St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School

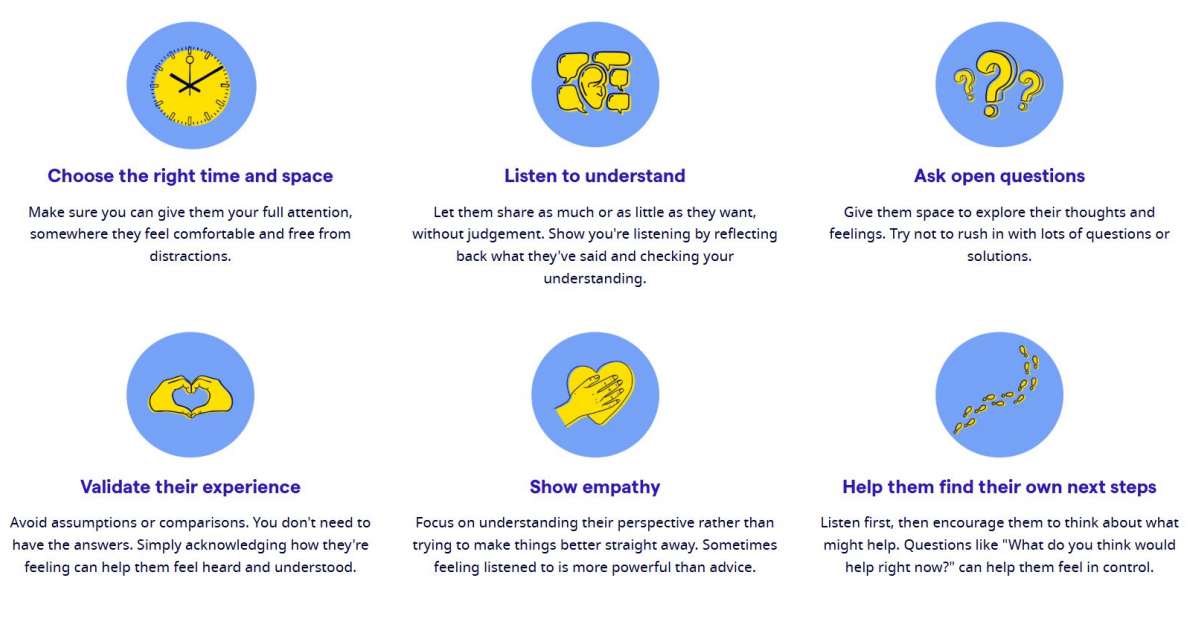
Welcome to this fortnight's SMRT Safeguarding Update...

WAKE UP WEDNESDAY

World Mental Health Day 2026

10 October marked World Mental Health Day; this takes place on this date every year with a different theme each year. The theme for this year: *Support starts with being heard*. As humans we have a core need to feel heard, seen and understood. Whatever challenges we are facing, they are likely to be compounded when we do not feel we have the support and understanding of others, and likewise just feeling that someone else understands and cares can make a difference in times of struggle.

This helpful graphic from Mental Health UK is a useful reminder of how we can hold space for our children and others in our lives by giving some simple steps to making a conversation about mental health feel safe and supportive:



We will shortly be inviting students to share their views on their own wellbeing via an individual survey that we will email to students. These surveys are helpful to us in enabling us to identify students that might have support needs that we have not been aware of already.

As ever, if you have concerns about your child's mental health, please get in touch with your child's form tutor. The Safeguarding and year teams have regular dialogue about our students and the right support for them.

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

10 Conversation Starters for Parents



Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.

National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday





1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

2 ASK TWICE



The campaign from time to change is great . https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION



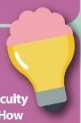
This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.



4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP



Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this… is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

7 EMPATHISE



'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE



Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE



Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.



Meet our expert



This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.

Sources of Information and Support

Your GP
Young Minds https://youngminds.org.uk/v
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/
https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/
https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health



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As always, if you have any immediate concerns about safeguarding issues, students, or the school site, please get in touch via:

safeguarding@smrt.bristol.sch.uk