

Thought-Full: Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

A guide for young people

More information at www.westsussex.gov.uk/Thought-Full or contact us by email: Thought-Full@westsussex.gov.uk



Who are Thought-Full?

Hello and welcome from Thought-Full! We are the Mental Health Support Team in Schools in West Sussex. We are really looking forward to working with you and are pleased you have taken the brave and positive steps to wanting our help and support. We will be in touch soon, however in the meantime, this is our Welcome Pack which we hope you will find helpful and supportive. This is aimed to give you some ideas about what we do, how your sessions with us will work, answer some of the questions you may have about our service and help put you at ease about what you can expect when your sessions with our friendly team start. You will also find some ideas to try at home to support your emotional wellbeing. We look forward to hearing if any of these have helped and look forward to meeting you!

What to expect: Steps to support

Step one: Talk to the Senior Mental Health Lead in your school. Describe the problem and what you would like to be different. This is a big and brave first step!
Step two: They will put this on a form and send it to us with some other details.
Step three: We will look at the form and decide if we can help you. If we can't help we'll help your school work out who can!
Step four: We'll meet up and talk things through. We use some questionnaires with rating scales. These are just a way for us to decide how we can best help.
Step five: Once we understand the problem we will set some goals together and begin working on the problem. There will be things for you to try at home and we will meet each week to see how things are going.
Step six: We'll bring things to a close after we've had up to 10 sessions. We'll review your goals and help you make a set-back plan.

What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)?

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is what informs the interventions we use in our sessions with you. CBT is a talking therapy. It is 'evidence based', which means that there has been a lot of research into this method to prove it is effective in helping you to cope with, and manage difficulties that you may be experiencing. CBT focuses on a thoughts, feelings and behaviours cycle, which means how you think (your thoughts or assumptions) are linked with how you feel (your emotions) which is then linked with what you do (your actions or behaviours). CBT works to change the patterns of thoughts and feelings that keep you stuck, to change this thoughts/feelings/behavioural cycle. With help to identify these unhelpful cycles of thinking and behaving, you will be able to build a more helpful belief and also improve your problem-solving skills which will reduce your emotional difficulties.

If you are in immediate danger or need urgent medical attention, call 999 or go to your nearest A&E. If you feel unsafe and need additional support, please contact your GP, or if out of hours, call 111. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support you can contact the YoungMinds Crisis messenger text service, by texting YM to 85258. They provide free 24/7 crisis support across the UK. You can also access The Sussex Mental Health Line, which is available 24/7 on 0800 0309 500.

What are the sessions like?

Our sessions and the way we work is based on the idea of Collaborative Working, meaning that we will work with you, supporting you in making decisions together. Usually, we meet with you for up to 10 sessions. In our first session we will explore what the main issues of concern are for you, so that together we can decide if CBT informed interventions are the right support for you.

We will then focus on what it is that is impacting on your life, and work together to unpick how you would like this to change. Whatever we work on, we will set a specific goal for our time together, so we can keep track of how helpful our sessions are. Depending on what we are working on, we may sit and talk about it and then actually practice things in everyday life so that we can begin to experience and think about things differently. We will work together throughout this, reviewing and celebrating progress as it is made, identifying any setbacks and managing these, and then planning for how our sessions will come to an end.

We will support you to manage your issue of concern, but you will need to work on this outside of our sessions for our interventions to be effective. This is a key part of CBT, and will help you to use what you learn within our sessions and put this into practice in your everyday life. We may set home learning tasks like reading, logging your progress at home, keeping a journal or we may ask you to complete activity sheets. Not doing home learning tasks is one of the main reasons for CBT based interventions to not work, therefore it is important that you are willing to do this. All we need from you is to be fully on board and motivated to talk and to work on this!

Where are sessions delivered?

We will try to see you during the school day, in school hours. Our sessions will usually last for the duration of a lesson, which is usually up to an hour. We will try to see you in person, face to face, however when this is not possible, we will arrange our session virtually through the computer. We will be able to see and hear each other. No one else other than you, your allocated practitioner from the MHST and your parent or carer (if agreed) will be able to join in or hear the session so it will still remain private.

Session attendance

If you need to cancel a session, please give us at least 24 hours' notice. To do so, email: MHST@westsussex.gov.uk. If we need to cancel your session for any reason we will contact you, giving as much notice as we are able to.

If you cancel two consecutive sessions you will be offered a review to decide whether this is the best time to have sessions.

If you miss more than two sessions without giving notice, we will discharge you from our service.

In between session contact with your practitioner

Contact outside of treatment times is limited. Your practitioner will contact you for the following reasons, using an agreed e-mail address:

- To send you resources used in the session
- To send appointment confirmations
- For you to send copies of your work (if applicable)

Guidelines for remote sessions

During the COVID-10 pandemic we are able to offer appointments regardless of the restrictions that may be in place. If you need to self-isolate, or schools are closed due to the pandemic, we are able to provide support remotely. We will email you a link to Attend Anywhere, which is a secure NHS video call service, or we will use WhatsApp video calling. If you need to have remote sessions, your practitioner will explain how you can access this.

Online sessions will follow the same format as face to face sessions:

- Your practitioner will call you at an agreed time
- Sessions will take place weekly and last for up to 60 minutes
- We recommend logging on 5-10 minutes before the session to make sure the link is working
- Try and find a quiet and private space for the meeting, ideally not your bedroom. Consider noise and if others can see or hear you, as well as personal or confidential information that may be in your background
- Be respectful of your practitioner and the session. It is not acceptable to video, screenshot, or screen record sessions and share them with others on any social media platform or in any other format
- Please avoid forms of distraction during sessions (e.g. eating, mobile phone, TV, computer)
- Please wear appropriate clothing to sessions (e.g. not pyjamas etc)

Data protection/ privacy notice

The Thought-Full team will use questionnaires to collect personal and special category data, the processing of which is necessary to enable us to be compliant with the law (general well-being duties), and for reasons of substantial public interest. The data will be processed in accordance with the 2018 Data Protection Act, the General Data Protection Regulations, and any subsequent data protection legislation. The data we collect will be securely stored and kept for period of up to 2 years before being appropriately destroyed. The data we will collect will not be used for any other purpose than that stated above without your prior written consent. West Sussex County Council is registered as Data Controller (Reg. No. Z6413427). For further details and information about our Data Controller, please see www.westsussex.gov.uk/privacy-policy

Working agreement

At the beginning of our work together, we will look at a therapeutic contract or working agreement. This sets out the expectations of our sessions, for example how to contact us between sessions, how long sessions will be and how and where they will be held. This is sometimes written down and on a signed contract or at other times may be done in discussion between you and your practitioner. All practitioners will discuss the working agreement with you and check that you fully understand this.

Consent and information sharing

During your initial session with us, your practitioner will also ask for your consent to engage in sessions with our service. This forms part of the working agreement. We will discuss with you the importance of having your consent {and your parents/carers consent when applicable} for your sessions with us, and will also explain the term 'confidentiality'. What we discuss during 1 to 1 sessions will remain confidential to the MHST service UNLESS we have a concern for your safety or wellbeing.

As part of our work, it may be helpful for us to share information with other people. We would not share information without discussing it first with you (and in the case of younger children, their parent or carer) and agreeing exactly what is going to be shared and how. The only time this might not be true is if we are concerned that you or other people are at risk of being seriously harmed. The practitioner will explain a bit more about this when at the first meeting. At times we may ask you for your consent to record the session for the purposes of our training. We will ALWAYS ask for your permission before doing this and you can always say no. You can stop your sessions at any time if you feel these are not right for you.

Frequently asked questions

Are our sessions confidential? Do you share what we discuss with my school? What we discuss in our sessions remains confidential between the MHST service and you (and your parent/carer if appropriate) UNLESS we feel there are concerns for your safety or wellbeing, or that of others. In this case, we have a duty of care to ensure that you and others are safe, and will need to share this further. Whenever possible, we will talk to you before we share any information so you know what we are going to say and who we will say this to. The MHST do have weekly contact with your school's Senior Mental Health Lead- who would have referred you to us, however we DO NOT share what we discuss and the content of our sessions, but we do inform them that we are working with you and will update them when our sessions are complete.

What happens to my sessions over school holidays? We are an all year-round service, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, which means we will be able to continue our sessions regardless of school holiday's. You don't need to worry if you have other commitments over the holidays' either as we will arrange our sessions around when you are available.

How long will my sessions last? Our interventions are designed to be short term, so we expect that we will work with you for up to 10 sessions. Each session is up to an hour long and we will aim for these to be held over school hours.

Are you a counsellor? No, we are Mental Health Practitioners. Although we may provide support in some of the same areas as counsellors, our approach is different in that we offer a different type of assessment and intervention and our qualifications are different. There are lots of different people who support people's mental health including Psychiatrists, CAMHS practitioners, GP's and Nurses, Mental Health Charity workers, specific Mental Health organisations and support groups, youth workers. Each one of these follows a slightly different approach to their sessions in the types of questions they ask, what happens in their sessions and how long they may offer sessions for.

Do I have to complete questionnaires and forms? All practitioners will use a range of tools, which include questionnaires and worksheets to complete within our sessions and also in between sessions at home, to help us plan together what interventions we will use and then evaluate if the strategy being used is working or not. They are really useful in supporting our discussions, planning our goals and then looking at if this is working. Some of our team will be training so may ask you for your feedback for their university so they can complete their course and qualify. We really appreciate your input into this. Anything that is asked of you to complete, like questionnaires and worksheets is hugely valuable to the session and your progress. Your feedback regarding your experience of the MHST service is also used to make improvements to the service. It can also be used anonymously to look at how our service is doing both locally and nationally.

Useful resources

- E-Wellbeing <https://e-wellbeing.co.uk>
Information and support for young people's wellbeing.
- YCMA Dialogue 01273 725259 / dialogue@ycmadlg.org
Counselling Services for children and young people.
- Sussex CAMHS www.sussexcamhs.nhs.uk
Information on the Sussex CAMHS service, including tips about mental health conditions.
- YES (youth emotional support) 0330 2226711 / yes@westsussex.gov.uk
A free service for young people aged 11 to 18 years looking for support with their wellbeing.
- Find It Out www.westsussex.gov.uk then search Find It Out.
Local drop in centres across West Sussex for young people to access advice and information.
- Be Ok www.sussexoakleaf.org.uk
Free mental health service for 16 to 25-year olds in Crawley, Horsham or mid Sussex.
- West Sussex Mind www.westsussexmind.org
Support for 16 to 25-year olds with their mental health, offering one-to one or group support.
- NHS Every Mind Matters www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters
Provides information and gives people the skills to improve their mental health.
- Young Minds www.Youngminds.org.uk
- Youth Health Talk www.Youthhealthtalk.org
- Childline www.Childline.org.uk or call 0800 1111
- ReThink www.rethink.org
- Headspace www.headspace.com
- Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 / www.samaritans.org
- Anna Freud- On My Mind: www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/
- B-Eat (eating difficulties/disorders) www.b-eat.co.uk
- Winstons Wish (bereavement) www.winstonswish.org.uk
- Cruse (bereavement) www.cruse.org.uk
- Stay Alive App <https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app/>
- Papyrus (prevention of young suicide) www.papyrus-uk.org