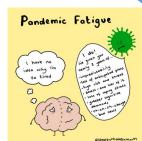
Barnet Virtual School Foster Carer Newsletter

Spring 2022

Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of the Barnet Virtual School Foster Carer Newsletter. We hope you had a good break although it seems a long time ago. We also hope the new term is going smoothly. However we do acknowledge how difficult things continue to be with COVID. This is why we have a focus on looking after yourself for this newsletter!



Last term, we had another new caseworker join our team, Sejal Patel. Some of you will have 'met' her in PEP meetings already. Sejal comes with a wealth of experience having been a head teacher in a primary school. As always, please do get in touch with the team if you have any questions or queries about education. If we do not know the answer, we will always endeavour to find out. Sarah Deale Head teacher, Virtual School

FOSTER CARER VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

We are offering a range of virtual workshops over the Spring and Summer terms. These are an opportunity to learn more about a particular topic, meet other foster carers and ask questions. If you would like to come to one of the workshops, please email barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk, stating which course you want to attend. We will then send you a link before the course and a certificate of attendance afterwards.

Workshop 1 and 2: Supporting positive relationships at home

Tuesday 1st March 2022 10.00am – 11.15am and repeated Wednesday 16th March 2022 1.00-2.15pm

Relationships play a key part in every child or young person's wellbeing. This workshop will share some top tips to support positive relationships at home and support children's emotional wellbeing.

Workshop 3: Ways to reduce exam anxiety

Tuesday 26th April 2022, 10.00-11.15am

A chance to explore practical ways you can support children and young people with exam stress and anxiety.

Workshop 4: Supporting Transitions

Wednesday 25th May 2022 10.00-11.15am

In this workshop we will explore a range of tried and tested strategies that will support children and young people as they start nursery or school, or when they move on to secondary school or college.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF—TIPS FOR CARERS



PACE YOURSELF:

Monitor yourself for disrupted sleep, excessive fatigue, irritability, poor focus and marked anxiety. If we run on empty, we can't care for those depending on us. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

ANXIOUS OR WORRIED?

Increased anxiety is common as we navigate COVID-19 and its broad consequences, especially when the demands on us have increased. Action is one of the best treatments for anxiety. Share your concerns and problem solve with family and friends to plan coping steps.

TAKE BREAKS WHERE POSSIBLE

Plan down time, it helps us refuel physically and emotionally.

PROMOTE TEAMWORK

Are there other family members who could step up and help out? Don't be afraid to ask.

EXERCISE, EXERCISE, EXERCISE

Aerobic exercise is vital for stress reduction. A short aerobic walk or workout is better than nothing and can make a difference in how we feel



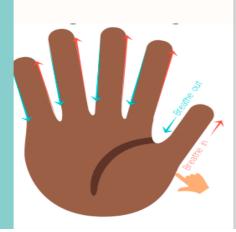


MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH HABITS

As stress and demands increase, healthy habits often take a hit. Make sure you eat at meal times and maximise healthy eating, limit alcohol, try to get enough sleep, prioritise aerobic exercise and get some sunlight.

5 Finger Breathing:

- **1.** Stretch one hand out so that you have space between your fingers.
- **2.** Hold up your pointer finger from the other hand.
- **3.** Start at the bottom of your thumb. Use your pointer finger to trace up your thumb as you **slowly** breathe in through your nose.
- **4.** When you get to the top of your thumb, **slowly** breathe out your mouth as you trace down the other side.
- **5.** Repeat for all fingers until you have traced your whole hand.



CONNECT, CONNECT & CONNECT AGAIN

Reach out to family, friends, and your favourite community groups for social contact.
Call, Facetime, Zoom, Skype or try Google Hangouts to reduce your isolation. Meaningful and fun connection, emotional support and healthy problem solving are vital to your health and wellbeing.



LOOK AFTER YOURSELVES cont'd

Grounding Exercise

Re-orient yourself in place and time by asking yourself some or all of these questions:

- •Where am I?
- •What is today?
- •What is the date?
- •What is the month?
- •What is the year?
- •How old am I?
- What season is it?

Sensory Awareness

Grounding Exercise 2

- Name 5 things you can see in the room with you.
- Name 4 things you can feel ("chair on my back" or "feet on floor")
- Name 3 things you can hear right now ("birds chirping" or "tv")
- Name 2 things you can smell right now (or, 2 things you like the smell of)
- Name 1 good thing about yourself

Other Grounding Activities

- Keep your eyes open, look around the room, notice your surroundings, notice details.
- Hold a pillow, stuffed animal or a ball.
- Place a cool cloth on your face, or hold something cool such as a can of soda.
- Listen to soothing music
- Put your feet firmly on the ground
- · Focus on someone's voice or a neutral conversation.

Reference—St John of God Hospital, Minding our mental health during the Covid-19 crisis: A resource for carers.

Contact Us



Follow us twitter to keep up with news and opportunities to support our young people.



You can read more about the Virtual School and find useful resources by going to

Virtual School | Barnet Education & Learning Service | London (bels.org.uk)



Tel: 020 8359 4534



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