

Psychological Service

Welcome...

Inside this issue:

Addressing Anxiety 2

Mindfull Vs Mindful 2

Inclusive Technology 2

Lochee Pathfinder Project 3

Understanding Child and Teenage 3

Happy, Happy, Happy...! 3

Relaxation 4

Welcome to our latest psychological Service newsletter. We hope you are refreshed after a relaxing summer break and are settling back in to the new academic year.

In our previous issue we introduced the new Enhanced Service pilot. This has two aims: preventative early intervention role and a short term intensive support role. One year on and this service has become involved in a range of roles from working with health visitors on early intervention strategies to supporting colleagues with individual cases. This issue we give an update of the progress and the next steps.

Staffing News...

We have had to say farewell to our Trainee Educational Psychologist, Mark Brotherton. Mark has been a trainee with us for two years whilst com-

pleting the MSc Educational Psychology course at Strathclyde University. Mark will continue to work with us to complete his research in the area of looked after children where he has gathered valuable information for the authority. He has been successful in securing a job with East Ayrshire Psychological Service and we wish him all the success in his career.

We are delighted to welcome back Jennifer Howitt who worked with us as an Assistant Psychologist and is now returning as a trainee whilst on the Dundee MSc course.

We would also like to offer a warm welcome to Christine McGovern who has joined our service as a Probationer Educational Psychologist.

Christine, like Mark, has just completed the two year MSc course at Strathclyde University. Prior to this Christine was a primary teacher in a school in Glasgow. We are delighted to have her as part of the team!

The Psychological Service had to say a sad farewell to the Director, John Wilson. John took a real interest in the service and came to our open days and met with the team several times over the years. It was John who highlighted years ago that we should be more hands on and he was an inspiration to us in the development of the Therapeutic Intervention service. We will miss him and wish him a long and happy retirement

Enhanced Service

The pilot for this service (which allows more focused intensive pieces of work to be carried out with children and families than the case / school psychologist can normally provide) came to an end in June 2013.

The service was used in a variety of ways including supporting a primary school refuser, working closely on parenting skills with various parents and grandparents, advising and supporting staff with regards to a transgender young person and providing group work for young people with anxiety and depression.

Evaluations from users of the service, and from psychologists, of the impact of

the service were very positive and suggest that this is a vital addition to the services we provide.

As a result Gillian, Eilidh, Ainsley and I are going to continue to provide and expand this service to include a focus on early intervention. We have established links both with health visitors and with the Youth Team and plan to use some of the time available to support and train young mothers and mothers with young children in the importance of attachment and parenting skills.

Many psychological services have moved away from intensive direct work with children young people and families and psychologists in other areas often

act more as consultants. In East Ayrshire teachers parents and management have told us that what they want is hands on work from Psychologists and we are happy to develop the services to do this. More children than ever before are experiencing mental health issues and as a service we want to provide our children with the best help at the earliest opportunity.



[Click Here to upgrade to
Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features](#)

Addressing Anxiety

Nick Smiley, Alison Jarvie, Jennifer Hunter and Siobhan Wilson have been working on an emotional wellbeing programme which has been piloted in the St Ninian's cluster during the 2012-2013 session. It was to address the rising number of anxiety related referrals for young people at adolescent stage. The intervention was focused on pre-school and Primary 5. The expectation was that by intervening early we would enable young people to cope better with challenges they face later. It began by carrying out training across the cluster on cognitive behavioural techniques then further training for nursery staff and Primary 5 staff. The Fun Friends programme was

implemented in the nursery and a cognitive behavioural techniques programme implemented across the P5 classes.

The programme teaches developmentally sensitive cognitive behavioural techniques to cope with and manage worry, and conquer challenges and adversity. It includes learning how to relax and self soothe, how to regulate emotions, how to be brave, how to be kind and empathetic, problem solving skills and how to think positively as well as recognise when you are thinking negatively.

The feedback from teachers involved in the project has been unanimously positive. They observed positive changes in

the children's social skills and resilience.

This year the programme will be repeated with the new Primary 5 stage and there will be follow up sessions for the Primary 6. The following year we hope to include some further sessions for them in Primary 7 with a focus on transition. Pre and post data collected from the pilot as well as evaluations from pupils and staff will be collated in order to expand this idea in the authority.

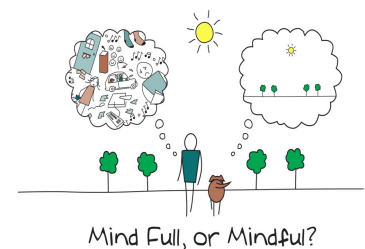
Mind Full Vs Mindful

Jennifer Hunter, Psychologist for St Cadoc's Primary and Siobhan Wilson, Assistant Psychologist, developed and delivered a Mindfulness programme to a Primary 7 class in St Cadoc's to support their transition from primary to secondary. The class had been identified as requiring particular support due to concerns regarding poor attention / concentration and high levels of distractibility across the class, along with regular issues in relation to challenging behaviours, and high numbers of children with anxiety and low self-concept. It was felt that a Mindfulness approach would be beneficial as Mindfulness has a strong evidence base in relation to supporting

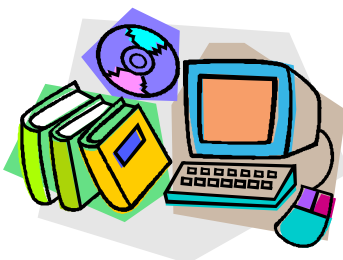
children to effectively manage stress and anxiety. The programme aimed to teach children the skills required to slow down and control their actions, particularly through deep breathing, motivation and focus and supporting them to become more aware of their senses and their moment-by-moment experiences.

The programme was very well-received by the school, who are now exploring ways in which mindfulness-based practices can be embedded across the whole school. The children reflected on their use of the skills and techniques they had learnt across a wide range of settings and indicated that this had helped them to feel calmer and more in

control when faced with difficult situations. They also indicated that they felt much more able to focus and concentrate on their learning in class and were feeling more positive and less anxious about the forthcoming transition to secondary school.



Inclusive Technology



Since our last newsletter the psychological service have set up a referral system for schools to refer for specialised equipment for individual pupils. We have met with the ASN coordinators, dyslexia advisors and secondary principal teachers for learning support to introduce this and have had some referrals

brought to us through this system. In the first instance staff considering specialised equipment for a pupil can discuss this with their school psychologist. They can help you come to a decision on what IT might be suitable and also support a referral where there is a cost implication. Referrals to the psychological

service inclusive technology team should be for equipment over the £250 threshold or where there are a number of items required for an individual which accumulate to over £250.

[Click Here to upgrade to Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features](#)

Lochee Pathfinder Project

Eddie McGee, Senior Psychologist, has been seconded as an Associate Tutor to teach on the MSc Educational Psychology programme at the University of Dundee. In addition, Eddie is carrying out research on behalf of the authority into the Lochee Pathfinder project established by Dundee City Council in 2011. The purpose of the research is to assess whether a similar project could be set up in East Renfrewshire.

The Lochee Pathfinder is a key initiative within Dundee City Council's GIRFEC strategy, which states we are developing the new 0 to 5 Lochee Ward Pathfinder where we are bringing early years practitioners together, either physically or virtually to implement all



our GIRFEC approach based on our Hierarchy of Needs (p52, Single Outcome Agreement for Dundee 2012 to 2017). The Lochee Ward 0-5 Pathfinder has been established in order to design and implement a 'getting it right' approach by developing opportunities for joint working, planning and integration of services for children pre-birth to 5 years and their families. The Pathfinder will be used to develop a best practice model for embedding the GIRFEC ap-

proach across Dundee. (Getting it Right for Every Child in Dundee Newsletter, October 2012).

The Lochee Pathfinder, draws on a number of policy initiatives such as Total Place and Asset Based Community Development, and although established before the launch of the Early Years Collaborative, is highly compatible with its aims and objectives and has sometimes been referred to as one big test of change reflecting the methodology promoted by the Early Years Collaborative. Hence, examples of good practice in these areas may also be identified and possibly applied in East Renfrewshire.

Understanding Child and Teenage Behaviour

Every year the Psychological Service run a series of workshops open to all parents of children who attend East Renfrewshire educational establishments. This year the workshops took place in Carolside Primary over five Tuesday evenings in April / May 2013. Parents can attend the pre-school, primary or teenage workshop. Each workshop is tailored to the needs and challenges of the young person at that stage.

Evaluations were completed by all the parents who attended and were extremely positive. 57% of the parents found the workshops extremely helpful, 39% very helpful and 1% helpful. No one rated

the workshops unhelpful.

Parents enjoyed the group discussion and working with the other parents the most helpful part of the programme followed by the video and the handbooks.

We are always looking to ensure we maximize attendance at these workshops as parents have found them to be very beneficial so please keep an eye out for the dates in 2014.

"Relaxed, informal environment"

"Enlightening. Good to hear others' views"

"Understanding that you are not alone was very comforting. Its changed everything for my daughter and I"

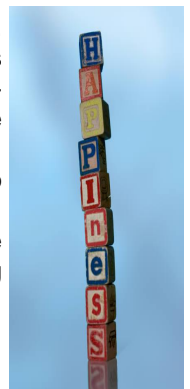
"Reassures me I am not the only one going through these issues"

Happy, Happy, Happy...!!!

A project was carried out to enhance the emotional wellbeing of staff and parents at McCready Family Centre between January 2012 and April 2013. The project involved two staff CPD sessions on positive psychology and strategies to increase happiness in daily life. Four workshops were then carried out with parents at Family Day focusing on developing positive mental health. The

first session explored strategies to make you happy such as positive thinking, healthy eating and helping others. Workshops were carried out with parents demonstrating practical examples of happy activities. These included dance therapy, horticulture, making healthy smoothies and collaboratively creating strength posters for each participant. The sessions concluded with an exploration of the impact of patterns of

thought on emotions and behaviour. Evaluations from staff and parents indicated that the project was positively received and had a positive impact on participants' general mood at that time. Next year, we hope to follow-up some of this initial feedback and ask staff and parents if the happiness project had any lasting effects on their emotional wellbeing.



[Click Here to upgrade to
Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features](#)

we are located at:

Psychological
Service
St John's Campus
Commercial Road
Barrhead

Telephone: 0141 577 8510

Fax: 0141 577 8562

Email: ps@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

**Our postal address
is:**

Psychological
Service
211 Main Street
Barrhead East
Renfrewshire

Our website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/PsychologicalService>

Relaxation

In the last issue we gave some ideas about how you can reduce your stress levels by using deep breathing. This issue we are going to focus on visualisation and guided imagery.

Some of the psychologists have been involved in running lunchtime workshops for secondary pupils. The focus has often been around exam anxiety. The number of referrals to the psychological service for high school pupils experiencing exam stress has been increasing year on year. Pressure to achieve good exam results can take its toll on a teenager and if not managed effectively can be a barrier to effective studying and exam success. S4 pupils at Williamwood High School and Woodfarm High School as well as a group of senior pupils in Isobel Mair School, who are preparing to leave school, were identified as experiencing stress. They were invited to join a stress management clinic held weekly. Using a cognitive behavioural approach pupils discussed the cause and effects of stress, the benefits of exercise and nutrition, relaxation and a range of effective strategies to improve stress management. Pupils reported feeling better equipped to deal with exam stress.

It has been very useful to learn from young people the different strategies they use to manage anxiety and the different strategies they try between sessions. This ranged from listening to music, going for a walk, reading a book and even trying out yoga. Using visualisations and guided imagery was very popular with the young

people. Its so easy to use and as relaxation is a skill anyone can do it. The more you practice the easier it becomes!

Creating a Calm Place

Make sure you are in a comfortable position with no distractions. You might want to play some relaxing music in the background. Close your eyes and begin to imagine yourself amidst the most relaxing environment. This can be somewhere you know like your favorite spot in your garden or an imaginary place. Close your eyes and just imagine yourself in this peaceful, quiet, safe environment. Involve all of your senses as much as possible thinking about who or what you can see, what different sounds you can hear, what does it smell like, what does it feel like to be here etc...

Some people give their calm place a cue word, for example, if your calm place is with horses your cue word might be stables. When you say this word in the future it should prompt you back to your calm place.

The next visualisation is an idea from a young person in Isobel Mair . The



imaginary worry box. Visualise a small worry box in the back of your head. When ever you feel yourself becoming anxious visualise that thought travelling to the back of your head and going in to the box then put the lid back on. You can say to yourself ~~do~~ think about that one later. When you go back later the worry wont feel as big. If you feel the box is becoming full, imagine a window at the back of your head opening and a big breeze sweeps all the worries out emptying the box completely. Make the box as personal as you can. Some people put a bright coloured ribbon round it!

If you like this idea but find it difficult to visualise you can make a box and write worries down. It can make you feel like you dealt with that thought rather than try to ignore it which can often be difficult. Every so often just carry the box to the bin and empty it or take the piece of paper back out and share it with someone.