

# Therapy & Wellbeing Newsletter

Bromley Beacon Academy &  
Bromley Trust Academy

Spring Term 2018

Edition 3 Volume 1



Dear Parents & Carers,

Spring is a reminder of newness; the hope of what is to come. Days become longer, animals are born, plant life springs into action.

Our world is constantly evolving and we are reminded of this during the springtime. Technology seems to be in a constant state of 'spring' – it is

hope that you are able to put some suggestions into practice with your families or for yourselves.

Over the coming year, the therapy team will be participating in a new endeavour of our

**“A mind that is stretched by new experience  
can never go back to its old dimensions”**

**– Oliver Wendall Holmes**

**For more information, resources or support, contact your  
school therapist:**

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ever changing and our interaction with it grows.

We have themed our Spring Term newsletter on technology and our mental health. Technology can be a wonderful tool that makes tasks simpler, connects us to others and provides self-help. However, it also carries risks that can be harmful to our mental health.

We have done research about the positive and negative impact of technology on our minds. We

own: The **Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools**. This project aims to celebrate and improve our well-being practices. We would welcome your input. To participate, please get in touch with your school therapist.

Warmest Wishes,

The Therapy Team

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## PARENT & CARER SUPPORT GROUP

Please make note of the upcoming Parent/Carer Support Group Dates. We look forward to welcoming you! Facilitated by two creative arts therapists, the confidential sessions offer a chance to meet and connect with others within a supportive, relaxed environment. Depending on interest, we do host occasional guest speakers. If you do have a particular interest or something that you think could be helpful, please get in touch.

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1.00-2.30pm**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> April 1.00-2.30pm**

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May 1.00-2.30pm**

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1.00-2.30pm**

**Location: Community Room,  
Orpington Fire Station (E41),  
Avalon Road, BR6 9AX**

## Top 10 Free Apps

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### 1. **SAM: Self Help for Anxiety Management**

SAM is an app designed to help people manage their anxiety. Users can record their anxiety levels and identify different triggers. Users can create a personalized anxiety toolkit, adding in the features of the app that they find most useful for easy access.

### 2. **IntelliCare**

IntelliCare is a suite of apps developed by researchers at Northwestern University to target symptoms of depression and anxiety. The mini apps include things like Worry Knot (for worry management techniques), Thought Challenger (to help reduce negative thought patterns), and iCope (for inspirational messages and reassurance).

### 3. **Breathe2Relax**

Breathe2Relax is an app developed for stress management. It walks users through breathing exercises that help to reduce stress, stabilize mood, control anger, and manage anxiety. The app's developers note that it can be used on its own to help reduce stress or in combination with other therapies.

### 4. **Five Ways to Wellbeing**

This app offers a practical way to help you feel good and function well in the world.

Reflect on your wellbeing, set activities to help you improve your wellbeing and track your progress, all from the comfort of your phone; whenever it suits you.

### 5. **Silvercloud**

Silvercloud programs address wellbeing, life balance, time management, communication skills, goal setting, communication and relationship management, anger management, stress management, relaxation and sleep management, among many others.



## Too much Technology? The Pros and Cons of Using Devices

The average person in the developed world spends three to four hours a day on a Smartphone screen.

There is no avoiding the fact that technology has become part of our everyday lives and the lives of our children and young people. How much of a concern is this and can we make use of technology to a beneficial end?

There have been worries that even for children to have 'regular exposure' to screens that subtle damage is occurring. This is perhaps no surprise if you consider that the average child use screens for more than 7 hours a day.

Symptoms of over use can be:

- Lack of restorative sleep
- Sensory overload
- Hyper aroused nervous system
- Possible rise in blood pressure

## Top 10 Free Apps

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### 6. Calm

Calm is the perfect app if you are new to meditation, but it also offers programs for more advanced users. Meditation sessions are available in lengths of 3–25 minutes, to fit in with your schedule.

### 7. Headspace

Headspace uses mindfulness and meditation to help you perform at your best each day. The app's mission is to provide you with the essential tools to achieve a happier, healthier life.

### 8. Moodpath

Moodpath is your pocket-sized mental health companion. Whether you are facing a rough patch or have concerns about your mental health, the app's goal is to support you through the difficult times and guide you out the other side.

### 9. Pacifica

Pacifica helps you to break cycles of unhelpful thoughts, feelings, and behaviors through methods such as CBT, mindfulness meditation, mood tracking, and relaxation.

### 10. SuperBetter

SuperBetter is a game focusing on increasing resilience and the ability to remain strong, optimistic, and motivated when presented with challenging obstacles in life. A study by the University of Pennsylvania found that when people played SuperBetter for 30 days, their mood improved, symptoms of anxiety and depression decreased, and self-belief to achieve goals increased.

It seems that there is little doubt about how these symptoms would affect us as adults, so if we consider the effect on young people, it gives us an indication of how this may impact on their behaviour.

In addition to concerns about how much time we are spending glued to screens another issue is the effect of social media on young people.

For example, many young people can be and are affected by bullying or being worried about appearance.



However, this does not mean that technology in general is harmful, it will have different effects on different people. Some studies have suggested that social media can be beneficial and certainly Apps that encourage us to practice Mindfulness, relaxation and meditation can be very useful as well as websites such as Childline and YoungMinds. (Some will even message you to remind you to take some time to breathe throughout the day!)



## Start a conversation: your child, technology and mental health

While there are of course many benefits to technology, it's important that we discuss the importance of using it in a healthier way.

**1)Talk about the impact of seeking approval from an online world that doesn't really know them** or comparing their lives to the edited versions of the lives they see online.

2) Chat about how too much technology has the **potential to effect sleep and therefore their health** and through that help them make more informed choices about when to 'switch off' at night.

3) Ultimately we need to **remind them that technology is not the only way of being social and encourage more face to face interaction** and connection reminding them to be wary of letting on-line engagement get in the way of good mental health and well-being.

## Social Media and Mental Health

Social media has changed the way we communicate, and there are a lot of benefits to it. We have access to unlimited information, we can connect with people from all over the world almost immediately and we can share with others things that matter to us.

Social media can motivate people to action and make social changes. It provides a platform for young people's voices to be heard allowing them to have a say on issues that matter to them. The online world has the potential to help young people to explore new concepts, manage risks and build resilience.

However, because social media has evolved so quickly and has a deep impact on social and interpersonal relationships, it's important to explore the potential effects on young peoples' emotional and mental health.

### What does research say about social media and mental health?

An overview of the research generally points to 3 main factors when it comes to why the overuse of social media can negatively impact the mental health of young people:

- Impact on Sleep

Whether it's the blue light of screens or the behavioural disturbances that make young people wake to check their phones, sleep is reduced. Sleep is crucial for the developing brains, and lack of sleep is associated with lower mood and depression.

- Use as a comparing tool

While social media was initially set up as means of connecting with others it is now also used as a means of comparing. On social media, most people present the highlights of their lives more regularly than the boring stuff. These highlights then appear to be the norm. People tend to post when we are on a high and surf other people's pages when we are on a low, so the difference between our real lives and the idealized lives we see on screen is further amplified. This can impact mental well-being leading to feelings of inferiority.

- Chasing likes on post to drive self-worth / self-esteem

Worrying about regularly posting pictures and status updates has been **linked to anxiety, poor body image and diminished mental health**. The constant seeking of approval from others means that young people don't develop a secure sense of self that isn't dependent on validation from others.

## Technology as a Positive Resource

### Mobile Apps:



**Five Ways to Wellbeing** offers a practical way to help you feel good and function well in the world.



**SuperBetter** is a game focusing on increasing resilience and the ability to remain strong, optimistic, and motivated when presented with challenging obstacles in life.

### Websites:

- **Survival Tips for the technology battlefield** <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/family/screens-teens-survival-tips-parents-technology-battlefield/>
- **Screen time is about more than setting limits** <http://theconversation.com/screen-time-is-about-more-than-setting-limits-79538>
- **The Stressbusting website** offers information about stress and provide techniques for coping: <http://www.stressbusting.co.uk/treatments/>
- The **Mind Tools** website can help you with stress management and assertiveness techniques: <https://www.mindtools.com/>
- The **Be Mindful** website provides guidance on mindfulness, including how to find a mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) course: <http://bemindful.co.uk/>
- **The International Stress Management Association** can help you find a specialist stress practitioner in your local area: <http://isma.org.uk/>
- **Mind's Infoline** can let you know about support groups and mental health services in your local area: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>
- **Help Guide for Mindfulness** <https://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>
- **The Meaning of Mindfulness** <https://www.thebestbrainpossible.com/the-meaning-of-mindfulness-2/>



## Local Agencies, Charities and Support Services

### Bromley Parent Voice



**Bromley Parent Voice**

Bromley Parent Voice is a forum that aims to be a voice to inform service providers of the need of children and young people with a disability or additional need and their families in the London Borough of Bromley. <http://www.bromleyparentvoice.org.uk/> 07803 287838

### Bromley Changes - Drug & Alcohol Service

A social care and health charity that supports adults, young people and families whose lives are affected by substance misuse, homelessness, poverty, unemployment, domestic abuse, mental health issues and offending. <https://www.changegrowlive.org/what-we-do> T: 02083131107

### Bromley Mencap

Bromley Mencap is an award winning, user led service which offers free support across a range of areas for families with a child who has social/communication or learning difficulties.

[www.bromleymencap.org.uk](http://www.bromleymencap.org.uk) T: 020 8466 0790

### Bromley Women's Aid

Support for Domestic violence. [www.bwaid.com](http://www.bwaid.com) T:02083139303

### Welcare in Bromley

Welcare is a family-focused charity dedicated to helping children and families overcome challenges and build towards a better future [www.welcare.org](http://www.welcare.org) T:020 7820 7910

### Young Minds



YoungMinds is the UK's leading charity championing the wellbeing and mental health of young people. The website also has support for parents and carers. <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

### Oxleas NHS



Support booklets for parents looking at Family relationships, violent behaviour, and gang affiliation. <http://oxleas.nhs.uk/advice-and-guidance/children-and-young-peoples-services/nvr/parent-booklets/>