



**Healthy London
Partnership**

**#LondonTogether - Mental Health in London – a communications framework to support children and young people,
parents and carers, staff and leaders working in education
August 2020**

As schools, colleges and other learning organisations prepare for the return of students we can anticipate an increase in people (including children and young people) experiencing mental and emotional distress. We know from other events of this nature that some issues will emerge immediately, but others will appear, later, with the return to some kind of normality. Such distress is to be expected as an ordinary response to extraordinary events and it is important individuals can feel free to seek help without stigma or feeling embarrassed. Some signs of distress may manifest later in the year so this document will be regularly updated to align with the school calendar and to respond to emerging feedback, themes, or issues as we move into new stages of the response to COVID-19.

Many issues may be possible to be dealt with through signposting to general sources of advice on mental health and wellbeing. [Thrive LDN](#) and [Good Thinking](#) provide a central role as pan London resources which can signpost people seeking help to a range of online and voluntary sector support as well as clinical resources. For mental health support and advice relating to children and young people, parents and carers, education and support staff, a range of helpful resources and advice can be accessed freely on the [Schools Mental Health Toolkit](#).

Anybody can be affected by poor mental health in these challenging times including both those who have previously accessed mental health services and those experiencing problems for the first time. We anticipate different groups being affected in different ways. The evidence already suggests there may be particular issues for:

- young people (especially those in vulnerable circumstances)
- people from BAME communities
- health and care staff and other keyworkers
- people affected by bereavement
- people with pre-existing mental health diagnoses

Other groups may emerge at a later stage and it will be important to tailor and develop messages and responses accordingly. Messages need to be tailored for both individuals directly affected by COVID 19 and others such as parents, carers or staff members who are concerned about the welfare of others and for organisations such as schools and employers who have a key role in supporting wellbeing.

There has been an abundance of guidance and information coming from several national and regional sources which although helpful can unintentionally cause some confusion especially for those working to support children and young people. The framework below aims to provide a basis for services provided by the NHS, local authorities and voluntary sector working together to meet the needs of young Londoners in particular.

While specific arrangements will vary across boroughs, this document sets out an overarching framework which can be used in London wide communications to create a consistent set of messages on how to seek help. It also contains a summary of where help is available online and it brings together the various resources available.

	Who for?	Pathway / message
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building resilience and supporting ourselves and others to feel mentally healthy <p>(Encouraging self-care)</p>	<p>Education Staff, leaders, teachers, parents, Governors, carers, Directors of Children’s Services, Directors of Education, Mental Health Support Teams, children and young people.</p> <p>System partners: NHS, London Councils, GLA, PHE, Department for Education, and wider system to promote and signpost to resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working at a school or within the education system and worried about the mental health of colleagues, parents, or young people? Help is available in the Schools Mental Health Toolkit. You will find lots of free information, tools and resources to help you during these challenging and uncertain times. There are also articles available on Good Thinking that specifically address the challenge of returning to school; for children and young people, parents and carers and education staff. Many people are feeling anxious about coronavirus and how it might impact them. It’s important to know that it is normal and okay to feel upset, anxious or confused at times. Help is available, with a range of support available now from Good Thinking, Every Mind Matters, and a new series of NHS-led webinars. Every Mind Matters has expert advice and tips to keep yourself mentally well. Place2Be: Mental Health Champions – Foundation programme This online children’s mental health training course developed from their work in schools, enhances professionals’ understanding of children’s mental health and introduces approaches that foster positive wellbeing in schools and communities. Versions available for teachers, student teachers and youth workers. This course is free to qualified teachers and school-based staff in the UK. Other resources are also available (and are signposted to from the HLP Mental Health in Schools Toolkit).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are working with young children, you can check out Healthy Early Years London. Getting a good start in life, building emotional resilience and getting maximum benefit from education are the most important markers for good health and wellbeing throughout life. • Many schools in London are doing great work to support their pupils' health and wellbeing. Healthy Schools London is a programme helps schools to go further, and support children, staff and communities. There's lots of advice and tips on the website. • If you are a parent or carer of a child and you are worried about their emotional and mental wellbeing, check out Young Minds for lots of tips and advice about supporting young people during challenging or confusing times. • Good Thinking has a range of mental wellbeing information sheets and workbooks for that you can work through in your own time. There are a number of modules for each workbook and activities for you to try out. Each module is free to download. Explore all the workbooks via www.good-thinking.uk/workbooks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting those who are concerned about their mental health as a result of the pandemic. 	<p>Those with emerging issues (including those specifically related to the pandemic, social distancing and lockdown)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Thinking provides digital well-being support and signposts to a range of services or • Contact your GP practice who will be able to refer to clinical services or to support offered locally by voluntary sector providers Or • If you are experiencing mental health problems or emotional distress you can self-refer yourself to NHS Psychological Therapies • If you are concerned about children or young people under your care contact early help services, Single Point of Access, Mental Health Support Teams. • Encourage children and young people to join Kooth, an online mental wellbeing community offering free, safe and anonymous support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting those who are struggling with chronic anxiety, depression or PTSD. 	Existing issues (with existing care team/worker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact your GP, key worker and/or Mental Health support team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting those in crisis and who need urgent care 	Those anticipating or experiencing crisis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call 111 for clinical support and transfer/signposting to MH services Contact 24*7 crisis lines operated by local mental health trusts (direct access for known patients) Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line, or text "YM" if you're under 19. If you're under 19, you can also call 0800 1111 to talk to Childline. The number will not appear on your phone bill.

Specific topics relating to the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people

Topic	Young Londoners (Inc. advice for parents and carers)	
	Suggested message	Suggested collateral / sources / additional links
Message #1 Advice for children and young people	<p>There's been a lot of changes at your school and in your lives because of COVID-19. It's OK to feel confused, worried, scared and little bit overwhelmed about what's going on with coronavirus.</p> <p>Remember - it's OK to not be OK. Everyone is finding this hard. So, how can we help to make the current situation less scary? Good Thinking have answered some of the questions you might have.</p>	www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/children-and-young-people/
Message #2 Social distancing is tough for	<p>Social distancing doesn't mean you can't be in contact with your friends and family. We live in an age where we're more connected than ever through technology and this means you can call or hang out over video with people every day,</p>	<p>Suggested social media post:</p> <p><i>#SocialDistancing doesn't mean you can't be in contact with your friends. Through technology we're more connected than ever and this means you can call or</i></p>

<p>everyone particularly for young Londoners</p>	<p>staying connected as often as you like through digital platforms.</p> <p>Check out The Mix's 10 fun things you can do at home.</p>	<p><i>hang out over video with people, staying connected as often as you like through digital platforms.</i></p> <p>www.themix.org.uk/mental-health/looking-after-yourself/feeling-bored-here-are-ten-fun-things-you-can-do-to-pass-the-time-at-home-35711.html</p>
<p>Message #3 Advice for parents and carers – supporting your own mental health</p>	<p>The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is going to affect everyone's daily lives, as the government and the NHS take necessary steps to manage the outbreak, reduce transmission and treat those who need medical attention.</p> <p>As well as thinking about the children or young people in your care, it is important to take care of your own mental health and wellbeing. Children and young people react, in part, to what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with a situation calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children and young people. Parents and caregivers can be more supportive to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.</p> <p>You can explore advice on how to look after your mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak or visit Every Mind Matters for clear advice and actions to take care of your mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak</p>
<p>Message #4 Be kind</p>	<p>The outbreak has created a lot of upset and challenge for everyone. Be kind to your teachers, parents, families, carers and friends because we are all finding this hard.</p> <p>Try to remember that this time is tough on adults as well. Today, ask your parents or guardian what you can do to help them. Keep up to date with schoolwork and call your grandparents or older relatives and neighbours.</p>	<p>www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus/londontogether</p>

	Share your stories about what you are doing to keep your spirits up during these difficult times via #LondonTogether.	
Message #5 Advice to help children and young people with an autism spectrum condition and/or learning disability	<p>We are all having to change the way we do things because of coronavirus (COVID-19) and adjust to many stresses.</p> <p>If you're looking after a child or young person with an autistic spectrum condition and/or a learning disability, the changes in routine due to increased hand washing, social distancing, mask wearing and disruption to school life may create additional stress.</p> <p>London's digital wellbeing service, Good Thinking, has some useful advice for families and carers to help children and young people with an autism spectrum condition and/or learning disability manage changes in routine.</p>	<p>www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/parents-and-carers-children-autistic-spectrum-disorder-learning-disabilities/</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Gray has created a social story • Carers UK has produced guidance for carers • Mencap has published an easy read guide • The National Autistic Society provides information on its website • The Girl With The Curly Hair Facebook page offers tips from parents and others and The Curly Hair Project website is also a useful resource.
Message #6 Bereavement support for children	<p>The Childhood Bereavement Network has provided advice and guidance from a number of children and young people's bereavement organisations.</p> <p>These including supporting a bereaved child or a young person, how to say goodbye when a funeral is not possible due to social distancing restrictions in place, and guidance for families with children and young people around changes to funerals.</p> <p>There is also further guidance on options for life streaming a funeral service and organising online family memorials.</p>	<p>www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/help-around-a-death/covid-19.aspx</p> <p><i>Suggested social media post:</i></p> <p>Bereavement as a result of #COVID19UK will be difficult for anybody, but perhaps more so for children who may be feeling heightened anxiety. Child Bereavement UK (@cbukhelp) have made a short video on how you can support a bereaved child:</p> <p>www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFm-SXeJwI8&feature=emb_logo</p>
Message #7 Parents and carers	If your child has an eating disorder, they might be finding things particularly difficult at the moment. They might feel more anxious and distressed about their health, weight, body image and not being able to socialise. Spending more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/parents-and-carers-supporting-children-and-young-people-eating-disorders/

<p>supporting children and young people with eating disorders</p>	<p>time in the house with family might make them feel that their food behaviours and intake are 'on show' and that they are being scrutinised more than before.</p> <p>Food shortages at the supermarkets, cancelled medical appointments and worry about how coronavirus might impact your family could also leave you feeling helpless and out of control when you're trying to support your child.</p> <p>Good Thinking has developed some helpful tips and advice to help you over the coming weeks. You can find more detailed guidance about managing eating disorders on the Beat website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/coronavirus
<p>Message #8 Parents of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)</p>	<p>Children with ADHD can be energetic, inattentive and impulsive to varying degrees. All these behaviours may seem worse when mixed with anxiety, excitement, boredom and change in routine, as any parent and teacher know. COVID-19 has rapidly brought all these things into our lives.</p> <p>Social distancing (which applies to children as much as any other age group), wearing face masks or having to quarantine can be distressing.</p> <p>Supporting your child's learning at home may be equally demanding for inattentive youngsters. Excitement, anxiety and lack of routine are a perfect storm for stressful family life. Good Thinking has developed some helpful tips and guidance to support families and to help you think about how to manage your child with ADHD during this challenging time.</p>	<p>www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/parents-children-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/</p>
<p>Message #9 Advice for young people on</p>	<p>If you have an eating disorder, the coronavirus outbreak might be causing additional stress. Not being able to see your friends or follow your usual daily routine at school, college or university might make you feel anxious and not in</p>	<p>www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/coronavirus</p> <p>www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/young-people-how-manage-eating-disorders/</p>

<p>how to manage their eating disorders</p>	<p>control. You might be concerned about whether you're vulnerable to infection and find the increasing amount of news stories and social media posts about food and exercise distressing.</p> <p>For detailed guidance about managing your eating disorder during the coronavirus outbreak, visit the Beat website. If you'd like to speak to a trained support worker, you can contact the Beat Youthline on 0808 801 0711 or the Beat Studentline on 0808 801 0811.</p> <p>The Good Thinking team has also created a helpful article to help you manage your eating disorder at this difficult time.</p>	
<p>Message #10 Advice for young carers</p>	<p>If you're looking after (or helping to look after) someone in your family who can't care for themselves, the coronavirus outbreak might be bringing added stress. You might be worried that the person you care for could be at risk of getting the virus. You might feel frustrated by having to go to school or isolated if you're at home for the rest of the time. Or you might also find that you need to provide more emotional support to your family than usual.</p> <p>It's particularly important that you look after yourself and know where to go for help at this time. The Good Thinking team has created a helpful article to support young carers.</p>	<p>www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/young-carers/</p>
<p>Message #11 Advice for the children of essential workers and volunteers</p>	<p>If your mum, dad or carer is an essential worker (sometimes called a key worker) or volunteer, you should be really proud of them. Just look at how many people joined in with #ClapForOurCarers every Thursday to say thank you.</p> <p>Of course, you might be worried that they still have to work and that this might be making them feel stressed. Perhaps you're also struggling with the fact that you still have to go to school when some of your friends don't.</p>	<p>www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/children-essential-workers-and-volunteers/</p>

	The Good Thinking team has created a helpful article to support children of essential workers and volunteers.	
Message #12 Advice for children and young people who receive counselling and other support	<p>If you receive professional support for a mental health condition (such as anxiety or depression), ADHD, autism or another condition, it's likely that your appointments have been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. You might not be able to see your support worker or team face-to-face at this time, for example.</p> <p>In a helpful article, The Good Thinking team has considered some of the questions you might have.</p>	www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/children-and-young-people-who-receive-counselling-and-other-support/
Message #13 Advice for children & young people with ADHD	<p>Many children and young people are feeling anxious about coronavirus (COVID-19) – your normal routine has probably been disrupted and you might be missing your friends.</p> <p>Having ADHD means you might find it frustrating to be at home so much and you might get fidgety and restless. There are lots of things you can do to help you concentrate and burn off some energy. The Good Thinking team has created some top tips to help you.</p>	www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/children-and-young-people-adhd/
Message #14 Advice for foster carers	<p>If you have a young person in your care at home, you might have some specific concerns about coronavirus (COVID-19) and its impact on schooling, contact arrangements and other things.</p> <p>Good Thinking's social care expert answers some of questions you may have about discussing coronavirus with the child in your care.</p> <p>If you're feeling anxious, stressed, depressed or having trouble sleeping because of coronavirus, Good Thinking can recommend NHS-approved apps.</p>	www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/advice-foster-carers/

<p>Message #15 Bereavement support for children</p>	<p>The Childhood Bereavement Network has provided advice and guidance from a number of children and young people's bereavement organisations.</p> <p>These including supporting a bereaved child or a young person, how to say goodbye when attending a funeral might not possible and guidance for families with children and young people around changes to funerals.</p>	<p>www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/help-around-a-death/covid-19.aspx</p> <p><i>Suggested social media post:</i></p> <p>Bereavement as a result of #COVID19UK will be difficult for anybody, but perhaps more so for children who may be feeling heightened anxiety. Child Bereavement UK (@cbukhelp) have made a short video on how you can support a bereaved child:</p> <p>www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFm-SXeJwI8&feature=emb_logo</p>
<p>Message #16 Good Thinking workbook resources</p>	<p>Good Thinking has a range of mental wellbeing information sheets and workbooks for that you can work through in your own time. There are a number of modules for each workbook and activities for you to try out. Each module is free to download.</p> <p>Explore all the workbooks via www.good-thinking.uk/workbooks</p>	<p>www.good-thinking.uk/workbooks/</p>

If you have any comments or questions about this toolkit please get in touch with jessica.simpson2@nhs.net