

Mindfulness Monthly



Issue 03: February 2024

Welcome to the third edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly'. I hope your son/daughter has had a successful half-term. As with previous editions, in this month's 'Mindfulness Monthly' we will be looking at how we can support your children in school, and find out more about the mental health professionals that work with our students. **Please note that any mental health support given is triaged in school by the Inclusion and Pastoral Teams. This allows us to ensure that the support we offer is appropriate for the student, whilst also enabling us to look at the case load of each colleague. We cannot refer directly to any agencies without this meeting taking place first.**

Mental Health and Well-Being Support Experts

In our last edition we looked at the key members of staff in the Thamesmead Pastoral Team, from the tutors up to the Pastoral Managers, Heads of Year and Assistant Headteachers. This month we will look at the professional teams and organisations that work in the school and learn more about them. These are the colleagues who we often refer to should we need to offer students further mental health support.

We are very lucky to have the support of a number of different agencies and colleagues, so the next edition will also feature information about the teams.



East to West is a charitable organisation which offers support for a wide range of needs being faced by young people. Relational support workers work alongside young people to understand their situations, grow their confidence and help them thrive.

How long have you worked for East to West?

I've been with the charity since 2013, mostly based in secondary schools. Over the years I've also contributed original resources and bespoke courses to support the intervention work that we do.

How many days a week are you based at Thamesmead?

The beauty of working three days a week in one school means that students can find me when they struggle.

What are the best parts of your work?

I am passionate about East to West's values and ethos. I enjoy relationally supporting students the most, assisting them with tips and strategies to manage life's emotional challenges whether at school or home. It is very satisfying to see their behaviour change for the better, or witness self-esteem jump as they realise the progress they've made.

What do you do to support with your own mental health?

To keep good mental health my Christian faith underpins my life and I check-in with good friends and swim and cycle to keep fit. I try to be in touch with nature, walking in local green spaces or along the riverside. A real boost to my well-being is a sea fix any time of the year. I relax by keeping my hands busy making things or gardening. I love to cook, hosting old friends and new. As a creative I need to grab visual vitamins so I make a regular habit of going to London to visit the V&A museum, art exhibitions and watching contemporary dance performances.



Mrs Calder

We are also lucky to have Ms Tikkanen in the team, and she will feature in next month's edition.

Mental Health and Well-Being Support Experts continued...



The Mental Health Support Team offer a school-based service which supports the mental health of children and young people in schools across Surrey. They offer support and advice around the child or young person to enable them to identify any concerns, understand what has happened for that child or young person and support any developing mental health needs.



Siobhan Smith

How long have you been working in the mental health team?

I have worked with young people for 18 years now in a variety of settings including schools, hospitals and residential care homes and I have been worked in the MHST since they arrived in Surrey in 2020.

How many days a week are you based at Thamesmead?

I am not based in Thamesmead specifically, but it is one of the schools that I oversee and work with.

What are the best parts of your work?

I like the variety and love getting to know young people and watch them grow in confidence.

What do you do to support with your own mental health?

I try to do things that I enjoy including spending time with friends, family and my beloved dog. I also try to have some down time too, where I don't need to be around people. In training to be a CBT therapist I learnt a lot of helpful skills that I use myself too.

How long have you been working in the mental health team?

This is my third year of being on the team. Prior to working for the MHST I trained as a Mental Health Nurse and gained experience working in a range of settings, and before that I worked in a secondary school in the pastoral team and trained as an ELSA.

How many days a week are you based at Thamesmead?

I work at Thamesmead for half a day on Thursdays generally.

What are the best parts of your work?

I love working 1-to-1 with young people and seeing the progress that they make in sessions and beyond - our sessions are designed to work with young people to provide them with the tools and strategies that they can continue to use after the sessions. I also really enjoy delivering workshops and assemblies as we can reach large groups of young people.

What do you do to support with your own mental health?

I make sure to do activities every day to support my mental health – I love taking my dog for a walk, doing something active or reading a good book.



Sarah Mihailovic

How long have you been working in the mental health team?

This is my third year being in the mental health support team; I have previous experience working within education which involved delivering interventions to support social and emotional development. I have also experienced working within an early intervention service as an assistant psychologist supporting people through their first experiences of severe mental health difficulties.

How many days a week are you based at Thamesmead?

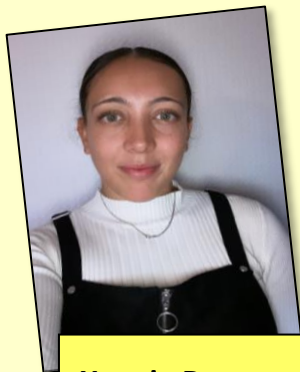
I'm based at Thamesmead on Mondays and Tuesdays

What are the best parts of your work?

My favourite part of the work is reflecting on the journey young people go through across our work together and them noticing the difference in themselves in terms of their mental health and being able to reach their goals.

What do you do to support with your own mental health?

To look after my own mental health I ensure that I have wellbeing check ins with my team; I always value having their support. I also make sure I take time to de-stress doing things I enjoy such as going out for food!



Yasmin Dummett

Mental Health and Well-Being Support Experts continued...



The Mental Health Support Team offer a school-based service which supports the mental health of children and young people in schools across Surrey. They offer support and advice around the child or young person to enable them to identify any concerns, understand what has happened for that child or young person and support any developing mental health needs.

How long have you been working in the mental health team?

I started working in the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in January 2023 but have been working with Children and Adolescents for nearly 8 years. In my previous role, I supported Children and Adolescents who presented in crisis, in order to prevent psychiatric hospital admissions, at a service called HOPE. I'd like to hope, within my new role as a Senior Clinician at Spelthorne MHST and as a qualified Registered Mental Health Nurse, I can continue to support the Young People achieve their goals and enable them to excel in life.

How many days are you based at Thamesmead?

I work at Thamesmead on Mondays and Tuesdays

What are the best parts of your work?

My favourite part of my job is building a therapeutic rapport with the young person I am supporting and supporting them during the highs and lows on their road to recovery.

What do you do to support with your own mental health?

In order to support my own mental health, I aim to go on holiday whenever possible and try as many different cuisines and learn about lots of different cultures. I also enjoy listening to music and watching a variety of different movies and series on TV.



Ellen Chitaukire



ELSA support is an individualised support programme designed to meet the emotional needs of children and young people. The principle is that children learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also addressed.

How long have you been conducting ELSA sessions with students?

I am now in my fourth year at Thamesmead School. I trained as an ELSA in 2022 and I became ELSA lead in September last year.

How many days are you based at Thamesmead?

I am based at Thamesmead everyday.

What are the best parts of your work?

I love conducting ELSA sessions. I enjoy meeting students and building up a positive and strong rapport. I enjoy watching them grow as individuals in confidence and help them work on strategies and issues that they may be facing at school or at home. I love being their go to person and seeing the progress they can make during and after their interventions.

What do you do to support with your own mental health?

To look after my own mental health, I enjoy spending time with my own family and love going to visit new places. I also enjoy reading and watching movies as well as cooking. I have regular well being check ins and am supported through the programme from an Educational Psychologist and I get to meet other ELSAs from others schools every half-term. This really helps my own mental health.



Mrs Barnes

We are also very lucky that Mrs Horgan has recently joined the ELSA team in school.

Well-Being Quote:

"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

Leonard Cohen