

Mindfulness Monthly

Issue 04: March 2024

Welcome to this month's 'Mindfulness Monthly'. In this edition we will learn about some more colleagues that work within the mental health team at Thamesmead, as well as sharing the feedback from the MHST's mental health audit that took place before Christmas.

Mental Health and Well-Being Support Experts

Following on from last month's look at the colleagues that come into school to provide mental health support for our students, we're going to learn about three more members of the team;



The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) 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 have worked in schools in Spelthorne since 2019. Before this I worked with young people in various services including schools and hospitals, starting in 2008. I have previously worked with young people who have been out of school for long periods of time, helping them to overcome the challenges of returning to education. I also have an interest in supporting those living with an underlying health condition such as chronic pain, Diabetes or Epilepsy.

How many days a week are you based at Thamesmead?

I mainly work on Tuesdays but will come in on other days if needed for a specific meeting, assembly or workshop.

What are the best parts of your work?

I love working with school staff to increase their knowledge of mental health and how we can support the young people to thrive in school. Navigating school life can be challenging and at times it feels impossible. It's nice to support school and young people to find solutions, making school life that little bit easier and more achievable.

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

I try to do things I enjoy, little and often; seeing friends, going for a walk and being by the sea – even on a windy day (although it's much better when the sun is shining!). I love to travel and try new foods, so a holiday to look forward to keeps me positive. I prioritise yoga once a week as a minimum amount of exercise and try to attend other aerobic classes as well. I use lists to keep a check on what I need to do so that things aren't just in my head.

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

I have been working in the mental health team for 5 months.

How many days a week are you based at Thamesmead?

I am not currently based at Thamesmead on a specific day, but as part of the MHST I work across the schools we cover and look forward to be part of activities such as parents evenings and assemblies when these events take place.

What are the best parts of your work?

The best parts of my work are in the sessions with young people, when they are able to start practicing what they are learning and it starts to help them!

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

To support my mental health, I try to get outside as much as possible, and always chat with friends or family when I know I need to share something.



Lizzie
Newman



Sophie
Edmonds

How long have you worked for East to West?

I started with East to West in September 2023 and have been studying Psychosocial Community Work for the past few years.

How many days a week are you based at Thamesmead?

I'm based at Thamesmead one day per week (Fridays).

What are the best parts of your work?

Being able to meet with different young people and to journey with them while working through different circumstances that they are experiencing.

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

To look after my own mental health I go for walks, swim and talk things through with friends. My faith also helps me with my mental health.



Kati Tikkanen

The MHST's Mental Health Provision Audit

In the first edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly' we shared a QR code in order for the Mental Health Support Team at Mindworks to gather feedback about the mental health support offered at Thamesmead. Students also spent time in registration completing a variation of this survey, and the responses were really interesting. We will use the information gathered to guide our thinking when it comes to reviewing the support we offer at Thamesmead, but we also thought it might be useful for you to see as well. As a result, please find the 'headlines' below;



Responses from the parental survey

- Seven parent/carer responses were received
- The areas that parents/carers felt were the main mental health concerns for their children were; social anxiety, peer pressure, anxiety regarding home learning, exam stress, performance concerns, bullying, and family concerns.
- When questioned about 'how confident you would feel to support your child with mental health concerns', one response said 1 out of 5 (1 representing 'not at all confident' and 5 being 'very confident'), two said 3 out of 5, and four said 4 out of 5.
- On the question 'what further support could be put in place?', the responses given were; better communication between staff, normalising coping strategies, proper support networks that students can access immediately, more support with exam stress for Year 11, mindfulness activities, access to a counsellor, and balance the tone of school communication about achievement and attendance.
- Based on feedback, parents/carers also expressed an interest in attending workshops in school regarding mental health.

Responses from the student survey

- 328 students completed the survey.
- The majority of students scored Thamesmead's support of their mental health as a 3 out of 5 (with 1 representing 'not very well' and 5 being 'very well'). Total scores out of the 328 were as follows; one out of five, 31 students; two out of five, 51; three out of five, 133; four out of five, 97 and five out of five, 16.
- Students felt Thamesmead could do the following better; more mental health assemblies, posting mental health techniques as posters around the school, staff to check-in more with students, setting up a designated calm space in school, making everyone more aware of mental health issues, and setting less home learning.
- Students felt that Thamesmead does the following well; having teachers and tutors to talk to, listening to what students have to say, mental health assemblies, having a dedicated mental health team, Personal Development lessons that help with mental health, supportive Heads of Year, having the SEND rooms for students to use.

In the summer term we plan to conduct another survey with parents/carers and students in order to gain further feedback.

In next month's edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly' we will share the results of a follow-up survey that was issued to students in February in order to celebrate 'Time To Talk Day'.

Positive Mental Health Top Tips: The Power of Sleep

Moving forward with Mindfulness Monthly, we would like to share top tips that can help support positive mental health. The first of these top tips may seem like the most obvious; the power of sleep.

Having a good night's sleep is incredibly important for everyone, particularly teenagers. A poor sleeping patterns badly affects performance in school – students feel tired and have low energy levels, and can be more distracted. A lack of sleep can be a real barrier to academic success and can affect your mental health, relationships and friendships, and can negatively affect your immune system. Many studies have found that a young person who sleeps well is more likely to; perform well at school; control their emotions better; feel and stay well; and maintain a healthy weight. Young people are also much more resilient when they are well rested.

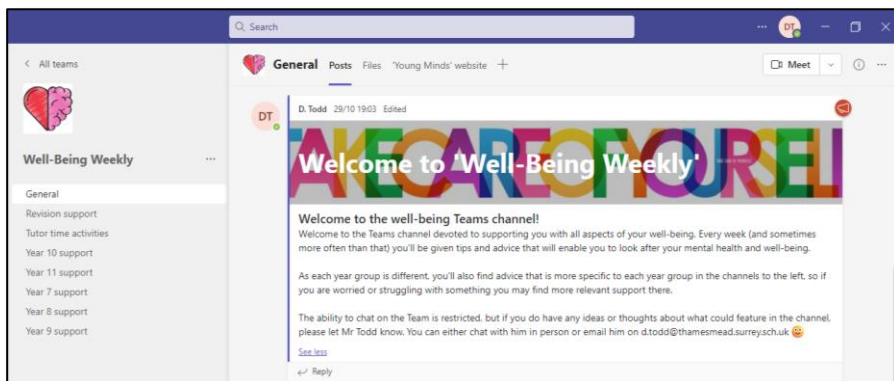
To develop good sleeping routines it is advisable for teenagers to; go to bed earlier and at the same time every night (having fixed going to bed and getting up times is helpful); take a bath or shower 30 minutes before going to bed; avoid screens (so no phones, tablets or TV) during the hour before bed; avoid sugar and caffeine before going to bed.



The 'Well-Being Weekly' Team for students

In the first edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly' we shared information about the mental health and well-being Team set up for students in school ('Well-Being Weekly'). As the months have gone on more information has been added to this. Please could we ask that you remind your children about the Team so that they can access the information should they need to. The channels features in the Team are explained below if they've not had a chance to look at it. Perhaps your children could also show it to you as well!

- **General Channel**
(featuring information for all students to access)
- **Revision Support**
(with guidance for GCSE students)
- **Tutor Time Activities**
(where all relevant tutor activities are saved)
- **Year Group Specific Channels**
(with information relevant to each year group)



Thamesmead Staff Profiles

As well as the profiles about the mental health teams that come into school, we thought it might be useful to find out more about Thamesmead staff and what they do to support their mental health;

What is your role at Thamesmead?

My role is SEND and Safeguarding Administrator. I have just moved into this role after 1½ years as a Communications Administrator. I am looking forward to my new role, gaining new knowledge and working closely with my two new teams.

How long have you worked at Thamesmead?

I have been at Thamesmead since September 2022. This is my first role in education.

Have you had other careers prior to working at Thamesmead?

I was working in broadcast media for 20 years. My last role was a Senior Scheduling Supervisor at Discovery Channel. I have always been interested in learning and development, and how to support others to fulfil their true potential. I became a health coach in 2015 and also a Mastery Method coach in 2021 and my journey as a coach, guide and mentor has been an amazing path to connect and serve others.

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

I use breathwork, exercise, journaling, nature walks, connecting to others, fasting, cold exposure and many somatic and coaching tools. Sometimes I do need to ask for help from others, so I have my therapist and coach friends when I need them.



Miss Rozman

What is your role at Thamesmead?

I am Student Personal Development and Mental Health Lead, and a teacher of Design Technology and Food, Preparation and Nutrition.

How long have you worked at Thamesmead?

This is my sixth year at Thamesmead (or 10 years if you include my time here as a student!).

Have you had other careers prior to working at Thamesmead?

I have only ever been a teacher (other than Saturday jobs when I was younger). I've worked in four schools (all based in Surrey) and have held a number of different roles in these schools, including Head of Years 7-13, Associate Assistant Headteacher, Assistant Director of Sixth Form and Head of Key Stage 3.

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

I am a huge film buff so enjoy having some escapism at the cinema. In addition I enjoy walking and reading (although I should do this much more than I do). I'm also a massive advocate of a nap! Spending time with friends and family is also very important to me.



Mr Todd

And finally...

If there is any content that you would like to see in future editions of 'Mindfulness Monthly', or any information that you think would be helpful, please do let us know. You are more than welcome to email Mr Todd (d.todd@thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk) with your thoughts.

Well-Being Quote:

"I've failed over and over and over again in my life... That's why I succeed"

Michael Jordan