

# Mindfulness Monthly

Issue 29: April 2026

Welcome to the April edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly'. In this edition we'll look at how we can use the natural transition Spring brings to help us make changes that can support our mental health and well-being. This month's articles explore different ways young people can manage pressure, from school work and friendships to their own inner expectations.

## Starting small: Why gentle change works best

April naturally feels like a fresh start. With the arrival of longer days, brighter mornings, and that first hint of warmth, many young people begin to feel a shift in their energy and motivation. This makes spring an ideal time for a gentle 'reset.' Instead of making big, overwhelming changes, families can focus on small steps that help young people feel more organised and emotionally grounded. This might include refreshing a study space, clearing out old notes, reorganising a school bag, or reintroducing routines that slipped during the darker months. A spring reset is also about mental space. Teens often carry worries, comparisons, and pressures without realising it. Talking openly about 'what we want to let go of this spring' can help them name and release some of that stress. Small steps create momentum, and when young people feel even slightly more organised or clear-headed, their confidence and sense of control naturally begin to lift.

## A fresh start: Creating a personal well-being plan for Spring

A new season is a great moment for young people to think intentionally about their well-being. A simple well-being plan for April can help them feel focused, organised, and emotionally supported. It might include a habit they want to start, something they'd like to stop, a calming strategy to use when overwhelmed, a place they feel good spending time, and something they are looking forward to. The goal isn't to create pressure - it's to give teens a sense of direction and autonomy. When families support these plans, it creates a shared language around wellbeing and encourages young people to take ownership of their mental health.

## Letting go of mental clutter

We often think about spring cleaning our homes, but April is also the perfect time to clear out the mental clutter that builds up over the school year. Teens may carry unhelpful habits such as negative self-talk, perfectionism, or fear of making mistakes. These habits can weigh on their well-being just as much as a messy bedroom weighs on their mood.

Encouraging a bit of 'mental decluttering' can be powerful. This might include writing down worries and throwing them away, creating a simple list of things they want to release, or identifying one habit they'd like to change. Parents and carers can model this too, sharing something they personally want to let go of this spring. When teens see adults embracing reflection and healthy change, they feel more confident in doing the same.

## Strengthening connections at home

By April, students (and parents and carers!) are often exhausted from the demands of the term. This is a good time to prioritise reconnection. Relationships are a major protective factor for young people's mental health, and small moments of togetherness strengthen those bonds. Families don't need big plans or expensive activities. Even simple shared moments (such as cooking together, going for a walk, playing a game, or watching a film...) can help teens feel supported and understood. Some young people struggle to initiate connection, so parents and carers taking the first step can be incredibly meaningful.

## The benefits of getting outside in Spring

Spending time outdoors is one of the simplest well-being boosts available, especially in Spring.

Fresh air, sunlight, and exposure to nature reduce stress levels, ease anxious feelings, and improve concentration. Even ten minutes outside can help reset a young person's mind after a busy day at school.



A good way to regulate yourself is to make the most of local green spaces (parks, fields, gardens, or even a quick walk around the block). Young people can try 'mindful noticing,' focusing on what they can hear, see, smell, and feel. This type of sensory grounding is particularly helpful for anxious or overwhelmed students. Spring offers a natural invitation to pause and reconnect with the world beyond screens and schedules.

Encouraging regular outdoor time (even in short bursts) can also support sleep, mood, and overall resilience. Parents and carers can help by suggesting outdoor breaks that feel low-pressure rather than purposeful, such as a gentle walk, sitting in the garden, or walking part of the journey home. When time outside becomes part of everyday life, it supports well-being quietly and consistently, without needing special equipment or planning.

## Why progress is often invisible

Spring is one of the most powerful metaphors for well-being: growth is slow, steady, and not always visible. For teenagers who often feel pressured to perform, change quickly, or 'be their best', Spring offers a gentle reminder that progress doesn't happen all at once. Nature shows us that even the smallest beginnings, such as a bud on a branch, or a blade of grass pushing through soil, are meaningful.

Families can use this time of year to practise outdoor mindfulness. This might mean pausing to listen to birdsong, noticing changes in the trees each week, or taking a walk and paying attention to colours, textures, and sounds. These simple practices encourage teens to be present rather than future-focused or distracted by comparison. When young people connect with nature, they also connect with their own capacity for slow, meaningful growth.

## Short breaks, big benefits

Life can feel full-on for young people as they have to juggle school demands, friendships, screens, expectations, etc.... Many teens rarely get genuine moments of stillness.

Encouraging 'small pauses' throughout the day can make a huge difference to their emotional balance. A pause might be a 30-second stretch between tasks, a quiet moment before getting out of the car, or simply placing a hand on the chest and taking a slow breath. These micro-breaks help the brain reset and reduce feelings of overwhelm. Families can make this easier by modelling it themselves: 'I'm just taking a little pause before we carry on'. When young people see adults normalising moments of calm, they learn that slowing down is not a weakness; it's a powerful tool for well-being.

## Supporting your teen through social stress

Friendships play a huge role in teenage life, and when things go wrong it can feel overwhelming. Whether it's falling out with friends, feeling left out, or navigating new social groups, young people often need gentle guidance. Parents and carers can support this by:

- Listening without taking sides
- Avoiding dismissive phrases like 'it's just drama'
- Encouraging problem-solving rather than just stepping in to fix everything
- Helping teens consider different perspectives
- Reminding them that friendships naturally change as they grow

Social challenges help teens develop communication skills, resilience, and a stronger sense of identity.



## When thinking feels non-stop

As days become lighter and routines shift, many young people experience a 'busy mind' - racing thoughts, constant worrying, or feeling mentally switched on all the time. This can happen even when life feels mostly positive. A busy mind isn't a sign something is wrong; it's often the brain trying to process lots of information at once.

Mindfulness can help by encouraging young people to slow their thinking without forcing it to stop. Simple strategies include noticing their breathing for a minute, naming five things they can see around them, or taking a short pause between activities. Parents and carers can support this by reassuring young people that it's okay to take mental breaks and by modelling this themselves. Learning how to manage a busy mind is an important life skill and helps prevent stress from building up quietly over time.

## Revision season self-care: Preparing without burning out

As exams approach, many students begin to feel anxious and overwhelmed. April is a good moment to establish healthy revision routines before stress escalates. One of the most effective approaches is to use short, focused study bursts with regular breaks - working with the brain rather than against it. Teens often believe that 'more is better,' but long, unbroken hours can lead to burnout and reduced memory retention. Parents and carers can support by helping create a calm revision environment, offering snacks and water, and encouraging a healthy balance between work, rest, social time, and sleep. Self-care should never feel like a reward for hard work as it's a key part of the learning process. Reminding young people to take breaks, move their bodies, and protect their sleep can make a huge difference to their well-being and academic confidence. We will be supporting this idea in school over the next half-term by producing a series of tutor time activities that will guide the students in how to revise effectively.

## When 'good enough' really is enough

As alluded to above, April is often a time when expectations increase - academically, socially, or emotionally. Young people can start comparing themselves to others or worrying that they're not 'where they should be'. It's important to remind them that progress is rarely neat or linear. Growth often happens through small steps, missteps, and moments of reflection.

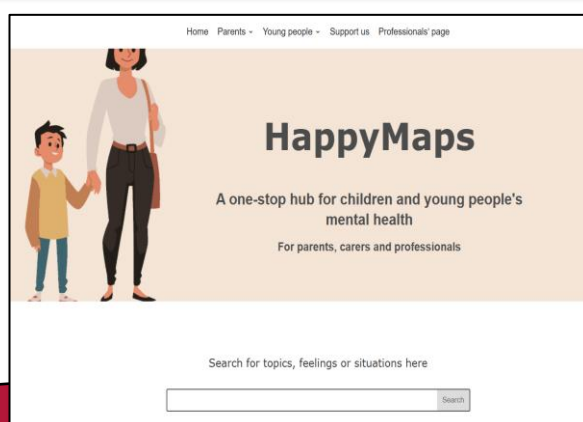
Encouraging a mindset of 'good enough' can protect young people's mental health. This might mean recognising effort rather than outcomes, celebrating improvements that others may not notice, or reframing mistakes as learning opportunities. When parents and carers talk openly about their own challenges and how they keep going despite setbacks, it sends a powerful message: success is not about being perfect - it's about keeping going with kindness towards yourself.

## Website recommendation of the month

### Happy Maps

(<https://www.happymaps.co.uk/>)

HappyMaps is an award-winning UK website created by both parents and mental-health professionals to help families find reliable, evidence-informed mental health support. It brings together high-quality resources on topics such as anxiety, sleep, low mood, eating issues, and general wellbeing. The site is designed to be simple, clear, and easy to navigate — something many parents find reassuring when they're already feeling worried or overwhelmed.



### Well-Being Quote:

**"Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny"**

**C.S. Lewis**

# Active April 2026

MONDAY



6 Do a body-scan meditation and really notice how your body feels

13 Make sleep a priority and go to bed in good time

20 Focus on 'eating a rainbow' of multi-coloured vegetables today

27 Find a fun exercise to do while waiting for the kettle to boil



TUESDAY



7 Get natural light early in the day. Dim the lights in the evening

14 Relax your body & mind with yoga, tai chi or meditation

21 Regularly pause to stretch and breathe during the day

28 Meet a friend outside for a walk and a chat

WEDNESDAY

1 Commit to being more active this month, starting today

8 Give your body a boost by laughing or making someone laugh

15 Get active by singing today (even if you think you can't sing!)

22 Enjoy moving to your favourite music. Really go for it

29 Become an activist for a cause you really believe in

THURSDAY

2 Spend as much time as possible outdoors today

9 Turn your homework or chores into a fun form of exercise

16 Go exploring around your local area and notice new things

23 Go out and do an errand for a loved one or neighbour

30 Make time to run, swim, dance, cycle or stretch today

FRIDAY

3 Listen to your body and be grateful for what it can do

10 Have a day with less screen time and more movement

17 Be active outside. Plant some seeds and encourage growth

24 Get active in nature. Feed the birds or go wildlife-spotting



SATURDAY

4 Eat healthy and natural food today and drink lots of water

11 Set yourself an exercise goal or sign up to an activity challenge

18 Try out a new exercise, activity or dance class

25 Have a 'no screens' night and take time to recharge yourself



SUNDAY

5 Turn a regular activity into a playful game today

12 Move as much as possible, even if you're stuck inside

19 Spend less time sitting today. Get up and move more often

26 Take an extra break in your day and walk outside for 15 minutes



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

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