

Mindfulness Monthly

Issue 31: June 2026

Welcome to the June edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly'. This time of year can bring a mix of pressure, tiredness and transition for young people. In this edition, we share simple ways parents and carers can offer support, reduce stress, and help young people finish the term feeling confident and balanced.

Preparing for end-of-year exams: Support without pressure

As end-of-year exams approach, many young people feel a mix of pressure, worry, and expectation. While a certain level of stress can help with focus, too much can quickly become overwhelming. One of the most helpful things parents and carers can do is shift the focus away from outcomes and towards preparation and well-being. Encourage your young person to use simple, structured revision techniques such as short study bursts with regular breaks, rather than long, exhausting sessions. Creating a quiet, organised space and maintaining consistent routines can also help reduce stress. Just as importantly, support them in taking breaks, getting enough sleep, and keeping active - these are not distractions from revision, but essential parts of it. Reassure your teen that feeling nervous is normal, and remind them that exams are just one part of their journey, not a measure of their overall worth. Feeling supported, rather than pressured, can make a significant difference to both their confidence and performance.

Helping young people manage exam stress

Exam stress doesn't just show up as worry - it can appear as irritability, tiredness, avoidance, or lack of motivation. Recognising these signs early helps parents respond with understanding rather than concern or frustration. Simple coping strategies can make a big difference. Encourage your teen to take regular breaks, talk through worries, keep a consistent sleep routine, and use calming strategies such as breathing or movement.

Just as importantly, create space for reassurance. Reminding your young person that they are valued beyond their results helps reduce the pressure they place on themselves.

If you would like further information about how to support your young person with the pressures of exams, you may wish to look at the leaflet shown opposite, which can be found on the Thamesmead School website using the link below. Hard copies are also available from Reception should you wish to have a physical copy.

<https://www.thamesmead.surrey.sch.uk/mental-health-support-information/>

Mental Health Support

Leaflet 7



Information to support your young person if they are getting stressed about exams or revision

Helping teens let go after exams

Once exams or assessments are finished, many young people find it difficult to switch off. They may replay questions in their mind, worry about results, or feel unsure what to do with the sudden change in routine. This is completely normal - the brain doesn't always relax immediately after a period of pressure. Parents and carers can support this transition by helping young people gently 'close the chapter'. This might involve encouraging activities that signal a shift, such as getting outside, seeing friends, or doing something creative or relaxing.

Remind your teen that once an exam is done, it's out of their control, and dwelling on it won't change the outcome. Learning to let go is an important life skill and helps protect emotional wellbeing during busy periods.

Staying connected during busy times

When life gets busier, especially during exam periods, staying connected can easily slip. Yet relationships remain one of the strongest protective factors for young people's mental health. Simple, low-pressure moments of connection can make a meaningful difference; sharing a meal, taking a short walk, or having a quick chat at the end of the day can all be very well received. These small interactions remind young people that support is steady and available, even when life feels stressful.

During busy times (particularly exams or major transitions), communication between parents and young people can naturally reduce. Teens may feel tired, distracted, or less inclined to talk, even when they still need reassurance. Keeping communication open doesn't require long conversations. Often, small, consistent check-ins are more effective - a brief chat, a shared activity, or simply letting your young person know you're there. Creating a low-pressure space where they feel listened to, rather than questioned, helps maintain trust and connection when demands are high.

Celebrating effort, not just achievement

As the year draws to a close, it's easy for conversations to focus on results, reports, or outcomes. While these are important, they don't always reflect the full picture of a young person's effort, growth, or resilience.

Taking time to recognise effort such as showing up each day, managing challenges, trying again after setbacks, etc... helps young people feel seen and valued. You might ask questions such as, 'what are you most proud of this year?' or 'what was something difficult that you kept going with?'. These conversations help shift the focus from performance to personal development, which supports long-term confidence and well-being.

Many young people develop resilience, independence, and emotional awareness throughout the year, even if these changes aren't always obvious.

As we approach the end of the academic year, encourage your teen to think about what they've learned about themselves, challenges they've overcome, moments they felt proud of, and skills they've developed. This kind of reflection helps young people recognise their own progress and builds a stronger sense of self-worth that isn't tied only to results.

Reflecting on the successes of the year make the return to school in September a little easier as well, particularly if the young people themselves recognise their achievements.

Supporting teens who say they're 'fine'

When a teenager says 'I'm fine', it's often a defence mechanism rather than a true reflection of how they feel. Behind those two words, they may be overwhelmed, afraid of being judged, or simply unable to articulate what's going on inside. Understanding what sits beneath this phrase can transform the way you connect with them;

- **An angry 'I'm fine'** means 'I'm one sentence away from exploding, and I don't trust that you can handle it'.
- **A sad 'I'm fine'** means 'I'm holding myself together with emotional tape, and if I say anything real, I'll fall apart'.
- **An anxious 'I'm fine'** means 'If I repeat it enough times, maybe the panic will disappear'.

Rather than pushing for answers or taking the brush-off personally, it helps to lower the emotional pressure;

- **Validate their feelings:** Try 'You don't seem fine, and that's okay. You don't have to talk now, but if 'fine' ever becomes 'not fine,' I can handle it'.
- **Create a safe space:** Avoid lecturing or jumping straight to solutions. Teens open up most to adults who stay calm and non-judgmental.
- **Offer different ways to talk:** Many young people find it easier to talk while walking, driving, or doing an activity together, where eye contact isn't so intense.

A quiet teen who insists they're 'fine' may still be processing worries internally. It doesn't always mean something is wrong, but it's worth staying gently observant. Support comes from being available, not interrogating. Keeping conversations open, noticing shifts in behaviour, and offering steady reassurance can make a real difference. When teens know they'll be heard without judgement, they're far more likely to speak when they're ready. If you'd like a deeper look into why teens hide behind these two words—and how to respond in a way that encourages trust rather than pressure—you may find the YouTube video '**This Is What Teens Hide Behind 'I'm Fine'**' helpful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfBZjcQpmp4>.

Finding balance when routines change

June often brings shifts in routine - exams, timetable changes, or a gradual winding down of the school year. While these changes can feel positive, they can also unsettle young people who rely on structure to feel secure. Parents and carers can help by maintaining a sense of gentle consistency around key areas such as sleep, meals, and downtime. Even when schedules change, having small predictable parts of the day helps young people feel more grounded. Reassure your teen that it's okay if things feel slightly 'out of sync' at times; change takes adjustment, and settling into new rhythms takes time.

Finishing the term with balance

As the academic year moves into its final stretch, many young people feel caught between wanting to keep going and feeling increasingly tired. Even those who have managed well throughout the year can find their energy dipping, motivation dropping, or everyday tasks feeling more demanding. At this stage, it's important to focus on sustaining effort rather than pushing harder. Encouraging a steady, balanced approach (such as combining focused work with regular breaks, maintaining simple routines, and setting realistic expectations) can help prevent burnout. Prioritising rest alongside work isn't a distraction from progress; it supports it. It also helps to remind young people that doing their best doesn't mean doing everything perfectly. It means continuing with consistency, persistence, and self-care. Taking time to recognise how far they've come this year (rather than focusing only on what remains) helps them finish the term feeling positive, capable, and supported.

A simple technique: The '5-4-3-2-1 Reset'

When young people feel overwhelmed, anxious, or mentally overloaded, it can be difficult for them to slow their thoughts down. One simple technique that can help in these moments is called the 5-4-3-2-1 reset. It helps bring attention back to the present moment by focusing on the senses. The technique works like this;

- **5 things you can see**
- **4 things you can feel** (for example, feet on the floor, clothes on your skin)
- **3 things you can hear**
- **2 things you can smell**
- **1 thing you can taste**

This activity gently shifts attention away from racing thoughts and back to what is happening right now. It doesn't stop difficult feelings instantly, but it can reduce their intensity and help young people feel more in control. Parents and carers can support this by practising it themselves and guiding their child through it when needed, using a calm, steady voice. Over time, young people can learn to use the technique independently, giving them a simple tool to manage stress wherever they are. Small strategies like this don't solve everything, but they can make difficult moments feel more manageable, which is an important step in supporting long-term mental well-being.

Website recommendation of the month

Anna Freud Centre – On My Mind:

(<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/>)

Developed by the Anna Freud Centre, this website is a trusted mental health resource created with and for young people. It offers clear, age-appropriate information about common emotional challenges, alongside practical coping strategies, videos, and real-life experiences. The site is particularly helpful for teenagers who want to understand their feelings better, while also providing guidance for parents on how to support their child's well-being in a calm and informed way.



Well-Being Quote:

"Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try"

John F. Kennedy

Joyful June 2026

MONDAY

1 Decide to look for what's good every day this month

8 Find joy in music: sing, play, dance, listen or share

15 Look for something to be thankful for where you least expect it

22 Watch something funny and enjoy how it feels to laugh

29 Share a friendly smile with people you see today

TUESDAY

2 Say positive things in your conversations with others

9 Ask a friend what made them happy recently

16 Speak to others in a warm and friendly way

23 Create a playlist of uplifting songs to listen to

30 Make a list of the joys in your life (and keep adding to it)

WEDNESDAY

3 Re-frame a worry and try to find a helpful way to think about it

10 Bring joy to others by doing something kind for them

17 Take time to notice things that you find beautiful

24 Bring to mind a favourite memory you feel grateful for

THURSDAY

4 Take a photo of something that brings you joy and share it

11 Eat good food that makes you happy and really savour it

18 Look for something good in a difficult situation

25 Show your appreciation to people who are helping others

FRIDAY

5 Think of 3 things you're grateful for and write them down

12 Write a gratitude letter to thank someone

19 Get outside and find the joy in being active

26 Make time to do something playful, just for the fun of it

SATURDAY

6 Get out into green space and feel the joy that nature brings

13 Take a light-hearted approach. Choose to see the funny side

20 Rediscover and enjoy a fun childhood activity

27 Be kind to you. Do something that brings you joy

SUNDAY

7 Do something healthy which makes you feel good

14 Share a happy memory with someone who means a lot to you

21 Send a positive note to a friend who needs encouragement

28 Notice how positive emotions are contagious between people

