

Mindfulness Monthly

Issue 35: October 2026

Welcome to the October edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly'. As we move further into the Autumn term, many young people are beginning to settle into routines, build new friendships, and navigate the challenges that naturally arise throughout the school year. This month's edition focuses on resilience, well-being, and practical strategies that can help young people manage pressure, develop confidence, and maintain positive mental health as the days grow shorter and the academic demands begin to increase.

Building resilience: Helping young people bounce back

Resilience is often described as the ability to 'bounce back' from difficulties, but it is important to remember that resilience does not mean never struggling. In fact, resilient people experience setbacks, disappointments, and challenges just like everyone else. The difference is that they gradually develop the skills and confidence to cope with these experiences and move forward. As young people progress through the school year, they may encounter challenges relating to friendships, academic expectations, extra-curricular commitments, or simply balancing the demands of everyday life. While it can be difficult to watch our children struggle, overcoming manageable challenges helps them develop problem-solving skills, confidence, and perseverance.

Parents and carers can play an important role by listening calmly, encouraging reflection, and reminding young people of challenges they have successfully overcome in the past. Questions such as 'What helped you last time?' or 'What's one small thing you could try next?' can help young people focus on solutions rather than problems. Over time, these experiences help build resilience that will support them throughout life.

Looking after well-being as the nights get darker

As Autumn progresses and the clocks move closer to changing, many people notice differences in their energy levels, mood, and motivation. Shorter days, reduced daylight, and colder weather can all affect how we feel. Young people are no exception, and some may find it harder to get out of bed, stay motivated, or maintain healthy routines. One of the best ways to support well-being during the Autumn months is to maximise exposure to natural daylight whenever possible. Spending time outdoors, particularly during the morning or early afternoon, can help regulate the body's internal clock and promote positive mental well-being. Physical activity can also play an important role in boosting mood and maintaining energy levels.

Parents and carers should also encourage regular social contact and enjoyable activities during the darker months. Simple things such as family walks, spending time with friends, or continuing hobbies and interests can provide important opportunities for connection and enjoyment. Looking after well-being in Autumn doesn't require dramatic changes; small, consistent habits often make the biggest difference.

Healthy technology habits

Technology is now an important part of young people's lives, helping them learn, communicate, and relax. However, finding a healthy balance between online and offline activities remains important for overall well-being. Rather than focusing only on limiting screen time, it can be helpful to think about the quality of time spent online. Some online activities may support well-being, learning, and social connection, while others may leave young people feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or tired. Encouraging young people to reflect on how different apps and activities make them feel can help them develop healthier habits. Families may also find it beneficial to establish simple routines around technology, particularly in the evenings. Creating screen-free time before bed, encouraging breaks from devices, and making time for hobbies, exercise, and face-to-face conversations can support healthier use of technology and improve both sleep and well-being.

Why mistakes help us grow

Many young people become frustrated when things do not go according to plan. Whether they receive a lower mark than expected, make a mistake in class, or struggle with something new, it can be easy for them to see mistakes as failures rather than opportunities to learn. A growth mindset encourages young people to view mistakes differently. Instead of focusing on what went wrong, they learn to ask questions such as 'What can I learn from this?' or 'What will I do differently next time?'. This approach helps build resilience and encourages persistence when challenges arise. We have spent time in registration periods this half-term looking at this.

Parents and carers can support this growth mindset by talking openly about their own mistakes and what they learned from them. Celebrating effort, perseverance, and progress rather than perfection helps young people understand that mistakes are a normal and valuable part of learning and personal growth.

When worries start to build up

Everyone experiences worries from time to time, and young people often have many different concerns competing for their attention. Schoolwork, friendships, family relationships, future plans, and social media can all contribute to feelings of stress or anxiety. Problems often feel much bigger when they stay inside our heads. Encouraging young people to talk about their worries can help them feel understood and supported. Sometimes simply saying a worry out loud can make it feel more manageable.

It can also be helpful to encourage young people to break large problems into smaller, more manageable steps. Focusing on what can be controlled, rather than everything that might happen, helps shift attention away from uncertainty and towards action. Small steps often feel much more achievable than trying to solve an entire problem at once. Remind your young people to remember that worries often feel most powerful when we face them alone. Sharing concerns with a trusted adult, friend, or teacher can provide reassurance, practical advice, or simply the comfort of knowing that someone understands. Encouraging open conversations about worries helps create a supportive environment where young people feel able to seek help when they need it.

The importance of asking for help

Many young people worry that asking for help means they have failed or should have coped on their own. In reality, recognising when support is needed is an important life skill and a sign of self-awareness rather than weakness. Everyone needs help occasionally, whether that is with schoolwork, friendships, emotional well-being, or a difficult situation. Knowing when to reach out can prevent small problems from becoming much larger concerns. Young people benefit from understanding that seeking support is both normal and positive.

Parents and carers can help by regularly discussing the people available to support them. This might include family members, friends, form tutors, teachers, pastoral staff, or other trusted adults. The more young people understand that support networks exist, the more likely they are to ask for help when they need it.

Seeking help early often prevents small concerns from becoming larger difficulties and teaches young people that looking after their well-being is just as important as looking after their physical health.

The power of taking small steps

When faced with a challenge, it is easy to focus on how big the problem feels. Whether it is a difficult homework assignment, preparing for assessments, improving friendships, or organising a busy schedule, large tasks can sometimes feel overwhelming. One helpful strategy is to focus on the smallest possible next step rather than the entire challenge. Instead of thinking about completing an entire project, a young person might focus on reading the first page, organising their notes, or spending ten minutes getting started. These small actions create momentum and often reduce feelings of overwhelm. Parents and carers can reinforce this idea by praising progress rather than perfection. Every small step moves a young person closer to their goal. Over time, these small actions build confidence and demonstrate that good progress is often achieved gradually.

Taking small steps can also help young people develop a sense of control during uncertain or stressful situations. When a challenge is broken down into manageable actions, progress becomes easier to see and celebrate. Over time, these small successes build momentum and confidence, helping young people realise that even the biggest goals are often achieved one step at a time.

Why rest is productive

In today's busy world, it can sometimes feel as though every moment should be used productively. Young people may feel pressure to study, socialise, participate in activities, and constantly stay busy. However, rest is not the opposite of productivity; it is an essential part of it.

When we rest, our brains process information, consolidate learning, and recover from the demands of everyday life. Sleep, relaxation, and downtime all support concentration, emotional well-being, and physical health. Without adequate rest, young people may find it more difficult to manage stress, solve problems, or maintain motivation.

Parents and carers can help by modelling healthy attitudes towards rest and encouraging balance between activity and recovery. Allowing time to relax, recharge, and simply enjoy free time is not a luxury; it is an important part of maintaining wellbeing and preventing burnout.

Technique of the month: 'Name It to Tame It'

When emotions feel overwhelming, it can be difficult for young people to understand exactly what they are feeling. One simple technique that can help is called 'Name It to Tame It'. When a difficult emotion arises, encourage young people to pause and identify it as specifically as possible. Instead of simply saying 'I feel bad', they might say: 'I feel disappointed', 'I feel nervous', 'I feel frustrated', or 'I feel embarrassed'.

Giving a name to an emotion can help make it feel less overwhelming and easier to manage. Once the feeling has been identified, it often becomes easier to decide what support or coping strategy might be helpful. This simple technique promotes emotional awareness and helps young people feel more in control during challenging moments.

The importance of having something to look forward to

As the weather becomes colder and the days grow shorter, it can sometimes feel as though there is less to be excited about. However, having positive events to look forward to, no matter how small, can have a significant impact on our well-being. Things to look forward to do not need to be expensive or extraordinary. It might be meeting a friend, enjoying a favourite hobby, watching a film with family, taking part in a school activity, or simply setting aside time to relax. These moments give us something positive to focus on and can help us stay motivated during busy or challenging periods.

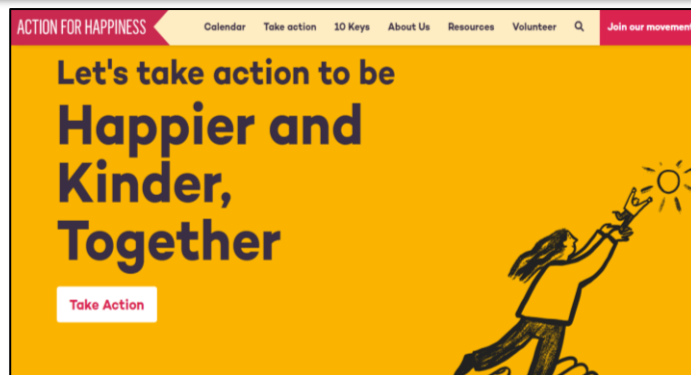
Parents and carers can support this by encouraging young people to plan enjoyable activities throughout the week. Looking ahead to positive experiences helps create balance, reminds us that difficult periods are temporary, and can boost mood and optimism when things feel demanding.

Website recommendation of the month

Action For Happiness

(<https://actionforhappiness.org>)

'Action for Happiness' is a charity dedicated to helping people create happier and more meaningful lives. Their website offers free resources, well-being calendars, practical activities, and evidence-based tips designed to support positive mental health. The monthly calendars are particularly popular and provide simple daily actions that encourage kindness, gratitude, connection, and self-care for both young people and adults.



Well-Being Quote:

"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together"

Vincent Van Gogh

Optimistic October 2026



MONDAY



5 Be a realistic optimist. See life as it is, but focus on what's good

TUESDAY



6 Remind yourself that things can change for the better

WEDNESDAY



7 Look for the good in people around you today

THURSDAY

1 Write down three things you can look forward to this month

FRIDAY

2 Find something to be optimistic about (even if it's a difficult time)

SATURDAY

3 Take a small step towards a goal that really matters to you

SUNDAY

4 Start your day with the most important thing on your to-do list

12 Look out for positive news and reasons to be cheerful today

13 Ask for help to overcome an obstacle you are facing

14 Do something constructive to improve a difficult situation

15 Thank yourself for achieving the things you often take for granted

16 Put down your to-do list and do something fun or uplifting

17 Take a small step towards a positive change you want to see in society

11 Avoid blaming yourself or others. Find a helpful way forward

10 Take time to reflect on what you have accomplished recently

18 Set hopeful but realistic goals for the days ahead

24 Write down three specific things that have gone well recently

23 Recognise that you have a choice about what to prioritise

22 Share a hopeful quote, picture or video with a friend or colleague

21 Let go of the expectations of others and focus on what matters to you

20 Find joy in tackling a task you've put off for some time

19 Identify one of your positive qualities that will be helpful in the future

25 You can't do everything! What are your three priorities right now?

31 Set a goal that brings a sense of purpose for the coming month

30 Identify three things that give you hope for the future

29 Plan a fun or exciting activity to look forward to

28 Ask yourself, will this still matter a year from now?

27 Be kind to yourself today. Remember, progress takes time

26 Find a new perspective on a problem you face



31 Set a goal that brings a sense of purpose for the coming month



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together