Mindfulness Monthly

Issue 36: November 2026

Welcome to the November edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly'. As we move further into the autumn term, many young people are balancing schoolwork, friendships, extra-curricular activities, and the changing seasons. This month's edition focuses on maintaining positive well-being, finding motivation during the darker months, and developing simple habits that can help young people stay resilient, connected, and emotionally healthy as the year progresses.

Understanding Teens workshop

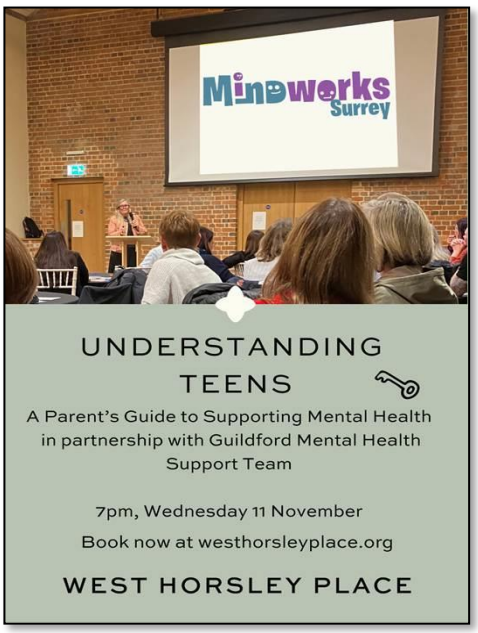
We have received some information about out upcoming event for parents and carers of secondary school students that we thought might be useful to share. 'Understanding Teens' is a free practical conference for parents and carers in partnership with Guildford Mental Health Support Team, which will take place at West Horsley Place on Wednesday 11th November at 6:30pm.

Understanding Teens: A Parent's Guide to Supporting Mental Health
Wednesday 11th November at 6:30pm, West Horsley Place, Epsom Road, KT24 6AN. This free evening conference for parents and carers of secondary school students, designed to help you better understand your teenager's social world and feel equipped to support them in building healthy, positive relationships. Delivered in partnership with Guildford Mental Health Support Team.

Book your free place: Understanding Teens | West Horsley Place

51 Parents attended a similar conference last November. After this event parents said:

- "The speaker was excellent, so knowledgeable and held the room."
- "I think the main presentation was exceptionally good and struck just the right balance. There was no feeling of rushed time she was extremely approachable."
- "Great speaker, lovely to have refreshments, shows care to parents mental health."



About us
West Horsley Place is a heritage charity with a vision to improve people's well-being through arts, heritage and nature. We're delivering this event as part of our Roots and Wings programme which works with schools to support students' well-being and improve attendance. The programme includes well-being courses, enrichment days and meeting space for 1-2-1s with students who are avoiding school.

Parent and carers survey about our support

We are always looking for ways to improve the support we provide for students and their families. As a result we would be grateful if parents and carers could take a few minutes to complete our short well-being survey. Your feedback will help us understand what support is most valuable, identify areas where we can improve, and shape future well-being initiatives for our school community.

To access the survey you can either scan the QR code and use the following link:
Mental Health and Well-Being Survey for Parents and Carers (November 2026) – Fill in form.
Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and experiences.

Keeping motivation going when energy levels dip

As the days become shorter and the weather becomes colder, many young people notice changes in their motivation. Activities that felt manageable in September can begin to feel more demanding, and some students may find themselves feeling less enthusiastic about schoolwork, hobbies, or everyday responsibilities.

It is important to remember that motivation naturally fluctuates. Most people do not feel motivated all the time, and waiting until motivation appears can often result in tasks being delayed even further. Instead, it can be helpful to focus on routines and habits. Small actions, such as spending ten minutes on a piece of homework or simply making a start on a task, often create momentum and make it easier to continue.

Parents and carers can support this by recognising effort rather than outcomes. Praising persistence, determination, and small achievements helps young people understand that success is often built through consistency rather than bursts of motivation. Some days will feel easier than others, and that is perfectly normal. What matters most is continuing to move forwards, one step at a time.

Technique of the Month: The 'Three Wins' exercise

The 'Three Wins' exercise is a simple but effective way of celebrating positives and encouraging us to reflect upon them. At the end of each day, encourage your young person to identify:

One thing they achieved, one thing they enjoyed and one thing they are grateful for

These 'wins' do not need to be major achievements. They might include completing homework, having a positive conversation, making someone smile, or enjoying a favourite meal. This simple exercise helps shift attention towards progress, positivity, and appreciation. Practised regularly, it can encourage reflection, boost confidence, and help young people notice the good things that happen each day, even during busy or challenging times.

Looking after your mental health during the darker months

As autumn turns to winter, reduced daylight can affect energy levels, sleep patterns, and mood. Many people find themselves feeling more tired or less motivated during this time of year, and young people are absolutely no different. One of the most effective ways to support well-being during the darker months is to maintain healthy routines. Spending time outside during daylight hours, staying physically active, maintaining regular sleep patterns, and continuing to engage in enjoyable activities can all have a positive impact on mental health.

It is also important to maintain social connections. Spending time with friends, family members, and trusted adults helps provide support and a sense of belonging, particularly when the weather makes staying indoors more appealing. Small, regular actions often make the biggest difference when it comes to protecting well-being throughout the winter months.

Why kindness matters

Kindness is sometimes thought of as something we do for other people, but it can also benefit our own well-being. Research has shown that acts of kindness can increase feelings of happiness, strengthen relationships, and help people feel more connected to those around them. Acts of kindness do not need to be big or dramatic. Holding a door open, helping a friend, offering encouragement, checking in on someone, or simply saying thank you can all make a positive difference. These small actions help create a more supportive environment both at home and in school. Random acts of kindness (small gestures for others when they are completely unexpected) can be particularly impactful – a simple note or some kind words can go a long way.

It is equally important to remember self-kindness. Many young people speak to themselves far more harshly than they would ever speak to a friend. Encouraging young people to treat themselves with patience and understanding can help build resilience and improve emotional well-being. Kindness towards ourselves and others helps create stronger, healthier relationships and supports positive mental health.

Kindness can also help strengthen school communities and friendships. Small gestures often have a much bigger impact than we realise, whether that is including someone in a conversation, offering encouragement, or simply taking time to listen. These acts help create a culture of respect, empathy, and support for everyone involved.

Celebrating progress

As the autumn term progresses, it can be easy for young people to focus on what they have not yet achieved. However, taking time to recognise progress can be just as important as setting goals.

Progress does not always come in the form of grades or awards. It can involve building confidence, developing friendships, improving organisation, or simply persevering when things feel difficult. Encouraging young people to reflect on how far they have come helps build self-belief and reminds them that growth often happens gradually, one small step at a time.

Small moments of connection matter

Family life can be busy, and meaningful conversations do not always happen during long planned discussions. Often, the most important connections are built through small, everyday moments that happen naturally. Sharing a meal, walking the dog, driving to an activity, or simply spending time together can all provide opportunities for conversation and connection. These regular interactions help young people feel valued, supported, and understood.

Parents and carers do not need to have all the answers. Sometimes, being available to listen is enough. Even brief moments of connection can strengthen relationships and support emotional well-being, showing young people that support is always available when they need it.

These moments do not need to involve lengthy conversations or elaborate plans. Sometimes, simply showing interest in a young person's day or spending a few minutes together without distractions can reinforce feelings of security and belonging. Consistent connection helps create strong foundations for positive mental health and well-being.

The power of gratitude

When life feels busy or stressful, it can be easy to focus on what is going wrong or what still needs to be done. Gratitude encourages us to pause and notice the positive aspects of our lives, helping us develop a more balanced perspective.

Gratitude does not mean pretending that difficulties do not exist. Instead, it encourages us to recognise that alongside challenges, there are often things we appreciate and value. These might be as simple as enjoying a conversation with a friend, receiving help from a teacher, spending time with family, or appreciating a favourite hobby.

One way families can practise gratitude is by sharing one positive moment from each day. This could happen at the dinner table, during a car journey, or before going to bed. Over time, this simple habit can encourage young people to notice positive experiences more readily and develop a greater sense of optimism and well-being.

Research suggests that practising gratitude regularly can improve well-being, strengthen relationships, and help people cope more effectively with stress. By encouraging young people to recognise positive moments, however small, we help them develop a more balanced perspective and a greater appreciation for the things that bring them joy and support.

The benefits of spending time in nature

As the weather becomes cooler and the days become shorter, it can be tempting to spend more time indoors. However, spending time in nature can have a positive impact on both physical and mental well-being, even during the autumn months. Research suggests that being outdoors can help reduce stress, improve mood, and increase feelings of calm. Whether it is a family walk, spending time in a local park, or simply taking a short stroll around the neighbourhood, even small amounts of time in nature can be beneficial. Autumn also offers plenty of opportunities to notice seasonal changes, from colourful leaves to crisp mornings.

Parents and carers can encourage young people to take a break from screens and spend time outdoors regularly. These moments do not need to be long or complicated to make a difference. Sometimes, a short walk and a change of scenery can help young people return feeling refreshed, focused, and ready for the rest of the day.

Learning to be comfortable with imperfection

Many young people place high expectations on themselves. They may feel they need to achieve top grades, perform well in every activity, or always make the right decisions. While having goals can be motivating, constantly striving for perfection can sometimes lead to stress, frustration, and self-criticism. We often see this with social media, where young people might present themselves as the best version of themselves that they can (often not based on reality or, in the case of images, with the use of filters on images), leading to over-comparison from others.

It can be helpful to remind young people that nobody gets everything right all of the time. Mistakes, setbacks, and difficult days are all part of learning and growing. Developing confidence often comes from understanding that it is okay to be imperfect and that progress matters more than perfection.

Parents and carers can support this by focusing on effort, perseverance, and personal growth rather than outcomes alone. Encouraging young people to view challenges as opportunities to learn helps build resilience and self-belief. Sometimes, being willing to try and make mistakes is far more important than getting everything right first time.

The importance of having a hobby

Having interests outside of school can play an important role in supporting a young person's well-being. Hobbies provide opportunities to relax, develop skills, meet new people, and spend time doing something enjoyable.

Whether it is sport, music, art, reading, gaming, volunteering, or learning a new skill, hobbies can help create balance during busy periods. They also give young people a sense of achievement that is separate from school and academic performance.

Encouraging young people to make time for activities they enjoy can help reduce stress, boost confidence, and provide opportunities for personal growth. Hobbies remind us that well-being is not just about managing challenges; it is also about making time for the things that bring us joy.

Taking part in clubs and activities can also help young people build confidence, make new friendships, and develop a stronger sense of belonging within the school community.

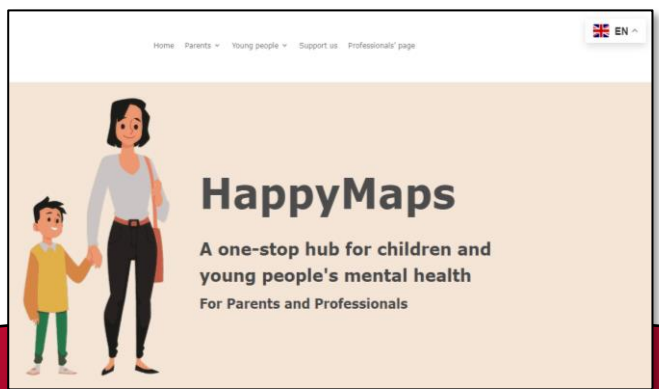
Did you know…?

Research suggests that regularly expressing gratitude can improve mood, strengthen relationships, and help us cope more effectively with stress. A simple ‘thank you’ or reflecting on something positive from your day can make a bigger difference than you might think.

Website recommendation of the month

HappyMaps
(https://happymaps.co.uk/)

HappyMaps is an award-winning website created by healthcare professionals and parents to help families access trusted mental health and well-being support. The site brings together high-quality resources on topics such as anxiety, sleep, friendships, behaviour, and emotional well-being, making it easy for parents to find reliable information and guidance in one place.



Well-Being Quote:

“Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realise they were big things”

Robert Brault

New Ways November 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Make a list of new things you want to do this month	2 Respond to a difficult situation in a different way	3 Get outside and observe the changes in nature around you	4 Sign up to join a new course, activity or online community	5 Change your normal routine today and notice how you feel	6 Try out a new way of being physically active	7 Be creative. Cook, draw, write, paint, make or inspire
8 Plan a new activity or idea you want to try out this week	9 When you feel you can't do something, add the word "yet"	10 Be curious. Learn about a new topic or an inspiring idea	11 Choose a different route and see what you notice on the way	12 Find out something new about someone you care about	13 Do something playful outdoors - walk, run, explore, relax	14 Find a new way to help or support a cause you care about
15 Build on new ideas by thinking "Yes, and what if... "	16 Look at life through someone else's eyes and see their perspective	17 Try a new way to practice self-care and be kind to yourself	18 Connect with someone from a different generation	19 Broaden your perspective: read a different paper, magazine or site	20 Make a meal using a recipe or ingredient you've not tried before	21 Learn a new skill from a friend or share one of yours with them
22 Find a new way to tell someone you appreciate them	23 Set aside a regular time to pursue an activity you love	24 Share with a friend something helpful you learned recently	25 Use one of your strengths in a new or creative way	26 Try out a different radio station or new TV show	27 Join a friend doing their hobby and find out why they love it	28 Discover your artistic side. Design a friendly greeting card
29 Enjoy new music today. Play, sing, dance or listen	30 Look for new reasons to be hopeful, even in tough times					













ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together