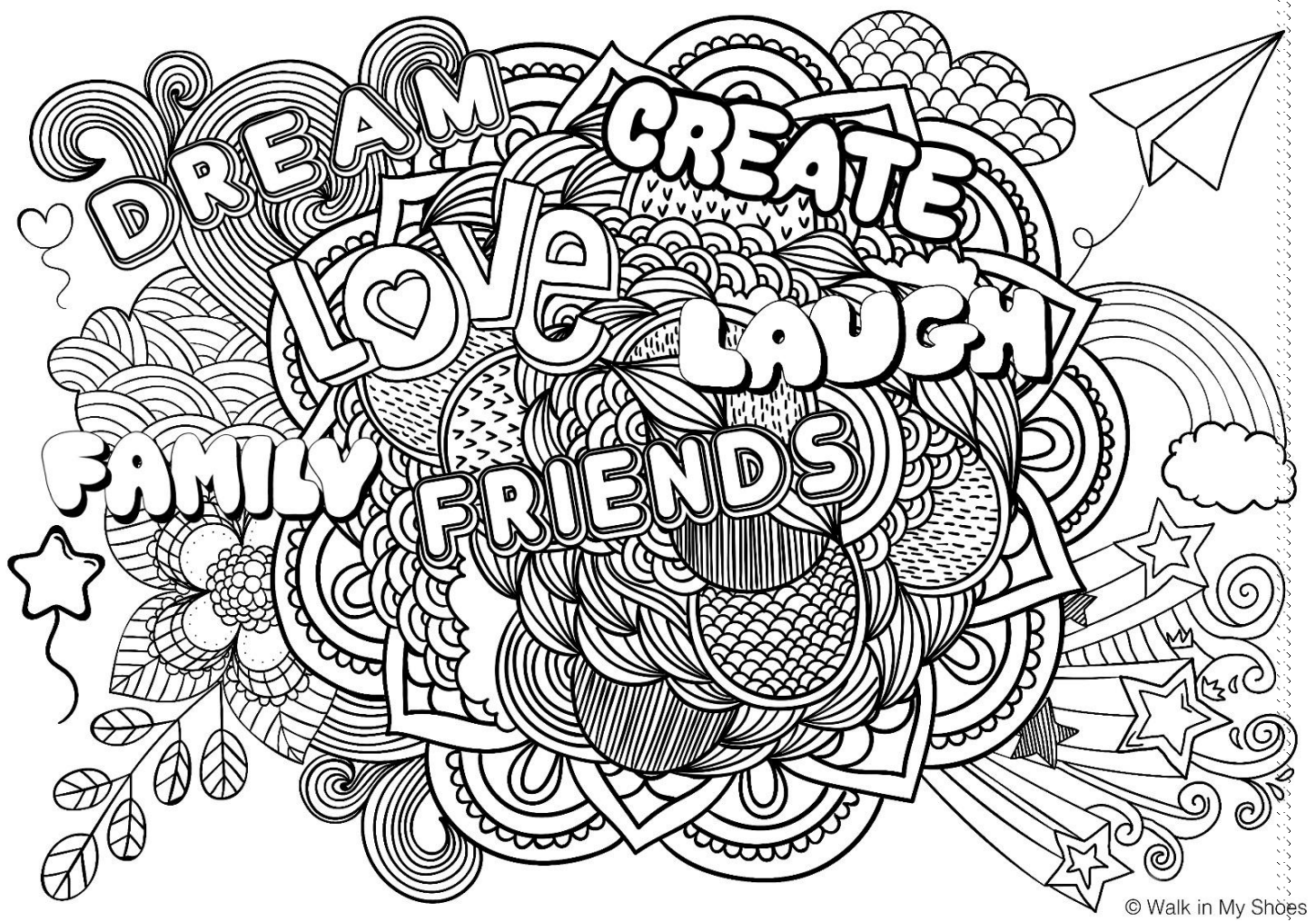


Thornhill College

Pocket guide to mental health



My theme for 2019 is:

Activities that are good
for my mental health:

✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	
✓	

My strengths:

👍	
👍	
👍	
👍	
👍	

I would like to improve:

↑	
↑	
↑	
↑	
↑	

Ways to look after your mental health



Talk about your
feelings



Take a break



Do something
you're good at



Care for others



Ask for help



Keep active



Keep in touch



Accept who
you are



Eat well

Mindful Meditation

Begin by finding a comfortable position, but one in which you will not fall asleep. Sitting on the floor with your legs crossed is a good position to try, or on your chair with your feet flat on the floor, hands resting in your lap, back straight.

Close your eyes or focus on one spot in the room.

Roll your shoulders slowly forward and then slowly back.

Lean your head from side to side, lowering your left ear toward your left shoulder, and then your right ear toward your right shoulder.

Relax your muscles.

Your body will continue to relax as you meditate.

Observe your breathing. Notice how your breath flows in and out. Make no effort to change your breathing in any way – simply notice how your body breathes. Your body knows how much air it needs.

Sit quietly, seeing in your mind's eye your breath flowing gently in and out of your body.

When your attention wanders, as it will, just focus back again on your breathing.

Notice any stray thoughts, but don't dwell on them. Simply let the thoughts pass.

See how your breath continues to flow ... deeply ... calmly.

Notice the stages of a complete breath ... from the in breath ... to the pause that follows ... the exhale ... and the pause before taking another breath ...

See the slight breaks between each breath.

Feel the air entering through your nose ... Picture the breath flowing through the cavities in your sinuses and then down to your lungs ...

As thoughts intrude, allow them to pass, and return your attention to your breathing.

(Pause) See the air inside your body after you inhale, filling your body gently.

Notice how the space inside your lungs becomes smaller after you exhale and the air leaves your body.

Feel your chest and stomach gently rise and fall with each breath.

Now as you inhale, count silently ... one

As you exhale, count ... one

Wait for the next breath, and count again ... one

Exhale ... one

Inhale ... one

Exhale ... one

Continue to count each inhalation and exhalation as 'one'.

(Pause)

Notice now how your body feels.

See how calm and gentle your breathing is, and how relaxed your body feels.

Now it is time to gently reawaken your body and mind.

Keeping your eyes closed, notice the sounds around you. Feel the floor beneath you. Feel your clothes against your body.

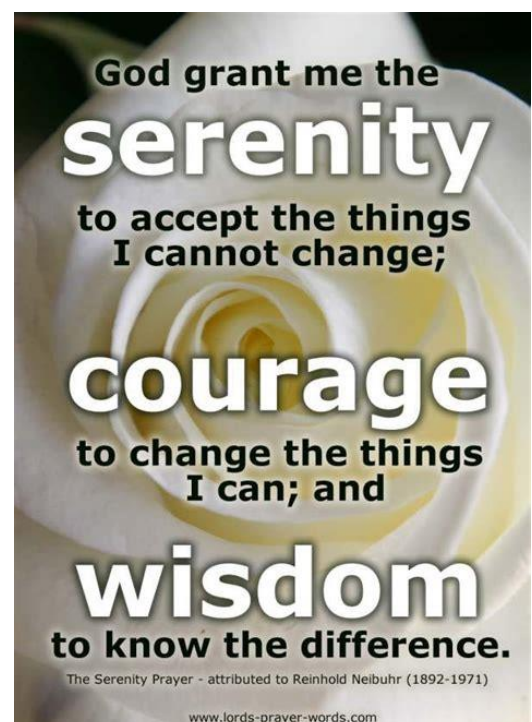
Wiggle your fingers and toes.

Shrug your shoulders.

Open your eyes, and remain sitting for a few moments longer.

Straighten out your legs, and stretch your arms and legs gently.

Sit for a few moments more, enjoying how relaxed you feel, and experiencing your body reawakening and your mind returning to its usual level of alertness.



I CAN'T CHOOSE

I CAN CHOOSE



WHAT CAN/CAN'T YOU CHOOSE? (YOUNGER)

what others think about me	to be kind to myself	to try my best
to say yes	to ask for help	what matters to others
to change my past	to go for it	to take a risk
who loves me	not to feel pain	who wins the lottery
my friends	to smile	to fix everyone's problems
to love myself	what other people feel	to believe in myself
to be true to myself	to say positive things	how honest others are
to ask questions	how someone treats me	to say sorry
how good or bad other people are	to laugh	how I spend my time
to be helpful	who trusts me	to change my future
to put myself first	how I react to feedback	to be braver
to be afraid	to give my all	when I need a rest
when it rains	to worry	who cares about me
to be with friends	to undo mistakes	what other people say
to say when I was wrong	who lives or dies	to start again

When you're depressed you tend to be less active than normal and you might stop doing things that lift your spirits. This can be a vicious circle and make you feel even worse.

It can help hugely to do things which you **get pleasure from**, or things which give you a **sense of achievement**. Depressive symptoms can also be helped by doing some exercise, which can help boost your self-esteem, or by doing something **sociable**. These are what we call the 'Fabulous Four'.

Step 1 – Think about activities you could do which fit into the following 'Fabulous Four' groups:

- Pleasurable activities
- Activities which give you a sense of achievement
- Activities which make you physically active
- Social activities

It's important to do a balance of activities from each group. So, for example, each day try scheduling in an activity from a different group to the day before.

Of course, each activity might fit into more than one group – a coffee and cake with friends can be both pleasurable and sociable.

Step 2 – Schedule your activities:

Print or copy the diary below, and then fill in what you plan to do for the next week.

Mark on the diary whether you managed to do the activity or not and how you felt about it, or why you didn't manage to do it.

Step 3 – Practice makes perfect:

It might take practice to find the combination that works for you. Just remember to try to keep a good balance of activities from across the Fabulous Four, and keep it realistic – don't over-stretch yourself.

Example diary:

	Pleasurable activity	Activity with a sense of achievement	Physical activity	Social activity
MONDAY		Sorted out utility bills		Meet friends for a coffee
TUESDAY	Walking the dog		Walking the dog (same)	
WEDNESDAY	Walking the dog		Walking the dog (again!)	Went to the local Residents meeting
THURSDAY	Coffee and cake with friends			Meet friends for a coffee (same!)
FRIDAY		Fixed security lights	Walking the dog (couldn't say it was pleasurable – it rained)	
SATURDAY			Walking the dog (rained, again...)	Meet friends for a coffee
SUNDAY	Coffee and cake with friends			Went to church... and coffee...

Fill out the diary below, planning events for yourself for next week 😊

Blank diary:

	Pleasurable activity	Activity with a sense of achievement	Physical activity	Social activity
MONDAY				
TUESDAY				
WEDNESDAY				
THURSDAY				
FRIDAY				
SATURDAY				
SUNDAY				

WHY WE GET ANXIOUS

Millions of years ago, we needed anxiety to keep us safe from danger. These days our bodies still try to protect us. We worry about different things that aren't always dangerous but our bodies still react in the same way. This is why you can feel anxious about things that aren't actually harmful.



Because anxiety is a normal reaction, it's sometimes hard to tell when it's becoming a problem for you. It can start as a simple worry but grow into a panic attack. If you have a lot on your mind then sometimes quite a small thing can bring on anxiety. Remember, anxiety is normal. And there are lots of ways to manage your anxiety.

5 things that can make us anxious:

- exams
- speaking in public
- going to school
- staying at a friend's house
- trying new things.



WORRIER POSE

Gemma Correll

WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR ANXIETY

Get Some Sleep to Reduce Anxiety. A 10-20 minute power nap gives you the best benefits, such as mental alertness and feeling rejuvenated.

Being Thankful. Higher levels of gratitude reduce anxiety.

Jam Out with Music. Music can decrease pain in high anxiety individuals.

Question Yourself. Write down what you are anxious about and question it heavily. Is this worry realistic?

Get into A Rhythm. Engage fully in an activity that requires you to complete a task efficiently using sequential actions.

Hydrate. When the body is dehydrated, it starts to function improperly.

Organize to Reduce Anxiety. If your surroundings are clean, peaceful, and enjoyable you will be more likely to relax.

Get Moving. Exercise releases endorphins and makes you feel happy.

GET STRESS UNDER CONTROL

Lots of different things can cause stress. And it can feel difficult or like you can't cope.

But you can manage stress. And our tips can help you get it under control.

Sometimes stress can be helpful. It can motivate you to get things done. Or help you see that things need to change.

Things might not change straight away - you might need to try a few different things. But it will get easier. If you need some help, you can always [talk to one of our counsellors](#).

5 things that you can try

1. writing or drawing how you feel
2. exercise and sports
3. planning what you do
4. having healthy food and drink
5. take deep breaths.

WRITE, TYPE OR DRAW

When you're stressed, you can sometimes be carrying around loads of pressure and negative thoughts. Writing your thoughts down can help you to let out these feelings and think differently.

Writing a diary, making notes or [drawing](#) can also help you work out what's making you stressed. You can then try to avoid these things in the future and know how to get support.

PLANNING AND PREPARING

Sometimes problems can seem too big to deal with so we end up just worrying, without feeling able to solve anything. This can make the problem seem scarier.

It helps to break big problems down into smaller ones. It's then easier to think of ways to solve them.

You could try:

1. **Organising your day.** If you have to revise or do chores at home, find a time when you're not distracted by TV, your phone, family or friends. Do tasks one at a time. Do something big, followed by a break and then something small. Breaks are important for rest and help you return to things with a fresh mind.

2. **Planning things.** If you have lots of homework or a big project for school, don't rush to do it all at once. Instead, give yourself time to do bits of work over a couple of days so you have space to think and focus.

3. **Asking for support**

Sometimes other people can help us. Think about what you need support with and who might be able to help. It could be a friend, someone in your family, a teacher or other adult you trust. Find out more about [asking an adult for help](#).

BEING HEALTHY

Eating the right food and keeping fit builds your strength and helps you cope with stress.

Eating sugary foods like chocolate and drinking coffee can make you feel better for a short while. But too much can make you feel tired and even more anxious. Replacing fizzy drinks and sweets with fruit and water may give you more energy.

GETTING HELP WITH DRUGS, SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

Some people might try to cope with stress by drinking [alcohol](#), [smoking](#) or taking [drugs](#). But these things can be dangerous. They can make you lose control of your body, forget things and stop you from making proper decisions.

You might also end up becoming addicted. Try [talking to an adult to you trust](#) or to our [counsellors](#) for help with other ways of coping.

RELAXING

Relaxation means doing something safe and enjoyable which helps you feel calm. And relaxing activities can help you feel more focussed and able to deal with stress and worries.

There are lots of ways to relax. You could try:

- meditation or mindfulness
- muscle relaxation
- breathing exercises
- listening to your favourite music
- going for a walk or spending time outside
- having a bath.

Try setting aside some time to relax every day. This could be in your break at school, when you get home or just before bed.

RUN, WALK, SKIP, SWIM OR SKATE

Getting active can help manage stress. Doing something physical releases chemical endorphins into our bodies. And these chemicals can help us cope with difficult feelings.

You don't have to be really sporty or competitive. Exercise can include walking, swimming, yoga, skipping, skateboarding and dancing. Find what works for you. Try a few things to see what you enjoy.

Being active has loads of benefits like:

- making you feel less stressed
- helping your mind and body feel healthy
- keeping you focussed
- calming you down.

If you're stressed, it might seem like you don't have time or energy to be active. But even a little bit of exercise can make a big difference.



A Creed to Live By

Don't undermine your worth by comparing

Yourself with others,

It is because we are different that each

Of us is special.

Don't set your goals by what other people

Deem important,

Only you know what is best for you.

Don't take for granted the things closest

To your heart

Cling to that as you would your life, for without

Them life is meaningless.

Don't let your life slip through your fingers by living

In the past or the future.

By living your life one day at a time, you live all the

Days of your life.

Don't give up when you still have something to give

Nothing is really over...until the moment

You stop trying.

Don't be afraid to admit that you are less

Than perfect,

It is the fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don't be afraid to encounter risks,

It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.

Don't shut love out of your life by saying it's

Impossible to find.

The quickest way to receive love is to give love.

The fastest way to lose love is to hold on too tightly,

And the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don't dismiss your Dreams. To be without

Dreams is to be without hope.

To be without hope is to be without purpose.

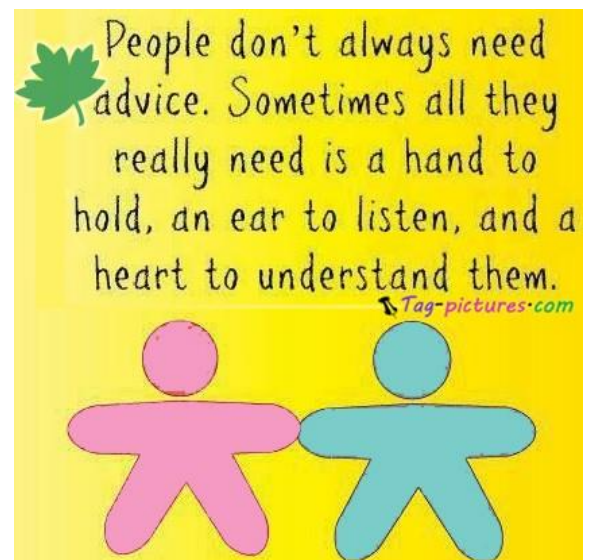
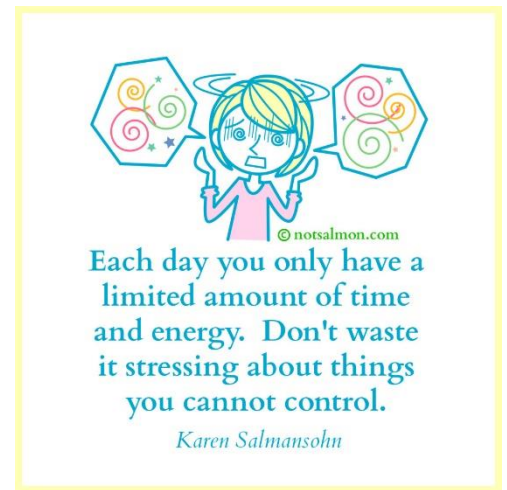
Don't run through life so fast that you forget

Where you've been,

But also know where you're going.

Life is not a race, but a journey to be savored

Every step of the way.

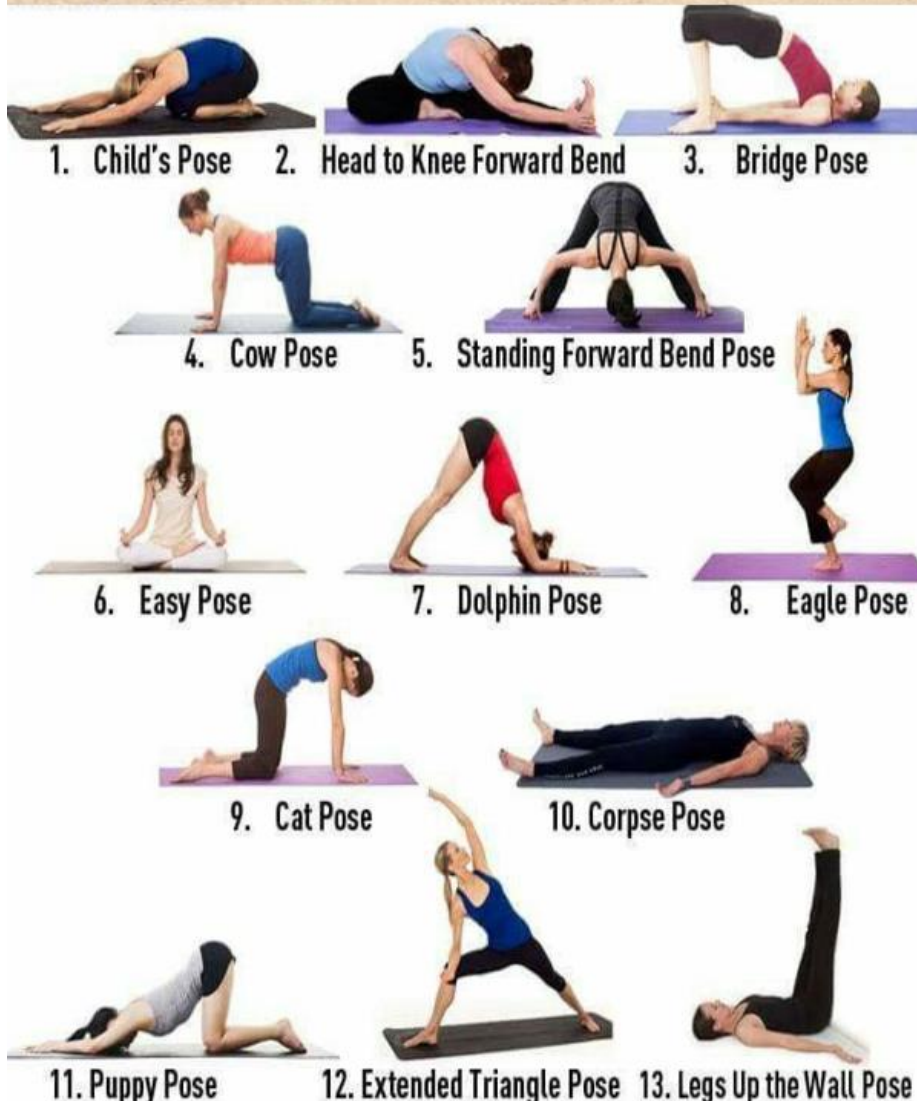


THE BENEFITS OF YOGA

There are so many benefits of doing yoga. Yoga can help you:

- improve and maintain the health of muscles, joints and organs
- keep your mind healthy
- get a better night's sleep
- improve performance and prevent injuries in sports
- speed recovery from training
- prevent conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and auto-immune disorders
- slow down the negative effects of an office job
- and increase your sense of happiness and well being.

YOGA POSES FOR STRESS RELIEF



Events during Mental Health Week

- Treats and Chats during form lesson (Bake a cake)

Pick one, two or a few girls from your form class to bake treats. During form lesson sit and have a chat to your friends about the things that make you happy 😊

- Posters on classroom doors..... what makes me happy/ random acts of kindness?

Each form class will fill out an A4 page on the things that make them happy or how to make others happy. This page can be displayed on the front of every classroom door..... spread the love <3

- The Hub- a drop in centre to have a chat (Monday and Tuesday lunch in Careers room)

The Wellness Ambassadors will be available at lunchtime on Mondays and Tuesdays in the Careers room. Why not come and have a chat with them... They can offer advice on a range of issues that you may have..... remember a problem shared is a problem halved!

- Go for a walk at break or lunch time

It's always good to get some exercise so why not take yourself out into the fresh air at break time or lunch time. "Darkness into light" event will take place in May- check it out online.

- Wellness Wednesday (designated rooms throughout school at lunch time)

There will be various classrooms throughout the school where you can sit during lunch time. You can listen to music, play games and make some creative crafts. What a great way to relax! This will continue on the first Wednesday of each month 😊

- Worry boxes

If you have something bothering you why not write down your worries on a slip of paper and drop it into the box. These boxes can be found at various places throughout the school eg. Locker areas and library

Who can I ask for help?

Form
Teacher

Year Head

Who can
I tell?

Parents

Ms Barr
Child
Protection
Teacher

Tell a
friend

School Counsellor
(box outside
lecture theatre)

Wellness
Ambassadors

Remember you are not
alone.... It is always good
to talk about your
problems!

Talking to
someone is the
first step
towards help...

Self care apps and numbers

MindShift

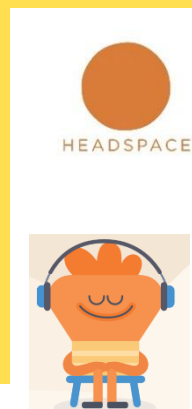
MindShift is a free app designed to help teens and young adults cope with anxiety. It can help you change how you think about anxiety. Rather than trying to avoid anxiety, you can make an important shift and face it. Lists symptoms of anxiety. Offers strategies to manage worry, panic, conflict, ordinary anxiety, and three specialised categories of anxiety: test anxiety, social anxiety, and perfectionism. Also contains relaxation exercises.

Mood Tracker

A website/app which lets you track moods and sleep patterns helping to manage depression, anxiety or bipolar disorder.

Headspace

Headspace is the simple way to reframe stress. Relax with guided meditations and mindfulness techniques that bring calm, wellness and balance to your life in just a few minutes a day. Plus, we have meditations on sleep to help you create the ideal conditions for a good night's rest.



We now have Headspace downloaded onto all of our school iPads. Why not try it out?

- ChildLine on 0800 1111 - offers help to young people in trouble or danger
- Samaritans 0845 790 9090
- Lifeline 0808 808 8000
- Young Minds on 0800 018 2138 - a parents' information service providing confidential advice for any adult concerned about the mental health or emotional well-being of a child or young person
- Family Lives Parentline on 0808 800 2222 - provides help and information for anyone caring for children

Evaluation

How would you describe your mental health? Circle one answer

Very poor

Poor

Not bad

Good

Very good

What factors affect your mental health?

What measures could Thornhill College make to help improve pupils' mental health and wellbeing?

Please tear off this page and put it into the box at the office