

An important message for Essex schools from our Public Health and Healthy Schools Team

Subject: Stress Awareness
Date: April 2020
Issue: No. 15

This month we are focusing our campaign on stress in response to April being **National Stress Awareness Month**. Whilst it was planned for this month, it has proved timely, with many of us feeling stressed about the COVID-19 pandemic. The advice and techniques in this month's edition should prove welcome and useful at this time in our history.

For latest updates on Coronavirus (COVID-19) click [here](#)

Stress can affect everyone from all walks of life and all ages, adults teenagers and children. It can affect different people in different ways. It can often affect our emotional and mental wellbeing, which can then often lead to physical symptoms. Fortunately, there are many different strategies that can be tried to help reduce daily stress. Because everyone can be affected differently, it can often take several attempts of trying a strategy or a combination of strategies to find the most effective way to reduce stress and increase mental wellbeing.

As part of our stress awareness campaign we have included signposting to resources, information and advice for personal wellbeing, young people in primary and secondary schools and family wellbeing.

Your pupils' wellbeing – Primary

To support your school with resources and lesson plans for emotional health and wellbeing, The [PSHE Association](#) has FREE information guidance on 'Preparing to Teach about Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing' for key stages 1-4.

Preparing for SATS can be a stressful time in schools for teachers and pupils, as the pressure on schools to do well is felt by everyone. Support the children in your school to look after their own wellbeing by introducing some relaxation and mindfulness activities. For information and free resources sign up to [schools in mind](#). For more resources which are all quality assured register to be a [mentally healthy school](#) through the Heads Together campaign supported by Young Minds.

Your pupils' wellbeing – Secondary

To support 11-16 year olds with managing exam stress there are now FREE lesson plans from Public Health England on exam stress, as well as other useful lesson plans. Click here for [resources](#) and stress busting tips.

The [PSHE Association](#) has lesson plans and recommended resources on this and other subjects covering mental health and wellbeing.

For more resources look on the [Young minds](#) website. Young minds are part of the heads together campaign for young peoples mental health.

Family Wellbeing

Please disseminate through Parent Mail where possible

[UNICEF](#) have guidance on how to speak to your child on COVID-19.

As a parent/carer we often put the needs of our family before ours. If you are feeling overwhelmed and [stressed](#) please read the advice from the NHS on how to tackle it.

Suggestions include:

- Talk to friends or family
- Have some 'me time'
- Try to get enough sleep - see the Sleep Council's free 30 day [Better Sleep](#) plan.
- Exercise - to do this as a family try the Change for Life [Disney](#) inspired 10 minute games and activities.

For more support on stress awareness click [here](#).

If your child is taking their SATs in May, they may be feeling a little anxious about it, to help them overcome this feeling, encourage them to try some mindful activities such as:

- Exercise, which could include yoga ,tai chi or swimming.
- Gardening
- Mindful walking
- Card making
- Doing a jigsaw puzzle
- Click [here](#) for more information.

Wellbeing for you

The NHS suggest that there are [5 steps to mental wellbeing](#):

- Connect with other people
- Be physically active
- Learn new skills
- Give to others
- Pay attention to the moment (mindfulness)

The NHS also have useful [Mental Health apps](#) that can help you manage stress.

It can be useful to identify if there are any lifestyle choices that may be contributing to your stress, for example diet. The charity Mind have a video clip on eight ways that your [food can affect your mood](#). Their advice includes ensuring that you eat often and stay hydrated.

If you are thinking about becoming more active but are not sure what's on or where to go the [Active Essex](#) website will give you information on what is available locally.

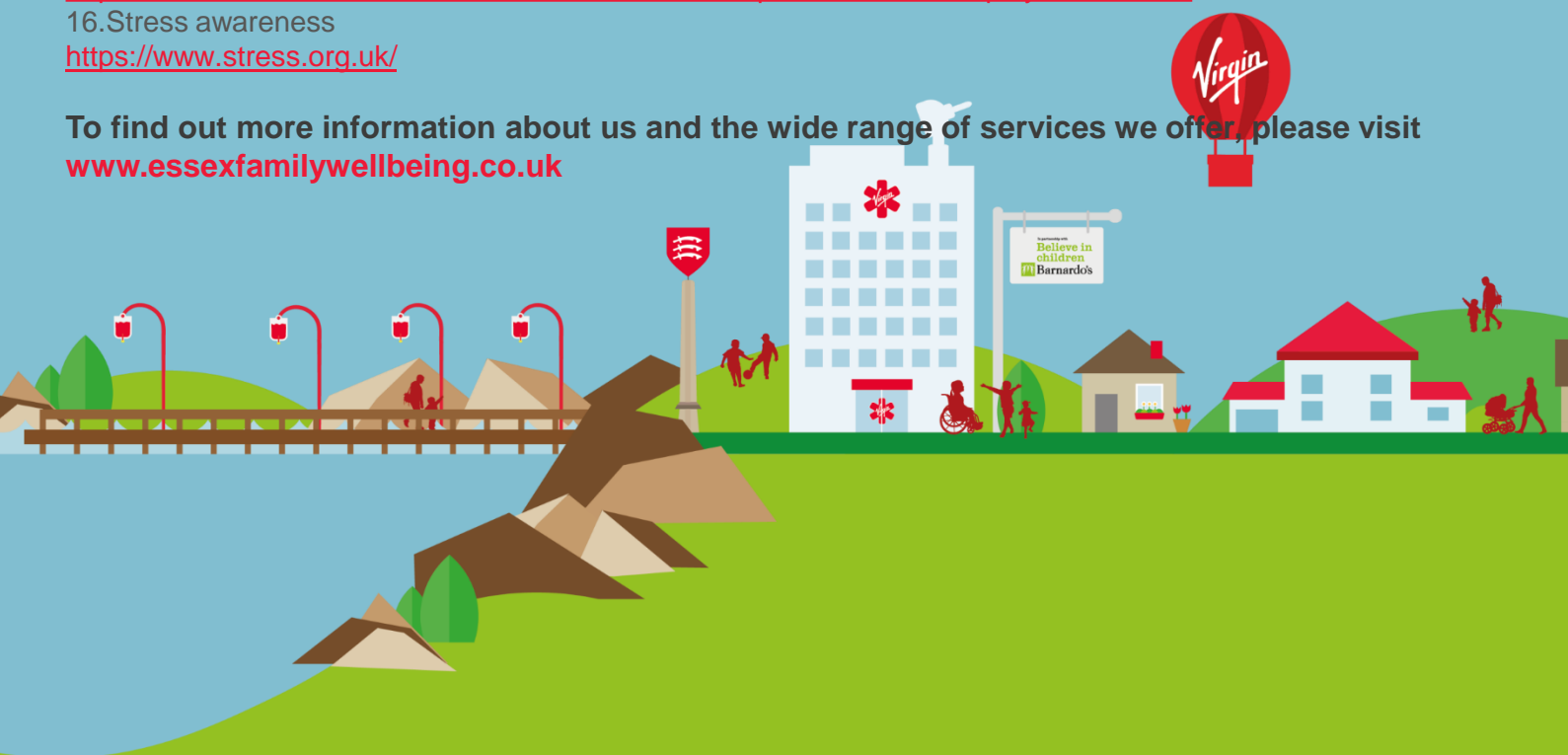
To learn new skills why not see what Essex County Council Adult Community Learning courses are available. They offer a wide range of activities including some for [wellbeing](#)

References

Please use these references to further your reading and find out more information on Managing Stress.

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4. Public Health England. (2020). Rise Above for Schools. Available at: https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview?WT.mc_id=RiseAboveforSchools_PSHEA_EdComs_Resource_listing_Sep17
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5. PSHE Association (2020). Guidance on teaching about mental health and wellbeing. Available at: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/guidance-teaching-about-mental-health-and>
6. Young Minds (2020). School Resources. Available at: <https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/>
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9. Change 4 Life (2020). 10 minute shake ups. Available at: www.nhs.uk/10-minute-shake-up/shake-ups
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11. NHS (2020). 5 steps to mental wellbeing. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing/>
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14. Active Essex (2019). Get Active in Essex. Available at: <https://www.activeessex.org/activity-finder/#>
15. ACL Essex (2019). Course List. Available at: <https://courses.aclessex.com/AvailableCoursesList.Asp?COL=NameDisplay&SRT=ASC>
16. Stress awareness <https://www.stress.org.uk/>

To find out more information about us and the wide range of services we offer, please visit www.essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk



We are always looking for ways to improve and provide you with information that is beneficial and relevant to you. We value your opinion and would love to hear your feedback on our briefings.

Please send your reply to Essex.Communications@virginicare.co.uk