

Wellbeing Hub Newsletter



Meet the Wellbeing Hub Team

Belinda Noack and David Larritt – Student Counsellors

We provide non-therapeutic counseling on various issues including personal, relationship, career, cultural or curriculum issues. Students are guided towards developing long term coping strategies and to continue engaging successfully in school life to reach their ultimate goal.



Sandy Rawlings – Family Youth Worker

Supports students who have been identified needing further support with attendance, connection to learning and optimum wellbeing. Sandy facilitates communication, interventions and programs that meet the needs of the students and their families.



Lisa Hubbard and George Hirst – Student Support Officers / Student Mentors

Lisa and George operate at our front desk of the Wellbeing Hub. They can guide the student in the right direction, support students with writing appointments and administrative tasks. Lisa and George support the effective operation of the Wellbeing Hub.



InSchool Psychology

GGHS have developed a positive partnership with InSchool Psychology for nearly 3 years now. InSchool Psychology provides free psychological services to our students and their families. It is offered onsite through the Wellbeing Hub.

We would like to welcome Michelle Appleyard who has begun working with us and our students in 2016. Michelle works on a Tuesday with referred students.

For any more information regarding how to use this service, please contact the school and ask to speak with our student counsellors, Belinda Noack or David Larritt.



Article of the Term

Depression proofing your kids by Clinical Psychologist Andrew Fuller

About 20% of people experience depression at some times in their lives. That means that almost every family has someone with some times of depression.

Unfortunately, once someone has experienced depression, they are at far greater risk of feeling that way again.

While I can't guarantee that we can protect everyone from depression, there are things that we can do to make it less likely.

Sadness is not always bad

Everyone loves being happy but being sad at times is not such a bad thing. Sadness gives us time for thinking things over, sometimes regretting things we have done helps us to resolve to be better people. Feelings of sadness, disappointment and set backs are part of human lives and without them we don't live whole lives.

We all want our kids to be happy but know that there will be times they will be sad. Helping young people to know that they won't be happy all the time is important. Realising that all feelings pass and that we can learn from the whole range of feelings, sadness included, is part of being human.

Lower the amount of stress

Try to identify some of the major sources of stress in your life and develop systems to deal with them. If you can't avoid the stressful situations at least develop a decompression strategy. This is a way of winding ourselves down after being revved up. Going for a walk, doing some exercise and being active are some of the best ways.

Find some good friends

Friends are a treasure. Along with family, having a few good friends that we can talk things over with enriches our lives and protects us in difficult times.

Eat healthy

What we eat changes our moods. For example, countries that eat low levels of fish have higher levels of depression. Fish contains a fatty acid known as EPA, which is lacking in those with depression. Fatty acids are also found in flaxseed, walnuts and chia seeds and are good fats.

These are good fats, so if you are hesitant about eating them, don't be. Whole grain oats have been shown to help with depression as they have folic acid and B vitamins and helps with a slow release of energy versus the crash and burn of blood sugar levels that can happen. Foods high in selenium which is found in meat, fish and cereal grains has also been shown to decrease symptoms of depression and helps with sleep patterns.

Have some source of "Flow"

We experience "flow" when we get involved in an activity that captivates us. At the end of these types of activities people often think, "Where did the time go?" There are many sources of flow – computer games, sports, drawing, dancing, reading, swimming and surfing are some. These are the things that you do that absorb you and take you away from your day to day cares and worries.

Losing yourself in a few pleasurable activities that challenge you is highly protective against depression.

Belong to the karma club

Decide to increase good will in the world by doing something positive for someone else. Try this out for one week. Pick someone you know and try to “knock their socks off” as much as possible. Give them compliments, greet them exuberantly and take time to be with them. You’ll be amazed at how much benefit you get from increasing someone else’s happiness.

Be grateful and lucky

Even people who have rotten things happen to them can rise above them. They usually do this by deciding to be lucky. While we can focus on the things that have upset us, most of us have many things and people to be grateful for. Focusing on that part of your life and deciding that you are lucky makes an enormous difference in your life.

Get enough sleep and rest

Getting enough sleep is one of the most powerful ways we can protect ourselves against depression. The structures in the brain that support the most powerful anti-depressant, serotonin, are built and re-built between the sixth and the eighth hour of sleep.

If you are having difficulty sleeping:

- Decrease caffeine consumption late in the day
- Decrease sugar in your diet
- Go to bed the same time every day and wake up at the same time every day
- Avoid late nights
- Avoid naps especially after 4pm
- Avoid spicy, sugary or heavy foods before bedtime
- Have the room at a comfortable temperature (some kids want to heat up the room and sweat the night away)
- Block out distracting noise
- Don’t sit in bed while studying get in the habit of reserving it for sleep
- Warm milk before bed is good as it is high in tryptophan, which aids sleep
- Try relaxation methods before sleeping
- Write out a to-do list for the next day before getting into bed
- Have a pre-sleep ritual e.g. reading or warm bath
- Switch off all electronics especially phones

Get some exercise

Exercise decreases stress hormones such as cortisol and increases endorphins (happy chemicals). Exercise also helps release dopamine, adrenalin and serotonin, which work together to make you feel good.

Endorphins are a hormone like substance, produced in the brain and function as the body’s natural painkillers. During exercise endorphins can leave you in a state of euphoria with a sense of wellbeing.

The most effective type of exercise for the release of endorphins is cardiovascular exercise and aerobics.

Moderate exercise for 10 minutes a day is enough to improve your mood and increase energy but it is suggested that you do 30 minutes per day.



Laugh more

Laughter raises our levels of serotonin and dopamine. Make a point of watching TV shows or movies that make you laugh. Share funny stories and jokes with friends. People report that laughing even when they don't feel happy improves their mood and sense of wellbeing.

Checklist of Signs: When should I worry?

In the childhood and teenage years depression can be harder to pick because it is obscured by heightened emotions and times of grumpiness.

Some signs of depression are:

- Loss of interest in usual activities – their get up and go, has got up and gone
- Increased use of drugs and alcohol
- Sleep problems
- Changes in energy levels – either sluggish or agitated and restless
- Changes in eating patterns – either disinterested in food or over eating
- Speaking about death and hopelessness
- Increased and inexplicable irritability
- Your own feelings of anxiety about your child

It is worth getting some help if your child or adolescent is appearing to be depressed. One way to do this is to say, "I'm worried about you and I want you to come with me and see someone so that I can work out whether I should be worried or not". Try to find a good local psychologist, psychiatrist or doctor who can relate to young people.



What is Mindfulness? (Centre for Clinical Interventions)

Mindfulness is about experiencing the world that is firmly in the 'here and now.' This mode is referred to as the **being** mode. It offers a way of freeing oneself from automatic and unhelpful ways of thinking and responding.

Benefits of Mindfulness

By learning to be in the mindful mode more often, it is possible to develop a new habit that helps weaken old unhelpful and automatic thinking habits. For people with emotional problems, these old habits can involve being overly pre-occupied with thinking about the future, the past, themselves, or their emotions in a negative way. Mindfulness training in this case does not aim to immediately control, remove, or fix this unpleasant experience. Rather, it aims to develop a skill to place you in a better position to break free of or not 'buy into' these unhelpful habits that are causing distress and preventing positive action.

Core Features of Mindfulness

- Observing
- Describing
- Participating Fully
- Being Non-Judgmental
- Focusing on One Thing at a Time



Cyber-safety Tip of the Term

According to a new study from Pew Research Centre, 92% of teens report going online daily, including 24% reporting going online almost constantly. 56% of teens, 13-17 years of age, go online several times a day.

Given these statistics, our tip to help teens use social networking safely is:

BE CAUTIOUS OF FRIEND REQUESTS

Sure, it's great to connect with new people through social people... but isn't there something suspicious when a complete stranger sends you a friend request?

Play it safe and only accept friend requests from friends in the real world.

Apart from the obvious (more severe) threats... friend requests from strangers more commonly turn out to be spam bots (meaning you'll be spamming your friends). Fake profiles are also created for cyber bullying. So when a new friend request comes in, and you think you know the person, be sure to check their profile first and see if anything looks fishy.

Wellbeing App of the Term

iProcrastinate

This is an organisational desktop tool for Macs. It is fantastic for all year levels, especially senior students to never forget due dates again.



Useful Websites for Parents and Teens

- www.reachout.com.au
- www.kidshelpline.com.au
- www.esafety.gov.au
- www.headspace.org.au
- www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

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