

Parent Newsletter

January 2026



NHS

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys

NHS Foundation Trust

Spring term one

Welcome to the start of the Spring term edition of your wellbeing newsletter!

We hope you have had a good break over Christmas & New Year!

Winter isn't just cold and darker – it can genuinely affect how we feel, behave and learn.

This newsletter hopes to provide some information about why winter can be challenging, what you might notice in your child and gives some simple ways which you can boost wellbeing through this colder season!



How might winter affect your child

Shorter days mean young people spend more time indoors and see less natural light which can affect:

- Energy Levels
- Motivation & Concentration
- Sleep Patterns
- Mood

Signs that your child might be struggling this winter

Every young person is different, but typical signs that your child is struggling may include:

- Feeling worthless or hopeless
- Decrease in energy
- Having trouble sleeping
- Depressed or irritable mood
- They want to stay in bed or avoid activities
- Changes in weight or eating habits
- Fatigue
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lack of enjoyment in things that usually interest them



Simple ways to Support Wellbeing this winter

- Open curtains in the morning, walk to school, go outdoors on the weekends.
- Keep the bodies moving – Have short movement breaks (walk, stretch, dance!)
- Aim for a consistent bedtime and gentle evening routine.



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- Create cozy traditions - As a family try to stay connected or invite friends round for board games or movie nights, make hot chocolate or just have a chat.

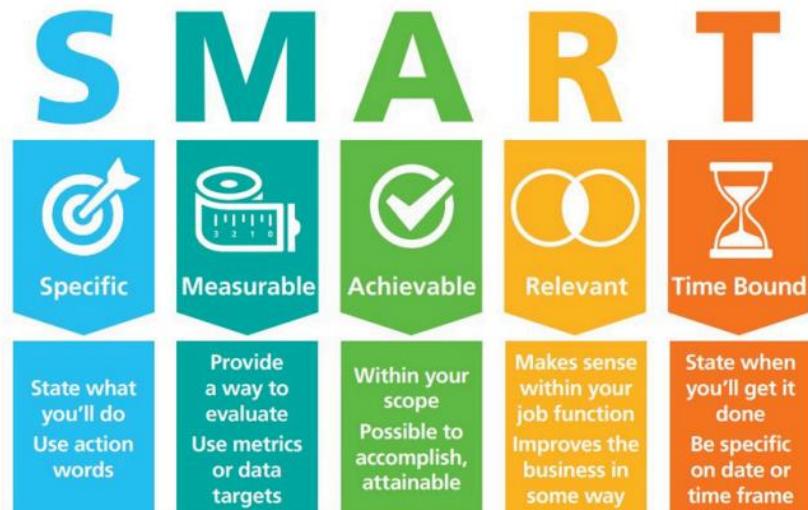
New Year, New Goals... understanding how to set SMART goals opposed to unrealistic goals

Some people find starting resolutions helpful for their mental health, and others don't.

Goals give us a sense of purpose. People who feel they have important goals report higher life satisfaction.

Accomplishing goals is related to a positive mood. While the opposite is also true, failing to accomplish our goals leads to lower emotional well-being.

Before you or your child set any goals for the new year, think about whether this is a helpful motivator or pressure you just don't need.



If you do, try to set new year goals – think smartly!

Some examples may be:

- **Read for 10 minutes every day before bed.**
- **See at least one friend once a week.**
- **Go on a 15 minute walk every day after school.**

Self-Care Corner: Simple Ways to Recharge

Breathing Exercise:



Hold the cup: Pretend to hold a warm mug of hot chocolate in your hands. You can also use a real cup for a more sensory experience.

Breathe in: Breathe in through your nose to smell the hot chocolate – count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Breathe Out: Blow out of your mouth to cool the hot chocolate down – count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Repeat the activity until you feel calmer

Winter Warmer: One-Pot Lentil Soup

Ingredients: 1 tbsp olive oil • 1 onion (chopped) • 2 carrots (diced) • 2 celery sticks (chopped) • 2 cloves garlic (crushed) • 1 tsp mixed herbs • 1 cup red lentils (rinsed) • 1 tin chopped tomatoes • 1 L vegetable stock • Salt & pepper

Method:

1. Sauté onion, carrot, and celery in oil for 5 mins.
2. Add garlic, herbs, lentils, tomatoes, and stock.
3. Simmer 25–30 mins until lentils are soft.
4. Season and serve with bread

Make a batch at the weekend — it's healthy, comforting, and perfect for a school-day lunch.

Upcoming awareness days

January	
Brew Monday (19 th)	Brew Monday downloadable resources Support us Samaritans
Parent Mental Health Day (30 th)	Parent Mental Health Day 2025 - stem4
February	
Children's Mental Health Week (19 th – 15 th)	Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week - Official site
Time to Talk Day (6 th)	TIME TO TALK DAY - February 6, 2026 - National Today

Resources for further tips and support

If you or your child have any concerns, please talk to your child's teacher or head of year who will be able to come and speak to us or give you further advice and support.

Useful Websites:

- www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.thegoto.org.uk
- www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk
- <https://teensleephub.org.uk>
- <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk>

Useful Apps:



Thank you!