



Are you OK
south west
London?



South West London and
St George's Mental Health
NHS Trust

Looking after a child or young person's wellbeing as they go back out into the world

There are times when we all feel the strain. As parents and carers, there are ways we can support children and young people to give them the best chance to stay mentally healthy.

Some children and young people have enjoyed being off school, while others will have really struggled – with the coronavirus outbreak keeping them at home and away from friends. Others may be coming to terms with family problems, loss or changes to their living situation.

As restrictions lift in some places, they might also face difficulties in being back at school or college, or have worries about getting or passing on the virus. It's also still uncertain what further changes we all may face.

Feelings like these will gradually ease for most, but there are always steps you can take to support them emotionally and help them cope with problems they face.

Please see the next page for the top 5 tips from the Every Child Matters campaign and look at the Every Child Matters website for more advice and resources.



Top 5 tips to support children and young people

1. Be there to listen



Ask the children and young people you look after how they are doing regularly so they get used to speaking about their feelings

2. Stay involved in their life



Show interest in their life and the things important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.

3. Encourage their interests



Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team help connect us with others and are important ways we can all help our mental health. Support and encourage them to explore their interests, whatever they are.

4. Take what they say seriously



Listening to and valuing what they say, without judging their feelings, in turn makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them process and work through their emotions in a more constructive way.

5. Build positive routines



We know it has not been easy recently, but try to reintroduce structure around regular routines, healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also really important – try to get them back into routines that fit with school or college.

There's lots more support available, for you and them, on the Every Mind Matters website: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/childrens-mental-health>.