



This summer issue of Safety Rocks looks at using technology safely, helping children’s anxiety with mindfulness, tackling child abuse, and keeping children safe during the summer holidays.

### ★ Sponsored Cyber Silence - take back control from technology

The advance of technology has changed the world and how we interact with each other but can you remember choosing to live and be connected like this?

During July we are challenging families to think about their use of technology and take back control. How many times have you or your children logged in for just a moment, only to realise that hours have slipped by? Or struggled to turn off phones even at the dinner table? Or found yourselves watching TV together as a family, while everyone is also on their phone, laptop or i-pad and that conversation is a thing of the past?

We would like you to invite friends, your children, teachers, colleagues and anyone else you know to take part in a sponsored cyber silence during the month of July. Set a challenge for yourself and your family, e.g. work stays at work, no emails at home, social media free evenings, turning off all devices at 8 o’clock, no screens or chargers in your bedroom.

Brighton & Hove secondary school pupils in 2015 stated that:

- on a school day 58% of young people spend two hours or more on social media and on a weekend 77% do so
- 27% of pupils have felt that they have had to use social media so that they don’t miss out on anything happening with friends
- 35% have caught themselves using it when they are not even really interested
- 17% have tried unsuccessfully to spend less time on social media

*From Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2015/6 – Social Media.*



★ To join our campaign, take back control from technology and raise funds to support Safety Net your local children’s safety charity email [events@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:events@safety-net.org.uk) or phone us on 01273 411613.



Safety Net is running online safety sessions for parents. The session lasts 2 hours and includes:

- ★ Latest online trends for children & young people
- ★ Information about parental controls
- ★ Discussion about screen time and parenting tips for when technology is “getting in the way”
- ★ Technology is contagious – are you being a positive role model?
- ★ Signposting to useful websites

Sessions run on August 23rd and September 21st. Contact us for details: 01273 420973 or email [training@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:training@safety-net.org.uk).

## ★ Helping young people deal with anxiety using mindfulness

Summer Term can be a stressful time for young people, with exams, changes in year and friendship groups and increasing pressures. Practising mindfulness as a family can be a useful way of helping your children to manage these challenges.

Mindfulness is about learning to focus our attention on our experience as it happens, moment by moment, with curiosity rather than judgement. Instead of stressing about what has happened or might happen, it trains us to respond to whatever is happening right now, whatever the circumstances and whatever we are feeling. This helps provide a 'buffer' for young people – particularly for those prone to anxiety – against being swept along by their emotions.

We may not tend to think about teenagers when we think about mindfulness, but there is growing evidence that it has real benefits for them and can help them to manage the challenges of adolescence. For example, studies have shown that mindfulness can help young people to build empathy with others as well as helping with concentration and impulse control.



### USEFUL APPS TO HELP PRACTICE MINDFULNESS:

- ★ Insight Meditation Timer
- ★ Smiling Mind
- ★ Stop, Breathe and Think
- ★ Take a Break!

### USEFUL CONTACTS:

- ★ Right Here Brighton & Hove have a range of activities and support related to young people's health and well-being:  
[www.right-here-brightonandhove.org.uk/activities](http://www.right-here-brightonandhove.org.uk/activities)

### ★ Here are some ways you can help your young person to practice mindfulness:

- ★ **Model Mindfulness yourself** - for young people to engage with mindfulness, it is important that they see us modelling it ourselves: are we stepping back in stressful situations and reflecting rather than just reacting in the heat of the moment and losing the plot? Can you incorporate some mindfulness into your everyday family life? Take time out to really be with your children, listen to them, and engage in activities that allow you to 'be in the moment' with them, like a walk, a game, an art or cooking activity or playing calming music.
- ★ **Teach them the science** - brain imaging studies show that mindfulness positively alters the structure and function of the brain, improving thought processing, learning and well-being. In effect, mindfulness is a form of training for the brain, in the same way that physical exercise is training for our bodies. There is an excellent TEDx talk by Dan Siegel, author of *Brainstorm: The power and the purpose of the teenage brain*, which has a great demonstration that you can use with teenagers to teach them about parts of their brain.
- ★ **Teaching Teenagers about the 'worried mind'**. Often anxiety stems from the thoughts that whirr around in our heads, when we imagine worst case scenarios. Focussing on being in the present moment and noticing our thoughts but not paying them any attention, can help young people to see that they are just thoughts, not reality.
- ★ **Breathe it out** – get them to focus on their breath, this is particularly useful for young people who are feeling anxious, as focusing on the breath helps them to switch their attention from worrying thoughts to sensory perception. They may like to close their eyes during this exercise, but paying attention to the sights and sounds around them is also a beneficial way to help shift attention away from anxious thoughts. Linking this exercise to a particular daily activity can help make it a regular practice – perhaps just before breakfast or last thing at night.
- ★ **Deciding on a 'quiet time' is another way of building in mindfulness** – a few minutes each day when the TV, phones and computers etc. are all turned off and the family can just 'be' together rather than 'do'.

# ★ Parent Page: Together we can tackle child abuse

The Department for Education launched a campaign in February of this year to encourage all of us to think about how we protect children and young people. Called 'Together we can Tackle Child Abuse', the campaign sets out what we can all do to keep children safer.

★ **Myth 1: It's not my job to report child abuse – that's for teachers or professionals to handle** • Fact: Everyone in the community has an important role to play in keeping children safe. If a child is being abused or their safety is at risk they need adults to notice something is wrong and act on their concerns. A third of people who suspect child abuse, do nothing because they're worried about being wrong or making things worse. You don't have to be completely certain to do something, if you have a feeling that something's not right, talk to your schools Designated Safeguarding Lead or the local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who can look into it.

★ **Myth 2: Reporting a child/family to 'Social Services' means the child will be removed from their family immediately by social workers** • Fact: Social workers' job is to protect vulnerable children and provide support to families who need help. Sharing your concerns with Social Services will not automatically mean a child is taken into care, but could mean a problem is spotted sooner and action taken to help the family. Where a decision is made to remove a child from their family it is made by the courts for the protection of the child.

★ **Myth 3: People will know it is me that reported and my call will not remain anonymous** • Fact: You will be asked about your own details but as a member of the public, you can choose to remain anonymous.

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**Who can I talk to?** Every school has to have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If you are worried about a child, you can talk to the DSL in your school; this service should be advertised to parents and carers. Or you can ring the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 01273 290 400 who will investigate the concerns by gathering information from a number of sources. Your piece of the puzzle might be the one that makes the difference.

★ **If you have a question** or would like to suggest a topic for future editions, email us at [newsletter@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@safety-net.org.uk). For an online edition, visit [www.safety-net.org.uk](http://www.safety-net.org.uk) or [www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk](http://www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk)

★ **Myth 4: It's only child abuse if it involves physical violence** • Fact: In 2014-15, over three quarters of the children on child protection plans were placed there as a result of neglect or emotional abuse rather than physical violence or sexual abuse. Many children are likely to experience more than one type of abuse and all types can have a long lasting effect on a child's physical and mental health, happiness and well-being.

★ **Myth 5: Child abuse doesn't happen in my neighbourhood, I live in a good area** • Fact: Child abuse and neglect can happen anywhere whatever a child's background, age, gender, race or sexuality or wherever they live, any child or young person could be abused or neglected.



## ★ To spot the signs of child abuse or neglect, look for changes in:

**Appearance** – such as frequent unexplained injuries, consistently poor hygiene, matted hair, unexplained gifts, or a parent regularly collecting children from school when drunk

**Behaviour** – such as demanding or aggressive behaviour, frequent lateness or absence from school, avoiding their own family, misusing drugs or alcohol, or being constantly tired

**Communication** – such as sexual or aggressive language, self-harming, becoming secretive and reluctant to share information or being overly obedient

★ **Join our Editorial Team** - If you would like to get involved in suggesting topics, giving feedback and helping put this newsletter together, why not join our community editor's team? This could be via email, phone or coming to meetings at our offices. It could just be one or two hours' a month or more if you have time.

# Here comes summer!

With summer holidays coming up, this is a good time of year to focus on water safety. Sadly every year young people die or are seriously injured due to drowning.

★ Quiz: what do the following signs mean?



Check the bottom of the page for answers.

## ★ Useful Resources for parents and carers

★ There are some useful sea safety videos on the Brighton & Hove council website about staying safe on the beach: [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/seafront/sea-safety](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/seafront/sea-safety)



★ You can also contact the council for information about registering under 16's to swim free in some Brighton & Hove swimming pools 01273 290000

★ Child-Friendly Brighton has a useful list of places that do swimming lessons in the Brighton area: [www.childfriendlybrighton.co.uk/indoor-activities/swimming](http://www.childfriendlybrighton.co.uk/indoor-activities/swimming)

## ★ Brighton Pride, August 5-7: Could you be a Pride Buddy?

Brighton Pride is a highlight of the Brighton annual calendar of events and represents an amazing celebration of equality and diversity in the city and beyond. To help make this a safe event for all, a group of people were recruited last year to act as "Pride Buddies", working from the Youth Service bus, to support young people who were in need of help, primarily due to intoxication. Last year was a great success, with the Buddies receiving praise and thanks from many young people and the emergency services.

This year the Buddies hope to recruit a team of young people to support them in responding

to those young people in need of: a place of safety, a carer to come to collect them, water, sun-cream, access to a phone, a shoulder to cry on or a sick bucket. Young users of Children's Services will also be supported to participate in the parade and costume-making workshops.



★ If you know of any young people aged 15 – 18 who would like to be involved as a Pride Buddy, please contact Alex Cooter on **01273 293966** or [alex.cooter@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:alex.cooter@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk)

★ As a parent or carer you can also help keep young people safe by telling them to stay with their group of friends and not supplying them with alcohol to take into the festivities. Or, check out the festival safety guide on the ru-ok? website: [www.ruokservice.co.uk](http://www.ruokservice.co.uk)

**Safety Net is 20 this year, and to celebrate we are organising a number of fundraising activities around the city. To find out more, email: [events@safety-net.org.uk](mailto:events@safety-net.org.uk) or go to [www.safety-net.org.uk](http://www.safety-net.org.uk)**

★ Quiz answers: a) danger deep water  
b) lifeguards on patrol  
c) no swimming, dangerous to swim  
d) strong currents e) no swimming

## Working with communities to keep children safe

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