

CHILDREN'S CENTRE PSYCHOLOGY

HELPING HANDS NEWSLETTER:

WINTER 2023/24

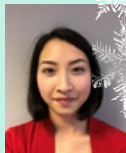
The Team



Dr Jeni
McElwee



Dr Charlotte
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Dr Rebekah
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Dr Alex
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Michael
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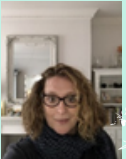
Elizabeth
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Luciana Oliver



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Lucy
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Downes



Emily
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Welcome



We are pleased to welcome Alex to his role as Clinical Psychologist at Nevill Hall Children's Centre!

"Hello, I'm Alex, and I recently became a Clinical Psychologist at Nevill Hall Children's Centre. I'm thrilled to join a team that shares a passion for early intervention, prevention, and enhancing access to psychological support for young people with additional needs, their families, and other professionals. Being a part of a team that prioritises the experiences and views of young people and families is something I look forward to, as I value the unique perspective they bring to our understanding of the world."

We are also excited to announce our two new Assistant Psychologists: Beth and Luciana!

"Hi everyone! My name is Beth, and I am the new Assistant Psychologist. I am really excited to get started and join a team who are passionate about making a difference to the lives of children and young people with additional needs, and their families. I am looking forward to supporting others in any way I can!"



"Hi everyone! I'm Luciana, the new assistant psychologist based at Serennu Children's Centre. I have loved working with children and young people with additional needs for the past couple of years and I am super excited to bring my passion to the Children's Centre Psychology team. I am especially looking forward to working alongside the brilliant team to support children and young people, their families and the professionals that they work with. I feel privileged to be joining a team that are as passionate about working with children and young people with additional needs as I am and I can't wait to get started!"

Children's Centre Psychology Workshops

We will be continuing our virtual workshops for parents/carers of children with additional needs. Over the next few months we will be offering the workshops below. Please scan, click on the QR code to book onto these and/or to sign up to our workshop mailing list

Supporting Anxiety in
Children

Friday 8th December
10am-12noon

Introduction to Sleep

Friday 19th January
10am-12noon

Exploring Behaviours
That Can Challenge

Friday 23rd February
10am-12noon



Introduction to Sensory Processing Tuesday 12th December
Parent/Carer Workshop 12.30-2.30pm

Introduction to Sensory Processing
Parent/Carer Workshop

Tuesday 12th December
12:30-2:30pm



Reducing Stress At Christmas

Christmas can be a really exciting and magical time for children and for their parents. But for some children, it can feel really overwhelming and challenging. There are many reasons for this.

For children with sensory difficulties, there are lots of new or unusual foods to eat, different smells. Moving from cold to hot environments, lots of really busy shops.

For children who struggle with change, Christmas brings lots of changes. The environment changes with people putting up decorations everywhere, routines in school can change as they practice for Christmas plays or concerts, TV schedules may change to show lots of Christmas specials, Christmas may fall on a day that they would normally eat chicken nuggets.

And then the whole structure of Christmas day can be really overwhelming for some children. The excitement of having so many gifts can mean that excitement can turn very quickly to anxiety.

So we wanted to give you some ideas to help reduce anxiety both in the lead up and during the day. The most important advice we can give is to build your own traditions, based on what works best for your family



When decorating your house, speak to your child about what decorations they would like. Think about keeping the decorations more minimalistic or getting your child to join in with decorating. You could even decorate over a few days so the change is more gradual and have a room which is Christmas free so your child can take a break when they need to.



For some children surprise can be difficult. You can manage this by preparing lists of the presents they want and only buying from this list. This is especially important for more meaningful presents as the excitement of receiving something they really like can become too much. It may also help to spread the gift giving over a few days or even weeks.



The Christmas meal can also be challenging. The best advice is to do whatever works for you and your family. This might mean that your child eats pizza or chicken nuggets because that's what they always eat on that day. Another consideration to help at mealtimes is to try and keep to your normal routines especially if your child is likely to become overwhelmed from the rest of the day.

As discussed above Christmas can be fun, and it can also be a stressful time of the year. It is important to take time out for yourselves and link in with trusted others. Enjoying a hot chocolate is often a fantastic experience in itself especially if you can do it with a friend, or as an enjoyable activity with your children.

For this activity we are encouraging you to take Time to Pause and this mindfulness exercise can enhance the experience of drinking a hot chocolate even more!

Step 1 - Holding: First, take the cup in your hands and take some time to enjoy the warmth against your hands and fingers. Feel how this warmth penetrates deep into your skin.

Step 2 - Seeing: Take time to really focus on your drink. Gaze at it with care and full attention. Imagine that you have dropped in from Mars and have never seen anything like this in your whole life. Let your eyes explore every part of it, examining the light reflecting on the surface, or the way the bubbles have formed, or the ripples on the whipped cream and any asymmetries or unique features.

Step 3 - Smelling: Hold the Hot Chocolate beneath your nose and take a few deep breaths. With each inhalation, take in any smell, aroma, or fragrance that may arise. As you do this, notice anything interesting that may be happening in your mouth or stomach.

Step 4 - Placing: Slowly raise the cup to your lips, noticing how your hand and arm know exactly where to position it. Gently, and without swallowing, take your first sip of the hot chocolate, noticing first how it enters your mouth. Spend a few moments focusing on the sensations of having it in your mouth.

Step 5 - Tasting: Begin to take notice of how the hot chocolate tastes, take account of the temperature changes.

Step 6 - Swallowing: When you're ready swallow the hot chocolate, paying close attention to any body sensations that happen, do you notice the warmth flowing through your body as it moves to your stomach, what other sensations do you notice

Step 7 - Following: Now you have taken your first drink, notice how your body is feeling as a whole. Finish your drink, all the while, taking account of your senses. (Adapted from <https://mindfulnessbox.com/raisin-mindfulness-exercise/>)

Mindful Hot Chocolate Drinking



Upcoming Awareness Days

Parent Mental Health Day

27th January

A day to reflect and be aware of mental health in parents and how this can affect their day-to-day lives.

Time to Talk Day

1st February

An opportunity for friends and families to come together to talk and listen about each others mental health.

LGBT History Month

1st February - 29th February

A month to celebrate the community that fought for the rights to express who you are!

Children's Mental Health Week

5th February - 11th February

A day to think about the importance of children's voices, and how we can ensure they are heard.