

Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year from the Ask Normen Team



Northamptonshire  
Mental Health  
Gateway

Coping with Christmas

### **We would like to hear from you.**

We hope you enjoy all of our updates. We would be delighted to hear from you if you have any dates for the diary, news or comments, or important documents that you would like to share.

Please go to

[www.asknormen.co.uk](http://www.asknormen.co.uk)

And fill out one of our submission forms.

Or you can contact us at [asknormen@nhs.net](mailto:asknormen@nhs.net)

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#### **Save the Date: Northamptonshire Mental Health Awareness Day 2016**

Show your commitment to stamping out mental health stigma and get involved in Northamptonshire Mental Health Awareness day, taking place on **Friday 12 February 2016**. This is an annual event where schools, community groups and local organisations across Northamptonshire join together to show their support of the Northamptonshire Mental Health Stigma Programme (MHSP). The day provides a great opportunity to raise awareness of mental health stigma in lots of interesting, fun and inclusive ways.

MHSP will be writing out to schools shortly with further details and materials



#### **Visit your library this Christmas!**

There are 36 libraries across Northamptonshire which run free children's activities in the Christmas holidays. Find out what is happening by viewing the events calendar on [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/whatson](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/whatson)

The libraries are only closed for four days over Christmas (Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 27th December and New Years Day) so, if you're looking for some peace and quiet, you can get away from it all at the library.

If you're stuck for a last minute Christmas present pop into your library. All libraries have library shops and a lot of the libraries are holding craft fairs on the run up to Christmas which gives you

to use on the day and we will also be featuring information in future editions of the Ask Normen newsletter. Keep checking the MHSP website for updates [www.talkoutloud.info](http://www.talkoutloud.info) or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

If you have any questions about the day please contact Tessa Parkinson, Project Manager on 07799 880611 or e-mail [tessa@3activeuk.com](mailto:tessa@3activeuk.com)

**Visit Ask Normen for lots of help and advice on anxiety, stress, depression and much more!**

plenty of opportunity to get something special.

Whatever you need your library will be there for you this Christmas!

Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service

Telephone: 01604 367207

[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service

John Dryden House, 8-10 The Lakes

Northampton NN4 7YD.



The lead up to the Christmas period can often be a stressful time for everyone with so much to organise and plan. It can often be a very overwhelming time, leading to feelings of anxiety and high levels of stress when wishing for the perfect festive period.

Alternative and complementary therapies can be a great way of de-stressing and help put worrying thoughts at bay. There are many easy changes that you can integrate into your daily routine to help you feel calmer and more relaxed.

In the morning, connect your mind and body by practising some yoga exercises to help release negative thoughts and clear your head. Practise breathing techniques by taking long deep breaths in, holding for 4 seconds before exhaling. You don't need to make plenty of time for this; it can take just 10 minutes to feel the benefits.

During the day swap your caffeinated hot drinks, which can heighten anxiety, with a detoxifying herbal tea. A beneficial choice would be a dandelion flavoured tea to help flush your liver of those nasty toxins. Try to reduce your fizzy drink consumption by opting for lemon infused water, which maintains hydration and helps to regulate blood pressure.

As you come to wind down during the evening it can be hard to switch off from worrying thoughts. Aromatherapy oils such as lavender are great de-stressors that help calm the mind. This can be a scented candle, used in a diffuser, or added to a long, hot bath. Tip: Add a couple of drops to your pillow at night to promote a good sleep.

The closer it gets to Christmas the more likely you are to feel the pressures and demands. Visit Therapy Directory <http://www.therapy-directory.org.uk/> and treat yourself to an indulgent massage to look forward to before the chaos of Christmas begins... you will be glad you did!



Deck the halls with  
boughs of holly,  
falalalalalalalala



Information,  
Advice and  
Guidance from



## Tis the season to be jolly – or is it?

This ancient carol tells us it is the season to be jolly, but we may actually be feeling the very opposite, or have a real mixture of emotions due to events in our lives this year or at this time of year in previous years. We could present ourselves as being 'jolly' on the outside and feel different on the inside, which is the process of masking. We often mask our emotions for a good reason, maybe so the children will have a good time, or the best Christmas ever! This tension can lead us to experience stress, which can make it very difficult to carry on with the normal functions and expectations of life.

I do feel very sad sometimes when hearing the stories of children who have been taken into care and have experienced a range of abuse or neglectful situations, through no fault of their own; the breakup of families, bereavements, living in fear of violence and abuse, observing the effects of alcohol, loss of income and family tensions. What I have described causes toxic stress and damages children, but there is hope, which is why I do my work with such children.

We all have our own stories, our own family backgrounds, our own beliefs and strive to deal with life on a daily basis. The glitz and glitter of Christmas presented on TV this year and in the shops may well be a far cry from reality. What if we can't meet the

## Autism Concern at Christmas Time.

Support Line – 0808 808 9090

Autism Concern has been established for over 20 years so has strong links with other organisations, enabling us to support the autism community with an holistic and tailored approach. It is not necessary to have a diagnosis to access our services, which include:

- Emotional support
- Behavioural advice
- Signposting to community services
- Training and awareness
- Understanding autism spectrum conditions
- Support with filling in benefits forms and applications

You can access Autism Concern's list of all of the community support across the county, that we are aware of, by [clicking here](#).

The team who form the Information, Advice and Guidance Service are available to speak to on the support line (0808 808 9090) and by email on [iag@autismconcern.org](mailto:iag@autismconcern.org)

### **ADHD Matters Northampton**

Christmas opening times - we will be closed for Christmas and New Year from the 24th December until the 4th January.

**Autism Concern**

needs of our families and feel highly stressed, depressed, inadequate or lonely? Here are my top ten tips to relieve some of that stress.

1. Stop for a moment, find a space to be alone and begin to say out loud what you are grateful for. (Maybe make a list and add to it whenever you can.)
2. Talk to a friend and ask them for some of their time and if they would really listen to you, tell them how you are feeling.
3. Take some fresh air and go for a walk somewhere to feel more energised. Lift up your head and look at the sky, the clouds and the trees.
4. Stroke the dog or a cat, whichever you prefer. This is very therapeutic and they mostly don't give you any advice!
5. Take a little relaxation time with your children and tell them how much you love them. Give them a great big hug. Watch a film with them and eat sweets with them too.
6. Write a letter to a friend or relative to tell them how much you appreciate them. It may be something they treasure for the rest of their life.
7. Take in some deep breaths, in for 4 breaths and out for four breaths. Yawning is good too.
8. Stretch some of your muscles, tighten your muscles – hold for a few moments – then release. Try different muscles in different parts of your

Our office closes on Wednesday 23rd December 2015 at 5pm and reopens on Monday 4th January 2016 at 9am.

Suite 39-42 Burlington House  
369 Wellingborough Road  
Northampton  
NN1 4EU  
Tel: 01604 239404  
Website: [www.autismconcern.org](http://www.autismconcern.org)



## Christmas Stress Relief - some sound advice from 'Skills you need'

Christmas can be a very stressful time of year. For many the Christmas holiday period is a mass of complex social interactions with family or relatives, some of whom you may rather not see.

There could well be expectations, or at least perceived expectations, to create a 'wonderful Christmas' with presents and perhaps the most important meal of the year.

Some people rate Christmas as being more stressful than divorce or being burgled. We

body.

9. Do some vigorous physical exercise, run, jog, go up and down stairs a few times or go swimming.

10. Laugh – with someone is best, or people will start talking!

All of the above will help to release some endorphins into your body, rather like chocolate does too, which will counteract the cortisol that may be building up in your body as a result of stress. Encourage your children to do this too and have some fun. You may not feel incredibly jolly on the run up to Christmas, but you can do yourself some favours.

John Fardon - Educational Entitlement Officer - Northamptonshire County Council.

[JFardon@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:JFardon@northamptonshire.gov.uk)



**Dates for your diary.**

**For details about Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaHMS) training courses please go to [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/tamhs](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/tamhs)**

don't want to add to the stress and have deliberately avoided putting images of holly, robins, snowmen or anything else Christmassy on this page! The page does, however, provide some tips and advice to make your Christmas as stress-free as possible. Don't let the festive season get you down: follow the tips and advice you find here, relax and enjoy yourself

Find more

at: <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ps/avoid-christmas-stress.html#ixzz3sJSeJ2w>



**How to deal with Domestic Violence**

Christmas can be a very difficult time for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Christmas is meant to be a time of joy, a time of generosity, a time of caring. But for too many women and children, the 25th December will be yet another day of living with fear, intimidation and violence.

Everyone has the human right to be safe – if you or someone you know is a victim of domestic abuse, Northampton Women's Aid can help.

TaMHS11/15Message in Schools  
Programme

12 January 2016 9.00am -  
5.00pm Kettering Conference Centre,  
NN15 6PB

13 January 2016 9.00am -  
5.00pm Kettering Conference Centre,  
NN15 6PB

TaMHS12/15Drawing and Talking -  
Foundation Level

13 January 2016 9.30am -  
4.00pm Kettering Conference Centre,  
NN15 6PB

**GAME NATION**

IASS in partnership with NAYC and Core Assets are arranging a number of Roadshows across the County. The events called GAMENATION are aimed at giving young people with SEND and their parents information and advice about staying safe online.

Participants will be given a chance to play new and retro games and Simon Aston, E-Safety Officer, will talk about the importance of staying safe online.

Roadshows will take place on

**Saturday 9th January 2016** at Kings Park Centre, Kings Park Road, Northampton, NN3 6LL

**Saturday 6th February 2016** at The Saxon Hall, Thorpe St, Raunds, Wellingborough NN9 6LT

For more information or to book a place, please contact Emma Harrison

Domestic violence takes place within an intimate relationship and forms a pattern of bullying and controlling behaviour. Domestic violence tends to get more severe and happen more often over time.

If you are being forced to alter your behaviour because you are concerned or frightened of your partner's reaction, it is likely that you are being abused.

Northampton Women's Aid operate a 24 hour helpline – call **0845 123 2311** for help and advice

Drop in service at 13 Hazelwood Road, Northampton NN1 1LG 9.00am – 4.30pm (during busy times appointments will have to be arranged)

**If you are in immediate danger call the police on 999 or 101**

**Northamptonshire against domestic and sexual abuse.**

<http://www.nadasa.co.uk/domestic-violence/>

Visit the Ask Normen news pages keeping you up to date with what's on over the Christmas holidays.



on 01604 636111 or email  
[emharrison@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:emharrison@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

## SECONDARY SCHOOL TRANSFER - YEAR 5 Seminars

Do you have a child currently in Year 5 at school? IASS are hosting two information sessions for parents to support the positive transfer to secondary school for children with Special Educational Needs.

Thursday 3rd March – 10am to 12noon

The Abbey Centre

Northampton

NN4 0RZ

Tuesday 8th March – 12:30pm – 2:30pm

Corn Market Hall

Kettering

NN15 7QA

Booking is essential – please contact us to register your place before Friday 26th February 2016 stating which session you wish to attend. Email [EmHarrison@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:EmHarrison@northamptonshire.gov.uk)



## Christmas Video games without the surprises!

Dear Santa, can I have Rise of the Tomb Raider for Christmas please...



## COMING SOON

In March 2016 IASS are planning to host two conferences in Northampton.

The Young Person Conference will be held at the Saints Rugby Ground and is aimed at young people with SEN. It will use the theme of Next Steps and Preparing for the Future. Students will be given the opportunity to participate in a range of activities including:

Finance – how to set up a bank account – led by Barclays Bank

Study Skills – run by either the Saints



# What's on the Web?

If you're a young person worried about your mental health there are many organisations which can help you.

YoungMinds does not offer advice to young people – our helpline service is for parents or carers worried about a child or young person.

- **Call** (for general enquiries about YoungMinds): **020 7089 5050**

## Northants CAMHS

### Children and Young People's Referral Management Centre (RMC)

**The RMC now provides a single point of referral for all Professionals.**

Any professional in the county (e.g. GP, teacher, health visitor, social worker) can now refer using one single referral form to one central place; the Referral Management Centre. Referrals are screened by a clinician from NHFT or NGH and then passed to the most appropriate service or services which best meet the needs of the child or young person – be that NHFT, NGH, a Specialist CAMHS response, youth counselling or youth-based group work.

For all referrals there is one integrated referral form. This is available from [www.nhft.nhs.uk/cyprmc](http://www.nhft.nhs.uk/cyprmc) alongside guidance on how to fill out the form.

The RMC can be contacted as follows for information and advice:

Tel: 0300 1111 022 Opening Hours Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm

## CHILDLINE

- Freephone **0800 1111** (24 hours)
- [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) | [online chat](#) | [message boards](#)

Childline is the UK's free helpline for children and young people. It provides confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem. It comforts, advises and protects.

## GET CONNECTED

- Freephone **0808 808 4994** (7 days a week 1pm-11pm)
- [www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)

Free, confidential telephone and email helpline finding young people the best help

whatever the problem. Provides free connections to local or national services, and can text information to callers' mobile phones.

## HEADMEDS

- [www.headmeds.org.uk](http://www.headmeds.org.uk)

Straight talk on mental health medication. Look up your medication to find out about side effects and things you might not feel comfortable asking your GP about, and listen to other people's experiences.

## SAMARITANS

- Tel: **08457 90 90 90** (24 hrs 7 days a week)
- [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Samaritans volunteers listen in confidence to anyone in any type of emotional distress, without judging or telling people what to do.

## FRANK

- **Freephone 0800 77 66 00** (24 hour service, free if call from a landline and won't show up on the phone bill, provides translation for non-English speakers)
- [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Confidential information and advice for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drug or solvent misuse.

## STONEWALL

- [What's in my area?](#)

Use Stonewall's area database to find local lesbian, gay, and bisexual community groups, other generic services, and gay friendly solicitors.

## B-EAT YOUTH HELPLINE

- **0845 634 7650** (Monday to Friday evenings from 4.30pm to 8.30pm and Saturdays 1.00pm - 4.30pm)
- Email [fyp@b-eat.co.uk](mailto:fyp@b-eat.co.uk)
- [Online community](#)

Information, help and support for anyone affected by eating disorders.

## THESITE.ORG

TheSite.org is an online guide to life for 16 to 25 year-olds. It provides non-judgemental support and information on everything from sex and exam stress to debt and drugs.

## YOUTH ACCESS

- Visit [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk) to search their directory of services for help in your area.
- Signposting service: **0208 772 9900** (Mon – Fri from 9am-1pm & 2-5pm)

A national membership organisation for youth information, advice and counselling agencies. Provides information on youth agencies to children aged 11-25 and their carers but does not provide direct advice.

## CHILDREN'S LEGAL CENTRE

- Child Law Advice Line **08088 020 008** (freephone)
- [www.lawstuff.org.uk](http://www.lawstuff.org.uk)

The Children's Legal Centre is a charity that promotes children's rights and gives legal advice and representation to children and young people.



**NHFT wants to find out if recent changes to services for children and young people has improved!**

Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) provides Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) across Northamptonshire.

NHFT wants to find out if recent changes to services for children and young people has improved or if there is still something else we can do to make the service better.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire (HWN) is the independent consumer champion for



health and social care in Northamptonshire. HWN ensures that local people have their say about the quality of services.

Over the next few weeks HWN will be asking young people and their families about their recent experience of CAMHS.

Everything you tell Healthwatch Northamptonshire is confidential and only the general themes will be fed back to NHFT. In this way we hope you will feel able to talk freely about your experience of care, including what could be better.

Please contact Kate Holt by email at [kateholt@healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk](mailto:kateholt@healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk) or phone 01604 892053 if you would like to be involved in giving Healthwatch Northamptonshire your views on CAMHS.



In October 2013, the Government launched the national cross-party manifesto for 1001 Critical Days which highlights the importance of early intervention in the 1001 days between conception to age 2 in order to enhance the outcomes for children.

Tim Loughton, MP for East Worthing & Shoreham and co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group Conception to Age 2: First 1001 Days, asserted that: "There is a growing acknowledgement that those first early years of a child's life are absolutely crucial. Getting it right as parents with professional help and public resource to support where needed has the potential to make a huge difference to how that child will grow into an adult contributing to society. Putting this approach at the heart of what Government does, across all party divides, has the potential to be life-changing literally which makes the work of the APPG so important."

The national manifesto is being officially re-launched on December 14th and you can find full details at <http://www.1001criticaldays.co.uk/>

In Northamptonshire we recognise the value of this work and will therefore support the national initiative by launching a local manifesto showing how we value the importance of support in the first 1001 days and how we intend to develop our services to ensure that all families have the support they need. The launch event will be held in January. The keynote speaker will be Andrea Leadsom MP who in her previous parliamentary role was instrumental in the creation of the original manifesto and, as a local MP continues to support the development of

this work in Northamptonshire.

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