



Parenting during pandemic

Day 36: Impact of exercise and physical activity on mental health

As the governments of the UK are beginning to relax rules on outside exercise during the continued lockdown, we thought it may be useful to think about the impact of exercise and physical activity on mental health. When we exercise, there is a release of endorphins in our systems which is known to make us feel happy. So beyond the physical benefits of exercise for our muscle systems, cardiac function and so on, exercise has a positive impact on mental health.

In previous blogs we have talked about the fact that when people feel down, they often start to lack motivation to do things and their physical activity can go down. This means less release of endorphins which would have made them feel happier so they can become more down and this can start a vicious cycle. Lockdown may have meant reduced physical activity for both children and adults meaning less release of endorphins and therefore less associated happy feeling. With the relaxing of rules around the amount of time we can now exercise outside, there may be opportunity for people to increase their exercise therefore increasing the release of endorphins and making people feel happier.

If you or your children have been feeling down during the pandemic and lockdown, it may be helpful to start to build in some physical activity into the daily schedule. This can start with simple exercise or activity and if this is done regularly, there can be an impact on mood.

Psychological theories link physical reaction with our thoughts, feelings and behaviours. This means that if we change our physical activity, there can be an impact on how we feel, think and act. All of these things are factors in our overall mental health and are important to our wellbeing. This is the case for both children and adults.

It may be helpful, therefore, to think about the amount of physical activity you and your children are managing during lockdown and to consider whether any change to this might impact your mental health at this time.



We hope these tips are helpful. Well done on managing another day off school and we hope you will join us again tomorrow.

Please contact us with questions, comments or topics you'd like to see covered. We'd love to hear your feedback.

Wishing you a safe and healthy path through this pandemic.