World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day is marked every year on 10 October as a reminder of the importance of mental health to our overall wellbeing. Mental health challenges can affect anyone: children, teens, and adults alike. Recognising this helps us reduce stigmas to build more compassionate and supportive environments.

Parents and caregivers play a central role in shaping the mental health of their children. World Mental Health Day is an opportunity to pause and reflect on the pressures young people face in today's world and how we can best support them. Whether it's helping them find balance between school, technology and rest, encouraging open conversations about feelings, or modelling healthy coping strategies ourselves, taking small steps at home can make a big difference. By engaging with resources and discussions on this day, families can strengthen their understanding of mental health and contribute to a culture where seeking help is seen as a sign of strength, not weakness.

What you can do on World Mental Health Day:

1. **Discuss the purpose of this day:**
Explain that by asking friends and family if they're okay shows that you care and helps prevent isolation. Try and relate this to some of their own experiences and friendships.

2. **Create a safe space for your child:**
Make it clear that you're available to listen to them whenever they want to talk. Ensure your child knows they can share their thoughts, their feelings and any of their experiences with you without judgement.

3. **Discuss the importance of emotions:**
Engage your child in conversations about emotions, clarifying that it's okay to feel sad, anxious, or stressed. Share emotions too, so they see it's normal to talk about your feelings.

4. **Identify supportive relationships:**
Guide your child to recognise the trusted people in their lives that they can turn to when they need support, such as family members, teachers, community members or school counsellors.

5. **Teach your child to listen actively:**
Explain the importance of listening carefully when someone shares their thoughts or feelings. Highlight the significance of giving their full attention and showing empathy.

6. **Address any mental health stigmas:**
Remind your child that seeking help is not considered a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength. Try sharing stories of some well-known individuals who have openly discussed their own struggles.

7. **Discuss other accessible resources:**
Introduce your child to age-appropriate resources like apps, books, videos or websites that provide further information about mental health, coping strategies and seeking help.

8. **Plan an activity with your child:**
Engage in a creative activity together, like an art project, cooking dinner, or writing a story, that will allow your child to express their feelings. Use this as an opportunity to continue the conversation about mental health.