

# THE Spark NEWSLETTER

## QUESTION TIME

We will have a question for every issue that we want you to get involved in and answer. We will add a poll to each issue and we will reveal the results in the following issue. This half-term question is:

**Do you feel supported with your mental health in your school?**

A link to the poll is at the bottom of the page. Please vote by 1st August.

## QUOTE OF THE HALF-TERM

**"A PERSON CAN ACHIEVE EVERYTHING BY BEING SIMPLE AND HUMBLE" - THE VEDAS**

**"SAYING NO CAN BE THE BEST FORM OF SELF CARE"**

**"YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO BE HAPPY BEING ANYONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF" - THIBAUT**

## KEEPING ACTIVE

BY JOEY HUSSELL

Now that restrictions are being eased and life is beginning to feel normal once again, let's take a moment to reflect on last year's quarantine period and the monumental effect it had on people's mental health and the ripples that will be felt for long to come.

During those months of isolation last year, everyone's lives were changed dramatically. Some more than others and for some it was unsurvivable. Domestic abuse cases rose concerningly as well as the number of people struggling with anxiety and loneliness. Whilst there is a high number of extreme cases we must remember that almost everyone's mental health suffered.

There were big changes for everyone and as the isolation took its toll even the most positive people would've begun to miss things in their lives. Smaller tasks that we took for granted became things we were dreaming of doing once again and people struggled to get through the spring months of last year and the winter of this year. One area of our lives which was cut off was sport which has always been a welcome escape for millions of people from all walks of life. Sports are a great way to stay in shape and make people feel confident about their fitness as well as great fun and a way of connecting with a wide range of people. As a result, all 3 of those things were missing from many people's lives for several months. We can now again begin to enjoy the finer things in life and appreciate them greater than we ever did before and reconnect with society doing the things we enjoy.



## SOCIAL ANXIETY

BY BRIDIE DOWNING

Restrictions have started to ease (Whoop!) but please remember we are still in a pandemic!

Many people suffer from increased social anxiety are just anxious due to covid. Therefore, please do not put pressure on people to hang out or go places. The truth is, a lot of us have forgotten how to socialise. Sure going back to school has given us fresh air and the opportunity to talk to others. However, we must stay mindful of the restrictions that are put in place to protect us.

One thing I've learnt from this lockdown (other than the constant need for hand sanitiser) is that sometimes spending time alone is healthy and much like everyone else, it's a reality we've been forced to face. Many people suffered from mental health issues during lockdown, that could be either new or preexisting so when planning to hang out or thinking for things to do - go easy on yourself. Lockdown was a whirlwind of emotions and some people fared better than others with the isolation. There is no need to rush these events and experiences. Yes, we only live once and have been in lockdown for what feels like a century but please don't burn yourself out.

Wear your mask; don't force yourself to do things if you aren't ready. Things will be easier to manage soon.

# SHOULD CREATIVE SUBJECTS BE DROPPED?

BY JOSEPH CARTER

There is an undeniable, positive link between taking part in creative activities and mental health. Whether creativity provides a distraction from the world or helps to explore real world themes in a safe and controlled environment, there is much evidence to suggest that being creative can improve somebody's mental health.

When the British government announced it would be cutting 50% of funding

towards art and design subjects at universities, the plans faced much criticism. Instead of the funding going towards creative subjects, it will instead be directed towards subjects that can support the NHS in future years (science, technology, engineering, etc). However, many people believe that the arts subjects should be prioritised in the same way because of the beneficial effects creativity has on mental wellbeing.



For example, creativity helps people express or manage their emotions in a positive way that they may not have been able to do without the use of the arts. Painting, drawing, photography and writing are common ways people communicate complex emotions. Furthermore, the concentration required to create art can absorb your attention to an extent that it becomes a form of meditation. This flow state can increase happiness.

TO READ THE REST OF THE ARTICLE  
HEAD TO OUR BLOG: LINK AT THE  
BOTTOM

## SCOLIOSIS

BY TEGAN PHILLIPS

Scoliosis is a medical condition that causes the spine to curve in the shape of an 'S' or 'C'. Scoliosis can be caused genetically, naturally, or due to an accident. There are ways of treatment but the most effective way is to surgically correct it. Scoliosis affects an estimated 3-4% of teenagers in the UK. The most common age for people to develop scoliosis is between the ages 10-15 years old with girls more likely to develop it than boys. The surgery consists of two titanium rods screwed to your spine, made of the same material screws: it's called spinal fusion.

What people don't realize is, surgery can have a massive effect on your mental health. Most people with scoliosis feel alone as it isn't always a visible disability which could lead to anxiety, depression, or even little to no confidence. But knowing you are not alone helps. Some celebrities such as Usain Bolt and Princess Eugenie have scoliosis.

Scoliosis affects your mental health in many ways but the main issue is confidence issues. People feel different due to the fact that their clothes hang differently because of the curve of the spine creating a "hump" on their back as it pushes the shoulder and/or the rib cage out. This makes them feel excluded and different as they might not feel confident enough to wear the clothes they want to wear or their friends are wearing. Other factors can include pain. Due to the spine not being straight, pain is a big factor as it leads to loss of motivation and also not wanting to socialise with friends or go outside.

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OUR BACKS TELL STORIES  
NO BOOKS HAVE THE SPINE  
TO CARRY

After spinal fusion, mental health conditions are very likely due to the massive trauma your body has just been through. I felt left out and very down

I had missed a lot of school and I didn't know what was happening or what was the main topic at school amongst my friends. Due to the imbalance of chemicals in your body, trying to adjust to life after surgery is difficult as you can't go back to how you were before and you have to learn coping methods to make your life easier.

I think that speaking out about surgery and how medical conditions can affect your mental health is important because after surgery everyone expects you to be fine where maybe you might not be.

## ANIMAL FACT

Did you know that Turtles breathe through their bottoms!

For more information look at the link below:  
<http://bit.ly/turtles-breathing>



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THE SPARK  
NEWSLETTER

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PAGE 2