



The Ladder Group
We rise by lifting others.

www.theladdergroup.net

Robert G. Ingersoll (1833–1899)

Information for Young People and their Families

Dear Parent / Carer

We all want children to have a happy and carefree journey to adulthood. However, children can experience challenging feelings about themselves and those around them which can create uncertainty and anxiety, often impacting on a young person's self-esteem and behaviour at home and in school.

For parents, this can be a worrying and challenging time and occasionally, regardless of a parent's efforts, children can find it hard to express their anxieties as they develop and relationships can become strained. Sometimes, it can be easier to talk to someone outside the family or school and that is where our team can help.

The Ladder Group provides professional, confidential and safe support to allow families the opportunity to explore and understand challenging circumstances and develop coping strategies for the future. We work with local authorities, community organisations, charities and schools to provide accessible social, emotional, professional mentoring and counselling support. Our team is experienced at supporting a wide range of issues both at home, in school and at work including motivation, low self-esteem, anxiety, bullying, loss and bereavement, physical and emotional issues, relationship difficulties, sexuality, exams and social media pressures.

Mentoring and counselling are different from talking to a friend, family member, colleague or a member of school staff. A professional mentor and counsellor:

- is professionally trained and won't be overwhelmed by your issues.
- is separate from your life and can provide a more objective viewpoint.
- has years of training and experience in listening and guiding in a supportive way.
- can support you but also challenge your thinking when you need it.
- puts you at the centre and doesn't get distracted by other things.
- Refer you onto other professionals when appropriate.

Please read the information attached and then feel free to get in touch to discuss how we might be able to help you or any questions you might have.

Yours sincerely

LK Whitworth

QGM, BSc(Hons), MSc(Psych), PGCE, NPQH, MBPsS

lee@theladdergroup.net

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For Parents and Carers

Our primary role is the safety and welfare of the young people and adults in our care. Our support is bound by the same professional standards and expectations as all educational and health professionals. To this effect our support is confidential however if our staff feel that a child, young person or adult has disclosed something that might put them or others at risk then they are professionally obliged to share that with our Safeguarding Lead who will then decide if any follow up action is required. Exceptions to confidentiality are disclosures related to possible harm to self and or to others, money laundering, acts of terrorism, drug trafficking and child protection issues.

Should such a situation arise then please be assured that the matter will be dealt with at the lowest appropriate level, discretely and sensitively and whoever is appropriate e.g. parents, school etc. will be contacted by our Safeguarding Lead and the matter dealt in the interests of the safety and confidentiality of those involved.

How you can help your son / daughter engage with their support:

- If your child is attending a face to face session make sure the journey to and from is easy, organised and stress free. If they feel uncomfortable about going on their own, go with them, even if you have to wait outside. Avoid adding any anxiety by doing anything that may make them feel self-conscious.
 - **Please note it is your responsibility as their parent / carer to ensure your child arrives safely and on time to attend their support session and then returns home safely afterwards, just like attending school. Please note, if they arrive late, their session will still finish at the same prearranged time.**
- **Cancelling a session.** Only a parent or teacher can cancel a session. If you need to cancel a session please give us at least 48 hours notice and we will endeavour to reschedule your session. If you give less than 48 hours notice we cannot guarantee this and it is possible you will lose this session.
- Be accommodating of any changes in mood as they reflect and process their support sessions and try new things. Your child may feel that you won't understand so don't be pushy but let them know that you care.
- After each session please remember our detailed session support is confidential to them, so please don't ask your child directly about their conversations as it might break trust and add to their worries. However if circumstances arise and they ask to talk to you, let them. If they do, suggest a time and place that is good for you both, where you have enough time to have a proper conversation without being interrupted. Try and use the same place each time to have these conversations.
 - With children under 18 we will provide a summary of our support to parents, school, CAMHS etc. as appropriate, when requested, to ensure that a child receives 360 degrees of understanding and support from all those involved in their care and to ensure continuity in any onward referral.
- Providing support is often a case of listening and being empathetic, rather than trying to find answers and fix. Stay calm and positive, be the "grown up", expect the unexpected and 'manage yourself' if they choose to be open with you and say things you aren't expecting or find challenging yourself ... or about yourself!
- Allow them to express themselves freely and without consequence or fear of judgement. Be a good listener, have good eye contact, nod and acknowledge what they say. Ask only open, general and supportive questions to help them reflect and articulate their thoughts and feelings. Avoid offering judgements or opinions. If they ask you to, avoid doing so by asking them what they think first and what's led them to think so.
- If your child spends 90% of the time talking and you only 10% then you're getting it about right!
- If a young person is having online support please ensure:
 - they have somewhere they feel is safe, calm and confidential to talk to their support on-line (ask them if they think it is)? Would you be happy having a confidential conversation similarly?
 - they've got a reliable internet connection and a device that will allow them to video conference for an hour?