

Dear All,

Hello again from all of us at Making Me!

I hope that this term has not been too stressful for you all. As ever, I am mindful that each and every one of you has overcome both personal as well as professional struggles and difficulties in order to be able to continue to deliver the academic learning and emotional support that our children so desperately need. Without wanting to sound in any way patronising, can I please take this opportunity to say a very big THANK YOU to each and every one of you!

A graphic with the words 'THANK YOU!' in large, colorful, block letters. 'THANK' is in green, pink, blue, and red. 'YOU!' is in yellow, pink, and blue with an exclamation mark.

Some news about Making Me

As ever, we have been very busy at Making Me during this second lockdown and we are very excited to announce the product of our labours in the form of our new website - <https://www.makingme.org.uk/>.

We owe a huge debt of thanks to the team at PHEW!, a website design and software company owned by the father of children attending one of our 'Making Me' schools, who very kindly updated and re-designed our website for us, completely free of charge. Please do take a look, we are truly delighted with the results.

Another change that I would like to make you aware of at our end, is the development of our **School Engagement Manager** and **School Relationship Manager** roles. The plan is that all of our schools who have introduced our Programme will be linked with one of our lovely School Relationship Managers so that you have an immediate point of contact going forward should you need anything further from us or should we need to make contact with you about any developments or additional resources at our end. Any new schools will be helped to introduce and embed the Programme by one of our School Engagement Managers.

As well as an attempt at ensuring that you are given the help and support you need, we also want to be sure that we continue our relationship with you – after all, your schools are dynamic organisations with ever changing staff and pupil challenges. The Programme we offer is all



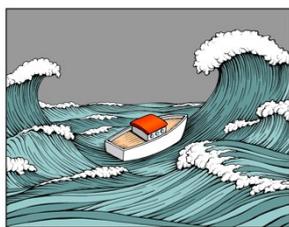
about the need for, and the value of, relationship so it makes absolute sense that we would offer this to you at the very core of what we do. To that end, if you are contacted in the new year by either Holly (Central Beds) or Lucy (Beds Borough), please do say hello and know that they are there to help and support you in any way they can going forward.

Testing times, but we are so nearly there....

Like me, many of you will have woken up to the news this morning that the Pfizer vaccine has been signed off for distribution in the UK, with, hopefully, the others to follow soon. Maybe also like me, you may be feeling a slight sense of 'Can I really begin to hope that this might be over?'.

This pandemic has been a long haul. By the time we are all vaccinated and life returns to a semblance of normal, it will be around a year since the nightmare of COVID began! I'm not sure any of us quite anticipated that when we first locked down back in March! I have written about everybody's unique experience of this journey a number of times – we may have all been in the

same storm, but across our communities, and even within our own families, we have definitely not all been in the same boat.



For me personally, this last lockdown has been hard. Already low on resources, finding the additional reserves needed to continue to offer support and positivity, both to myself as well as to the people in my world, has been difficult at times – ‘rollercoaster’, would be one way of putting it, ‘moody’ is probably more the word my family would use!

I took some comfort recently when I listened to (another) lecture about the impact of the COVID pandemic on our emotional wellbeing. Broadly speaking, the nature of our current circumstances means that we are operating from two opposing emotional ‘systems’ all the time – faced with all the loss (actual loss of a loved one, or the loss of ‘living’ - experiencing, enjoying, connecting) means that we need to ‘shut down’ our emotional system to contain or process the feelings of loss. At the same time, we are needing to be permanently vigilant, for our own wellbeing and that of our loved ones, as well as the wellbeing of all the people in our care. This ‘hyper-vigilance’ requires us to operate our ‘fight-flight’ emotional response system – the complete opposite to what is required if we are to process grief and loss. Add to this the fact that we have all been operating from this place of hyper-vigilance for some considerable months – even though this is an ‘emergency’ response system – and perhaps it explains a little bit why life has been not only tricky and resources have felt low, but also why we may feel exposed and, dare I say it, even a little emotionally unbalanced at times.



So, if like me you are feeling like you are operating on a rollercoaster of emotions, please be assured – you’re not going mad- not according to the science anyway - you’re just running on your reserve tank which itself is running very, very low.



In light of this and as I have so often done during the past few months, I am going to end this Newsletter with a plea to all of you; PLEASE do what you can to look after yourself and your own wellbeing over the coming Christmas break. Settling our own snow can often be the last thing we focus on, but if we are at least aware of our need for self-care and why we might need it, we are making a step in the right direction.

I look forward to, hopefully, seeing lots more of you all in the coming year – I have really missed you all. Thank you for keeping in touch and, as I said at the beginning, for continuing to use our resources to **SEE, HEAR** and **HOLD** the children in your care throughout this time. Until the next time, I wish you and all your school communities, a very “**HAPPY CHRISTMAS**” with every blessing for the coming year!

With our very best wishes,

Liz and the team

