

Be More Outdoors is a registered charity based in the Colne Valley with over eleven years experience in delivering outdoor activities to children, families and a host of organisations including many local schools.

We are offering families a **free** opportunity to participate in our small group **Therapeutic Forest Schools** programme. This programme is aimed at families with children experiencing low to moderate anxiety or mental health difficulties, who would benefit from a small group session in the outdoors, with access to advice from a clinical psychologist.

These sessions to enable children, and their families, to experience the proven benefits of nature on wellbeing and mental health.

Therapeutic forest schools offers achievable challenges and supports taking positive risks such as shelter building, nature art, using tools safely, climbing, woodland crafts and campfire cooking. This can lead to:

- the development of practical skills – supporting gross and fine motor skills, improved physical health and improved motor abilities
- a better understanding of self – your own feelings and how to manage them, your strengths and challenges and improved self-discipline.
- more acceptance of others, kindness, care, forgiveness and respect.
- the development of a growth mindset – where we can become more comfortable having a go at a new challenge or being brave.
- the opportunity to problem-solve during hands-on experiences,
- the development of more independent and self-confidence

Our sessions begin with attendees coming together to participate in an informal discussion around “**Keeping safe**”, and to meet and greet, which we find to be useful in building confidence in the setting and routine. That said, should any child be unwilling to participate in this or any aspect of the sessions, that is fine. Our aim is for children and adults to feel safe and enjoy their time with us.

The keeping safe discussion is then usually followed by a story which may be seasonal, nature based or a traditional or familiar tale. Within the story is a link to an activity or craft. This enables the child to take home a reminder of the session and to stimulate discussion at home.

We recognises the important role that food and drink play in bringing people together and as such, every session will have a food element to it with all special dietary requirements catered for. We also serve bottomless hot drinks to everyone.

None of the activities are compulsory and anyone choosing to simply sit by the fire and socialise (*or not*) or play in the space will be welcome to do so.

The sessions are staffed by forest school practitioners and a clinical psychologist. This staff team believe that being in nature at the site is a safe space for children and their carers to experience a healthy range of emotions, through all the challenges of social interaction, to experience some quiet time and to build resilience. In addition to this, the clinical psychologist is able to offer individual insights and guidance that may help in supporting your child’s development.

The programme of six sessions will take place weekly at our Horse Field site in Slaithwaite

(SEE BELOW FOR DATES AND TIMES)

All of our sessions take place outdoors, but we have shelter from the rain and fires for warmth and cooking. As this programme is running outdoors, would advise all participants to dress in layers of clothing to help keep warm and to wear walking/snow boots or wellies with two pairs of socks.

If you or your child does not own suitable warm or waterproof clothing, please get in touch as we do have clothing that we can loan to you for the duration of the programme.

Similarly, if you feel that transport to the session is a barrier to attending, please get in touch, as we have financial support for transport available.

We have a composting toilet on site along with hand washing facilities and antibacterial gel dispensers.

At this time we would ask that a single adult accompanies a single child, this allows us to maximise the numbers of families who can participate. However, should you need to bring a sibling along to the session, owing to child care issues or an extra adult to help you, please get in touch and we will do our utmost to accommodate your needs.

What to do next

To register interest in the programme, please contact Dr Samantha Walker, the clinical psychologist for the programme. Once we have a cohort of attendees, successful applicants will be contacted by Dr Walker for an informal introduction and discussion on how we can make your time with us both enjoyable and productive.

For further information on the sessions or the site, please contact Alan Scully the programme Lead Practitioner on 07980 898113 or by email, info@bemoreoutdoors.org

For further information on the Therapeutic aspects of the programme and on the evaluation process, please contact Dr Samantha Walker by email on DrWalker@bemoreoutdoors.org.

We look forward to meeting you and hope that you will enjoy your time with us.

Further details on how to find our site will be sent should you decide to participate in the programme.

With thanks

Alan Scully
BMO Lead Practitioner

All sessions will run in the morning between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm

DAY	DATE	TIME
SUNDAY	2nd October	10.30 am - 12.30 pm
SUNDAY	9th October	10.30 am - 12.30 pm
SATURDAY	15th October	10.30 am - 12.30 pm
SATURDAY	22nd October	10.30 am - 12.30 pm
SATURDAY	29th October	10.30 am - 12.30 pm
SUNDAY	6th November	10.30 am - 12.30 pm

We understand that committing to a programme of six consecutive dates can be challenging but if you cannot commit to at least five of the dates, please let us know when you apply. We will be running the programme next year and you may find the new dates more suitable.

