

**Mental Health -
Identifying and Supporting
our school community**



Tuesday 11th June 2019

What is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

The strength and capacity of our minds to grow and develop, to be able to overcome difficulties and challenges and to make the most of our abilities and opportunities.

www.mentalhealth.gov.uk

Young Minds,
2006



Mental Health in Childhood



Facts and Figures



28% of pre-school children face problems that have an impact on their psychological development.

- 10% of children and young people aged 5-16 experience anxiety and depression.
- At least 3% of children suffer from anxiety disorders but relatively few are referred for treatment. Meltzer et al (2000)
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression. Over 8,000 children aged under ten years old suffer from severe depression. Office for National Statistics, 2004



5 THINGS WE SHOULD ALL DO:

- 1) **Start talking about mental health.**
- 2) **Create safe spaces.**
- 3) **Support for all.**
- 4) **Make sure we know how to help.**
- 5) **Recognise that it takes a 'village'.**



MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES

- Body scan
- Fingers clockwise around hand
- Clasp hands with relaxation music
- Finding anchors to use
- Techniques such as breathing in - count to 10, breathing out - count to 10



Teaching about Mental Health

(Helping in the long term)

The aim is to increase awareness and understanding in order to:

- Give children a language to talk about their own and others' mental health
- Reduce stigma, negative viewpoints and prejudice
- Reduce fear of the unknown
- Ensure they understand that recovery from mental illness is possible and likely
- Know how and where to get help when needed



Mental Health on a scale of 1-10



Resilient

Vulnerable



What can you, as a parent, do to help your child with anxiety or depression?

- **Be positive** - smile when you see the child, show that you are pleased to see them, make every day a fresh start.
- **Listen** - take time to find out how the day is going, what happened at the weekend, why playtime went wrong etc. If "now" is not the time, tell them when will be!
- **Talk to them** - share your thoughts and experiences, be honest and open when possible, share your fears and anxieties, talk as a whole class about emotions.
- **Notice but don't question** -
'I noticed that you seemed a bit stressed this morning.
Is there any way I can help?'



What we do in school?

- Member of the Greater Manchester Schools Mental Health programme
- Headteacher and Deputy completed MH Champion Training
- Staff trained in MH First Aid
- Year 5 pupils completed Children's Champion MH Training
- Pupil **Well-Being Team** completed Children's Champion MH Training
- **ALGEE** approach
- All year 5 pupils completed MH First Aid
- Close links with CAMHS
- Practise Mindfulness techniques



What we do in school?

- Provide 'Reflection Time' and use of reflection areas
- Active Well-Being Team
- Have 'Worry Eaters' in classrooms
- Help them to become more socially confident by praising everyday activities; choose them to take messages to others
- Ask them to buddy another anxious child (buddy stop/benches)
- Provide alternatives at unstructured times (eg board games; quiet areas)
- Plan and encourage exercise (bouts of activity) & healthy eating (This can be as effective as medication)
- Mindfulness bags



What we do in school?



- Teach emotional literacy - explain the meaning of words like sad, depressed, upset, anxious (and happy, calm, safe etc) so that children can talk about their feelings appropriately.
- School counsellors (Place 2be and Wigan Family Welfare)
- Trusted adult as a point of contact
- Time out and Quiet spaces
- Social Skills groups e.g. Talkabout, Socially Speaking, Circle of Friends
- Resilience lessons
- Encourage all children to identify, affirm , use and celebrate their strengths
- **Teach about Mental Health and Well Being**

Teach children how to take care of their own mental health eg...

Five Ways to Wellbeing



1. Connect – talk and listen to others
2. Be active – do what you enjoy
3. Take notice – the simple things
4. Keep learning – embrace new experiences
5. Give – your time, your words and your presence



THINGS YOU CAN DO:



**Calm colours such as yellow
(dyslexia friendly)**

Doodle wall/board/books

**Checking in – thumbs
up/thumbs down/face
pebbles**

**Well-being ambassador – mind
medicine prescriptions**

**Bouts of exercise – BBC super
movers/Daily Mile/go for a
walk**

Random acts of kindness

**Well-being space – reflection
area**

Sand timers for silence

**Well-being area –space in the
garden**

Well-being bags

Counselling

Reading

Music for relaxation

Help cards and Colour feel wheels

Make something – crafts

Laughing monkey

Recipes for well-being – first aid kit

Useful resources and website

Ask school for advice

Five a day mental health

Make an appointment with yourself

**Build your own mental health
toolbox for your family and
yourselves**

Useful Websites, Publications, Books and Resources

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/454495/Childrens_Mental_Health_EasyRead.pdf

www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools-2

www.youngminds.org.uk

The Mental Health Handbook for Primary Schools – Belinda Heaven
(Speechmark)

Helping Young People Manage Anxiety – Carol Fitzpatrick

‘Worry Eaters’ – google for best prices!



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- Enhances self-esteem.
- Self-worth can be corrected (deal with negative messages).
- Build resilience.
- Develop cognitive and emotional coping skills.
- Overcome adversity.
- Deal with challenging behaviours.
- More equipped to deal with emotions.
- Provide the tools to deal with hardship.
- Build long term resilience (self regulation).
- Economy and health service reductions.



***‘It is easier to build
strong children than
to fix broken men’***

Frederick Douglas

