



Safeguarding & Child Protection at Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

10 October is World Mental Health Day

Mental health problems can affect anyone, any day of the year, but 10 October is a great day to show your support for better mental health and start looking after your own wellbeing.

Lockdown is having a devastating effect on children and young people's mental health. It's been unbelievably hard, but together, we can make a difference and show young people they are not alone.

Mental health is a big issue for young people...

- 1 in 8 children have a diagnosable mental health disorder – that's roughly 3 children in every classroom
- 1 in 6 young people aged 16-24 has symptoms of a common mental disorder such as depression or an anxiety disorder
- Half of all mental health problems manifest by the age of 14, with 75% by age 24
- In 2017, suicide was the most common cause of death for both boys (16.2% of all deaths) and girls (13.3%) aged between 5 and 19
- Nearly half of 17-19 year olds with a diagnosable mental health disorder has self-harmed or attempted suicide at some point, rising to 52.7% for young women

It has a big impact in adulthood...

- 1 in 3 adult mental health conditions relate directly to adverse childhood experience.
- Adults who experienced four or more adversities in their childhood are four times more likely to have low levels of mental wellbeing and life satisfaction



Support available in school

includes:

Learning Mentor 1:1

ELSA support assistants

Lego therapy

Horticultural Therapy

Sensory Circuits

My Happy Minds

Dove body image

School health from 0-19 service

Self harm - The term 'self-harm' usually refers to someone intentionally causing themselves harm. Self harm is usually a physical response to an emotional pain. It can also include self-neglect and engaging in risky behaviour. Self-harm is often a coping mechanism however, everyone's reasons for self harming are individual to themselves.

Anxiety - We can all feel anxious when we are worried. However, anxiety can become a problem if we have anxious feelings that ; Last a long time; are out of proportion to the situation; feel so strong that we start to avoid situations and events; cause us to have panic attacks, or make us feel out of control.

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, overleaf is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Jayne Jones

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Carly Hughes

Useful Acronyms and Vocabulary

CEOP - Child Exploitation and On-line Protection Centre

CYC—Cheshire Young Carers

CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

KSCIE - Keeping Children Safe in Education

RSE - Relationships and Sex Education

ELSA - Emotional Literacy Support Assistants

Useful Websites

youngminds.org.uk

nspcc.org.uk

childline.org.uk

cheshireyoungcarers.org

ldas.org.uk

papyrus-uk.org

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



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#WakeUpWednesday

1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

Are you sure?

3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



Sources of Information and Support

Your GP
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/v/>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>