

'Mental health: let's talk the talk'

Parents' guide

Aimed at parents
and carers of
children and
young people



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Introduction

We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health...

Being a parent is not always an easy task, however it can be so rewarding to see your child thrive and grow. To ensure that your child has the best opportunities it is vital for you both to understand mental wellbeing and the impacts of mental health stigma.

Most people have good mental health most of the time, but the number of children who experience a mental health problem is growing.

If you haven't spoken about mental health in your family, you're not alone.

Here are the stats about 'nonversation':



Three children in every classroom experience mental health issues

55%

A poll of more than 1,100 parents found that 55 per cent had not spoken about stress, anxiety or depression to their children

45%

45 per cent of parents felt they did not need to have the conversation because mental health "was not an issue"

20%

Of those, 20 per cent said they did not know how to address the issue

What is mental health?

Mental health is the emotional strength that enables us to enjoy life and endure things like pain, disappointment and sadness. It influences the way we think and how we see ourselves, as well as the way that we interpret others and everyday life.

Mental health can have a huge impact on our ability to learn, communicate and enjoy relationships.



Here are some ideas about what good mental health enables us to do:

- **develop mentally, emotionally and spiritually**
- **have healthy relationships with other people**
- **be happy spending time on our own**
- **be aware of other people's feelings**
- **play and learn effectively**
- **develop a clear sense of right and wrong**
- **resolve problems and learn from them**

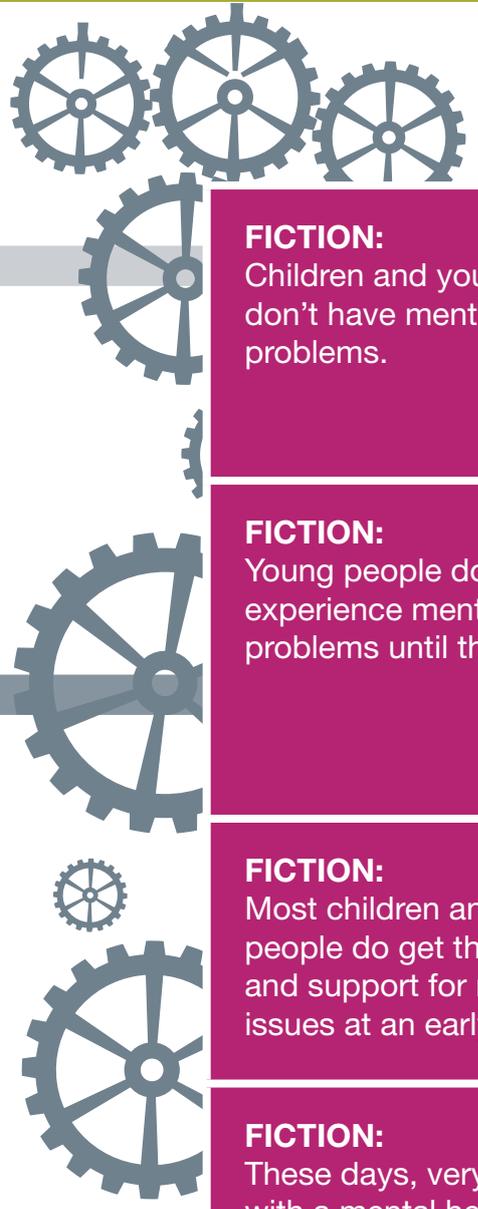
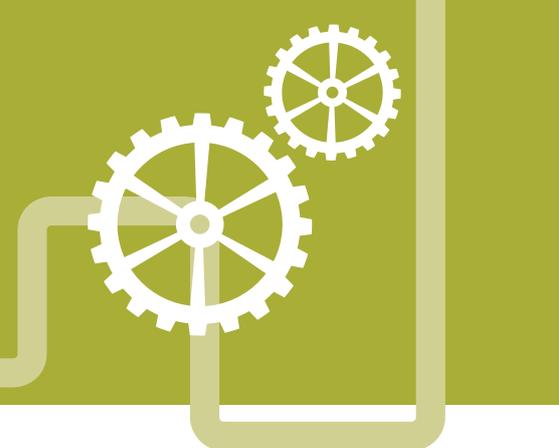
(Taken from Bright Future, Mental Health Foundation)

Mental health problems can be thought of as being on a spectrum, ranging from poor general mental wellbeing (how you are feeling and how you cope with day to day life), right through to severe mental health problems (such as bi-polar disorder or schizophrenia) – and anything in between.

Mental health problems can present themselves differently, as does the way we cope with them. Some people overcome situations quickly while others can be affected for a long time.

Mental health stigma and discrimination contributes to why people are held back from getting better. It can prevent us from talking to people about how we are feeling. There is no shame in talking about mental health problems; mental health is everyone's business.

The fact-ory



FICTION:

Children and young people don't have mental health problems.

FACT:

One in ten young people (aged 5-16 years old) will experience a diagnosable mental health problem. That's approximately three in every classroom. (*Young Minds*)

FICTION:

Young people don't experience mental health problems until they are older.

FACT:

Although less common in younger children, mental health problems can develop at any age. Many mental health problems in adulthood occur as a result of problems during childhood. (*Rethink Mental Illness*)

FICTION:

Most children and young people do get the right help and support for mental health issues at an early stage.

FACT:

Most children and young people (70 per cent) don't get the right help and support at an early stage. (*Taken from Mental Health Foundation*)

FICTION:

These days, very few people with a mental health problem experience stigma and discrimination.

FACT:

In fact, nowadays, most people with a mental health problem (nine out of ten) experience stigma and discrimination. (*Time to Change*)

FICTION:

All people with mental health problems are unpredictable and violent.

FACT:

People with mental health problems are significantly more likely to be victims of violence than they are to be violent. (*Time to Change*)



Talking tips

Mental health shouldn't be a taboo topic.

Often our mental wellbeing is affected by a 'trigger' situation or event (e.g. bullying, educational difficulties, death of someone close to us etc.)

However, sometimes there is no clear reason why we experience poor mental health. You play a critical role in knowing when your child might need help. Regular, short chats with your child about how they are feeling can really help you to pick up any signs of changes to their emotional wellbeing and give them help and support at the earliest possible stage.

Take the opportunity to talk. You don't have to set aside time to specifically talk about mental health. Small and informal chats in the car or while making dinner are often the best way of engaging your child in discussion.

Talking helps. Many young people experiencing mental health issues can help themselves and are often very keen to do so. Simply chatting to someone they trust can make a lot of difference.

Don't push. If your child doesn't want to open up, let the subject go, then repeat the process at another time. Showing that you're available and open to conversation means they will be more likely to come to you, should they need to.

Be patient. There are times that your child won't feel like talking

It's OK. If your child expresses their feelings, reassure them that it is okay to feel the way they do. What may not seem a big deal to you may be having a real impact on your child

Ask simple questions. "How was your day?" or "how did it go?" are great ways of encouraging your child to open up about their feelings.

Healthy body, healthy mind

Physical activity

All children, regardless of their physical abilities, can become active. Being physically active can have a big impact on your child's emotional wellbeing. Physical activity encourages children to connect with each other, learn about trust and cooperation. These are all ways to build a child's self esteem and improve their emotional wellbeing.



Diet

Good food, good mood. A healthy balanced diet can help your child to think clearer and have more energy.



Sleep

Making sure your child gets enough sleep is important to help them think clearer the next day and enjoy their activities.



Friendships

Your child's emotional wellbeing will also benefit from having time to relax and have fun. Friendships play a big role in emotional health and wellbeing and, as your child grows up, they become more and more important. Listen to any concerns that they have about these. You could even try role play to enable your child to practice skills such as sharing and compromising, which is an important part of maintaining friendships.

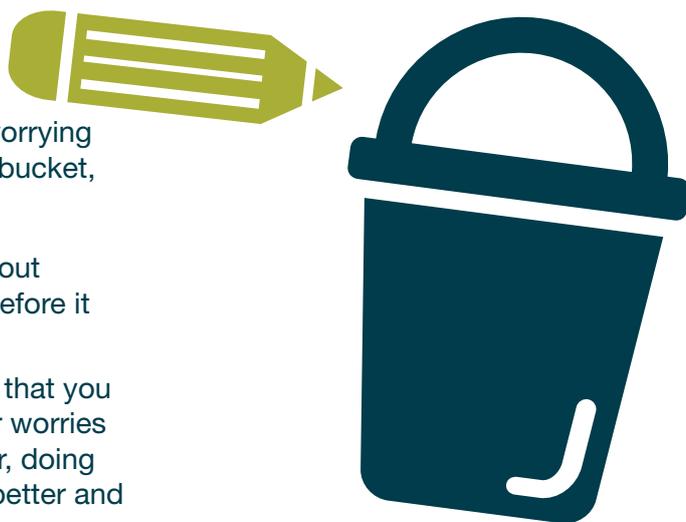


Play it, think it

Activities ideas...make time...make it fun

Stress bucket

- Draw out a big bucket shape,
- Discuss with your child anything that's worrying them at the moment. Write these on the bucket,
- Draw some holes on the bucket,
- Explain that the holes will help to empty out some of these worries from the bucket before it overflows,
- Have a chat with your child about things that you can both do to help them cope with their worries (e.g. spending more time talking together, doing physical activity, eating better, sleeping better and having more time to relax and have fun).



When to seek help

Of course you can seek advice from professionals at any time.

Feeling sad or down is part of typical human experience.

If these feelings continue over a long period of time and stop your child from functioning in day-to-day life then it may be worth getting some professional advice or support. There are a number of professionals that have a lot of experience in helping people with mental health issues:

- GPs
- Teachers
- Health visitors
- School nurses
- School support workers
- Social services
- Voluntary agencies
- Counsellor or child therapists
- Child psychologists
- Paediatricians
- Educational psychologists
- Youth Workers
- Youth Offending Team (YOT)
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)



Sources of advice and support for parents

Service	Available to...	How to access service...
Kooth	Free online support, advice and counselling for your child (aged 11-19 years).	Online via www.kooth.com
Windsor & Maidenhead Youth & Community Counselling Service	Free and confidential counselling for young people aged 11-25 years. Service now available in Slough.	Online via www.number22counselling.org Or call Maidenhead 01628 636661 or Windsor 01753 842444
DASH	Domestic abuse services	Tel: 01753 549865
Homestart	Support for parents with depression or children with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder).	Visit the Homestart website at http://hsslough.co.uk/ Tel: 01628 661029 Email: office@hsslough.co.uk
Puffell/Thrive	Online wellbeing website for self-assessment, information and advice on a range of mental health issues for young people aged 14 years and over.	Online self-assessment via www.puffell.com
Slough Children's Trust	Provides support & advice to families and professionals to meet the needs of pupils where there is an emotional health and well-being concern.	Contact the First Contact Team, Slough Children's Trust direct for advice and consultations on any mental health concerns that are low risk on 01753 875362.
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Berkshire Healthcare Trust)	Children aged 5-18 years old living in Slough who are suffering significant difficulties due to mental illness or emotional and behavioural difficulties.	Referral via schools (SENCO) or a GP http://servicesguide.slough.gov.uk/kb5/slough/services/service.page?id=0rFOX0IEk60&catyouth=521&cr=1 Tel: 0300 365 0300
Educational Psychology Services	All children/young people living in Slough going through an Education, Health & Care statutory assessment. All schools offered a core service Children/young people at risk of school placement breakdown.	Request for an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan. Consultation with the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) at the child's school Direct referral through annual review, if pupil's school placement is at risk of breaking down.
Coaching and Wellbeing Service (managed by Tier 2 CAMHS)	For parents known to social care and where case is open can refer to this service.	Referrals through social workers, health visitors and children's centres via referral form to the coaching and wellbeing service.



Slough Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Outreach Service	Support pupils in mainstream education aged 4-18 years with a diagnosis of Autism.	For information contact the Advisory Outreach Teacher for ASD on 01753 787627. Messages left on the voicemail system will be accessed regularly.
Slough Young People's Service	Young people aged 11-19 and up to 25 (with special education needs.	Self-referral parent/carer on behalf of children / young people or with support from a professional. Consent is required. Tel: 01753 875510 Email: youthsupport@slough.gov.uk
Youth Offending Team (YOT) & Youth Intervention Support Programme (YISP)	YISP is available for Slough children aged between 8-17 years who are at risk of offending or involved in anti-social behaviour.	Contact the Slough Youth Offending Team on 01753 522702
Young Carers	Slough Borough Council proactively identify young carers living within the area and carry out an assessment of their needs to enable access to support services.	Information to refer young carers for support and information about young carers. Tel: 01753 476589 Email: FIS@slough.gov.uk www.servicesguide.slough.gov.uk
Family Information Service (FIS)	This service offers a range of advice and information for all families, children and young people in Slough. Financial advice, housing, childcare, nursery's, playgroups, community group Also has specific resources for ASD, ADHD, depression, anxiety, eating disorders and self harm. When typing in a key word of the services guide it will come up with any service that can help in this area.	FIS offers information outreach sessions in community venues such as schools or children's centres. Tel: 01753 476589 Email FIS@slough.gov.uk www.servicesguide.slough.gov.uk



Useful resources:

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

Time to Change www.time-to-change.org.uk

Mind www.mind.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness www.rethink.org

Depression Alliance www.depressionalliance.org

NHS Choices Live well www.nhs.uk/Livewell/mentalhealth

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust <http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/>

Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk

National Self-Harm Network www.nshn.co.uk

Autism Berkshire www.autismberkshire.org.uk/

Homestart <http://hsslough.co.uk/>

Royal College of Psychiatrists (useful recourses Including MindEd – free online education to help adults identify and understand children and young people with mental health problems)
www.rcpsych.ac.uk/usefulresources.aspx



Other sources of information

The British Psychological Society www.bps.org.uk

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Therapists www.babcp.com

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy www.bacp.co.uk

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio tape or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format, please telephone 01344 352000.

