

Helping to support your child's mental health

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Mental health involves how we think, feel and behave, as well as how well we can cope in everyday life. Each situation we are in can impact our mental health & wellbeing, positively or negatively, and it is therefore constantly changing. Sometimes we go through stages where our mental health is quite low for extended periods, this might be due to sadness, anger, anxiety, numbness that can be difficult to shift from.

In different situations there will be aspects that trigger our thoughts, this leads into our feelings, body sensations and then our behaviours. Often this happens without us realising, and for a young person/ anyone, this can be confusing and might leave us feeling out of control or not able to regulate ourselves.

These triggers tend to develop from experiences that we've had in the past, or fears/ worries that we have for the future, leaving us quite out of touch with what's going on in the present.

What are the signs?

The signs will differ per individual, depending on the day and their mood- signs that something is different could be because a young person is struggling.

- If a young person doesn't seem like themselves
- They might seem more distant than usual
- Spending more time at home/ less time socialising
- Losing interest in the things they used to enjoy
- Might seem less confident
- Not talking, laughing or smiling like usual
- Might be more angry, anxious or emotional
- 'Risky' behaviours like drinking, drugs or smoking, going out late
- Not taking care of themselves like they usually would e.g. not showering, eating, sleeping, brushing teeth, putting makeup on
- Difficulty focusing or concentrating
- You might be aware they are hurting themselves or have start speaking negatively about themselves



Active/Effective Listening

-Be aware of your body language: openness, eye contact, facial expressions. *Know your child- sometimes eye contact might create more pressure or discomfort, try talking whilst watching telly or driving.*

-Pay attention without distractions. *We all know how disheartening it can be when we try to talk to someone who isn't listening, is doing something else or is not paying attention.*

-Try to let your child speak freely without interrupting or asking questions, giving them time to do so. Once they have finish you could then: ask follow-up questions, show that you have understood and listened. E.g. *'I can tell you're upset about that'*

-Try to avoid sharing your own experiences or changing the subject, this can take away from what your child has said. Instead think about their perspective and the impacts on them. e.g. *'It sounds like that was difficult for you'*

-Try to avoid asking why, sometimes we don't know why. *Instead try 'What has made you feel like that'*



Show them that you care

-Create an environment you both feel comfortable to speak openly. Think of the who, what, where, when, why on how best to do this. *E.g. home, evening, watching tv.*

-This will look different for everyone and completely depend on your relationship with your young person. *What do you already do to show them you care?*

-We all have different ways of giving and receiving care/ love languages and it's important to take time to notice when your young person feels cared for, or if you could show this differently. *e.g. Spending time vs. Making food vs. Giving hugs vs. Buying chocolate vs. "I'm proud of you"*



Spend time with them

- It can be difficult to talk to people openly about what we're thinking about, especially when we are not used to doing it.
- If you can spend time with your young person doing things they enjoy and building the bond, they might be more willing and feel as if they can be more open. *Talk about their likes & dislikes, friends, be open about the things you struggle with yourself.*
- Give them time to do this, you can't form this kind of relationship straight away. Respect their boundaries and what they feel comfortable sharing or doing.



Acknowledge and accept their thoughts and emotions

- Don't use phrases like 'cheer up' or 'get over it', as these can make us feel as if our emotions are invalid. *We are allowed to feel emotions, and they are there for a reason.*
- Use phrases like 'I can see you feeling ...', 'Has that made you feel...?', try to tune in to what they are sharing with you to understand their emotions in the situation.
- Sometimes we might want distracting from our emotions, sometimes we want to feel them. *Try to gauge this from your young person or simply ask them what they need at that time and support them through it.*
- When wanting to help someone, it can feel like we must change how they're feeling or fix their problems. *Sometimes sitting with them through their emotions can be enough.*



Try to understand your child from their own point of view

- Young people can feel their parents don't understand them & struggle to be open.
- It is okay and it is normal to feel like you don't always understand your child.*
- We can never fully understand what is going on for another person, but trying to understand them and showing care and interest can go a long way.

Understand what their needs are

-We all have basic needs e.g. food, water, love, belonging, self-esteem. Sometimes we might need help to meet our needs and that's okay.

-Ask them what they need and especially what they need from *you*.



-Pay attention to the times when they seem more themselves and try to notice what has led to this *e.g. being outdoors, when they've seen friends, after they've had a nap*

-Support and encourage them to meet their own needs *e.g. running them a bath, make a cup of tea, helping with tasks, being there to listen, being on their own*

-We meet emotional needs by showing them care, respect, support, love, valuing them and giving them space. *Please don't put pressure on yourself to do this all the time - think realistically how you can help to support your young person in some of these ways.*

Understand the wont share everything with you

-It's inevitable that young people won't share everything with their caregivers.

-They might be embarrassed, they might think you won't understand, they might be worried they'll upset or worry you, they might think you don't care.

-There needs to acceptance, however difficult, that you can't know everything - putting pressure on your child, despite good intentions, could make them feel worse. *Putting too much pressure on yourself to always support can also make you feel worse.*

-Work with the information you do have, listen, make yourself approachable, give them the time and the patience to open-up and be grateful when they have done.

Look after yourself

-Caring for and support others through their struggles is not easy and it is important to take care of yourself along the way too.

-Find the time to do things for yourself: things that make you feel good, calm, relaxed, support or comfortable.

-Encourage your young people to take care of themselves by giving them a example of someone who is caring for themselves.

Self care is not
self
indulgence.
Self care is self
respect.

Whether you are a adult who is struggling with their own mental health, or an adult who is supporting a child through their own mental health issues, it can be really difficult.

There are always ways you can gain knowledge and support if you want or need it.

Below are listed some **resources**, for parents supporting a young person & for young people themselves.

Alongside **helplines** that can be used as an adult for your own wellbeing, by young people or as an adult supporting a young person.

Finally, a list of **services**, split into young people's services vs adult services (accepting YP)

Please take the time to read through these whether it is helpful for yourself or whoever you might be helping to support.

Talk to your child about counselling- we offer a counselling service at Chapeltown Academy Tues-Thurs. Students refer in through Jess Humphreys- Pastoral Support.

We also offer drop-in counselling sessions which your child can attend within college, which they access by using their college email or sign up sheet.

Resources for parents

YoungMinds Parents Helpline: advice, emotional support and signposting.

www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline-and-webchat/

You can call Parents **Helpline** on 0808 802 5544, Monday - Friday 9:30am - 4:00pm.

Our Parents **webchat** is open 9:30am - 4pm, Monday - Friday. Or **Email** out of hours.

YoungMinds website also has a section for parents

Mind: info for caregivers www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/information-for-parents/

Action for children: Advice and activities to support children with their mental wellbeing

www.parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/mental-health-wellbeing/

Resources for young people

Kooth: online/ app based wellbeing support (www.kooth.com)

The Mix: (connecting young people to talk about anything e.g. money, mental health, drugs) has a helpline, chatline and crisis messenger (www.themix.org.uk)

YoungMinds: advice and support (www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/)

Helplines for young people, or parents/ adults who are struggling:

Childline: call 0800 1111

Samaritans (mental health support): Call 116 123

SHOUT (text based mental health support): Text 85258

SANeline (if you or someone you are supporting is experiencing a mental health problem):
Call 0300 304 7000

Papyrus HOPELINEUK (concern for a young person-suicide prevention): Call 0800 068 4141

Sheffield Telephone Helpline (emotional support and information): Call 0808 801 0440

Change Grow Live (advice and support with drugs, alcohol, mental health or relationships-
under 21s and parents): webchat

Cruse Bereavement Support (for emotional support): Call 0808 808 1677 (times are online)

Call your GP if you would like more ongoing support with your mental health.

Services for young people, or parents/ adults who are struggling:

Golddigger trust (wellbeing groups for ages 11-18)

Door43 at Sheffield Futures (counselling support/ wellbeing groups for ages 13-25)

Sheffield Young Carers (support for ages 8-25 years)

Grief encounter (Support for children & young people- helplines/ online counselling)

CAMHS (have services in Sheffield/ Rotherham/ Barnsley)- referral through a GP

Cavendish Cancer Care (counselling for those affected or bereaved through cancer)

Rape & Sexual Assault services: Sheffield SRASAC, Barnsely BSARCS, Rotherham ACS

SYEDA eating disorder support- Sheffield & Rotherham & (Barnsley only **18+**)

Sheffield IAPT (**18+**)

Counselling Services (based on income, **both 18+**): 'Contact counselling service', 'share psychotherapy'

For **Private Counselling:** look on BACP directory, Counselling directory

Have a think about how you meet the needs of your child & how you could support them in meeting these needs for themselves.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Adapted for Kids!



These are all NEEDS - with more critical ones closer to the bottom of the pyramid



One Time Through

Think about how your own needs are met too.

IDENTIFYING POSITIVE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

that shape mental health in adults

- ① Ability to talk with family about feelings



- ② Felt Experience that family is supportive in difficult times



- ③ enjoyment in participation in community traditions



- ④ Feeling of belonging in high school.



- Feeling of being supported by friends



- ⑥ having at least two non-parent adults who genuinely care.



- ⑦ feeling safe and protected by an adult at home

