

Supporting young people with mental health

Slide 1

(If I could control the bullets one point at a time rather than one clump all in one go that would be great)

So shall we look at some of the mental health problems that can affect children and young people.

- **Depression** - affects more children and young people today than in the last few decades. Teenagers are more likely to experience depression than young children.
- **Self Harm** - is a very common problem among young people. Some people find it helps them manage intense emotional pain if they harm themselves, through cutting or burning, for example. They may not wish to take their own life.
- **Friendships** - I have certainly seen a huge increase in friendship issues over the past 15 years. Communicating through social media has its consequences especially when the bravado online has to be addressed face to face later on. There's an increase in online bullying and self esteem can be based on how many 'likes' they get online. There is often a loss of reality and self as they try to fit in with their peers. Friendships really suffer.
- **Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)** - can cause young people to become extremely worried. Change can trigger this and low self image.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** can follow physical or sexual abuse, witnessing something extremely frightening or traumatising, being the victim of violence or severe bullying or surviving a disaster.
- **LGBT** - There are high levels of mental health issues among lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) teenagers. These have often been linked to experiences of homophobic and transphobic discrimination and bullying. Other factors such as age, religion, where you live or ethnicity can add extra complications to an already difficult situation.
- **Having a Physical Disability or Learning Disability** - Children who are consistently overactive ('hyperactive'), behave impulsively and have difficulty paying attention may have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Learning difficulties can also knock a young person's self esteem leaving them feeling, in their words, stupid and with no hope.
- **Eating Disorders** - usually start in the teenage years and are more common in girls than boys. The number of young people who develop an eating disorder is small, but eating disorders such as Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia can have serious consequences on their physical health and development

Slide 2

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recently issued a questionnaire to 540,000 15 year old students in 72 countries.

The findings of this survey were that 1 in 6 pupils are unhappy.

Teenagers taking part in the survey were asked

- If they were happy at school
- If they felt a sense of belonging
- Whether they ate breakfast
- If they had an evening meal with parents
- How they spent their time outside school, including whether they did an hour of exercise a day
- Bullying

Slide 3

So in order to get the best out of our children and enable them to grow into well rounded, happy and resourceful people we need them to:-

- be in good physical health, eat a balanced diet and get regular exercise
- have time to play or chill both indoors and outside
- be part of a family that gets along well most of the time
- Go to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils. The reason this meeting is taking place ticks that box I think.
- take part in local activities for young people outside school where they can meet different people.

Other important factors include:-

- feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves
- being hopeful and optimistic
- being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed
- accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at
- having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community
- feeling they have some control over their own life
- having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems.