

Mental Health Awareness

Overton School

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Last reviewed on:	26/08/20
Next review due by:	25/08/21

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that you don't have a mental health problem.

If you're in good mental health, you can:

- Make the most of your potential
- Cope with life
- Play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends.

Some people call mental health 'emotional health' or 'well-being' and it's just as important as good physical health.

Mental health is everyone's business. We all have times when we feel down or stressed or frightened. Most of the time those feelings pass. But sometimes they develop into a more serious problem and that could happen to anyone of us.

Everyone is different. You may bounce back from a setback while someone else may feel weighed down by it for a long time.

Your mental health doesn't always stay the same. It can change as circumstances change and as you move through different stages of your life.

There's a stigma attached to mental health problems. This means that people feel uncomfortable about them and don't talk about them much. Many people don't even feel comfortable talking about their feelings. But it's healthy to know and say how you're feeling.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Mental health problems range from the worries we all experience as part of everyday life to serious long-term conditions. The majority of people who experience mental health problems can get over them or learn to live with them, especially if they get help early on.

Mental health problems are usually defined and classified to enable professionals to refer people for appropriate care and treatment. But some diagnoses are controversial and there is much concern in the mental health field that people are too often treated according to or described by their label. This can have a profound effect on their quality of life. Nevertheless, diagnoses remain the most usual way of dividing and classifying symptoms into groups.

SYMPTOMS

Most mental health symptoms have traditionally been divided into groups called either 'neurotic' or 'psychotic' symptoms. 'Neurotic' covers those symptoms which can be regarded as severe forms of

‘normal’ emotional experiences such as depression, anxiety, or panic. Conditions formerly referred to as ‘neuroses’ are now more frequently called ‘common mental health problems.’

Less common are ‘psychotic’ symptoms, which interfere with a person’s perception of reality, and may include hallucinations such as seeing, hearing, smelling, or feeling things that no one else can. Mental health problems affect the way you think, feel, and behave. They are problems that can be diagnosed by a doctor, not personal weaknesses.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ARE VERY COMMON

As found by the APMS (2014), 1 in 6 people in the past week experienced a common mental health problem.

Source: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey

Anxiety and depression are the most common problems, with around 1 in 10 people affected at any one time.

How do mental health problems affect people?

Anxiety and depression can be severe and long-lasting and have a big impact on people’s ability to get on with life.

Between one and two in every 100 people experience severe mental illness, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, and have periods when they lose touch with reality. People affected may hear voices, see things no one else sees, hold unusual or irrational beliefs, feel unrealistically powerful, or read particular meanings into everyday events.

Although certain symptoms are common in specific mental health problems, no two people behave in exactly the same way when they are unwell.

Many people who live with a mental health problem or are developing one try to keep their feelings hidden because they are afraid of other people’s reactions. And many people feel troubled without having a diagnosed, or diagnosable, mental health problem – although that doesn’t mean they aren’t struggling to cope with daily life.

GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Good mental health is not simply the absence of diagnosable mental health problems, although good mental health is likely to help protect against the development of many such problems.

Good mental health is characterized by a person’s ability to fulfill a number of key functions and activities, including:

- the ability to learn
- the ability to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- the ability to form and maintain good relationships with others
- the ability to cope with and manage change and uncertainty.

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled.

HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

1. Talk about your feelings

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled.

2. Keep active

Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and can help you concentrate, sleep, and look and feel better. Exercise keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy and is also a significant benefit of improving your mental health.

3. Eat well

Your brain needs a mix of nutrients in order to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health.

4. Drink sensibly – Adults:

We often drink alcohol to change our mood. Some people drink to deal with fear or loneliness, but the effect is only temporary.

When the drink wears off, you feel worse because of the way the alcohol has affected your brain and the rest of your body. Drinking is not a good way to manage difficult feelings.

5. Keep in touch

There's nothing better than catching up with someone face to face, but that's not always possible. You can also give them a call, drop them a note, or chat with them online instead. Keep the lines of communication open: it's good for you!

6. Ask for help

None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things don't go to plan.

If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help. Your family or friends may be able to offer practical help or a listening ear. Local services are there to help you.

7. Take a break

A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health.

It could be a five-minute pause from cleaning your kitchen, a half-hour lunch break at work, or a weekend exploring somewhere new. A few minutes can be enough to de-stress you. Give yourself some 'me time'.

8. Do something you're good at

What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Enjoying yourself can help beat stress. Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it, and achieving something boosts your self-esteem

9. Accept who you are

We're all different. It's much healthier to accept that you're unique than to wish you were more like someone else. Feeling good about yourself boosts your confidence to learn new skills, visit new places and make new friends. Good self-esteem helps you cope when life takes a difficult turn.

10. Care for others

Caring for others is often an important part of keeping up relationships with people close to you. It can even bring you closer together.

DO YOU NEED URGENT HELP?

If your mental or emotional state quickly gets worse, or you're worried about someone you know – help is available.

You're not alone; talk to someone you trust. Sharing a problem is often the first step to recovery.

Mental illness and suicidal thoughts can affect anyone, of any age, of any background, at any time. Like with physical illnesses, people don't choose to have a mental health problem. And they need the appropriate care to get better.

Mental illness and suicidal thoughts are common issues for young people.

It can be difficult to know if a child is suffering as they often keep it to themselves. But we're here to help you spot the signs and know how to support them.

1 in 3 Childline counseling sessions was about mental or emotional health and wellbeing issues in 2016/17

Source: NSPCC (2017) Childline annual review 2016/17: not alone anymore.

The most common reason for Childline counseling sessions in 2016/17 was mental and emotional health

Source: Bentley, H. et al (2017) How safe are our children? The most comprehensive overview of child protection in the UK in 2017.

**IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER DON'T DELAY – CALL THE POLICE
ON 999.**

Find information at:



NSPCC

