

WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH COFFEE MORNING

Thursday 29th February 2024





WHAT TO EXPECT FROM TODAY

- Raise awareness and understanding of mental health
- Ideas on how to build your child's resilience
- To know what to look out for regarding your child's mental health
- Ideas on talking to about mental health
- Strategies to support mental health

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental Health is all about how we think and feel about ourselves, others, and the world around us. **We ALL have it.**

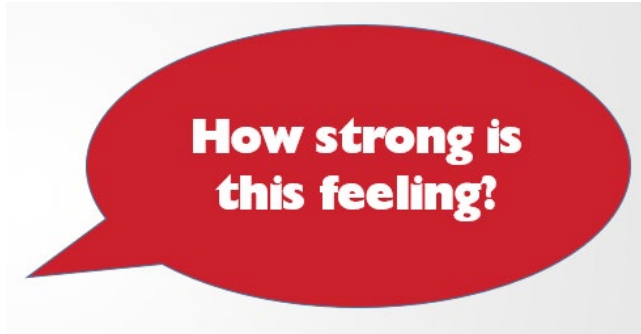
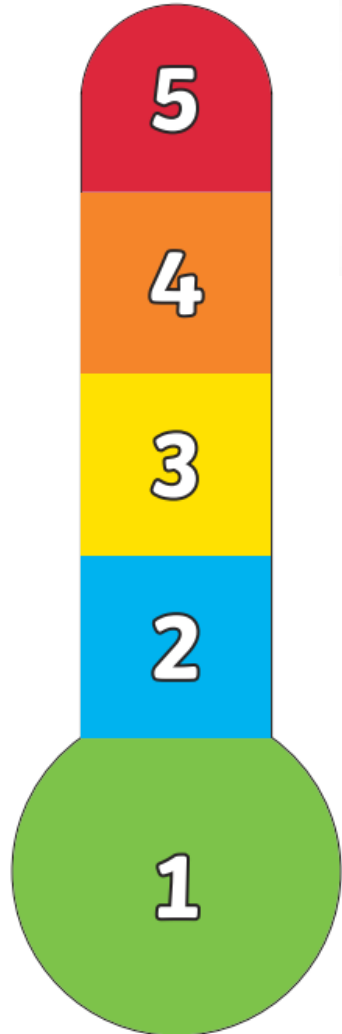
Good mental health means being able to:

- Develop and thrive
- Make and keep friends, and understand what makes a good friend
- Use and enjoy time on our own
- Empathise with others
- Play and learn
- Develop a sense of right and wrong
- Resolve problems and setbacks and learn from them

WHAT MAKES A CHILD HAPPY?



SCALING FEELINGS



It is a way to gauge how strongly a child is feeling a particular emotion. For example they might say they are sad - the scale allows staff to gauge how sad they are feeling, and importantly whether the actions they take helps to reduce or increase this feeling.

The green end is positive and the red end is negative.

This is a tool that parents can use with their children, to assess how serious they feel about a certain situation.



CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Children with additional needs might find it harder to:

- be aware of their own mental health/ understand what is happening,
- communicate how they are feeling,
- cope with difficult feelings,
- think about or follow plans to improve their mental health.

Therefore we might see more challenging behaviour or more signs of distress

Mental Health



Well

Unwell

Productive
Energetic
Coping well
Sleeping well

Irritable
Overwhelmed
Worried
Forgetful

Angry
Panicky
Fatigued
Restless

Aggressive
Withdrawn
Depressed
Anxious

SIGNS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH

Signs of poor mental health

- withdrawing, or avoiding friends or social situations
- finding it hard to concentrate, or losing interest in schoolwork
- not wanting to do things they previously enjoyed
- feeling irritable or angry
- feeling tearful, miserable, lonely or hopeless
- feeling empty or numb
- being very self-critical
- sleeping more or less than normal
- eating more or less than normal
- feeling tired or not having any energy
- wanting to self-harm

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience:

'the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.'

(Oxford English Dictionary)

What Does Resilience Mean to Young People?

<https://youtu.be/4RzHx5rw0f4>

5 WAYS TO BUILD A CHILD'S RESILIENCE

1. Help them manage uncertainty

Parents can help their children feel safe and secure during uncertain times by helping them recognise that life is actually less certain than they think – but this is okay. In fact, it can be exciting not knowing exactly what will happen – surprises can sometimes be nice!

Remind them of times when unexpected events in their lives turned out to be great. Keep a journal with them of all uncertain things in their lives and note how they turn out. They won't all turn out to be good, but that's okay too (see the second tip). For example, that time when their grandparents turned up unexpectedly, when they saw a friend during a walk in the park, or when they found a treasured toy on sale in a charity shop. All these are examples of uncertainty and can help your child to start seeing an uncertain future as less threatening.



2. How to cope with setbacks

Not all unexpected events are good of course, and building resilience is about helping children cope with disappointment and things going wrong.

Encourage your children to talk about feelings and emotions so that they can recognise and label the feelings of disappointment and frustration that are normal reactions to set-backs. Help them to name these feelings when they notice them.

Show them that setbacks are an important part of life and lead by example – talk openly about things that have gone wrong in your life and demonstrate how to bounce back.

Coping strategies - demonstrate slow, deep breathing. This can be so effective in calming a person and requires no resources so you can do this anywhere at any time.

3. Embrace mistakes

Resilient children are less afraid of making mistakes and more prepared to take risks – because they can cope with having got it wrong. Explain how we don't always know the answers or the right way to behave, but we can make the best choices we can – and accept if we get it wrong. This means showing them that mistakes are great ways to learn and are part of what makes us human.

You could even encourage them to make mistakes. Whether that be with homework, or craft projects or creating a new dish for supper – encourage them to take risks. Show them that making mistakes helps us learn – how will they know that sprinkling in a chosen spice creates an unpleasant taste if they don't try, or that adding red to the paint won't give them the hue they were after unless they experience it for themselves?

Again lead by example and don't let them see you beating yourself up for making a mistake - remove 'I should have...' from your vocabulary and change to 'I could have...'. .



4. Empower your children

Resilient children are able to make age-appropriate decisions about the things that affect them. All parents want to protect their kids – it's part of the job description, but when we try too hard to protect them from life's bumps we can do more harm than good to their developing resilience.

When parents make choices for their child and are over-involved in their lives, children learn that they can't trust themselves and grow up believing that others always know better. Part of being resilient is learning to become independent and to trust in our own abilities – whilst asking for help where appropriate.

If they turn out to not be happy with their choice, help them accept responsibility for that so that they learn that they're largely accountable for their own happiness and achievements. You can do this by praising them for shrugging off bad choices or by helping them to live with them, for example you could say, 'maybe you wish you'd chosen the other meal but yours is great because it has roast potatoes – and next time you'll know to make a different choice.'

5. Challenge their beliefs

Finally, resilient children develop helpful, rather than unhelpful, ways of thinking. Examples of unhelpful thinking styles include catastrophising (assuming the very worst will happen), black and white thinking (seeing things only as either good or bad), ignoring the positives (dismissing when good things happen and only focusing on when bad things happen), fortune-telling (assuming they know what is going to happen) and overgeneralization (assuming that because something happened once, it will always be that way).

In terms of COVID-19 this could mean a child assuming that they or their loved ones will get ill (fortune-telling), perhaps seriously (catastrophising), that life at school will be terrible with social distancing (black and white thinking), that they won't be able to see their friends (ignoring the positives of the friendships they have maintained during the pandemic), or that lockdown will be back every few months (overgeneralization).

Challenge these beliefs by explaining the flaws in their thinking styles and that we all make such thinking mistakes sometimes and helping them see alternative perspectives that may be equally valid.

WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH TEACHING AT TEMPLE MEADOW

We already teach about and support mental wellbeing at our school. We teach about mental health and well-being through:

- Our Learning 4 Life curriculum
- Participating in Mental Health Awareness Week
- Lunch time Sports Coaches (and teachers) linking the benefits of exercise to mental health
- The Animals in My Brain approach
- Brain breaks and mindfulness
- Assemblies

And we support mental wellbeing by:

- Pastoral Support Team
- Support for families by referring them to outside agencies such as Relate and CAMHs



Unhelpful coping strategies lead to...

Thoughts

Feelings

Physical symptoms

Behaviours



Positive coping strategies.

STRESS BUCKET

...lient child/young person will have a combination of a large capacity for managing stress and

ROAR RESPONSE

R

Recognise the signs and symptoms

O

ask **Open** questions (try to spot the 'big' thought

A

Access support, services and self-care

R

Build **Resilience**





HOW TO TALK AND HOW TO LISTEN

- Make talking openly about mental health a normal everyday part of life
- Give it your full attention and take it seriously
- Positive body language
- Ask open questions
- Stay calm
- Offer empathy rather than solutions
- Encourage your child to think of what might help (give them control)
- Reassure them

MINDFULNESS

- Promotes relaxation and calm

[Rainbow Relaxation: Mindfulness for Children \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Bubble Bounce! Mindfulness for Children \(Mindful Looking\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

[The Body Scanner! Mindfulness for Children \(youtube.com\)](#)

5 WAYS TO MENTAL WELLBEING

Connect – with other people,

- talk, spend time with family
- and friends

Be Active – physical exercise,

- walking,

Take Notice – ‘Be in the

- moment’, notice what’s going
- on around you in the present

Learn – do a crossword, read

- a book, learn a new skill,
- attend a workshop!

Give – help others, engage in

- your community



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Think about phone usage – both theirs and yours

- We don't fully understand the impact of social media on our mental health but using phones and laptops can impact on our sleep, which is important to our mental health.
- We're also more likely to listen to one another if we're not distracted by technology.

Notice any changes in your child's behaviour

- Young people tell us how they're feeling in many ways, not always verbally.
- Learning what is normal for your child makes it easier to notice when things change, and if this might be a sign that they're struggling

Take care of your own mental health and well-being

- Changes to our mental health can sometimes affect children and their well-being. They may pick up on your anxiety or low mood. This doesn't mean you should hide or minimise your feelings. You can try to explain them using phrases like, "It's ok to get big feelings, everyone gets big feelings but it's still the grown up's job to look after the children" or "If grown-up's get big feelings it's not your fault - we can ask other grown-ups for help with our feelings."

WHEN YOU FACE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR AT HOME OR HAVE A CHILD WHO HAS LOW MOTIVATION

There are many issues which may impact upon a child's mental health

Structuring the day at home can really support with easing the anxiety they may feel.

Structuring the day allows the child (and adult) to view and understand what needs to be accomplished that day. The structure does not need to just highlight tasks that need completing. It is a good idea to also build in times for fun and relaxation.

An example of a structured day may include:

- What is now and what is next
- What tasks are expected of them, and the likely duration of these tasks
- A clear start and end to the structured day
- Demonstrate balance - Highlight the fact that there is time for work, time for relaxing and time for fun
- Agreed ideas - parent and child discuss and agree upon the detail of the timetable and stick to it. This may give the child a feeling of ownership

Visual timetables are recommended, particularly age appropriate, child friendly designs.

Think about healthy eating (get them involved in cooking!) and exercise.

A good night's sleep is also really important - try to get them back into routines that fit with school.

SUPPORTING WELL-BEING IN THE HOME- ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

My child and I disagree a lot

Possible solutions:

- clear rules/boundaries
- choose your battles
- communicate assertively and calmly

I am concerned about my child's physical/mental health:

Possible solutions:

- eat meals at structured times
- schedule in some exercise
- continue to take care of yourself,
- even if you aren't going anywhere
- change the environment, get out of the house for a walk or cycle

My child does not want to engage in home learning

Possible solutions:

- establish the reason why, there may be an easy solution -
- Discuss this with the class teacher

POSITIVE DIARY

Positive Diary - this is something to complete everyday. The Positive Diary has been designed to help the individual reflect and focus upon times where they have felt proud, achieved something or made someone else feel good. Using this consistently may help the individual recognise that great things happen everyday.

M O N	Something I did well today...	
	Today I had fun when...	
	I felt proud when...	
T U E	Today I accomplished	
	I had a positive experience with...	
	Something I did for someone...	

HAPPY JAR



WHERE TO ACCESS SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH

- GP
- NSPCC – email: help@nspcc.org.uk or call: [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000)

For useful tips for talking about your feelings:

- <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/documents/topics/learning-disability/mental-health/top-tips-feelings.pdf>

Support for mental health for young people with autism:

- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/mental-health/anxiety>

Where to get URGENT help:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/dealing-with-a-mental-health-crisis-or-emergency/>
- Call Parents' and Carers' helpline on: 0808 802 5544

Support for your child

Shout provides free, confidential support, 24/7 via text for anyone at crisis anytime, anywhere.

You can:

- text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer
- text with someone who is trained and will provide active listening and collaborative problem-solving



- Join us for Mood Master in April 2024
- Letter coming soon.



PARENT/CARER PLEDGE

One thing I am going to do to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of my child is.....