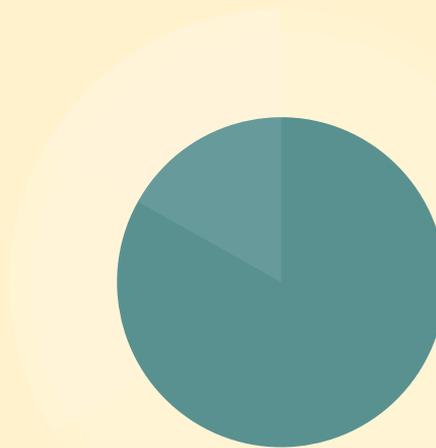


Mental Health and Wellbeing Parent Workshop

With Karen Ayres and Rebecca Neale

Friday 11th February 2022

A very warm welcome to you all



Karen Ayres
Assistant Head
Teacher for Inclusion
and SENCo



Rebecca Neale
Deputy Head &
Behaviour Lead

Mental wellbeing support

Our leads at Grange Park

Mental health Support Team: Karen Ayres, Rebecca Neale

Safeguarding Team:

Tijen Hassan - Head Teacher

Tracy Murray - Deputy Head

Rebecca Neale - Deputy Head

Karen Ayres - Assistant Head and SENCo

Sue Denny - Deputy Head

Parent Support Service: <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/if/parent-support-service/>

- Enfield service offers 1:1 support to parents who are struggling with issues with their children at home up to the age of 18

Educational Psychologist Support (EPS) TELEPHONE: 0208 379 2000

- This service provides free support via a telephone consultation

What to Expect from today's mental health workshop...

- 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 your child about mental health



What is Mental Health?

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



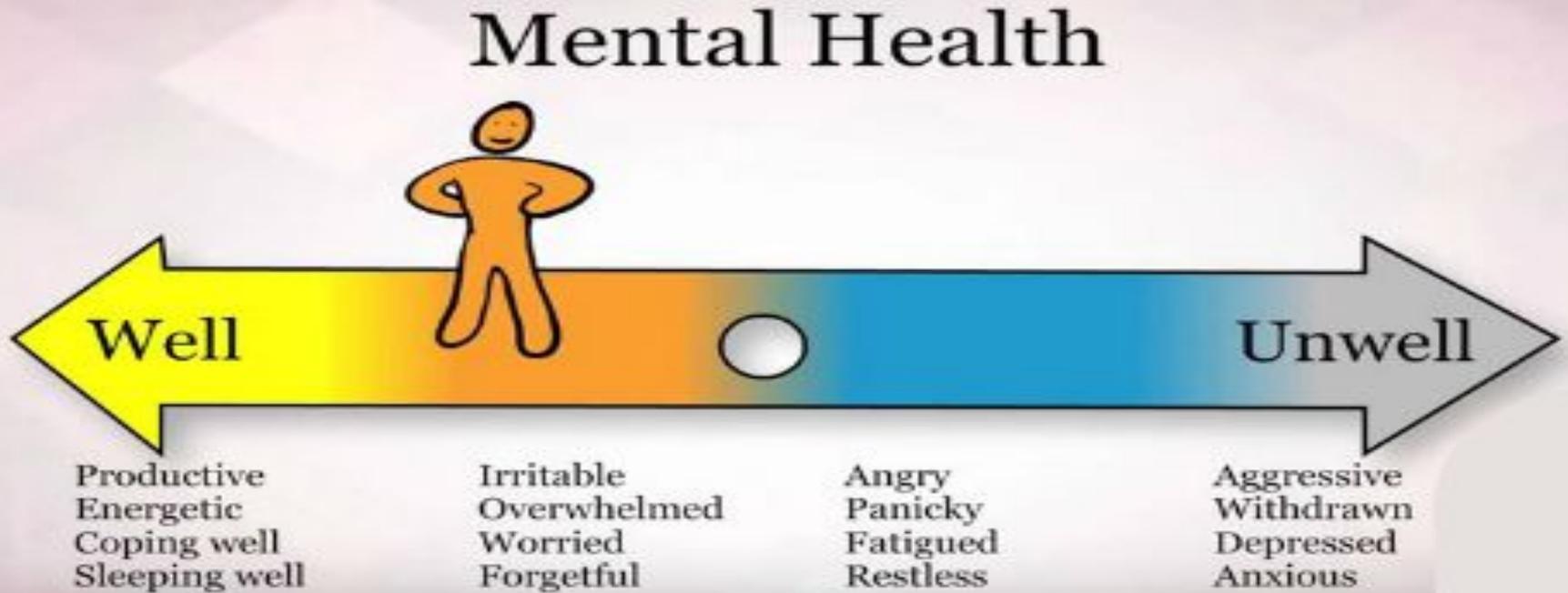
Children with Additional Needs

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

What is Mental Health?





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>
- Are children today resilient?

5 ways to build on your 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



EMBRACE MISTAKES.
WITHOUT THEM,
YOU WOULDN'T
GROW.

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



**CHALLENGE
YOUR LIMITING
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.

Mental wellbeing teaching at **Grange Park**

We already teach about and support mental wellbeing at our school. We teach about mental wellbeing by:

- Participating in Mental Health Awareness Week
- Learning about mindfulness – continuing to embed through the PSHE curriculum
- Sports Coaches and teachers linking the benefits of exercise to mental health
- Embedding the 5 ways to wellbeing
- Having a wellbeing and mindfulness section on your Google Classrooms
- Having Trust Boxes in all classrooms

And we support mental wellbeing by:

- Having a support system in place for mental wellbeing by referring to me and the learning mentor
- Support for families by referring them to outside agencies such as CAMHs



Resources and Strategies to support our Children's Mental Health & Wellbeing

Day to day

Our everyday habits are important to our mental health, just as they are to our physical health. Here are a few suggestions to help your child develop good habits.

Think about the five ways to wellbeing

Are there things you can encourage them to do, or do together, each day?

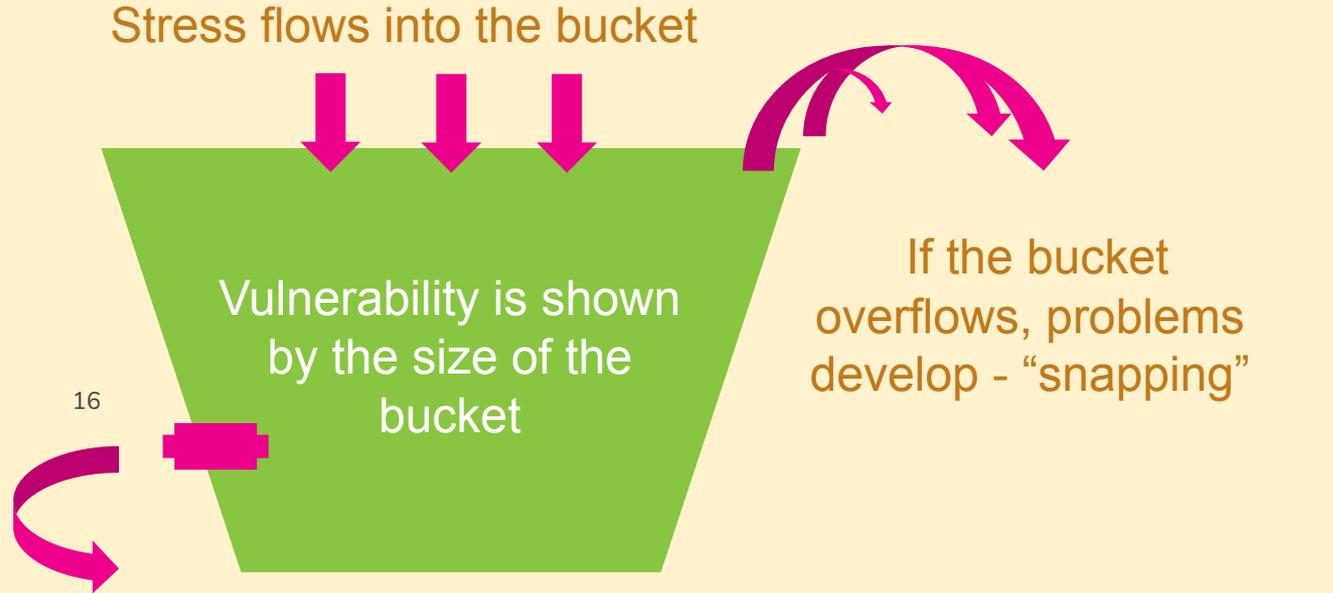


5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing

- **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



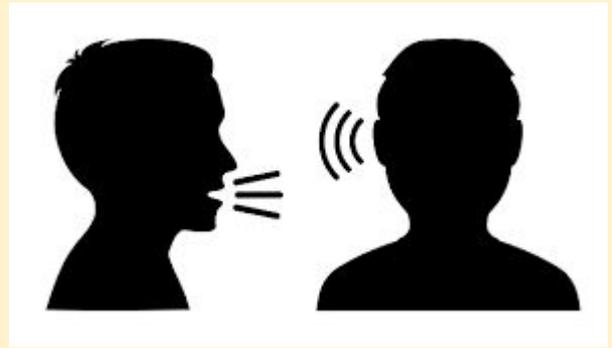
The Stress Bucket



Helpful coping strategies = tap working lets the stress out

Unhelpful coping strategies = tap blocked so water fills bucket and overflows

How to Talk and How to Listen



- Make talking 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)



Mindfulness

- **A powerful resource for our children to promote relaxation and calm**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbBI-BT9c4>

Rebecca

Talk openly about mental health

Just as you might encourage them to eat fruit and veg to keep their bodies healthy (and model this behaviour yourself), talk openly about, for example, staying connected with others or being physically active in order to take care of our minds.



Model good habits

Children often learn from copying what they see around them. If you are taking care of your own mental health, it's easier for them to see what good habits look like.



Phone Usage

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.





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



How can I help my child?

Try to open up a conversation about what's going on. You might start by letting them know that you've noticed they don't seem very happy at the moment, voicing your concerns in a caring and non-judgmental way.

Listen and provide emotional support. Try not to ask too many questions, come up with quick solutions or gloss over their sadness. Empathise with how they're feeling – letting them know they can talk to you as often and for as long as they need to.

Try again another day if they don't want to talk. Finding it difficult to talk or reach out is often a part of feeling low or depressed – and it can be especially difficult for young people to talk about these kinds of feelings. Let them know you're there when they're ready to talk

Think together about whether there's anything in particular that's making them feel this way. This could include a problem with a friendship or family relationship, feeling bullied or left-out at school, feeling overwhelmed by school work, struggling with a change such as divorce or separation in the family, or a combination of things. Are there changes that could be made at home or school that would make things easier?



If they don't feel able to talk to you, encourage them to speak to someone else – while reassuring them that you'll still be there. Let them know about the phone, webchat, email and text support they can access from services available.

Support them to keep routines, activities and connections with other people going as much as possible. Make opportunities for seeing friends and family, and encourage them to do the things they enjoy – whether that's exercising, listening to music, doing something creative like colouring or drawing, watching a favourite film, reading a favourite book or going for a walk with you.

Help them to do the daily things that support our wellbeing. This includes getting up at a regular time, eating regular meals, doing exercise, drinking water, spending quality time with loved ones and getting enough sleep.



Reassure them. Let them know you love them, these feelings won't last forever, and that you can find support to help things feel better.

Don't ignore worrying signs, hoping they'll go away. Trust your gut feeling – you know when something's just not right.

Seek professional help if you're worried about your child's mental health. Some children and young people will need professional and specialist help to feel better. They may benefit from a specific diagnosis or a treatment such as talking therapy. You can find more information about this below.



How should we respond if we are worried?

Being a parent can be challenging in everyday situations. Now, more than ever, taking care of your mental health is important. Staying at home more or having to work from home can put different pressures on everyone. And if you're struggling, it's okay to reach out for support from friends, families and organisations that are here to help.

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."

The NSPCC can help support you through any worries for your child's mental health and wellbeing:

0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

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



Low mood

Children may struggle and appear to have a low mood, as a result, there may be a range of negative feelings present.

Things you can do

Promoting a positive mindset - creating a can do attitude - finding tasks that highlight improvements or become easier in time

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...	

Further Support

Guidance for Parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

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

Childline

[ChildLine](#) provides a confidential helpline for any child with a problem. It comforts, advises and protects

You can:

- call 0800 1111 any time for free
- have an [online chat with a counsellor](#)
- check out the [message boards](#)

Thank you for joining the mental health workshop today

If you have any questions, please feel free to:

- Stay on the chat if you're comfortable to ask questions on here
- Email the school office to request a call from Karen or Rebecca
- Send an email detailing anything linked to wellbeing and mental health related to your child
- Use any of the helplines or links provided in this workshop to support yourself as a parent and for the child/and/or family

Wishing you a happy and healthy half term