Supporting children and young people's

Mental health and Wellbeing

Information for parents and carers

West Northamptonshire Council

Integrated Care Northamptonshire

North Northamptonshire Council

You are not alone

We know that being a parent or carer isn't always easy. Although it's often amazing and rewarding to watch your children or young people grow up, it can also be really hard work. Things might feel especially difficult if your child or young person is struggling with their mental health. Or if their mood and behaviour seem different, and you're not sure why or what you can do to help.

But you are not alone.

- ***One in six children aged 5-16 are likely to have a mental health problem. This figure went up by 50% between 2021 and 2022 alone.***

- ***The proportion of young people aged 17-19 in England with a probable mental health problem jumped from one in six to one in four.***

Most lifelong mental health issues begin in childhood. But talking about wellbeing early on can help us all cope better with life's challenges. As a parent or carer, you are possibly in one of the best positions to speak to your child and support them as best you can. This may mean finding another trusted person for them to speak to about their mental health and wellbeing, or seeking professional help.

In this leaflet we will talk about:

- Seeing the signs
- Supporting your child or young person
- Seeking professional help.

Kindly note - Anything that is underlined in this information leaflet provides a link to further information or services. Click on the underlined wording to follow.

Seeing the signs

Changes in you your child's typical behaviour may be an indicator of deteriorating mental health or wellbeing. These signs may be emotional, behavioural or physical changes.

The emotional signs to look out for include:

- Crying more than usual
- Persistent sadness
- Irritability and aggression – particularly if this manifests in regular, unprompted outbursts
- Talking about morbid topics such as death or suicide

Some of the behavioural signs that could be a sign of poor mental health include:

- Young children may become clingier while young adults more become more withdrawn
- Losing interest in friends and other things they like doing
- Being reluctant to talk
- Usual activities don't retain their interest
- Difficulty concentrating

Some of the most common physical signs to look out for include:

- Self-harm
- Changes in appetite
- Disrupted sleep patterns
- Increased incidences of bed wetting for younger children
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches
- Rapid loss of weight
- Teeth grinding
- Loss of hair

Ways to support a child or young person

Time to talk

Giving children and young people opportunities to open up is one of the biggest things we can do as parents and carers to support their wellbeing.

It can be easy to forget the simple power of sharing what we're going through and feeling heard. But even though you can't fix everything when your child is struggling, you can make them feel seen and understood – and this in itself can make them feel more able to cope.

Here is a link to some conversation starters from Young Minds UK:

Young Minds - Conversation starters

How are you feeling?

How can I support you through this?

If you need to talk to someone else, that's okay too

Listen and regularly ask how they're doing, to help them get used to talking about their feelings. Consider how to help them work through their emotions in constructive ways.

Support and encourage interests. Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team helps connect us and boost our mental wellbeing. Show interest in their life and what's important to them
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Pay attention to how they are feeling or behaving and support them through difficulties It may not be easy facing challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why.

Seek professional help or advice

It can be difficult to get through to children and young people at times, especially when they are going through a hard time. Early help can prevent children from coming to harm. When families face problems, getting the right support, at the right time, is essential and can prevent a mental health crisis.

There are a range of services designed to support children and young people and their families in these difficult times. These include.

- Apps and text services
- Counselling and drop in services
- Telephone Helplines

These are listed below.

If your child needs immediate medical attention or is a risk to themselves or others seek emergency assistance via 999

Further Support and local services

Apps and Text services

Calm Harm App
An application designed to help young people aged 13 years and above resist or manage the urge to self-harm. Visit the CalmHarm website to try the app

Tellmi App- *An* app that provides a safe and secure forum for teenagers wanting to anonymously discuss any issue affecting their lives. You can get advice from experts or other teenagers going through similar experiences in areas such as mental health, relationships, self-harming and friendships. Visit the Tellmi website for more information on this service.

Text a School Nurse
Text 07507 329600 on Monday to Friday from 9am to 4pm for friendly and helpful advice, for 11 to 19 year olds. Find out more about the Chat Health - Text a School Nurse service.

SHOUT is a free, confidential and anonymous text support service. Text SHOUT to 85258 if you are struggling to cope and need to talk

Eating Disorders Service

Children and Young People Community Eating Disorder Service
A community specialist eating disorder service offering countywide treatment to children and young people up the age of 18 years. The service offers a wide range of evidence-based interventions. Find out more about the CYP Community Eating Disorder Service.

LGBTQIA+

OUT THERE Youth Group
An LGBTQ+ support service CYP every Friday:
5:30pm to 7:30pm for school years 7, 8 and 9
7pm to 9pm for school years 10, 11, 12 and 13
For more information please email lgbtqsupport@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk or call 07585 737482.. Find out more about the lGBTQIA Support team

Counselling and drop in services

Service Six
A charity committed to changing lives and creating futures for disadvantaged children, young people and their families.
Call the Service Hub team on 01933 277520 or email referrals@servicesix.co.uk.

Espresso Yourself Wellbeing Café
A service for young people aged 11 to 18 years, and their parents/carers, providing support if you are struggling with your mental health or if you find yourself in crisis. Please drop in to talk to a mental health professional in a safe space.
Check out the updated dates, times and locations for the wellbeing cafes.

The Mix Helpline - A support service for young people to talk about any issue troubling them. Call 0808 808 4994 or live chat 1-2-1 between 4pm and 11pm from Monday to Saturday. Alternatively, you can email via The Mix website and will get a response within 24 hours.

Counselling by The Lowdown
A counselling service for anyone aged between 11 and 25 years within the NN1-NN7 postcode area. You can fill out an online referral form and can be self-referred.. Find out more about the Counselling by The Lowdown service.

CHAT Youth Counselling
A confidential youth counselling service ofered free to young people aged from 9 to 25 years in the North East Northamptonshire area.
For more information, call 01832 274422 or email info@chatyouthcounselling.org.uk.

Time2Talk - A counselling service for young people in the Daventry District and South Northamptonshire, offering a range of free services. The counselling is available for young people between the ages of 11 and 18 years, and up to 25 years with a special education need.
Find out more about Time2Talk.

For Parents

Parent Helpline offers tailored information, advice and support to parents and carers who are concerned about their child or young person's mental health. You can speak to us over the phone, or chat to us online - Parent Helpline - Young minds

Parenting mental health UK.
Guides and information for parents with children or young people struggling with their mental health
Parenting mental health Guides.