



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

February 2024



What today's session will cover:

Knowledge – To raise awareness on the effects on children with positive emotional health and wellbeing

Attitudes – To promote activities parents can use to enhance their children's social and emotional learning

Skills – To equip parents with the skills to improve their children's emotional health and wellbeing



WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING?

MENTAL HEALTH





MENTAL HEALTH

IS...

- A part of everyone
- Something to look after
- Real and complex
- Really important
- Something you can change

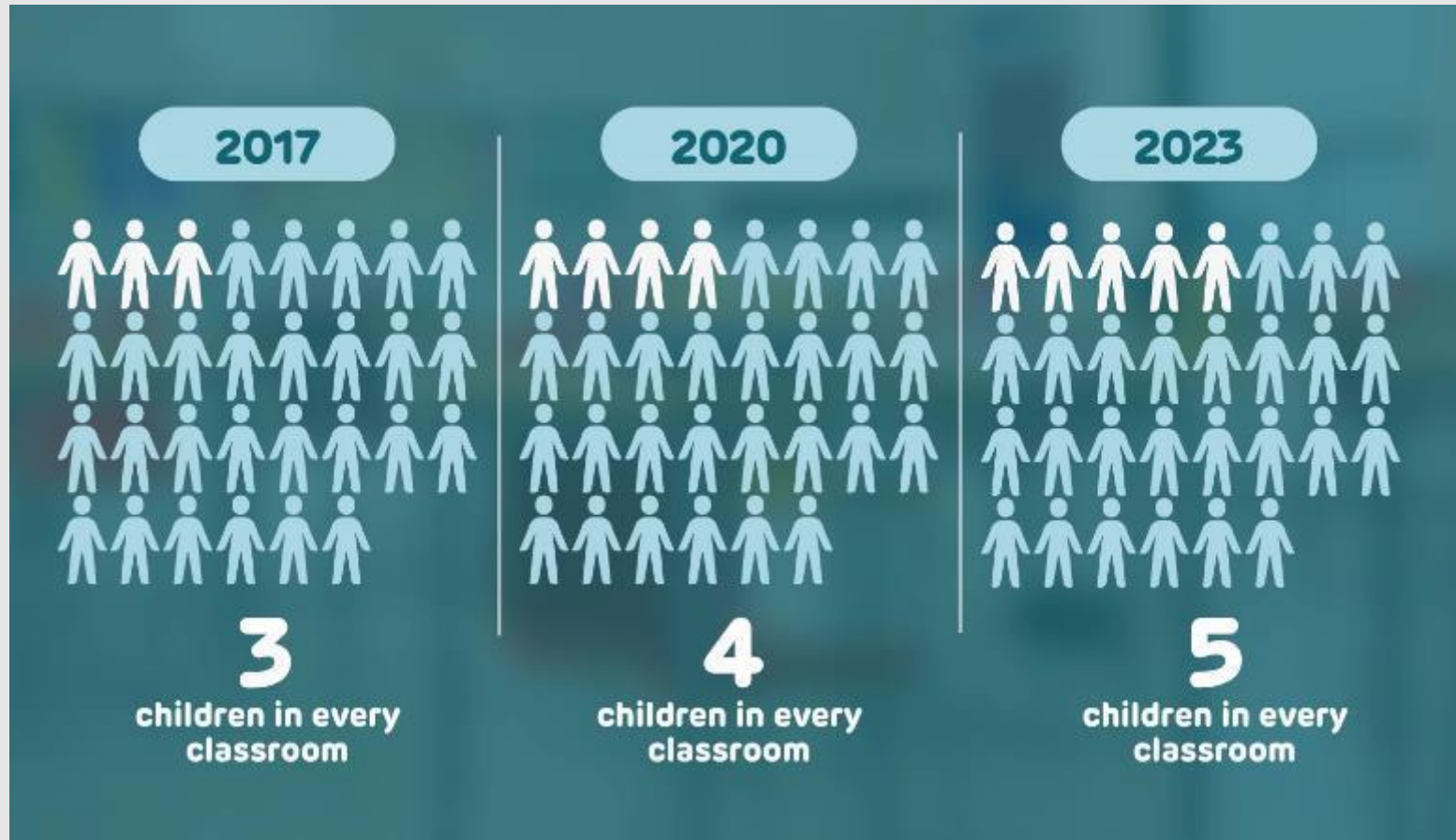
ISN'T...

- A sign of weakness
- All in your head
- Something you can just snap out of
- Always a negative thing
- Something to be ashamed of



WHY IS MENTAL
HEALTH & WELLBEING
IMPORTANT?

The number of children with a probable mental health condition is increasing





Among 8 to 16 year olds, rates of probable mental disorder were similar for boys and girls, while for 17 to 25 year olds, rates were twice as high for young women than young men.



More than 1 in 4 children aged 8 to 16 years (26.8%) with a probable mental disorder had a parent who could not afford for their child to take part in activities outside school or college, compared with 1 in 10 (10.3%) of those unlikely to have a mental disorder.



Children aged 11 to 16 years with a probable mental disorder were 5 times more likely than those unlikely to have a mental disorder to have been bullied in person (36.9% compared with 7.6%).

They were also more likely to have been bullied online (10.8% compared with 2.6%).



WHAT SUPPORT CAN
SCHOOL OFFER?

- ❖ Advice & signposting to specific support
- ❖ Counsellor for specific children
- ❖ Drop-in sessions with the counsellor open to all children at lunchtime
- ❖ Drawing & Talking for specific children
- ❖ Referrals to external agencies
- ❖ Specific interventions to support your child



HOW CAN I SUPPORT
MY CHILD?



Be there to listen

Regularly ask your child how they're doing, to help them get used to talking about their feelings, and know there's always someone there to listen. You can get tips on [Young Minds: How to talk to your child about mental health](#).



Support them through difficulties

Pay attention to how your child is feeling or behaving and try to help them work through difficulties. It may not be easy facing challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why. Learn more from [the Maudsley Charity on difficult behaviour](#).



Stay involved in their life

Show interest in their life and what's important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.



Encourage their interests

Support and encourage your child to explore their interests. Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team helps connect us and boost our mental wellbeing.



Take what they say seriously

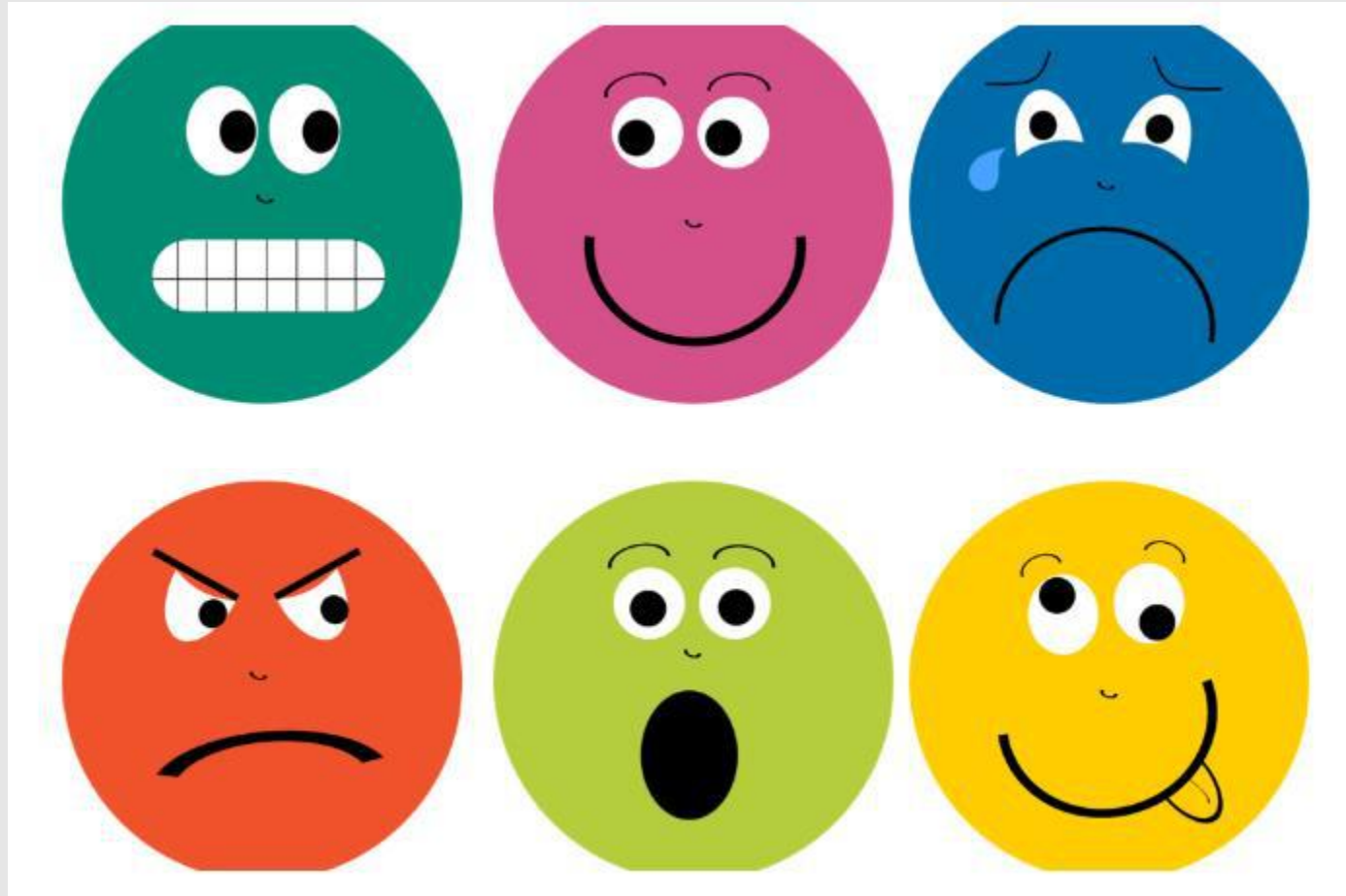
Listening to and valuing what they say makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them work through their emotions in constructive ways. [Anna Freud Centre's guide on ways to support children and young people](#) has more on this.

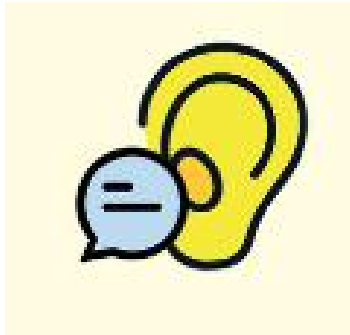


Build positive routines

Try to have structure around regular routines, especially around healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also important, so have a fixed time for going to bed and getting up. The [Sleep Charity has relaxation sleep tips for children](#).

Helping children to identify their feelings and normalise talking about them

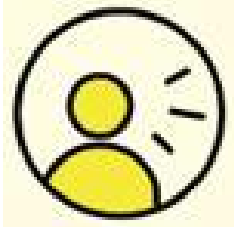




BE THERE TO LISTEN

Books about emotional literacy





TAKE SERIOUSLY
WHAT THEY SAY

What to do if your child tells you they're struggling

If your child tells you they're struggling, it's important to make sure they feel seen and heard.

When responding, it helps to:



1. Validate their feelings. You could say 'it's really understandable that you're feeling...' to let them know that their feelings are okay.



2. Thank them for sharing what's going on and be encouraging about the way they've opened up.



3. Let them know that you love them, you're there for them, they can talk to you whenever they need to, and you can help them get support if they need it.



4. Ask them if there's anything you could do that they would find particularly helpful.



5. Spend time together thinking about what's making them feel this way. It could be something at home or school, a relationship with a friend or family member or something else.



6. Let your child know about the helplines, textlines and online chat services that are available - which you can find at the end of this guide. Young people can find it difficult to talk and worry about upsetting their parents, so reassure them that it's okay to open up to other people.



7. Remind your child that this is temporary. Reassure them that things can change and they can feel better.



8. Avoid conversations at the height of distress. It's important to be there for them, but it can be more helpful to talk about the causes when things are feeling calmer.

<https://youtu.be/-uEBVIGoC9Y>



SUPPORT THEM
THROUGH
DIFFICULTIES



<https://youtu.be/zcGvU9fyJtg>

Here are some ways we can support the development of resilience:

- **Develop a sense of community belonging**

Whenever possible, support your child to build a positive relationship with other important adults in their lives. This can help them develop better friendships and empathy and is linked to higher levels of educational achievement and self-esteem.

- **Model positive relationships**

Happy relationships between parents and significant adults lead to better mental and physical health for all involved. Children thrive emotionally when they see and are involved in warm and caring relationships, where they are respected and valued.

- **Develop positive routines**

It's good to remember that our mental health relies on physical routines. Try to find a routine that works for your family. One that has consistent and clear boundaries.

- **Help your child develop coping strategies**

Coping strategies help us to deal with overwhelming feelings. Encourage your child to find one, or more, that they can turn to. For example, they could try relaxation, exercise, journaling, music, or distraction techniques.

- **Support your child to face specific challenges**

Worries about everyday experiences are a good chance to help prepare your child to face future challenges. For instance, you could support them in managing the anxiety about going to a sleepover or presenting their work in assembly.

- **Let your child flex their muscles**

It's so helpful for children to learn that they can do things on their own. Overprotecting them won't help. Remember that a tolerable amount of stress is actually beneficial.



STAY INVOLVED IN
THEIR LIFE

Special time together

- Try to build some one-on-one time with your child. This can be tricky if you have more than one child or a busy home life. It could just be 5 minutes while you're making dinner or when they're in the bath.
- Talk to your child about their day.
- Join them in their play at home.
- Visit somewhere that ties into their interests – library/museum/art gallery/park.



ENCOURAGE THEIR
INTERESTS

- Sign up for free after school clubs
- Check your emails from school/noticeboard at front for Low Cost/No Cost ideas of things to do locally
- Visit museums/art galleries/parks/libraries that tie into their interests – many are free



BUILD POSITIVE ROUTINES



Sleep



Healthy food



Exercise



WHERE CAN I GET
MORE SUPPORT?

Make an appointment to talk with Miss Fender (SENDSCO), Mrs Honeybourne (Deputy Head) or Mrs Warland (Head Teacher)

<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/>

<https://maudsleycharity.org/familiesunderpressure>

[/](#)

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-mental-health/>