

Each half term this section of the website will be focusing on different aspects of mental health for you to consider. There is also a list of local and national organisations with specific services that may be able to help further. There is a brief description of the services provided together with the link to the website for you.



What is Mental Health?

There is often a lot of confusion about what we mean when we talk about mental health. Many people immediately start thinking about mental health problems or mental illness – but this is only one part of the picture.

Everyone has 'mental health' and this can be thought of in terms of:

- how we feel about ourselves and the people around us
- our ability to make and keep friends and relationships
- our ability to learn from others and to develop psychologically and emotionally.

Being mentally healthy is also about having the strength to overcome the difficulties and challenges we can all face at times in our lives – to have confidence and self-esteem, to be able to make decisions and to believe in ourselves.

Five ways to mental wellbeing

Just as we can eat '5 a day' of fruit and vegetables to improve our physical health, there are 5 ways that we can use to improve our mental wellbeing.



Connect – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and pupils. Spend time developing these relationships.

Be active – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life.

Take Notice – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

Keep learning – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?

Give to others and yourselves – even the smallest act can count whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

Mental health difficulties

Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year.

In England, 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem (such as anxiety and depression) in any given week

Half of all mental health problems manifest by the age of 14, with 75% by age 24

1 in 10 children have a diagnosable mental health disorder – that's roughly 3 children in every classroom

Spotting the signs of mental health difficulties

We've got a simple way to remember some of the signs and what to look out for if you've started to feel concerned about your child's mental health - **M-A-S-K**:

Mood

They get irritable, argumentative or aggressive towards you. They may blame you if things go wrong. They can also become withdrawn

Actions

They may experience changes in eating and sleeping patterns. Look out for any signs of bullying, alcohol, drugs or self-harm

Social

They suddenly appear especially bored, lonely or withdrawn or they start to get into trouble. Losing interest in friends and other things they liked to do or missing school are common warning signs.

Keep Talking

Refusing or being reluctant to talk about how they're feeling is common. But keep listening and ask how they are feeling. When they do open up, make sure they know there's someone there who really cares.

Further information and support

Support for adults

The Samaritans

The Samaritans offer a safe place for anyone to talk any time they like, in any way – about whatever's going on.

Telephone 116 123

Email jo@samaritans.org

Website www.samaritans.org

Talking Therapy

Access to 1:1 CBT therapy within Oxfordshire with the option to self-refer

Telephone 01865 901222

Email Talkingspaceplus@nhs.net

Website <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus/>

Useful support for pupils

CAMHS

Parents and professionals can now refer for further support and young people can now self-refer for further support with mental health difficulties, just complete online form.

<https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/refer/>