

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

Children and Young People — Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 children and young people, including depression, anxiety and conduct disorder and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.

Alarmingly, however, 70% of children and young people who experience a mental health problem have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- Being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise
- Having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors
- Being part of a family that gets along well most of the time
- Going to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils
- Taking part in local activities for young people

Other factors are also important, including:

- Feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- Being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves
- Being hopeful and optimistic
- Being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed
- Accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at
- Having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community
- Feeling they have some control over their own life
- Having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems

Most children grow up mentally healthy, but surveys suggest that more and more children and young people have problems with their mental health today than 30 years ago. That is probably because of changes in the way we live now and how that affects the experience of growing up.

Reference — www.mentalhealth.org.uk

What mental health problems commonly occur in children?

- **Depression** affects more children and young people today than in the last few decades, but it is still more common in adults. Teenagers are more likely to experience depression than young children.
- **Self-harm** is a very common problem among young people. Some people find it helps them manage intense emotional pain if they harm themselves, through cutting or burning, for example. They may not wish to take their own life.
- **Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)** can cause young people to become extremely worried. Very young children or children starting or moving school may have separation anxiety.
- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** can follow physical or sexual abuse, witnessing something extremely frightening or traumatising, being the victim of violence or severe bullying or surviving a disaster.
- **ADHD** children who are constantly overactive (hyperactive), behave impulsively and have difficulty paying attention may have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Many more boys than girls are affected, but the cause of ADHD isn't fully understood.
- **Eating Disorders** The number of young people who develop an eating disorder is small, but eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can have serious consequences for their physical health and development.

Looking after your Mental Health

5 Ways to Wellbeing is an Essex County Council campaign that highlights five steps that residents can follow to keep them well, both in body and mind.

What are the Five Ways to Wellbeing?

The Five Ways to Wellbeing Framework was developed by the New Economics Foundation as a set of five evidence based actions that promote wellbeing. Based on the latest scientific evidence the simple actions, if taken regularly, can improve wellbeing and enhance quality of life.

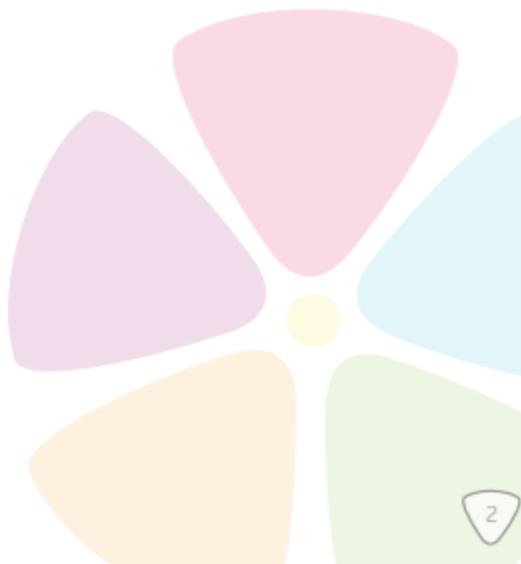
The Five Ways to Wellbeing are to:

- **Connect** – connecting with others
- **Give** – giving – looking outward as well as inward
- **Be active** – doing something active
- **Take Notice** – taking notice of the world around you
- **Keep Learning** – learning new things

Each action can be undertaken individually or collectively as part of everyday activity.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing may help young people:

- Make the most of opportunities and deal with stressful situations by taking time out and learning how to cope when things get tough.
- Increase their interpersonal skills, empathy and communication skills through giving and seeing themselves as part of the wider community.
- Increase their chances of employability and self-worth by taking notice of what they are good at and what they have to offer others.



Mental Health Support

- Kooth

www.kooth.com

An on-line counselling service for young people aged 11-26. This service is accredited by Essex County Council and is completely free for Essex based students. Young people are able to access fully-trained counsellors in a confidential instant-messaging environment.

- Mind

www.mind.org.uk

We provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. We campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

- Young Minds

www.youngminds.org.uk

Leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered, whatever the challenges.

- LGBTQ

www.thebeyouproject.co.uk

To help you understand what you are feeling and to give you practical advice about decisions or changes you might be getting ready to make in your life.

- Samaritans

www.samaritans.org e-mail jo@samaritans.org Tel: 116 123

You talk, we listen - we listen to you and help you talk through your concerns, worries and troubles. Callers who are d/Deaf or who have hearing or speech impairments can contact us for support by email: jo@samaritans.org or by using the Next Generation Text (NGT) service.

- Stem4

www.stem4.org.uk

stem4 provides information on identification, intervention and effective management of commonly occurring teenage mental health issues.