



THE SOURCE

The Source Academy Safeguarding Newsletter

July 2017

According to the Mental Health Foundation, mental health problems affect 1 in 10 children and young people. The BBC reports that figures show young people are affected disproportionately with over half of mental health problems starting by the age of 14 and 75% by 18 and 1 in 4 adults will be affected by mental health at some point in their lives.

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 take decisions and to believe in ourselves.

Dealing with life's ups and downs

Having said that we all have mental health, it's also important to understand when you might need to get some help or support with how you are feeling – or to know when perhaps you may be experiencing a more serious problem.

It is quite normal to sometimes feel worried, anxious or upset when things don't go as you hope – everyone faces pressure in their lives at certain times and these can include:

- exams
- work and getting a job
- growing up and becoming more independent from your family
- making up (and breaking up) with friends

What to look out for

If someone (a learner or a colleague) is experiencing **worries, anxieties and difficult feelings** to the extent that they are **seriously interfering with their everyday life**, for instance:

- being able to study and go to school
- being able to eat or sleep as they normally do
- to go out with their friends or take part in their favourite hobby

and these feelings are becoming persistent, that is **lasting for a few weeks or more**, then it might be that they have a mental health problem or disorder and need to get some advice and help.

A child or teen might need help if he or she:

- Often feels anxious or worried
- Has very frequent tantrums or is intensely irritable much of the time
- Has frequent stomachaches or headaches with no physical explanation
- Is in constant motion, can't sit quietly for any length of time
- Has trouble sleeping, including frequent nightmares
- Loses interest in things he or she used to enjoy
- Avoids spending time with friends
- Has trouble doing well in school, or grades decline
- Fears gaining weight; exercises, diets obsessively
- Has low or no energy
- Has spells of intense, inexhaustible activity
- Harms herself/himself, such as cutting or burning her/his skin
- Engages in risky, destructive behavior
- Harms self or others
- Smokes, drinks, or uses drugs
- Has thoughts of suicide
- Thinks his or her mind is controlled or out of control, hears voices

Mental health problems can be related to bullying, eating disorders, self-harm and substance abuse, and can occur as a result of family break ups and bereavements. Stress and changing circumstances can also impact young people's mental health and it can present itself as anxiety, panic attacks and depression.

You can use the attached link to check your or your learners' moods -

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/youth-mental-health/pages/Youth-mental-health-help.aspx>

If you have any concern about a learner or a colleague's mental health please contact Andy Womble on 075843981447 or Helen Lee on 07827852504.

More information is available on:

<https://www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/young-people/what-is-mental-health>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/mentalhealth/Pages/Mentalhealthhome.aspx>