What Is 'Mental Health & How Is It Defined'?

"Mental Health is defined as a state of **well-being** in which every individual realises his or her own **potential**, can **cope** with the normal stresses of life, can **work productively** and fruitfully, and is able to **make a contribution** to her or his community" World Health Organisation

Having Good Mental Health Does NOT Mean Life Without Stress-It Is Coping Well With What Life Brings, That Helps Us To Bring Balance To Our Lives...

Norman Vincent Peale: The Power of Positive Thinking

Some Common Mental Health Terminology

- **Mental Health**
  Overarching umbrella under which 'mental health problems' (MHP) and 'mental health and wellbeing' (MHW) sit.

- **Mental Health Difficulties**
  A term that refers to symptoms that meet the criteria for **clinical diagnosis** of MH problems i.e. anxiety, depression, eating disorder, etc.

- **Mental Wellbeing**
  A term that includes achieving **self-actualisation** and **being happy with one's self, feeling fulfilled** also **loving ourselves**. A mentally well person has high self -worth, self confidence, self-control, has high drive and purpose, has a strong sense of belonging, has no problems developing and sustaining positive, healthy relationships throughout their life.

  Mental Health & Wellbeing has to be referred to on a '*continuum*' it is something that we have to always be aware of securing and sustaining, alert to and constantly working on –this status is NOT static but Dynamic.
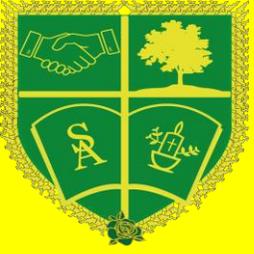
Discussion

WHAT CAN AFFECT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON?

Remember The Same Factors That Affect Children Affect Adults

Factors That Affect Children & Young People's Mental Health

- Poverty/Deprivation
- Bereavement/Loss
- Abandonment/Neglect
- Imprisonment of parent or the young person
- Divorce/Separation
- Bullying (any form)
- Long term illness
- Gender/sexuality matters

- Lack of belonging/Too much attention
- Physical/ verbal/Emo abuse
- Sexual abuse/Over exposure
- Peer pressure/Parent Pressure
- School pressures (exams)
- Young Carer responsibilities
- Addiction
- Status :refugee, asylum illegal, police protection

Some Context Surrounding Children's Mental Health & Wellbeing Between ages 11-16

In A Survey Conducted By The NSPCC

- **1 in 10 children** feel they have **no one to talk to at home** when they are worried, afraid or sad about a situation at home or at school (are any in our classroom?)

- **Nearly four in ten (38%)** said that worrying caused them difficulty with going to sleep (do you see children falling asleep in class….have you explored why with them?) Today many more are up late on phones, chat rooms & social media too

- **More than a quarter (27%)** said they get into fights or arguments due to feeling angry from home, left out, put down by parents/siblings, jealous of others, feeling arrogant & boastful (all signs of poor mental health)

- **Just over a quarter (26%)** said that worrying about situations at home (eg. divorce, separation, eviction, domestic violence) caused them to struggle to do their homework (so before we assume… let's assess…what is the root cause?)

- **More than one in four (27%)** don't want to be in school, around others sometimes because of feeling bad about themselves, lacking confidence, being unsettled, uncomfortable, unhappy…even feeling embarrassed for being habitually late to or absent from school. Many young children cry when they are late to school

Facts To Consider When Addressing children and Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing

- **50% of serious mental health problems** are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24 so helping children to become better managers of their Mental Health and Wellbeing early on is essential

- **Childhood trauma/Adverse childhood experiences** can have a lifelong impact on mental health if not managed/addressed properly and early with children

- **Children born into poverty/deprivation** are more likely to experience mental health problems and some may use this as an excuse or a crutch all their lives; however studies have shown that poverty itself is not a cause of poor mental health, its poor choices and priorities even while poor that is the cause. Some of the most resilient/mentally balanced children are from poor countries.

- **Children of the middle classes and affluent** also suffer with serious mental health and wellbeing challenges-sometimes in more extreme ways than the poor, but socially, they learn from very early to mask this well. Many are serial abusers of drugs and alcohol, self harming and eating disorders.

- **Education and awareness** is important for wellbeing as knowledge and good habits learned early can have positive impact and outcomes an children's mental health. (Public Health England 2022)

- **20% of adolescents** may experience a mental health problem particularly during puberty or major transitions: going to secondary school, college and university.

- **10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years)** have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem, **yet 70% of children and adolescents** who experience mental health problems have never had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.

What Should We Look Out For At School & Let Parents Know About Their Children? Signs…

- **Withdrawn**/Loner behaviour

- **Decline in school performance**/school work

- **Physical Appearance suffers**-too much or too little attention in this area

- **Aggressive Behaviour:** Confrontational, Oppositional and Disrespectful

- **Risk Taking Behaviour :**shop lifting, truancy, stealing, serious lying, drug abuse, joining/forming gangs, disrespecting parents and staff-usually among older pupils

- **Changes in eating/sleeping habits** at home…impacting school-usually among younger children

- **Absenteeism** :from school, clubs, youth development programmes (sometimes due to short/long term illness/ issues)

- **Lack of interest** in things they used to enjoy: Dance, Drama, Sports, School

- **Low self-esteem**, self-confidence, self-image and self-worth

- **Self harming** behaviours-physical
- **Self-loathing**-always negative about self

- **Having Difficulties opening up,** and communicating their feelings/needs

Provision and support Available For Protecting, Promoting & Supporting Pupils' Mental Health
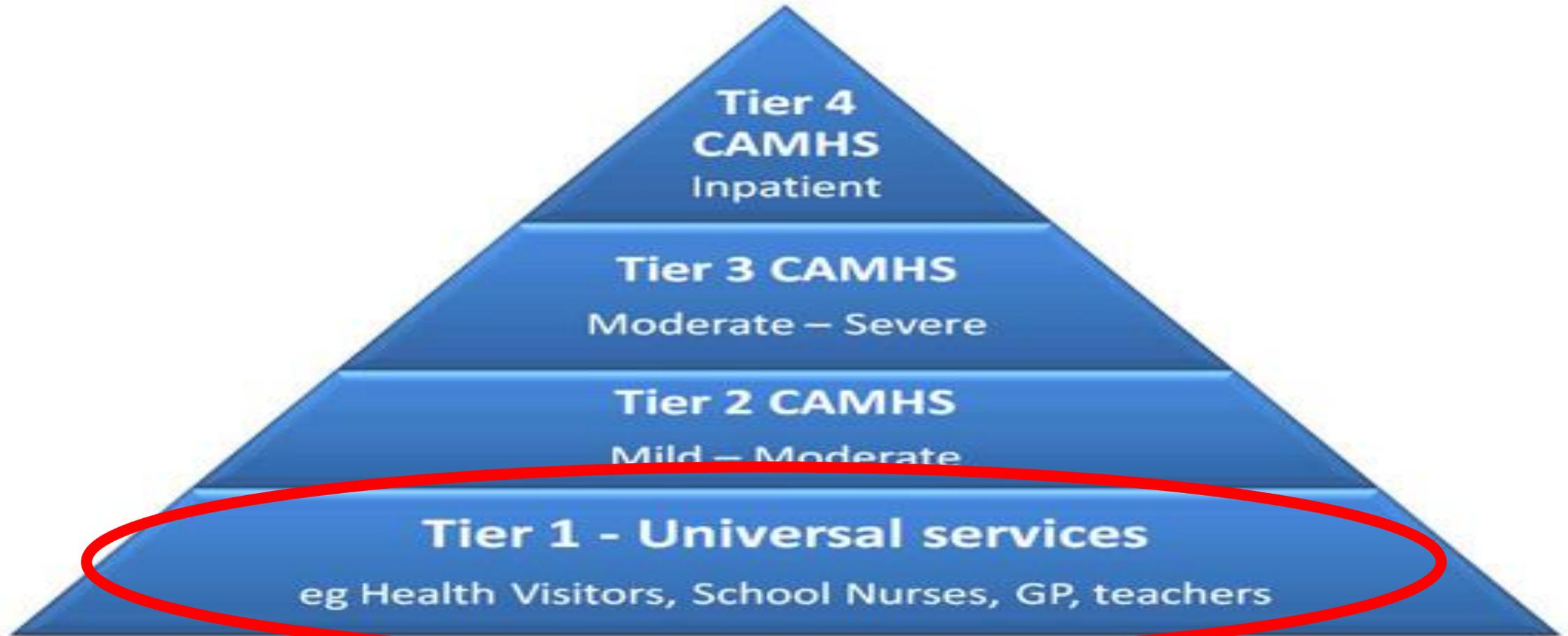
Be knowledgeable of NHS & LBN Framework for Improving Mental Health In School

Have at least One Trusted Adult in each cohort as a point of contact for children to go to.

Importance of dependable adult to supporting and protecting mental health of children and young people – e.g. strengthen parenting, mentoring, guidance, befriending initiatives

Resilience Development in Schools

Whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing – ethos, curriculum, positive behaviour, anti-bullying, Pastoral care

Teaching children conflict resolution and problem solving techniques-DON'T ALWAYS RESOLVE PROBLEMS FOR THEM!

LET THEM DO THE RESOLVING THEMSELVES-MEDIATE

Build Resilience Development in School Communities

Create A Strong Programme of Clubs & Activities, Youth Services via voluntary and community organisations. Staff to be confident and skilled to support and intervene or re-direct pupils

Share Guidance on LBN Services Available To All

Children, families & Young People. The LBN have a range of support options for early intervention and can help

All to find their way to appropriate help quickly

Responding to Distress : All Safeguarding and DSLs are points of references across the School with additional help from- Frontline agencies across LBN who can confidently support and intervene to help children and young people in situations of distress such as All Abuse including Domestic Abuse, Self Harm and Risk of Suicide

Develop Peer Help &Self Help

& Advise on Positive Use of Media Platforms That Can Help

Those who share their problems enjoy better mental health - build opportunities for young people to provide peer support, and to use social media for wellbeing

If you are dealing with a mental health crisis or emergency and want to speak to someone , **please call Newham's Mental Health Crisis Helpline on 0800 073 0666**. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also visit www.mind.org.uk for a list of other service providers who may be able to help you.

Reduce The Stigma Linked to Mental Health... Let Everyone Know It's Okay **NOT** To Be Okay!

Key Messages : Don't Be Afraid To Talk & Get Help When You Are Not OK...if you don't say...there is no way

Create the conditions:

- For our children to talk about how they feel openly without judgement.

- Have our children and adults working together to produce an environment filled with joy, openness, support, and acceptance! How can you contribute?

- Have the confidence to learn and use emotional intelligence/ literacy to challenge the negative behaviours and practices of others you see around.

- **Praise and promote good role models**

Teach Children Self-Care....Looking After Self

❖ **MAKE TIME TO DO THE THINGS YOU ENJOY!**

❖ **Adults To Build in Support and Supervision** – let children know they can come to you to talk. Encourage them to join a club or programme within their interest and skill set at school or in the wider community

❖ **Make referrals**: Time for Talking Counselling Service https://www.newham.ac.uk/students/mental-health-and-well-being-support/

❖ **Newham Children and Young People's Mental Health Learning Resource includes an area for self-care** - https://www.elft.nhs.uk/newham-talking-therapies

❖ **NHS Living Life is a free telephone service** available to anyone over the age of 16 feeling low, anxious or stressed http://www.nhs24.com/usefulresources/livinglife/

❖ **Newham Crisis Support and Advice for serious cases**

https://www.wellnewham.org.uk/advice/mental-health-crisis-support

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