



Children's Mental Health Week 1 -7th February

In this month's issue of our newsletter we are going to focus on Children's Mental Health Week.

Every year, children's mental health charity Place2Be choose a different theme to celebrate, support and encourage children's mental health; this year's theme is.....

Express yourself (more about that later!)

Facts about children's Mental Health

A recent survey conducted in July 2020 showed that one in six children aged between 5 and 16 have a diagnosable mental health condition.

The rate has risen in boys aged 5 to 16 from 11.4% in 2017 to 16.7% in July 2020 and in girls from 10.3% to 15.2% over the same time period, according to the Mental Health of Children and Young People in England 2020 report.

These diagnosable conditions include anxiety, depression and conduct disorders and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.

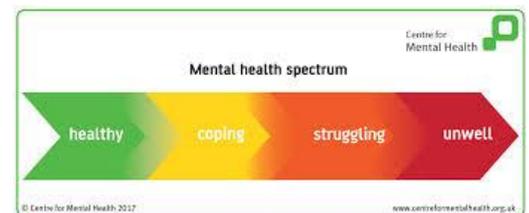
Things that can help a young person stay mentally well include:

- 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.
- 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 children and young people have problems with their mental health today than 30 years ago. That's probably because of changes in the way we live now and how that affects the experience of growing up.

Mental Health Spectrum

Just like with physical health, we all have mental health. Our personal mental health works on a spectrum scale and looks like this:



Every individual, even our children, move up and down this spectrum based on events that are happening in their life.

You know those days where everything feels just that bit harder and you're that bit more tired and you're just not sure why; then the next day you feel happy and full of energy - that's you moving up and down the spectrum.

We all know how to look after our physical health and most of us do this without thinking. We can do this with our mental health too, just by being aware of how we feel at any given moment, being kind to ourselves and taking those well-earned you time breaks when you need them.

National Awareness days

1 – 7th February: Children's Mental Health Week

1 February – National Dark Chocolate Day

4 February: Time to Talk Day

4 February: World Cancer Day

5 February: World Nutella Day



Express yourself

This children's mental health week is all about expressing yourself, celebrating the unique and amazing person that is **you!**

You can express yourself in lots of different ways:

- By being creative
- By singing
- By dancing
- By acting and drama
- By story telling
- By how we dress
- By how we style our hair or what colour it is

Expressing ourselves makes us feel:

- Happy
- Relaxed
- Excited
- Connected
- Confident and good about ourselves

During Children's Mental Health Week, your class teacher will be sharing an online assembly all about how to express yourself. We'd like you to take a look at some of the suggestions for expressing yourself during that assembly and then send in your amazing efforts.

Have fun 😊

Wellbeing Activity

Mindfulness walk

- 1) Stand still and take several slow, deep breaths which will help your body to relax
- 2) Soften your focus and look at the ground in front of you
- 3) Smile: smiling tells our brain that something nice is going to happen
- 4) Walk forwards slowly and focus on each movement you make
- 5) While walking pay attention to what you see, smell and hear, take time to stop now and again to just be in the moment, feel the breath of the wind against your skin, listen to the sounds all around.
- 6) Finish your walk by standing still again then take a few more deep calming breaths and smile

Congratulations, you've just taken your first mindful walk!

Self Help Book Recommendations

Starving the Anxiety Gremlin by Kate Collins-Donnelly - *A cognitive behavioural therapy workbook on anxiety management for your child to work through independently or with help from an adult.*

The Unworry Book by Alice James - *An Activity book to calm your mind.*

Don't Worry, Be Happy by Poppy O'Neil – *A child's guide to overcoming anxiety.*

