

Mental health and wellbeing
guidance



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Five Ways To Wellbeing

Evidence suggests there are five steps we can all take to improve our mental wellbeing.

Encourage pupils to try these steps, they may feel happier, more positive and able to get the most from life.

What are the five ways to wellbeing and how can they help children?

1. Connect - social contact

Encourage children to develop good relationships and connect with the people around them such as: family members, friends, neighbours, classmates, teachers and school staff.

2. Be Active

Physical activity and regular exercise have positive impacts on children's moods and emotions.

Encourage children to find an activity they enjoy, playing football, swimming, running, playing in the park after school, etc. and to make it a regular part of their weekly routine.

3. Keep Learning - Active Minds

Learning a new skill can give children a sense of achievement as well as experiencing positive emotions.



Encourage them to consider activities such as learning to play a musical instrument, solving puzzles, joining after school activity clubs, etc.

4. Self-care and relaxation - be mindful

Talk to the children about appreciating the present moment, their thoughts,

body and the world around them. It's important for children to have good sleep routines, as well as taking time to relax by doing something they enjoy such as reading a book or watching a film.

5. Give to others - be kind

Getting involved in social and community life can help children to gain a sense of fulfilment. Children that are encouraged to enjoy greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

If the child is giving you cause for concern, speak to your ROAR/MHFA member of staff for further advice.

Further information can be found at www.liverpoolcamhs.com/need-advice



Helping a child experiencing trauma

This leaflet has been created to help school staff to support a child experiencing trauma. Working alongside the school's ROAR or Mental Health First Aid Champion, staff will be able to decide on the appropriate action to take.

What is trauma?

Trauma is a reaction to the experience of events involving threat or danger to yourself or others. Personal experience can cause this, or sometimes through witnessing or hearing about terrible events that have happened to others.

Children and young people sometimes witness or are involved in things they find very scary or stressful such as accidents, violence or terrorist attacks. It's quite normal to be upset for even quite a while after a frightening event.

Trauma has been described as 'normal reactions to extraordinary events'. If reactions continue for over three months, then it may be necessary to explore professional support.

What might I see in a child?

- A child may display or experience different behaviours, signs and feelings, including:
 - Hyper-vigilance - a state of increased awareness
 - Poor concentration
 - Continuous minor physical complaints such as stomach aches or headaches
 - Unusual and untypical behaviour
- Nightmares or sleeping problems
- Panic attacks



- Feeling angry, sad, guilty, confused or any combination of feelings

Six ideas to support a child

1. Try and make things as normal as possible - the child will feel safer when they are reassured and know what to expect.
2. Help the child to understand what's happening by explaining the truth, giving facts about the situation.
3. Make sure the child understands you are available to talk when the child is ready, don't avoid the subject.
4. The child may find using dolls or toys, or even drawing pictures to help understand what's happened.
5. Answer questions truthfully, but keep them simple. The child may ask questions several times, which could be the child's own way of accepting what's happened.
6. If someone has died, make sure the child understands what this means, that it is permanent. Avoid statements such as 'David has gone away', instead say, 'David has died' and keep repeating if necessary, if the child keeps asking about the person.

If the child is still giving you cause for concern, speak to your ROAR/MHFA member of staff for further advice.

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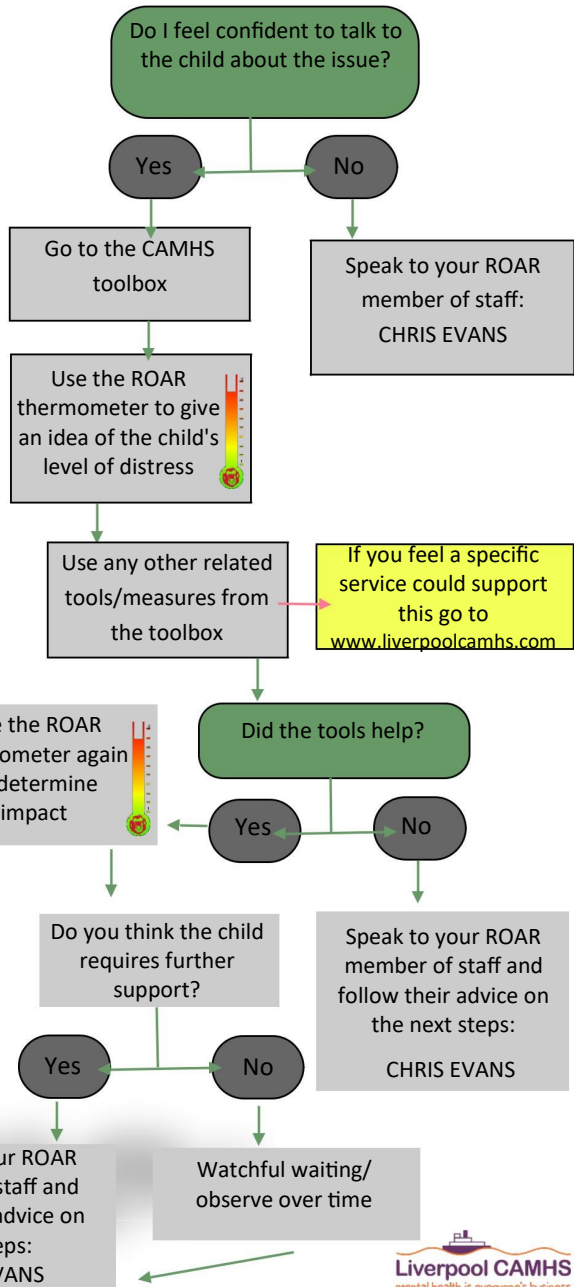
What do I do when I'm worried or have a problem?

Problem	Where to go for help
Bullying/Cyberbullying	Parents Bully busters (0800 169 6928) Teachers (Safe hand) Child line (0800 1111)
Finding work too hard	Teacher (Safe hand) Parents Mrs Warren
Problem with friends	Parents Child line (0800 1111) Teacher (Safe hand)
Feeling low/sad	Learning mentor (Mr Evans) Parents Child line (0800 1111) Safe hand (YPAS – 707 1025)
Problem with family	NSPCC (0800 1111) Parents/other Child line (0800 1111) Teachers Family members YPAS (707 1025)
Issues with growing up	Learning Mentor Safe hand NSPCC (0800 1111) Child line (0800 1111) YPAS (707 1025)



What do I do when I'm worried about the mental health or emotional wellbeing of a child?

If at any point throughout this process a safeguarding concern arises, then follow your school safeguarding procedures
Kate Tierney



Helping a child experiencing problems sleeping

This leaflet has been created to help school staff to support a child experiencing problems with sleeping. Working alongside the school's ROAR or Mental Health First Aid Champion, staff will be able to decide on the appropriate action to take.

How much sleep does a child need?

All children are different, but generally each night:

- Children aged 3-5 need 11-12 hours
- Children aged 6-11 need 10-11 hours
- Teenagers need 9-10 hours.

Why do children experience sleep problems?

There can be different reasons:

- Bedtime fears - many young children are afraid of the dark or being left alone.
- Bad habits - such as napping too much during the day, eating a poor diet, use of electronic devices before bedtime or sub-stance abuse.
- Anxiety, low mood or depression
- A chemical imbalance in the brain.
- Nightmares, sleepwalking, night terrors or insomnia.

Six ideas to help parent/carers support a child.

1. Make sure the child is comfortable. Not too hot, not too cold, not too noisy or bright.
2. Establish a good bedtime routine. For example: A warm drink, warm bath, bedtime story and say goodnight. Aim to get up and go to bed at the same time every day.
3. Encourage the child to do some ex-



ercise particularly late afternoon or early evening, but not late in the evening to avoid overstimulation.

4. If something is troubling the child when it's time to sleep, suggest writing it down or drawing a picture of the thoughts.
5. Help the child to relax before bed—reading a book, listening to music.
6. If struggling to fall asleep help the child to imagine being in a relaxing place, feeling happy and slowly breathing in and out.

Things to consider:

1. Avoid going without sleep for a long period of time
2. Encourage the child not to have too much caffeine or sugar in their diet.
3. Encourage families to have their supper early in the evening rather than late.
4. Don't allow the child to lie in for too long. After a bad night, don't let the child sleep in the next day, this will just make it harder to get to sleep the following night.
5. Don't allow the child to play computer games or overuse phones and other devices close to bedtime. Screen time may help with boredom, but it can make it harder to get to sleep as your mind is stimulated. Stop a couple of hours before you plan to sleep.

If the child is still giving you cause for concern, speak to your ROAR/MHFA member of staff for further advice.

Further information can be found at www.liverpoolcamhs.com/need-advice

Helping a child experiencing anger

This leaflet has been created to help school staff to support a child experiencing anger. Working alongside the school's ROAR or Mental Health First Aid Champion, staff will be able to decide on the appropriate action to take.

What is anger?

Anger is a normal emotion which can be useful in our lives. It can, however, be destructive and disruptive in respect of relationships, behaviours and learning.

What might I see in the child?

You may see excessive outbursts of physical or verbal behaviour such as fighting or shouting.

It's normal for teenagers during adolescent stages to have periods of emotional outbursts displaying signs of anger, but it may be an indicator of other underlying situations or conditions that could require further support.

Six ideas to support a child.

1. With the child, identify any underlying trigger factors or situations that create feelings of anger.
2. Help the child to 'problem solve' possible situations that cause anger.
3. Give the child the opportunity to have some time out when feelings of anger build up, in order to diffuse those feelings.
4. Encourage the child to try things to relax, such as:



- Going for a walk/run
- Listening to music
- Playing computer games
- Reading a book

- Seeing friends
- Taking a bath

Talk to the child about our bodies and how they can change - specifically talk about how the child's body changes when tension builds before an outburst of anger.

Encourage the child to look for signs such as increase in temperature, sweating, breathing faster and pulse-racing.

Do not mirror the child's behaviour as this will cause it to escalate. Instead, manage the situation adopting a calm and controlled approach.

If the child is still giving you cause for concern, speak to your ROAR/MHFA member of staff for further advice.

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Helping a child experiencing low self-esteem

This leaflet has been created to help school staff support a child experiencing low self-esteem. Working alongside the school's ROAR or Mental Health First Aid Champion, staff will be able to decide on the appropriate action to take.

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is how someone thinks about themselves. Being confident means being comfortable with how they look and how they feel; it means feeling good about themselves, their abilities, and their thoughts.

Low self-esteem is when a child is lacking in confidence, and doubts their own decisions and abilities.

How might a child act?

Children with low self-esteem may have poor eye contact and defensive body-posture. They may be withdrawn and have poor levels of participation in class activities.

A child may engage in negative self-talk, such as, "I'm not good enough" or, "I can't do this".

A child may also frequently show signs of absorbing negative comments from care-givers, such as, "My parent says I'm stupid".

Seven ideas to support a child.

1. Validate the child by focusing on positives and find something to praise the child about, such as being kind or being good at sport, etc.
2. Encourage the child to do more enjoyable activities—things you know the child previously enjoyed.
3. Focus on 'small wins', don't chase big achievements. Do the little things and use them as a springboard. The child should be encouraged to feel



proud of even small achievements.

4. Consider a buddy system or nurture group within the class, or the wider school.
5. Use the **Five Ways to Wellbeing** as a tool to support the child, maybe discuss this in the classroom setting and make some goals
6. Explore positive role models and discuss what makes the child feel good about unique differences.
7. Discuss and practise positive body language, encouraging good posture and eye-contact.

If the child is still giving you cause for concern, speak to your ROAR/MHFA member of staff for further advice.

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Helping a child experiencing low-mood/depression

This leaflet has been created to help school staff to support a child experiencing low mood or depression. Working alongside the school's ROAR or Mental Health First Aid Champion, staff will be able to decide on the appropriate action to take.

What is low mood/depression?

Feeling sad is a normal reaction to everyday life experiences. However, when these feelings continue and begin to interfere with a child's enjoyment of life, they may be feeling depressed.

In its mildest form, depression can mean a child feels low. This may not stop them from leading a normal life, but makes everything harder to do and less worthwhile. At its most severe, depression can be life-threatening because it can make a child feel suicidal.

Depression can be caused by lots of things such as life experiences, family history, bullying, feeling like they have lack of support or it may even run in their family.

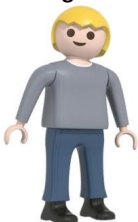
What might I see in the child?

A child might display or experience different behaviours, signs and feelings such as:

Feeling: Worthless, hopeless, moody, guilty or helpless.

Behaviours: Tearful, Irritable, withdrawn, avoiding friends and family, lack of interest in appearance, difficulty in concentrating.

Thoughts: 'I don't deserve any help', 'what's the point?', Dismissing the positives, negative thinking patterns, including not wanting to live anymore.



Physical signs: Tired, eating changes, changes in sleep

pattern, aches & pains, slowing of speech.

Nine ideas to support a child.

1. Break things down into small steps and celebrate when achieved.
2. Encourage the child to exercise regularly and keep an eye on diet, avoiding sugary/fatty foods and stimulants.
3. Gently encourage the child to continue to do activities previously enjoyed - even if the enjoyment has lessened.
4. Try to identify any factors that may be contributing to the child's low mood such as environmental issues, age-related, physical illness, friendship issues etc.
5. Help the child to identify a trustworthy adult to talk to.
6. Help the child to identify and access a safe place.
7. Encourage the child to be around people who are caring and positive. Both negative and positive thoughts are contagious.
8. Think about the classroom environment and things that may make a child feel vulnerable. Think about sitting the child next to a friend, being mindful about the pressures of group work, giving the option to opt out when appropriate.
9. Introduce mood boosting activities for the whole class such as the golden mile (a run or walk around the school), singing, mindfulness exercises, a class chant, or watching a funny YouTube clip etc.

If the child is still giving you cause for concern, speak to your ROAR/MHFA member of staff for further advice.

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Helping a child experiencing anxiety

This leaflet has been created to help school staff to support a child experiencing anxiety. Working alongside the school's ROAR or Mental Health First Aid Champion, staff will be able to decide on the appropriate action to take.

What cause anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of fear or panic. We all get it from time to time when we try a new experience or things that are difficult. This feeling goes back to the neolithic time when humans were surrounded by dangers. Anxiety is the body's alarm system that sends adrenaline around the body and give people superhero-like boosts to allow them to run away from dangers. It's known as the FIGHT, FLIGHT (avoiding or running away) or FREEZE response. When children get the FLIGHT or FREEZE response they may find themselves staying away from activities and People. The longer they stay away, the harder it is to go back.

How might a child act?

A child might display or experience different behaviours, such as:

Feelings: frightened, worried, angry, nervous, embarrassed or overwhelmed.

Behaviours: avoiding situations, withdrawing from social settings, biting nails, sleeping issues, tearful, struggling to concentrate, hyper-vigilant.

Thoughts: worrying that nobody likes them, 'I cant do it', 'I must do this', catastrophizing, negative thinking.



Physical signs: Frequent tummy aches, headaches, shaky hands, tense muscles or scratching.

Eight ideas to support a child.

1. It helps if you can prepare the child in advance, explain what is going to happen and why - using a calm tone of voice. Pay particular attention to situations the child may find overwhelming such as crowded spaces.

2. If the child is very young, regular routines around bedtime and getting ready for school can help with separation anxiety.

3. Check the child is eating healthy meals regularly to ensure balanced physical and mental energy levels.

4. Ask the child what they are thinking when they feel anxious. It can help to ask the child to draw a picture of themselves with a thought bubble above their heads to show this.

5. If the child is over the age of five, it might be helpful to talk about the child's worries to an understanding adult - this could be someone outside the immediate family.

6. Try to spot trigger points for the child's anxiety during the school day. Consider the class seating plan, use of toilets, changing and PE - all common triggers.

7. Help the child to control breathing when feeling particularly anxious by visualising blowing out a big bubble. The key is to encourage the child to blow out for longer than breathing in.

8. Re-focus the child's attention using music, exercise, creative activities, fidget toys or stress relief aids.

If the child is still giving you cause for concern, speak to your ROAR/MHFA member of staff for further advice.

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