Mental health

Information for parents and carers

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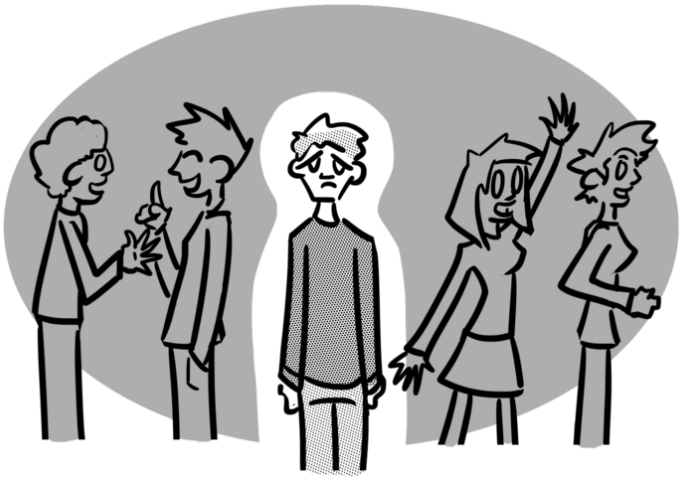
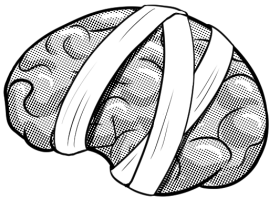
Did you know?



Research states that mental health issues affect about 1 in 10 children. The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows young people to develop resilience, cope with the ups and downs in life and grow into healthy adults.

Surveys suggest that most young people are mentally healthy but more children are having problems due to life changes, traumatic events, feeling vulnerable or not coping with difficult situations. The Guardian has recently published that tens of thousands of young people in Britain are struggling with their mental health and are seeking help online for problems.

Research indicates that common mental health problems for young people include depression, self-harm, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and panic attacks. Poor mental health in childhood affects educational attainment, increases the likelihood of smoking, alcohol and drug use, and has consequences for poorer physical health in later life.



What can you do?

Take time to do some research about mental health issues and symptoms with young people. Point your child towards websites or helplines that can give them information as well. Here are some useful websites to get you started:
www.mind.org.uk www.youngminds.org.uk

Seek further advice from a professional if you are worried or concerned about your child.

Talk to your child about any worries they have, be supportive and show empathy and understanding. Try to avoid persistent questioning but encourage them to open up to you and reassure them that you are there to help them. Try to make your child feel loved, trusted and safe.

Don't blame yourself for any problems your child is having as this will not help the situation. Be honest and explain that you are worried and help them access the right kind of help. Encourage your child to take up healthy habits to help them to maintain a positive state of mental health. Examples are:

- Healthy eating
- Good sleep routine
- Seeing friends and connecting with others
- Taking time out to relax
- Exercising
- Doing hobbies
- Spend time outdoors

e: enquiries@pixl.org.uk **www.pixl.org.uk**