

Communication – Context - Curiosity

Mental Health is often used to describe how people feel regarding their emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.

Mental Health is not static and may change over the course of days and weeks. Sometimes this might be because of something that has happened recently or in the past. It is important to regularly check in with young people regarding how they are feeling particularly after a significant life event, or a change in their behaviour and presentation.

Mental Illness can be described as when a young person's mental health concerns persist for a longer period or have an effect on their day-to-day functioning.

- ❑ **It can be normal for young people to feel sad, unhappy or anxious at points in their life. Often these are short and temporary periods, however, if these feelings do not resolve it can be a good idea for them to talk to someone that they trust such as friends, family or professionals.**
- ❑ **Sometimes mental health concerns persist for a longer period of time or are accompanied by other concerns such as changes in our diet, sleep, social contact and suicidal thoughts. As a professional you should be alert to changes in the young people you work with and sensitively explore what these changes might indicate regarding their safety and mental health. These may require additional mental health support.**

Indicators of a change in mental health can include:

- Struggling to leave the house to see friends or go to school
- Struggling to switch off from worries, pressure and stress
- Struggling to socialise and be around people
- Struggling to take care of themselves and do things like eat, sleep or wash
- Struggling to do the things they enjoy
- Struggling to feel positive about themselves
- Struggling to believe that things can get better
- Changes in weight, mood or sleep.
- Injuries consistent with self-harm

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Where to find out more

Young Minds have a lot of resources and information for young people and professionals: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/> and Place2Be has a wide range of [practical tips for parents and carers](#) to support children's wellbeing and behaviour

The NHS provides a succinct overview of reliable and up to date information: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/>

Anna Freud provides information, resources and up to date information regarding young people and mental health: <https://www.annafreud.org/>

What can cause mental health to deteriorate?

- ☐ Bullying or abuse
- ☐ Trauma
- ☐ Problems at home, school or in the community
- ☐ Poverty, homelessness or poor housing
- ☐ Losing someone you trust
- ☐ Experiencing discrimination and stigma (including racism, homophobia and transphobia)
- ☐ Difficult relationships with family, friends or partners
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Stress and pressure
- ☐ Physical health problems
- ☐ Low self-esteem

What can I do: Be aware of the mental health of young people you are working with, listen to what they say and be aware of any changes in their behaviour or presentation. Refer young people for specialist support where it is required.

Where to get help:

- ☐ Many schools and colleges provide pastoral support and counselling
- ☐ Streetwise provides a range of support including counselling
- ☐ CYPS provide mental health assessment and support
- ☐ Check for resources available from the [NSCP website](#)