Mental Health Literacy & Wellbeing in Schools: What Works?

Date 4.07.17
Dr Helen Pote
Why is the mental health of young people important?

Mental health problems are common
- 850,000 children aged 5-16 have mental health problems (1 in 10 children)
- Three children in every classroom have a diagnosable mental health disorder.

Child mental Health Problems lead to Adult mental health problems
Of those with mental health problems in adult life
  - 50% start by the age 14
  - 75% start by the age of 24

We have successful treatments
- Universal approaches
- Targeted support

Mental health problems link to a range of other difficulties
- Poor school attainment
- Exclusions
- Teenage pregnancy
- Prison sentence
- Drug dependency

£34bn + £1.4b
Five Year Forward for Mental Health Government Response (2017)

£1.4 Billion Investment in Child Mental Health 2017-20

- Making mental health first-aid training available to all secondary schools, with the aim of having trained at least one teacher in every secondary school by 2019
- Evaluating different approaches which schools can use to prevent mental ill-health
- Launching a pilot programme on peer support for young people in schools and online
- Possible Care Quality Commission & Ofsted joint inspections on children’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Publishing a Green Paper on children and young people’s mental health later this year
- £20 million to Time to Change anti-stigma programme, improving the attitudes of young people towards mental health and reaching 1.75 million young people by 2020
- Reporting on the prevalence of mental health conditions in children and young people by 2018
**Political ‘Push’ for Mental Health First Aid?**

**Government puts £200k behind plan for mental health first-aiders in every secondary**

Adi Bloom
27th June 2017, TES


![Image of two people talking]

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*Image source: Shutterstock*

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*Photo credit: Getty Images*

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*Image description: Two people engaged in conversation, possibly in a school setting.*
Seema and her stomach aches...

Stomach aches
Missing lessons and school days
Not eating regularly
Not sleeping and Waking early
What is Mental Health Literacy?

Promotion of wellbeing

Attitudes/stigma towards mental health

Recognition of mental health problems

Knowledge about mental health problems
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promotion</th>
<th>Universal (staff &amp; pupils) Mental Health Literacy Wellbeing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
<td>Indicated (pupils) At Risk MHP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Targeted (pupils) MHP clinical levels</td>
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</table>
What works?
1. A whole school approach

Implementation is key: SEAL Programme 2007-2010

- Social and emotion skills
- Mental health difficulties
- Pro-social behaviour
- Behaviour problems
- School climate (trust, supportiveness, liking school)
- Effects did not last

Evaluation 20017-2010
Year 7 Pupils N=8630

- Patchy Implementation of whole school approach
- Selective/Tick box approach to components
- Sustaining time and effort long-term was difficult
What works?

2. Interventions based on need

How are things?

Below is a questionnaire which is going to ask you how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. You should just pick the answer which is best for you. For example, we might ask “I feel happy”, and then you will have to mark one of the options that say “Never”, “Sometimes” or “Always”

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I get very angry</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I lose my temper</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I hit out when I am angry</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I do things to hurt people</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am calm</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I break things on purpose</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I bully others</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What works?
3. Focus on Regular Active Skills Development - Resilience


- **UK Resilience Project** from 2007 (Challen, Noden, West & Machin, 2011).
- Year 7 pupils universal (N=2000)
- 18 hour manualised programme of resilience workshops
- Delivered by teachers
- Controlled comparison

- ✔ depression symptom scores
- ✔ school attendance rates
- ✔ academic attainment in English.

X Anxiety, Behaviour, Maths and Life Satisfaction

- ✔ Weekly workshops showed a larger impact than those timetabled fortnightly’
- ✔ ‘At risk’ Pupils showed more improvements which lasted longer
What works?
4. Train School Staff Effectively

- Recognise signs of Mental Health Problems
- Understand Child Development & Attachment
- Knowledge of Mental Health Problems
- Refer Appropriately
- Manage own stress and wellbeing
Evidence Based Resources for Staff Training
Families & Older Pupils

1. Recognition of Mental Health Problems: Validated screening tools
   - Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire/ Me & My Feelings
     [http://www.corc.uk.net/](http://www.corc.uk.net/)
   - MHL Survey

2. Knowledge of Mental Health Problems: [www.MindEd.org.uk](http://www.MindEd.org.uk) online training sessions for staff and pupils on common mental health problems


4. Refer on: New Thrive model of assessing and managing need
   [http://www.annafreud.org/service-improvement/service-improvement-resources/thrive/](http://www.annafreud.org/service-improvement/service-improvement-resources/thrive/)

Surrey Targeted Mental Health Approach      Pote (2013)
An example of Successful Mental Health Promotion

1. Mental Health Awareness Training for all school staff (3 hours)

2. Staff consultations and in school support from Primary Mental Health Workers

3. Attachment Training for all school staff (1.5 hours)
385 schools in Surrey ➔ 122 Schools Trained

122 of the engaged schools undertook the MHA training

2500 members of staff were trained

N = 1847 satisfaction data
N = 599 competence data

Post

School staff – either satisfied or fully satisfied with the quality of the training.

Post

School staff reported feeling significantly more competent across all areas of mental health awareness

3-6m

School staff reported being more able to understand and respond to mental health concerns
Staff Competence Improvements

![Bar chart showing competence improvements before and after training across various domains.](image)
Mindfulness involves learning to direct our attention to our experience as it is unfolding, moment by moment, with open-minded curiosity and acceptance (Kabat-Zinn 1996).

Meditation - paying close attention to inner states such as thoughts, emotions and physical sensations, as well as to what is happening in the outside world. Present focussed acceptance of emotional states.

www.mindfulnessinschools.org
www.headspace.com
Conclusions for schools for MHL and Wellbeing

Changes in Pupil outcomes are usually small for Universal approaches but have real life impacts

Maximise effectiveness:

- Take a whole school approach
- Design Interventions Based on Need
- Thorough Implementation is key over time
- Teach Staff and Pupils Actively in small groups
- Evaluate Impact (with comparison groups if possible)
References


