

Mental Health First Aid at



November 2020

The aim of our school 'Mental Health First Aid' work is to help any child, or young person who is experiencing a mental health, or emotional well-being problem, before professional help is obtained.

Although our staff aren't trained therapists, we will try our best to help parents:-

- **To recognise the symptoms of mental health problems.**
- **To support them by providing some initial help.**
- **By sign-posting children, young people and their families to appropriate professional help.**

This leaflet explains how we can help children and young people and where you can go for professional help.

Who delivers mental health services?

Many services contribute to the mental health and emotional wellbeing of a child or young person.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (**CAMHS**) is an umbrella term for them.

Typically, CAMHS teams include counsellors, psychiatrists, psychologists, family therapists and community nurses and can also include teachers, social workers.

Your GP and School Health Visitor can make a referral to CAMHS.



Is your child experiencing any of the following mental and emotional health problems?



Depression?

A clinical depression is not the same as feeling sad or 'blue' when something bad happens.



Clinical depression is one that lasts for at least two weeks and affects the young person's behaviour and it has physical, emotional and cognitive effects. It also interferes with the ability to study, work and have satisfying relationships. When it is severe it can increase the risk of self-harm, substance misuse and suicide.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS include:

Sadness, anxiety, anger, mood swings, crying spells, loss of appetite or overeating, unexplained aches and pains withdrawal from others.



Anxiety?

Everybody experiences anxiety at some point, it is a natural response useful in helping us to avoid dangers. Anxiety can vary in severity from mild uneasiness through to a terrifying panic attack. It can vary from a few moments to many years.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS include *physical effects* such as cardiovascular, respiratory, neurological, gastrointestinal, stomach aches, headaches.

Psychological effects such as unrealistic worry, decreased concentration and memory, irritability, confusion, tiredness,

Behavioural effects such as avoidance of situations, distress in social situations, repetitive compulsive behaviour, asking for a lot of extra reassurance.



Self-Harm?

“Self-harm” is a behaviour and not an illness. People self-harm to cope with emotional distress or to communicate they are distressed. Children and young people may self-harm because of bullying or conflict, bereavement, parent divorce or separation, traumatic experiences, poor self image, pressure to do well at school, influence from social media and peer groups.

Examples of self-harm are: cutting, burning, picking at skin or re-opening wounds, hair pulling, hitting, taking personal risks and others.

Possible warning signs of self-harm are: unexplained accidents or injuries, cuts, bruises, keeping fully covered

(even in warm weather), blood stains on clothing, towels or bedding, blood-soaked tissues, changes in socialising, sleeping and eating patterns.



Eating Disorders?

Eating disorders involve a disturbance of eating habits or weight-control behaviour which results in impairment to physical health or affects the child's psychological and social functioning. Eating disorders occur in people who over-evaluate their body shape and weight, rather than evaluate themselves by their achievement, or relationships.

Examples of eating disorders are: anorexia, bulimia nervosa, Food avoidance emotional disorder, binge eating.

Possible warning signs include *physical, emotional and Psychological and behavioural signs:* weight loss, changes in character, obsessive concern about body weight, extreme fear of being overweight, or of eating, distress at mealtimes, preoccupation with food, becoming withdrawn, inducing vomiting, avoiding mealtimes with others. Signs of bingeing can be sores on knuckles, tooth decay, throat infections, heart palpitations.

Which professionals can help?

GPs, Health Visitors, School Nurses, Social Workers

Your local GP	Your Health Visitor	<i>Early help Together for Children</i>
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Your local CAMHS

Sunderland Community CAMHS

Wessington Primary School

Lanercost

Washington

NE38 7PY

0191 2831153

Other agencies and organisations

www.mind.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.anorexiabilimiacare.org.uk

www.childbereavementuk.org

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

www.papyrus-uk.org

