

CACHE Level 2

Certificate in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health

DUTY OF CARE

RISK FACTORS

DISCRIMINATION

SAFEGUARDING

EARLY INTERVENTION

STRESS AND ANXIETY

Workbook 1

Section 1: Understand children and young people's mental health in context

In this section, you will learn about the concept of mental health, what is meant by mental ill-health and the prevalence of mental health problems in children and young people. You will explore the legislation and guidance that is in place to support children and young people with mental health concerns and the duty of care that they are owed. You will look at society's attitudes to mental health concerns and how society's view of mental health has changed over time.

Mental health terms

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 1.

If you are learning about mental health, it is important to understand some of the terms that are used to describe mental health and aspects of it. Before you go on to look at aspects of mental health in children and young people, we will define some terms you may come across.

Mental health

Everyone is different, and a person's mental health will be unique to them. This applies to children and young people as well as adults. Mental health is just as important as physical health. Being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that someone doesn't have a mental health problem; it means they have a positive state of mental well-being.

Did you know?

The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

(http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en)



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Everyone has 'mental health' and this can be thought of in terms of:

- How we feel about ourselves and the people around us
- Our ability to make and keep friends and relationships
- Our ability to learn from others and to develop psychologically and emotionally

Being mentally healthy is also about having the strength to overcome the difficulties and challenges we face during our lives – to have confidence and self-esteem, to be able to make decisions and to believe in ourselves. Mental health is concerned with feeling positive about yourself, being able to cope with everyday pressures and being able to realise your own abilities.

Mental ill-health

The term 'mental ill-health' is generally used to refer to a group of conditions that affect a person's ability to think, interact with others and cope with the demands of everyday life. This can lead to significant changes in the person's thinking, feelings or behaviour. The term 'mental ill-health' covers a wide range of conditions, from the worries and grief we all experience as part of everyday life to severe depression or completely losing touch with everyday reality. Mental ill-health can affect anyone of any background at any time in their life and may also have an impact on the people around them, such as family and friends.

An individual's mental health will vary and may change. It is often seen as a spectrum or continuum, where mental health is at one end and mental ill-health at the other. In the middle, an individual may show some signs of mental vulnerability but may not have an identifiable mental illness or disorder.



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Amy and Beth's stories

Amy is seventeen and in her final year at school. She is doing well in her studies and is confident about her exams. She is happy at home and is looking forward to going to university to study history. She has a supportive group of friends and if she does feel a bit worried or unhappy sometimes, they are encouraging and help to cheer her up. She is also good at reminding herself that she can do it and seeking support if she has a problem.

Beth is in the same year as Amy. She is predicted similar grades in her exams, but her teachers are worried she won't achieve them because she is very anxious. She is having regular panic attacks and doesn't believe she can do well. She is particularly worried because she doesn't know what she wants to do at university, though her parents are keen for her to do law. She has become isolated from her friends and classmates and rarely asks for help from teachers.

Amy and Beth are similar in age and have similar ambitions, but are at different places on the mental health continuum. However, their mental health is not fixed. Amy's mental health could change; she could become more anxious. Beth could receive support to help her overcome her anxieties and face her coming exams with more confidence. This is why it is better to think of mental health as a continuum, rather than classifying individuals as having mental health or mental ill-health.

Resilience

Resilience in mental health is how well individuals cope with problems, trauma, tragedies, threats and sources of stress in their lives. Individuals with resilience can adapt when faced with challenging circumstances and maintain their well-being, even when things don't go as planned.

Mind, the mental health charity, explain that resilience is made up of three key elements:

- Well-being – how a person feels; their mental state
- Social connections – how they connect with others
- Ways to cope – psychological strategies to cope with difficult times

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Knowledge Activity 1: Look back at Amy and Beth’s stories. Write down which of them is more resilient and explain why.

Lined writing area for the knowledge activity. A large 'SAMPLE' watermark is visible across the page.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is how an individual feels about themselves – their opinion of themselves. For example, whether they think they are a nice person or not, if they like themselves and how much confidence they have in themselves and their abilities.

High self-esteem is where an individual values themselves and is confident about who they are and what they can do. Individuals with low self-esteem may dislike themselves and have little confidence. They don’t value themselves and don’t expect others to value them either.

Low self-esteem is not a mental illness – we all have times when we lose confidence – but it can lead to mental ill-health and mental health conditions if it is not addressed in the long-term.

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Knowledge Activity 2: Think of a time when your confidence was low. For example, something happened that knocked your confidence. Write down what you can remember about what it felt like.

Handwriting practice area with horizontal lines. A large, faint watermark reading 'SAMPLE' is overlaid diagonally across the page.



Jack's story

Jack is twelve years old. He is the smallest boy in his class and he doesn't like the way he looks. He thinks he is overweight and doesn't like having to wear glasses. He's often teased for being small and plays the fool at school because he thinks this will make people like him more. He hates it when people laugh at him though. He has become anxious about going to school and this is affecting his school work. His tutor at school feels he may be depressed as a result of low self-esteem.

Growing up, especially in the pre-teen and teenage years, can be a difficult time for children and if they develop self-esteem issues, these may lead to anxiety and depression.

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The relationship between mental health and well-being

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 2.

Well-being is used to describe general health and happiness of an individual. Well-being is actually made up of lots of different factors. Well-being doesn't just depend on having healthy bodies and minds. For children and young people, well-being depends on factors such as:

- Being physically and mentally healthy
- Being able to learn and develop
- Being positive about themselves and their lives
- Having enough food, clothing and other things that matter, such as pocket money, toys, TV, mobile phones and other possessions
- Having a healthy and positive home environment
- Being able to take part in education and other activities
- Being able to look forward to the future

Being mentally healthy is part of well-being but it is also affected by the other elements of well-being. If children are living in poverty, don't feel positive about themselves or are finding school difficult, this may affect their mental health. They may become anxious or depressed.

Did you know?

Research carried out shows that children living in poverty are nearly three times more likely to experience mental health problems than their more affluent peers.

(Meltzer, H. et al. (2000) *The Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Great Britain*. London: The Stationery Office)



DEPRESSION

SUPPORT SERVICES

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