

EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH

What is emotional & mental health?

Emotional and Mental Health is all about how we feel. This could be good, bad, happy or sad but it is important to remember that everyone is different. Whilst we hope that all our children and young people will live healthy, happy lives sometimes we may need a little support or help. This resource is aimed at helping you to support any mental health concerns and to suggest some ways that you can help.

Why a separate leaflet for SEND students?

For children and young people with a learning disability the rate of having a diagnosed mental health concern is between 4 and 6 in 10.

For children and young people with a learning disability, being able to express their emotions can be difficult and they can often express their emotions through behaviours which we see as being challenging (Mental Health UK, 2018).

CALM

This may look different for each of our children and young people.

Your child should present normal patterns of sleep, eating, behaviour and mood.

Each child's 'normal' is different so this will be different for everyone.

You know your child best!

What to look for

- Joining in with routine activities.
- Joining in with some different activities, with support.
- Regular sleeping pattern.
- Normal levels of eating and drinking.

What can I do?

- Keep going and enjoy the moments.
- Reinforce all the good things they are doing but be explicit, for example 'I like it when you sit at the table with us'.

How can I make things even better?

- Celebrate all the successes of the day, afternoon or even of the moment. Talk about all the young person's strengths, what they are good at and what they like to do.
- Talk about what could make the good days even better, and how they would like to be helped when they are having a bad day.

CONCERN

You may become concerned if you feel that something isn't quite right with your child. Maybe they are sleeping more or less than usual, eating more or less or behaving in a way that seems different. You know your child better than anyone so trust your instincts. It may be worthwhile asking for some help or support to help you get back to normal.

Changes in your child's behaviour may be natural responses to puberty, growing up or to significant family events. You may want to seek some help or reassurance if you feel that your child is not acting like their usual self, particularly if changes to their behaviour or personality last for longer than you would expect.

What to look for

- Changes to eating or drinking habits.
- Changes to sleep pattern.
- Refusal during daily routine.
- Displaying overly positive or negative emotions.

What can I do?

- Try to chat with your child about their feelings, and your own feelings while doing an activity (driving, playing a game etc).
- Keep to your normal routines.
- Make a note of changes in behaviour.
- Try some relaxation techniques as a family

Who can help?

- Family and/or Friends.
- School Staff - Nurse, Class Teacher.
- GP.
- Family Support Team.
- Social Worker.

CRISIS

Students with a learning disability will often have difficulties verbalising how they are feeling, which can result in behaviours that may be seen as challenging. These behaviours can often be as a result of overwhelming situations or over stimulation, as not every child can process difficult or tricky situations as they are happening. This can result in a 'meltdown', which could occur at the time, a couple of days or even a couple of weeks after the event.

What to look for

Behaviours that prevent day to day activities from happening for instance:

- Refusal of food or drink.
- Behaviours become controlling of family events and sibling activities.
- Extreme mood swings.
- Aggression and violence resulting in injury or fear.
- Overly sexualised behaviour.

What can I do?

- Regulate your own feelings. Do a self-body check for bruising or marks if you get hit or hurt.
- Do not try to reason; fewer words often help.
- Stay with your child or young person; they can often feel frightened and scared when they are out of control.
- Build in extra down/ calm/ relaxing time for you and the whole family.
- Getting enough sleep is vital.
- If possible, remove any sensory triggers.
- Remember it can take days for the young person to re-regulate themselves.

What can help?

- Emergency Services – 999.

Inform the child or young person keyworker at the school at the earliest opportunity.

We would like to thank Derby Opportunity Area for supporting this endeavour. We would also like to thank the schools that have contributed to this leaflet; St Andrews, St Martins, St Giles, Ivyhouse, Newtons Walk, and Kingsmead.

Useful contacts and support

Getting the right support can sometimes be difficult, however, the best suggestion is don't wait until there is a crisis. Ask your school for contact details and phone numbers, in addition below is a variety of contact details you could also use.

The Lighthouse

thelighthouse@derby.gov.uk
01332 256990

STePS Team

<https://stclaresschool.co.uk/steps/>

New Arrivals Team

01332 641305

Umbrella

01332 785658

Parent Carers together

<http://parentcarerstogether.com/>

Smile

smile@jubilee.org.uk

Funabil8y

reception@stjamescentre.org

Council for Disabled Children

councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Young Minds

0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday)
9.30-4pm. <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Contact

www.contact.org.uk

SOS SEN

www.sossen.org.uk

Action for Children

www.actionforchildren.org.uk