

Health, Well-being, and Lifestyle.

Mental health- Presentation.

ECEY5009 Human Development Portfolio

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Contents.

- 1) Presentation Link.
- 2) Presentation Scrip.

Link to Presentation.

[ECEY5009- Mental Health Presentation.pptx](#)

Script

Introduction

My name is Katie Taylor, and this presentation will explore health, well-being and lifestyle, the specific theme throughout this presentation will be mental health in the early years. There are various economic and social factors that can affect a child's health and well-being. Children affected by mental health can suffer detrimental impacts that affect their physical health and well-being and can result in dying 20 years earlier (Rose, Gilbert and Richards, 2017). Article 6 of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child states that all children collectively have the right to a life and achieve their maximum potential (UNICEF, no date).

What is mental health?

Mental health in children is drawing global attention as the number of children being diagnosed of suffering with a mental health condition is escalating (Church, 2022, pp.331-335). According to the Department for Education (no date) mental health is a term used to refer to the overall well-being of an individual and includes development socially and emotionally.

According to UNICEF (no date) mental health is a fundamental aspect to support children being able to play a part in society, they state that mental health is the foundations that support a child's overall health and well-being. The World Health Organisation (2022) defines mental health as an individual's state of psychological awareness and that this empowers people to manage stress.

According to The Mental Health Foundation (no date) 10% of children between the ages of 5 to 16 years old have a diagnosable mental health condition. The Children's Society (no date) state that 1 in 6 children are affected by a mental health condition. The Welsh Government conducted research and found the same statistic as The Children's Society. Through the research conducted by the Welsh Government it was found that 1 in 6 children are impacted by mental health and it is a predominant issue that is raised frequently with the Children's Commissioner for Wales. (Health and Care Research for Wales, 2025). A report published by School Health Research Network (SHRN) found that 24% of children were impacted by mental health conditions (Beddoe, 2025, pp.8-9).

Mental health problems in children covers a broad spectrum. According to Eapen, Graham and Srinath (2024, pp.13) mental health primarily focuses on the mind rather than the body and is frequently the result from multiple factors.

Factors that impact mental health.

There are a range of factors that increase a child's chance of experiencing mental health struggles. Factors include being raised in a single parent household, facing poverty and deprivation and their mothers mental state (Bradshaw, 2016, pp.139-142). Rainer, Treloar, Abolinasir and Edwards (2024) state that poverty is a major risk determinant to mental health in children. A child's mental health and well-being significantly depends on their home environment, if children experience adverse home conditions this can negatively affect mental and physical health (Brown et al., 2015, pp. 42) Eapen, Graham and Srinath (2024, pp.14) agree with the impact environmental factors can have on mental health. However, they state that a child's genetics can influence their temperament which can impact mental health. Musgrave (2017) agrees with the detrimental impact the environment can have on a child's mental health and overall well-being. She states that children who experience adverse childhood experiences have an increased chance of being diagnosed with psychiatric disorders. Mainstone-Cotton (2017) agrees with the influence poverty has on affecting a child's mental health and states that it has the highest detrimental influence. However, Musgrave (2017) states that while there are numerous factors that influence mental health, they are not usually experienced in isolation but experienced collectively. Research conducted in Wales shows that there are direct links between a child's mental health and their main caregivers mental health, through this research it suggests that if a child is living in an environment where their main caregiver is suffering with depression, they have a higher chance of developing a mental health condition which can affect them not achieving their educational milestones (Health Care and Research Wales, February no year). The Department for Education (no date) suggests that children's mental health is influenced by early life experiences from prenatal into childhood. Hogg and Moody (2023, pp.3) suggests that the mental health of children plays a contributing factor in their development and future life achievements.

How does it affect a child's health, well-being, and lifestyle?

A document released by the National Health Service Wales (2022, pp. 1-4) states that during the first one thousand days of a child's life this is a fundamental time where the foundations are beginning to be formed socially, emotionally, cognitively, physically and their behaviours are shaping. Throughout this document it suggests that the relationships children have with their parents from the womb impact their well-being and their overall mental health. Kamis (2021, pp. 54-68) suggests that children whose parents have psychological problems are a key concern for causing stress to children and results in poor mental health. Longitudinal research released by Public Health England (2021) found children who live in an environment where their main caregivers have a mental health condition are more likely to develop considerable emotional and behavioural challenges by the time they turn seven years old. Children developing a sense of belonging influences their mental health and well-being, early years children experiencing a sense of belonging supports psychological development as they grow (Allen et al, 2025). Children developing a strong positive bond with their caregivers meets their physiological needs and their psychological needs (Gillibrand, Lam and O'Donnell, 2016, pp.249). Children having their needs met can be reflected through Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. According to Stoianov (2017, pp 14-16) Maslow formed his theory around healthy individuals and the factors that support them developing good well-being. Maslow emphasises an individual's personal development so they can attain an enriching life (Pichere and Caiat, 2015 pp5-6). Stoianov (2017, pp. 14-16) suggests that if a child's basic needs are not met by, they are more prone to developing poor mental health and well-being which will directly impact their overall health.

Theorist Bowlby formed his theory based on the attachments children have with their caregivers, he believed that if a child faced neglect this would lead to biochemical reactions within in the amygdala and would lead to poor well-being overall affecting a child's mental health (Rose, Gilbert and Richards, 2016). Bowlby's theory suggests that children developing positive bonds with caregivers is fundamental to a child's overall health and wellbeing (Gillibrand, Lam and O'Donnell, 2016 pp.249). According to Garvey (2023, pp.161) by a child feeling safe through their relationships it develops essential skills to cope with stresses throughout life which promotes good mental health and soothes areas of the brain such as the nervous system. Mayhead

(2025, pp. 6-7) agrees with the importance of an early year's child developing a sense of belonging as it interconnects directly with mental health.

The level of concerns is rising on the impact the environment has on a child's mental health and well-being. The World Health Organisation (no date) suggests that the environment a child experiences contributes to the child's well-being. According to the World Health Organisation (no date) poverty is considered a detrimental lifestyle impact that can increase the chance of a child experiencing mental health conditions. Brown, Learmonth, Mackereth (2015, pp. 91) suggest that supporting a child and their family to experience an active lifestyle will promote their quality of life and release the chemicals in the brain called endorphins which promote positive well-being. Mental Health in children affects deeper than their overall well-being but can contribute to obesity which will cause detrimental impacts to their health (Beltran-Garrayo et al., 2023). Children's mental health issues can impact their physical health resulting in symptoms such as headaches, stomach cramps and sleep difficulties (Bradshaw, 2006, pp. 143). A child has sleep difficulties can result in them being irritable which will impact their overall mental state (Musgrave, 2017). Wein (2021) agrees with the impact that sleep has on a child's overall health and well-being and suggest that sleep difficulties can enhance the risk of medical conditions especially mental health however, a child having good quality sleep enriches cognitive function and supports positive mental health which directly connects to a child's overall health and well-being.

O'Neill et al., (2025) suggest that children impacted by mental health may experience reduced educational progress and poor physical health. Mayhead (2025, pp. 6-7) agrees with the impact mental health conditions has on a child's educational development however, she states it goes beyond education and creates barriers to their emotional well-being and social relationships.

Role of practitioner.

According to Underdown (2007, pp122) children who experience positive mental health lays the foundations for emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual development which nurtures developing holistically. Brodie (2018, pp.12-15) agrees that providing a child with experiencing positive mental health and positive interactions it supports the child to develop holistically. Bradshaw (2016, pp.305)

states that by practitioners delivering early intervention it provides a holistic approach to supporting children and families who are impacted by poor mental health Beddoe (2025, pp9) agrees with the importance of developing intervention and prevention strategies through a holistic approach as it is considered a key element to support meeting a child's needs.

Early Year's Children who are impacted by a mental health condition can still achieve their full potential if professionals recognise and understand their condition (Eapen, Graham and Srinath, 2024, pp. 178). Ebbeck, Warriar and Goh (2017, pp.83-92) state that practitioners and parents play a fundamental role in developing a child's health and well-being, for practitioners to support children so they can flourish they need to build the foundations of a positive relationship based on understanding the individual needs of the child. Dogra, Parkin, and Warner-Gale (2018, pp. 146) suggests that if a child is experiencing a mental health condition their readiness to learn is often impacted negatively and can result in school avoidance. Practitioners providing children with the opportunities to participate in physical activities will increase endorphin levels (Pangkahilla et al., 2016, pp. 493-496). By practitioners supporting children increasing their endorphin levels it will improve psychological and physiological health (Mikkelsen et al., 2017 pp.48-56).

The Department for Education (no date) state that the key aspect for children to be mentally healthy they need to experience attentive and nurturing relationships. The NSPCC (2024) state that practitioners need to be aware children who are suffering with mental health conditions diagnosed or un-diagnosed as it can lead to child protection concern if the child is putting themselves or others at risk of harm. Church (2022, pp.331-335) agrees with the impact practitioners have in enhancing a child's health and well-being.

Dogra, Parkin, and Warner-Gale (2018, pp. 283) state that professionals supporting children and families can promote positive mental health by providing interventions that support ecological changes, and this can result in positive health and well-being. According to Children's Commissioner for Wales (no date) to support children and families who are impacted by mental health conditions it is fundamental for multiagency to be working in collaboration because due to the increase of children it is impacting the Mental Health Services cannot cope with it alone. The Welsh

Government (2025) have developed a multi-agency strategy to support agencies working in collaboration, the core aim of this is to elevate resilience in those whose well-being is impacted by poor mental health. In the four purposes curriculum for Wales, it puts a key focus on supporting children to become healthy, confident individuals. In schools this can be seen in practice by providing children with the opportunities to develop understanding on the importance of physical health and their lifestyles while promoting well-being and emotional literacy (Welsh Government, 2020). Incorporating mental health into policies and frameworks supports to establish the foundations to build communities that support and protect children to flourish (Beddoe, 2025, pp8-9).

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service also referred to as CAMHS is a support service with an objective of providing intervention to enhance a child's mental health and wellbeing and is available for children impacted by mental health (National Health Service Wales, no date). Eapen, Graham and Srinath (2024, pp. 180) suggest that the role of the professionals supporting early years children to promote positive mental health is communicating with caregivers effectively the importance of healthy lifestyles. A Baby Friendly Initiative in Wales provides caregivers with support from midwives and health visitors on gaining the understanding of close positive relationships from before a child is born, this initiative provides strategies on how to achieve these relationships while promoting infants' well-being and positive mental health (Evans, 2025, pp.20-21).

The Welsh Government have produced a draft Mental Health Strategy that emphasized how Wales provides strategies to provide appropriate mental health care specifically for the youngest citizens (Beddoe, 2025, pp.8-9).

Conclusion

This presentation has clearly demonstrated the impact mental health has on a child's health, well-being, and lifestyle. As discussed, children and their families need to be provided with the opportunities to develop an understanding of emotional literacy, and the impact mental health has. It is fundamental to support parents and children, so they are aware of the support services that are available for them to access especially through multi-agency collaboration. Within this presentation the statistics from research have been discussed and theories that relate to mental health have

been acknowledged. It is clear the role the practitioners have on providing intervention to children and families who are impacted by mental health. As discussed in the presentation it is fundamental that the practitioners have an understanding on the impact mental health has on the amygdala and can develop positive relationships with the families and children to gain a deep understanding on how to support them further. Thank you for listening.