

Mental Health.

CRITICALLY EXPLORE THE PERSONAL, CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES ON WELL-BEING.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing whereby individuals recognise their abilities, are able to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to their communities (**World Health Organisation (WHO), 2023**).

What is the Concepts of Mental Health?

According to the **WHO, (2023)** :

- ▶ “Concepts of mental health include subjective wellbeing, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence and recognition of the ability to realize one’s intellectual and emotional potential”.
- ▶ “Mental health and mental wellbeing are fundamental to the quality of life and productivity of individuals, families, communities and nations, enabling people to experience life as meaningful and to be creative and active citizens”.

What are the Fundamental Elements of Mental Health?

- ▶ Mental health is a fundamental element of the resilience, health assets, capabilities and positive adaptation that enable people both to cope with adversity and to reach their full potential and humanity.
- ▶ Mental health is also the key to understanding the impact of inequalities on health and other outcomes. An extensive body of research confirms the relationship between inequality and poorer outcomes, a relationship which is evident at every position on the social hierarchy and is not confined to developed nations.
- ▶ The emotional and cognitive effects of high levels of social status differentiation are profound and far-reaching greater inequality heightens status competition and status insecurity across all income groups and among both adults and children (**Welsh Government (WG), 2021**).

What are the Influences and Outcomes of Mental Health for Individuals and Communities?

Mental health influences a very wide range of outcomes for individuals and communities. These include:

- ▶ Healthier lifestyles; better physical health; improved recovery from illness; fewer limitations in daily living; higher educational attainment; greater productivity, employment and earnings; better relationships with adults and with children; more social cohesion and engagement and improved quality of life.
- ▶ These outcomes are not just or necessarily a consequence of the absence of mental illness but are associated with the presence of positive mental health, sometimes referred to as 'wellbeing'. Improving mental health is a worthwhile goal in itself: most people value a sense of emotional and social wellbeing; in addition, good mental health has many other far-reaching benefits (Welsh Government **(WG, 2021)**).

What is Positive Mental Health?

Although definitions vary, positive mental health is generally seen as including:

- ▶ Emotion (affect/feeling).
- ▶ Cognition (perception, thinking, reasoning).
- ▶ Social functioning (relations with others and society).
- ▶ Coherence (sense of meaning and purpose in life **(WG, 2021)**).

Good Emotional and Mental well-being in Children and Young People.

Children and young people have so much to cope with, whether it be the stresses of growing up in an uncertain world, added pressures such as family circumstances, poverty, physical and mental impairment, housing, access to transport and facilities which many of us take for granted, or their physical environment. All of these can influence children and young people's emotional and mental well-being.

Good emotional and mental well-being allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope better with the challenges they face, and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults. Things that can help keep children and young people of all ages mentally and emotionally well and resilient include:

Good Emotional and Mental Well-being.

8

- Being listened to, feeling valued, respected and known as individuals.
- Being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise.
- Having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors.
- Being part of a family that gets along well most of the time.
- Going to a school that looks after the well-being of all its learners.
- Taking part in local activities for young people.

Other factors are also important, including:

- Feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe.
- Being motivated and interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves.
- Being hopeful and optimistic (**WG, 2021**).

How can we Understand Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?

Understanding how Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs affect individuals' health and behaviour across the life course has been one of the most transformative developments in public health over recent years. A history of ACEs can underpin poor educational attainment, health-harming behaviours and anti-social and criminal behaviour in adolescence, and in later life the development of premature ill health and death. In Wales, ACEs are a common theme preventing individuals from fulfilling their potential and impacting on health, criminal justice, education and other public services.

Building resilience across the life course can help people avoid and overcome many of the problems arising from childhood adversity. Support from a family member or from elsewhere in the community can prove the critical difference between ACEs pushing an individual into a harmful life course or, with a little help, finding a way to stay on one offering better health and prosperity (**Public Health Wales, 2018**).

What Approach can we use in Schools to Support Emotional and Mental well-being?

According to the **WG, (2021)**, using a Framework such as the 'Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being', supports the much wider whole-system approach to meeting the well-being needs of children and young people. It aims to improve the emotional well-being and mental health services/support for children and young people, through coproduction with those with lived experience, their families, communities, NHS health boards, local authorities and the third sector.

What is the School-Approach About?

The whole-school approach is about:

- ▶ Embedding good well-being through teaching as well as all the other aspects of school life.
- ▶ An ethos that values inclusion, where everybody works together, contributing their individual skills and resources to the collective good.
- ▶ Creating a supporting environment where young people are encouraged to fulfil their personal and academic potential, where they thrive, learn and emotionally develop, supported by teachers who operate in a culture that also values teachers' own well-being.
- ▶ Incorporating and building on existing good practice.
- ▶ Incorporating the work of others such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), which has traditionally offered assessment, treatment and interventions (**WG, 2021**).

Why should we embed a Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being?

Numerous studies show that education and mental well-being are closely linked and promoting the health and well-being of learners within schools can positively impact learner cooperation, commitment, learning and engagement. This means having a school culture, ethos and environment that nurtures learners' health and well-being can improve learners' educational outcomes. Equally, the relationship between physical and mental health cannot be understated – physical health problems significantly increase the risk of poor mental well-being, and vice versa (**WG, 2021**).

What does the Whole-School Approach Framework seek to support?

13

The whole-school approach seeks to support good emotional and mental well-being by promoting a positive cultural environment in schools, where children and young people form positive relationships with staff and other learners, and relationships are strengthened:

- ▶ Between teaching staff.
- ▶ With the school senior leadership team and wider school staff.
- ▶ With parents and carers.
- ▶ With other professionals working with the school.
- ▶ With the wider community that surrounds the school. It is about embedding good well-being through teaching as well as all the other aspects of school life.

It is an ethos that:

Where everybody works together, contributing their individual skills and resources to the collective good.

- ▶ Creates a supportive environment where young people are encouraged to fulfil their personal and academic potential, where they thrive, learn and emotionally develop, supported by teachers who operate in a culture that equally values their own well-being. The Framework places several actions and requirements on schools and partners **(WG, 2021)**.

Why is it important to use a Whole-School Approach? & Who are responsible for the Whole-School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being ?

The whole-school approach recognises the complexity of managing school emotional well-being, e.g., teaching young people to:

- ▶ Understand their own emotions and how they can adapt and cope with the challenges they will face.
- ▶ Manage low-level short-term challenges such as exam stress and extremely challenging and complex situations such as parental ill health, substance misuse, caring responsibilities, life events and unexpected events.

According to the WG, (2021) schools, local authorities and governing bodies are responsible, and required to look carefully the 'Whole-School Approach Framework' - a statutory guidance:

- ▶ When carrying out their duties in promoting the welfare of children who are learners at the education setting, including meeting their mental and emotional well-being needs.
- ▶ When developing action plans, strategies and other policies that impact on the well-being of learners, staff and others working within the school environment **(WG, 2021)**.

It is important that schools can provide a place where adults, children and young people work together to overcome challenges. Children and young people will experience many different relationships throughout their formative years, whether they be short-lived friendships, ones that have been built on trust over several years, or ones that will continue to grow throughout their adult lives. School life can and should be challenging and for a child or young person having at least one strong relationship, someone they trust, someone who is more experienced and who they feel has their interests at heart is paramount to not just their academic achievement, but also their social development (**WG, 2021**).

Case Study -How Social Media Affect Students Mental Health within a Further Education Setting.

A Parents' Online Guide to Social Media and Mental
Health: Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People.

*'YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH IS A VITAL PART OF THEIR OVERALL WELLNESS. LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP
THEM BUILD RESILIENCE AND STRONG EMOTIONAL HABITS' (PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND, 2020).*

An Assessment of Needs.

It is the responsibility of teachers, parents and carers, to help children and young people to negotiate the obstacles, avoid the hazards and enable them to get the best out of technology. Parents, not schools, have the responsibility to make choices about the place of screen entertainment, technology and social media in children's lives.

The College needs help from parents for when children and young people are not under their care. The college proposes for a new website page to be added to the main website the college currently uses, 'A Parents' Online Guide to Social Media and Mental Health: Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People'.

Colleges have a responsibility to inform and advise, making sure that parents are supported in the complex task they face, and to alert parents to the possible risks of inappropriate exposure to screen entertainment, technology and social media. College plays a critical role in educating children and young people about how to use social media safely and responsibly. However, colleges cannot address all the issues and parents also have a responsibility to protect children and young people from harm. The college proposes that having an easily, affordable and accessible website page dedicated for parents to access information on the guidance of social media and health and well-being of children and young people will enhance well-being among children and young people for now and the future.

What are the Strategies that can be used for the College Website ?

- ▶ Digital awareness and safety page dedicated for parents on the college website.
- ▶ Getting parents and guardians involved to help plan and enhance further well-being amongst children and young people using social media together **(Keles et al., 2020)**.

What would be the Approaches used for a College Website?

- ▶ Inform and advise.
- ▶ Support parents/guardians in the complex task they might face.
- ▶ Parent handbook (Online).
- ▶ Booklets/leaflets online.
- ▶ Create awareness groups (**Allcott et al., 2020**).

Statistics Demonstrate the Risks of Internet Use On Young People's Lives.

Key Statistics.

- ▶ Year on year increases in the numbers and rates of police-recorded online child sexual offences in England and Wales and Northern Ireland.
- ▶ Increases in police-recorded offences of obscene publications or indecent photos in all four UK nations over the last 5 years.
- ▶ Increases in the number of URLs confirmed by the Internet Watch Foundation as containing child sexual abuse imagery since 2015 **(NSPCC), (2020a)**.

- Less than half of children aged 12–15 say they know how to change their settings to control who can view their social media.
- Most parents, carers and members of the public agree that social networks should have a legal responsibility to keep children safe on their platforms (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children **(NSPCC), (2020a)**).

Additionally:

- A total of 5161 crimes of sexual communication with a child have been recorded in 18 months.
- In 2019 there has been almost a 50% increase in offence in offences recorded in latest 6 months compared to same period in previous year.
- In 2010 there has been a 200% rise in recorded instances in the use of Instagram to target and abuse children over the same time period.
- There have been over 5000 online grooming offences recorded in 18 months **(NSPCC), (2020b)**.

Children and young people in schools and colleges indicates that social media is an extremely important part of their daily lives. It brings many benefits but is also exposes them to risks. Young people are often very aware of these risks and understand how to keep themselves safe. However, sadly this does not prevent all of them from harm, as is evident through recent cases of teenage suicides because of social media, which have been highlighted in the media in the United Kingdom (UK) and more widely. Schools and Colleges cannot solve all the problems and that parents/guardians also have a responsibility to keep young people safe when they are online (**Glazzard and Stones, 2019**).

What does the evidence say?

There is a significant body of evidence to suggest that screen entertainment, technology and social media can be harmful to the growing child and have a negative impact on the social, emotional and academic development of young people.

Why is screen entertainment, technology and social media increasingly seen as a threat to healthy child development? **(Royal Society for Public Health, 2017).**

Why is screen entertainment, technology and social media increasingly seen as a threat to healthy child development?

Mental Health.

It can reduce children's attention spans, making it harder for them to concentrate and contributing to an increase in ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder). It can contribute to a decrease in children's academic achievements. It can act as a trigger for autism It can reduce the amount of sleep that children get.

It can impair the child's ability to master their own language.

It can Fav our the development of the left hemisphere at the expense of the right, reducing the ability to solve problems and think innovatively.

It can decrease the amount of reading that most children engage in (**Michikyan and Suárez-Orozco, 2016**).

Emotional Health.

It can damage the development of the brain's frontal lobes and therefore the child's ability to feel empathy.

It can contribute to the premature on-set of puberty, (physical in its manifestations but emotional in its disruption.)

It is linked to aggressive and anti-social behaviour.

It is linked to children's low self-esteem.

It can undermine a child's cultural expectations and reference points **(Michikyan and Suárez-Orozco, 2016)** .

Physical Health.

It have an impact upon the amount of physical activity most children engage in.

It can adversely affect children's eye-sight.

It is linked to increased obesity.

It can contribute to the risk-averse culture which inhibits children's sense of adventure and exploration **(Michikyan and Suárez-Orozco, 2016).**

Social Media.

28

Cyber-Bullying.

- ▶ 7 in 10 young people experience cyberbullying.
- ▶ Cyberbullying exists in a variety of forms including:
- ▶ The posting of hurtful comments online.
- ▶ Threats and intimidation towards others in the online space.
- ▶ Posting photographs or videos that are intended to cause distress (**Glazzard and Mitchell, 2018**).

Effects of Cyberbullying.

29

For the victim this can be significantly humiliating and result in a loss of confidence and self-worth. Humiliating messages, photographs and videos can be stored permanently online, resulting in the victim repeatedly experiencing the bullying every time they go online.

Victims of cyberbullying can experience:

- ▶ Depression.
- ▶ Anxiety.
- ▶ Loss of sleep.
- ▶ Self-harm and feelings of loneliness (**Glazzard and Mitchell, 2018**).

Body Image.

Social media has also been associated with body image concerns. Research indicates that when young girls and women in their teens and early twenties view Facebook for only a short period of time, body image concerns are higher compared to non-users. Young people view images of “ideal” bodies and start to make comparisons with their own bodies. This can result in low body-esteem, particularly if young people feel that their own bodies do not compare favorably to the “perfect” bodies they see online (**Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016**).

What are the Effects of Body Images?

- ▶ Low body-esteem.
- ▶ Depression.
- ▶ Body-surveillance.
- ▶ Low body-confidence.
- ▶ Eating disorders (**Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016**).

What are the Benefits of Social Media?

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT SOCIAL MEDIA CAN IMPACT DETRIMENTALLY ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH. AT THE SAME TIME, SOCIAL MEDIA USE CAN BE BENEFICIAL AND HAVE POSITIVE EFFECTS
(FARNAN ET AL.,(2013)).

Benefits.

33

- ▶ To gain emotional support.
- ▶ Prevent and address mental health issues.
- ▶ To form online digital communities with others who share similar characteristics.
- ▶ Reducing isolation.
- ▶ Participating in online networks.
- ▶ To gain mutual support, advice and solidarity.
- ▶ Reduce feelings of loneliness and support the development of a positive, personal identity.
- ▶ To become more resilient (**Farnan et al., 2013**).

What are the Responsibilities of Parents?

The role of parents.

To model healthy online behaviours.

- ▶ To establish clear expectations about the amount of time their child spends online.
- ▶ Negotiate the rules jointly.
- ▶ Determine the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- ▶ Explain what it means to be a digitally responsible citizen (**Glazzard and Stones, 2019**).

What are the Rules that can be set by Parents for Children's and Young People Safety?

- ▶ Parents to develop their own digital literacy, so they are aware of the platforms and software that their child is interacting with.
- ▶ Parents to develop knowledge of the risks that their children are exposed to.
- ▶ Children and young people not to use technology during the night;
- ▶ Restricting technology use during mealtimes or other social occasions.
- ▶ Limit the amount of screen time which children are exposed to.
- ▶ Discussions of what might constitute appropriate use of the internet (**Glazzard & Stones, 2019**).

Social media use can have a detrimental impact on children and young people's mental health. It can result in anxiety, depression, body image concerns, self-harm, substance abuse and even death. However, for young people social media is a tool for networking, staying connected with friends, exchanging information, a source of support and advice and a rich source of knowledge. Preventing children and young people from using social media is not an appropriate solution, given all the benefits that come with it.

The aim of the college is to work along side parents for them to do all that they can to help us keep children and young people safe from harm, through adopting a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach when crises occur. The social media and mental health page that is part of the main college website dedicated to the parents can inform, advise, seek information for peace of mind (**Barry et al., 2017**).

Reference List.

37

Allcott, H., Braghieri, L., Eichmeyer, S., & Gentzkow, M. (2020) '*The welfare effects of social media*. American Economic Review, 110 (3), 629-76.

Barry, C. T., Sidoti, C. L., Briggs, S. M., Reiter, S. R. & Lindsey, R. A. (2017) '*Adolescent social media use and mental health from adolescent and parent perspectives*. Journal of Adolescence, 61 :1-1.

Fardouly, J. & Vartanian, L. R. (2016) '*Social media and body image concerns: Current research and future directions*. Current Opinion in Psychology, 9: 1-5.

Farnan, J. M., Snyder, S. L. & Worster B.K. (2013) '*Online medical professionalism: Patient and public relationships: Policy statement from the American College of Physicians and the Federation of State Medical Boards*'. Annals of Internal Medicine, 158 (8):620-662.

Glazzard, J. & Mitchell, C. (2018) '*Social Media and Mental Health in Schools*'. St Albans: Critical Publishing.

- Glazzard, J. & Stones, S. (2019). 'Social Media and Young People's Mental Health'. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.8856>.
- Holland, G. & Tiggemann, M. (2016) '*A systematic review of the impact of the use of social networking sites on body image and disordered eating outcomes*'. *Body Image*, 17: 100-10.
- Keles, B., McCrae, N., & Grealish, A. (2020) '*A systematic review: the influence of social media on depression, anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents*'. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. 25(1):79-93.
- Kelly, Y., Zilanawala, A. Booker, C. & Sacker, A. (2018) '*Social media use and adolescent mental health: Findings from the UK Millennium Cohort Study*'. *Eclinical Medicine*. 6:59-68.
- Michikyan, M. & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2016) '*Adolescent media and social media use: Implications for development*, *Journal of Adolescent Research*'. 31(4):411-414.

National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (2020a) . *'How safe is our children?* Available: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/how-safe-are-our-children>.

National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), *Grooming Offences*' (2020b). Available: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/over5000-grooming-offences-recorded-18-months/>.

Public Health Wales (2018), *Sources of resilience and their moderating relationships with harms from adverse childhood experiences. Report 1: Mental illness*. Available: [ace_resilience_report_en_pdf_11162.pdf](https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ace_resilience_report_en_pdf_11162.pdf) (bangor.ac.uk)

Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), (2017). *'#Status of Mind Social media and young people's mental health and wellbeing'* Available: <https://www.rsph.org.uk/static/uploaded/d125b27c-0b62-41c5-a2c0155a8887cd01.pdf> (rsph.org.uk).

Salomon, I. & Brown, C. S. *'The selfie generation: examining the relationship between social media use and early adolescent body image'*. The Journal of Early Adolescence. 2019; 39(4):539-60.

Selkie, E. M., Fales, J. L. Moreno, M. A. (2016) *Cyberbullying prevalence among US middle and high school-aged adolescents: A systematic review and quality assessment'*. Journal of Adolescent Health, 58 (2): 125-33.

Scott, H., Biello, S. M., & Woods, H. C. (2019) '*Identifying drivers for bedtime social media use despite sleep costs: the adolescent perspective*'. *Sleep Health*, 5 (6): 539-45.

United Kingdom Government (2020) 'Stop Bullying and Effects of Bullying' (2020). Available from: <https://www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/effects/>.

Woods, H.C. & Scott, H. (2016) '*Sleepy teens: Social media use in adolescence is associated with poor sleep quality, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem*'. *Journal of Adolescence*, 51: 41-9.

Welsh Government (WG) (2022) 'Development of a theory of change and evaluability assessment for the whole school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing'

Available: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2021-12_-_development-of-a-theory-of-change-and-evaluability-assessment-for-the-whole-school-approach.

World Health Organisation (WHO)(2023) 'Addressing child and adolescent mental health' Available: <https://www.who.int/europe/activities/addressing-child-adolescent-mental-health>.

Questions & Answers.

Thank you for listening.

