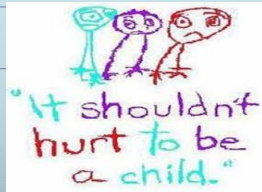


Children and Young People Mental Health



"The front lines in the battle for good mental health in the UK are not within our NHS, they are in our nation's schools, colleges, universities and workplaces. By the time we reach the NHS, all too often we've already reached crisis point."

Professor Dame Sue Bailey
Chair of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition



Aims

- › How do we understand Mental Health Problems
- › Explore some of the current statistics and theories relating to mental health
- › Identify current mental health conditions
- › Strategies for promoting emotional health and wellbeing for Children and Young People (CYP).

'Mental Health' – What does that mean?

- › This can be confusing, when we think of mental health, we start thinking of problems or mental illness
- › However, we all have 'mental health' and this can include:
 - › How we think about ourselves (our own self esteem, identity and confidence) and others around us (and how we feel when we are with others)
 - › Our ability to create and develop and keep friends and relationships
 - › Our ability to learn from others and develop both emotionally and psychologically.
- › It also includes resilience and how we develop skills to overcome life's challenges and difficulties.
- › Having confidence and belief in our own sense of self enables us to take decisions that will affect our life.

Mental Health

- › We all experience challenges and at points in our life our own mental health can be put to the test, this can include:
 - › Exam and assignment pressures
 - › Employment issues
 - › Family and relationship challenges
 - › Bereavements
 - › And so on..

What causes mental health problems?

- › Mental health can have a wide variety of causes. Mostly, we do not know what causes a particular problem, however it is recognised that some people can be more deeply affected by an issue than others.



Factors that can potentially trigger poor mental health

- › Childhood trauma (including abuse or witnessing abuse)
- › Social isolation, lack of support
- › Discrimination and stigma
- › Bereavement
- › Long-term stress
- › Unemployment
- › Poverty – Sky News UK on course for 'record level of child poverty'
- › Substance misuse
- › Adult trauma
- › Physical causes (head injury, epilepsy for example)
- › Genetic factors (research is still being undertaken in this area and as yet is still not indicating any clear proof that genetics have a role to play in the development of MH problems)).

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Facts about CYP Mental Health in Wales

- › Together for Mental Health (2012) aims to promote mental wellbeing of all people in Wales and wherever possible to prevent mental ill-health from developing.
- › The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)
- › Mental Health Foundation: research, policy and innovation charity that aims to build public knowledge and understanding on mental health and well-being.

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Survey Results (2015)

- › 13% of adults living in Wales (aged 16 and older) are receiving treatment for a mental health problem.
- › A higher percentage of women are receiving treatment for a mental health problem (16% vs 10%).
- › The overall cost of treatments and support for mental health problems in Wales is an estimated £7.2 billion a year.
- › People who have a mental health problem die on average 10 years earlier than the general population.

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Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

- ▶ National Assembly for Wales Inquiry into Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) 2014 stated that CAMHS is receiving more referrals than ever before.
- ▶ Within the last four year there has been a 100% increase in the demand for their services.
- ▶ Between 2010 and July 2014 the total amount of referrals for CAMHS services doubled from 1204 to 2342.
- ▶ The number of referrals that are waiting for more than 18 months to receive a service has seen an almost five-fold increase during that same period (from 164 to 798).

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Self Harm and Suicide

- ▶ In Wales, the number of admissions to Emergency Services, is on the rise, with approximately 5,500 admissions each year, however this doesn't account for those that are not admitted into hospital, nor those who do not self-report self harm.
- ▶ The Welsh Government Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy highlighted the relevance of self harm to be mostly women aged 15-19.
- ▶ In Wales, suicide accounted for 27% of external deaths in all ages from 15 and over, between 2010 and 2012.

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Additional Statistics (UK)

- ▶ One in 10 children aged between five and 16 have been clinically diagnosed with a mental health problem.
- ▶ Just over half of these children (5.8%) have a conduct disorder
- ▶ 3.7% have an emotional disorder (anxiety, depression)
- ▶ And one to two percent have severe ADHD
- ▶ Half of those with lifetime mental illness (excl dementia) first experience their symptoms around the age of 14.

(ONS, 2004)

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Consequences of Poor Mental Health?

- ▶ **Consequences in childhood can include:**
 - ▶ Lower levels of achievement in school
 - ▶ Behaviour issues, which can lead to school suspension or expulsion
 - ▶ Offending behaviours
 - ▶ Fewer qualifications
 - ▶ Poorer employment prospects
- ▶ **Consequences in adulthood can include:**
 - ▶ Poorer relationships with other adults and family
 - ▶ Mental health problems into adult life
 - ▶ Can lead to serious physical illnesses



Key Issues

Attachment
Adverse Childhood
Experiences
Mental Health
Problems

Attachment Theory

- ▶ Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby (1969, 1973) to try to understand how children, particularly babies interact and develop relationships with their parents.
- ▶ Attachment is a biological process that enables the child to feel safe and nurtured. It is interactive between the child and the caregiver.
- ▶ Attachment is significant both during childhood and also during adulthood.
- ▶ The security of the attachment can enable good, positive adult child relationships in the future. It can enable the child to develop better skills at problem solving, as well as increased confidence and a greater ability to understand and share emotions.

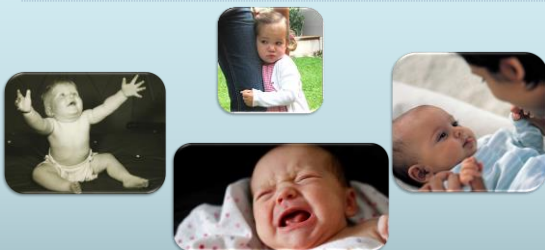
Attachment Theory

- Poor, or limited attachment can give rise to particular issues both in the short term (during childhood) and later on, well into adulthood.
- Difficulties with attachment as a young child can lead to difficulties with later relationships; challenges with emotion regulation; behaviour difficulties, self identity and how we perceive others see us.
- Having difficult attachments at birth are not irreversible, one good solid relationship at any point can be beneficial.

Attachment and young children

- Babies need to experience their parent/primary caregiver as available and sensitively responsive to their needs, signals and communications
- Because young babies are so reliant on the adult, they will use various strategies to make the caregiver come to them: crying, clinging.
- They are *fight* responses and *signalling* behaviours

Attachment behaviours



The older infant

- As the young child develops, learns to walk etc, they will be able to run towards their primary caregiver.
- They can make sense of relationships and social situations
- All children (with only extreme exceptions) will attach to their carers.

Maintenance of Attachment System

- If attachment behaviours fail to achieve their goal, their system will remain activated – along with this will go the arousal and distress that accompanies the activated system.
- *Protest*: loud crying, anger and attempts to follow or searching for the caregiver.

Cont..

- *Despair*: If the loss of separation is prolonged the baby can enter a phase of despair. They are seeking the return of the caregiver, but will eventually give up and lose faith (Robertson, 1953)
 - *Period of grief and mourning*
- *Detachment*: if the loss continues there will be a defensive stage of seeming detachment

Safe Haven and Secure Base

- Attachment figures who do provide the safe haven will enable autonomous and independent children
- Children and adults who do not have a secure base will feel more anxious within the world, new experiences will feel alarming. Without the secure base, the individual will feel insecure and lack confidence. This can have significant developmental consequences.

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Emotion Regulation

- Humans are sociable creatures. Much of our time is spent in the company of others and that social group can provide protection, resources, knowledge a sharing of skills, sexual relationships ...
- The emotional experience is often termed *affect*: this covers:
 - Our physical feelings, psychological feelings and facial expressions.
- Attachment as a theory of affect regulation
- This aspect of attachment links up with many other branches of developmental science: early brain development, social interaction and understanding, emergence of personality differences and emotional intelligence.

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Emotion Regulation

- Children who are helped to regulate their arousal, through caring and sensitive responses, will learn to regulate themselves physiologically, emotionally, cognitively (Perry and Szalavitz, 2006)
- Co-regulation is at the heart of attachment, being able to self-regulate, the eventual growth of social understanding, empathy and relational skills.
- Neuroscience is demonstrating more and more how the state of the mind and the underpinning neurological structures can affect the body and vice versa.

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Biological Stress Systems

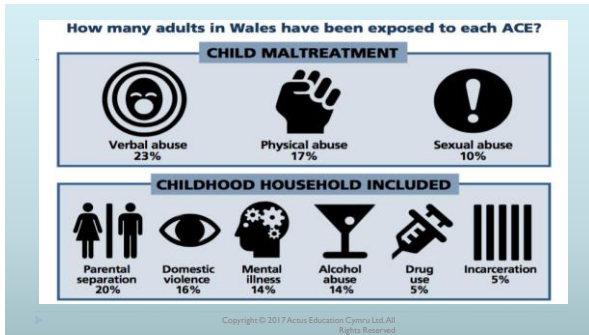
- **Stress hormone – Cortisol**
 - Securely attached children have less reactive stress systems
 - Children who have suffered traumatic childhoods (incl neglect) have abnormal patterns of cortisol release. They will have hypersensitive nervous systems and are easily aroused.

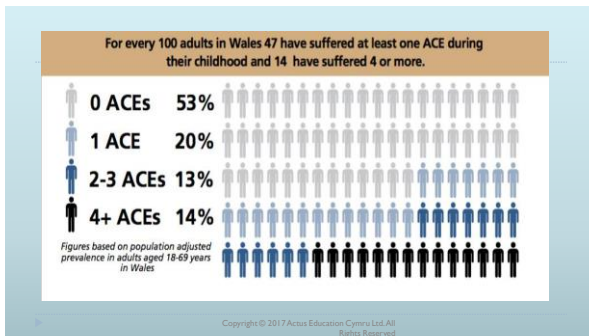
Patterns of attachment

- Each pattern of attachment represents a strategy to produce and receive care and protection.
- Four combinations of the way the self and others are experienced and mentally modelled within the parent-child relationship:
 - Avoidant (A)
 - Secure (B)
 - Ambivalent (C)
 - Disorganised (D)

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have harmful impacts on the individual across the lifecourse.
- The Welsh ACE Study looked at nine ACEs and explored the effect on mental health.

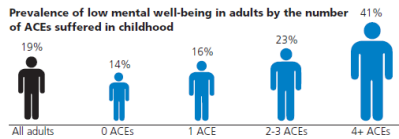






The prevalence of low mental well-being in adults increased with the number of ACEs suffered in childhood

Mental well-being was measured using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (SWEMWBS) which includes seven questions to assess mental well-being over the last two weeks. Scores for these questions are combined to provide an overall mental well-being score ranging from 7 to 35. Individuals scoring below 20 were categorised as having low mental well-being.*



*Low mental well-being was classified as >1 standard deviation below the mean overall mental well-being SWEMWBS score of all respondents (mean = 24.47, SD = 4.57, low <20).

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ACEs

- ▶ [ACEs and Low Mental Health – Infographic](#)
- ▶ [ACEs and their association with Mental Well-Being in the adult population in Wales \(PDF\)](#)
- ▶ [ACEs animation](#)

Different types of mental health problems

- ▶ There are many different types of mental health problems that young people can experience, some of the common issues are identified below:
 - ▶ Stress and anxiety
 - ▶ Depression
 - ▶ Psychosis
 - ▶ Self Harm
 - ▶ Eating Disorders

Anxiety (CYP)

- As many as 1 in 6 children will experience anxiety at some point before reaching adulthood (YoungMinds, 2017).
- Anxiety is a feeling of fear or panic. It can be a normal reaction to a stressful event (e.g. exams or tests) but after the event has occurred usually the feelings will return to normal.
- If the problem has gone however, and the emotions continue that's when anxiety can become an issue.

Symptoms of Anxiety

- Feeling scared or panicky all the time
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low appetite
- Withdrawal
- Tired and irritable
- Low mood
- Feeling faint
- Physiological illnesses: headaches, stomach aches.

Treating Anxiety

- Anti-depressants: Clozapine, Fluoxetine, Lithium, Lorazepam
- CBT/Other Counselling
- Self Help: Psychoeducational books, activities, exercises

Depression

- › Depression is one of the most common types of illness
- › It is not the same as bipolar disorder (or manic depression)
- › It often develops alongside anxiety
- › It is a mood disorder, where the individual feels low all the time, with negative emotions.

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Symptoms of Depression

- › Depression affects people in different ways. Symptoms can include:
 - › Social anxiety, avoidance of friends and social situations
 - › Disrupted or prolonged sleeping
 - › Feeling irritable, upset, lonely
 - › Feeling hopeless
 - › Suicidal ideation
 - › Lethargic
 - › Self critical

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Treating Depression

- › Drug treatment: Amitriptylene, Chlorpromazine, Citalopram, Diazepam, Fluoxetine, Lithium
- › Counselling
- › Exercise or outdoor activities
- › Mindfulness

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Psychosis

- › Psychosis can be a symptom of a serious mental illness (e.g bipolar disorder or schizophrenia) or it can be related to depression, stress or substance misuse.
- › In a psychotic episode a person will lose touch with reality and may see things, hear things or feel things that are not actually there. They believe things that don't rationaly make sense.
- › It is treatable.

Symptoms of Psychosis

- › Often it is the people around an individual that will notice the psychotic episode.
- › Some of the behaviours can include:
 - › Hallucinations
 - › Feeling as if you are being watched or followed, or that your life is in danger
 - › Confused thoughts, inability to concentrate
 - › Feeling that something else is taking control of body and thoughts

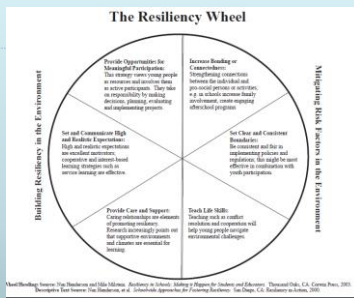
Treating Psychosis

- › Treatment can include anti-psychotic drugs or neuroleptics: Lithium, Fluoxetine, Propranolol
- › CBT

Strategies for Promoting Good Mental Health

- ▶ In order to develop emotionally and intellectually capable young people, good mental health needs to be the priority.
- ▶ Enabling children and young people to develop psychologically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually and spiritually will enhance a young person's sense of self and well being and enable young people to make a successful transition into adulthood.
- ▶ How can we do this?

Strategies: The Resiliency Wheel



Strategies: Mindfulness

Mindful Life and your Child:

Life for most kids today presents:

- A schedule that is too busy
- Pressure to perform
- Too much media
- Lack of face to face relationships
- Increasing anxiety & depression
- A brain that is in a constant state of Fight or Flight



The Result:

- Decreased academic performance
- Problems with attention
- Impulsive behaviors
- Increased depression and anxiety
- Sleep difficulties
- Social struggles

Mindfulness helps children develop:

- Increased stimulation in the prefrontal cortex of the brain
- Better focus and concentration
- Compassion
- Increased sense of calm
- An understanding of how their brain works



The Result:

- Increased self-awareness
- Skilled response to difficult emotions
- Increased empathy and understanding of others
- Natural conflict resolution skills
- Happier, healthier kids who are ready to learn

Summary

- › Explored our understanding of mental health and mental health problems
- › Looked at some of the current statistics and theories relating to mental health
- › Identify a small number of mental health conditions
- › Strategies for promoting emotional health and wellbeing for Children and Young People (CYP).

Resources

- › **Books:**
- › Bowlby, J. (1971) Attachment and loss; Vol. I, Attachment. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- › Gerhardt, S. (2004) Why Love Matters: how affection shapes a baby's brain. Hove: Brunner: Routledge.
- › Holmes, J. (2014) John Bowlby and Attachment Theory. Hove: Routledge
- › **Tools:**
- › Relax Kids: The Wishing Star, Marneta Viegas and other Relax Kids products.
- › Mindfulness App: Headspace (for Kids)
- › MindEd: Free educational resource on CYP MH for all adults.
- › **Website:**
- › Public Health Wales (ACEs studies): <http://www.publichealthwales.wales.nhs.uk/>
