A Parents Guide to

Mental Health in Teenage Years

Picture 1- (American Physiological Association, 2018)

Mental Health and Well-being is Fundamental for our Ability to Thrive and Succeed.

(Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper, 2017)

Effective Mental Health Begins in Childhood

(Actionforchildren.org.uk, 2017)

Definition of Well-being

'The state of feeling healthy and happy'

(Cambridge Dictionary, 2018)

Sarah Stewart – Brown (*cited in* Nhs.uk, 2016) argues, 'feeling happy is a part of mental well-being'.

To experience satisfaction, happiness, confidence and engaging with society, all participate in our mental well-being.

Definition of Mental Health

- Mental health consists of, our 'emotional, psychological, and social well-being'.
- It influences how we feel, think and act.
- Our mental health helps with how we deal with stress, people and our choices in life.
- Mental health is essential at each stage of our lives, from when we were children, to our teenage years and through to adulthood.

(Mentalhealth.gov, 2017)

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More children today have been diagnosed with a mental health problem than they did 30 years ago, reason for this may be because of how much our lives have changed over the years and the effects it causes.

Additionally, one in ten children have been diagnosed with a mental health problem, these may include, anxiety, depression and a behaviour disorder.

For children to prosper into adulthood, we need to aid their mental health as children, giving children a healthy balance diet, regular exercise, participating in local events, achieving well in school and having a healthy relationship alongside family members and close acquaintances.

Teenagers may face many difficulties going into adulthood, changes in their lives can often trigger problems , these may include-

- A death
- Change in school
- Bullying
- Having a long-term illness
- Parental separation
- Being abused (physically and sexually)
- Living in poverty
- Discrimination about their sexuality, race or religion
- Children who are carers

(Mental Health Foundation, 2018)

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is a form of bullying which is done, via your mobile phone, tablet or computer (Bullying.co.uk, n.d.). Additionally, social media sites, messaging apps, online gaming, and many other chat room site apps can have a negative affect on your child's life, if cyber bullying is taking place. Furthermore, 47% of children have reported receiving offensive profile messages, in addition to, 62% that have been sent malicious messages through online chat room apps (Bullying.co.uk, n.d.).

Different types of cyberbullying include:

- **Harassment**- sending rude, abusive messaging
- **Denigration**- sending untrue messages, sharing photos of a person to ridicule and embarrass.
- **Flaming-** knowingly using abusive language to cause offence.
- **Impersonation-** using someone else's identity online.
- **Cyber stalking-** continuous distribution of messages that comprise of harmful threats, harassment, intimidating messages, or engaging in other online activities that make a person fearful for his or her wellbeing, therefore this could be illegal depending on what was said.
- **Exclusion**- intentionally leaving someone out of a group, this is the most common form of cyberbullying (Bullying.co.uk, n.d.)

To help combat cyberbullying is to set boundaries, regulate internet access, control what they can and cannot do, use privacy settings and set up parental controls.

If you have concerns about cyber bullying you could contact the school if other pupils are involved, contact your mobile provider to change phone number or phone the police.

(Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying, 2014)

Teenage Depression

Teenagers face many complexities while growing up, from puberty, who they are, and do they fit in (Smith, Robinson and Segal, 2018). Hence, it is difficult to know if it is normal teenage behaviour or depression (Smith, Robinson and Segal, 2018). However, teenage bad moods or occasional anger bursts are normal, depression is separated, depression can cause unhappiness, anguish and rage (Smith, Robinson and Segal, 2018). Various, disobedient and unhealthy feelings can be signs of adolescent depression (Smith, Robinson and Segal, 2018).

Signs of Teenage Depression

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritation or aggression
- Tearfulness or regular crying
- Removal from friends and family
- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Inadequate school work
- Changes in eating and sleeping behaviours

Picture 2-

(Teenage problems, 2013)

- Agitation and nervousness
- Feelings of insignificance and blame
- Lack of interest
- Tiredness or absence of energy
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Thoughts of death or suicide

(Smith, Robinson and Segal, 2018)

Signs your teen might be contemplating suicide

- Talking about perpetrating suicide
- Writing about suicide
- Giving away their belongings
- Participating in irresponsible conduct
- Glamorizing death
- Saying goodbye to friends and family, in person, letters, or on social media
- social media posts that suggests death

(Hurley, 2018)

If your teen has suicidal thoughts please ring

Samaritans Telephone number - 116 123 or visit the website- samaritans.org

(Itv.com, 2018)

Raising children is extremely demanding, parents working hours have increased over the years and people are finding it challenging to spend quality time with their children and give them the attentiveness they require (Timimi, 2009). Therefore, Spending quality time with your teen, can gradually become problematic (Familylives.org, 2018).

Below are some suggestions on spending time with your teenager

- Make plans to watch a movie
- Have a pamper night
- Let them cook for you
- Play a game console
- Any outdoor activity, bike riding, dog walking, football etc…
- Decorate their room with them

(Familylives.org.uk, 2018)

Exercise and Mental Health

Exercise is good for our hearts, body and mind, research has found that frequent exercise can help beat depression, anxiety and stress (Rcpsych.ac.uk, 2017). Moreover, when we exercise our body releases a 'feel good chemical called endorphins in our brain', as well as, a chemical called 'dopamine' and serotonin' which are connected to depression, exercise can assist new brain cells to grow. Therefore, participating in approximately 40 minutes of energetic exercise five days a week can have the best results for our bodies and mind.

(Rcpsych.ac.uk, 2017).

Picture 3-

(Rcpsych.ac.uk, 2017)

Diet and Mental Health

Picture 4-

(British Nutrition Foundation, 2018)

Evidence suggests that nutritious food is fundamental for our mental health, and several mental health illnesses may be influenced by what we consume, consequently, health problems such as depression, schizophrenia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, can be caused by what we eat. Therefore, to safeguard our mental health we need a diet which offers suitable amounts of carbohydrates, good fats, amino acids, fresh fruit, and vegetables, wholegrains and plenty of water.

(Mental Health Foundation, 2018)

Statistics in Mental Health for Young People and Teens

- One in ten young people have been diagnosed with a mental health condition,
- Additionally, 850,000 children and young people living in the United Kingdom have been diagnosed with a mental health difficulty
- Boys are more likely to develop depression with a statistic of 11% compared to 8 % of girls
- 18 % of children reported they had been subjected to cyberbullying,
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) have a higher chance of poor mental health with suicide thoughts, substance abuse and self-harm rather than their heterosexual peers

(Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper, 2017)

Picture 5-
(Indianayouthgroup.org, 2012)

- 20% of teens may endure a mental health problem every year
- 50% of children suffering from mental health problems are recognised by the age of 14
- 75% of people are identified by the age of 24
- 10% of children aged 5 to 16 have been diagnosed with a mental health problem
- 70% have not received suitable interventions at a satisfactorily early age
- 70& of young people have not had sufficient intervention at a young age

(Mental Health Foundation, 2018)

Help Available

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is an NHS service that helps young people with mental health problems, it helps with depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm, children who have been abused, aggression, bipolar disorders and schizophrenia (YoungMinds, 2018).

There are CAMHS services throughout the UK, with highly qualified staff in dealing with children's mental health, such as social workers, therapists, psychologists and doctors (YoungMinds, 2018).
To be referred to CAMHS, you can contact your child's school or your local GP

(youngMinds, 2018).

Other help available

- **Family Lives** is a charity focussing on the family unit. You can call their confidential helpline on 0808 800 2222 (9am-9pm Monday to Friday, 10am-3pm Saturday to Sunday). Also available on onlineforums.
- **Young Minds,** the mental health charity has a confidential helpline. You can ring them on 0808 802 5544 (9.30am-4pm Monday to Friday)
- **Relate** offers relationship advice and counselling. You can also use **Live Chat** to talk to a counsellor for free.
- **FRANK,** the drugs charity, has full knowledge regarding drugs. You can also call their helpline on 0300 123 6600 available any time 7 days a week.

(Nhs.uk, 2017)

Picture 6- (Mani, 2015)

This leaflet is also available in :

- Welsh
- Polish
- Panjabi
- Urdu
- Bengali
- Gujarat
- French
- Arabic
- Portuguese
- Spanish
- Chinese
- Spanish

(Ons.gov.uk, 2013)

Picture 7-
(Pixabay.com, 2018)