



**What can be learned from
global research, policy and
practice which might enhance
education for the health and
well-being of the children and
young people of Wales?**

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Introduction

- This presentation will be looking into a key concept. The issue that will be covered within this presentation will be mental health education.
- This presentation will be looking at what is being done globally, but also what is being done in Wales. This presentation will be looking in greater detail into the Global Development Goals.
- The impact that ACE's have on children and young people, and the importance of having an early intervention.
- Finally it will be considering the importance of PSHE, and the positive impact that it has on young people.

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The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Wales

- ▶ Everyone suffers with mental health. Some people have good mental health, whereas others have poor mental health.
- ▶ Mental Health Wales (no date) notes that 'An additional £7.1m will help to protect, improve and support the mental health of children and young people in Wales'.
- ▶ The Mental Health Foundation (2016, p. 5) discuss that in 2012-13, Welsh Government had spent £200.87 per head on mental health issues. Of this, £13.94 of that was spent on child and adolescent mental health.
- ▶ I believe that more should be spent on children and young people's mental health.

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Adverse Childhood Experiences

- ▶ Children and young people who experience traumatic and stressful childhoods are more likely to take on health harming behaviours.
- ▶ Children that are raised in certain environments could adopt those behaviours later on in life.
- ▶ Public Health Wales (2015, p. 6) notes that 'Children raised in environments where violence, assault and abuse are common are more likely to develop such traits themselves as these behaviours are seen as normal'.

ACEs increase individuals' risk of developing health-harming behaviours

Compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ ACEs are:

4	times more likely to be a high-risk drinker
6	times more likely to have had or caused unintended teenage pregnancy
6	times more likely to smoke e-cigarettes or tobacco
6	times more likely to have had sex under the age of 16 years
11	times more likely to have smoked cannabis
14	times more likely to have been a victim of violence over the last 12 months
15	times more likely to have committed violence against another person in the last 12 months
16	times more likely to have used crack cocaine or heroin
20	times more likely to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime

(Bellisi, Ashtoni, Hughesii, Fordii, Bishopi & Paranjothyi, 2015, p. 2)

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Mental Health in Education

- Schools play an important part in the promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of students. This could be done through lessons such as PSHE.
- The Department for Education (2018, p. 6) discusses the role that schools have in the welfare of students, and note that 'All schools are under a statutory duty to promote the welfare of their pupils, which includes: preventing impairment of children's health or development, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes'.
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The Importance of PSHE in Schools

- ▶ It is known that PSHE is beneficial to young people. PSHE allows for young people to gain knowledge and skills for them to keep healthy and prepare them for life.
- ▶ The PSHE Association (no date) discusses about the benefits of PSHE, and notes that 'A growing body of research shows that pupils who are emotionally healthy do better at school. PSHE education helps children and young people to achieve their potential by supporting their wellbeing and tackling issues that can affect their ability to learn, such as anxiety and unhealthy relationships.'

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Mental Health in Education

- ▶ Early intervention is one of the most important steps that schools can take in helping students with their mental health and wellbeing. One of the schools roles in doing this is by giving young people access to specialist support. The Department for Health (2018, p. 6) discusses about this specialist support as 'Working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment'.
- ▶ Teachers have got a lot to be dealing with in terms of the number of classes they have, the number of young people they work with and the marking of their work. Teachers may not have time or the specific training to support young people suffering with mental health issues.

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Research in Wales – Mind over Matter

- ▶ Research conducted by the National Assembly for Wales (2018) looks into the change needed in emotional and mental health support for children and young people in Wales.
- ▶ The report discusses that there has been an increase in emotional, behavioural and mental health issues amongst children and young people.
- ▶ The research found that there were two contributing factors that were linked to these issues, they were a pressure to achieve good results academically, and the influence and pressure from social media – this is down to it being accessible 24 hours a day. (National Assembly for Wales, 2018, p. 22)
- ▶ The National Assembly for Wales (2018, p. 29) notes that 'Embedding well-being, emotional resilience, and healthy coping mechanisms in the new curriculum is vital'.

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Global Development Goals

- World leaders in 2015 agreed 17 goals that aimed for a better world by 2030. These goals have the influence to end such things as poverty and climate change.
- In particular, Global Goal 3 is about good health and wellbeing. One of the targets for this goal is to reduce mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health. The Global Goals for Sustainable Development (no date) notes that by 2030 it hopes to 'Reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being'.
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A Global Perspective - Canada

- ▶ The Canadian Mental Health Association (2019) discusses the work that is being done in secondary schools in Ontario, and notes that 'Mental Health and Addictions Nurses work in schools to provide early identification and intervention supports and services to students so they can thrive at school, remain in school, or successfully transition back to school'.
- ▶ Early Identification and intervention is vital for helping support young people in getting them the help that they need. Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (no date) discuss that there is 'Approximately 1 in 5 children and youth in Ontario have a mental health challenge. About 70% of mental health challenges have their onset in childhood or youth'.

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A Global Perspective – Canada

- ▶ The Canadian Mental Health Association (2019) discusses the importance that teachers and parents have of keeping an open line of communication with each other and the importance of an early intervention and notes that 'If a student is identified as "at risk" by a parent or teacher, a school support team may come together to develop a plan'.
- ▶ Schools in Ontario have implemented a support team named ASSIST, that helps promote student mental health and well-being.
- ▶ School Mental Health ASSIST (2019) notes that 'ASSIST provides a continuum of capacity-building resources to help education professionals understand their role in supporting student mental well-being, and in identifying students who may be struggling'.

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Conclusion

- ▶ In conclusion, research has shown that things are being put into place, both in Wales and globally to support children and young people with their mental health.
- ▶ It is vital that professionals such as teachers and youth workers, as well as parents know and spot the signs of mental ill health as early as possible. The earlier the intervention, the better.
- ▶ Multi agency work is vital for ensuring that children and young people receive the right support and guidance.
- ▶ However, I believe more can be done. For example, better awareness of organisations that support children and young people with mental health issues within their local community.

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