



PSA Bulletin

This week let's talk about 'Children's Mental Health'

The theme of this year's Children's Mental Health Week is **Growing Together**.

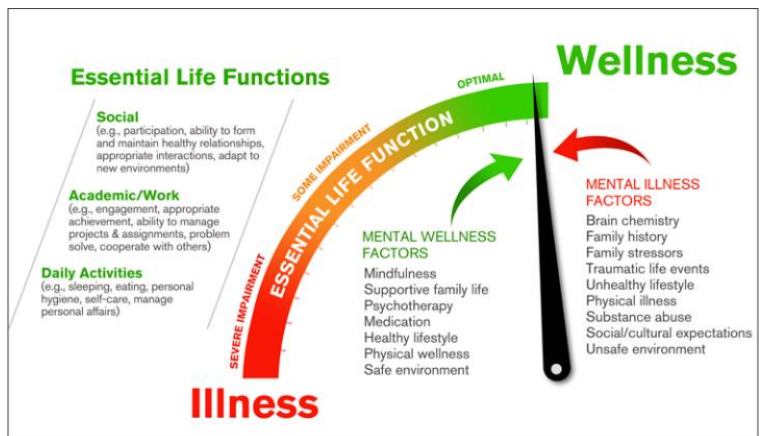
Growing Together is about growing emotionally and finding ways to help each other grow. Challenges and setbacks can help us to grow and adapt and trying new things can help us to move beyond our comfort zone into a new realm of possibility and potential. However, emotional growth is often a gradual process that happens over time, and sometimes we might feel a bit 'stuck'.

- 1 **Make conversations about mental health a normal part of life:** Anywhere is a good place to talk; in the car, walking the dog or cooking together. Model everyday talk about feelings such as by talking about a TV character's feelings.
- 2 **Give your full attention:** We all know it's horrible to be half listened to. Keep eye contact, focus on the child and ignore distractions.
- 3 **Check your body language:** Try to keep it open and relaxed and make sure you come down to the child's level.
- 4 **Take it seriously:** Don't downplay what the child is saying or tell them they're "just being silly". Resist the urge to reassure them that everything is fine.
- 5 **Ask open questions:** Such as "How did your day go today?" This will help to extend the conversation.
- 6 **Calmly stay with the feelings that arise:** It can be our automatic reaction to steer away from difficult emotions.
- 7 **Offer empathy rather than solutions:** Show that you accept what they are telling you but don't try to solve the problem.
- 8 **Remember we are all different:** Respect and value the child's feelings, even though they may be different to yours.
- 9 **Look for clues about feelings:** Listen to the child's words, tone of voice and body language.
- 10 **Some ways to start a conversation about feelings might be:**
 "How are you feeling at the moment?"
 "You don't seem your usual self. Do you want to talk about it?"
 "Do you fancy a chat?"
 "I'm happy to listen if you need a chat."

As **parents and carers**, you play an important role in your child's mental health. There are lots of great resources and ideas about ways you can support you child [here](#).

For parenting advice from child mental health experts on practical tips to support children's wellbeing and behaviour you may like to take a look at [Parenting Smart from Place2Be](#)

Mental health continuously shifts, changes, and evolves during a lifetime. We can identify the current state of a person's mental health in relationship to how a person is functioning in the world. This picture includes some of the factors that contribute to various states of mental health.



If you are concerned about your child's mental health, ask the following questions:

- **INTENSITY:** How intense are your child's behaviours, thoughts, or emotions?
- **FREQUENCY:** How often does your child feel or behave this way?
- **DURATION:** How long do these individual episodes or periods last?
- **FUNCTIONALITY:** Above all else, how well is your child functioning in life? Is your child impaired in any way at home, at school, or with friends?

Thriving "I got this."	Surviving "Something isn't right."	Struggling "I can't keep this up."	In Crisis "I can't survive this."
Calm and steady with minor mood fluctuations	Nervousness, sadness, increased mood fluctuations	Persistent fear, panic, anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness	Disabling distress and loss of function
Able to take things in stride	Inconsistent performance	Exhaustion	Panic attacks
Consistent performance	More easily overwhelmed or irritated	Poor performance and difficulty making decisions or concentrating	Nightmares or flashbacks
Able to take feedback and to adjust to changes of plans	Increased need for control and difficulty adjusting to changes	Avoiding interaction with coworkers, family, and friends	Unable to fall or stay asleep
Able to focus	Trouble sleeping or eating	Fatigue, aches and pains	Intrusive thoughts
Able to communicate effectively	Activities and relationships you used to enjoy seem less interesting or even stressful	Restless, disturbed sleep	Thoughts of self-harm or suicide
Normal sleep patterns and appetite	Muscle tension, low energy, headaches	Self-medicating with substances, food, or other numbing activities	Easily enraged or aggressive
			Careless mistakes an inability to focus
			Feeling numb, lost, or out of control
			Withdrawal from relationships
			Dependence on substances, food, or other numbing activities to cope

Our children are never too young to start learning about mental health and **self-care**. If we create a culture around them where it becomes normal to talk about how we feel and importantly what we can do to help ourselves feel 'better', we are more likely to help our children to grow to become resilient young adults. We can do this by **role-modelling** and prioritising our own wellbeing. Children will often mimic what they see. It is not 'selfish' to find time for parent self-care and activities which are good for your wellbeing – in fact – it is the exact opposite.

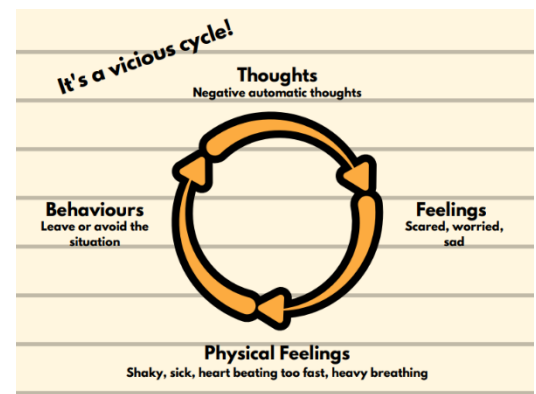
Here are some common topics that parents often come to speak with me about with regards to their child's mental health and some of my favourite resources to signpost parents to:

[Anxiety and worries](#)

[Low Mood](#)

[Stress](#)

[Unhelpful / negative thinking](#)



How to contact me:

It's never too soon to make contact if you have any concerns. You can reach me via text on the PSA mobile

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Normal working days are Tuesday and Wednesday 8.00-16.00 and Thursday 8.00-13:00

