HEALTHiER MiNDS

East Renfrewshire Council

A Guide for Parents and Carers

Welcome to
HEALTHiER MiNDS
A Guide for Parents and Carers

If you are reading this it is likely that you are interested in or worried about your child's mental wellbeing and what you can do to support them. HEALTHiER MiNDS – A Guide for Parents and Carers brings together information and practical advice that we think you will find helpful when supporting your child to manage life's challenges. It includes information about how low mood, anxiety and stress can affect us, how to develop resilience, and looks at ways of developing strategies with your child to help them manage and feel a bit better. There is also information about relevant local services in East Renfrewshire, and the different roles that professionals can have in supporting children, young people and families who are experiencing more chronic and severe mental health needs.

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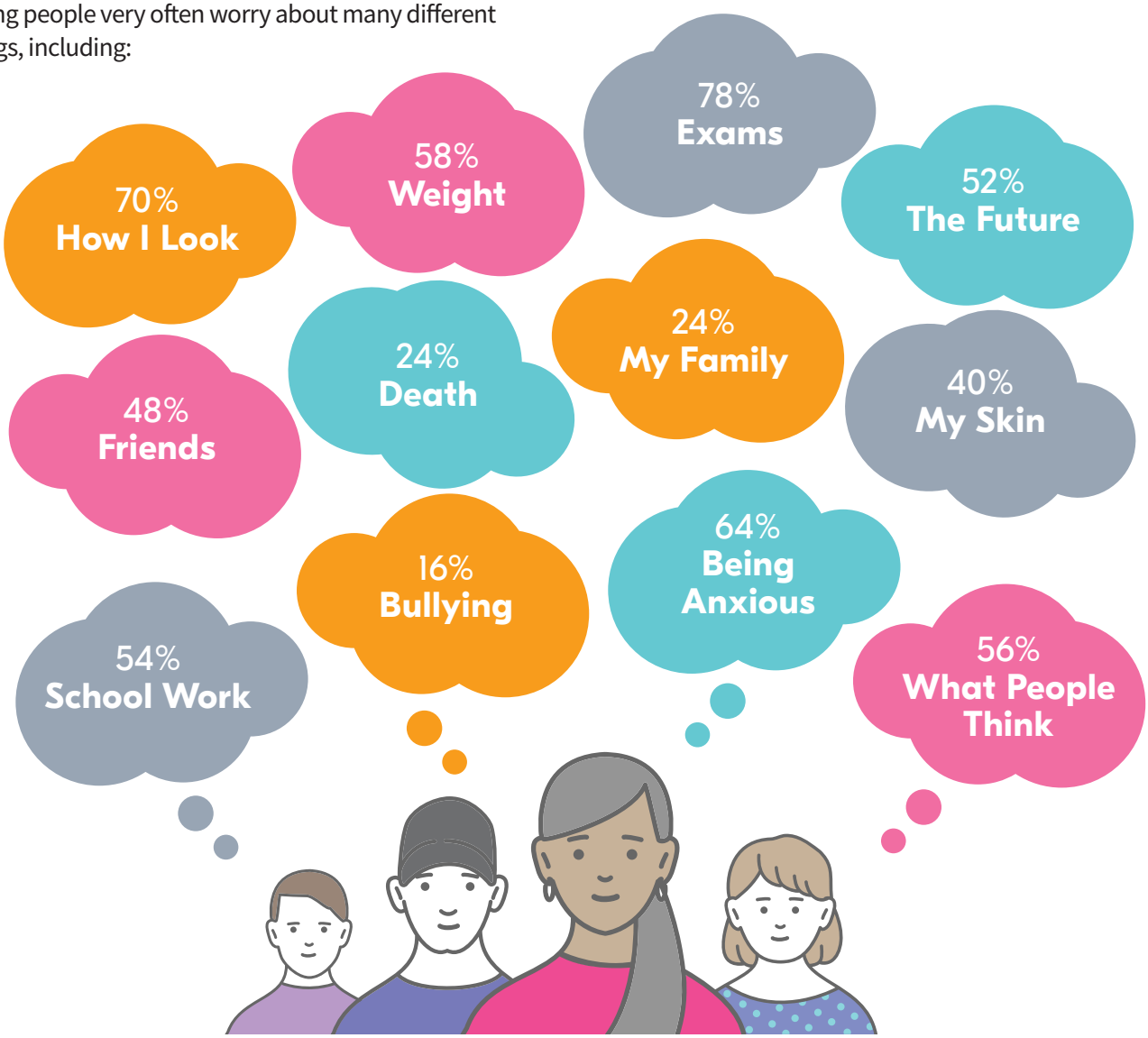
Managing Life's Challenges

A recent survey in East Renfrewshire highlighted that young people very often worry about many different things, including:



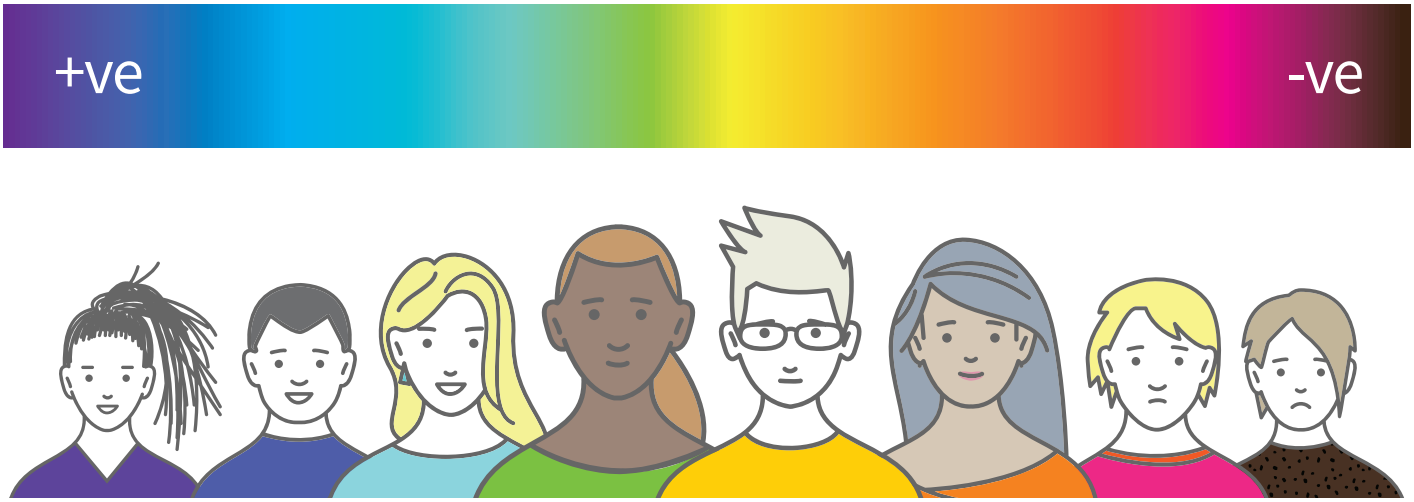
It is normal to experience challenges when growing up, particularly during adolescence, times of transition (e.g. moving to a new school), or when there has been a significant loss, such as a death in the family or when parents have separated.

In almost all situations, children and young people's mental wellbeing is best supported by those closest to them, particularly parents, family members, friends, and other key adults such as school staff. Through these relationships, your child will learn coping strategies along the way that help them to manage difficult times in the future. Some children and young people will experience times when they need additional or specialist support. This may be because of the impact of what they have experienced, such as loss, trauma, neglect or abuse.

The Mental Wellbeing Continuum

It can be helpful to think of mental wellbeing as a **continuum** that ranges from feeling happy and content to experiencing chronic and enduring mental health difficulties that can be extremely difficult to manage. How you should respond and the support that your child needs depends on where they are on this continuum.

The Mental Wellbeing Continuum



It is normal to go through times when we are leaning towards the negative end of this continuum. Our experience of what is happening or has happened in our lives will influence our mental wellbeing. Sometimes, when we experience thoughts, feelings and behaviours that are challenging or distressing, it can be difficult to move back to the positive end of this continuum. There will be lots of factors which influence how you or your child cope and show resilience at times like these.

What is Resilience?

Resilience is our ability to manage life's challenges, bounce back from adversity, and move forward. Children, young people and families all differ in their resilience. Resilience is something that changes depending upon our situation. Many different things contribute to our resilience, in both positive and negative ways.

How a child or young person manages a difficult time will depend upon the **support** around them, the **coping strategies** they have and the **significance** they place on each of their experiences.

If your child is generally feeling positive about their coping strategies and the people around them who provide support, and if they have some confidence in the possibility that things will change for the better, then they are more likely to bounce back when faced with a challenge.

Our level of resilience develops and changes over time through our responses to challenging life experiences. We learn and develop certain skills through our successes and failures, and these can influence how resilient we become when faced with new challenges.

Resilience becomes stronger through coping with different types of risk and challenging situations that are age appropriate and manageable. However modern life means that children sometimes do not experience as many of these challenges or risks in the earlier years, than previous generations. For example, children often don't play unsupervised outside the family home or in the school playground. Many children go to adult organised activities. Although they still have to negotiate through play, make decisions, compromise and problem solve, there is almost always an adult to fix things if they go wrong. With the best of intentions, adults try to protect children from risk and failure. In many ways this is a good thing. However as a child becomes a teenager and the risks and challenges increase, if they have little or no lived experience of managing stressful situations, they might struggle to cope. The challenges and pressures that young people now face have become very complex. However, these challenges are common and with the right help they can be overcome.

Managing Low Mood, Anxiety and Stress

Stress is a perfectly normal response to events around us. Our ability to act impulsively and immediately is actually very important. This 'fight and flight' behaviour is a response to a stress hormone produced by our bodies called cortisol that triggers a reaction in order to keep us safe from harm. For our ancestors, this was essential for survival.

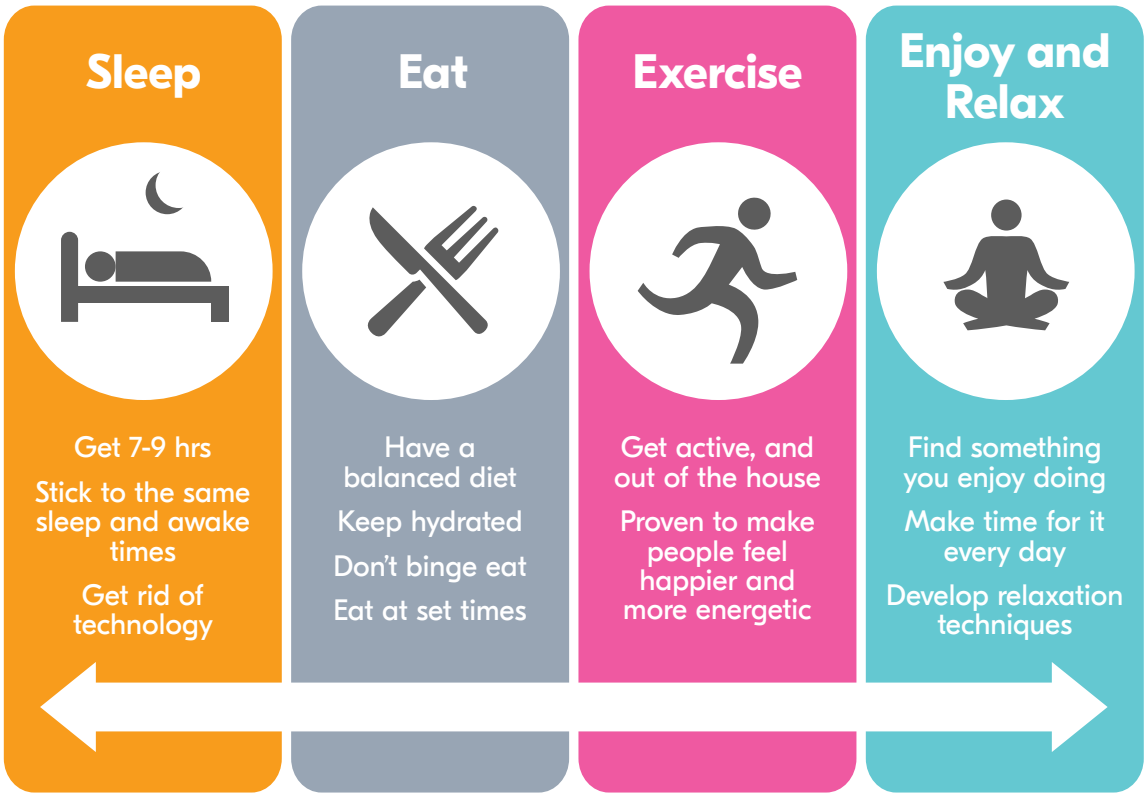
A certain amount of stress can help us to be more alert and focused. However, in the modern fast paced world, too much stress, or constantly being anxious, is unhealthy for our lives and relationships. It makes us 'hypervigilant' a lot of the time. This means we are constantly on edge and looking out for the next threat. Feeling like this can mean we are constantly in 'fight / flight' mode and makes it very difficult to think clearly.

Over time, when we experience too many situations that have developed into triggers that make us feel stressed, we can begin to feel a lack of control in our life. In these circumstances, we are likely to experience low mood, feel less resilient, and have poorer mental wellbeing.

There are strategies that you can use to help your child to improve their mental wellbeing and resilience. There are physical strategies, such as relaxation, healthy eating, setting a good sleep routine, and exercising regularly, and there are talking strategies.

Physical strategies are basic and often forgotten about, but they are crucial when responding to stressful events. By encouraging your child to pay more attention to the basics first it can bring about a better balance that will help them straight away.

One of the best short term solutions to a stressful event is a relaxation exercise. These can quickly slow your heart beat and help calm you down. Good relaxation techniques include Breathing Exercises, Muscle Relaxation, Visualisation or Guided Imagery. More information on each of these can be found in the Resources section.



Listen, Talk and Connect

Your presence and support in the life of your child will be a positive influence on their mental wellbeing. Children and young people who have this are more connected to others, more self-confident, optimistic about the future and better able to cope with difficulties. It is good to look for ways to connect with them. You are likely to know them and what motivates them better than anyone. If your child is younger, getting alongside them while they are playing and following their lead is a way to connect.

If your child is older, sitting playing a computer game with them, watching a movie or taking them shopping may be a good way to connect. Don't rush in to talk about what they are worried about. Try and allow things to develop naturally, and give your child 'openings' to talk. Allowing a calm, relaxed silence will help them feel like they have time and space to think and speak. There are some simple 'Do's and Don'ts' that can help.

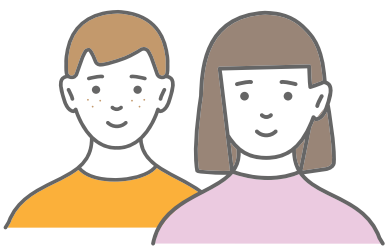
Do ✓

- **Connect and make time** for you and your child to do things together regularly. Make plans and stick to them, but throw in some unplanned enjoyment too.
- **Notice their body language** and think about what this tells you about how they are feeling.
- Think about your own body language. Use eye contact sparingly, smile, touch them gently, give them a hug, and make sure your gestures and movements are slow and relaxed. **Let your calm become their calm**.
- **Walk the walk**. Encouraging your child to sleep well, eat healthily, exercise, and take time for relaxation will be more effective if the adults in the house are doing some of these things too. **The language we use is important** and a child will learn how to talk about things from the way adults do. Think about the language you use with each other in the house. Focussing on what is going well, being non-judgemental and calm can really help.
- **Remember** that how you connect with your child will depend on **their likes**; some children may want to spend time talking things over, others may prefer doing activity or sport.
- **Be kind to yourself**; it is impossible to be a perfect parent all of the time.

Do ✓

If your child is younger …

- **Play!** Even if just for short bursts throughout the week, make the time, let them make the decisions (within reason!) and follow their lead. Use basic language, comment on and describe what your child is doing and ask open ended questions that can't be answered yes or no, for example 'what are you going to do next?'
- Use language to help your child **identify their feelings** during experiences. This may involve making links between what they are feeling and what they are doing, for example *'You are smiling, do you feel happy when I push you on the swing?'*
- **Show them how to recover**. If your child is very upset, give them a big cuddle, and sit with them until they are calm. Then you can then talk things through.



Do ✓

If your child is older …

- **Listen** without feeling you should give advice or a solution. Try to avoid judgement.
- **Validate** the feelings that your child describes or shows, for example, *'I can see you are feeling really stressed right now because of all that is happening at school/home. Is that right?'*
- **Comment** on what you hear and see and restate it, for example, *'So you are saying you are feeling a bit fed up at the moment?'*
- Look and listen out for **exceptions**, times when your child mentions that things are going better or when they appear to be enjoying an activity.
- **Encourage** your child to notice and focus on these 'exceptions' and do more of the things that make them feel better.
- Help your child to develop their own **coping strategies** by building on things they are doing already, for example, *'You said that you feel better when you talk to your friend face to face and when you take the dog for a walk. Could you arrange to do that together?'*
- Ask how you can **help**, for example, *'Is there anything I can do to take a little bit of the anxiety away?'*
- Encourage your child to **ask for help** if needed, for example, *'Could you speak to your sister about it too? She went through something similar' or 'Could you speak to your pupil support teacher or someone else in school to see if they can help you find other ways to make things a little easier right now?'*
- **Pay attention**. Turn off the tv, put the phones away, and create a calm, quiet environment when you can.

Don't ✗

- Judge.
- Overreact.
- Avoid the issue *(this will not help or encourage your child to address a situation).*
- Talk just about problems *(focus on the **exceptions** too).*
- Rush to solve the problem *(As a parent, this can be hard – but we all cope better when we have been supported to find our own solution to a problem).*
- Dismiss their concerns and say they're wrong to feel a certain way *(Only they truly know how they are feeling; being told they are not feeling a certain and that they are wrong will only make them feel worse).*
- Be afraid of long silences. Slow down! Don't rush the conversation or press too much, either for information or for a quick fix.

Talking about Mental Wellbeing and Mental Health

Talking to your child about their mental wellbeing is important. They will benefit from listening to you and others talking to them openly about thoughts and feelings, whilst keeping it appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The language that we all use to talk about mental wellbeing is also very important. There is much more awareness and openness about mental wellbeing these days. This is a good thing. It helps us to recognise when a young person is experiencing a significant mental health problem such as depression. We can use these descriptions to find the correct supports strategies, and to ensure they do not feel stigmatised. However, as more people become familiar with medical labels like depression and anxiety disorder, they can become misused or overused, whether in the press, social media or in our everyday conversations. For children and young people who are facing common stressors and the challenges of growing up, the use of medical labels can also be unhelpful. They can lead to feelings of 'blame'. The child may feel like their thoughts and those of their key adults are focussed on:

What is wrong with you? ✗

How can we fix you? ✗

In lots of situations it is better to use everyday language to talk with your child about their feelings. They are more likely to feel that they are being supported if adults are able to listen and talk with them about their feelings. Using questions like the ones below will be helpful:

- What is happening/ has happened to you for you to feel this way?
- What is going on in your life just now?
- How are you trying to manage things just now (what is working/not working)?
- What else could you try? What do other people do to manage? What would you suggest to a friend if they were experiencing something similar?
- What things are in your control and not in your control?
- Are there times when things are a bit better for you, or you don't feel like this?
- Who are you close to? What relationships do you have?
- What do you need from me right now? What do you think you need from other people?

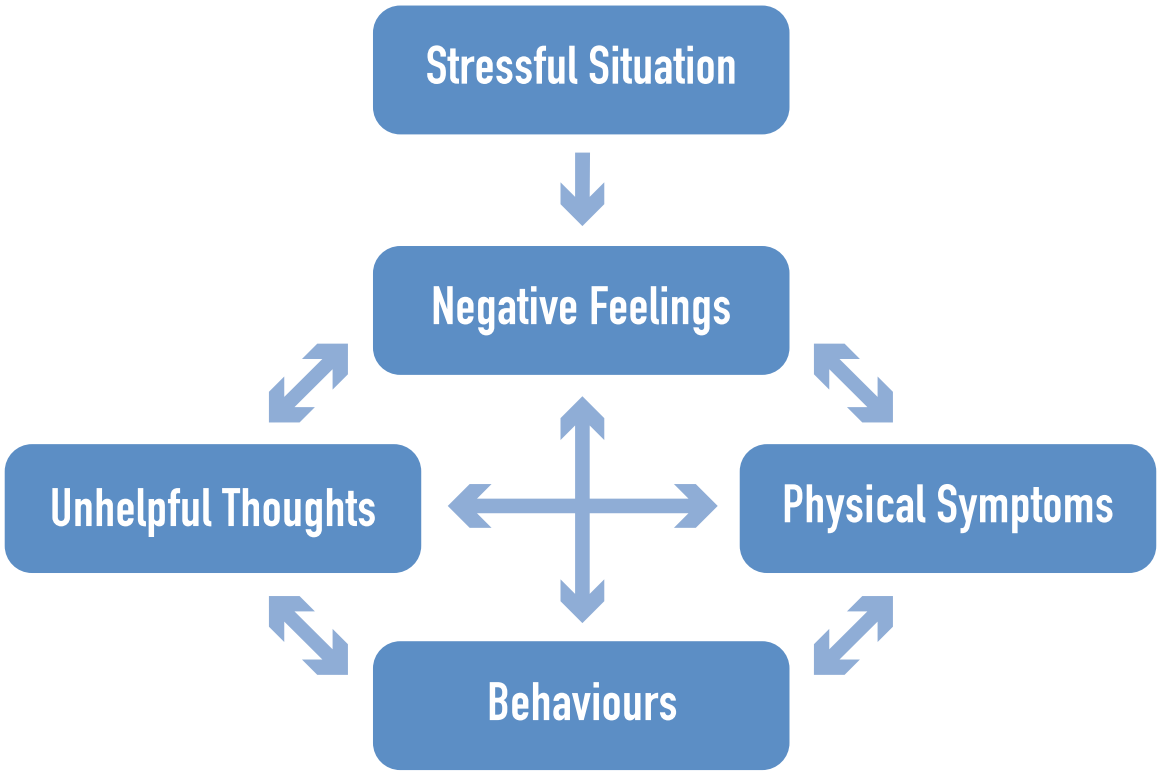
Approaching mental wellbeing in this way can help keep your child hopeful and open to the idea that things can change for the better. It can also encourage them to think about what they can and cannot change, and the times when things are better. This will help your child to find their own successful coping strategies to help them to get through a difficult time.

Changing Our Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours

Stress can make us feel anxious and low. This can impact upon how we think about ourselves and other people. Many people who are stressed avoid people, places or situations that they associate with stress.

When stressful events happen, we don't always think in a balanced way. We can focus on upsetting thoughts and feelings about ourselves, for example, *'they don't like me. I'm useless...'* These thoughts can go around and around in our head and become more and more negative.

Our thoughts, feelings and behaviours all interact and combine to keep our stress going. It becomes a vicious circle.



You can help your child develop their emotional awareness by encouraging them to pay more attention to their thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and by helping them to see the connections between these. If we challenge our thoughts, we can sometimes break a negative cycle. Being able to identify whether our thoughts are **unhelpful** or **helpful** is very useful.

For children and young people who are good at talking about how they are feeling, it can be useful to help them to recognise and challenge their own negative thoughts and identify helpful alternatives. This can help them change unhelpful feelings and behaviours. This is one of the main aims of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or 'CBT'. There are now many self-help guides and books which can be used to practice and develop this skill with activities (have a look at the 'Resources' section for some ideas).

A good starting point and one of the most natural ways to support your child is to talk more openly about how you overcome challenges.

Key adults who model effective coping strategies themselves are a good source of learning for young people. Talking openly about a problem, say at work, and explaining what your initial thoughts, feelings and behaviours were, can normalise things for young people. Talking about how you decided to change your approach to a problem by challenging your own thinking and how that worked can be really empowering.

It is also worth asking them what they think you could do in a situation if you have a problem. Working through a problem together that isn't about them can feel less threatening. If they feel like they are helping, they are more likely to feel better about themselves.

Help your child to set realistic goals – remember, you can't solve the world's problems, and you can't solve it all in one go.

Helping Your Child to Challenge Unhelpful Thoughts

Remember, although many of our thoughts occur outside our control, they are just thoughts, sometimes without any real basis, and are not necessarily facts. Even although we may believe a lot of our unhelpful thoughts when we are feeling stressed, it is good to remember that they should be questioned as they are often based on wrong assumptions. First you need to recognise an unhelpful thought, then you need to challenge it.

The following gives some examples of types of thinking errors and unhelpful thoughts:

Thinking errors	Unhelpful thoughts
Predicting the Future **Catastrophising** **What If**	What if I fail all my exams? I know the party will be a disaster
Jumping to Conclusions **Taking Things Personally** **Mind Reading**	He's not rung back – he doesn't like me
Focusing on the negative **Ignoring the Positive** **Filtering**	Everyone is saying I'll never make it No one likes me
Black and white thinking **All or nothing** **Perfectionism** **'Should' thinking**	That was a complete waste of time They all hate me I should always get full marks
Over-generalising	I failed it so I'm useless

The following questions will help your child to challenge their negative thoughts and to try and make their thoughts more balanced

- Is this thought helpful to me?
- What is the evidence for and against this thought?
- What kind of 'thinking error' could it be?
- What would you say to a friend in the same situation if they were thinking this?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of thinking in this way?
- Is there another way of looking at the situation?
- How important is this thought? How will you feel about this in 6 weeks?
- What thought could I replace this with that would be more helpful?

Here are some examples of how your child could change their thoughts from unhelpful to helpful during a stressful time like exams:

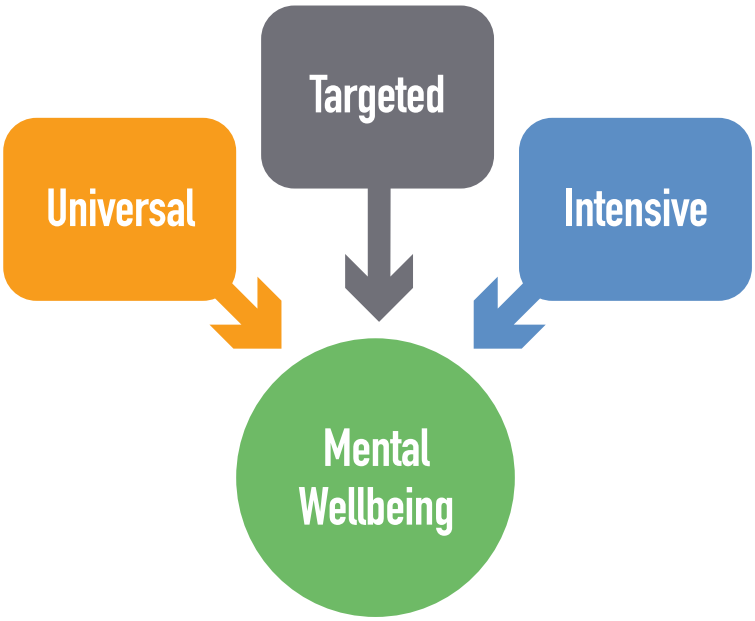
Unhelpful	Helpful
I've left it too late.	I am going to make best use of the time I have left.
I'm never going to be able to get this done.	I'm going to do as much as I possibly can.
I'm freaking out right here.	I feel anxious, but I know what to do to help with that.
I can't do this.	I can try my best.
It's too hard.	Nothing worth having comes easy, it's hard but I have a plan to break it down and get through it.
What is the point?	I am going to come out the other end of this with no regrets.

The 'helpful' thoughts are more realistic and will make challenges easier to handle. Being able to change their unhelpful thoughts can therefore be a good coping strategy and stop young people feeling as anxious.

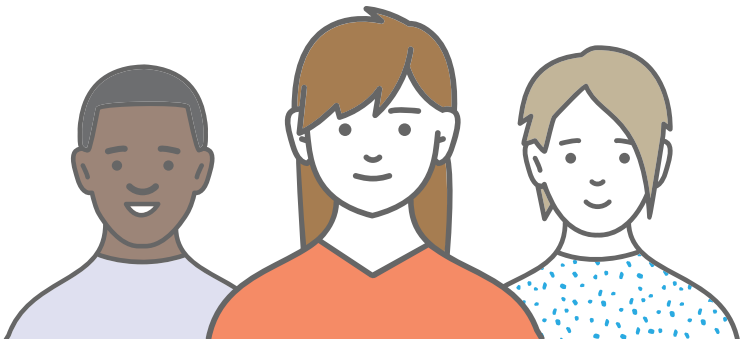
How and When Services Can Help

What support can they provide?

The support that services provide to children and young people can be thought of as **Universal (available to all)**, **Targeted (accessed by some)** and **Intensive (accessed by few)**. In addition to the support provided by parents and family members, **Universal support** is also provided by a universal service such as Education or Health. These are services which are available to all who engage with them. These services can also provide some **Targeted support** or facilitate access to a targeted service. In a minority of cases, children and young people will require **Intensive support** from specialist children's services.



Mental Wellbeing



There may come a time when your child would benefit from **targeted** or **intensive** support from a service because they are experiencing more chronic or enduring difficulties. This may be because of your child's development, their health, or because of they have experienced serious adversity or a trauma.

How and when services might be able to offer **universal** , **targeted** or **intensive** support is described below:

Education

Early Learning and Childcare Centres and Schools

Universal

When children go to nursery and school, one of the key areas of the curriculum is wellbeing. This means that they are taught the knowledge, skills and capabilities that they need to develop coping strategies and mental wellbeing.

Targeted

For children who require further help to support their wellbeing, schools and nurseries use a variety of strategies and interventions based on an assessment of individual need. This may include accessing a social skills group, or an exam stress group or arranging regular check-ins between a child and young person and key member of staff.

Some children benefit from a wellbeing assessment and plan which considers the abilities and needs of individual children and young people, and takes account of the person's experiences within school, at home and in the community. The overarching aim of the wellbeing assessment is to identify strengths and protective factors, as well as the vulnerabilities and risks present in the life of the child or young person. Wellbeing assessments and plans are carried out to identify targets and support strategies that best promote the child's wellbeing within their own individual circumstances. Targets and supports are monitored and reviewed within the GIRFEC framework, with the aim of ensuring that the child or young person is safe, healthy active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.

Education

Educational Psychology

Universal

Educational Psychologists promote a **relationship - based approach** to support adults to meet the needs of children and young people. They consider developmental, learning, environmental and psychological factors which contribute to a child's mental wellbeing and support schools to ensure children and young people have the experiences and supports they need to overcome barriers to their learning. They also explore 'exceptions' and protective factors which contribute to a child's capacity to use their coping skills within schools.

They use their knowledge of psychology to help schools and families **understand** how they can support children and young people to deal with the ups and downs of life.

Targeted

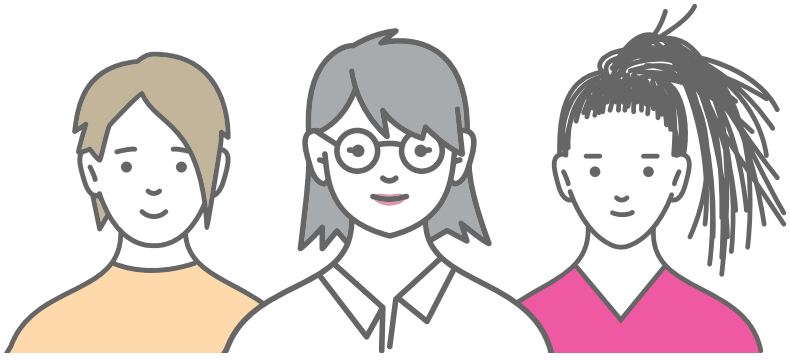
Educational Psychologists look at ways in which the **school and home environment** may be adapted to better support a child and to remove barriers to their learning.

Educational Psychologists support schools to **deliver programmes and strategies** which help children and young people to understand and address **anxiety** or to cope with **loss**.

They support education staff and parents in understanding what a child's behaviours are communicating. E.g. a child may avoid certain situations because it is stressful.

They can help a child learn to self-regulate by using **relaxation strategies** or mindfulness or cognitive behaviour therapy approaches.

Educational Psychologists can also work with children and young people to enable them to understand how their **mind works** and to help them to **develop strategies** which enable them to cope with difficult situations.



Health and Social Care Partnership

Health

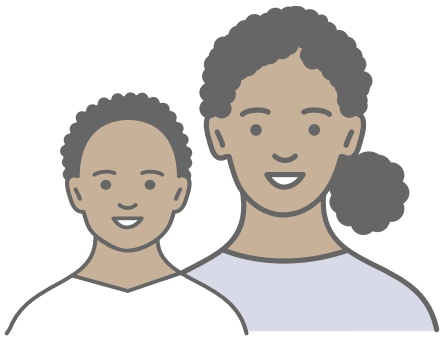
Universal

Midwives, Health Visitors and other partners work with parents and carers to support the healthy development of children and positive interaction between the child and the primary carers.

Targeted

Many children and families experience mild or temporary difficulties at some time during childhood that can be addressed early by Health Visitors, nurses or other health professionals. This may involve advice and guidance, including signposting families to information or supportive activities.

Health Visitors can also provide early support through making changes or enhancements to how they support the child and family. This might include one-to-one activities, or group work, for example with Health Visitors signposting families to one of the East Renfrewshire **'Psychology of Parenting' Parenting programmes**.



Health and Social Care Partnership

Youth Counselling – Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH)

The East Renfrewshire Youth Counselling Service is delivered by RAMH (Recovery Against Mental Health). This is a commissioned service by the HSCP. This targeted provision is available for all school pupils in East Renfrewshire within all 7 secondary schools and is accessed via the Joint Support Teams (JST). Young people are seen by a youth counsellor for approximately 8 sessions and issues such as family relationships, anxiety, depression, friendships, isolation, exam and school worries are all themes that can be explored.

Intensive

Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

Functional Family Therapy is an intensive commissioned service from the HSCP delivered by Action for Children. The FFT team work with young people and their parent(s) / main carers and other people who are important in their lives. Most of the work is done with all the key people 'in the room' at the same time.

Intensive

School Nursing Intensive

The East Renfrewshire School Nursing service is aligned with the HSCP's Intensive Services. This recognises that looked after and care experienced young people may be some of the most vulnerable known to services, often due to the trauma they have experienced.The school nurse provision works in a strength based and relational manner and helps young people with issues such as weight management, oral, physical, and sexual health needs. The service is trauma informed and can support young people in their emotional health and well-being.

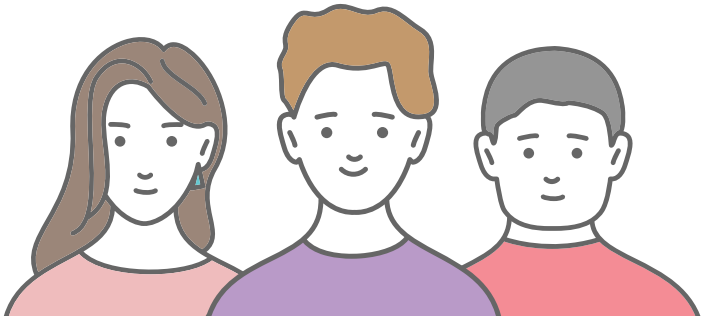
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Intensive

The East Renfrewshire and South West Glasgow (CAMHS) team offers assessment and intervention to children and young people 0-18 years who are experiencing moderate to severe mental health difficulties. These difficulties can result in persistent symptoms of psychological distress. The difficulties may cause significant impairment in day-to-day functioning and/or there may be a risk that the child/young person may cause serious harm to themselves or others.

The CAMHS team is made up of a range of health workers such as: psychiatry, clinical psychology, mental health nursing, family therapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy. Each professional has different skills and it is not unusual for some children/young people to see more than one team member across their time in CAMHS. The team will consider environmental, social, family, psychological and biological factors.

At the initial assessment appointment the child/young person and family will be asked about their difficulties, as well as strengths and protective factors. The aim is to come to a joint understanding of the current situation, and a plan going forward. This plan may include help from other services. Some children/young people may require further assessment or intervention within the CAMHS team. Dependent on need, interventions can include: therapeutic group work, ongoing work with other agencies involved, family therapy or individual therapeutic approaches such as cognitive behavioural therapy. For some of these children/young people it may also be helpful for them to be started on medication. The CAMHS team will also ask the child/young person's and family's permission to contact other agencies who have been involved to date, to obtain further information on what has been helpful.



Voluntary and Third Sector

Children 1st – The Family Wellbeing Service

Targeted

The Family Wellbeing Service provides help and support to families where there is a child aged 8-18 experiencing emotional distress. The distress that the child is experiencing may be due to relational disconnection and trauma.

The Family Wellbeing Service is able to offer families space and time to talk through their experiences and their feelings. The team gets alongside the whole family to help them make sense of what's happened; to identify and connect with their own strengths and abilities; to strengthen their relationships and reduce emotional distress. Staff build relationships with families to best understand what they would like to be different and to agree on how this could be achieved.

- Support and help is offered to families where and when suits them best.
- Staff can meet with family members individually or as a family group.
- Peer group supports and befriending support is also offered to families.
- Support is flexibly tailored to enable families to get the help they need. Support is not time limited and will be offered for as long is needed.

The Family Wellbeing Service can be accessed through a direct referral from the family's GP. Staff will contact the family within 2 weeks of being referred by their GP.

Health and Social Care Partnership

Family First

Targeted

Family First is a local authority resource which was established in 2015 to provide a little bit of help to families with children aged 0-11. There are 5 workers who work across the authority to ensure the service is available to all families.

The Family First Team was established to prevent families from becoming involved in statutory services by providing hands on support, advice and interventions. Their key tasks include:

- Providing practical aid, assistance and guidance to children or families, individually or in groups, in both planned and unplanned situations;
- Providing information to families on relevant services and community groups and facilitating their independent access to such;
- Working with families to share key knowledge and skills on attachment, parenting, wellbeing, nurture and problem solving;
- Building the capacity of families to independently find solutions to their concerns and issues (e.g. financial worries, sleep counselling, and behaviour management, housing situations).
- Empowering families to independently manage situations which may arise in the future, without the need for service input;

With 'a little bit of help' the wellbeing of families in our communities have increased. This allows families to function positively allowing children to attain and families to access and contribute to their communities.

The service is growing each year and this is evident in the rise in self-referrals and demonstrates the accessibility of the service to families within their community. Support with parenting continues to be the main issue for families seeking a little bit of help.

Useful Resources

The Healthier Minds website provides information and advice to parents and professionals about ways to support children and young people's well being. There is also information about supporting your child and keeping them safe online
https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/healthierminds

Other Websites:

Healthy Minds

is an awareness raising resource to promote basic awareness and understanding of mental health and topics that are associated with and can impact on mental health and wellbeing.
nhsggc.org.uk/healthyminds

What Topics are covered?

Aye Mind **www.ayemind.com** Digital resource including training, apps and resources on mental health; Basic MH (Adult), Basic MH (CYP), Body Image, Emotional Literacy, Loneliness & Isolation, Long Term Conditions, Loss and Grief, Maternal Mental Health, Adult MH framework, CYPMH framework, One Good Adult, Resilience, Sleep. The resource is aimed at anyone who has an interest in raising awareness of Mental Health and Well-being.

Winston's Wish

a charity supporting children and young people who have been affected by bereavement and loss.

East Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Services

A number of leaflets are available to provide guidance and advice to parents, children and young people to support their wellbeing, develop their resilience and coping strategies. These include:

Useful Resources to support wellbeing of children and young people

Apps for Relaxation:

Stop, Breathe and Think

Mindshift

Relax Lite

Calm

Hospichill

Good relaxation exercises for younger children using animal visuals spoken in a Scottish accent.

Rays of Calm 1 and 2

Short, Guided visualisations for children and young people spoken in a Scottish accent.

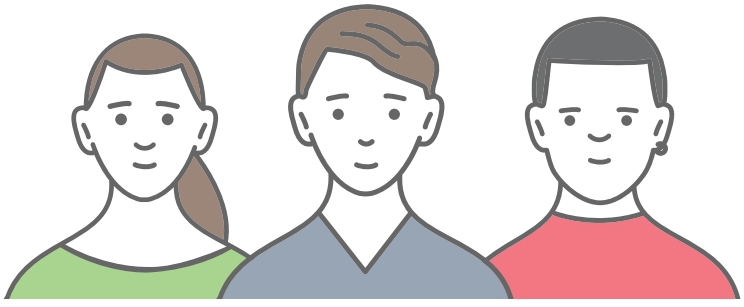
Clips

Links to help children and young people cope with anxiety:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWeB_xzlUpc

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mb0g-z9g8eQ

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvM_TtQi9DU



Useful Resources

Muscle relaxation

The process should include the following:

1. Tense the muscles
2. Notice the feeling in all the muscles that are tight
3. Relax
4. Enjoy the pleasant feelings

Muscle Relaxation technique websites

http://www.yourfamilyclinic.com/

http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/

http://www.tenzone.u-net.com/

http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/

http://www.cwgsy.net/

Visualisation/Guided Relaxation with visuals

Try out Christiane Kerr apps – (each one lasts approximately 4 minutes)
Relaxkids.com

Breathing

- Strawberry/blow a candle (Smell the strawberry..blow out the candle..)
- Smell the flowers (Smell the flowers..one by one..)
- Blow up the balloon .. then let it go
- Dragon Breathing
  A dragon's head can be made out of a paper cup and some streamers The idea is to blow a deep breath out through a small hole in the bottom of the cup making the fire fly upwards (this can be made out of crepe paper, or even cutup napkins or tissue paper).
- Tummy breathing (see opposite)

Tummy Breathing

To work out if you are doing tummy breathing, put one hand on your chest and one hand on your tummy.

Now breathe.

Which hand is moving faster? If the hand on your chest is moving faster, you are breathing too quickly.

If the hand on your tummy is moving more quickly, you are taking nice, deep breaths that will help you to stay calm.

Tummy Breathing Exercise

1. Place one hand just above your tummy and the other on your chest.
2. Open your mouth and gently sigh, as if someone had just told you something really annoying. As you breathe out let your shoulders and the muscles of your upper body relax, down.
3. Close your mouth and pause for a few seconds.
4. Keep your mouth closed and breathe in slowly through your nose by pushing out your tummy.
5. Now stop for 3 seconds.
6. Open your mouth. Breathe out through your mouth by pulling your tummy in.
7. Pause.

Now do steps 4-7 for as many times as it takes for you to feel calm again.