

Mental Health & Young People in Education, including the impact of recent cultural change

📍 Hook Junior School 30th October 2023



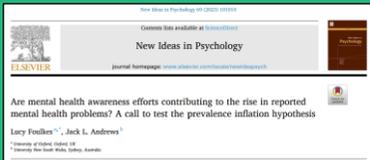
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Are mental health problems on the rise for children and young people?

Yes? – what's your rationale / evidence?
No? – what's your rationale / evidence?




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Clarifying the Language



Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

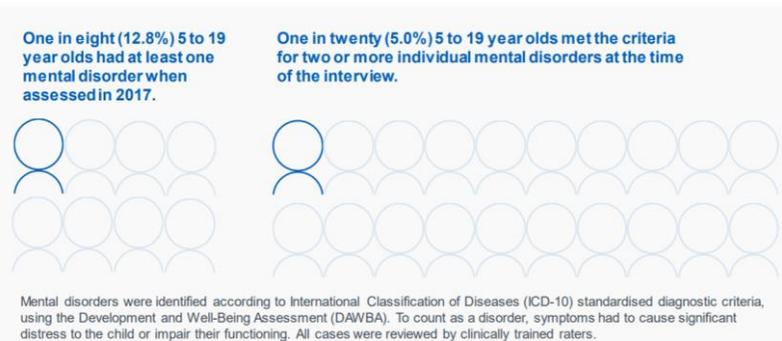
Mental illness is a condition which causes serious disorder in a person's behaviour or thinking.



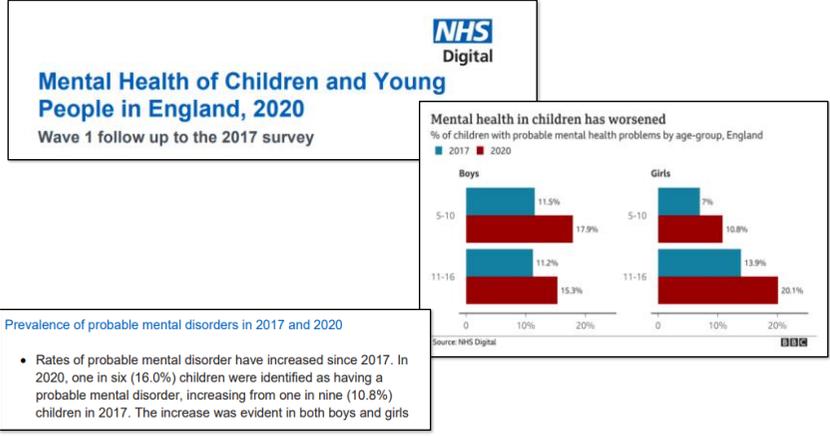
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Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017: Summary of key findings – (NHS Digital - November 2018)

One in eight 5 to 19 year olds had a mental disorder in 2017



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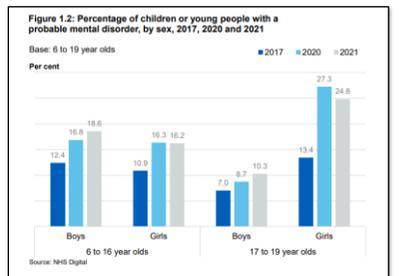


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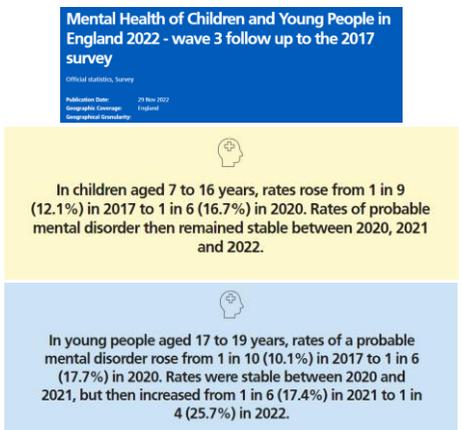


Key findings:

- Probable mental disorder:** Rates of probable mental disorder increased between 2017 and 2021; in 6 to 16 year olds from one in nine (11.6%) to one in six (17.4%)
- Eating problems:** The proportion of children and young people with possible eating problems increased between 2017 and 2021, from 6.7% to 13.0% in 11 to 16 year olds

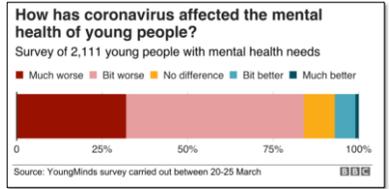
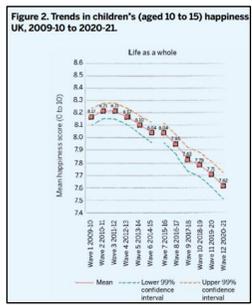


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Since 2017, the likelihood of young people having a mental health problem has increased by 50%



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Childhood and adolescence can be a time of change, transition and challenge:

What are the key challenges?

- Starting school
- Transferring from primary to secondary school
- Changes in friendship groups
- Going through puberty
- Exam pressures
- Family changes, e.g., new siblings, divorce, bereavement, moving house
- Sexual maturation and development, including sexual orientation
- Transition to university or work



How far have we come since 1991? The world has changed in some ways but not in others...

Life for young people (and therefore parents) Outside School:

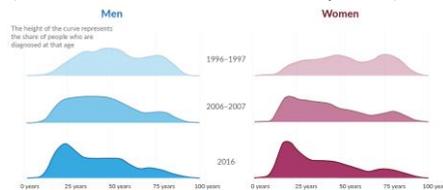
1991: playing outside, reading books, playing sport, listening to music, very little media consumption. No socialising online – spending time with friends. Considerable access to part-time jobs.

2023: limited outdoor play and limited time outdoors in general (dramatic rise in obesity levels), decline in reading books (30% of UK children own no books), organized sport playing, listening to music (now primarily video streaming), high and increasing media consumption. Majority of socialising now online. Limited access to part time jobs.



UK Anti-depressant prescriptions:

- 1991 – 9 million
 - 2018 – 65 million
 - 2019 – 71 million
 - 2022 - 83.4 million
- (8.3 million adults & 192K 10-19yr-olds)



The Doctor who gave up drugs (BBC series 2 episode 1 52 mins 30 (2 mins) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1w3QJjpwJhA>

- We are currently prescribing 3.5x the medication to children than we did in 1991
- Behavioural problems are the biggest area of increase:
 - 2000–2015 = 800% increase in ADHD prescriptions
 - 2022 estimate is that between 2%-5% of school aged children have ADHD.

In depression and anxiety...

THE KEY MAINTAINING FACTOR



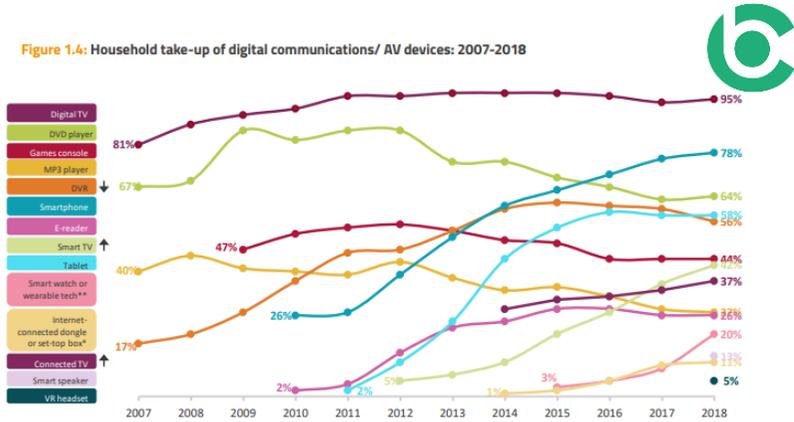
PERSISTENT OVERUSE OF THINKING MODE



RUMINATION AND ATTEMPTS TO STOP



Figure 1.4: Household take-up of digital communications/ AV devices: 2007-2018

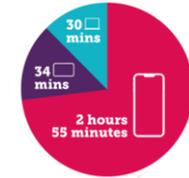


Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker. Data from Quarter 1 of each year 2007-2014, then Half 1 2015-2018.

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2022 Personal (non-work related) Daily Media Consumption:



Average Daily Media Consumption (per UK citizen):

- 1991 – 20 mins
- 2011 – 1hour 30 mins
- 2019 – 3 hours 3 mins
- 2022 – 3hours 59 mins

Percentage of young people with both parents in full time employment:

- 1996 (when records began) - 62%
- 2022 – 77%

- When we add in work, the average UK adult now spends **8hrs 41 mins** using media or communications devices = **more than sleeping** (8hrs 21 mins)



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The impact of cultural change:

- Individual consumption of media:
 - 'On Demand'
 - constant news,
 - separate experiences,
 - decline in delayed gratification & social reasoning
- Entitlement culture
- Life Events
- Social Media:
 - the 'Attention Economy' – Tristan Harris
 - lack of escape, perfect models & need for 'likes'
 - Communication stress & angry emails / voicing anger online
 - Simulacra, advertising & 'junk' values
 - 'Dove' research: 50% of children say the 'toxic beauty culture' on social media makes them and their peers feel anxious.



"The more you connect, the less you connect"



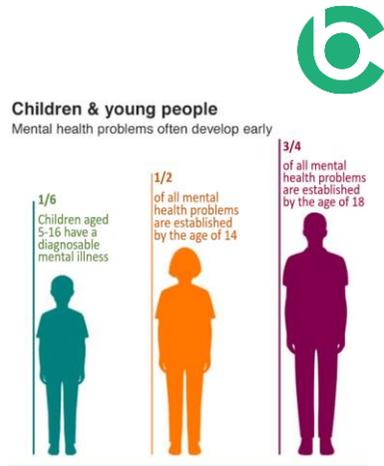
Images credits: Ogilvy (for the Center For Psychological Research)



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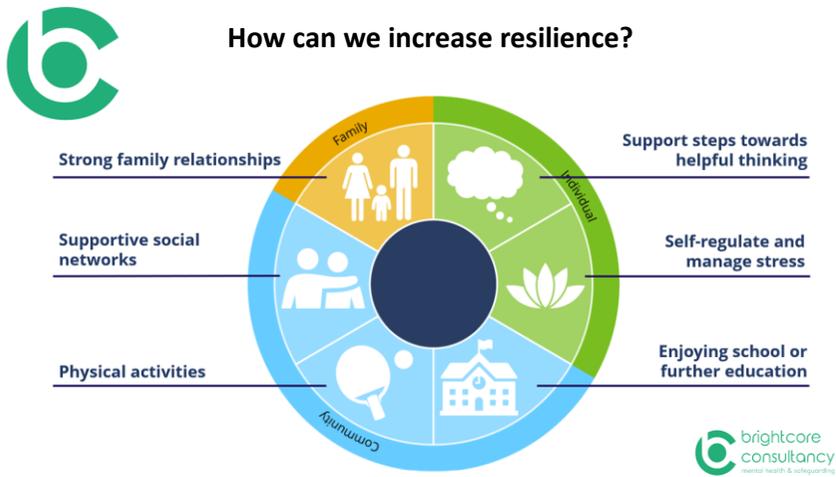
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We also know that **most mental health problems are preventable** and there is considerable scope for increasing interventions that reduce the incidence of people developing mental health problems and increase the potential for sustained recovery after illness.



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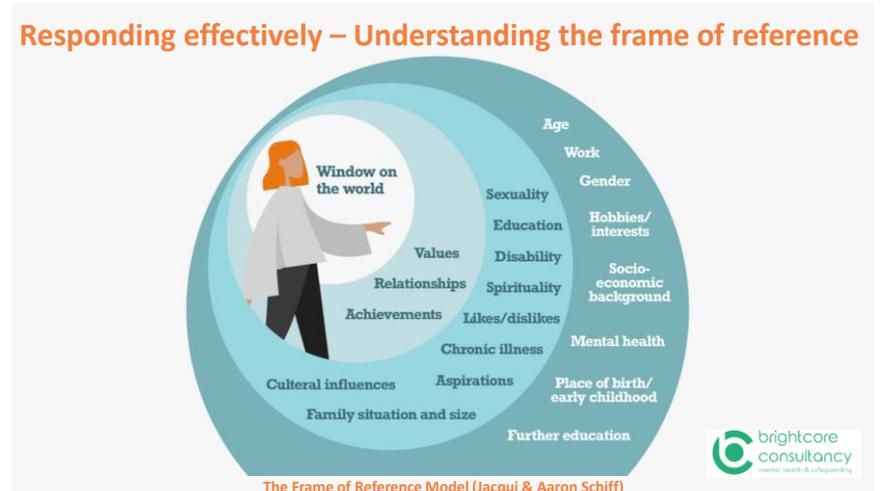


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Responding effectively - Non-Judgemental Listening

- Listen to the young person
- Give your undivided attention to the speaker
- Seek to understand before you seek to be understood
- Accept their worries are real for them
- Don't be critical
- Try not to get frustrated
- Don't try to solve their problems
- Give emotional and practical support without taking over
- The most common problem in communication is not listening



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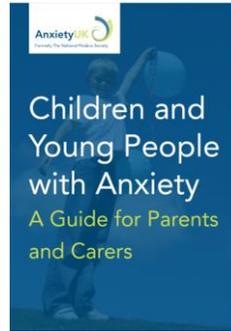
What can we do as parents?

- Know how to report concerns
- Engage our children about how they are feeling – validate what they say.
- Educate ourselves - Read websites, advice & guidance
- Discuss with our children how they are using new technologies and what they are viewing.
- No electronic devices in bedrooms, especially overnight.
- Turn all devices off least 1 hour before going to sleep.

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Useful guidance & support strategies for parents:

1. Useful calming, breathing & distraction techniques
2. Using Music to flip the mood
3. Using positive affirmations
4. Safe Space Visualisations
5. Using Mindful Moments
6. Diet: Low/High Sugar. Caffeine
7. Sleep – length & quality
8. Exercise – 30 mins / day
9. Technology – useful Apps & Online Support
10. Promoting Relaxation
11. Pleasure & Mastery Technique
12. Guidance & Support documents



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**'3 Good Things'
Practice**



Martin Seligman

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LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

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Stress Management:

- Relaxation
- Eating Well
- Movement
- Sleeping Well
- Finding Balance

Effective Relaxation:

- Me Time (minimum 15 mins per day)
- Screen-free time
- Gratitude
- Stillness
- Social Eating



Movement

- 10K steps
- Strength training
- HIT training
- 20 minute movement breaks

Five ways to enhance wellbeing

Eating Well

- De-normalising sugar
- 5-a-day
- Timing meals correctly
- Drinking Water
- Unprocessing your diet (less than 5 ingredients)

Sleeping well:

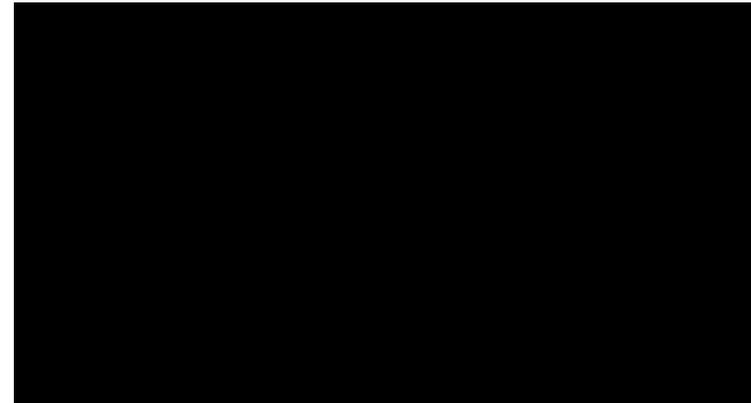
- Darkness
- Morning daylight – outside
- Routine = 90 mins free of screen time
- Caffeine before noon
- Dealing effectively with over-thinking

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Inside Out (Disney / Pixar)



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Thank you – Any Questions?

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