

A close-up photograph of three young people smiling joyfully outdoors. On the left is a young man with brown hair and a plaid shirt. In the center is a young woman with dark curly hair and a nose ring, wearing a dark sweater. On the right is a young man with dark skin and a red shirt. The background is a soft-focus green field.

Healthy heads

For those who work with
children and young people

Mental health and young people

Having good mental health is just as important for children and young people as having good physical health.



‘Mental health’ is often confused with ‘mental illness’. Having good mental health doesn’t necessarily mean feeling happy all of the time. People who have good mental health still face difficult challenges in life just like everyone else. However, they are able to get through the hard times without losing a positive sense of themselves and the world they live in.

Children and young people’s negative feelings usually pass. However, if you see that a child or young person is distressed for a long period or that these feelings are disrupting their life, it is important to seek expert help as soon as possible.



What to look for

Growing up can be a time of great turmoil for children and young people.

They may feel overwhelmed, have problems eating and sleeping, experience trouble concentrating and often feel they can't cope with the pressures life brings. Therefore, it's really important that they know they can talk to you. Make sure you are there for them when they need you.

Spotting the signs that a child or young person is struggling is not always easy. Things to look out for include situations where an individual is:

- being disruptive
- becoming easily angered
- not taking part in activities
- not being his or her usual self
- engaging in rituals and/or compulsive, repetitive behaviour
- displaying extreme mood swings without any provocation – one minute they are exultant or jubilant, then without warning they turn gloomy, weepy, angry or confrontational
- showing loss of appetite, weight loss or weight gain
- suffering from fatigue or loss of energy
- exhibiting persistent feelings of sadness or crying spells
- suffering a drop in grades over a period of time
- being unable to make decisions, follow through or concentrate
- becoming anxious
- getting into trouble
- showing signs of possible self-harm.

Places you can go for help

MindEd is an e-learning portal, from the Department of Health, to support young healthy minds.

- www.minded.org.uk

YoungMinds provides online resources for professionals who work with children.

- www.youngminds.org.uk
- Follow YoungMinds on Twitter: @YoungMindsUK

Online resources you can recommend to young people

A full list of helpful sites and resources, which you can direct young people to, can be found on the children and youth section of the Methodist Church website.

Please visit: www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/resources-worker/mental-health