

Looking after our mental health isn't just for tough times:

Mental health is about daily well-being, not just during tough times. It can affect how you feel mentally, and physically, impacting your day-to-day life, either positively or negatively.

Regardless of your age, looking out and caring for yourself, every day can help you feel your best and make it easier to handle life when things feel tougher.

8 Ways you can role model and promote good mental health and wellbeing

These are just ideas, and what works best for one family might look different for another.

- 1 Prioritise mental health** – show your child that mental health is just as important as physical health. E.g., Showing compassion for yourself when you make a mistake, such as being kind to yourself and seeking support when needed. and
- 2 Practise self-care.** These don't have to be complicated or time consuming. E.g., take time for yourself to do something you enjoy.
- 3 Demonstrate positive behaviours.** Consider how much time you spend on your phone, what you do during that time and how this makes you feel, practise regular bedtimes and eating a balanced diet.
- 4 Model mindfulness techniques** - 'what went well today', 'what was tricky' and 'what are you looking forward to tomorrow' or try some deep breaths. The Childline website has lots of mindfulness activities to try.
- 5 Talk about your thoughts and feelings** and encourage your child to share theirs if they feel comfortable to.
- 6 Help them be proactive about problem solving.** Ask them, do you want me to just listen, or help you find an answer?
- 7 Praise, encourage and motivate,** helping build their confidence and self-esteem.
- 8 Learn or try new things together.** Set aside time regularly for you to do something you both enjoy together.

"I've been self-harming and today my mum found out about it. I wasn't expecting her to be nice about it, but actually she just asked me why I did it and how I did it. She's also said she's going to get me help. I know everyone's situation is different, but even if you might think your parents might not be very supportive, you might be surprised."

Young Person writing on the Childline message boards

Where to get help

For children and young people:

If a child or young person is worried or upset about something, it's important that they ask for help. Encourage them to speak with an adult or to contact one of the free services below:

School counselling services: Face to face support. You can refer yourself via www.exchange-counselling.com/ or speak to a teacher in school to help.

Childline: Available 24/7. www.childline.org.uk or call 0800 1111.

Kooth: Free, safe and anonymous support for ages 10-26: www.kooth.com

Text Clacks – 24/7 text-based crisis support that is free and off-bill. Text 'Clacks' to 85258.

Directory of Mental Health Supports: <https://sites.google.com/view/directory-of-mental-health-sup/MHWBinClackmannanshire>

Local NHS services: such as GP surgery

For adults, concerned about children and young people's mental health:

NSPCC Helpline – for advice and support. Call 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk.

ParentLine. Call: 08000 28 22 33.

Directory of Mental Health Supports: <https://sites.google.com/view/directory-of-mental-health-sup/MHWBinClackmannanshire>

Local services: such as GP surgery.

Support for your own mental health: You can't pour from an empty cup, and being a parent isn't easy. Be a positive role model by looking after yourself too.

Qwell: free online counselling, community support and self-help tools through qwell.io.

Text '**CLACKS**' to 85258 for free and confidential support, 24/7.

Find us online!

 **Clacks Keys campaign**



Clacks Keys

is a youth-led campaign empowering children and young people in Clackmannanshire with the knowledge of how and where to get support with their mental health, and how to have conversations with their peers and adults in their lives.

The campaign also aims to increase the confidence and knowledge of adults in the community and professionals about how they can support children and young people to experience better mental health and wellbeing.

The campaign is a partnership between NSPCC Scotland and Clackmannanshire Planet Youth Coalition.

www.clackscouncil.co.uk/exampleclackskeys



The campaign is a partnership between NSPCC Scotland and Clackmannanshire Family Wellbeing Partnership (FWP), created alongside young people aged 12-14.

'Kids Will Be Kids': The science behind it

Here are some facts that help us better understand young people and their behaviours.

Around **7 in 10** young people experience mental health problems

- Did you know that the teenage brain is still growing and changing - it's only about 80% developed in adolescents! The last part to develop is called the frontal lobe, which handles skills like reasoning, planning, judgment, memory, and impulse control. **This means teens are more likely to struggle with peer pressure and take risks, without yet having the skills to think about the potential consequences.** This can also make them more likely to struggle with their mental health.
- Boys and girls develop differently. Girls peak in information processing around ages 12-14 and boys about two years later. This explains why teen girls often seem much more mature and ready to be challenged at school, than boys the same age.
- **Teen brains are more sensitive** to alcohol and sensory overload, which can affect their ability to process and remember things. For example, when teens say, **"I forgot," they often genuinely did because their brains are still developing!**
- **Teens need 8-10 hours of sleep** to feel and function at their best. This isn't always easy though, as their sleep hormone, melatonin, releases later in the day than adults. This makes them more energetic in the evening and makes it harder for them to wake up early or focus in the morning.
- According to Harvard University, young people's **brains are better at learning from experiences and adapting.** This is because their brain has lots of plasticity, allowing them to learn, adapt, and change based on their environment. This helps teenagers handle stresses like exams, friendships, or relationships, building resilience and developing lifelong skills for the future (Harvard Magazine, 2008. Updated 2025).

Key Messages

This leaflet was created by young people aged 12-15. They believe that parents and carers can help improve mental health for children and young people by:

- **Being open and non-judgmental:** Keeping an open mind and avoiding jumping to conclusions can lead to better conversations.
- **Listening to young people's point of view:** Trying to understand their experiences and acknowledging their views helps young people feel heard, valued, and understood.
- **Staying calm:** Sharing emotions is normal and can be helpful, but remaining calm and listening is most important in the moment.
- **Trusting young people to make their own choices:** Feeling in control of their lives is essential. Advice, guidance, and boundaries are helpful, but they also need to feel like independent individuals. If unsure, ask them what they need!

By following these tips and acknowledging their voice, it helps young people feel better understood, valued, and respected. This helps to build better relationships, improves communication, and makes young people more comfortable and confident in seeking help and support.



Using the examples to the right, see if you can try to come up with some scenarios and solutions together.

*These conversations can be hard. Make sure to set aside some time afterwards for a low stress activity. E.G., you could watch a film, have a cuppa, or go for a walk together. Sometimes, we might need time alone afterwards, if so, try to plan time in later to do something nice together.

Having at least one stable and supportive relationship with a parent, caregiver, or other adult is important for healthy development. This positive relationship can help children and young people get through challenging times, helping support strong brain development, including in those who have experienced significant challenges and adversities (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015).

Let chat about mental health together

Having conversations can sometimes be hard, particularly when it's about things that are important to us. Young people have created this tool, helping to support parents, carers and their children to make these conversations* a little bit easier.

We encourage you to go through this activity with your child or young person when everyone's in a good mood and has time to talk. If the time comes to have the 'scenario' conversations, this should help make it a little bit easier.

Scenario

Think about a child or young person in your life...

You could try to help them by...

Think about a child or young person in your life...

What if they don't want to talk, have big emotions, or react negatively when you try to help?

Remember, we all deal with things differently.

You notice they're not their usual self (e.g., they seem off, sad, angry, not focused):

- Asking calmly what's wrong
- Asking if they'd like to spend time together
- Offering a cup of tea
- Asking if they'd like someone to just listen or if they need help solving it

- Trying to stay calm
- Seeking advice sensitively from another adult (e.g., family, school, NSPCC helpline)
- Leaving a leaflet for Childline or local support services out for them
- Making sure they know you're there for them, when they're ready
- Helping in other ways (e.g., offering to help tidy their room, offering a lift instead of taking the bus, or reducing their chores so they can prioritise self-care).

They've got into trouble with a teacher, neighbour, police, etc.

- Asking calmly what happened
- Trying to keep an open mind and listen to their point of view

- Trying to stay calm
- Seeking advice from another trusted adult
- Making sure they know you're there for them when they're ready