



‘Growing Together’ – Role modelling a positive approach to wellbeing to support children in our care

Andy Caress
Mental Health Trainer, Charlie Waller Trust



About us

Charlie Waller was a strong, funny, popular, good-looking and kind young man, with a close and loving family. To the outside world, he had everything to live for. Yet in 1997, at the age of 28, Charlie took his own life. He was suffering from depression.

In response to this tragedy, his family founded The Charlie Waller Trust, to open up the conversation around mental health, and to ensure that young people are able to understand and look after their mental health and to spot the signs in others.

Charlie sits at the heart of our story, our vision and our purpose.



We're talking mental health

Our vision

A world where people understand and talk openly about mental health, where people and those who support them are equipped to maintain and enhance their mental health and wellbeing, and have the confidence to seek help when they need it.



Evidence based training



Positive

We take a positive approach to mental health. We focus on prevention and early intervention, and recognise the importance of offering hope.



Proven

Our consultancy, training and resources are all based on sound clinical evidence.



Practical

We give people practical strategies and tools to care for their mental health, and to support others in doing so.



Safety first

- ✓ Confidentiality: 'what's said in the room stays in the room'
- ✓ Respect individual perspectives
- ✓ Listen to each other
- ✓ Sensitive issues, including suicide, may be discussed
- ✓ Monitor your own wellbeing and opt in or out of discussions accordingly
- ✓ Know where to access support



Let me introduce myself...





My 'children'!





Before we start...

We will be discussing:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- The role of trusted adults and the importance of role modelling
- 'Growing together' as families





What is mental health?

“Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community”

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/what-is-mental-health-and-mental-wellbeing



**World Health
Organization**



What is subjective wellbeing?

“Subjective well-being can be thought of as a positive state of mind in which a person feels good about life as a whole and its constituent parts, such as their relationships with others, the environments that they inhabit and how they see themselves. ”

The Children's Society (2018)
The Good Childhood Report

**The
Children's
Society**

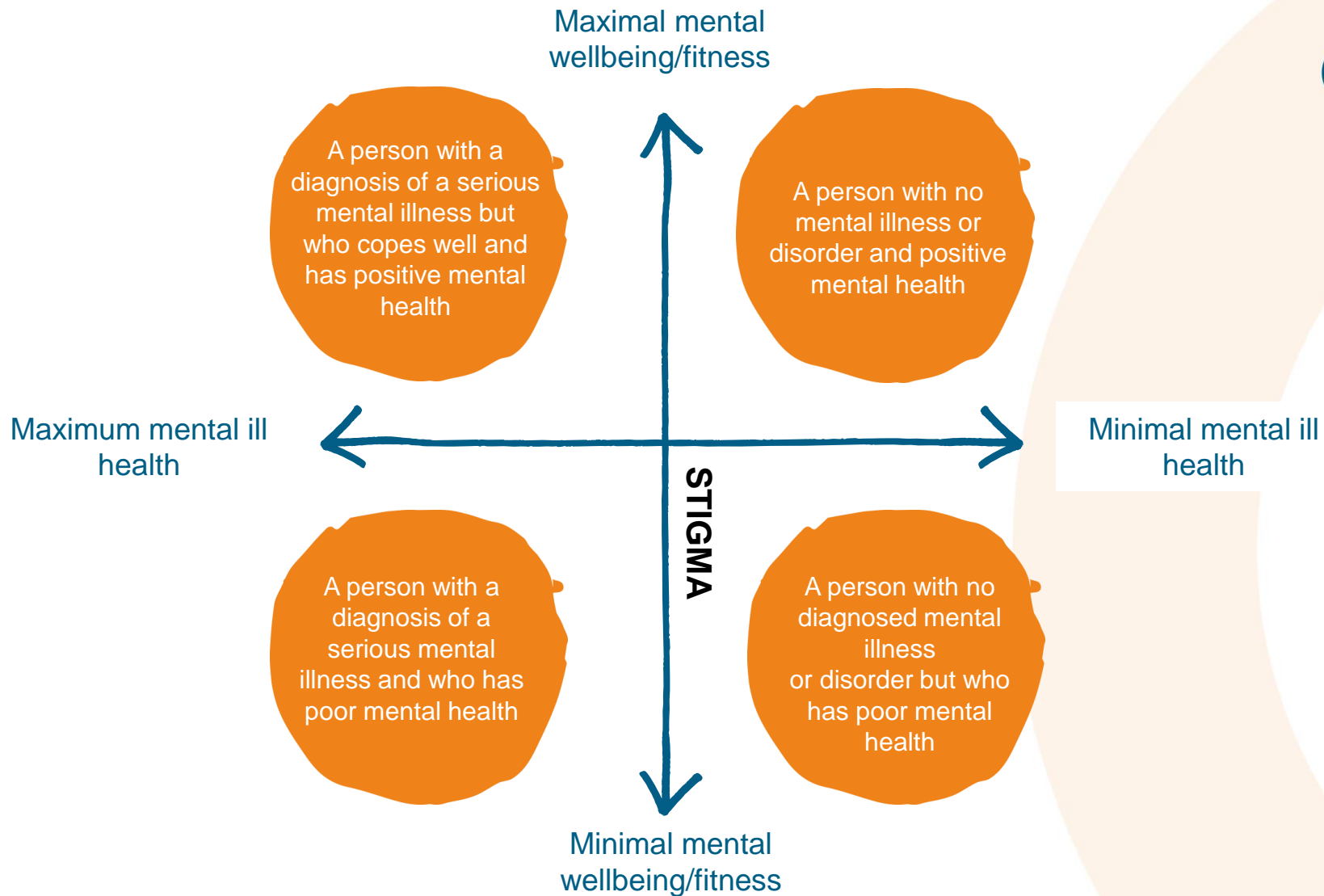


Pre-COVID societal wellbeing

- In the year ending March 2020, average ratings of life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety all deteriorated
- In the UK, average ratings of anxiety increased by 6.3% in the year ending March 2020 when compared with the year before, from 2.87 to 3.05 (out of 10); this was the largest annual increase in anxiety since we began measuring personal well-being
- Average ratings of happiness in the UK fell by 1.1% in the year ending March 2020, compared with the year before

Office for National Statistics (2020)
Personal well-being in the UK: April 2019 to March 2020

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/measuringnationalwellbeing/april2019tomarch2020



“Mental health and well-being are not the same thing. You can have good mental health and low well-being and vice versa.”

The Children's Society (2021) *Good Childhood Report*



Importance of children having a support network

Having social support (family and friends who helped them feel safe, secure and happy) was the strongest predictor of life satisfaction at age 14

Young people with lower life satisfaction scores at age 14 were significantly more likely to have negative scores on mental health indicators at age 17

The Children's Society (2021) *Good Childhood Report*



‘Growing Together’ – The importance of trusted adults



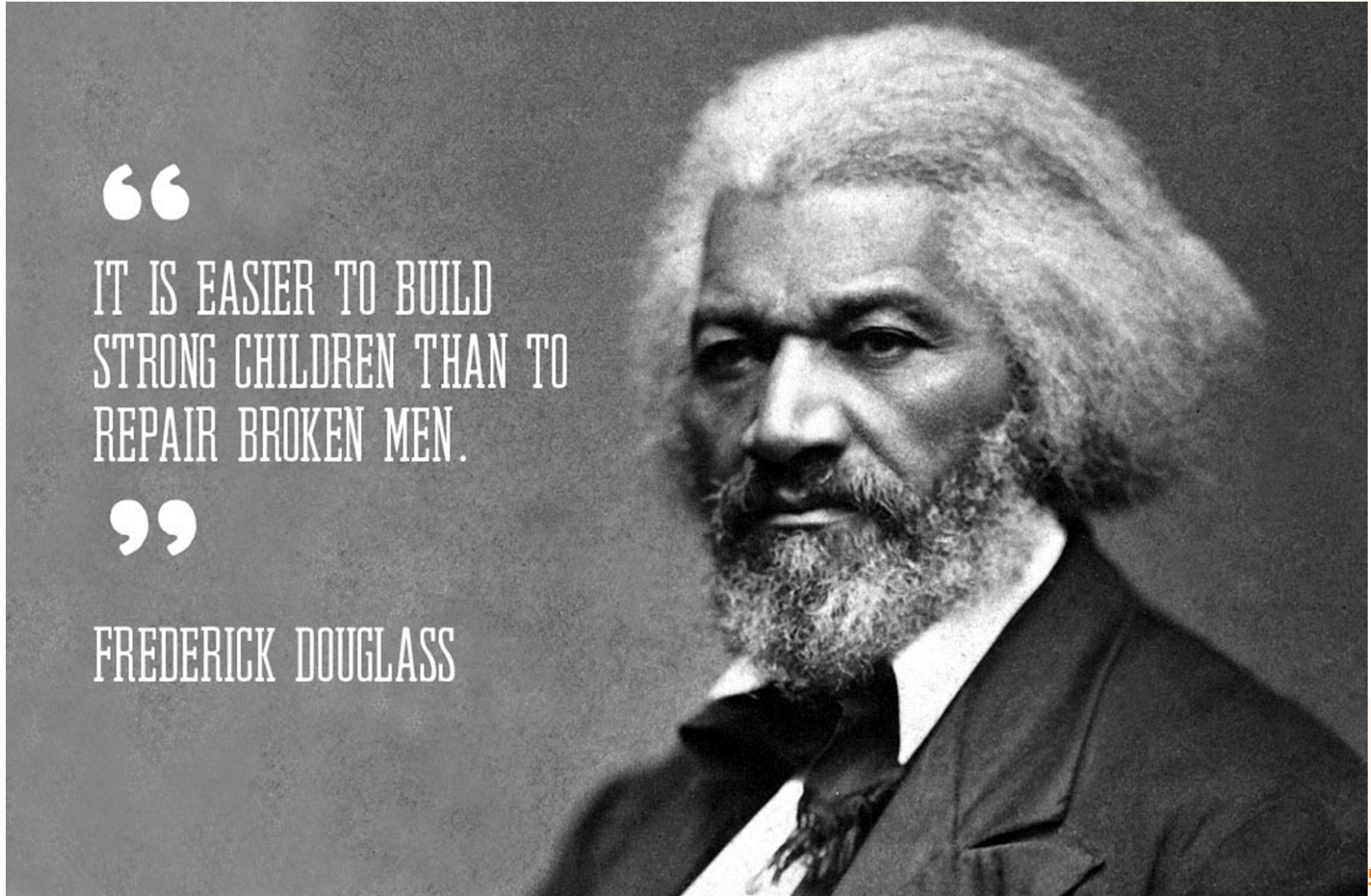


“

IT IS EASIER TO BUILD
STRONG CHILDREN THAN TO
REPAIR BROKEN MEN.

”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS





The Orchid and the Dandelion

- 'While a conventional but arguably deficient wisdom has held that children are either 'vulnerable' or 'resilient'... children simply differ, like orchids and dandelions, in their susceptibilities and sensitivities to the conditions of life that surround and sustain them.
- Most of our children can, like dandelions, thrive in all but the harshest, most bestial circumstances, but a minority of others, like orchids, either blossom beautifully or wane disappointingly, depending on how we tend and spare and care for them'



Boyce, W.T (2019) *The Orchid and the Dandelion*, p.xvi



How to respond if a child in your care is struggling

“Keep reminding yourself that you didn't cause this; there are so many inputs into young people lives now that we're not actually in control of. So, I think it's really important that parents see themselves not as the kind of controller of their child's mental health and wellbeing, but actually a facilitator for positive wellbeing”

Suzanne Alderson, author of *Never Let Go: How to Parent Your Child Through Mental Illness*

<https://www.mentalhealthtoday.co.uk/blog/parental-mental-health/how-to-support-yourself-and-your-child-through-mental-illness>

Suzanne Alderson

Founder of
Parenting Mental Health

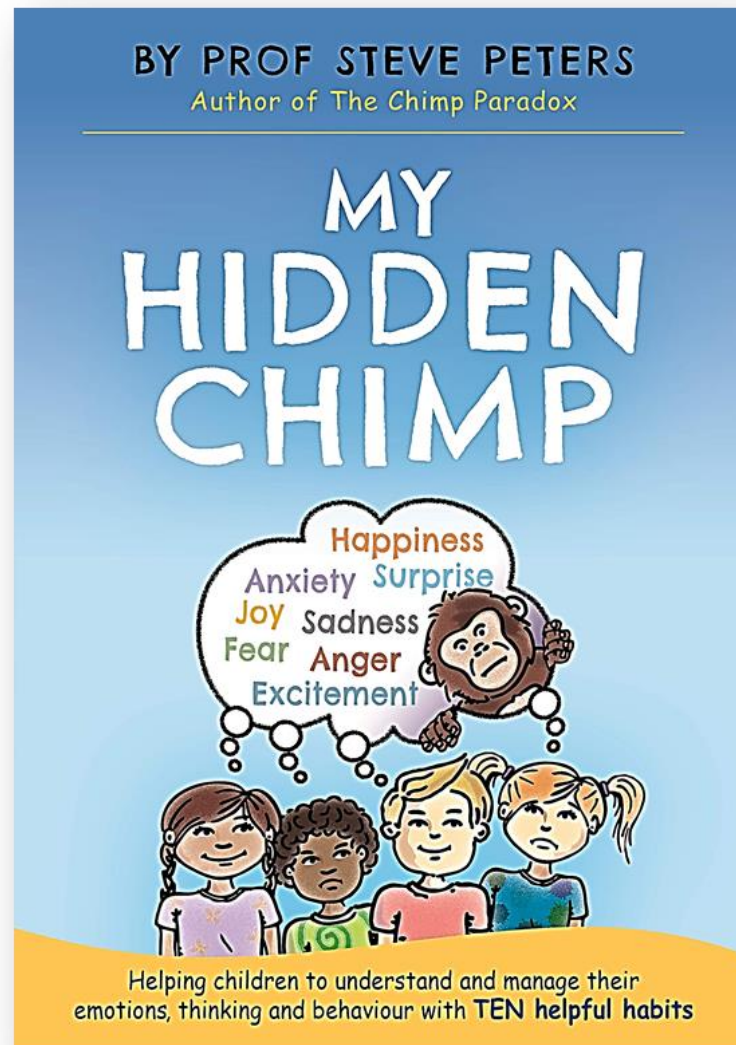
Never Let Go

How to Parent
Your Child
Through
Mental Illness





Helping your child understand their emotions





The role of the ‘trusted adult’

“Trusted adults are those ‘who young people are willing to be vulnerable with or to risk relying on, and whom they believe will protect their wellbeing’”

Meltzer et al (2016)

*Being Trusted: The perspectives of trusted adults about engaging with young people,
Children and Youth Services Review, 63 p.58*

“The most important resiliency factor is ‘a young person’s connectedness to others: in particular, connectedness with people who model and reinforce pro-social behaviour, and who go out of their way to communicate care and respect’ (Burt, Resnick & Novick)”

Rodd and Stewart (2009)

*The Glue that Holds Our Work Together: The role and nature of relationships in youth work,
Youth Studies Australia, 28(4), p.6*



Challenge
negative
self talk

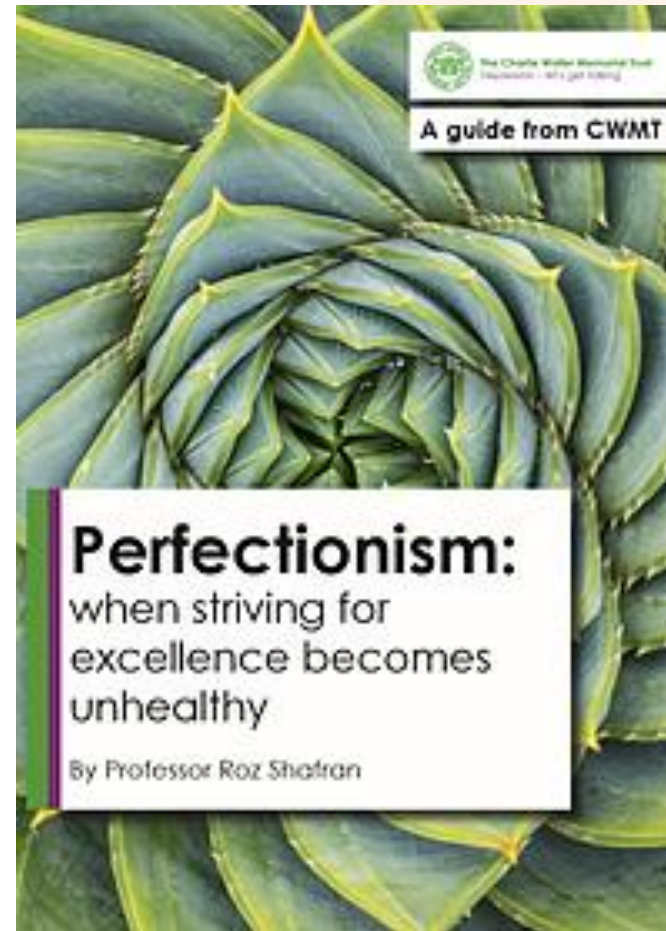
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Unhealthy perfectionism

“People with unhealthy perfectionism react to mistakes in an extreme and highly self-critical manner and are very uncomfortable with uncertainty.”

Professor Roz Shafran



<https://charliewaller.org/resources/perfectionism>



The two main types of perfectionism

Excellence-seeking perfectionism involves tendencies to fixate on and demand excessively high standards. Excellence-seeking perfectionists not only stringently evaluate their own performance but also hold high performance expectations for other people in their lives.

Failure-avoiding perfectionism involves an obsessive concern with and aversion to failing to reach high performance standards. Failure-avoiding perfectionists are constantly worried their work is not quite right or good enough and believe that they will lose respect from others if they do not achieve perfection.

<https://hbr.org/2018/12/the-pros-and-cons-of-perfectionism-according-to-research>



Healthy striving for excellence –

A mistake is usually seen as

Temporary

Isolated

Perhaps outside their control

Unhealthy perfectionism –

A mistake is seen as

Permanent – I will always be a failure

Pervasive – I am useless at everything


Personal – it is all my fault I am so useless



All or nothing thinking

Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'


If I'm not perfect I have failed
Either I do it right or not at all



Over-generalizing

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw


"everything is always rubbish"
"nothing good ever happens"



Mental filter

Only paying attention to certain types of evidence


Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes



Disqualifying the positive

Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count




Jumping to conclusions

There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:


- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

2 + 2 = 5



Magnification (catastrophizing) & minimization


Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important



Emotional reasoning

Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot



should must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labelling

Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

I'm a loser
I'm completely useless
They're such an idiot



Personalization

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault

"this is my fault"

Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault



Replacing rumination for reflection

“Reflection is the processing of experiences with purpose, and with the goal of gaining insight, learning, and ultimately self-improvement. By contrast, rumination is when someone thinks about something over and over again, without purpose.”

Jonathan Alpert, psychotherapist

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/reflection-rumination-dwelling-positive-coping-strategies/>



Know
the
warning
signs

2

DEPRESSION

THE WARNING SIGNS



Feelings of
hopelessness and
pessimism



Feelings of
worthlessness, guilt
and helplessness



Thoughts of
death or suicide



Restlessness



Irregular sleep



Decreased energy



Changes in mood



Insomnia



Difficulty
making decisions



Appetite or
weight change



Persistent sad, anxious
or empty mood



Tearfulness

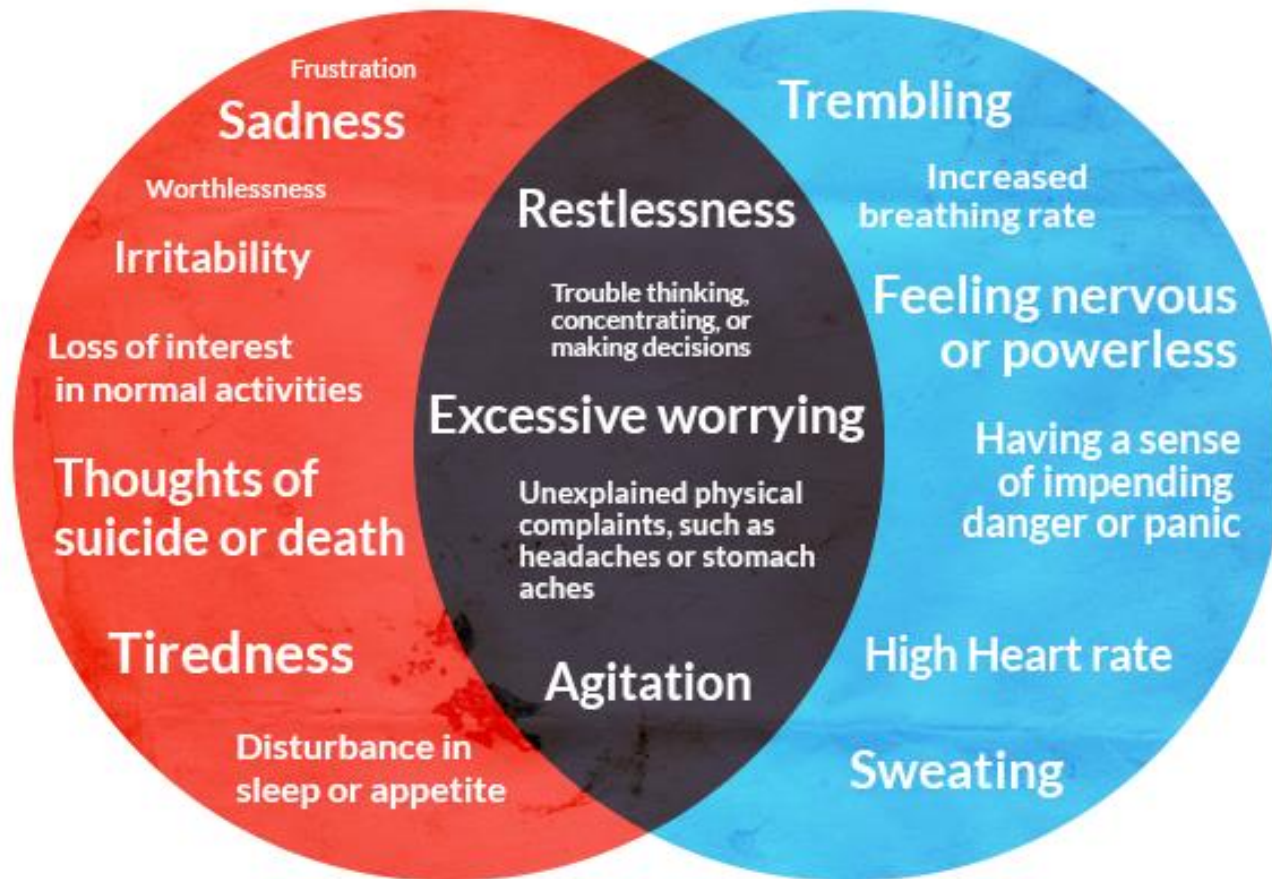
Learn these signs for your own safety and the safety of others.

Failure to do so may result in fatality (15% of people who suffer from depression make an attempt on their lives).
If you, or someone you know, experience 4 of these symptoms over a number of weeks seek professional advice immediately.



Depression

Anxiety





Asking and Listening

3



The importance of asking how our children are feeling

“The single question on life satisfaction included in the Millennium Cohort Study (and also asked in other surveys of children, such as Understanding Society), completed at age 14, was a significant predictor of young people’s self-reported psychological distress and emotional and behavioural difficulties (based on their Kessler and SDQ scores)....

[Such findings emphasise] the importance of asking children themselves about how they feel about their life.”

The Children’s Society (2021) *The Good Childhood Report*



“Ask Twice” – Time to Change

1 in 4 of us experience a mental health problem in any year. And worryingly, the current restrictions on our lives mean we are missing out on support from those around us. So if someone says they are fine, they might not be. A second ‘how are you?’ can make all the difference.

www.time-to-change.org.uk/asktwice



let's end mental health discrimination



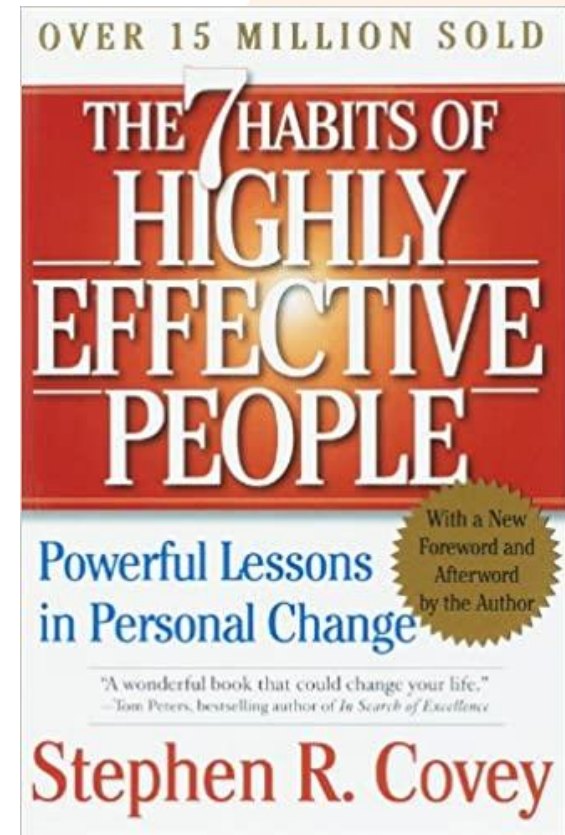
***“Listen and make
us feel listened to.
Anything else is a
bonus.”***



“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.”

Covey, S. (1989)

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People



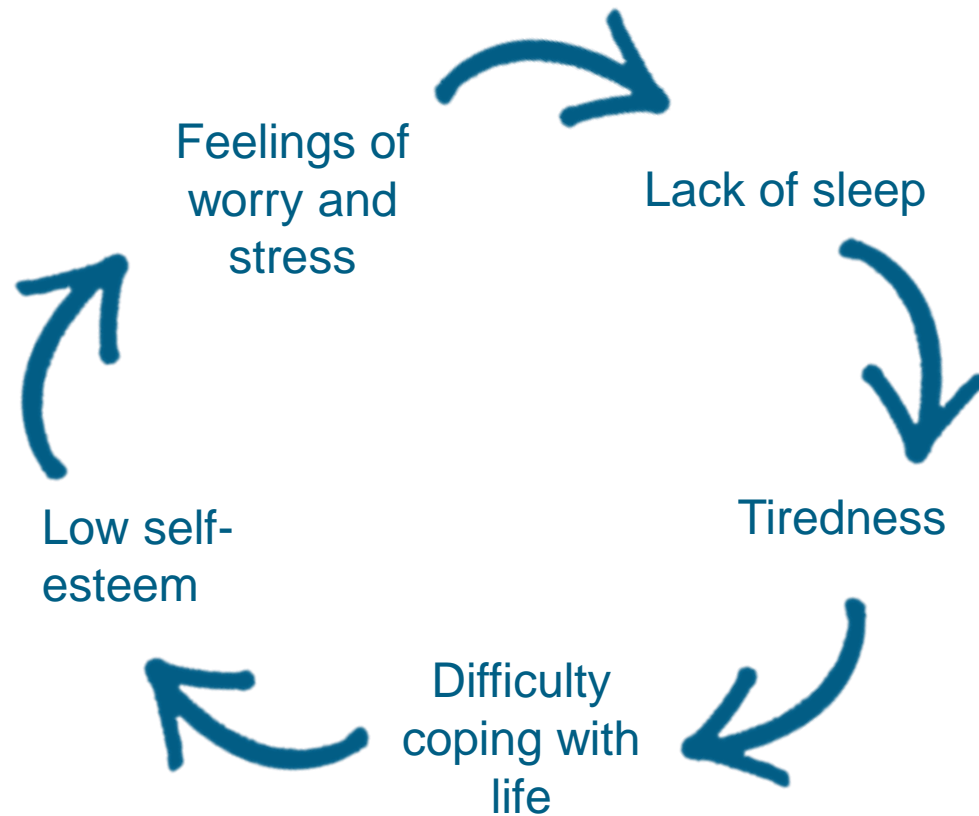


Support
and role-
model
good
sleep
habits

4



Relationship between sleep and mental health



<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/sleep-problems/about-sleep-and-mental-health/>



Screen time and sleep

Our sleep hormone Melatonin rises when it's dark and it triggers a whole range of reactions in our body to get us ready for sleep. And the trigger for Melatonin's rise is through our eyes. The eyes send a message to our brain, Melatonin secretes, we get sleepy, we go to sleep. But Melatonin needs darkness for this to happen.

Try and help your children stop using screens at least 30 minutes before bedtime. That will allow Melatonin enough time to kick in and get the body system ready for sleep.

And finally we should really role model good sleep habits for our children and adolescents. Showing our children we can also restrict our own screen exposure is very important. They watch and learn everything that we do. So the more we do the more they'll do.

Dr Sarah Blunden, S. (2020) *Sleep and Screen Use*

<https://parenting.sa.gov.au/easy-guides/sleep-and-screen-use-sarah-blunden>



Top tips to get to sleep and sleep better



Keep regular sleep hours

Going to bed when you feel tired and getting up at roughly the same time helps teach your body to sleep better. Try to avoid napping where possible.



Confront sleeplessness

If you are lying awake unable to sleep, do not force it. Get up and do something relaxing for a bit, and return to bed when you feel sleepier.



Create a restful environment

Dark, quiet and cool environments generally make it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep. Watch our video for tips on how to sleep better.

[Video: Tips for sleeping better](#)



Write down your worries

If you often lie awake worrying about tomorrow, set aside time before bed to make a list for the next day. This can help put your mind at rest.

[Video: Tackle your worries](#)



Move more, sleep better

Being active can help you sleep better. These videos can get you going, but remember to avoid vigorous activity near bedtime if it affects your sleep.

[Better Health: Home workout videos](#)



Put down the pick-me-ups

Caffeine and alcohol can stop you falling asleep and prevent deep sleep. Try to cut down on alcohol and avoid caffeine close to bedtime.



Have
positive
chats
about
being
online

5



A history of parental worry!

“A pernicious excitement to learn and play chess has spread all over the country, and numerous clubs for practicing this game have been formed in cities and villages...chess is a mere amusement of a very inferior character, which robs the mind of valuable time that might be devoted to nobler acquirements ... they require out-door exercises—not this sort of mental gladiatorship.”

Scientific American, 1858





Digital literacy and wellbeing

“For many parents, fear is the dominant lens through which they look at the internet. What we at Wise Kids teach parents is that the internet is like a global city. We don’t say, ‘The city is dangerous, we are not going to enter the city’. What we say is, ‘Let’s look out for the good things to do in the city, and let’s avoid the places that are a bit dodgy’.

Dr Sangeet Bhullar, founder of *Wise Kids*

<https://charliewaller.org/what-we-do/online-learning-materials/interviews/the-online-world-with-dr-sangeet-bhullar>



Risks within the 'global city'

|  CORE | Content Child as recipient | Contact Child as participant | Conduct Child as actor | Contract Child as consumer |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aggressive | Violent, gory, graphic, racist, hateful and extremist content | Harassment, stalking, hateful behaviour, unwanted surveillance | Bullying, hateful or hostile peer activity e.g. trolling, exclusion, shaming | Identity theft, fraud, phishing, scams, gambling, blackmail, security risks |
| Sexual | Pornography (legal and illegal), sexualization of culture, body image norms | Sexual harassment, sexual grooming, generation and sharing of child sexual abuse material | Sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual messages, sexual pressures | Sextortion, trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, streaming child sexual abuse |
| Values | Age-inappropriate user-generated or marketing content, mis/disinformation | Ideological persuasion, radicalization and extremist recruitment | Potentially harmful user communities e.g. self-harm, anti-vaccine, peer pressures | Information filtering, profiling bias, polarisation, persuasive design |
| Cross-cutting | Privacy and data protection abuses, physical and mental health risks, forms of discrimination | | | |



Opportunities within the 'global city'

Young people as social participants and active citizens

Social networking services can provide an accessible and powerful toolkit for highlighting and acting on issues and causes that affect and interest young people.

Young people developing a voice and building trust

Social networking services can provide young people with opportunities to learn how to function successfully in a community, navigating a public social space and developing social norms and skills as participants in peer groups.

Young people as content creators, managers and distributors

Social networking services rely on active participation: users take part in activities and discussions on a site, and upload, modify or create content. This supports creativity and can support discussion about ownership of content and data management.

Young people as collaborators and team players

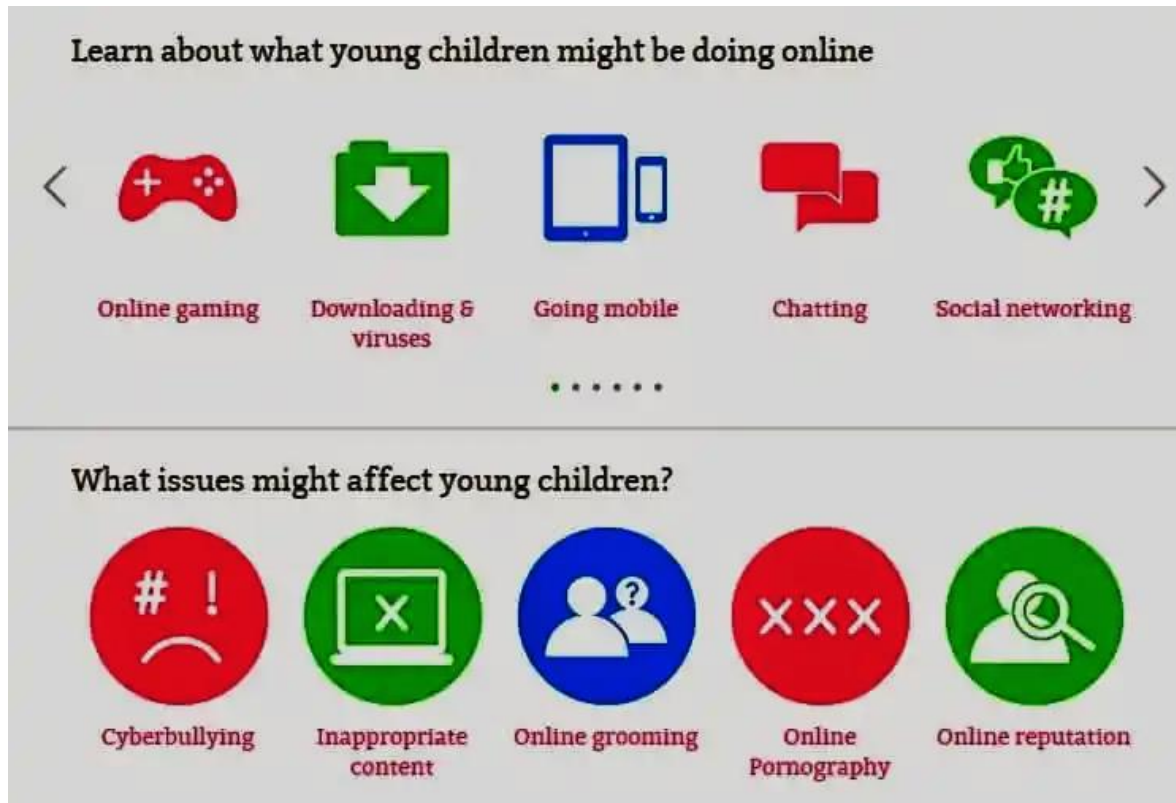
Young people may need to ask others for help and advice in using services, or understand how platforms work by observing others, particularly in complex gaming or virtual environments. Once users have developed confidence in a new environment, they will also have gained the experience to help others.

Young people becoming independent and building resilience

Online spaces are social spaces, places for young people to be with friends or to explore alone, building independence and developing the skills they need to recognise and manage risk, to learn to judge and evaluate situations, and to deal effectively with a world that can sometimes be dangerous or hostile. However, such skills can't be built in isolation, and are more likely to develop if supported. **Going to a social networking service for the first time as a young person alone can be compared to a young person's first solo trip to a city centre, and thus is important for a young person to know how to stay safe in this new environment.**



Recommended resource



**internet
matters.org**

<https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/>



6



I said to her, 'You never speak to me anymore'. She replied, 'You never have time for me'

We wash the dishes together
and chat

We chat in the car on the way
to school

We diarise it – the third
Saturday of the month



Build a
support
network

7



The importance of trusting relationships with non-parental adults

Adolescents value relationships with non-parental adults who 'tend to provide a combination of positive adult qualities (e.g., providing advice, serving as a role model) and "peer-like" relations (e.g., non-judgmental, nonpunitive, fun)'

(Beam et al, 2002, *The Nature of Adolescents' Relationships With Their "Very Important" Nonparental Adults*, American Journal of Community Psychology, 30(2), p.322)



My Mum is brilliant but I
hate the thought of
worrying her, so there are
some things I prefer to talk
to my aunt about



MindEd is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults.

 Follow @MindEdUK



Select the right MindEd for you...



MindEd for Families

Are you a parent or carer who is concerned about your child? Or perhaps you just want some hints and tips on parenting? MindEd for Families has online advice and information from trusted sources and will help you to understand and identify early issues and best support your child.

[Go to MindEd for Families](#)

MindEd for Professionals & Volunteers

This is for you if you volunteer, work or are studying to work with infants, children or teenagers. MindEd has e-learning applicable across the health, social care, education, criminal justice and community settings. It is aimed at anyone from beginner through to specialist.

[Go to MindEd e-Learning](#)

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/young-people/>



You are not alone.

Thousands of parents contact us every year
and get the help they need.

T: 0808 802 5544

E: parents@youngminds.org.uk

W: youngminds.org.uk/parents



YOUNGMiNDS



Make a
plan for
wellbeing

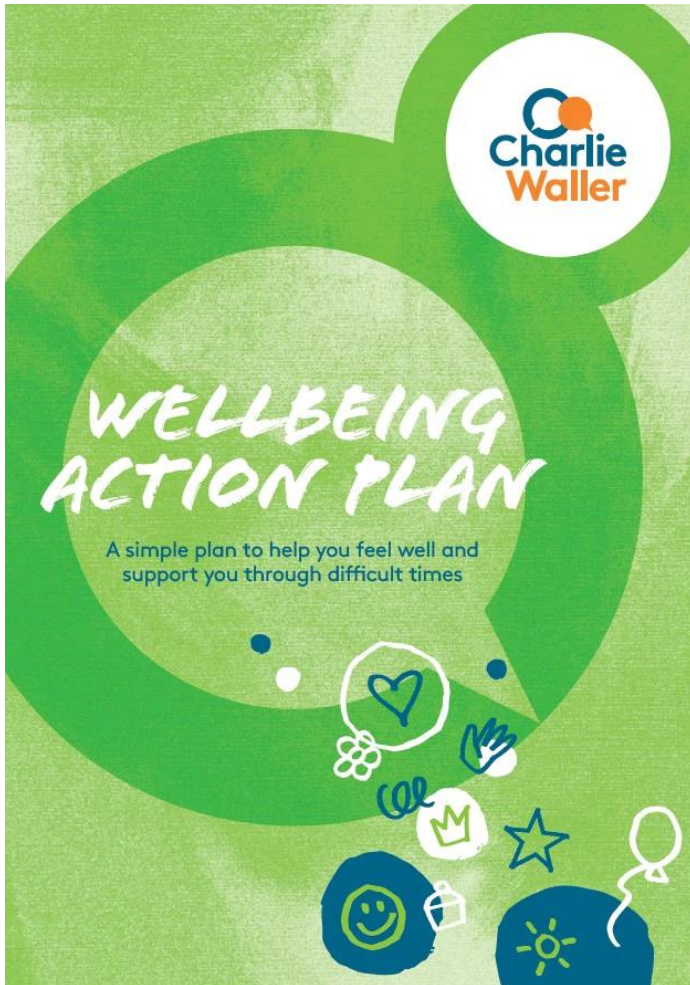
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The foundations of a Wellbeing Action Plan

- 1. Hope:** people who experience mental health difficulties get well, stay well and go on to meet their life dreams and goals.
- 2. Personal responsibility:** it's up to you, with the assistance of others, to take action and do what needs to be done to keep yourself well.
- 3. Education:** learning all you can about what you are experiencing so you can make good decisions about all aspects of your life.
- 4. Self advocacy:** effectively reaching out to others so that you can get what it is that you need, want and deserve to support your wellness and recovery.
- 5. Support:** while working toward your wellness is up to you, receiving support from others, and giving support to others, will help you feel better and enhance the quality of your life.

<https://www.combined.nhs.uk/person-centredness-framework/wellness-recovery-action-plans-wrap%e2%80%8b/>



<https://charliewaller.org/resources>



Questions?



Resources

Free guides and workbooks for professionals, parents, young people and others interested in mental and emotional wellbeing.

www.charliewaller.org/resources

Training feedback

Feedback from participants on our training is a key component in evaluating the effectiveness of and in making improvements to our training and resources.

We would be very grateful if you would complete this short survey based on the training you have received today.

www.charliewaller.org/what-we-do/training-feedback



Take on the **#Fit4Feb for schools** challenge and boost your class' mental health!

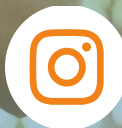
Regular physical activity isn't just good for children's physical health - it also helps improve their brain function, sleep and energy levels, and emotional wellbeing. So why not take part in our **Fit4Feb for schools** challenge this February!

- Pick a day in February.
- Complete an activity which is based on the number 28 (we have 28 suggestions for you).
- Raise (a minimum of) £28 for the Charlie Waller Trust!

Visit the CWT website for more information and to sign your class up now - **[Fit4Feb for schools 2022 \(charliewaller.org\)](https://charliewaller.org)**



Follow us



Charlie Waller Trust
@charliewalleruk

A circular inset image showing two hands forming a heart shape, with a blurred background of people.

Fundraise for us

Fundraising for us not only brings in money to help us continue our work – it also raises mental health awareness and what people can do to take care of their wellbeing.

Find out more

charliewaller.org/get-involved