

'Mental Wellbeing: let's talk the talk'

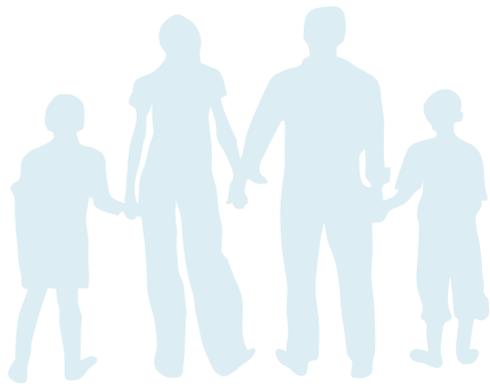
Parents' Guide



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Introduction

We all have mental health, just like we all have physical health...

Being a parent is not always an easy task, however it can be so rewarding to see your child thrive and grow. To ensure that your child has the best opportunities it is vital for you both to understand mental wellbeing and the impacts of mental health stigma.

Most people have good mental health most of the time, but the number of children who experience a mental health problem is growing.

If you haven't spoken about mental health in your family, you're not alone.

Here are the stats about 'nonversation':



Three children in every classroom experience mental health issues

55%

A poll of more than 1,100 parents found that 55 per cent had not spoken about stress, anxiety or depression to their children

45%

45 per cent of parents felt they did not need to have the conversation because mental health "was not an issue"

20%

Of those, 20 percent said they did not know how to address the issue

What is mental health?

Mental health is the emotional strength that enables us to enjoy life and endure things like pain, disappointment and sadness. It influences the way we think and how we see ourselves, as well as the way that we interpret others and everyday life.

Mental health can have a huge impact on our ability to learn, communicate and enjoy relationships.



Here are some ideas about what good mental health enables us to do:

- develop mentally, emotionally and spiritually
- have healthy relationships with other people
- be happy spending time on our own
- be aware of other people's feelings
- play and learn effectively
- develop a clear sense of right and wrong
- resolve problems and learn from them

(Taken from Bright Future, Mental Health Foundation)

Mental health problems can be thought of as being on a spectrum, ranging from poor general mental wellbeing (how you are feeling and how you cope with day to day life), right through to severe mental health problems (such as bi-polar disorder or schizophrenia) – and anything in between.

Mental health problems can present themselves differently, as does the way we cope with them. Some people overcome situations quickly while others can be affected for a long time.

Mental health stigma and discrimination contributes to why people are held back from getting better. It can prevent us from talking to people about how we are feeling. There is no shame in talking about mental health problems; mental health is everyone's business.

The fact-ory

**FICTION:**

Children and young people don't have mental health problems.

FACT:

One in ten young people (aged 5-16 years old) will experience a diagnosable mental health problem. That's approximately three in every classroom. *(Young Minds)*

FICTION:

Young people don't experience mental health problems until they are older.

FACT:

Although less common in younger children, mental health problems can develop at any age. Many mental health problems in adulthood occur as a result of problems during childhood. *(Rethink Mental Illness)*

FICTION:

Most children and young people do get the right help and support for mental health issues at an early stage.

FACT:

Most children and young people (70 per cent) don't get the right help and support at an early stage. *(Taken from Mental Health Foundation)*

FICTION:

These days, very few people with a mental health problem experience stigma and discrimination.

FACT:

In fact, nowadays, most people with a mental health problem (nine out of ten) experience stigma and discrimination. *(Time to Change)*

FICTION:

All people with mental health problems are unpredictable and violent.

FACT:

People with mental health problems are significantly more likely to be victims of violence than they are to be violent. *(Time to Change)*



Five ways to wellbeing

Children and young people can help support their own well-being by following the five ways to wellbeing, which are activities that have been developed by the New Economics Foundation. Parents can help encourage children and young people to take part in activities that could enhance their wellbeing.



Shared meal times, watching TV and doing things as a family will all help to support your child's wellbeing. Having a trusted adult to talk or confide in is also beneficial. Finding ways for your child to see their friends outside of school will also make a difference.



Encourage your child to be active, in and outdoors. A family walk, cycle or swim can be good fun for the whole family. Group sports are also good for young people as they can enhance self confidence and provide an opportunity to make new friends outside of school.



Learning outside of school is just as important as learning in school and young people have said they feel a sense of achievement from gaining new knowledge or skills. Parents have the opportunity to pass on skills they might have, such as cooking, DIY, sewing or photography.



Help your child to notice and enjoy their surroundings, this might be by going on day trips to different places (such as a city farm, local forest, the coast or a different part of your home town). Being able to live in the moment is also a key part of wellbeing. Parents can also help their children to pay attention to how they are feeling and show them how to process their emotions in a positive way.



Teach your child that giving can mean more than simply giving someone a present. Encourage your child to do something nice for someone, for example a sponsored activity to raise money for charity, saying thank you or smile at someone.

Talking tips

Mental health shouldn't be a taboo topic.

Often our mental wellbeing is affected by a 'trigger' situation or event (e.g. bullying, educational difficulties, death of someone close to us etc.)

However, sometimes there is no clear reason why we experience poor mental health. You play a critical role in knowing when your child might need help. Regular, short chats with your child about how they are feeling can really help you to pick up any signs of changes to their emotional wellbeing and give them help and support at the earliest possible stage.

Take the opportunity to talk.

You don't have to set aside time to specifically talk about mental health. Small and informal chats in the car or while making dinner are often the best way of engaging your child in discussion.

Talking helps. Many young people experiencing mental health issues can help themselves and are often very keen to do so. Simply chatting to someone they trust can make a lot of difference.

Be patient.
There are times that your child won't feel like talking

Don't push.

If your child doesn't want to open up, let the subject go, then repeat the process at another time. Showing that you're available and open to conversation means they will be more likely to come to you, should they need to.

Ask simple questions.
"How was your day?" or "how did it go?" are great ways of encouraging your child to open up about their feelings.

It's OK. If your child expresses their feelings, reassure them that it is okay to feel the way they do. What may not seem a big deal to you may be having a real impact on your child

Healthy body, healthy mind

Physical activity

All children, regardless of their physical abilities, can become active. Being physically active can have a big impact on your child's emotional wellbeing. Physical activity encourages children to connect with each other, learn about trust and cooperation.

These are all ways to build a child's self esteem and improve their emotional wellbeing.



Diet

Good food, good mood. A healthy balanced diet can help your child to think clearer and have more energy.



Sleep

Making sure your child gets enough sleep is important to help them think clearer the next day and enjoy their activities.



Friendships

Your child's emotional wellbeing will also benefit from having time to relax and have fun. Friendships play a big role in emotional health and wellbeing and, as your child grows up, they become more and more important. Listen to any concerns that they have about these. You could even try role play to enable your child to practice skills such as sharing and compromising, which is an important part of maintaining friendships.



Play it, think it

Activities ideas...make time...make it fun

Stress bucket

- Draw out a big bucket shape
- Discuss with your child anything that's worrying them at the moment. Write these on the bucket
- Draw some holes on the bucket
- Explain that the holes will help to empty out some of these worries from the bucket before it overflows
- Have a chat with your child about things that you can both do to help them cope with their worries (e.g. spending more time talking together, doing physical activity, eating better, sleeping better and having more time to relax and have fun).



Watch and read age appropriate films, TV programmes and books

These can be a good way to open up a conversation with your child about some difficult issues or emotions and how they can be handled in a positive way. Examples include: 'The Lion King', 'Finding Nemo' and 'Inside Out'.

'Compliments to myself'

– play as a family. Sit together and take it in turns to finish positive sentences (e.g. I am proud of myself because..., I feel good when..., my favourite thing about myself is ...).

When to seek help

Of course you can seek advice from professionals at any time.

Feeling sad or down is part of typical human experience.

If these feelings continue over a long period of time and stop your child from functioning in day-to-day life then it may be worth getting some professional advice or support. There are a number of professionals that have a lot of experience in helping people with mental health issues:

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- GPs
 - Teachers
 - Health visitors
 - School nurses
 - School support workers
 - Social services
 - Voluntary agencies
 - Counsellor or child therapists
 - Child psychologists
 - Paediatricians
 - Educational psychologists
 - Youth Workers
 - Youth Offending Team (YOT)
 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)



If you need urgent help or support please phone the common point of entry
01635 295555.

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

Emotional Health Academy

The Emotional Health Academy provides early intervention emotional health support to children, young people (0-19), and families. The Academy works directly in schools and across communities in West Berkshire. Our goal is to help ease the pressure on specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

The Academy also coordinates a multi agency Emotional Health Triage, West Berkshire's new way of helping children, young people and their family's access the right help at the right time. You can request support for a child or young person with emerging, mild or moderate emotional health concerns, by downloading a multi agency triage referral form at <http://community.westberks.gov.uk/> and emailing to: emotional.health.triage@westberks.gov.uk

For general enquiries contact: Barry Stormont, Emotional Health Academy Operations Manager at: barry.stormont@westberks.gov.uk

Home Start West Berkshire

Home-Start West Berkshire supports parents with at least one under 5 in the family who are dealing with issues such as isolation, sickness, disability, mental health, domestic abuse, twins/triplets or difficult relationships. Volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families under stress in their own homes to prevent family crisis and breakdown. Families can refer themselves, or be referred to Home-Start West Berkshire by any agency, e.g. health visitor, social worker, family support worker, CPN, nursery teacher, etc. A referral form can be found on the website: www.home-startwb.org.uk

Contact: **Grace Ryder**, Scheme Manager, Home-Start West Berkshire, 4-8 The Broadway, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1BA Telephone: 01635 760310
Email: office@home-startwb.org.uk

Time To Talk West Berkshire

Time to Talk West Berkshire provides free confidential counselling services to young people in need aged 11 to 25. Up to 12 weekly 50 minute sessions with the same counsellor at the same time and place are available.

Contact: **Luisa Rayner**, Office Manager, Time to Talk, Broadway House, 4-8 The Broadway, Newbury, West Berkshire RG14 1BA . Tel: **01635 760331**
Email: office@t2twb.org

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

Trust House Reading

Specialist therapeutic support for children and young people aged between 4 to 17 years old who have been affected by rape, sexual violence, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation. Trust House Reading also provide a range of other support services for people affected by rape and sexual abuse including; confidential helpline, ISVA Support and email support.

For more information or queries, please call the office on **0118 950 2835** or email: **office@trouthousereading.org**. Support services can be contacted by emailing **support@trouthousereading.org** or by calling their confidential Helpline on **0118 958 4033**.

A2Dominion

A2Dominion's West Berkshire Domestic Abuse Service offers confidential support for men and women fleeing domestic violence to rediscover freedom of choice and self-esteem. Access to refuge, an outreach service supporting clients in the community, support groups and a helpline are available.
Contact: WBDAS Helpline **0800 731 0055**

Bounce Back for Kids (BB4K)

Bounce Back 4 Kids (BB4K) is a support programme developed by PACT that uses therapeutic techniques to support children who have been victims or witnesses of domestic abuse. The programme works with the children and their parents or carers to come to terms with experiencing family breakdowns. Children need to meet the following criteria for BB4K:

- Children have witnessed or been victims of domestic abuse and are displaying challenging / withdrawn behaviour
- Children must be aged between 5 and 12
- Children must be able to acknowledge the hurting that has happened in their family and be able to talk about it
- Children must want to attend a BB4K programme, they cannot be forced to attend
- Parents/carers must be willing to support the child throughout the BB4K programme
- The perpetrator must have left the family home and be out of the relationship

Tel: **0118 402 1755**

Email: **BB4K@pactcharity.org**

Website: **<http://pactcharity.org/community-projects/bounce-back-4-kids>**

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

The Edge

The Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service for West Berkshire work with young people up to the age of 18 and their families/carers who are affected by drugs or alcohol.

Email: theedge@westberks.gov.uk Telephone: **(01635) 582002**

Young Carers Project

Young carers are children and young people under 18 who take on caring tasks and responsibilities within their family.

This could happen when a family member, maybe a parent, brother or sister needs a lot of care. They may have a physical disability, a progressive disease, mental health difficulty or substance misuse problem. The young carers project can help give time out from caring, providing group work, help young carers to access clubs and leisure activities.

A young carer can contact the outreach team directly to talk about how they can help. A family friend concerned about a young carer can make initial contact on behalf of the young person. A GP, Care Manager or other professional can also make contact.

Young Carers Project, West Berkshire Council, 50 Andover Road, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6JW. Telephone: **01635 43639** Email: youngcarers@westberks.gov.uk

Educational Psychology Service

Educational psychologists apply psychology within the educational system and the community. They specialise in promoting learning, development, emotional well-being and positive outcomes for children, young people and their parent or carers.

Some of the services Educational Psychologists provide include; therapeutic interventions, psychological assessments, monitoring, review and evaluation, direct work with individual pupils and small groups and advice, support and coaching.

If you think your child would benefit from an educational psychologist's help then please speak to the class teacher or SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) who will discuss this further with you. Contact: Cathy Burnham Principal Educational Psychologist, West Berkshire Council. Email: cathy.burnham@westberks.gov.uk
Tel: **01635 519026**

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

CAMHS work with young people who are experiencing significant (often severe) and complex difficulties with their mental health. This could include:

- Feeling very low a lot of the time
- Getting very worried about lots of things
- Difficulties managing behaviour
- Significant difficulties understanding and finding and fitting in with friends
- Having significant difficulties around eating
- Hearing voices
- Being very preoccupied by certain things or thoughts.

Usually these symptoms will have been occurring over several months and will not have responded to interventions from early intervention and children's services.

CAMHS will work with the child and young people and their families to help reduce the impact these difficulties are having on their lives. Referrals are accepted from all health, education, and children's services colleagues and should be made on the Berkshire CAMHS referral form (found on professionals page of the CAMHS Website) and sent to CAMHS CPE (information about CPE is found in the 'Our Service' section of the CAMHS website, with a referral form and contact details on the 'Professionals' page). <http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs/>

Contact the CAMHS Common Point of Entry on **0300 365 0300**.

Family Information Service directory (FISd)

West Berkshire's Family Information Service offer a free telephone and on-line directory service, dedicated to providing up to date information for parents, parents to be, carers and professionals to help support children up to their 20th birthday or 25th birthday if a child has a disability.

Phone: **01635 503100** Email: fis@westberks.gov.uk

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

Family Hubs (Formerly Children's Centres)

Family hubs support families, parents and carers of children aged 0 to 5 years old. Family hubs provide; early years education and childcare, help to access social services, health services, training and employment services, information and advice services.

There are a number of different events and sessions for each of the Family Hubs:
<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27781>

Contact: West Berkshire Council's Early Years Service Tel: **01635 503500**
Email: **earlyyears@westberks.gov.uk**

Youth Offending Team

The YOT team helps prevent young people from offending, or re-offending. The YOT:

- works with young people who have received an out of court disposal from police, or who have been to court for an offence, and the court has ordered them to work with the YOT
- provides reports for the court to advise on what services are available, to assist in decisions about sentencing for young people
- provides services to parents to help them to respond to any difficulties their children have
- work with victims of youth crime, offering advice and information, and an opportunity for the effect of the offence on them to be made known to the young person, either directly or indirectly

Contact: West Berkshire's Youth Offending Team, email: **yot@westberks.gov.uk**
tel: **01635 553600**

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS)

IYSS work with young people aged 11 - 19 years of age with a primary focus on the needs of children on the edge of care, those at risk of sexual exploitation, children who go missing, Looked After Children (LAC), those Leaving Care, Young Offenders, young people who are not in education training or employment, teenage parents and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. An enquiry for help may be made by:

- a professional: such as a teacher, social worker, education welfare officer; or
- a concerned adult such as a parent, grandparent or family friend; or
- a direct request by the young person

Contact: **Richard Ferguson** Email: iyss@westberks.gov.uk Telephone: **01635 503090**

Community School Nurses

School Nurses are specialist nurses trained in public health. They provide support and advice to children, young people (5-19's) and their families in a range of health issues. These include advice on; physical health: weight management, asthma, eczema, allergies, medical conditions, mental health: emotional health, anxiety, self harm, low mood and sexual health advice and signposting. School Nurses also run bedwetting clinics for school age children. School Nurses work closely with local schools providing training on a variety of medical conditions. They are supported by Staff Nurses and School Health Assistants who deliver the National Child Measurement programme in reception year and year 6. Referrals are accepted from Schools, parents and young people as well as other professionals.

Contact: School Nurses Office, West Berkshire Community Hospital, London Road, Benham Hill, Thatcham, Berkshire RG18 3AS. Telephone: **(01635) 273384** or Email: bks-tr.CSNWestBerks@nhs.net

Health Visitors

Health visitors, who are all qualified nurses or midwives, are there to support and guide you and your family as your child grows up. They provide you with practical support and health advice within your community with a focus on families and young children up to the age of five-years-old. They answer your questions and give advice on all sorts of topics including breast-feeding, sleep, immunisation and teething.

Health Visitors are informed of all pregnancies and births from the midwife service and informed of all new families with under-fives registering with a GP in Berkshire. If you are pregnant, they will contact you to introduce our service at about 28-weeks. Parents and carers can also refer themselves to us Tel: **(01635) 273626**.

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

Swings and Smiles – yp counselling service

Swings & Smiles is a SEND play facility where children with additional needs are able to play with their families in an environment that is suitable for them. A range of activities are offered including a fully accessible soft play room and sensory room. An outreach service is provided for families who are unable to access the centre or for larger groups within the community, this is largely sensory based play. Swings & Smiles offer support for the whole family, including drop-ins for parents and specialist sibling support. Sibling support can be accessed via a monthly drop-in or as a 1:1 counselling service. Swings & Smiles also deliver the 6 week SIBS programme across schools in the area. For more information visit www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk, call **01635 285170** or email phoenix@swingsandsmiles.co.uk

Autism Advisor for Families

Autism Advisor for Families offers:

Support for families and carers post Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis by:

- Listening to parents concerns and answering questions
- Providing guidance and information for families
- Sign posting to other services and voluntary organisations.
- Managing and delivering training programmes for parents

Parent Autism Workshops for parents with children with a newly diagnosed child with Autism 0 – 5, 5 - 11 Years & now 11-18 years Old. Home visits are made to homes across West Berkshire. Parents / Carers can self refer. Contact: **Melissa Hutchings**, Autism Advisor for Families Tel: **01635 503646**
Email: melissa.hutchings@westberks.gov.uk

West Berkshire National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society, West Berkshire Branch aims to support children and adults with autism and Asperger syndrome in West Berkshire, including their parents and carers. Their services include two youth clubs (aged 10-13 & 13-18 years), professional speaker evenings, a befriending service, quarterly newsletters, a monthly adult social group, regular family activities, a book library and lots more. We also hope to establish an 18+ youth group and a book club soon, for more information please check the website; <http://www.westberksnas.org.uk/>

If you would like to become a committee member, a volunteer or just find out more about the Branch, please Email: westberkshire@nas.org.uk or Telephone: **07748 880725**.

Sources of advice and support for parents and carers

Parenting Special Children

Parenting Special Children run specialist parenting programmes for parent/carers who have children with special needs.

Programmes include Time Out from Special Needs, an 8 week course for parent/carers who have children with a range of special needs; Time Out from ADHD, a four week course for parent/carers who have children and young people with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder); Time Out from ASD a four week course for parent/carers who have children or young people with Autism.

All programmes are FREE to families.

If you would like to book a place on one of the courses that we run please email or ring **Ruth Pearse** on **07876 275731**. We will then send you dates and an outline of the course.

Telephone: **01189 863532** Email: **admin@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk**

Website: **www.parentingspecialchildren.co.uk**

SAFE!

SAFE! Supports young victims of crime to help them to cope with the impact of their experience. They may be the direct victim or struggling after witnessing a crime against someone else (for example witnessing domestic violence in the home). SAFE! can provide support young victims at any point, whether the crime is reported or not, pre-trial or post-trial...etc. Support is based on Protective Behaviours methods to help regain a sense of safety and confidence following an experience of crime.

SAFE!

- Offer up to twelve one-to-one sessions.
- Accept referrals for any young person between the ages of 8-18 (up to 25 if the individual has additional needs)
- Only accept referrals with the young person's consent.
- Can support young people through the criminal justice system
- Helps to build confidence and self-esteem
- We offer priority support for those affected by sexual violence.
- Sign post on to more appropriate agencies if necessary.

If you would like more information please call **0800 133 7938** or email **www.safeproject.org.uk**

Useful resources

Safe Sex Berkshire

www.safesexberkshire.nhs.uk

Emotional Wellbeing West Berkshire

www.emotionalwellbeingwestberkshire.co.uk/

Elevate

westberkshire.elevateme.org.uk/index.htm

Young Carers – babble

<https://babble.carers.org/>

Young Minds

[/www.youngminds.org.uk/about](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/about)

Time To Change

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

MindEd – for families

<http://minded.e-lfh.org.uk/families/index.html>

