



# SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Working together to keep our young people safe



FEBRUARY 2024

In this month's issue:

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## RECOGNISING THE SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MIGHT BE STRUGGLING WITH THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

### Change in the way they approach school

If your child seems unenthusiastic about going to school and learning, it's important to take note of any changes in their behaviour.



### Change in behaviour

Have you noticed any recent changes in your child's behaviour? They may have become argumentative, uncooperative or irritable.



### Poor sleep

Are you noticing differences in their sleep patterns? Perhaps they are having difficulty falling asleep or waking up frequently throughout the night.



### Changes in social habits

If a child is spending more time alone and playing alone, it could indicate they are becoming withdrawn.



## Mental Health: We all have it!

As we approach Children's Mental Health Week, it's a great opportunity to take stock of our children's well-being. Mental health should be treated with the same level of importance as physical health. We all possess it, and it is our responsibility to care for it. This involves being able to identify when something isn't quite right, as well as implementing preventative measures to ensure our children's mental health is in good condition.

## Initiating Discussions with Your Child About their Mental Health

Taking care of a child's mental health is a continuous process. Having conversations with them from an early age can make a significant difference in the long run. Starting with a daily check-in about how they're feeling is an excellent way to begin these talks. These conversations can also encourage your child to engage in healthy activities that can further support their mental well-being. Below is an example of a check-in you could use.

## MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Tell me how you're feeling with an emoji

- |  |               |  |                      |
|--|---------------|--|----------------------|
|  | really great  |  | starting to struggle |
|  | pretty good   |  | having a hard time   |
|  | okay, I guess |  | I need support       |

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## Tips for Nurturing Your Child's Mental Health

Here are some helpful tips to prevent potential mental health issues from arising and promote a healthy well-being for your child.

### The importance of sleep

Children are developing physically, intellectually and emotionally and their development is aided by good quality sleep. Children who have poor sleep will find it harder to cope with daily life and may suffer with poor mental health.

#### Tips for improving sleep:

- ◆ Have a set bedtime everyday and create a calming environment 30 minutes before bedtime
- ◆ Have a routine during the 30 minutes so the child knows what to expect. This might include having a bath and reading a story
- ◆ Put electronic devices away 30 minutes before bedtime
- ◆ Have good eating and exercise habits during the day

## 4 ways to support your child with their mental health



### ●●● Encourage good physical health

Encourage healthy habits, such as a balanced diet, regular exercise, and good personal hygiene in children. Set a good example at home and talk to them about it.



### ●●● Set boundaries with devices

Children should have designated times to disconnect from social media, the internet, and gaming for alternative activities that promote social interaction.



### ●●● Have open conversations

To eliminate stigmas, talking to children about mental health is crucial. Using personal experiences and relatable examples from TV shows can help start the conversation.



### ●●● Create healthy habits

Encourage healthy hobbies, social activities, and connections to promote mental well-being and prevent unhealthy patterns, obsessions or addictions.

## Young Minds- A Charity Committed to the Mental Health of Young People

YoungMinds is a charity that offers assistance and resources to both young individuals and parents. Their website has plenty of valuable guidance and advice, including a helpline for parents and children in need of support.

**YOUNGMINDS**



### Chat to us online



To chat to us online, click on the chat icon in the bottom righthand corner of your screen. We're open Monday to Friday, from 9:30am to 4pm.

When we're closed, you can still leave us a message in the chat. We'll reply to you by email in 3-5 working days.



### Speak to us on the phone



Call our Parents Helpline for free on [0800 802 5544](tel:08008025544).

We're open Monday - Friday 9:30am - 4:00pm.