

A Bright Future for All

Promoting mental health in education

Tany Alexander

The protection and promotion of children and young people's mental health is an investment for life. It can enhance their emotional, social and learning skills which, in turn, can help them achieve at school or college, aiding them to form supportive relationships and supporting them into adult and working life. It can strengthen their resilience so they are more able to deal with life's events and problems, helping them avoid distress or recover more quickly. It can also prevent the development of some mental health problems.

Schools and colleges provide one of the most important settings for activities which promote children and young people's mental health and while there are many examples of good practice, much more needs to be done. The Mental Health Foundation has produced this pack to provide a resource for teachers and support staff wishing to develop debate and activities on mental health promotion throughout their institution. The Foundation recognises the pressures that educational staff face and so have produced a pack that can be used flexibly and at a pace that suits the school or college. The pack seeks to affirm work already underway, while providing guidance on what more can be done.

The pack has been developed with a number of educational consultants and initial piloting shows that the approaches set out can make a difference, even within a few months. The Foundation hopes that as many schools and colleges as possible will use it and help make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people, from as young as five and up to, and beyond, 18. Some activities will need to be adapted to apply in the education context for which they are needed.

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Director Scotland and UK Development
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The London Special Educational Needs Regional Partnership is very pleased to have had the opportunity to be involved with this work. Promoting the mental health of students and staff through a whole-school/college approach is fundamental to developing and sustaining an inclusive education system. We hope the pack will be widely used by schools and colleges and the ideas contained in it taken further as practice develops.

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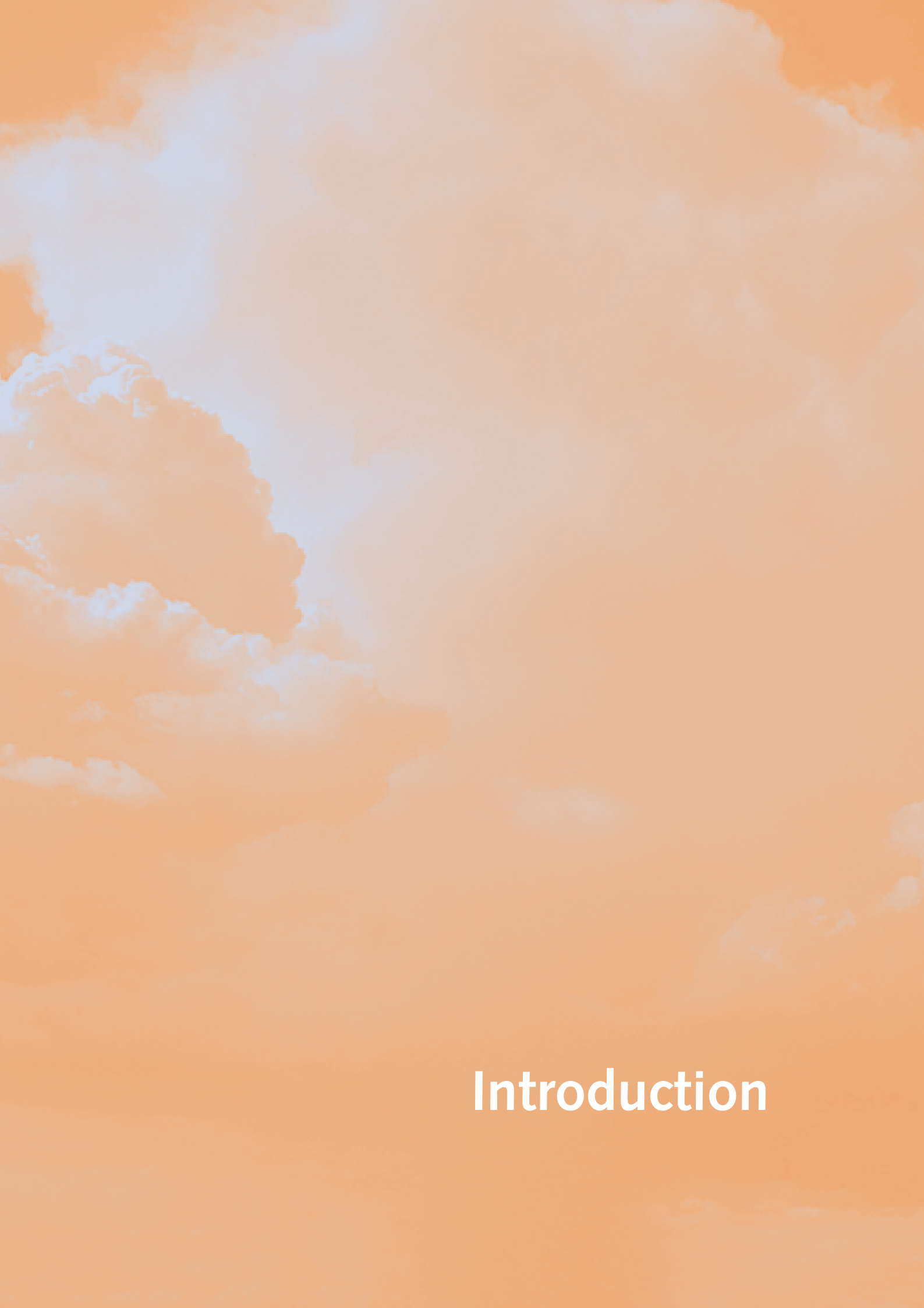
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Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Why mental health promotion in education?

“Developing children as rounded people and active members of the community is at the heart of what schools are about.”

Estelle Morris, Secretary of State for Education and Skills

“... that we would want [children] to be people with a strong sense of themselves and their own humanity, with an awareness of their thoughts and feelings, with a capacity to feel and express love and joy and to recognise tragedy and feel deep grief ...”

Tim Brighouse, Chief Education Officer, Birmingham LEA

Our purpose in producing this pack is to provide schools and colleges with the understanding, the knowledge and the practical tools to work on the objectives detailed above in a mutually compatible way. Our hope is that this pack will contribute to making educational institutions better places to be, with all the benefits that this will bring for students, staff and the community as a whole.

Eight of the best reasons to develop a whole-school/college approach

- because an active mental health promotion in schools and colleges promotes academic achievement, reduces exclusions and disaffection and increases well-being in everyone involved
- because schools and colleges, as educational organisations, as workplaces and as part of the local community, should be a positive place in which to work
- because mental health is the responsibility of us all
- because it promotes good relationships between students and staff, and increases trust and co-operation
- because it fosters a sense of safety for everyone
- because it promotes a sense of inclusion, in which difference is accepted, and diversity can be celebrated
- because although it cannot prevent serious illness in itself, it can and does play a vital part in preventing some serious problems
- and because last, but not least, it plays an important role in reducing stigma for those of us who at some point in our lives experience mental distress.

1.2 Purpose of the pack

We hope that this pack will provide you with information that will help in promoting mental health in your educational setting. Our aim is to

- affirm the importance of everything that already works towards the promotion of well-being in your school or college community
- provide some new ideas and inspiration.

We hope you will find it of practical use in embracing a whole-school/college approach to mental health.

It is important to say that there is no ‘right’ way to do things – what is good for one setting may not suit another, and every school and college has unique opportunities as well as challenges with which to work.

While there are probably as many ways of promoting positive mental health in education as there are schools and colleges (and many good ideas in practice that we have not been able to cover in this pack), most successful approaches tend to have some common features. For this reason, we have provided checklists and guidelines for you to evaluate your own practice and plan for the future.

We hope this resource will be helpful to you.

Who is this pack for?

This pack will be of interest to all those involved with schools, colleges and children and young people including:

- older students with an interest in making their school or college a better place to be
- educational staff with an interest in promoting whole-school/college approaches to mental health
- educational counsellors and nurses
- those in schools or colleges with a responsibility for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship curricula
- heads of years
- special educational needs co-ordinators
- senior management team
- learning mentors
- advisory teachers
- education professionals, such as educational psychologists
- child mental health professionals
- all those involved in tackling inequality
- those who wish to promote inclusion.

We hope that it will also help to provide some common ground to all those concerned with the well-being of children and young people and go some way towards developing partnership working among those involved in health, education and social services.

How to use the pack

We have designed the pack to be as flexible as possible, allowing you both to dip into it as time allows and to work systematically with the material included.

Working on your own

If you are interested enough to be reading this pack, you are already doing something important towards a positive approach to mental health promotion in your school or college. You can also:

- use your insights to think about your own professional development, and any plans you might like to make for the future, including training inside the educational setting or outside. Use your next appraisal or find yourself a mentor who can encourage you as you move forward (see ‘what a learning mentor is’ in Handout 29)
- sound out any specific ideas you would like to try with your line manager and colleagues who might be particularly interested. As the Kingsbury High School case-study (see page 105) shows, you may be able to win support for more initiatives through one successful project, so do not hold back if you have an idea.

For your school/college

If you are reading it on behalf of your school or college, whether you are a student, a teacher, a governor or a parent, or a professional from outside the education service you can:

- use the case studies and activities to provide one or more training sessions for colleagues (for example, an INSET day or half day, a short session for the senior management team meeting or a governors’ training session).
- use relevant material (particularly from Section A) to form the basis of a ‘position paper’ to take to governors, the senior management team or heads of years to get your institution started on new directions for its development plan
- use activities to deliver appropriate parts of the PSHE curriculum. Most can be used with students as well as adults
- canvass opinion in your school or college, try a particular activity from this section with each of the different interest groups in your education environment (teachers, students, heads of years, heads of curriculum areas, governors, senior management team, learning support teams, parents and carers) in turn, before comparing the results.

1.3 Piloting the pack

To test out the effectiveness of the pack, the Mental Health Foundation invited eight schools to take part in a six-week 'brief pilot' between the middle of November and the beginning of February 2001/2002. The schools involved in this pilot are listed on page four.

Despite the shortness of the time period, and the fact that the end of the first term and the Christmas period is not an ideal time for introducing new ideas into most schools, six pilots were successfully completed. Two additional schools took part in the initial consultation but were unfortunately unable to complete them in the time.

Feedback from the schools revealed some very interesting ideas, and where possible these have been built into the final version of the pack. (The schools involved, however, are in no way responsible for the final contents of the pack or its shortcomings.)

“The pack provided a context and a whole big picture ... No matter which activity I was doing, or planned to do, I knew how it affected the big picture. The ideas of this pilot and pack provided a point of reference, backed up by research. The ideas in it are ones that no progressive school can afford to ignore.”

“As it was for me, so it was for the staff ... a very valuable learning experience. The pack informs and directs... forms the basis for development and research ... stimulates action and maintains enthusiasm. Having access to the pack is a privilege ...I would encourage all schools to take a long hard look at the pack and would recommend that it be made free of charge to all schools.”

Feedback from staff at participating schools

In general, the results were very encouraging, showing what can be achieved even in a very short space of time. One outcome was the insight that working on a project in one part of the life of a school can quickly shed light on other areas (for example, focusing on the toilets in one school (environment) has had an impact on the area of student participation in school decision-making.

The Mental Health Foundation would like to thank the schools that have generously offered their time to researchers as case studies for the pack, and to those who have taken part in this initial piloting.



Background

2 Background

2.1 Children and young people's mental health

There is now increasing evidence that positive mental health and educational achievement are intimately linked. Just as success at school or college is an important factor in building the self-esteem of children and young people, emotional and psychological problems can impede learning.

We also know that there is much that schools and colleges can do to promote the mental health, emotional and social well-being of the young people in their care. Many education staff are all too aware that there are many young people, whose spiritual and moral existence is promoted only by their school or college. Educational organisations are already doing a tremendous amount both in the curriculum and more widely through the ethos and policies, often without recognising this as mental health promotion.

There have been a number of changes for children and young people in recent decades. On the whole, they:

- are physically healthier
- have longer life expectancy and
- have more spending power than their predecessors.

It is widely acknowledged that many are struggling with the pressures they face. These include:

- changing family structures
- child poverty and economic deprivation, which are acknowledged risk factors in the development of child mental health problems
- pressures at school or college such as exam stress or bullying
- increasing suicide, depression and self-harm
- drugs, crime and gang culture.

These factors can sometimes present extreme challenges to parents, carers and education staff. Peer culture can be so much stronger than school, college culture or family culture, leaving adults feeling powerless.

Young people from vulnerable groups include:

- looked-after children
- refugees and asylum seekers
- gay and lesbian young people
- young people who care for ill or disabled parents, carers or siblings
- young people who are cared for by parents with mental health problems
- young people with parents or carers with problems such as alcohol or drug abuse or who are involved in criminal activities
- young people with special educational needs
- young people who have experienced trauma or abuse
- other disadvantaged groups
- clever and hard-working children.

All these young people can suffer discrimination and bullying, leading to serious loss of self-confidence and social exclusion.

Young people also face different pressures than previous generations in the world beyond school or college, including increased presence and allure of drugs, crime and gang culture. Although young people are more likely to stay on in education, unemployment is higher among young people than in any other group.

Research has shown that as many as one in five children and young people will suffer from clinically defined mental health problems at some point during their time at school. Some will suffer from serious mental health problems, and need specialist intervention. Studies carried out by the Mental Health Foundation, and confirmed by the work on healthy schools under the National Healthy School Standard (England), has shown that interventions for children who are beginning to show signs of distress are most likely to be successful when undertaken as part of a whole school/college approach to children's emotional and mental health.

Students with emotional and behavioural difficulties are over-represented in exclusion and non-attendance rates, and children out of school are over-represented in youth offending figures. Mental health promotion strategies focused on all children and young people have particular benefits for those most at risk.

Teachers and educational staff are often working under huge pressure to try to meet the needs of young people and create an atmosphere where it is possible for them to flourish. This pack aims to help all those in the education community to build on what they are already doing to create a more positive environment for all, which maximises mental health, reduces stress and enables students and education professionals to enhance their performance. It will also help schools and colleges to ensure that their work is in line with new initiatives, codes of practice and legislation on these issues.

However, the benefits do not stop there. As those interviewed for our case studies have shown, the process of working towards a mentally healthier educational setting can be creative and fulfilling for the whole educational community, and often the community beyond. Those embarking on this process have found themselves challenged and refreshed, with a renewed vision of the positive role that educational institutions can play in the lives of young people, and with abundant opportunities for self-development. Many have become involved in local and national networks and find that the expertise they have gained is of immense value to those new to this area of work.

2.2 Initiatives supporting mental health in education

There are now a number of policy initiatives that support whole-school/college mental health promotion in education. If you are involved in a school or college, you may already know something (or a great deal) about these, or your work may not have brought you into contact with them. We have included a list of these initiatives below to draw attention to the body of thought that backs up the importance of mental health promotion in educational settings and to emphasise the important place that mental health promotion has in relation to all those who work with children and young people. They include:

- European Convention on Human Rights
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- *Pupils with problems* circulars from the Department for Education and Skills
- Department of Health Quality Protects Programme
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*
- *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation* White Paper
- *Excellence in Schools* White Paper
- *Schools Building on Success* Green Paper

The key features of these, and the support they lend to mental health promotion in schools and colleges, is laid out in Appendix IV.

Healthy Schools Initiative

The government's Healthy Schools Programme (England) provides a great deal of support for mental health promotion, within a framework of whole-school/college health promotion. The table following summarises the main features of this initiative.

	What it is	Relevance to mental health in schools and colleges
<p>Healthy Schools Programme</p>	<p>Joint initiative of the Department of Health and Department for Education to establish the National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS) which provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a quality standard ● accreditation ● guidance on how to take part ● Healthy Schools newsletters which include information on mental health initiatives in schools ● a Healthy Schools network, administered by the Healthy School Standard Team based at the Health Development Agency ● Healthy Schools, Healthy Teachers initiative ● Wired for Health website 	<p>The NHSS aims to “help schools become healthier places for staff and students to work and learn”.</p> <p>“Major topic areas affecting the health of children and young people in schools include ... emotional health and wellbeing ...”</p> <p>The standard requires that “... a whole-school approach is used in working on specific themes such as ... emotional health and wellbeing ... relationships education, PSHE and citizenship”.</p>



Section A

This section introduces the issues, and aims to provide activities to help schools and colleges develop a working definition of mental health for themselves. Some activities will also enable you to get to grips with concepts and ideas that might be new to you and your working situation.

3.1 Introducing the issues: towards a working definition of mental health

It is helpful to specify what positive mental health is, in the context of our general understanding of what it is to be healthy, either as an adult, or as a young person.

You could try this: Activity 1

You can do this on your own, with a group of colleagues or with children and young people.

What is mental health?

Time: 25-35 minutes

1. Think of someone who you would describe as “really healthy”.
2. Write down (in pairs if you are working in a group) a list of words which describe what this person is like.
3. Next, try to classify your descriptive words according to whether they relate to the mental, physical or moral/spiritual side of the person. You might find using a table like the one below a useful way of doing this.

A healthy person I know

Mental	Physical	Moral/spiritual

4. You could provide participants with Handouts 1, 2 and 3 and invite participants to compare and contrast these.
5. It might also be important to invite participants to reflect on their feelings on completing this activity, and to emphasise that everyone is different and that few people are ever completely mentally healthy all the time.

You could try this: Activity 2

You can do this on your own, with a group of colleagues or with students. It follows on well from the activity above.

Our schools'/colleges definition of mental health

Time: 25-35 minutes

1. Ask participants to look at the ideas and definitions shown in Handouts 1-3 about good health and mental health.
2. Working in small groups, to try come up a definition of mental health for young people in the school or college.
3. Share these in the big group, then try to agree one definition. You can offer the definition “What is a mentally healthy young person” in Handout 4.
4. How and where could this definition be used in your educational setting?
5. Would your definition for a mentally healthy adult differ from this?

You could try this: Activity 3

Keeping myself mentally healthy

Time: 35-45 minutes

1. Ask participants to spend a little time thinking about the things that keep them mentally healthy. Who can they rely on in their lives? Where can they go for help?
2. Have them share whatever they feel comfortable about with the person sitting next to them.
3. As facilitator, introduce the concept of the ‘Helping hand’ (Handout 5) and the format it offers for drawing together resources – inner and outer – we each have for helping ourselves in times of trouble.
4. Supply each person with a copy of the ‘Helping hand’ diagram or draw a large one for them to copy, and ask them to fill it in using the information they have noted about themselves in point 1 above.
5. It is important to stress that it is not necessary to show one’s ‘hand’ to anyone else. But if appropriate, and the level of trust in the group allows, further discussion can be initiated in the group on the different kinds of resources each person has available to them. This could help participants gain useful ideas about books, music or activities. They might also gain insights into the life circumstances of others in the group.

Other factors that influence our mental health

Good health (and mental health) is also affected by things beyond the control of an individual or a family, for example:

- whether they have their basic physical needs met
- whether they have access to opportunities to learn or work
- how much access they have to resources relative to others in the society
- whether they face discrimination
- whether they are male or female.

Communities and/or society can promote or hinder the mental health or well-being of its members, through the degree of tolerance for diversity, acceptance and support offered to citizens.

However, it is also true that periods of low mood are a natural part of life that most of us experience from time to time. Most of us will need help in keeping our health, dealing with life’s challenges and learning to cope with frustrations and disappointments.

3.2 What is a mentally healthy school/college?

“If people enjoyed things they would learn a lot more.”

Secondary school pupil

“If a child is in dread of getting their head kicked in at break-time, they are not going to be able to concentrate much in the lesson beforehand, or afterwards.”

Learning mentor

The range of factors contributing to mental health and well-being in an educational setting can be surprisingly wide-ranging from the safety and cleanliness of one’s surroundings to the degree of welcome and enjoyment available.

In Section B we will be looking in some detail at these factors, and how to do an ‘audit’ of the mental health of your school or college.

You could try this: Activity 4

Promoting mental health in education

Time: 35-45 minutes

This exercise can be done by staff or students. It would be helpful to offer Handouts 1, 2 and 3.

1. Read aloud the definitions and ideas of good health and mental health in Part 1, and the quotes above.
2. In pairs, discuss what attributes of a school or college might undermine mental health.
3. Feed back results to the large group.
4. Taking the attributes of the mentally unhealthy educational setting the group has identified, try to turn each on its head to determine the attributes of a mentally healthy setting.
5. Is there anything else people would like to add? If they could have three wishes for their school or college, what would these be?
6. Taking one of two of the ideas generated in point 5, what would you need to do next, to make them happen?
7. Supposing you managed to create a mentally healthy environment. How would you keep it that way?

Handouts 6 and 7 might be useful as feedback for this exercise, or to stimulate discussion.

Variation

- At stage 2 above, you could ask some groups to look at what undermines mental health for students, and others to look at education professionals. (A group of teachers might want to differentiate further, looking at the stresses on SMT members, heads of years, subject teachers, learning support staff and so on.)
- As a large group, discuss whether the pressures in school or college are different for students and for staff. What are the common elements?

You could try this: Activity 5

What makes our school/college a good place to be?

Time: 45-55 minutes

This activity could be done with a group of children and young people working together, or a group of staff.

1. First, spend a little time thinking about the experiences that have encouraged you to grow in your life. You can do this on your own, or in pairs if you are working in a group.
2. Next, look at Handout 8. Think about the elements listed and what kinds of things did – or could – contribute to fostering each attribute in a young person. You can consider:
 - relationships
 - events
 - activities.
3. Think about the education environment you are involved in, considering all its aspects, its ethos, the people, the activities as well as the curriculum. What do you value about it? What makes it a good place to be? Make a few notes or draw a picture.
4. Which of these aspects currently contribute to fostering the desirable attributes in those who attend your school or college?
5. You might also like to think about some of the factors that work against these – in the community, in general circumstances (for example, the environment), in the staff or in the students.
6. Finally, list the three most positive, and the three most negative aspects of your school or college. Of the negative aspects, which is the easiest to change? Of the positive, which could be further developed?

3.3 Mental health problems in young people

As with all matters of health, mental health and well-being varies across a spectrum from good through mild problems to severe and complex needs. In adults the spectrum may show itself for example from feeling good and positive about life to mild short-term difficulties. These might include, for example, sleep loss, anxiety and low mood, in the face of transient but heavy work and personal pressure, to more chronic depression.

In children, and in young people, the spectrum is similar. Usually happy, positive, successful learners may demonstrate challenging behaviour or become withdrawn in response to some acute problem in their home situation. Long-standing behavioural difficulties represent a more entrenched mental health problem.

Even in a mentally healthy school or college there will be serious mental health problems for which children and young people may need specialist help and guidance, inside and outside the learning environment.

The government has recognised the importance of the role of education staff in promoting mental health among students, along with those with a formal role such as GPs. The role of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) will be looked at more fully in Section B.

It is not appropriate for education professionals to deal with serious or long-standing mental health disorders of young people in their school or college. However, part of a whole-school/college approach to mental health is to ensure that staff are clear about their role, and when and where to refer the young person for help. However, it is hugely helpful for a young person with mental health problems – whether transitory or more long term – for adults in their learning environment to have some understanding of what they are going through. A focus on mental health in the educational setting can:

- prevent some children and young people from developing serious problems
- ensure access to early advice and help when things start to go wrong for a student
- encourage joint working between education services, health services, voluntary organisations and social services professionals to overcome any problems that present
- improve attainment.

Problems of young people

A national survey has indicated that:

- 10 per cent of children aged five to 15 experience clinically defined psychiatric disorder:
 - 5 per cent have conduct disorders
 - 4 per cent have emotional disorders such as low mood, eating difficulties or self-harm
 - 1 per cent are hyperactive
- in a class of 20 there are likely to be two children with a clinically definable mental health problem
- additionally perhaps another 10 per cent may experience psychological problems serious enough to need help.
- early mental health problems can persist as two thirds of three-year-olds with significant disturbance still had significant difficulties aged eight and 12.

According to Young Minds, the average secondary school of 1000 pupils will have

- 50 students with depression
- 100 experiencing significant distress
- 10 affected by eating disorders
- 5-10 attempting suicide in any one year. Suicide by young men has increased by 75 per cent in 10 years.

The kinds of problems you might come up against in the education setting are grouped below.

Further information can be found on the Department for Education and Skills website, where the *Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings* guidance can be downloaded.

Type of difficulty	Examples in the education setting
Emotional	Withdrawal, phobias, anxiety states, school refusal, self-harm and high-risk behaviours, obsessive compulsive disorders, depression
Conduct	Stealing, defiance, fire-setting, aggression and anti-social behaviour
Hyper-kinetic	Disturbance of activity and attention
Developmental	Language disorder, specific reading difficulties, autism, delay in acquiring one or more skills such as speech.
Eating	Obesity, anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa
Self-care	Soiling, wetting
Post-traumatic stress	Following trauma such as rape, violent attack
Somatic difficulty	Chronic fatigue syndrome, physical manifestations of psychological problems
Psychotic difficulty	Schizophrenia, drug-induced psychosis – which may be indicated by one or more of the following: cutting, overdosing, hearing voices, extreme withdrawal

So how can we use the kinds of ideas and concepts we have covered so far to improve achievement and well-being in education?

Useful concepts: Risk and resilience

It is possible to classify the factors which have an impact on children and young people's mental health. Certain individuals and groups are more at risk of developing mental health problems than others, and there are also protective factors that enable children to be resilient – to thrive – despite the conditions and adverse events they face.

This is not to say that any one risk factor (or all) will necessarily cause mental ill health in young people or that having one or more resilience factors will necessarily protect them. But it is important for those working with young people and concerned with their mental health to have some understanding of what a particular child might be 'up against'.

Children's likelihood of developing mental health problems is greatly increased when adverse external circumstances, adverse family relationships and particular child characteristics reinforce each other.

Continuing risk arises from persisting disadvantageous circumstances, rather than from one irreversible early effect. The more disadvantages and the greater the experience of adverse life effects, the more protective factors are needed to act as counterbalance.

Whatever schools or colleges can do to limit the impact of the risk factors and to provide those circumstances which promote resilience will strengthen the child or young person's mental health.

Risk factors

In the environment	In the family	In the child
Socio-economic disadvantage	Overt parental conflict	Genetic influence
Homelessness	Family breakdown	Low IQ and learning disability
Disaster	Inconsistent or unclear discipline	Specific developmental delay
Discrimination	Hostile or rejecting relationships	Communication difficulty
Hostile, rejecting or abusive relationships	Failure to adapt to child's changing needs	Different temperament
Lack of training for child-rearing practices	Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder	Physical illness, especially if chronic or neurological
Lack of rehabilitation opportunities	Death or loss – including loss of friendship	Academic failure
	Neglect or abuse – physical, sexual or emotional	Low self-esteem

“Domestic violence has been shown to provoke a number of reactions in a child including fear, confusion, rejection, insecurity, guilt, a sense of injustice, anger and despair. This happens whether a child is the target of the violence, or witnesses it.”

Peter Wilson of Young Minds

Some children will already have encountered a number of adverse events in their lives and may be living with many of the disadvantages which put them at risk. For them school or college can begin to provide some of the factors which will boost their chances of thriving, particularly the opportunity to have:

- positive, trusting relationships with staff
- a sense of success in the learning community and in personal development.

School or college on its own may not be enough for some, but it has its part to play both in providing the enabling conditions and in providing an access route to other sources of support and help. For some children, school or college may be the one environment where they have access to reliable, trustworthy adults who believe in them and care for them.

You could try this: Activity 6

How can our school/college increase emotional resilience in young people?

Time: 45-55 minutes

1. Copy Handout 9, ensuring that each person present has a copy.
2. For each of the factors listed, try to decide which the school or college could have a role in providing. Tick the boxes next to those factors.
3. Taking each of the ticked factors in turn, try to form a question for your school or college. For example, if you think that your organisation could have a role in providing wider support networks, your question might be: “How can we increase support networks for students?” Handout 10 might be useful in providing some feedback after this stage of the activity.
4. When you have completed your list of questions, you could:
 - wordstorm some answers among the participants present. If you would like to take this exercise further. There is an activity in Section B on how to audit the mental health of your school or college which will help you look at what your organisation does already, and identify areas you might like to do further work in
 - look through Case Studies to find the ways in which other schools have risen to these challenges
 - survey staff, students or governors using your question formulated in point 3 above to gather a range of answers that you might use towards a development plan.
5. Would you be uncomfortable about working in any of these areas? Why?
6. Discuss how influential the role of the educational environment can be in relation to the other factors in a young person’s life. Is a secondary school or college different in its ability to provide a positive influence on a child’s life from a primary school?

3.4 Thinking about staff

“A less stressed staff makes for a much better experience for young people in a school.”

Shenley Court School

“The county council surveyed all its employees to find out how they felt about their work and the answers covered alarming stresses and strains, particularly among the 11,500 people who worked in education – 7,500 of whom were teachers.”

Times Educational Supplement

“Why do I do it? Working on strategies to promote mental health in my school helps my own development. It gives me the chance to do some of the things I said I wanted to do in my job interview.”

Hampstead School

A whole-school/college approach to mental health has been shown time and time again to improve achievement and to take pressure off staff. It provides staff with support in dealing with difficult situations, encourages good relationships between students and staff, and makes the school a good place to be.

You could try this: Activity 7

Stressors and anti-stressors in your education environment

Time: 30-50 minutes

As facilitator, it would be helpful to prepare yourself for this session by:

- gathering information on the kinds of support available for staff in your school or college and LEA, as well as national initiatives such as ‘Teacherline’
 - choosing to make senior management team, governors and parent groups aware of the kinds of stresses for staff in the school/college. However, you also need to maintain the trust and confidentiality of those who have taken part in the session.
1. Working on your own, make a few notes on the following questions:
 - How do you know when you are stressed?
 - What do you notice about yourself?
 - What might your students notice?
 - What might your family notice?
 - What might your colleagues notice?
 2. What causes you stress in your working life? Wordstorm a list for yourself. Some of these will be personal to you, some you will share with your colleagues.
 3. In pairs, share those you feel comfortable talking about with a neighbour.
 4. Next, compile a list as a group.
 5. Spend some time on your own listing that make you feel better. Where can you go for help?

6. Working as a large group, or in groups of three to four, can you find an 'anti-stressor' for each stressor you listed in Handout 11? Share results.
7. What is good about working in your school or college from an anti-stressor point of view? What factors of this environment help to keep you happy?
8. As facilitator, you can mention mechanisms in your education setting and beyond that are available to help staff with high stress levels. For example:
 - school/college counsellor
 - Teacherline
 - staff appraisals.
9. In the large group, discuss whether there are other things that might make you feel better. These can be as down-to-earth or creative as you like!

You could try this: Activity 8

Staff 'happy hour' project

Buckingham Middle School, Shoreham-by-Sea staff end the week with a 'happy hour'. The head provides soft drinks and snacks in the staff room and the idea is that staff can wind down together, and go home feeling relaxed and looking forward to the weekend. It works for them.

Put together a small team to investigate the possibility of a regular social, or other event that would make staff feel valued.

You could try this: Activity 9

Increasing support for staff

Time: 35-45 minutes

1. Taking each of the factors mentioned in Handout 12, try to say what effect it might have on the atmosphere or ethos of a school or college. How might the cumulative effect of these factors impact on students and staff in a school or college? Use Handout 13 for this task.
2. Looking back at the features of a mentally healthy school/college (Handout 7), suggest how each could help increase teacher resilience.
3. Using Handout 12 again, ask participants in twos or threes to say which, if any, they find to be problems in your school or college. Are there any things you can think of that could help increase staff resilience?
4. If you managed to create a really good working environment for teachers at your school, how would you keep it that way?

Other activities in this section are also aimed at considering the mental health of teachers.

- Activity 3 – the variation offered might make a useful team-building exercise at a staff meeting or INSET day.
- Activity 4 – can be adapted for use with staff by changing point 2 to read, 'what attributes of the school or college might undermine the mental health of staff?'
- Activity 5 – the questions can be re-written to look at how the school or college could offer a good environment for staff.

All staff have needs – all staff are needed

It is very important not to overlook either the needs – or the contribution – that non-teaching staff can make to mental health promotion in a school or college.

At a school in Kent which specialises in dealing with excluded and disaffected young people, the staff team as a whole are considered as part of the mental health promotion team and encouraged to play an active part in engaging with students. One student formed a special bond with a school security guard who had been encouraged to share his hobby of falconry with the students. The young man sought him out to talk about birds in times of special distress, and formed a strong bond with him, which was mutually rewarding, as a result.

You could try this: Activity 10

Whole-school/college, whole-staff approach

Time: 45-55 minutes

1. In groups of three, brainstorm all the different roles that adults fulfil in your education community.
2. Together, in the large group, list all the roles of non-teaching staff.
3. Allocate each role to a different pair in the group. Ask them to consider:
 - how could people in that role contribute to or hinder mental health promotion in our learning environment?
 - what support might non-teaching staff need to help develop mental health promotion skills?
 - what opportunities are there for non-teaching staff to be involved in decision-making in our school or college?
4. As a large group, share results and identify three ideas that could most easily be taken forward in the education setting.

Initiatives examining the role of staff and national initiatives (government, LEA and voluntary sector) dealing with staff stress and promoting well-being are outlined in the Case Studies section. For more detailed information see ‘Resources for education staff’ in Appendix 1.

In Section B we look at some of the practicalities of implementing a whole-school/college approach, and in Case Studies we examine some of the experiences of schools who have been actively promoting mental health for some time.



Section B

In this section we provide a basic do-it-yourself tool kit for improving mental health in your school or college, with methodologies, contacts and planning tools to provide you with some practical plans for whole-school/college strategies.

4.1 Introducing the whole-school/college mental health tool kit

In this section you will find a tool kit to help you in working towards a mentally healthy school or college.

The tool kit begins with an activity to help you audit the mental health of your learning environment – to help you to evaluate what you feel you do well, and identify areas you would like to work on. This can be done in sections, over time, or as a complete project.

It also includes information on practical approaches that have been successful at secondary level, including links to the PSHE and citizenship curricula.

We have also included material on the role of policies in supporting a whole-school/college approach to mental health, with activities on good practice in policy making.

4.2 What do we mean by a whole-school/college approach?

The majority of schools will already have in place a number of initiatives that promote the mental health of the members of the school community and make the school environment pleasant, safe, welcoming and supportive and encouraging active learning and positive behaviour.

You could try this: Activity 11

Auditing the mental health of your school or college

Time: Flexible

Use the whole-school/college approach diagram in Handout 14 as a tool to stimulate your thinking on different elements of learning life.

1. What we do now: use the whole-school/college approach diagram as a framework for collating information on all the aspects of the life of your education environment that you feel contribute to mental health promotion. Use the notes and questions in Handout 15 to guide you. These may appear daunting at first, but will provide you with a very useful ‘snapshot’ of where you are now. To make it easier, you could:
 - take one section at a time
 - prioritise one question from each of the sections as a first stage
 - decide to do a quick-audit in the first instance, just using the information you have to hand. This will give you a very useful ‘feel’ for where you need to start. It may be all you need to do.

You can always build up the picture afterwards, if necessary, as you discuss it with colleagues, or have a chance to do more research. Use Handout 16 to assist in your quick audit.

2. What we do not do, but might: Once you have collected all the information, it will be easier to spot any gaps in your provision.
3. What we would like to do: Use the whole-school/college approach diagram to canvass opinion among the different groups in your school or college (management, staff, parents, governors and students) about what they feel would most improve life in the educational setting. This may take some time to do, but will help to engage different groups in your school or college and bring out some interesting ideas.

Your completed 'audit' will open up many avenues for further exploration.

- Almost all those interviewed in our case studies stressed the importance of giving any new initiatives time to develop, so do not expect radical changes overnight. While results can begin to be seen very quickly, it is best to prepare for a long-term approach.
- Appoint a co-ordinator to pull the programme together.
- The co-ordinator will need the support of the senior management team to ensure real commitment to change and to obtain resources.

Your programme will also need to fit the particular needs of your educational setting, but there are many examples of approaches that have been shown to work which can be adapted to suit your circumstances and the staff's skills and interests.

The next activity will be useful to help you find out which approach might be helpful to you.

You could try this: Activity 12

Planning an initiative to improve the mental health of your school/college

Time: 20 minutes

Handouts 17 and 18 will help you think through any initiatives you want to take as a result of using Handout 16. They could be of assistance as the basis of a paper for the senior management team (or governors) of your school or college and will help you to plan and share information with others involved.

4.3 The whole-school/college mental health promotion tool kit: policy

Policies your school/college needs

Schools and colleges are required to have policies in a number of areas including:

- equal opportunities
- special educational needs
- sex education
- drugs
- anti-bullying
- anti-racism
- behaviour
- critical incident.

Many of these have links to mental health, some more strongly than others.

Your school or college may choose to have policies in other areas such as:

- bereavement
- social relationships
- emotional literacy
- continuing professional development
- staff care
- pastoral care
- parent/carer partnership
- mental health promotion.

You could try this: Activity 13

Policies that promote mental health in education

Time: 35-45 minutes

This activity can be done with staff and/or students, and it will be particularly good to try with governors who are responsible for policy. For the activity you will need to provide participants with a copy of Handout 19 – one between two should be sufficient.

1. Working on your own, or in pairs, read through the list of policies in the left hand column.
2. Try to decide in which ways these policies might relate to mental health issues in your education setting, and note your ideas in the relevant box in the right hand column.
3. Compare results, writing the answers on a flipchart.
4. Discuss which of the policies are the most relevant to the mental health of young people in your setting. You could also look at which are the most relevant to staff, teaching staff and others, and which, if any, to parents.
5. Are there any other kinds of policies you think a school or college should have to promote mental health?

What makes a good policy for a school or college?

Having a policy is not enough. A policy needs to be effective.

An effective policy:

- is about promoting good behaviour
- is about being pro-active, rather than reactive
- is written in clear, simple language
- is reviewed and evaluated regularly
- lays out who is responsible for what
- is clear about its aims and objectives, and the time frame within which these need to be achieved
- gives guidance on how these will be met
- is one which the school/college community understands
- is one which the school/college community is motivated to support
- is collectively owned and practised.

You could try this: Activity 14

Policy into practice

Time: 35-45 minutes

For this activity you will need a list (and preferably copies) of all the policies your school or college has at present.

1. Ask colleagues or students to brainstorm in pairs a list of all the policies your school or college has that relate to mental health. If the group is not conversant with mental health issues, it may be best to begin by trying Activity 1 from Section A.
2. Have them share their lists with the whole group. Write them up on a flipchart.
3. Write up in a second colour any policies that the group were not aware of.
4. Discuss why the group think this is the case. From the discussion you will probably be able to draw out two or more strands of reasons including:
 - the link between the policy concerned and mental health at the school is not obvious or clear
 - the policy concerned does not ‘work’ in some way or is not being implemented.
5. Now, again working in pairs, try to list some of the features that make an effective policy.

The process of developing a policy, collecting information and making decisions can be a very creative and rewarding one for your school and will ensure that any new policy is collectively owned and practised.

Ask other schools or colleges in your area for copies of their policies and note the features that you think work particularly well. (You can also add these to your mini-resource bank.) Share your good ideas with them, too.

For further guidance on writing effective policies see Resources (Appendix 1).

Gaining support for your school's/colleges' mental health policies

“Policies have an important role in affirming the ethos of a school, and are best when they are clear and brief and give a clear description of the ethos. In my experience it is better to capture a policy in writing only after it has developed in practice.”

Shenley Court School

School/college communities will need motivation to support policies. Generally, the different groups in a school or college community will support a policy if:

- it makes sense to them
- they can see how it benefits them
- it inspires them
- its aims and processes are clear
- they have been consulted in drafting it, and have had the chance to comment and make some input into it.

In order to make your policies really work for your learning environment, you will need to find ways of involving the whole education community in writing them.

They will also need to be reviewed regularly, to keep them relevant. “But you can’t be doing this all the time – things change very fast. You need to make compromises,” according to the head of Shenley Court School.

You could try this: Activity 15

Putting together participatory policy

Time: 35-45 minutes

1. List all the mechanisms your school or college has for involving the different sections of your school or college community. Handout 20 will probably help you.
2. Imagine you needed to evaluate an existing policy – for example, the anti-bullying policy, and you want to get input from each of the groups within the school/college community. Ask yourself:
 - which mechanisms would be best for this purpose, and how would you use them?
 - in what order would you work?
3. Design a flow-chart showing how you would go about this.

You could try this: Activity 16

Good practice in policy development

Time: 35-45 minutes

1. Imagine that you were given the job of rewriting your school’s/colleges’ anti-racism and discrimination policy to make clear the importance of the relationship between racism and mental health for young people.
2. Divide the group into pairs, and have each pair make some notes on the process they might use, assigning each pair one of the following questions.
 - What sources of background information could you draw on?
 - What kind of reference group would you like to support you?
 - What people or groups of people could you consult from within the school or college?
 - Are there any particular groups or organisations outside the immediate education setting you would wish to consult?
3. Share information with the group.

4.4 The whole-school/college mental health promotion tool kit: approaches

You could try this: Activity 17

Useful approaches

Time: 35–45 minutes

1. Give participants a copy of Handout 21, and ask them, in pairs, to fill in the column ‘What it is’ using their existing knowledge.
2. Using reports from pairs in the whole group, fill out the definitions together. Fill in any gaps using the information in Handout 21.
3. Next, divide participants into small groups and invite each group, using the definitions you have completed together, to think of ways that they might use that approach in the life of the school or college.
4. Share approaches, and, if possible, prioritise as a group which they would like to start on first, and why. These ideas can be put forward to the schools or colleges management team and governors for action.

Variation

- Invite teachers and staff to complete stages 3 and 4 working in groups specific to their subject areas.

Approaches to mental health promotion in schools and colleges

Handout 22 outlines a range of complementary concepts and techniques found to be helpful in promoting mental health in schools and colleges. We hope that they will offer some food for thought as you think about future projects and programmes for your own school or college. We have also provided more detail on some of the key concepts and techniques. Further information can be found in Appendix I and Appendix III.

Emotional Intelligence

In “Why mental health promotion in education?” (Section A) we looked at the conflict that some schools have felt between their mission in equipping students for full and satisfying lives within healthy communities, and their goal of improving academic results. In looking at ways of promoting well-being in schools and colleges, we are bridging the gap and working on both these objectives in a mutually compatible way.

Many in schools and colleges have found the concept of the promotion of emotional literacy to have been extremely useful in this process. Daniel Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* shows how over-emphasising the cognitive aspects of intelligence misses the contribution that emotions make to our thinking and decision-making. He points out that success in life is influenced to a great degree by how we handle our emotions and that increasing self-awareness, learning to manage anger and developing empathy plays a large role in reducing anxiety and leads to improved relationships and, ultimately, achievement.

You could try this: Activity 18

Whole-school/college emotional literacy

Time: 35-45 minutes

1. Read to participants the quotations regarding mental health in Handout 3 and the definition of emotional literacy in the Handout 22.
2. Have them list in threes what they think are the attributes of:
 - an emotionally literate adult
 - an emotionally literate young person.
3. Share findings from each group in the large group, discussing any differences.
4. Now divide participants into four groups. Invite them to say what would constitute
 - an emotionally literate school or college
 - an emotionally literate teaching staff
 - an emotionally literate non-teaching staff
 - emotionally literate students
 - emotionally literate parents.
5. Share findings as a group, and discuss how each of these, in turn, might be facilitated. What difference would it make to your school or college?

Working with Refugee pupils in the London Borough of Newham

Young refugees identified a number of things that made it difficult for them to settle in at school or college:

- feeling lost and anxious about finding their way around a large and unfamiliar school or college
- being bullied because they are new, or in some cases because they are culturally different
- having to learn in an unfamiliar education system and an unfamiliar language
- at times feeling overwhelmed by their memories and unable to concentrate
- some refugee children have extensive domestic responsibilities that make it difficult to complete work on time.

Many of the things that helped these refugee students would be equally helpful to all young people at school including:

- a consistent programme of induction for all newly-arrived 'casual admissions', including supplementary support as necessary
- buddy systems with students already familiar with the school
- help for year 7 students with finding their way around
- understanding from teachers about how their experiences may affect their capacity to concentrate and to complete work on time.

From Antidote website (see Appendix III for more information).

There are many ways of promoting emotional literacy in schools and colleges including all of the approaches mentioned in Case Studies. These include circle work, peer listening, buddy systems and paired learning.

Emotional literacy is a way of conceptualising all initiatives in an education setting for promoting well-being. Like all effective approaches, the promotion of emotional literacy in schools and colleges requires a whole-school/college approach which in turn requires the support of senior management. As shown at Shenley Court School an effective way of teaching young people emotional literacy is for them to see it modelled in practice. The well-being of education staff is central to this practice. The Fourth 'R': Emotional Education in the Curriculum conference held by Antidote in 1998 concluded that:

- staff need opportunities to develop their own emotional understanding if they are to help children and young people develop emotional understanding
- staff are more likely to be effective within emotionally supportive environments – teachers need to work in an environment where staff support each other, making it possible to acknowledge their mistakes and talk about the challenges they face without embarrassment.

Peer support

“There is a great deal of teacher and pupil enthusiasm for these schemes, not only as a way of challenging bullying, but as a way, in the long term, of changing the ethos of a school to one of care ... it is possible to create environments that promote rather than discourage pro-social ways of living and communicating with others.”

Helen Cowie

Research carried out by the Mental Health Foundation has shown that in times of trouble ‘turning to friends was a clear first choice’, and yet research shows that only 17 per cent of children will spontaneously go to the aid of a victim of bullying. Reasons for this can include:

- strong peer pressure towards bystander apathy
- fear of retaliation by bullies
- lack of confidence in their own supportive skills
- embarrassment at being rebuffed
- anxiety that they may say the wrong thing
- relief at not being the target
- enjoyment at someone else’s misfortune.

It has been shown that young people are much more likely to offer support to peers in distress if there is a system in which they can operate. There are many different kinds of peer support. As shown in the case studies of Kingsbury High School (which offers a combination of conflict mediation, mentoring and counselling-based peer support) and Flegg High School (which offers a mainly counselling-based scheme), there are a remarkable number of benefits for the whole-school from such programmes.

At a Mental Health Foundation peer support network meeting involving 60 peer representatives from seven London schools, peer supporters identified the following changes in the school having resulted from the initiatives they had been involved with. According to these students, peer support:

- relieves stress on staff to deal with minor issues so they have more time to deal with major issues
- helps staff get in touch with students' emotional needs
- means small problems can be dealt with before they get out of hand
- friendly sociable environment where there is less bullying, year 7 students are able to settle quickly and there is mixing across year groups.

Circle time

“I think if you just sit down at tables and on chairs and discuss things it doesn't really work. It doesn't have as much effect, but if you sit in a circle, you can see everyone, you can see them talking and hear them really well, you don't have to turn around, so you concentrate more.”

Year 7 student quoted in *Circle Time: A much needed resource in Secondary Schools?*

Circle time, sometimes called quality circle time (QCT), is a programme of structured class meetings for engaging children and adults in the process of learning, personal social development, conflict resolution, peer support and problem solving. It involves a whole-class meeting where everyone sits in a circle. It is a forum that is bounded by strict ground rules to ensure emotional 'safety' and respectful listening.

Circle time is now a well-used methodology in primary schools for increasing self-awareness and self esteem in children, but its usefulness in secondary school and colleges has until recently been relatively unknown. A recent research project by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has shown something of its huge potential for mental health promotion at secondary level. The research showed that:

- students enjoyed it (by a factor of 6:1)
- reduced shyness and fear of ridicule were common, resulting in pupils reporting greater readiness to ask teachers questions in class and more confidence to share feelings of sadness and joy with peers
- increased social cohesion had facilitated learning in other subjects.

Circle time encourages young people to:

- reflect on their behaviour
- set goals for improvements
- regulate their personal behaviour
- acquire skills and attitudes relevant to the establishment of positive relationships with peers
- become more sensitive to and tolerant of others
- develop competencies and skills in attending, observing, thinking, speaking and listening.

Using circle time in a secondary school or college may require more thought than it might in a primary school as it will be less familiar to teaching and support staff. The culture is somewhat different and classrooms may offer physical barriers such as lab benches. However, as the case studies show, it can be used to good effect in teaching the pastoral curriculum (Hampstead School and Kingsbury High School) in working with troubled students. With some thought, it can also be used with non-teaching staff, governors and parents.

There are several good reasons for secondary school and college staff to think about becoming familiar with circle time. These include:

- Ofsted reports have recognised and commented on the contribution of circle time to promoting moral, spiritual, social and cultural development and developing positive behaviour and relationships born out of mutual respect and value
- it helps with early identification of disaffected students
- circle time can help to bridge the divide that so often exists between childrens' experience of primary and secondary school or college. The overwhelming majority of children in primary school now have experience of using circle time, one of the benefits of which is feeling valued and trusted
- many of the skills it offers students are directly related to the requirements of the PHSE and citizenship curricula.

You could try this: Activity 19

Ground rules for good relating

Time: 35-45 minutes

'Ground rules' is the term used for a set of principles that help discussions go well, and are one of the key concepts of circle time. See Handout 23 for an example of these rules.

1. Ask participants to think back to the last time they were involved in a discussion.
2. Invite them to list, in pairs, behaviour on the part of other people (including words, language, body language and sounds) that in any way inhibited their participation in the discussion.
3. Share these in the large group, grouping them according to the categories mentioned in point 2.
4. Discuss how they might have felt in the discussion they thought of in point 1, if beforehand, participants had agreed on a list of ground rules that encouraged positive and respectful behaviour in the group.

Inclusiveness

In schools and colleges, inclusive practice is used to enhance educational attainment by trying to identify, and remove, barriers to participation among particular groups of students. It is a way of working which involves providing an open and welcoming environment in which there is a problem-solving mentality, tolerance for difference and celebration of diversity. An inclusive environment is one which uses a social, rather than medical model of disability, recognising that problems are often caused by attitudes to difference, rather than difference itself.

The term social inclusion refers to the recognition that some groups within society are more empowered to participate than others, and strives to create an ethos in which this is recognised, and steps are taken to remedy the situation (see Section A, Activity 1). Inclusive language is a term used to describe language that strives to find common ground among participants and is value-free and non-judgemental.

There are differences within any group of people. Inclusive practice recognises this and tries to work in ways which recognise this and enhance participation within the group. Inclusiveness addresses:

- differing levels of physical and mental ability
- differences between boys and girls
- differences of culture
- differences of race, ethnicity, language and faith
- perceived differences of any kind, including 'in' and 'out' groups.

Examples of an inclusive approach demonstrated in this resource include:

- the intention at Shenley Court High School to re-write circular letters the school sends out to make them more user-friendly (see Case Studies)
- the experience of Kingsbury High School in changing the physical environment of the school to make it accessible for a student who uses a wheelchair and the policy, praised by Ofsted, of having signers for the deaf in every assembly (see Case Studies)
- to assist refugees in settling in at school (see p34).

You could try this: Activity 20

Including everyone

Time: 35-45 minutes

At a recent conference on promoting whole-school/college mental health, students from Kingsbury High School led a session based on the following guide.

Arrange participants into circles of about eight people.

1. Going round the circle, ask each person in turn to say their name. Going round again, have each say their name again, and to say something about why they like it.
2. Next, ask participants to imagine that they are an animal. Which animal would they choose? (They keep the answer to themselves.)
3. Now ask them to imagine themselves, as this animal, in a forest.
4. Continue as follows, “Imagine that you have spotted some really nice food for yourself. You are really hungry. You approach the food and see that there is another animal with the same idea. What is this animal?” (Again, they keep answers to themselves for now.)
5. Next, ask participants what they would do and allow a little thinking time.
6. Finally, have people in turn, say what kind of animal they were, what kind they met, and how they dealt with the food situation.

“We do this exercise because everyone can take part – everyone knows their name and has an imagination,” says a year 9 peer listener at Kingsbury High School.

“The exercise also gives people some insight into their characters. We explain to them that the kind of animal they chose shows something about how they see themselves.”

How they dealt with the potential conflict over food shows something about how they see themselves relating to others. Some animals might have fought, some might have run away, some might have come to a compromise.

“We can use this information as the basis of a discussion about ways different people react, in certain situations. We do this both with those who have been bullied, and those who have a tendency to bully others,” explains a peer listener.

Whole-school/college approach

In striving to implement a whole-school/college approach, it is important to look at the people in the school or college community as a whole and the processes that the community is engaged in. Equally important, but less tangible, and less easily measurable is the atmosphere, or ethos of your learning environment. If staff, students, community members do not feel welcome and valued, special projects and policies for mental health promotion can fall on stony ground. Activities 21 and 22 look at ways of doing a health-check on your school or colleges' atmosphere in two less obvious areas:

- the school/college environment
- the tone of the communications sent out.

You could try this: Activity 21

An inclusive education environment

Time: 35-45 minutes

Some preparation will be needed for this activity which should be completed in stages. This could be done as classwork by students.

You will need:

- Several maps:
 - one scale map showing the school or college in its grounds
 - one scale map showing the buildings, with features such as corridors and toilet areas marked
 - one scale map showing your school or college in the local community, including the streets around for about half a mile.
 - Three teams of volunteers
 - Information from voluntary organisations such as ChildLine on bullying.
1. At an introductory session, work with participants on developing a 'working definition' of what bullying is. Draw on resources such as voluntary organisations and your anti-bullying policy.
 2. Divide your participants into three groups, and assign each group the area covered by one of the maps listed above.
 3. Ask each group to do some research on their area, asking students in each of the schools' year groups (perhaps through their tutor group) where they feel safest, and why, and where they feel less safe, and may have been bullied. Ask them to come prepared with this information to your next meeting.
 4. Together, groups share the information they have come up with, and mark 'danger' areas on the maps.
 5. Think together about why particular areas might feel less safe than others, and what might be done about these areas. Could students put together a paper for the assembly, the senior management team, the governors or the school/college council?

You could try this: Activity 22

Words of welcome: inclusive letters home

Time: 35-55 minutes

You could do this as part of a staff INSET day or with pupils as part of inclusiveness studies in the PHSE curriculum, or both.

1. Spend a little time wordstorming the following terms:
 - inclusiveness
 - partnership
 - accessible
 - authoritarian.
2. Make copies of all the standard letters the school/college sends to parents. Working in small groups, have participants highlight all the examples of the following, preferably each in a different coloured highlighter pen:
 - jargon
 - authoritarian language
 - complicated text.
3. Finally, have the group choose one letter to rewrite to make it more welcoming to the reader. You could also 'road test' these with groups of volunteers, perhaps in a governors' meeting.

4.5 The whole-school/college mental health promotion tool kit: curriculum

“I’d want to come to school.”

Primary school pupil talking about what makes for a healthy school

Mental health promotion and PSHE curriculum development

Some schools and colleges have found that working in close partnership with the local education authority can have great benefits.

The PSHE advisor in the London Borough of Camden says her aim as an advisory teacher was to support good PSHE teaching in the schools in the borough. “I work in two ways. I provide a central training programme to help schools get up to speed on new government initiatives – at the moment I do a lot of work on the new citizenship curriculum – and sex and drugs education. The new citizenship curriculum will be compulsory, unlike the PSHE one. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a compulsory curriculum.

“The disadvantage, of course, is that it may *appear* irrelevant to students and staff who can be begrudging about spending time on it, ‘because there is no exam in it’. Another is that because it has had such low status, there is very little investment in research in the same way as there is for ‘hard’ subjects like science. We have very little evidence about how effective our teaching is in this area. We need investment in good evaluation.

“The overriding advantage of not having a compulsory curriculum is that you can gear what you teach to the students you have. That is really very important. It is arguable how much use it will be to teach PSHE if it is not directly relevant to the lives of the students being taught.”

Camden’s PSHE advisor also conducts school-based INSET training, through which she has had contact with Hampstead School. This training helps schools and colleges in developing their own policies, including those that promote good mental health. “I’m not here to replace teacher support and guidance, but I do help them with their competence and confidence.”

Hampstead School has made good use of support offered by the advisory service. According to the assistant head, “We decided to produce our own schemes of work in the school. Some teachers were quite unused to that, quite unconfident about doing it. But with the LEA’s help and encouragement we have managed it and it has helped our pastoral team to feel ownership of the teaching programme.”

“As part of PSHE education, I feel mental health promotion is particularly important” continues the PSHE advisor. “However, it is only one small part of the PSHE curriculum. What it boils down to is probably four lessons a term. Of course that is not nearly enough in relation to the importance of the issues. However, PSHE lessons are not the only times in which students can be taught how to keep themselves mentally healthy and to challenge prejudice. Opportunities can be created in other curriculum areas as well, as they can outside the classroom, in all aspects of school or college life.

“It is also true that the *way* things are taught is important, in mental health promotion as in other things, it is important to provide variety in the methods used. PHSE teaching generally, and mental health in particular, is particularly lacking in visual materials such as cards and posters, to which young people readily respond.

She recommends that in order to ensure that mental health promotions gets the attention it deserves in schools and colleges each institution should have:

- its own schemes of work
- a policy on PSHE that includes mental health promotion
- a handbook on PSHE teaching.

In other words, PSHE should have to go through the same planning processes in a school or college as maths and science.

“New initiatives such as the Healthy Schools initiative (which aims to create local partnerships between health and education) can be very useful to schools as part of their efforts to do good health promotion work, if they take opportunities to make the guidance their own.”

Mental health promotion and the curriculum: finding the links

A positive ethos is probably one of the best measures of whether a school or college is successful in promoting mental health. In Activity 11 we looked at some of the ideas and concepts related to mental health promotion and how these relate to the life of a school or college. We saw mental health promotion is as much about process as about product, and a whole-school approach is by far the most effective in working towards making your learning environment a happy and healthy place.

While there are many opportunities for promoting mental health through the community life of the school/college, there are also clear links to the national curriculum. Though mental health promotion is an integral to many parts of the curriculum, it is linked most obviously with the areas personal, social and health education and citizenship. In Handout 24 we have drawn out the links between mental health promotion and the non-statutory framework for PSHE at key stages 3 and 4 and the Statutory Order for Citizenship at key stage 3 and 4.

You could try this: Activity 23

The curriculum and mental health promotion

Time: 35-45 minutes

This activity looks at the links between some of the most common tools used in promoting mental health promotion in schools and colleges and the requirements of the PSHE and Citizenship curricula at key stages 3 and 4. It would work well at a departmental day for teaching staff, or with older students. It would follow on well from Activity 17.

For this activity you will need enough copies of the following for one between two participants:

- Handout 22
- Handout 24
- Handout 25.

1. Either begin with Activity 17, or distribute copies of Handout 22. Have participants examine it in pairs. Going round the pairs, have each say what they understand about each approach to the large group. Allow some time for discussion, so that everyone has an understanding of what each of the approaches entail.
2. Give each pair a copy of Handout 25, and ask them to match the approach described with any of the curriculum requirements that it fits with.

Variation

With a group that knows each other well, this activity could be made more interactive (and more fun) in the following way:

1. Following step 1 above, ask for seven volunteers to represent each of the curriculum areas listed in Handout 24 above. Each will need a 'station', for example a chair and a sign indicating which element they represent. Arrange the stations in a row down the middle of the room.
2. Next, find seven volunteers, each willing to represent one of the approaches in Handout 22. Arrange them in 'stations' in the same manner, with their signs, opposite the curriculum requirements. Give each of these 'stations' a different colour ball of wool (tie one end of this to the leg of the station's chair), or sheet of sticky dots or stars. If you have more than 14 people, the extras can double up at the stations on this side of the room.
3. Have the members of the approaches group move towards each of the curriculum stations (it does not matter what order they work in), unravelling their ball of wool as they go. If they find, after discussion at that curriculum point, that they can make a link between their approach and the curriculum point, they loop the wool around that chair, and then return to their own station. They continue in this way until they have had discussions at each station.
4. When the discussion is over (about 20 minutes), and everyone is back at their original station, it should be easy to see where the links are. Discuss with the group their thoughts on this process, on the links they found, and on any gaps.

There are also an increasing number of classroom resources that link the curricula with mental health promotion activities.

4.6 The whole-school/college mental health promotions tool kit: training

Time is a precious commodity in schools and colleges. However there are many opportunities to look at mental health issues and many ways in which some training on mental health promotion can be incorporated into the life of our schools and colleges.

In thinking about staff training, some or all of these opportunities have been used:

- INSET days (half day or full day)
- staff meetings
- key stage meetings
- site meeting
- departmental meeting
- school assemblies.

A whole-staff approach is ideal for mental health promotion training, but may not always be possible. If not, it is possible to make a good start with smaller amounts of time, if possible at regular intervals.

Effective training looks to provide staff with the skills, attitudes and values, and knowledge they need to maximise their role in promoting good mental health, including their own. It will also work best if it gives them a chance to participate actively and if they can see the relevance or benefits for them. Generally, people will be most interested if they can see the relevance to their own lives and work.

Be creative

The activities throughout this resource have been designed to be used in many contexts, including in staff training days. You can select activities to make up a day of desired consistency and length. Some sample 'menus' have been provided below. You can also use the activities in this resource as a base for designing your own activities – the more enjoyable, the better! As part of a whole day INSET, for example, you could write a booklet, design a poster, write some promotional materials – something that will remind the staff of what they have learned, and may also be of practical use afterwards.

You can also invite special speakers. Local voluntary organisations, CAMHS teams, the peer support network and the larger national organisations listed in Appendix III may well be able to provide speakers or trainers for schools and colleges.

Activities menu

- For an extended staff meeting (1 hour) you might choose:
Activity 9: **increasing support for staff**

- For a half-day's INSET (2½ hours) you might choose:
Activity 1: **what is mental health?**
Activity 13: **policies that promote mental health in schools/colleges**

- For a full-day's INSET (4 hours) you might choose a programme similar to the one below.
Morning:
Activity 20: **including everyone**
Activity 5: **what makes our school/college a good place to be?**
In groups have participants read one of the case studies, and choose from it:
 - a question they would like to ask
 - one good idea they would like to try then share these in the larger group.Afternoon:
Prioritising ideas: which ones could we take forward?

Reflection time:
 1. List three things I have learned about myself today.
 2. List three things I have learned about my school/college today.
 3. List an action that I would like to do as a result of what I have learned today.

4.7 The whole-school/college mental health tool kit: resources

While creating a whole-school/college approach is undoubtedly a challenge, it is also true that if you have a little time to devote to detective work, you can find many sources of help and support, and sometimes even money.

These sources divide roughly into:

- community resources, including locally-based community groups and voluntary organisations
- statutory resources, both locally and nationally based, including national policy frameworks such as the Healthy Schools Programme, initiatives of your local education and health authorities and CAMHS teams
- nationally-based voluntary organisations. Organisations such as ChildLine and the Mental Health Foundation and networks such as the peer-support network
- businesses, such as the Barclays New Futures fund (see Flegg High School case study).

The role of the business community in relation to schools and colleges can be a rather sensitive issue, perhaps best left to each individual school or college to determine. In this resource we will concentrate on the help secondary schools can obtain from community, statutory and voluntary organisations.

Community resources

The Case Studies section shows that there are many productive ways in which schools, colleges and local communities can interact. As you work on developing the mental health promotion strategy for your learning environment, it will be useful to be aware of all the resources your school and college has access to within your local area.

You could try this: Activity 24

Our web of contacts

Time: 35-55 minutes

1. Spend a little time thinking about your school/college as part of the community.
2. Make a brief list (in pairs) of all the people, organisations, policies and resources that come to mind that contribute to mental health in your school or college.
3. If you have time, ask groups of students, teachers, the senior management team, governors and parents for their ideas. In particular, you might like to ask for the views of the head of PSHE, the careers teacher, the nurse, the librarian, and the counsellor (if you have one).
4. Next draw a picture or a whole-school/college approach diagram (Handout 14).

This exercise will give you a 'snapshot' of the resources for mental health that your institution already has access to, and it will help you as you work through the rest of this section.

Statutory initiatives

The importance of the role of staff in relation to young people's mental health is recognised by professionals working in the field of child and adolescent mental health, along with that of GPs and school nurses. (The full range of CAHMS involves four 'tiers' of support, and is set out in Appendix V.)

You could try this: Activity 25

Who can help?

Time: 35-45 minutes

This activity might work particularly well as part of an INSET day on mental health promotion for your school or college. You will need enough copies of Appendix V for every one in the group to have sight of it.

1. Start by going through the definitions of mental health in Activity 1 with the group.
2. Working in threes, have the group try and formulate a definition of mental distress. Then share Handouts 1-4 used in Activities 1 and 2.
3. Invite participants to work in groups of three again, and give each group a copy of Appendix V and ask them to look at it and comment on it. What does it add to their understanding of the support systems for young people with mental health problems at your institution?
4. As a large group, with the help of contributions from the pastoral team, look at the kind and frequency of school/college contact with Tiers 1 and 2 of CAMHS. Would more frequent contact better support staff at the school in carrying out their pastoral duties, and what benefits might there be for students? Is there any way in which this might be facilitated?

Schools and colleges have found that it is well worth getting to know their local CAMHS team, for example by inviting them to a staff meeting, a senior management meeting, or to take part in a training event on mental health promotion at your school. If you do not already have a name or number, you can ask your local GP, your local health authority or mental health trust. (Note that CAMHS cannot be contacted through social services.)

Who can help the young person?

For young people who do develop significant distress, the array of different professionals, from doctors and psychologists to social workers, they may become involved with can be bewildering. A start has been made with new initiatives (for example the Healthy Schools Initiative) but many are still frustrated at the lack of opportunity for real communication.

Some schools have found it useful to offer themselves as a meeting point for all those involved with a child. At Shenley Court High School, see Case Studies, the school counsellor holds 'case conferences' for all the professionals involved with a particular young person. The school – as well as the professionals – finds this an excellent way of keeping an over-view of what is going on for the child.

You could try this: Activity 26

Local authority initiatives

Project

Your area will have its own Local Agenda 21 plan, as well as a Health Improvement Plan (HIMP). Your school or college may well have been consulted in framing these local action plans.

1. Obtain copies of the relevant documents, and try to see how the initiatives proposed could help promote mental health in your educational setting, using Handout 26.
2. Find out whether your school/college is part of a Health Action Zone or a Education Action Zone. If so, how could these initiatives be used to help promote mental health of students and staff? (Refer to the case study of Pennywell School.)

You could try this: Activity 27

Mental health in our school/college: where can we get help on ...?

Project

This is a project which will enable you to collect together in one place the information on all the topics you have mapped in the previous activities, to act as a mini-mental health resource centre.

Your mini-resource centre may consist to begin with simply of a card index with names and contact details (and a few notes) perhaps divided into the four sections suggested below. A larger system could include:

- useful leaflets and flyers
- documents and policies
- addresses and phone numbers of people and organisations that can support mental health promotion in your school or college.

How big and how detailed it is is up to you and the time you are able to spend. It will also depend on whether you are working alone, or with a 'task group' of staff and students who can help you collate information. Another important factor will be the space that you have available. It does not matter how humble your beginnings, your system can always be added to later.

Give some thought to where the mini-resource centre will be stored (an easily accessible place such as the library is ideal) and arrangements to have it regularly updated.

Your mini-resource centre will help your school/college by providing:

- an easy access point to all useful information in one place, for whoever needs it
- a means of sharing information among staff involved in different aspects of the schools' or colleges' life
- a means of seeking information on subjects that might be embarrassing for the young person
- a place to store information that comes into the school or college about local services and organisations that might otherwise get 'lost'
- a place to store ideas and examples of good practice for possible use in the future.

It should also make you feel much more confident about dealing with a range of mental health promotion issues, and help make it clear to everyone in your education setting what can be provided from within the learning environment, and where help can be found from outside.

To compile your mini-resource centre, you will need:

1. **Information from inside your school or college** about mental health promotion, for example:
 - copies of existing policies and procedures relating to mental health, for example anti-bullying policy, bereavement policies
 - a list of those responsible for different aspects of mental health promotion at present, for example PSHE teachers and their areas of expertise, school counsellor (if you have one), careers teacher and others. List what they offer, to whom, when they are available and how they can be contacted
 - copies of leaflets and flyers explaining initiatives your school or college has for promoting mental health, for example if the counsellor has produced a leaflet, include a copy or if you have a peer-listening service, include details.

This can be added to as policies change, new staff are appointed, initiatives begun, and as your school develops its mental health promotion measures.

2. **Information from the wider community** on all services, resources and people that can be made use of, for example:
 - CAMHS team and others the school or college is regularly involved with, or might be
 - local young people's counselling services
 - relevant information from your LEA
 - local branches/contacts for national initiatives such as ChildLine.
3. **National policies and guidance circulated to your school or college such as:**
 - information on the Healthy Schools Programme
 - relevant reports such as the McPherson report on racism
 - resources such as the Index for Inclusion
 - information about national voluntary organisations such as Teacherline or the Teacher's Benevolent Fund.
4. **You could also include things like:**
 - articles and press cuttings on mental health issues of relevance to schools/colleges
 - evidence of good practice you come across, for example in neighbouring schools or college (take the name, contact details and a few notes on the initiative if you have no written information)
 - a section for interesting ideas – even if you cannot act on them now, you may be able to come back to them later
 - a record of initiatives undertaken, as they happen. This would be a good place to store copies of any funding proposals and evaluations of projects, compiling a bank of information to learn from, and to celebrate and record successes.

When you have drawn together all your information, you might like to draw up a basic index of those items particularly relevant to

- teaching staff
- non-teaching staff
- students, of different age ranges
- parents
- governors
- others in the community who use or depend on your school/college.

This will help you identify both your strengths and any gaps that you would like to fill, using the information in this section.