

Useful ideas when thinking about wellbeing in schools

Schools have become increasingly interested in the non-cognitive aspects of their curriculum. In other words the stuff that we learn whilst we are at school that doesn't fit into the core curriculum about who we are, how we live and what matters in life. However, many teachers can see the task of thinking about wellbeing (both their own and their students) a daunting task and something that their initial teacher training didn't focus on. Each child and adult that we work with is an individual each with their own unique needs and preferences and we need to take this into account. However, there are some useful ideas that can help us in making sure that our schools are positively improving wellbeing

How can we make wellbeing and mental health a whole school issue?

An estimated 1 in 10 children and young people have a diagnosable mental health need. So, in an average secondary classroom three students who would benefit from support with their mental health and wellbeing. All staff should have at least a basic awareness of mental health needs and training is available via CAMH for staff.

Do you know the wellbeing of staff and students in your school?

The School's Health and Education Unit (SHEU) can help survey your students and staff. You could even carry out your own surveys using recognised scales such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale or the Stirling Children's Wellbeing scale. Gaining quantitative and qualitative data can help to identify wellbeing issues in your school.

How can we reduce staff stress?

There is a strong case that the mental health and wellbeing of teachers will affect the wellbeing of the students they teach (and vice versa). Use the DfE resources to identify and reduce workload so that stress is manageable.

What do you do well now?

When trying to look at mental health a focus on what your organisation does to uplift and strengthen resilience would be a good starting point. Campaigns that just focus on mental illness can mean that some people feel that it is just an issue for someone.

Do we do enough to support physical wellbeing?

There is an undeniable link between physical health and mental health, evidence is so strong that GPs can now prescribe 'exercise' on the NHS. The Youth Sport Trust has a range of ideas about how to use physical exercise to boost mental wellbeing. Finding opportunities for staff and students to have fun and exercise together can really make a difference.



Key areas and debates:

- Flourishing
- Positive psychology
- Mental Health
- Multi-agency work
- SEMH

Who should I follow on Twitter?

Twitter is awash with inspiration for making a positive change to wellbeing for both staff and students. Here are a few I have found useful:

Action for Happiness @actionforhappiness

Youngminds @youngmindsUK

Time to change @Timetochange

Attachment Research @Attachmentrc

Youth Sport Trust @YouthSportTrust

Centre for Mental Health @CentreforMH

Papyrus @papyrus_Tweets



Follow
@CamTSNet
for more
'subjects on a
page'

What should I read?

Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health: A DfE Green Paper

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>)

This is essential reading as it lays down the foundations for changes to mental health support throughout England and Wales over the next five years; it is worth considering how close your current provisions are in relation to these recommendations.

10 keys to happier living: a practical handbook for happiness V. King.

A really useful starting point for thinking about ways to create opportunities for wellbeing in your school. This book has a useful framework for supporting wellbeing based on some thinking from positive psychology. (<https://www.actionforhappiness.org>)

The MeeTwo Teenage Mental Help Handbook

MeeTwo (<https://www.meetwo.co.uk>) is a peer support platform for students facing wellbeing challenges. They have produced an excellent book which has accounts from students, staff and researchers working in the field of mental health. They also have a brilliant directory of services and resources in the book.

Anna Freud Schools in Mind network

(<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/schools-in-mind/>)

Produces some excellent resources summarising the latest research into mental health in schools. It is worth checking out their pamphlets for parents, staff and students on wellbeing. I highly recommend reading their work on measuring the impact of wellbeing interventions in school.

The Children's Society Good Childhood Report

(<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/the-good-childhood-report-2019>)

The Children's Society produces an annual report on the issues and challenges facing children and young people. They have some excellent work on the research into wellbeing in schools.

National Children's Bureau (NCB) A Whole School Framework for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

(<https://www.ncb.org.uk/resources-publications/whole-school-framework-emotional-well-being-and-mental-health>)

NCB are exploring ways that schools can change their culture with regards to mental health and wellbeing. It is worth reading their research on what might constitute 'good' provision in schools as a starting point for further discussion.