

Using Educational Psychology to Improve Children's Mental Health

Having good mental health is important for all children.

It is about being able to:



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The things that educational psychologists are doing to make a difference to children's mental health:

- Training school staff to:
 - understand children's emotional development
 - to reduce the experience children have of being emotionally over-whelmed,
 - so minimising the likelihood of children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties

- **Supporting schools to have a whole-school approach that promotes and supports children's mental health**
- **Supporting schools to adopt solution-focused ways of working, by helping school staff, children and parents/carers to achieve what they need most, through helping them recognise and build on their strengths and successes**
- **Helping school staff to work on their own emotional wellbeing – so that they are more able to tune in to the needs of the children they teach and support**
- **Supporting schools in assessing and tracking the well-being of their pupils and identifying the effectiveness of what they provide for pupils**
- **Using programmes of proven effectiveness to train and support staff to teach whole classes ways of coping and managing challenges. These programmes include 'Zippy's Friends' for 5-7 year-olds and 'FRIENDS for Life' for 9-14 year-olds, each using the principles of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)**
- **Helping groups of children, who need extra support, to learn how to cope and become more resilient, such as through the CBT-based 'Growing Optimism' group programme**
- **Supporting schools and early years settings to deliver courses that help parents/carers to support their children in managing their own emotions and behaviour, such as the 'Solihull Approach Parenting Group' and '1-2-3 Magic'**
- **Providing consultation and advice for school staff, parents/carers and children where there are mental health / emotional wellbeing concerns**
- **Providing direct therapeutic support for children**
- **Working collaboratively with other professionals and services, including Specialist Teachers for Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing,**

Specialist Primary Mental Health Practitioners and other staff from the Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Many of these activities are part of a programme of work across the county under the Northamptonshire Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) Programme. This is available to all the council's schools, to promote and intervene in children's mental health, both at the whole school, 'universal' level and targeted to those who are especially vulnerable to difficulties.

While most support from specialist senior educational psychologists is through the council's 'Core Offer', this support can also be commissioned by schools for specialist work or projects.