

## Mental Health & Young People in Education, including the impact of recent cultural change

📍 Hook Junior School 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023



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## Clarifying the Language



**Mental health** is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

**Mental illness** is a condition which causes serious disorder in a person's behaviour or thinking.



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## Are mental health problems on the rise for children and young people?

Yes? – what's your rationale / evidence?  
No? – what's your rationale / evidence?



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## Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2017: Summary of key findings – (NHS Digital - November 2018)

One in eight 5 to 19 year olds had a mental disorder in 2017

One in eight (12.8%) 5 to 19 year olds had at least one mental disorder when assessed in 2017.

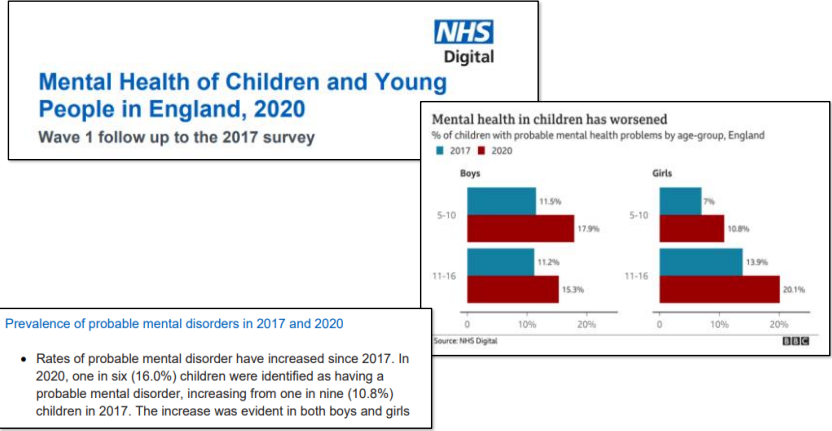


One in twenty (5.0%) 5 to 19 year olds met the criteria for two or more individual mental disorders at the time of the interview.



Mental disorders were identified according to International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) standardised diagnostic criteria, using the Development and Well-Being Assessment (DAWBA). To count as a disorder, symptoms had to cause significant distress to the child or impair their functioning. All cases were reviewed by clinically trained raters.

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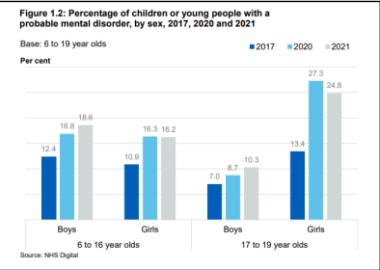
**Key findings:**

**Probable mental disorder:**

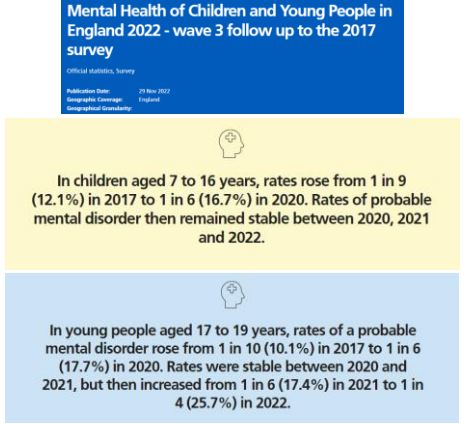
Rates of probable mental disorder increased between 2017 and 2021; in 6 to 16 year olds from one in nine (11.6%) to one in six (17.4%)

**Eating problems:**

The proportion of children and young people with possible eating problems increased between 2017 and 2021, from 6.7% to 13.0% in 11 to 16 year olds

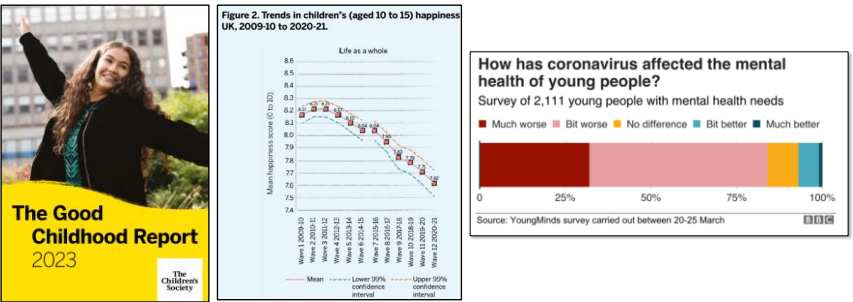


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Since 2017, the likelihood of young people having a mental health problem has increased by 50%

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Childhood and adolescence can be a time of change, transition and challenge:

### What are the key challenges?

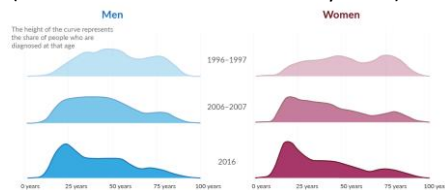
- Starting school
- Transferring from primary to secondary school
- Changes in friendship groups
- Going through puberty
- Exam pressures
- Family changes, e.g., new siblings, divorce, bereavement, moving house
- Sexual maturation and development, including sexual orientation
- Transition to university or work



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### • UK Anti-depressant prescriptions:

- 1991 – 9 million
- 2018 – 65 million
- 2019 – 71 million
- 2022 - 83.4 million



- We are currently prescribing 3.5x the medication to children than we did in 1991
- Behavioural problems are the biggest area of increase:
  - 2000–2015 = 800% increase in ADHD prescriptions
  - 2022 estimate is that between 2%-5% of school aged children have ADHD.

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How far have we come since 1991? The world has changed in some ways but not in others...



### Life for young people (and therefore parents) Outside School:

**1991:** playing outside, reading books, playing sport, listening to music, very little media consumption. No socialising online – spending time with friends. Considerable access to part-time jobs.

**2023:** limited outdoor play and limited time outdoors in general (dramatic rise in obesity levels), decline in reading books (30% of UK children own no books), organized sport playing, listening to music (now primarily video streaming), high and increasing media consumption. Majority of socialising now online. Limited access to part time jobs.



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In depression and anxiety...

THE KEY MAINTAINING FACTOR



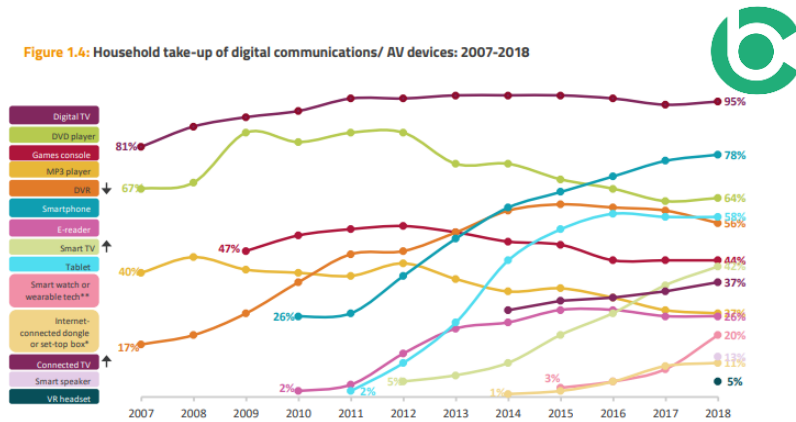
PERSISTENT OVERUSE OF  
THINKING MODE

RUMINATION AND ATTEMPTS TO STOP



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Figure 1.4: Household take-up of digital communications/ AV devices: 2007-2018



Source: Ofcom Technology Tracker. Data from Quarter 1 of each year 2007-2014, then Half 1 2015-2018.

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#### Average Daily Media Consumption (per UK citizen):

- 1991 – 20 mins
- 2011 – 1 hour 30 mins
- 2019 – 3 hours 3 mins
- 2022 – 3 hours 59 mins

#### Percentage of young people with both parents in full time employment:

- 1996 (when records began) - 62%
- 2022 – 77%

#### 2022 Personal (non-work related) Daily Media Consumption:



- When we add in work, the average UK adult now spends **8hrs 41 mins** using media or communications devices = **more than sleeping** (8hrs 21 mins)



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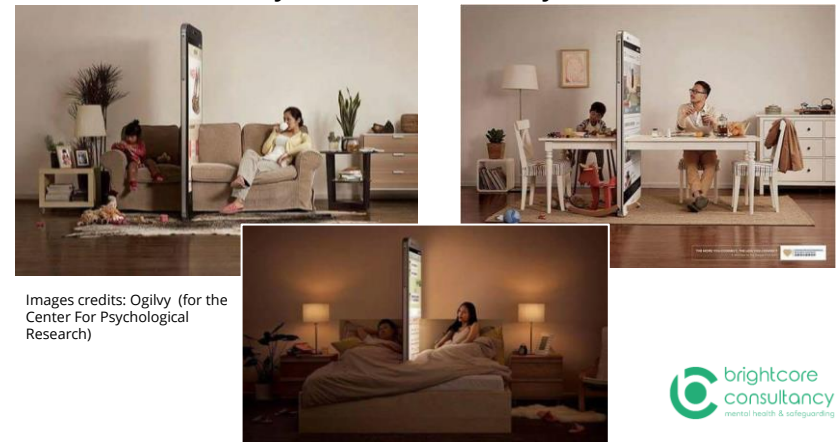
### The impact of cultural change:

- Individual consumption of media:
  - 'On Demand'
  - constant news,
  - separate experiences,
  - decline in delayed gratification & social reasoning
- Entitlement culture
- Life Events
- Social Media:
  - the 'Attention Economy' – Tristan Harris
  - lack of escape, perfect models & need for 'likes'
  - Communication stress & angry emails / voicing anger online
  - Simulacra, advertising & 'junk' values
  - 'Dove' research: 50% of children say the 'toxic beauty culture' on social media makes them and their peers feel anxious.



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### "The more you connect, the less you connect"



Images credits: Ogilvy (for the Center For Psychological Research)



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We also know that **most mental health problems are preventable** and there is considerable scope for increasing interventions that reduce the incidence of people developing mental health problems and increase the potential for sustained recovery after illness.



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“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults.”

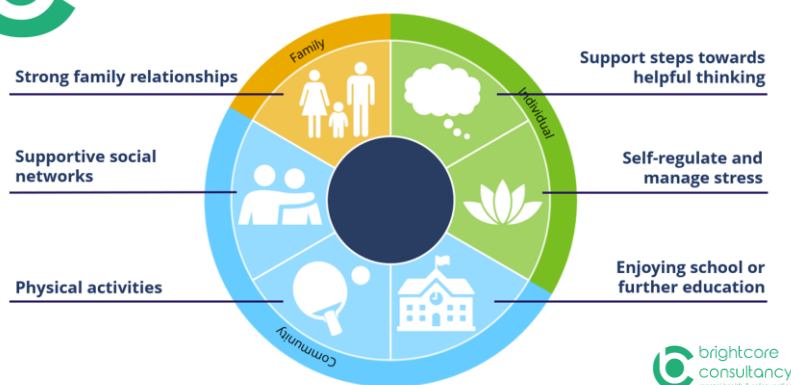
 Frederick Douglass (1818-1895)



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### How can we increase resilience?



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**Sports**

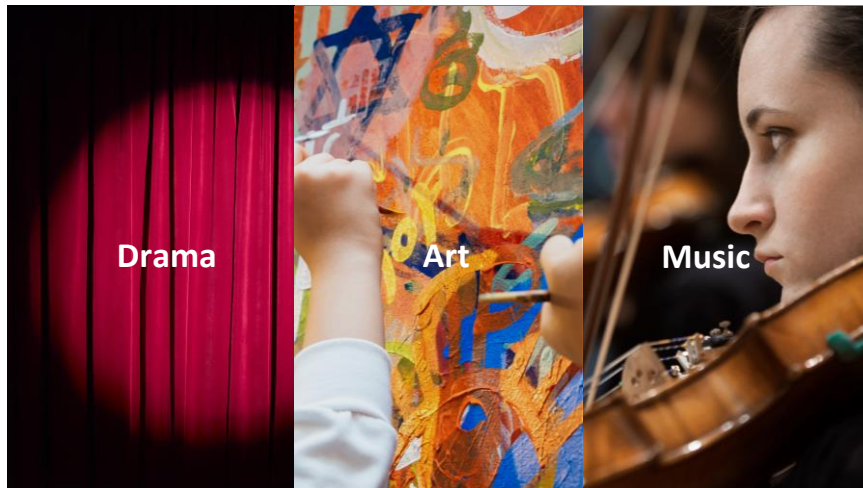
    
Department for Education  
Department for Health, Social Care & Sport  
Department for Communities & Social Care

**School Sport and Activity Action Plan**

July 2019

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## Responding effectively – Understanding the frame of reference



The Frame of Reference Model (Jacqui & Aaron Schiff)



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## Responding effectively - Non-Judgemental Listening

- Listen to the young person
- Give your undivided attention to the speaker
- Seek to understand before you seek to be understood
- Accept their worries are real for them
- Don't be critical
- Try not to get frustrated
- Don't try to solve their problems
- Give emotional and practical support without taking over
- The most common problem in communication is not listening



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## What can we do as parents?

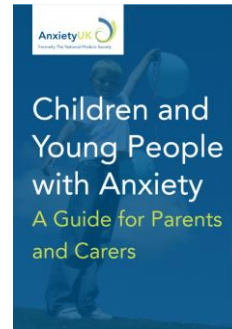
- Know how to report concerns
- Engage our children about how they are feeling – validate what they say.
- Educate ourselves - Read websites, advice & guidance
- Discuss with our children how they are using new technologies and what they are viewing.
- No electronic devices in bedrooms, especially overnight.
- Turn all devices off least 1 hour before going to sleep.



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### Useful guidance & support strategies for parents:

1. Useful calming, breathing & distraction techniques
2. Using Music to flip the mood
3. Using positive affirmations
4. Safe Space Visualisations
5. Using Mindful Moments
6. Diet: Low/High Sugar. Caffeine
7. Sleep – length & quality
8. Exercise – 30 mins / day
9. Technology – useful Apps & Online Support
10. Promoting Relaxation
11. Pleasure & Mastery Technique
12. Guidance & Support documents



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3 Good Things' Practice



## Martin Seligman

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LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

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### Stress Management:

- Relaxation
- Eating Well
- Movement
- Sleeping Well
- Finding Balance

Effective Relaxation:

Me Time (minimum 15 mins per day)	Mo
Screen-free time	10K s
Gratitude	
Stillness	
Social Eating	

## Five ways to enhance wellbeing

Eating Well  
De-normalising sugar  
5-a-day  
Timing meals correctly  
Drinking Water  
Unprocessing your diet (less than 5 ingredients)

Sleeping well:  
Darkness  
Morning daylight – outside  
Routine = 90 mins free of screen time  
Caffeine before noon  
Dealing effectively with over-thinking

- Movement
- 10K steps
- Strength training
- HIT training
- 20 minute movement breaks

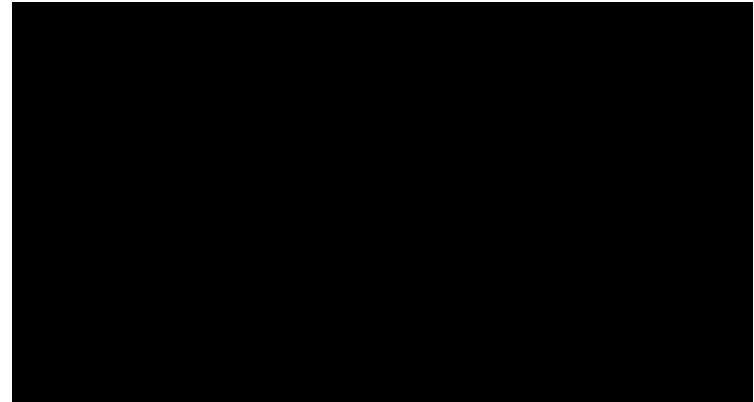


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## Inside Out (Disney / Pixar)



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Thank you – Any Questions?

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