



How can we support young people to look after themselves and look after each other? When do we need to step in and help?

This article covers three main areas. How young people can look after their own wellbeing, how they can support their peers and those around them and finally, as the adults in their lives, do we know when to step in and help.

SLEEP

For many school-age people, making sure their basic needs are met can be a challenge. Not getting enough sleep is nothing new, however excessive screen time, lack of down time and secret gaming in bedrooms are certainly more of a recent phenomenon. It is often surprising when students tell me how late they have been on their phones or games, well after their parents have gone to bed and to sleep. Do you know what time your child goes to sleep every night to get their recommended 9 hours? Is their phone still in their bedroom?

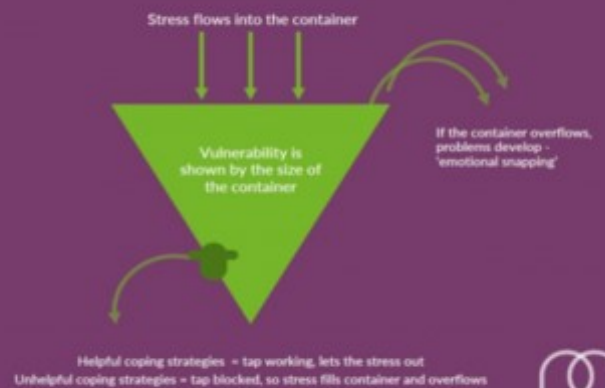
Eating a healthy breakfast, getting plenty of exercise, being fully hydrated and the aforementioned sleep are well-known factors that contribute to our overall well-being, but only more recently are **'the links between physical wellbeing and mental health becoming more explicit.'** The message from researchers is clear: in order for teenagers to feel mentally well, they need to look after their physical health and largely that means being more physically active.

Let's suppose, our youngsters have secured the first line of defence (sleep, exercise, healthy food and pursuing hobbies they love), the next mechanism for support is their friends and people they feel they can talk to. The old saying is 'a problem shared is a problem halved' and being able to share thoughts and feelings is a healthy way to keep things in perspective. We share with students the resources from Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), one of those is the 'Stress Container' <https://www.cllibeim.co.uk/2019/11/08/knowledge/>



Encouraging young people to talk about what is bothering them is a great coping mechanism. They may not want to talk to a parent, but you might be able to suggest another significant adult in their lives they can talk to.

What's in your Stress Container?



At school, we encourage young people to look after their wellbeing and also each others. Our Peer Mentors, School Council representatives and 'Talk Sense' Sixth Formers are all examples of student groups who offer the opportunity for our students to talk to someone.

However, on some occasions, the problem might be more serious than friends, family or peer supporters can help with and that's where school staff can help. We now have our own Mental Health First Aid Trainer, so we can offer more school staff the training to help young people in school. We also have a large and experienced Pastoral Team who support and guide students through the majority of life's bumps in the road. We can also refer to agencies beyond school when needed.

We all play a part in helping young people to navigate their way through difficult situations, such as falling out with friends, failing at something or feeling unhappy. These are all normal scenarios that throw up unexpected emotions. Learning to recognise and handle these emotions is a process. Learning to express our emotions appropriately and deal with the situation is a key part of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Parents play a major role in this journey and school staff at Imberhome support young people through this learning too.

I am often asked by parents, how they can guide a child through a difficult situation such as anxiety about online bullying that has caused hurt and upset. My advice would be to model calm and positive behaviours and reassure them that things will feel better. Aside from the online advice about blocking or reporting, remember the points in this article too. Check physical wellbeing (is the phone out of the bedroom at night, is there enough device downtime, enough sleep?). Is there someone that the child can speak to in the family or friendship circle that they trust to offload to? Do they need further support from one of our school student support groups or member of staff. If so, please contact our [Form Tutors](#) in the first instance or why not encourage them to seek this [support](#) for themselves via their Form Tutor or staff detailed on this website page?

5 Ways to Improve Mental Well-being

by @inner_drive | www.innerdrive.co.uk



- 1 CONNECT WITH OTHERS
- 2 GET ACTIVE
- 3 BE MINDFUL
- 4 KEEP LEARNING
- 5 GIVE TO OTHERS

Encourage young people to be kind when things aren't running smoothly or they feel upset. Both kind to themselves and kind to others - retaliation or internalising feelings will be really unhelpful for their emotional wellbeing.