

WELLBEING

# Children's Mental Health Week

3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020



According to The Children's Society, 10% of children and young people have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem.

Yet 70% of children and adolescents suffering with mental health conditions have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age. Clearly, there is more that we can do to support children's mental health as a society.

### Child mental health in the UK & ROI

Children can come across a variety of challenges that can cause a strain on their mental health, such as bullying, social isolation or suffering a bereavement.

According to research from Laya healthcare, one in five primary school children in Ireland experience general anxiety and "low moods". With the most common cause for their ill mental health due to being left out of friendship groups.

While in the UK, The Children's Society have reported that 75% of all mental health problems are established by the time someone is 18.

It's clear if we do more to spot the signs of mental health conditions in children, such as anxiety, ADHD and mood disorders early on in life, we can help prevent their symptoms from worsening later in life.

If you want to learn more on spotting the signs of mental health issues in children and what you can do to help, visit [Action for Children](#).

### Children's Mental Health Week 2020

Place2Be, the UK's leading national children's mental health charity, launched the first ever Children's Mental Health Week in 2015. From the 3<sup>rd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> February 2020, schools, youth groups, organisations and individuals will all take part in the event.

The aim of the wellbeing campaign is to shine a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health, and to raise funds towards the cause.

### Find your Brave

Three children in every primary school class are suffering from mental health problems. To help encourage more young people to speak up, Place2Be have set this year's theme as 'Find your Brave'.

Bravery is different for every individual. For some, it can mean sharing your thoughts and feelings, for others, it can be engaging in a new experience and trying the unknown.

'Find your Brave' promotes the idea that being brave isn't about keeping your feelings to yourself, instead its about finding positive ways to deal with things that might be difficult, overcoming physical and mental challenges and looking after yourself.

### How to get involved

**Social media** - raise awareness of the importance of supporting children and young people's mental health by spreading the word via social media. [Click here](#) to download Place2Be's social media guide.

**Fundraising** - organise a fundraising event at your workplace, such as a bake off, a "dress down" day or charity cycle.

**Local facilities** - Reach out to local schools and youth groups and encourage them to take part in the awareness day. Place2Be have some brilliant [resources](#) aimed at a variety of age groups.

With the number of children being admitted to A&E with mental health problems raising by 330% over the past decade, it's now more important than ever before to ensure that we all do our part in highlighting the importance of children and young people's mental health.

If you would like to find out more information on any of the topics mentioned in this article, please contact the Health Assured 24/7 confidential helpline.

Or alternatively, visit our portal to view advice articles, webinars and 4-week programmes all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing: [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com)

TOPICAL

# Time to Talk Day

6<sup>th</sup> February 2020

According to the Mental Health at Work initiative, 60% of people say that stigma and discrimination are as damaging, or more damaging, than the symptoms of their mental health problems.

On 6th February 2020, we acknowledge Time to Talk Day (TTTD) - a campaign created by UK mental health charity Time to Change.

The aim of the campaign is to encourage more people to break the stigma that surrounds mental health and talk more openly about their emotional wellbeing.

Whether it be in your workplace, at home or at social events, Time to Change believe there are always opportunities for you to check in and ask about a person's mental health. And with reports estimating that 1 in 6 people experience a mental health problem each week, it's likely that someone close to you could be suffering in silence.

## Tips for talking about mental health

If you are concerned about a friend, colleague or family member's mental health, you may not be sure on what you can do to help. You may be tempted to ignore the issue and hope

they come to you for support, or you might be worried that by talking about the issue, you could make it worse.

However, talking to someone and acknowledging their issues is often the first step for people confronting their mental health problems.

If you are unsure on how to start that first conversation about mental health, here are a few tips:

### 1. Don't try to diagnose

Although you want to help as much you can, try not to make assumptions about the person's issues and diagnose the problems yourself. This can only be done by a medical professional or trained counsellor.

### 2. Ask twice

How many times do you answer half-heartedly to the question "how are you?". By asking the question twice, you will let the person know that you are truly interested in their mental health.

### 3. Listen carefully

Let them lead the conversation and acknowledge what they are saying by nodding or repeating certain phrases to ensure you have understood it. You may not agree with everything they are saying, but it will show that you respect their feelings.

### 4. Communicate in different ways

Talking face-to-face can be beneficial as you can read a person's body language or reassure them with physical contact such as a hug or holding their hand. However, some people may prefer to

share their feelings via text, email or social media instead.

### 5. Respect their answers

Despite your best efforts, some people may not be ready to talk about what they're going through. You have to respect that and know that they will be more likely to ask for your help if they are struggling in the future.

## How do I get involved?

**Pledge wall:** Get your workplace involved with TTTD by erecting a **Time to Change pledge wall** in a communal area. Here, your colleagues can write their own pledges - creating a wall of support for ending mental health stigma. This is a low-cost activity that can help start mental health conversations at work.

For more ideas and online resources, [click here](#) to access the TTTD 2020 page on the Time to Change website. Here, you can find multiple info packs and order forms to obtain your free promo materials.

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## LEGAL

# Mental health and the law—your rights



Mental health problems are a growing concern in today's society. For the individuals and families of those experiencing poor mental health, it's often a difficult and confusing time.

The statistical data within the UK suggests that 1 in 4 people will suffer from a mental illness, with mixed anxiety and depression being the most prevalent form. According to NICE guidelines, 7.8% of adults in the UK meet the criteria for the diagnosis of mixed anxiety and depression. Due to the epidemic nature, it has become imperative to understand the law surrounding mental health.

The Mental Health Act 1983 (as amended by the Mental Health Act 2007) covers the procedural rights of mentally ill patients within England and Wales. The Act covers a broad spectrum of issues protecting those who have been detained (sectioned) under the Mental Health Act. This includes an individual's rights when detained; the rights of the detainee's family members, consent to treatment when detained, rights when leaving hospital treatment and rights when being treated in the community.

The Equality Act 2010 protects those suffering from a disability from unfair treatment. This may apply to individuals suffering with a mental illness, providing the mental illness is considered a 'disability' under the definition in the Equality Act. Disability is a protected characteristic where:

*'A physical or mental impairment that is long-term and has a substantial adverse effect on normal day-to-day activities.'*

The Equality Act protects those meeting the definition from discrimination, harassment and victimisation in various everyday circumstances. For example, employment, when using service providers, public transport and governmental departments. Mental health conditions that may be covered under the Act include: depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder, this is not an exhaustive list as there are various other types of mental health problems that exist.

Employers and service providers may have to make 'reasonable adjustments' for individuals suffering from a mental health condition, which is considered a disability under the Equality Act. Reasonable adjustments are where something is adapted or changed to remove/minimise any disadvantage an individual faces because of their disability. This can include a change to policies or procedures, providing additional aids/equipment or changing physical features of a building or premises.

The **Equality Advisory & Support Service** provide assistance to those who feel they have been treated unfairly due to a disability, and provide support regarding issues relating to equality and human rights.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides protection to individuals who may lack the mental capacity to make decisions for themselves due to their mental health. The legislation also enables individuals to plan ahead for when they may no longer have mental capacity, relevant where an individual believes their ability to make a decision in the future will be affected by a mental health disorder.

The Human Rights Act 1998 is the main

piece of law that ensures human rights are protected in the UK, placing a legal duty on public authorities and services to respect and protect an individual's rights. There are a series of rights contained within the legislation, however the most pertinent rights under the Act for those who lack mental capacity and suffer from mental health are:

**Article 2 Right to life:** a duty to uphold a person's right to life e.g. protecting mentally ill patients at risk of suicide.

**Article 3 Prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment:** for example, protecting mentally ill patients from excessive force, neglect or abuse.

**Article 5 Right to liberty and security:** safeguards setting out the right of liberty and when this right can be restricted, i.e. when detained under the Mental Health Act.

A Person suffering from a mental health condition may also have the right under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to access their personal data in which an organisation holds about them. A Subject Access Request should be submitted to the organisation in writing for them to release such data. Under GDPR, data concerning (mental) health will be treated to a higher degree of protection than personal data in general, as this is considered sensitive personal data

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