

Introduction



This information guide has been produced by Healthwatch Northamptonshire and is an introduction to mental health, possible problems and what help is available.

It has been written for Children and Young People and their friends and family.

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Young Healthwatch Conference 2015

The Young Healthwatch Conference took place at Kettering Conference Centre in February 2015.



On the day lots of people talked about their experiences of health and social care in Northamptonshire.

Lots of different people had stands to show what they do and the day was supported by the National Lottery fund.



Lots of young people and professionals talked about the lack of support available for children and young people who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health.



Healthwatch Northamptonshire with support from a range of groups of young people have put together this information guide.



It talks about what it means to have mental health difficulties and also provides you with further places where you and your family and carers can get more information or support.



What do children and young people think?

Children and young people were asked about what was important to them now and for the future.

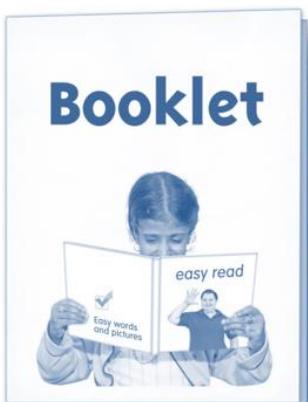
Some of the key things young people talked about were;



Feeling safe



Knowing who to talk to



Where to find information

What is Mental Health?



Mental health can affect the way you think, feel and behave.



Some mental health problems are described using words that are in everyday use, for example 'depression' or 'anxiety'.



This can make them seem easier to understand, but can also mean people forget how serious they can be.



A mental health problem feels just as bad, or worse, than any other illness - only you cannot see it.



Mental health difficulties are very common and affect around 1 in 4 people in Britain today.

Understanding Mental Health



Different mental health issues

There are many different types of mental health difficulties. You may experience some of these things at the same time.

These are some of the common things people experience.



Depression

Depression lowers your mood and can make you feel sad and hopeless, slow, unmotivated and tired. It can affect how you feel about yourself (self-esteem), sleep, and your hunger (appetite).



Anxiety

If you are feeling anxious, you may feel restless, experience sleeping problems and possibly physical symptoms. If you are highly anxious, you may also develop related problems, such as panic attacks.



Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

OCD or obsessions are unwelcome thoughts, ideas or urges that repeatedly appear in your mind, for example, this could be something like repeatedly checking a door to make sure it is locked or washing your hands a number of times.



Phobias

A fear becomes a phobia when you have an exaggerated or unrealistic sense of danger about a situation (such as going outside) or objects (such as spiders).



Eating problems

If you have an eating problem, you may find yourself eating too much or too little. You may stop yourself from eating anything, even when you are very hungry, or you may eat constantly, or binge (eat a lot of food).



Anorexia, bulimia, (making yourself sick) bingeing and compulsive eating are some of the most common eating problems.

Bipolar disorder (manic depression)



If you have bipolar disorder, you will experience extreme swings in mood - from periods of overactive, excited behaviour, known as 'mania' or 'manic episodes' - to deep depression. Between these highs and lows, you may have stable times.

Schizophrenia



Schizophrenia is when you feel confused or have thoughts, or see and believe things that are not real.

Some people with Schizophrenia don't believe they have a mental health problem.

Some people with Schizophrenia don't think that the term 'schizophrenia' is the best way to describe their experience.

Personality Disorders



Some people with personality disorders may find it difficult to change patterns of thinking, feelings or the way they behave.

You may have a more limited range of emotions and feelings, attitudes and behaviours with which to cope with everyday life.

This might make your life difficult or affect the people around you.

Panic attacks



These can be intense, often very frightening symptoms, usually lasting between 5 and 20 minutes.

If you experience a panic attack, you may find it hard to breathe, and feel your heart beating hard.

You may have a choking sensation, chest pain, begin to tremble or feel faint.

Panic attacks can occur at any time, and this is what makes them different from a natural response to real danger.

Self-harm



Self-harm is a way of expressing very deep distress where you take actions to cause yourself physical pain.

You may not know why you self harm, but it can be a means of communicating what you can't put into words or think clearly about.

After self-harming, you may feel better and able to cope with life, for a while, but the cause of your distress is unlikely to have gone away.

Suicidal feelings



Many people experience suicidal feelings. Suicidal thoughts can be unpleasant and scary. However, thinking about suicide does not mean that you actually intend to take your own life.

Lots of people think about suicide, and most do not go on to kill themselves.

Could I be ‘going mad’?



Experiencing mental health difficulties is often upsetting and frightening. However experiencing difficulties with your mental health are a common, human experience.

They can happen to anyone, at any time. For most people, these experiences will only last for a short time.

If you are unwell, you may worry that your mental health is only going to get worse or that you are going mad.

You may feel that you are losing your normal personality and are no longer yourself.

Could I be 'going mad'? ☹️



You may also be afraid of becoming a danger to others or of being locked up.

These fears are often reinforced by the negative way that people experiencing mental health difficulties are shown on TV, in books and by the media.

You may also be scared of being seen as 'mad', and of losing your friends, family and independence.

These fears may stop you from talking about your problems. This, in turn, is likely to increase your distress and sense of isolation.

Getting Help 😊



In reality, most people know someone who has experienced difficulty's with their mental health.

Talking to a family member or friend about how you are feeling is often a first step to getting the support you need.

You may also find that discussing your problems with someone else who has experienced something similar helps you.

So what causes mental health issues?



Mental health issues can have a wide range of causes. In most cases, no one is sure what the cause of a particular problem is.

The following things are examples and could have an impact on your mental health:

- Childhood abuse, trauma, violence or neglect
- Isolation, loneliness or discrimination
- The death of someone close to you
- Stress or frustration
- Homelessness or poor housing
- Money worries, poverty or debt
- Caring for a family member or friend
- A long-term physical health condition
- Being involved in a serious accident
- Being the victim of a violent crime
- Bullied by others, face to face or on the internet
- Depression related to a disability / impairment
- Concerns regarding your sexuality

Understanding mental health better...



It's important to recognise everyone gets worried or anxious, particularly during times of change. This could be when your changing school or taking exams.



When your mood and a lack of interest and pleasure in usual activities lasts for more than two weeks this could be a sign you are feeling depressed.



For more common mental health difficulties, particularly depression and anxiety, a doctor, usually your doctor will normally give you a short questionnaire about how you are feeling.



Less common mental health difficulties may mean you need to see to a specialist. This is called making a referral and is normal.

Many people experience the same feelings like a change in your sleeping pattern.

This can happen if you have depression and anxiety.



Your doctor will give you the information and support you need and will explain what will happen next.

How can I help myself?



Spending time on relationships you're interested in like family and friends can really give you a boost.



Talking to people who have had a similar experience or share similar feelings can be a massive support.



Doing regular physical activity can be very effective in lifting your mood and increasing your energy levels, and it is also likely to improve your appetite and sleep.



Contact a local group for information about exercises you might be able to do, or ask your doctor for advice.



Notice the flavours in your evening meal, or the way the sun sets. When you slow down and observe, you can catch sight of amazing things.

What young people think about mental health

Happy and Healthy

I just cant cope

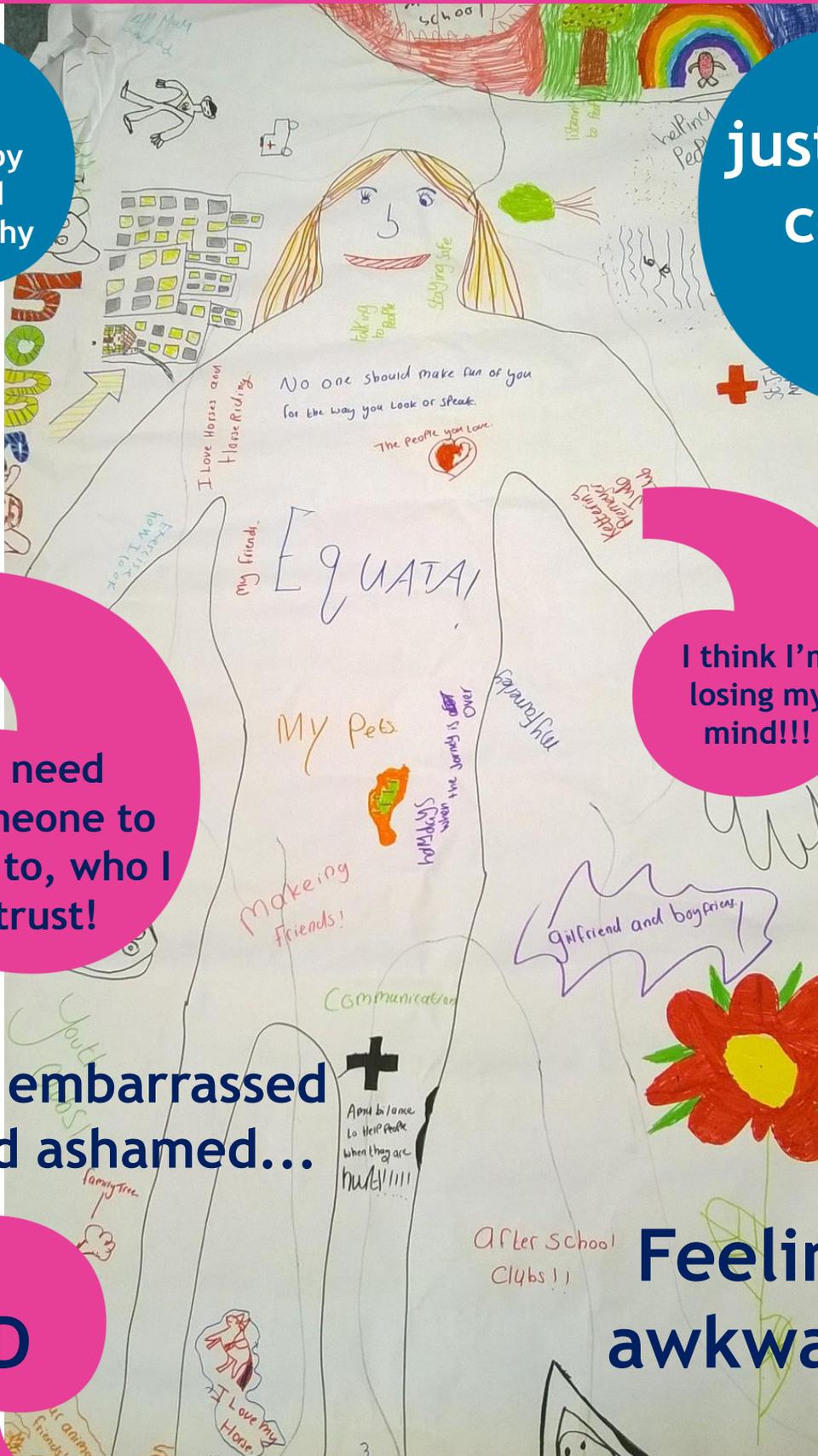
I need someone to talk to, who I trust!

I think I'm losing my mind!!!

I'm embarrassed and ashamed...

SAD

Feeling awkward



Useful contacts

In most cases we recommend you first speak with your own Doctor or you can contact the NHS directly.



NHS



www.nhs.uk



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Useful contacts



Northamptonshire
County Council

The Children's Rights Service



Children's Rights Service
Northamptonshire County
Council



Russell House
Rickyard Road
Northampton
NN3 3QZ



info@northamptonshire.gov.uk
www.northamptonshire.gov.uk

01604 368051

Useful contacts



The Lowdown



The Lowdown

3 Kingswell Street (off Gold St)
Northampton
NN1 1PP



info@thelowdown.info



01604 634385

Useful contacts



Child Line



Call ChildLine

Calls are free and confidential.

www.childline.org.uk



You can call ChildLine at any time on;

0800 1111

to speak to a counselor.



Useful contacts



Youth Works



Counselling and therapeutic services:



**Youth Works CIC
William Knibb Centre
Montagu Street
Kettering
Northants
NN16 8AE**



01536 518339

Useful contacts



Children and adolescent
mental health services:
(CAMHS)

Newland House
Campbell Square
Northampton
NN1 3EB

Phone 01604 656 060
Email camhs@nhft.nhs.uk



Sudborough House
St Mary's Hospital
London Road
Kettering
NN15 7PW

Phone 01536 452 400



Unfortunately, we are unable to accept referrals directly from young people or families. Professionals can make referrals to child and adolescent mental health specialism (CAMHS) by visiting the following link:

www.nhft.nhs.uk/cyprmc

Need More Help? Get in Touch



Healthwatch Northamptonshire
3rd Floor

Lakeside House

Bedford Road

Northampton.

NN4 7HD

0300 002 0010

Voice/ text 07951 419331

www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk



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We look forward to hearing from you

This information was made easier to understand using Photosymbols



**Winner of the Healthwatch Network Choice Award 2015
and Highly Commended in:**

- Making a difference across the system
- Making a difference to social care
- Making a difference in diversity and inclusion

