

Harpenden Society Public Meeting KWS 17.10.24

Adolescent Mental Health *the what, the why & the how*

Dr Alison Cowan

Who Am I?

HERTFORDSHIRE GP

- South-West Hertfordshire: regular weekly surgeries including 2 x weekly YPCs
- Hertfordshire CYPMHS GP Lead
- HPFT: 1 day/week as a medical officer for the CYP Community Eating Disorder Service

MUM to 3 x 'adolescent' girls



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Agenda

What is the current situation?

- Definition of adolescence
- Importance of good adolescent mental health and current landscape

Why are we in this situation?

- Biological and psychosocial contributory factors

How best to support our young people to achieve good adolescent mental health



A close-up photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a bright red raincoat with the hood up. She is in the middle of a heavy rainstorm, with water droplets visible all around her. Her mouth is wide open in a shout or scream, and her eyes are closed. The background is dark and filled with falling rain.

*“Children and young people are a quarter of
our population but 100% of our future”*

Russel Viner BMJ 2018

WHAT?



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Definition of Adolescence

- **WHO Definition**

Adolescence: 10-20yrs

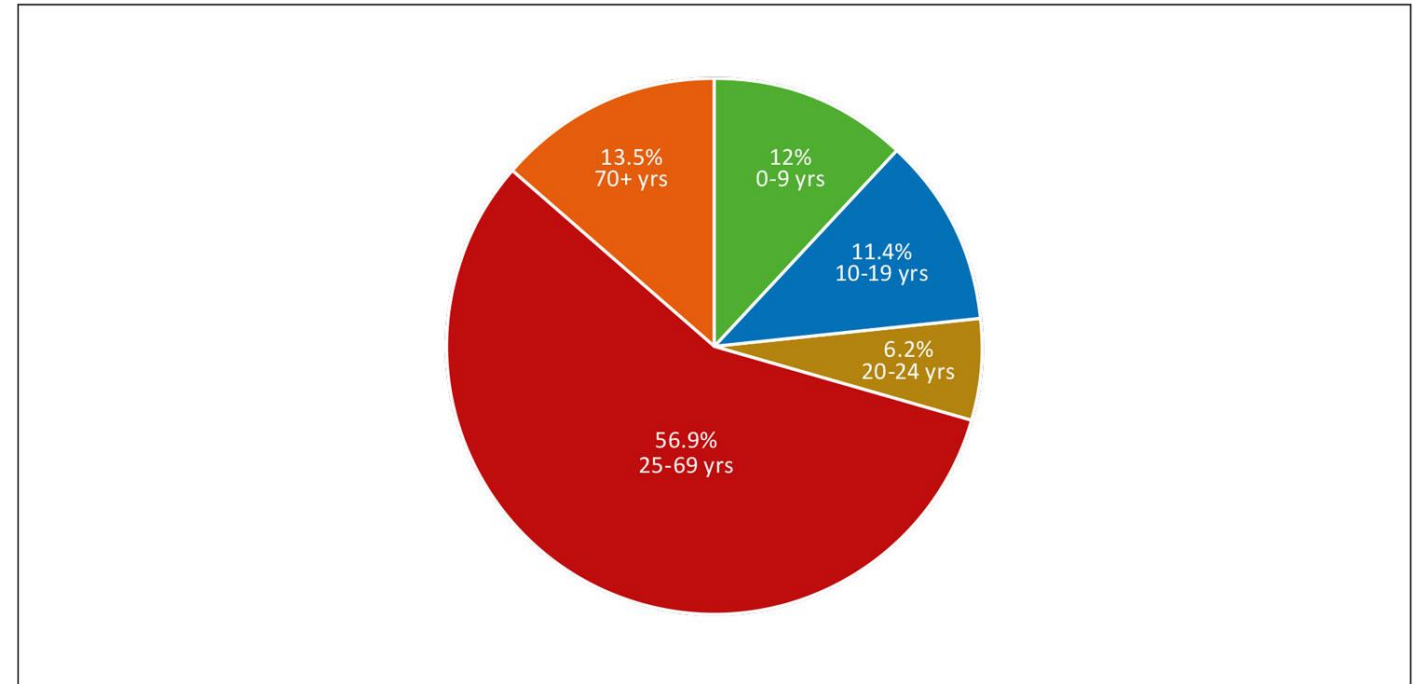
Young People: 10-24yrs

- **10-24 year olds make up:**

1 in 5 of UK population

11.7 million in UK

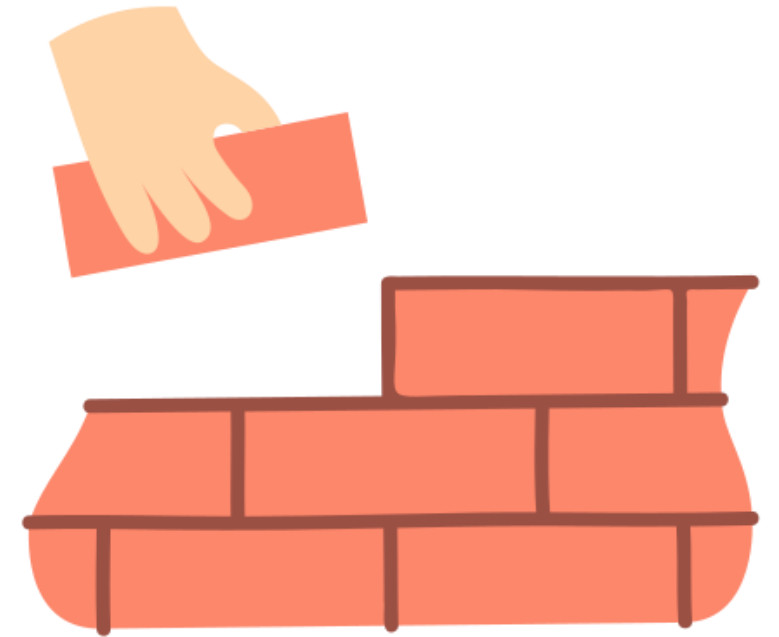
Chart 1.2: 10-24 year olds make up 18% of the UK population (2019)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2020) Annual mid-year population estimates: 2019

Adolescence

- “Adolescence is a unique stage of human development and is crucial in laying the foundations of good health” (WHO)
- It is a period of dramatic and rapid physical, cognitive and psychosocial changes
- Good health in adolescence leads to good health in adulthood



A person with dark hair is sitting in a room, looking down with their arms crossed. Sunlight streams through horizontal blinds on the left, casting diagonal shadows across the person and the wall. The right side of the image is covered by a dense, dark pattern of black scribbles. The text "Key Issues" is written in yellow on the right side.

Key Issues



“This is the great error of our day, that physicians separate the mind from the body.”

Plato – 4th Century B.C

Mental Health

- 50% of lifetime mental illness begins before the age of 14yrs
- 75% of lifetime mental illness begins before the age of 24yrs
- Increasing rates of mental illness compounded by the pandemic
- NHS Digital 2021: probable mental disorder
 - 1 in 6 (17.6%) 11-16yr olds
 - 1 in 5 (20%) 17-22yr olds (27% young women)



Issues Related to Adolescents

Physical Health

- Emergence of long-term conditions
- Adolescent obesity: tripled in last 30 years
- Risk-taking behaviour



Mental Health

- Anxiety and Depression
- Self-harm and suicide
- Eating disorders
- Conduct disorder
- ADHD
- Autism spectrum disorder

Sexual Health

- Teenage pregnancy rates
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Under-age sex
- Child sexual exploitation and assault
- Pornography



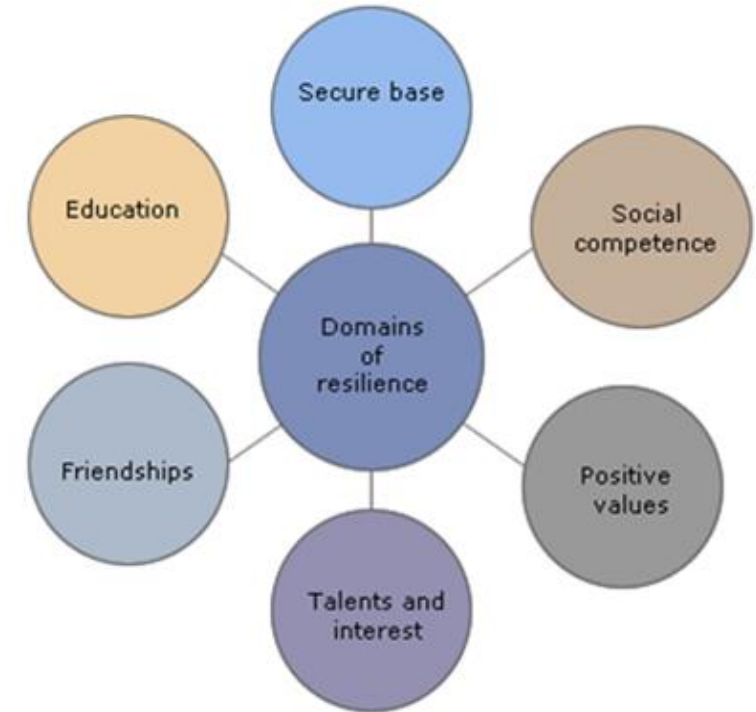
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Mental Health

- **Higher rates of mental health problems in marginalised groups:**

- Low-income families
- Children Looked After (CLA)
- Neurodiversity & Special Education Needs
- LGBTQ+
- Gypsy and Traveller communities
- Ethnicity
- Youth Justice System



Risk-Taking Behaviour

Smoking

Drugs

Alcohol

Unprotected
Sex

However, risk taking is age-appropriate in adolescence



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WHY?



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A person wearing a grey and white vertically striped long-sleeved shirt and a matching striped flat cap. They are covering their face with both hands, with their fingers interlaced behind their head. The person's head is bowed down, and their hair is visible at the bottom. The background is a blurred blue metal fence and green foliage.

Contributing Factors

Changes and Challenges to Navigate

- **Developmental Changes**

- Biological changes: puberty; sleep and eating pattern
- Neurobiological changes
- Psychological
- Social



- **Sociocultural Pressures**



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Biological Changes - Puberty

- **Stimulated by activation of complex neuroendocrine network**
- **First Phase: Adrenarche**
 - Turning on of adrenal glands
- **Second Phase: Gonadarche**
 - Sexual maturation and achievement of reproductive capacity
 - Gonadal steroids
 - Growth and development of secondary sexual characteristics
 - Development across all organ systems including CNS



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Other Biological Factors

- **Sleep difficulties**

“92% of CYP with depression started with sleep difficulties” – (Reynolds, 2020)

- **Body Image & Eating pattern**

Disordered eating or eating disorder

Minnesota experiment



****Do not need to appear low weight for physical and mental health to be at risk ****



Neurobiological Changes

Adolescent brain:

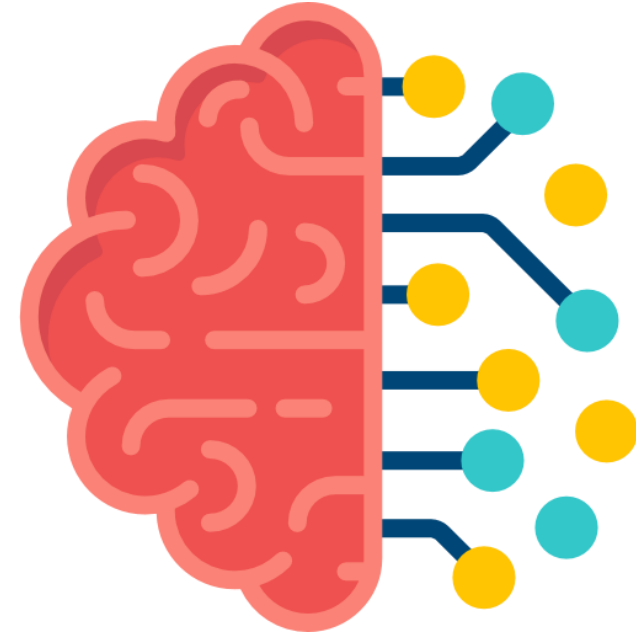
- Wired to learn faster
- More synapses and increased excitability

Synaptic plasticity:

- Some synapses reinforced
- Others disappear - synaptic pruning

Myelination:

- Development of inter-connections between parts of the brain
- Leads to speedier nerve conduction
- Begins at the back of the brain and moves forward to the frontal lobe



Impact of Neurobiological Changes

- **Risk-taking behaviour**
 - Increased sensation seeking with poor self-regulation

Psychological Changes

- Change in thinking pattern
 - Move from concrete thinking to more abstract thinking
- **Establishment of personal identity**
 - Sexual identity
 - Gender identity



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Social Changes

- Complex social networks
- Families become a smaller part of reference group
- Conformity with peers and obtaining a sense of belonging
- Establishing of intimate relationships
- Establishing independence and autonomy
- Increased access to internet and social media – relationship with this

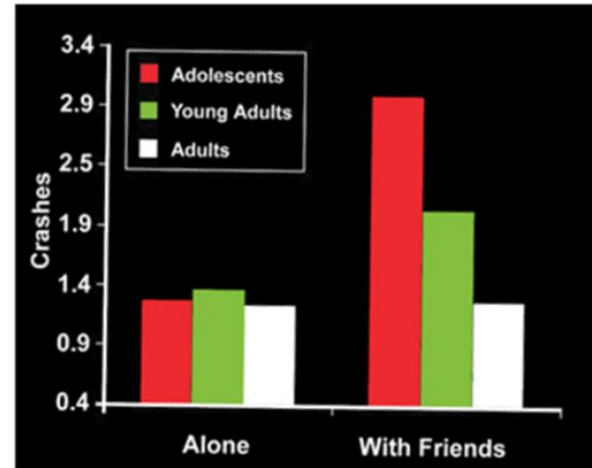


Sociocultural Pressures

Educational pressures

Social pressures:

- Peer pressure
 - Drive to become independent
 - Integrate into peer group(s)
 - Hypersensitive to social exclusion
- Social media
 - Impact on sleep and exercise
 - Digital harm
 - Cyberbullying
 - Pornography
 - Sexual curiosity



<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3869041/>



HOW?



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Mental Health – TRAM Tool

Typical

T – Transient (comes and goes)

R – Reactive to circumstances

A – Appropriate to the age and developmental stage

M – Manageable (does not cause significant impairment)

Concerning

- Persistent – over time
- Pervasive – symptoms are usually present in a variety of settings
- Unexplained or disproportionate in comparison with peer group
- Disabling – cause significant suffering and/or impairment



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Mental Health – Normalisation

CYP presenting with appropriate and normative responses

Developing emotional intelligence in CYP to notice and manage emotions

RULER

R – Recognise emotions

U – Understand emotions

L – Label emotions

E – Express emotions

R – Regulate emotions

STOPP

S – Stop

T – Take a breath

O – Observe what's happening

P – Pull back

P – Practice what works



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Mental Health – TRAM Tool

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- **Persistent** – over time
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Mental Health Support

First Step

- ☐ **Listen:** non-judgmentally and recap
- ☐ **Validate:** acknowledge distress
- ☐ **Explain:** with reference to any triggers mentioned



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Anxiety is a **normal** human response to stress or fear.

We all feel anxious from time to time, but some people are more prone to anxiety.

Anxiety symptoms are part of the fight or flight response, they are intended to be helpful to keep us safe and in spurring us on into action.

'When we face stressful situations, it can set off our brain's in-built alarm bell system, which tell us something isn't right and that we need to deal with it. Our brain wants the difficult situation to go away, so it makes us feel more alert, stops us thinking about other things, and make our hearts go faster and harder to pump more to our legs to help us run away.'

Explanation - Anxiety

Anxiety becomes a problem when the symptoms are:

- Going on too long
- Happening too often
- Causing us to worry that there is something seriously wrong
- Stopping us from doing what we want to do

Anxiety becomes a part of a **vicious cycle** where our symptoms, thoughts and behaviours keep the anxiety going.



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Explanation - Low mood

Evolutionarily, our brains are wired negatively to allow us to look out for danger and be prepared but we can sometimes get stuck in a cycle of viewing things negatively which can then make us feel down. Lots of different factors can contribute to negative thought processing including early experiences, difficult circumstances, individual differences, body chemistry, and reduced activity

When we feel down our body chemistry and behaviour might change and this could lead to a *vicious cycle*.

Research has shown ***trying to break this vicious cycle by changing the way you think & what you do will start to change the way your feel.***



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Mental Health Support – *high level need*


First Step

- ☐ **Listen:** non-judgmentally and recap
- ☐ **Validate:** acknowledge distress
- ☐ **Explain:** with reference to any triggers mentioned

Immediate Need for support

- **Physical health** – First Aid +/- A&E
- **Mental health – Crisis team 0800 6444 101 (24/7)**
 - Rising levels of distress/concern
 - Increasing frequency or degree of self-harm or suicidal intent
- **Safeguarding need**
 - Safeguarding referral 0300 123 4043
 - **999** if at immediate risk

Crisis Support

CRISIS SUPPORT RESOURCES	
Stay Alive App	
Helplines	Hertfordshire Single Point of Access (SPA) 0800 6444 101 Samaritan 116 123 Childline 0800 1111 Papyrus Hopeline 0800 068 4141 Shout texting service: 85258 www.giveusashout.org 24/7



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Hertfordshire CYP Resources - *low level need*

SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	
Healthy Habit & Self-care Resources	
Mental Health Self-management Strategies: Apps; Leaflets; Websites	
ONWARD SIGNPOSTING: REMOTE SERVICES	
Digital Wellbeing Services	WithYOUth Service (includes Lumi Nova); The Sandbox
ONWARD SIGNPOSTING: FACE TO FACE SERVICES	
Watford FC Programmes	Youth Link (social prescribing service); Empower; Kicks
Herts Mind Network	Spark - Creative Wellbeing Groups; Drop-in Herts Haven Café's (www.withyouth.org)
HCC Services for Young People (HCC SfYP)	1:1 Youth worker Support; Groups; Supporting YOU Programme
HCT	Public Health Nursing (including Chat Health); Childrens' Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs)
HPFT	Mental Health Support Teams (MHST's); Hertfordshire & Mid-Essex Talking Therapies
Community Counselling	Youth Talk; Signpost; Rephael House; YCT



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Self-management Resources

HEALTHY HABITS & SELF-CARE RESOURCES

Just Talk website: www.justtalkherts.org



Togetherall: <https://togetherall.com/>



Every Mind Matters: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>





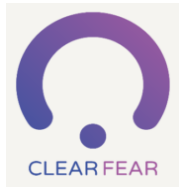


Anna Freud Self-care: <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>

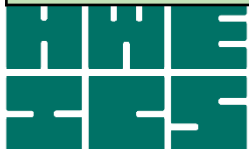


Smiling Mind app: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>



Self-management Resources


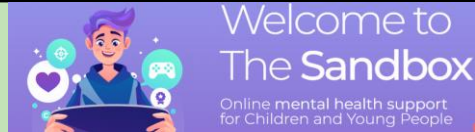
MENTAL HEALTH SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	
Apps	<p>What's Up app </p> <p>Mindshift app; Clear Fear app  </p> <p>Calm Harm app  Stay Alive app </p>
Leaflets	<p>Hertfordshire & Mid Essex Self-help Guides</p> <p>Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear Self-help Guides</p> <p>Mental Health Foundation Self-help Leaflets</p>
Websites	<p>Every Mind Matters Mental Health Resources</p> <p>Anxiety Canada Youth Resources</p> <p>Centre for Clinical Interventions Resources</p>



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Onward Hertfordshire Signposting

DIGITAL WELLBEING SERVICES	
	
<p>Website, live chat, games and downloadable resources for CYP, parents and professionals Suitable for neurodiverse patients</p>	
<p>5-18yrs Daily helpline One to one therapy sessions with support worker Lumi Nova App: 7-12yrs fun digital therapeutic intervention - manage fears and worries</p>	<p>10-25yrs Replaces Kooth One to one therapy sessions with accredited counsellor: includes weekends ICBT: 10-12week course</p>

Onward Hertfordshire Signposting

FACE TO FACE SERVICES

 <p>WATFORD COMMUNITY SPORTS & EDUCATION TRUST REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1102239</p>	<p>Youth Link (10-24yrs) social prescribing links CYP to sustained activity to improve their physical and mental health – SW Herts</p> <p>Empower: (9-12yrs) 6 month project that aims to improve mental health through physical activity</p> <p>Kicks: (8-18yrs) aims to inspire CYP to achieve their potential and improve wellbeing</p>
<p>HCC</p> 	<p>Supporting YOU Programme (11-17yrs): 10-week programme group teaching CBT 1:1 support work; projects and groups</p>
<p>HMN</p> 	<p>Spark - Creative Wellbeing Groups; Drop-in Herts Haven Café's (www.withyouth.org)</p>
	<p>Public Health Nursing: any health issue in CYP attending school; includes Chat Health</p> <p>CWPs (5-19yrs): deliver manualised CBT – anxiety and low mood</p>
<p>HPFT</p> 	<p>Mental Health Support Teams: Educational MH practitioners (EMHPs) - similar to CWPs - in certain schools Details of schools and colleges with an MHST are here</p> <p>Hertfordshire & Mid Essex Talking Therapies (>16yrs) - formerly Wellbeing team</p>



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Onward Hertfordshire Signposting

FACE TO FACE SERVICES *continued*

Community Counselling



13-25yr: St Albans District



13-25yr: Watford & Hemel



11-19yr: WGC & Hatfield
Currently not accepting new referrals



11-18yr: East & North Herts



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Onward Hertfordshire Signposting - Eating concern

Disordered eating

- Support for CYP/carers/professionals <https://bebodypositive.org.uk/>
- Beezee Bodies Teen clinic (13-17yr): Beezee Youth <https://beezeebodies.com/refer-a-client/>

Eating disorder:

- **Low risk**
 - Signpost to
 - First Steps ED <18yr: www.firststepsed.co.uk
 - Living Room >18yr www.livingroomherts.org
- **High risk** – Refer to HPFT Community Eating Disorder via SPA



What is Be Body Positive?

Your new go-to destination for information & resources on disordered eating, fussy eating, eating disorders, normal eating and body image

For young people, parents, carers and health professionals

hello@bebodypositive.org.uk @bebodypositive_nhs



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Neurodiversity Support

- **The Toolbox** <https://thetoolbox.mindler.co.uk/>
- **Neurodiversity Support Hub**

01727 833963 

 supporthub@add-vance.org

Opening Hours

9AM – 1PM – Monday, Wednesday & Friday

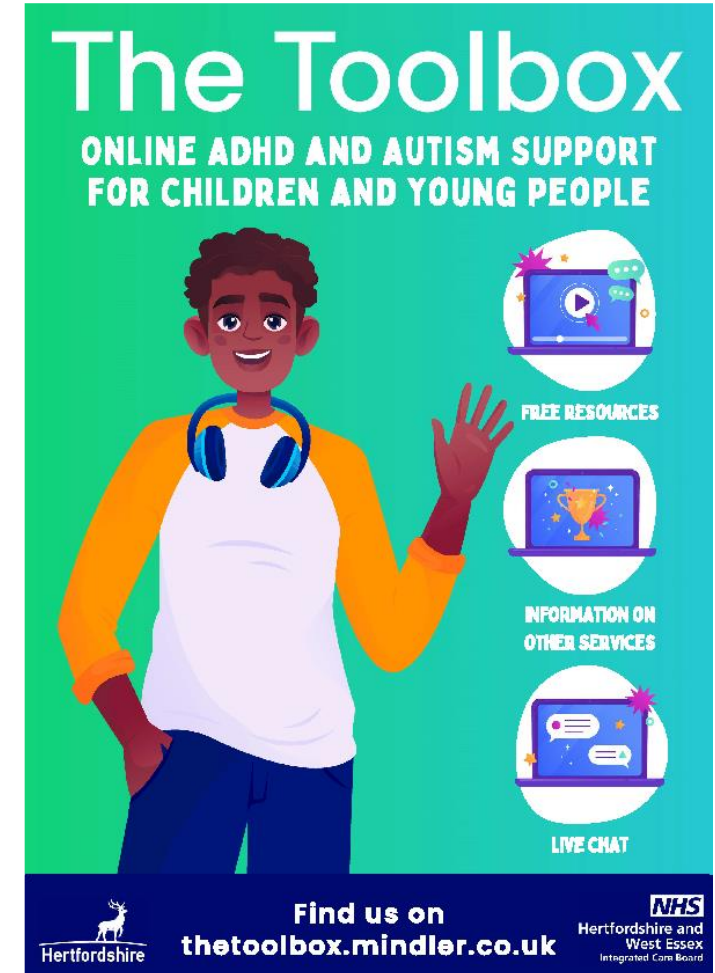
9AM – 3PM – Tuesday & Thursday

7PM – 9PM – Wednesday (By Appt)

Here to support, reach out for a listening ear



- [The Hertfordshire Local Offer](#)



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Parental Support

- [Healthier Together Website Parental Support](#)
- [Thrive YPC - List of health resources for young people in Hertfordshire](#)
- [The Hertfordshire Local Offer](#)
 - [DSPL Support](#)
- [HCC Directory of Parental Support](#) *free parenting courses*
- **NESSiE** support: <https://nessieined.com/>
- [CYPMHS - Carers In Herts](#)
- [ChatHealth parent support](#) service



Tackling Transition after Secondary Webinar

withYouth
YOUNG PEOPLE'S Digital Wellbeing Services

Topics include

- Mental health and well
- Managing stress
- Friendships
- Independence
- Confidence building
- Coursework/exams

Open for all students leaving secondary for college or sixth form




withYouth

YOUNG PEOPLE'S Digital Wellbeing Services

Groups

7 - 12 year olds Group (Tuesdays at 6pm)
13+ Group (Wednesdays at 7pm)

Topics

- Understanding emotions
- Friendships & Relationships
- Coping strategies
- Self-harm & 5 Ways to Wellbeing
- Abuse & exploitation
- Changes
- Bullying
- How to cope at school
- Homelife
- Identity
- Building confidence & self-esteem

The groups will be running on an 8 week block basis with a capacity of 10/15 young people.

For more information, please email withyouth@hertsmindnetwork.org or call us on 0208 189 8400



Looking Ahead Workshop

Herts Haven Café

For 16 to 18 year olds
Preparing for adult wellbeing support

Monday 11th November 5pm - 7pm

Watford Palace Theatre, 20 Clarendon Road, Watford, WD17 1JZ

mind Hertfordshire Network
RSVP: cyp@hertsmindnetwork.org




THE SANDBOX & THE TOOLBOX LIVESTREAM

26/11 AT 5PM

TOPIC: BOYS' MENTAL HEALTH




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How to find this information:

Just Talk Website:

www.justtalkherts.org



The infographic is titled 'JUST TALK' in large, bold, teal letters. It features a central graphic of two overlapping speech bubbles. Surrounding this central graphic are six colored boxes, each containing a question and an answer. The boxes are: 1. 'What is it?' (orange border) with a handshake icon, describing the campaign as coordinated by Public Health, NHS, Education, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise organisations, steered by young people, including Just Talk Ambassadors. 2. 'Who is it for?' (blue border) with a group of people icon, stating information is for children, young people, parents/carers, and professionals. 3. 'What kind of resources do we offer?' (green border) with a document icon, listing leaflets, toolkits, posters, e-learning, webinars, short films, and a journal. 4. 'How are messages shared?' (pink border) with a speech bubble icon, encouraging involvement via the website or email, and listing social media handles. 5. 'Vision:' (teal border) with a sun icon, stating the goal is for all young people to recognise it's ok to not be ok, feel comfortable and confident in talking about mental health, have tools for looking after their wellbeing, and know how to access support. 6. 'FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING' (teal border) with a flower icon, listing five ways to wellbeing.

What is it?
Positive mental health and wellbeing campaign: Coordinated by Public Health, with **35 partners** including NHS, Education, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise organisations. Steered by young people, including our ever-growing number of **Just Talk Ambassadors**.

Who is it for?
There is information for **children**, young people, **parents/carers**, and **professionals**.

What kind of resources do we offer?
Leaflets, toolkits, posters, **e-learning**, **webinars**, short films, **journal** – always adding more resources based on feedback.

How are messages shared?
Get involved check out our website www.justtalkherts.org or drop us an email justtalk@hertfordshire.gov.uk
FOLLOW US AT
Instagram: @JustTalkHerts
Twitter: @JustTalkHerts
Facebook: JustTalk Herts

Vision:
To make Hertfordshire a county in which **all young people** recognise that **it's ok to not be ok**, feel **comfortable** and **confident** in talking about **mental health**, have **tools** for looking after their **wellbeing**, and know how to **access support** when it's needed.

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING



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Hertfordshire Children and Young People's Mental Health Service Directory

The services below provide a combination of early intervention and more specialist support for children and young people's mental health. Click the service name or scan the QR code to be redirected to more information.

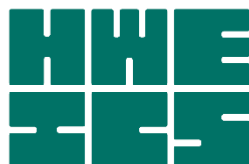


- Telephone service
- Online/virtual service
- Face to face service
- Referral required

Chathealth 0-5	NHS Talking Therapies
Chathealth 11-19	PALMS
Children's Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team	Rephael House Counselling
Children's Wellbeing Practitioners	Safe Space
CHUMS Bereavement Support	School Nurses and Duty Line
Educational Psychologists	Signpost
Families First	Single Point Access (SPA)
First Steps ED	Specialist CAMHS
Health for Kids	Spectrum Family and Young People's Service
Health for Teens	Step 2
Herts Haven Cafés	The Sandbox
Just Talk	Togetherall
Just Talk Ambassador Scheme	WithYOUth
Lumi Nova	YCT Counselling
Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (MHSTs)	Youth Talk Counselling
NESSie Parenting	Young Minds Parent Helpline

- Reaching developmental and emotional milestones, learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems. Mentally healthy children have a positive quality of life and can function well at home, in school, and in their communities.
- Difficulties with normal life problems, poor self confidence, low self esteem, low aspirations, difficult family relationships, poor peer relationships, experimental substance misuse, bereavement, poor concentration, difficulty sustaining relationships, some worries, low mood.
- Many worries, high levels of anxiety, persistent low mood, body image concerns, behaviour puts peers at risk, persistent or high risk substance misuse, risk taking behaviour, unable to display empathy, difficulty coping with anger or frustration, bereavement by suicide/suspected suicide, withdrawn or unwilling to engage, disruptive or challenging behaviour, unable to maintain peer relationships (bullying, bullied or aggression etc).
- Mental health problems which are:
 - Persistent, complex and severe
 - Present in all environments (home, school, with peers)
 - Beyond a normal response to life's problems
- Deliberate self harm requiring hospital treatment, suicidal ideation with imminent plan and means, psychotic episode (hearing unexpected voices, unrealistic or racing thoughts not related to physical or substance misuse), intentional overdosing, persistent inability to engage with services or support offered, risk taking behaviour with no underlying mental health disorder, unresponsive to treatment and continuing to decline.

[Mental Health Support :Guidance for professionals working with children and young people \(CYP\) \(justtalkherts.org\)](https://justtalkherts.org)



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Primary Care – Young Person's Clinic

- Appointments for 11-24yr olds
 - After school: 16.00-19.00
 - 30 minute appointments
- Delivered by upskilled GPs
 - Regular support and supervision
- Holistic assessment
- Well resourced through local partnerships
 - Early intervention
 - Better utilisation of local services
- Opportunity to further expand YPC team using the ARRS

'This is the great error of our day, that physicians separate the mind from the body'

- Plato, 4th century B.C

thrive



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Patient Information Leaflets

Each leaflet is laid out in the format below:

- General emotional and mental wellbeing support
- General telephone and online mental health support
- Face to Face support
- Websites and Apps
- Books
- Helplines



A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a bright red raincoat with a hood. She is standing in a heavy rain, with water droplets visible all around her. Her mouth is wide open in a shout or scream, and her eyes are closed. The background is dark and blurry, emphasizing the rain and the woman's expression.

Thank you!

*“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass
but about learning to dance in the rain”*