

Exposure to unhealthy coping mechanisms

When young people are exposed to self-harm, eating disorders or other unhealthy coping mechanisms, either by witnessing it first-hand or by watching it on TV or the internet, they are more likely to replicate those behaviours themselves.

Illness in the family

If a parent or sibling falls seriously ill, it can place great pressure on a young person who often takes on some form of caring role. Coupled with worries about their loved one, young people often feel unable to voice their worries or concerns for fear of being a burden.

AMH MensSana

Action Mental Health's MensSana project supports young people and their key contacts through a range of activities. If you are concerned about the mental health of a young person, MensSana Project Workers can be contacted in confidence for information on available sources of support in your area.

All MensSana mental health awareness programmes underpin and endorse the five ways to well-being message promoting a culture of prioritising mental health as much as physical health. The Five Ways to Well-being are a great example of how we can make small changes in our everyday life with maximum effect.

For more information on AMH MensSana call 028 9182 8494 or email amhmenssana@amh.org.uk

REMEMBER: help is available

Lifeline 0808 808 8000

Childline 0800 1111

Samaritans 116 123

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/parentsandyoungpeople.aspx

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Good mental health is not just something older people should be concerned about. Young people are also affected by mental health issues. Good mental health means feeling positive and having the ability to cope with school, parents, siblings, friendships and relationships.

Looking after your mental health is just as important as looking after your physical health. In fact, poor mental health can lead to poor physical health.

By the time girls reach 14 years of age, one in four will be depressed, while one in ten boys of the same age will be living with depression.

There are a number of triggers that can affect mental health and well-being but research has shown that the quicker you seek help, the more likely you will feel like yourself again, sooner. If not, you can be left vulnerable to unhealthy coping mechanisms, like self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse.

Problems at home

Family strife can take a huge toll on your life, making it difficult to concentrate in school, especially if you're too embarrassed to talk about it with friends. Stable family relationships are a fantastic source of emotional support for young people, so if that breaks down you may feel there's no one to turn to.

Relationships

The breakdown of relationships at school, whether platonic or romantic, can leave you feeling hurt and overwhelmed. In these instances many young people are far more likely to turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as self-harm, eating disorders or substance abuse.

Exam pressure

The pressure of exams can often be a trigger for mental health problems. Whether the pressure to achieve good grades comes from your parents or peers, this type of stress can overwhelm young people, especially around milestone years like GCSEs. Exam stress can cause mood changes, hair loss, weight loss and even suicidal thoughts.

Bullying

Bullying can range from name-calling and physical aggression to cyberbullying online, which can be very detrimental to a young person's self-esteem. But never suffer alone: turn to someone you trust.

Trauma

If you've suffered a bereavement – even the death of a pet – or have been involved in an accident, or suffered abuse, you can be left feeling very vulnerable and in great need of support.

Transition to a new school

Moving to a new school can be very difficult for young people. Some may miss the familiarity of their old setting and be fearful of establishing new friendship groups. This is especially true of pupils making the progression up to 'big school'.