

Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools Initiative (WAMHS)

Parents' Introduction to the Project
Sir Thomas Abney
8th October 2018

Introduction to the Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) Initiative

- Why bring together wellbeing, mental health and schools?
- Who is in WAMHS?
- What is WAMHS?
- What will your school get as part of WAMHS?
- Parents – you are the experts on your child and the greatest resource.....

What is good mental health?

World Health Organisation describes it as -

A state of wellbeing in which:

- Every individual realises his or her own potential
- Can cope with the normal stresses of life
- Can work productively and fruitfully
- Is able to make a contribution to his or her community

This fits very easily with the values of school and is often what parents say they want for their children!

Mental health difficulties in adolescence can benefit from early prevention in primary school

- The number of 15-16 year olds reporting depression has doubled between 1980s and the 2000s
- The proportion of 15-16 year olds with a conduct disorder has doubled between 1974 and 1999
- Self harm has increased dramatically in the last decade
- Childline annual report (2016) identified an 87% increase in young people struggling to access professional help

The impact of supporting wellbeing is clear:

- Children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, social, and school wellbeing, on average, have higher levels of academic achievement and are more engaged in school, both concurrently and in later years;
- pupils who are confident about their learning persist when faced with challenges;
- pupils who use problem-solving skills to overcome obstacles do better academically;
- Children with better emotional wellbeing make more progress in primary school and are more engaged in secondary school.

(Public Health England 2017, DfE 2012)

These things take practice and primary school is a great time to build skills for emotional resilience later in life.

What role should schools play?

“In order to help their pupils succeed, schools have a role to play in supporting them to be resilient and mentally healthy. There are a variety of things that schools can do, for all their pupils and for those with particular problems, to offer that support in an effective way”. (2016)

Teachers and parents are often the first to notice difficulties in children that may benefit from support

What mental health challenges might benefit from support?

- Behavioural difficulties
- Anxiety, including anxiety about attending school
- Low mood, depression
- Attention and concentration difficulties
- Relationship difficulties, social isolation
- Eating and sleep difficulties
- Deliberate self harming behaviours
- Post traumatic stress

Schools can be a source of great resilience for children and young people when working in partnership with families and communities:-

- Modeling of positive relationships
- Providing a positive and supportive structure
- Consistency
- Development and building of positive skills
- Modelling that emotional life is important and can be managed together

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Noticing and responding – to what?

- A physical illness leading to school refusal
- Grief due to injury, death or illness
- A major change e.g. a new school, break up of parents' relationship, financial worries, moving home, a new sibling
- Relationship difficulties/ arguments with loved ones
- Sexuality and sexual worries
- SATS/academic pressure
- Bullying/relationships with peers/social withdrawal



What can parents contribute?

- Family compassion, warmth and a stable home environment
- Acknowledgment of issues and willingness to engage/trust
- Promoting asking for help when needed
- Holding the hope for your child that change is possible
- Supporting self-esteem and self-identity at home and school
- Access to community resources, transport and groups
- Wider social support systems e.g. extended family, church, family and community centres

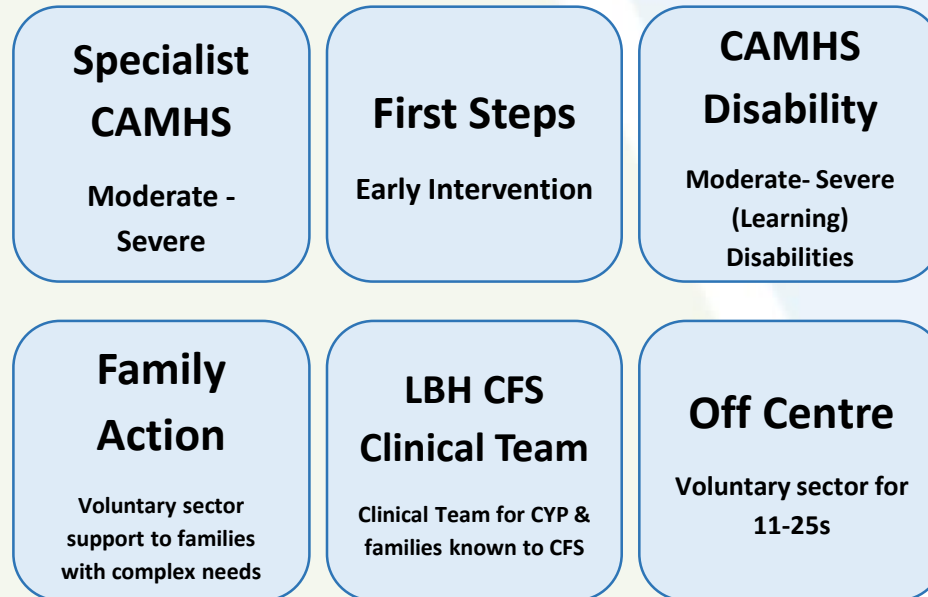
Who is in WAMHS?

WAMHS is run by the **CAMHS Alliance in City & Hackney** and is made up of:-

Partners



Commissioned providers



WAMHS in your school – Who?

- Designated Mental Health Lead – Ms Eloise Adamson
- Wellbeing Framework Partner – Ms Lisa Williams
- CAMHS Worker In School – Dr Anneka Peppiatt

The model



Your school's action plan

- Working with parents and carers
 - parents to feel they can contribute to discussions about mental health and stigma of mental health services
 - parents actively involved and sharing ideas about how to support behaviour and wellbeing across home and school
 - parents to feel they have opportunities for their voice to be heard
- Identifying needs and monitoring impact of support
 - to develop systems to keep track of pupil's needs and to evaluate what has helped/not helped
- Teaching to promote pupil resilience and social/emotional learning
 - focus on mental health in PSHE curriculum, drop down days and circle time
- Staff development
 - Support for teachers to develop their understanding of wellbeing and mental health to support pupils

A quick word about parents....

**You are your child's greatest
resource**

How do I look after myself?



The oxygen mask principle



So, at the start of this term.....

Think about how you look after yourself in all areas of your life

- What helps and nourishes you?
- What brings you joy?
- Popular activities are mindfulness, yoga, Exercise, social networks....



You can help make the WAMHS project a success...we need your ideas!

- What more could your child's school be doing to support your child's wellbeing?
- What could be added to the curriculum or the learning environment to help your child develop social and emotional skills that promote wellbeing?
- What would you as parents like to know more about to feel well-informed about supporting your child's social, emotional and mental health? (previous ideas from other parents have included: introduction to child development, helping my child with bedtimes, managing screen time, promoting positive behaviour, supporting my anxious child, stress reduction for parents – what would you like to see offered?)
- What do you know already and what more would you like to know about mental health services for children in Hackney?