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Building resilience – improving pupil’s emotional health and wellbeing through the Enhanced Healthy Schools model

In December 2011, a group of professionals from various different services and organisations in Rochdale were invited to the first ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing Steering Group’ meeting by Shabnam Sardar, Public Health Development Manager (Wellbeing). I was a member of this group, representing the schools in Rochdale, in my capacity as Healthy Schools Programme Manager. The work that this group started was the beginning of a journey developing an approach for schools to improve Emotional Health and Wellbeing and was an interesting challenge.

The purpose and responsibilities of the group were:

- To develop a Five Ways to Wellbeing Programme for the Borough.
- Drive at a strategic level the implementation of the Five Ways to Wellbeing Programme.
- Work collaboratively and utilise the assets in our community, service providers, commissioners and community groups, to inform and implement the Five Ways to Wellbeing Programme.
- To oversee the evaluation and progress of the activities within the work streams.
- Keep communication leads up to date with forthcoming activities and events that may provide positive publicity opportunities.

The group was accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The group also provided feedback to the Executive Lead in Public Health, the Multi-Agency Health Lifestyles Group (MAHLS), and the Mental Health Commissioning Team.

During Phase 1 of the work, the Five Ways to Wellbeing initiative was promoted in schools throughout the Borough. A small number of pilot schools chose to have the Five Ways to Wellbeing

as a focus for their Enhanced Healthy Schools work. The learning from the pilot schools would then progress into other schools during phase 2 of the Five Ways to Wellbeing programme.

In Phase 2 of the programme a Children and Young People’s Task and Finish Group was established with five objectives to fulfil:-

- Taking opportunities to measure and monitor the wellbeing of local adults and children by developing and using validated tools such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) and the Stirling Wellbeing Scale.
- To embed the Five Ways to Wellbeing within organisations and communities.
- To embed the Five Ways to Wellbeing into the core local principle reflected in local policy and business plans.
- To communicate the Five Ways to Wellbeing Message to effectively change people’s behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the local Five Ways to Wellbeing approach including its impact on both prevention and treatment outcomes.

Smithy Bridge Primary School

Smithy Bridge Primary School was one of the first pilot schools to use the Five Ways to Wellbeing for their Enhanced Healthy Schools focus. The school serves a pleasant residential suburb of Rochdale on the edge of the Pennine moors, and is close to the local beauty-spot of Hollingworth Lake Country Park. The school has on roll approximately 470 pupils, including those attending the nursery. The full-time pupils are allocated by age into 14 classes, making the school two-form entry. Class sizes average out at 30 pupils.

The Enhanced Healthy Schools model in Rochdale uses a 'plan, do, review' cycle and has been adapted locally from the national model. Schools have been crucial in this work and the use of 'pilot schools' has meant that all the tools are developed by teachers and me working together.

In order to determine a 'baseline' measure for children we had to look for suitable scales as the WEMWEBS tool was designed for young people and adults aged 16 years plus. I took this request back to the Steering Group and Dr Michael Taylor, GP, Mental Health Commissioner, Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale, suggested the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale. This is a holistic, positively worded scale, developed by the Stirling Educational Psychology Service, and is suitable for educational professionals looking to measure emotional and psychological wellbeing in children aged 8 to 15 years.

The school identified a cohort of 29 Year 6 pupils for their Five Ways to Wellbeing, Enhanced Healthy Schools work. These children completed the Stirling Wellbeing Scale in October 2012 and a target group of 7 children who scored less than 40 on the Stirling Wellbeing Scale were identified.

Enhanced Healthy Schools Action Plans were developed with the school and it was agreed that the school would complete the Stirling Wellbeing Scale with the same pupils in July 2013. The outline of the work that the school carried out from their action plans included:-

- Mood lifting/relaxation activities used in class.
- A focus on Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Y6 Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHE) lessons.
- A new PSHE scheme of work for Y1 - Y6.
- Children using stress and anxiety scales.
- Anger management techniques explored with individuals.
- Communication of action plans to staff and governors.
- Action plans available to parents and OFSTED via our website.

Evidence of impact

The school reported back in July 2013 after the same cohort had again completed the Stirling Wellbeing Scale and commented on the following:-

- Emotional Well-being activities are more regularly on Y6 planning.
- Whole class are beginning to use stress indicators and understand the language of emotion.
- Some target children are using the strategies and are controlling their outbursts more regularly.
- Some target children are beginning to recognise trigger situations and are able to avoid them.
- Learning mentors are reporting some children are talking positively about their strategies.
- Preferred mood lifting activities have been identified as Cyber Coach and yoga/relaxation.
- 85% of children scored over 45 on the Stirling Wellbeing Scale July 2013, compared to 55% in September 2012.
- The average score in July 2013 was 51, compared to 45 in September 2012.

Targeted group (table below) - 7 children made an average increase of 14 in their score, average score September 2012 - 32, average score July 2013 - 47.

Pupil	Score Sept 2012	Score July 2013
1	24	54
2	26	54
3	31	40
4	33	46
5	36	48
6	39	43
7	39	46

Teachers Comments:-

"Emotional scales/barometers were used in a limited way and were not found to be particularly useful or necessary."

"Movement, particularly Cyber Coach was seen to be a useful 'mood lifting' exercise for all children."

"Some individuals in this cohort have found the transition period - SATs, high school etc. particularly challenging but still have scored more on the Stirling Well-being Scale."

Other pilot schools work

Initially a group of twelve primary and three high schools were approached as 'pilot schools' and a tailored approach was offered to each of them. Within this there were a variety of activities undertaken which included:

- Bolton Octagon's 'Dramatically Healthy' Theatre Group worked with Cardinal Langley RC High school pupils to produce a play on the Five Ways to Wellbeing which was rolled out to other schools and performed at the Healthy Schools Conference in June 2014. The production included workshops after the performance.
- Link4Life, offered 'Yoga' and relaxation sessions for pupils in primary schools. (Link4Life is the trading name for the Rochdale Borough wide Cultural Trust. Link4Life is a provider of arts, sport and heritage services in the Rochdale borough).
- Laughter in Mind developed a series of 5 lessons each one exploring one of the areas of the Five Ways to Wellbeing and worked with both primary and high schools to deliver this in the classroom. (Laughter in Mind is a not for profit Community Interest Company. They offer fun flexible interactive training packages and workshops to support improvements in emotional and physical health, resilience, and overall well-being).
- I, Sue Astin, Healthy Schools Programme Manager, developed a set of 6 session plans, one introductory lesson and one on each area of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, with resources for schools to use in the classroom. These were sent into schools in September 2014.
- Schools used the Enhanced Healthy Schools Model to 'plan, do, and review' their work. They also used the Stirling Scale or WEMWEBS to record changes to pupils wellbeing scores and reported these back to the Healthy Schools Programme.

From this work with the pilot schools we established a clear offer for schools to use as part of their approach to improving pupil's emotional wellbeing and embedding the Five Ways to Wellbeing in a school setting. Plans for the current academic year have included a number of additional initiatives.

2015/16 Academic Year Plans

- New resources from the PSHE Association on teaching Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing are now available for all schools. Schools received these in September 2015.
- Training days are scheduled for both phases in June 2016, with a focus on Mental Health

and Emotional Wellbeing. This training will also incorporate the Five Ways to Wellbeing message.

- The link to the Five Ways to Wellbeing animation developed by our CAMHS user group was sent into schools in September 2015.
- There is a continuing focus on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing as part of the Enhanced Healthy Schools Programme.
- As part of the CAMHS Transformation plans we have set up a High Schools Group to improve links between CAMHS and High Schools.
- The Books on Prescription Scheme for Children and Young People has been introduced into each of the High Schools.
- Schools also have access to the services of '[Kooth](#)' (an online counselling service for 11 to 25 year olds) and '[Tootoot](#)' (an online tool for pupils to report incidents of bullying, sexism, racism, extremism, mental health and homophobic issues and other worries).
- All schools receive regular updates via the Healthy Schools Manager from the Anti-bullying Alliance about anti-bullying week and other related topics.
- Anti-bullying Week takes place each year and this year is set for 14th to 18th November 2016.
- Schools have also been given a range of tools to help them promote pupils emotional health and well-being which includes the Social and Emotional Aspect of Learning materials, 'How to Guide' and the 'Children's Happiness Scale' from the Office of the Children's Rights Director for England.
- Our Ethnic Minority Achievement Team has audio translations of the Stirling Wellbeing Scale for use with our asylum seeker, refugee and international new arrival pupils.

Work on these plans is continuing to move forward in Rochdale Schools and the evidence of impact from this work is very positive as shown in these final comments from teachers and pupils.

Teacher Comments

'Most children can now confidently identify how they are feeling and how to manage these feelings'.

'Pupils have learnt a number of strategies on how to deal with their EHWP'.

'The class really enjoyed the work on the Five Ways to Wellbeing and showed good understanding'.

Pupil Comments

'I was relaxed and calm after the sessions, these techniques helped me in assessment week'. (Yr 5 pupil)

'I like having time to relax and think'. (Yr 5 pupil)

'I know how to relax when I am angry and this stops me from getting in trouble'. (Yr 4 pupil)

'Learning how to control my emotions helps me with my behaviour'. (Yr 4 pupil)

Resources

Public Health England. 2015. Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing - A whole school and college approach. Accessed 4th May 2016.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/414908/Final_EHWP_draft_20_03_15.pdf

Laughter in Mind - Laughter In Mind CIC is a not for profit Community Interest Company, governed by a voluntary Advisory Board consisting of 5 members and two workshop leaders. Our fun flexible interactive training packages and workshops support improvements in emotional and physical health, resilience, and overall well-being. Accessed 4th May 2016.
<http://www.laughterinmind.co.uk/about-2/>

'Five Ways to Wellbeing' : Rochdale video. Accessed 4th May 2016.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF7Ou43Vi6c>

Useful Websites to support this work

MindEd	www.minded.org.uk
NSPCC	www.nspcc.org.uk
Think U Know	www.thinkuknow.co.uk
Barnardo's Real Love Rocks	www.barnardosrealloverocks.org.uk
Young Minds	www.youngminds.org.uk
PSHE Association	www.pshe-association.org.uk

Useful Documents

'Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing. A whole school and college approach'. ([Public Health England – March 2015](#))

'Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing'. ([PSHE Association – March 2015](#))

'Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lesson Plans for Key Stages 1 and 2'. ([PSHE Association – July 2015](#))

'Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Lesson Plans for Key Stages 3 and 4'. ([PSHE Association – July 2015](#))

Mental Health and Behaviour in schools ([DFE - March 2016](#))

SHEU

Schools and Students Health Education Unit

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