

Let's Talk Mental Health!

We all have it and just like physical health, it is equally as important! "Mental health" is simply a broad term to discuss everything that goes on inside a person's mind. So let's break it down: Mental health is a term used to describe the "wellness" of everything going on up there. Some people will remain in a positive mind-set for the entirety of their lives and by this, I mean happy, positive outlook and an 'everything's great' attitude. Although, most of the population, not so much. Everyone will go through stages during their lifetime, no matter your age, when everything inside our incredible brains gets a little off track. This, in turn, can sometimes cause some more serious problems. Here is where the term "mental health problems/disorders" is used.

A mental health problem is typically defined as "a problem/disorder that affects your mood, thinking and behaviour". Some examples of common diagnosable mental health disorders include Anxiety, Depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Eating Disorders (disordered eating). Some slightly less common ones are known as Borderline Personality Disorder, Schizophrenia and Bipolar. The list is endless, describing each individual's struggles and challenges, and as someone who has struggled with a mental health disorder for as long as I can remember, an official diagnosis isn't the be all and end all. Of course, seeing a professional and getting a thorough mental health assessment carried out is the most appropriate process of getting diagnosed with any of the above conditions and more. I absolutely enforce seeing a professional whether that be a Doctor, Psychologist/Psychiatrist or Counsellor.

But we do all struggle sometimes and you don't need a diagnosis to receive help with that. Admitting that your mental health might be taking a hit can be the hardest step in getting help with it. However, there are a huge variety of services that are available to anyone and everyone and can offer a broad range of help. I recommend discussing with parents, carers and friends (where possible) in the first instance to attempt to put in help where it may be needed.

Although, I understand that not everyone has this sort of support available to them, and that's why I'm writing this today. Below is a list of services which you can contact when in need, whether this be simply needing someone to offload too, or finding out where you can get help in a crisis:

Kooth- an online mental wellbeing community where you can access safe anonymous support:
<https://www.kooth.com/>

Bedford Open Door- a charity providing free counselling:
call: **01234 360 388**
text: **07922 105 200**

CHUMS- a mental health service for children and young people:
<http://chums.uk.com/>

By Molly