



# Our Minds Matter

A framework to support  
children and young people's  
emotional wellbeing in Fife

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# Introduction

## Aims of the framework

The framework aims to clarify what good emotional wellbeing looks like for our children and young people, and how we can all reflect on ways to keep ourselves mentally fit. It was originally developed in 2017 and looks at what support looks like, and who is involved in supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing and encourages an integrated and shared approach.

## What have we learned so far?

- The prevalence of poor mental health across Scotland's children and young people has incrementally increased over the past six years, with all services supporting children and young people experiencing increases in presentations and complexity.
- Supports and interventions to support young people's emotional wellbeing are best seen on a continuum where services move across the GIRFEC layers, responding to needs in a flexible and proportionate way.
- A focus on Universal, Early Intervention and Preventative approaches ensures that most young people can enjoy positive emotional wellbeing and flourish.
- Good inter-agency partnership working is the most effective way to ensure that children and young people are supported to access the right support at the right time.
- The landscape relating to children and young people's wellbeing has changed over the past few years. The introduction of The Promise for care experienced young people, School Counselling Services for young people aged 10 + and The Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework has ensured that children and young people feel able to seek help at an early stage when they are experiencing poor mental health.
- To enable us to provide effective and holistic wellbeing support to children and young people, we need to ensure that we are building the knowledge, skills and confidence of those people close to them.



# What does good mental health and emotional wellbeing look like?

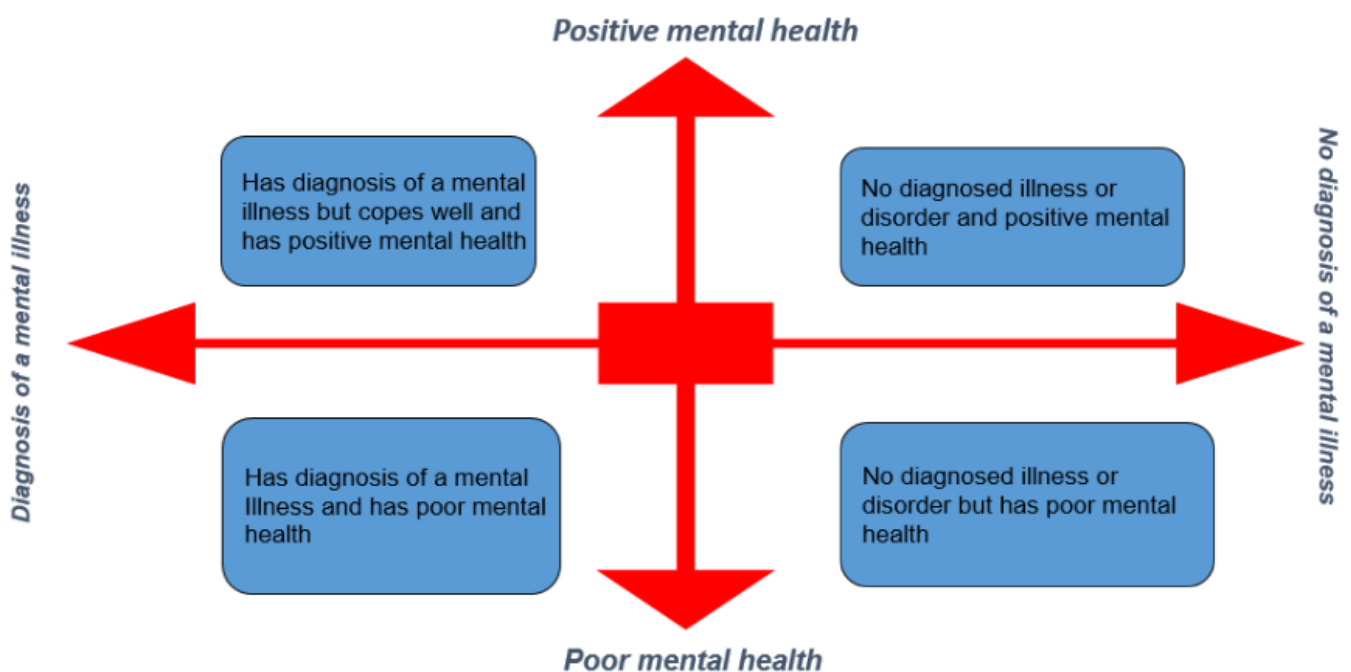
We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. Our emotional wellbeing can change throughout the day, and from week to week depending on our circumstances and ability to access support and information.

***'Mental health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right. And it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.'***

***World Health Organisation 2025***

If we consider emotional wellbeing and mental illness sitting on two continuums it is possible to have a diagnosed mental illness and still have good emotional wellbeing (e.g. being happy, having good peer relationships, doing well at school).

The Mental Health Continuum:



Most young people do not have a diagnosed mental illness, but some may not be feeling emotionally well or thriving due to feelings of anxiety, having low self-esteem or poor body image. If we focus on positive ways to support our emotional wellbeing these can serve as protective factors for our mental health.

# Overview of support

## It can be Universal, Additional or Intensive

Universal, Additional and Intensive services can work effectively as single agencies, jointly or within an integrated approach, to help develop and promote children and young people's wellbeing.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this framework the following definitions of Universal, Additional and Intensive have been agreed:

### Universal

Available and accessible to all children and young people from a broad support network that promotes positive wellbeing, encourages resilience and promotes emotional literacy.

### Additional

Available to children and young people with individual needs that are identified through the Child Wellbeing Pathway and other types of assessments to inform supports offered as part of a plan for the young person.

### Intensive

Available for those with complex signs of mental distress which impacts on their day-to-day functioning involving partnership with specialist providers identifying individual or group interventions specifically targeted to meet the need of children and young people.



Framework for Intervention

Whilst the framework appears to describe three different stages of intervention, in fact these are seen as a continuum where services move across the categories responding to needs in a flexible and proportionate way.

A fundamental principle that underpins the framework is that, as far as possible, children, young people and families are supported by Universal provisions as this reduces the need to move into Additional and/or Intensive support.

# Stages of support

## Universal Support

### What is Universal Support?

Universal Support should promote the holistic emotional wellbeing of every young person.

It is normal for children and young people to face emotional challenges growing up, and following the [five ways to wellbeing](#) encourages us to stay mentally fit, promotes emotional and physical wellbeing, and reinforces perseverance when things don't work out.

Encouraging young people to recognise and talk openly about their feelings in a supportive, co-regulated environment allows them space to consider and resolve issues independently, building their resilience and confidence.

Knowing where, when, and from whom to seek support and advice is important and this should be accessible to all children and young people, families, and staff supporting them in ways which best meet their individual needs.

### What might Universal Support look like?

- **Respectful and inclusive cultures** and communities which reinforce positive values and build effective relationships.
- **Positive, holistic approaches** which emphasise young peoples' strengths and capacities.
- **Effective partnerships** with families and communities.
- Recognition of the importance of **young people's voice**, membership of groups and valuing of peer networks.
- Promotion of **mental and emotional literacy**.
- **Peer-to-peer** support for children and young people.
- **Challenging mental health stigma** and discrimination.
- Accessible **programmes of support** in school and communities to enable young people to cope with known stressors such as relationships, exams and social media.
- Encouragement of young people to focus on maintaining positive mental health for themselves using the **5 ways to wellbeing**.

# Additional Support

## What is Additional Support?

Where there are wellbeing concerns around a child or young person the Child Wellbeing Pathway is used to address emerging issues and support the team around the child to work in partnership to respond to needs and concerns. It is based on the principles of GIRFEC and promotes the use of the wellbeing indicators.

Central to the process are the five key questions which practitioners should routinely ask if they have concerns about the wellbeing of the child or young person:

1. What is getting in the way of this child's or young person's well-being?
2. Do I have all the information I need to help this child and young person?
3. What can I do now to help this child and young person?
4. What can my agency do to help this child or young person?
5. What additional help, if any, may be needed from others?

## What might Additional Support look like?

- **Coaching and person-centred planning:** Coaching can be used in everyday interactions with young people to support them to identify their own strengths and to develop their own coping skills.
- **One-to-one targeted support** to help young people to build skills, self-confidence and resilience to improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- **Supporting professionals around the child**, offering direct advice, consultation training and coaching for staff working directly with young people from a range of Our Minds Matter partners.
- Offering **practical and emotional support** for families who are concerned about a young person's mental health.
- Providing a wide range of **online resources and signposting** that can support children and young people, families and professionals.

# Intensive Support

## What is Intensive Support?

Due to the complex and varied nature of mental distress it is likely that bespoke packages of therapeutic interventions and care will be created for individual young people. A small number of children over time may need agencies to work together more intensively to promote their well-being, requiring carefully coordinated intervention and access to those resources that are not generally available.

To do this we continue to use the Child Wellbeing Pathway with appropriate partners' involvement, drawing upon multi-agency assessment processes.

## Who provides Intensive Support?

It is likely at this intensive stage that specialist providers will work in partnership with existing supports. This would include NHS services such as CAMHS and specialist commissioned service.

## What might Intensive Support look like?

- **Longer-term** support and treatment for those with conditions likely to have an enduring, inhibiting effect on normal emotional, psychological and social development.
- **Multi-systemic therapy** including approaches such as behavioural, and cognitive behavioural therapy as well as structured family therapy to work with young people and their families.
- **Tailored, one-to-one** professional support to help young people to build skills, self-confidence and resilience and to stop harmful behaviours.
- **Regularly monitoring** and reviewing to ensure the support is meeting the need of the child or young person. This enables the team around the child to consider appropriate next steps.
- **Counselling** gives young people the opportunity to explore, understand and overcome issues in their lives which may be causing them difficulty, distress and/or confusion.
- **Supporting the team around the child** to provide advice, consultation and coaching.

## Further Support

For further information and advice about local and national emotional wellbeing supports and services, including CAMHS, School Nurse Service, Child Psychology and other multi-agency partners, please visit

[Emotional wellbeing | Fife Council](#)