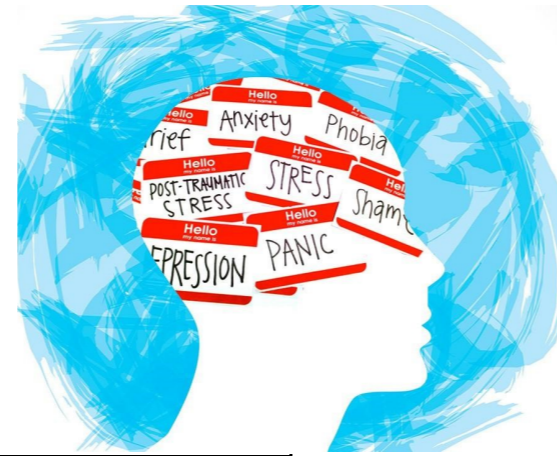




## Health and Wellbeing—Mental Health

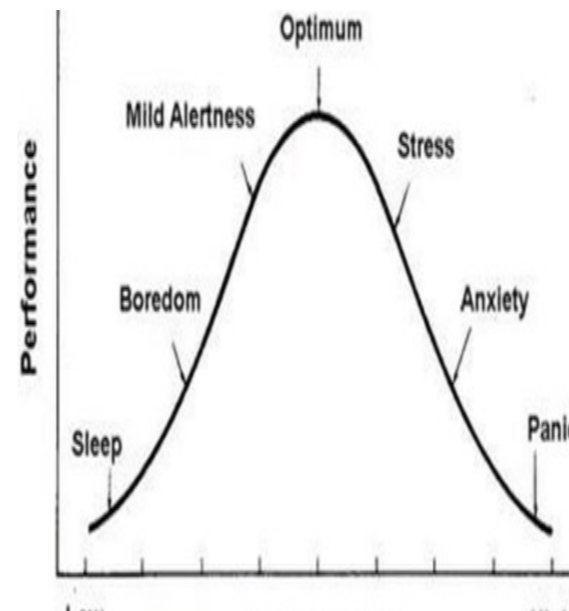


### Signs of good mental wellbeing

- Feeling relatively confident in yourself and have positive self-esteem
- Feeling and express a range of emotions
- Building and maintaining good relationships with others
- Feel engaged with the world around you
- Live and work productively
- Cope with the stresses of daily life
- Adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

### Things to Remember

- Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at points in their lives.
- Only a Doctor or Mental Health Professional can diagnose Chronic Stress or an Anxiety Disorder.
- There are treatments available and coping mechanisms.
- Having a stress or anxiety disorder is not a sign of weakness and is more common than people think.



### Signs of poor mental wellbeing

- Erratic changes in mood and behavior
- Distancing from friends and family.
- Loss of interest in things that they used to be interested in.
- Excessive sleeping or not sleeping.
- Increased alcohol consumption.
- Poor concentration and being easily distracted
- Finding it hard to make decisions
- Feeling overwhelmed by things & tearfulness
- Finding it difficult to control your emotions
- Irritability and short temper or aggression

### The Importance of Positive Relationships

Connecting with others can help us to feel a greater sense of belonging and can help to challenge feelings of loneliness.

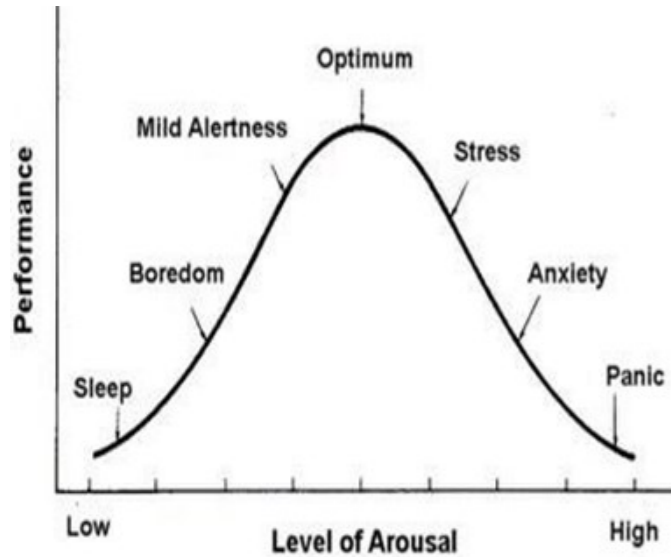
- **Make time for the people you love.** Keeping regular contact with friends and family, whether it's face-to-face, on the phone or by text, can strengthen your relationships.
- **Join a group.** Think of the things you like to do, such as drawing, gardening or sport and look for local groups. Meeting others with a shared interest can increase your confidence and build your support network.
- **Talk about the way you feel.** Opening up to a trusted friend or family member can help you to feel listened to and supported. Just acknowledging your feelings by saying them out loud can help.
- **Use peer support.** If you're finding things difficult, talking to people who have similar feelings or experiences can help you to feel accepted.

Key words	Definitions
Mental Wellbeing	Mental wellbeing describes your mental state - how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month or year to year.
Mental Illness	Mental illnesses comprise of a broad range of problems, with different symptoms. However, they are generally characterized by some combination of abnormal thoughts, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others.
Stress	A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances.
General Anxiety Disorder	A condition characterized by 6 months or more of chronic, exaggerated worry and tension that is unfounded or much more severe than the normal anxiety most people experience.
Social Anxiety Disorder	Also called social phobia, is intense anxiety or fear of being judged, negatively evaluated, or rejected in a social or performance situation.
Depression	People experience low mood, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration.

### Where to get more help and support

- Parents and trusted family.
- School Staff and Wellbeing Team
- Your Doctor or Practice Nurse
- MIND - <https://www.mind.org.uk>  
Help line - **0300 123 3393** open 9am to 7pm, Monday to Friday or Text: 86463
- Young Minds - <https://youngminds.org.uk> Text: 85258 or Parents Helpline: 0808 802 5544
- Stem4 - <https://stem4.org.uk/>

# Health and Wellbeing—Mental Health



**Anxiety Disorders**

Anxiety is an evolutionary and survival mechanism which is often linked to the flight or fight response. The brain responds to a perceived threat or danger by releasing stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol which cause the physical symptoms of anxiety. Once the threatening situation has stopped, the body will usually return to normal.

But if someone has an anxiety disorder these feelings of fear and danger can be ongoing and interrupt their daily routine long after the threat has gone. They can make them feel like things are worse than they actually are.

**General Anxiety Disorder** is a long-term condition that causes a person to feel anxious about a wide range of situations and issues, rather than a specific event. People with GAD feel anxious most days and often struggle to remember the last time they felt relaxed. As soon as 1 anxious thought is resolved, another may appear about a different issue.

**Social Anxiety Disorder**, also called social phobia, is a long-lasting and overwhelming fear of social situations. Social Anxiety is more than shyness. It's an intense fear that does not go away and affects everyday activities, self-confidence, relationships and work or school life.

**Symptoms of General Anxiety Disorder**

<p>Mental symptoms of anxiety can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racing thoughts,</li> <li>• Uncontrollable over thinking,</li> <li>• Difficulties concentrating,</li> <li>• Feelings of dread, panic or 'impending doom',</li> <li>• Feeling irritable,</li> <li>• Heightened alertness,</li> <li>• Problems with sleep,</li> <li>• Changes in appetite,</li> <li>• Wanting to escape from the situation you are in, and</li> <li>• Dissociation.</li> </ul>	<p>Physical symptoms of anxiety can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sweating,</li> <li>• Heavy and fast breathing,</li> <li>• Hot flushes or blushing,</li> <li>• Dry mouth,</li> <li>• Shaking,</li> <li>• Hairloss,</li> <li>• Fast heartbeat,</li> <li>• Extreme tiredness or lack of energy</li> <li>• Dizziness and fainting, and</li> <li>• Stomach aches and sickness.</li> </ul>
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**Treatments for Chronic Stress and Anxiety**

- Therapy and Counselling such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Medications – including SSRI's, Benzodiazepines, and Beta-blockers
- Self Care including mindfulness, meditation and journaling.
- Alternative therapies such as acupuncture.

**Symptoms of Chronic Stress**

Chronic stress affects the whole body. It can have several physical or psychological symptoms, which can make functioning on a daily basis more challenging. The type and severity of symptoms vary considerably from person to person. Signs and symptoms of chronic stress can include:

- Irritability, which can be extreme
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating,
- Rapid, disorganized thoughts
- Difficulty sleeping / insomnia
- Digestive problems and changes in appetite
- Feeling helpless
- A perceived loss of control
- Low self-esteem
- Loss of sexual desire
- Nervousness
- Frequent infections or illnesses
- High blood pressure



**Factors affecting body image**

- Puberty and the changing body.
- The Media
- Peers and Family

**Ways to promote positive body image**

- Accept Your Body.
- Remember Nobody's perfect.
- Don't body-shame yourself.
- Build a better habits.
- Like Your Body - Find things to like about your looks.
- Take Care of Your Body
- Eat healthy foods.
- Get a good nights sleep.
- Be active every day.
- Keep to a healthy weight.

**What can cause problems with our sleep?**

- Medical Issues** – there are 89 recognised sleep disorders and the most common are Insomnia, Sleep apnoea, Restless limb syndrome.
- Technology** - The blue light emitted by screens restrain the production of melatonin, the hormone that controls your sleep/wake cycle or circadian rhythm. Reducing melatonin makes it harder to fall and stay asleep.
- Hunger** – It is not recommended to eat a big meal before bedtime, a small bedtime snack helpful. If you go to bed hungry, you're likely to wake up with hunger pangs.
- Stress** causes hyperarousal, which can upset the balance between sleep and wakefulness.
- Mental Health Issues** – Mental health issues can have a variety of impacts on sleep, such as anxiety making it hard to settle due to racing thoughts, PTSD can lead to nightmares and night terrors, depression can lead to over sleeping.
- Your Bed** - Past research shows that sleeping on an uncomfortable mattress can rob you of up to an hour's vital, restful sleep.
- Clutter and Messy Rooms** - A cluttered bedroom makes for a cluttered mind. Don't use it as a dumping ground for the rest of the house. Your bedroom should be a sanctuary, somewhere you can go to turn off and relax.
- Napping and Lie Ins:** Trying to make up for lack of sleep with extra time in bed the following morning, or even a few days later, throws off your internal body clock. Naps of under 30 minutes can be refreshing any longer throws out your body clock

**Statistics on Eating Disorders**

- Between 1.25 and 3.4 million people in the UK are affected by an eating disorder
- Around 25% of those affected by an eating disorder are male
- Eating disorder are most common in individuals between the ages of 16 and 40 years old

**Causes of Eating Disorders**

Eating disorders are not simply about food; the behaviours that accompany them may often serve as a coping mechanism or a way to feel in control. Eating disorders have many causes which are individual to the person however some common causes are:

- Distorted Body Image
- Bullying
- Depression and/or Anxiety

**Symptoms of Eating Disorders**

Symptoms of eating disorders will vary between individuals and type of eating disorder. Not matching the symptoms exactly does not mean that someone does not have an eating disorder, however, some common symptoms include:

- Eating very little food or eating large amounts of food in a short time in an uncontrolled way
- Having very strict habits, rituals, or routines around food
- Spending a lot of time worrying about your body weight and shape
- Changes in mood
- Deliberately making yourself ill after eating
- Avoiding socialising when food may be involved
- Withdrawing from social groups, hobbies you used to enjoy or from family life
- Physical signs such as digestive problems or weight being very high or very low for someone of your age and height.

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**Where to get more help and support**

- Parents and trusted family
- School Staff, school nurse and Wellbeing Team
- Your GP or Practice Nurse
- Youth Access - [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)
- The Mix - [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)
- Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (13:00-23:00 daily)
- B-eat - [www.b-eat.co.uk](http://www.b-eat.co.uk)
- Helpline: 0808 801 0711 (Daily 3pm-10pm)
- Men Get Eating Disorders Too - [mengetedstoo.co.uk](http://mengetedstoo.co.uk)
- Anorexia & Bulimia Care - [exibulimiacare.org.uk](http://exibulimiacare.org.uk)
- Helpline 03000 11 12 13 (option 1: support line, option 2: family and friends)