



Supporting Minds at Fullbrook - Recognising early signs of anxiety and low mood

Welcome to 'Wellbeing Wednesday: Supporting Young Minds at Fullbrook' focused on supporting our children's mental health and wellbeing. Miss Lawrence, our Whole School Safeguarding and Mental Health Lead, will share evidenced-based research and practical strategies to support children and teenagers at Fullbrook each week. We hope these provide helpful guidance and reassurance for families.

At Fullbrook, we appreciate that the secondary school years can be an emotional rollercoaster, for young people and parents alike. While ups and downs are a normal part of growing up, there are times when changes in mood or behaviour may signal that a young person is struggling and needs a bit of extra support. As always, if you have any concerns, you can always contact your child's Head of Year, Tutor or the DSL Team. There are also many helpful UK organisations such as Young Minds, CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) and guidance from the NHS and UK government. These leading mental health charities all highlight how important it is to notice concerns early and respond with understanding and care.

What might parents notice?

Rather than one-off bad days, anxiety and low mood often present as a persistent change from a young person's usual self. These might include:

- Persistent worry, fear or feeling overwhelmed
- Increased irritability, anger or emotional outbursts
- Withdrawing from friends, family or activities they usually enjoy
- Changes in sleep or eating habits
- Frequent physical complaints such as headaches or stomach aches
- Avoiding school or a noticeable drop in attendance or performance

Low mood or depression can also involve ongoing sadness, loss of motivation, tiredness, difficulty concentrating, or negative thoughts about themselves or the future.

How parents can help

- Keep conversations gentle and open; Young Minds encourages parents to listen calmly and without judgement. Letting your teenager know that their feelings are taken seriously can make a huge difference
- Look for patterns, not moments; Mood swings happen, but changes that last several weeks are more likely to need attention
- Support healthy routines; Regular sleep, meals, physical activity and time with others all play an important role in mental wellbeing, as highlighted by the NHS Every Mind Matters campaign
- Know when to seek extra help If anxiety or low mood is affecting day-to-day life, speaking to your GP can be a helpful first step. Support may be available through school or via services such as CAMHS

When to act urgently

If your child talks about self-harm or suicide, or you feel they may be at immediate risk, it's important to seek urgent help straight away by contacting emergency services or a crisis helpline. Both CALM and Young Minds emphasise that it's always better to act early and ask for help. In summary, staying alert to changes, keeping communication open with both your child and their Head of Year or the DSL team at Fullbrook can make a real difference.

If you would like further support or advice, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

In next week's 'Wellbeing Wednesday' instalment, we will be offering advice on how to talk to your child about their mental health without judgement.