

# Let's Talk... A common language and understanding of emotional wellbeing and mental health

A joined-up approach to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people



Colby, age 6

A Guide for Families

January 2021

## Contents

<b>Title</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	The purpose of this guidance, who it is for and how it came about	2
<b>Helpful &amp; unhelpful language</b>	Examples of unhelpful language and how we can adapt it to be more helpful	2
<b>Understanding the levels of intervention across Education, Health &amp; Care</b>	Making sense of the varying approaches to intervention from our services	4
<b>Risk &amp; protective factors</b>	Listed factors relating to the child/young person, family, school and community	5
<b>What Emotional Wellbeing &amp; Mental Health looks like at different levels of need</b>	A table to define and understand the different levels of emotional wellbeing & mental health	6
<b>Resources &amp; Contacts</b>	A selection of resources and contacts which may be useful in supporting emotional wellbeing & mental health	9
<b>Glossary &amp; Acronyms</b>	Key terms and phrases explained	10
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	Thanks to those who contributed to the creation of this guidance	12
<b>References</b>	Sources on information that informed this guidance	12

## Introduction

What our children hear us say shapes how they understand, see the world and what they learn about themselves. This includes how they talk about emotional wellbeing and mental health.

The information in this guidance is helpful for supporting all children and young people. It provides a shared understanding of emotional wellbeing and mental health. We hope that everyone will use this common language, so that everyone feels understood and can plan for support. There are three versions of this guidance. This one for families, one for children and young people and another for school staff and other services. We hope this builds everyone's confidence.

“Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” (Young Minds, 2017).

Emotional wellbeing and mental health mean different things to different people. We all have mental health and we must look after it, getting the right support at the right time.



Jessica, age 10

## Helpful & unhelpful language

Language shapes how we understand things about ourselves and others. Children, young people and families have shared that they hear unhelpful words and phrases which can make them feel judged. This has got to change.

We need to use helpful language to make sure that everyone feels understood and empowered through their experiences. It is vital that this begins with changes in language.

This will take time and starts with everyone reflecting on the words they use to describe emotional wellbeing and mental health. We also need to remember it's not just what we say, it's also how we say it. We may not get this 'right' every time, but being willing to try we can make positive changes if we all work together.

This table shows how some of the unhelpful language we hear can be changed to more helpful language. This will promote compassion and kindness, hope, connection and belonging.

Examples of unhelpful language	Our preferred language (helpful language) <i>*Explanations of these terms can be found in the Glossary.</i>
<b>Vocabulary:</b> <b>Behaviour</b> <b>Naughty</b> <b>Defiant</b>	Communicating behaviours*

<p><b>Manipulative Tantrums</b></p> <p><b>Phrases:</b>  “Just want people to feel sorry for them”  “Red mist”  “Doing it on purpose”</p>	<p>“I wonder if...”</p>
<p><b>Vocabulary:</b>  Rough  Violent  Aggressive  Refusal  Rude</p> <p><b>Phrases:</b>  “Kicking off”  “Meltdown”  “Out of control”</p>	<p>Stress &amp; distress  Hyper-arousal (fight/flight)  Hypo-arousal (freeze/shutdown/disassociation)</p>
<p><b>Vocabulary:</b>  Dramatic  Emotional  Hormonal  Feral  Disturbed  Crisis</p> <p><b>Phrases:</b>  “Overreacting”  “They didn’t mean it” (related to self-injury)</p>	<p>Dysregulation  Outside their window of tolerance*  Overwhelmed</p> <p>The CYP requires:  Co-regulation  Self-regulation</p>
<p><b>Vocabulary:</b>  Broken  Surly  Dangerous</p> <p><b>Phrases:</b>  “There’s nothing we can do for them”  “Causing harm to others”  “Harmful to others”</p>	<p>Adaptive response*  Building resilience  Risk  May have experienced/be experiencing  Trauma/Adverse Childhood Experiences*  Compromising the safety to themselves and others</p>
<p><b>Vocabulary:</b>  Over sensitive  Attention seeking</p> <p><b>Phrases:</b>  “It’s not that serious”</p>	<p>Attachment/connection seeking  Anxiety  Separation anxiety  Avoidance/withdrawn  Not feeling safe yet</p>

<p><b>Vocabulary:</b>  <b>Unstable</b>  <b>Fragile</b>  <b>Odd</b>  <b>Special</b>  <b>Nutter</b>  <b>Mad</b></p> <p><b>Phrases:</b>  <b>“Maybe it’s not that bad”</b>  <b>“A few sandwiches short of a picnic”</b></p>	<p>Emotional wellbeing and/or mental health difficulties  Neuro-diverse*  Emotional literacy skills  Social and emotional development</p>
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It may be useful to use the helpful language in the table to support change the way emotional wellbeing and mental health is talked about. This might be useful when supporting One Plans, Education, Health and Care Plan Needs Assessments (EHCP) and Team Around the Family Plan (TAF).

**Understanding levels of intervention across Education, Health and Care**

Education, Health and Social Care use different models to describe need. This can create confusion. Here is a simple explanation of each model:

Health Model: iThrive



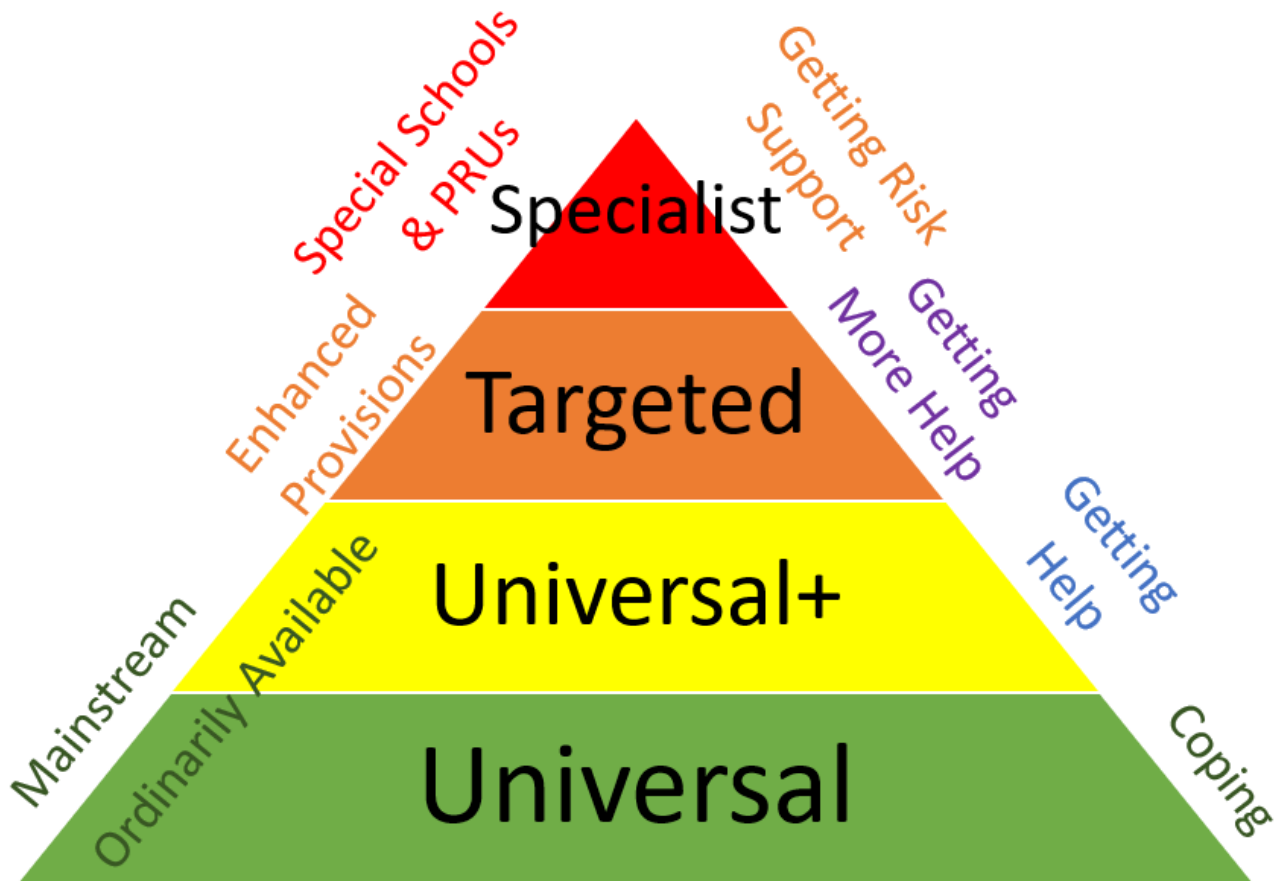
Social Care: Essex Windscreen of Need



Education: SEND Code of Practice



Here you can see them combined in one model:



Children and young people may not access services at the same 'level' or for the same length of time. Accessing support from one service does not mean that they will also access that level of support from another service. For example, a child or young person may be in a mainstream school/setting accessing a 'Universal+' offer, and also 'Getting risk support' from the NHS.

### **Risk & Protective Factors**

We all have a range of risk and protective factors which affect their experiences. This includes emotional wellbeing and mental health. Families do the best they can with the resources available to them and the knowledge they have. Understanding these factors can help us make small positive changes. These small changes could make a big difference.

Children and young people have risk and protective factors in these four areas. To learn more about risk and protective factors please speak to your school or other supportive services.



## Glossary & Acronyms

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Adaptive response</b>	The perception of a threat leads to a response within the body for dealing with the threat. This is an adaptive response as it prepares the body to take the necessary action (fight, flight, freeze, etc).
<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences</b>	A wide range of circumstances and experiences that impact on a child's development. These may be through stress or deprivation. In Essex we take an adverse experience to be any that in an on-going or severe way compromises whether a child is safe.
<b>Alternative Provision</b>	A school/setting which provides an alternative education for pupils who do not attend mainstream or special schools.
<b>CCG</b>	Clinical Commissioning Groups are our local health providers. There are 7 across Southend, Essex & Thurrock.
<b>CETR</b>	Care, Education Treatment Reviews assess the need for hospital stays for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or autism and complex mental health needs.
<b>Communicating Behaviour</b>	All behaviour is communication. We must act as 'stress detectives' to explore what a CYP is telling us through their communicating behaviours.
<b>Directory</b>	A list of provisions, resources, tools, etc.
<b>Discharge</b>	When an individual's care is ceased from a service provider. Usually used in health contexts.
<b>Early Intervention</b>	Provision which is put in place to prevent further escalation of need.
<b>EHCP</b>	Education, Health & Care Plan. A statutory plan outlining targeted/specialist support for pupils with SEND.
<b>Enhanced Provision</b>	An educational setting which provides targeted, short-term education for pupils with additional needs.
<b>EP</b>	Educational Psychologist.
<b>EWMH</b>	Emotional wellbeing and mental health.
<b>EWMHS</b>	Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health Service.
<b>FCAMHS</b>	Forensic Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service.
<b>In-patient</b>	A person who experiences a stay in a hospital setting.
<b>IP</b>	Inclusion Partner (part of the SEND Quadrant Teams in Essex).
<b>Mainstream</b>	An educational setting which provides universal education for the majority of pupils.

<b>Multi-Agency Team, with examples</b>	A Multi-Agency Team is made up of a group of professionals from different services. They work together in collaboration with joint responsibility to ensure that the whole needs of a child or family are met.
<b>Multi-Disciplinary Team, with examples</b>	A Multidisciplinary team is made up of a group of health care professionals. They are members of different 'disciplines' e.g. Psychiatrist, Psychotherapist, Clinical Psychologist, nurse and occupational therapist etc.
<b>NELFT</b>	North East London Foundation Trust are the providers of EWMHS in Southend, Essex & Thurrock.
<b>Neuro-diverse</b>	Conditions such as autism, dyslexia and ADHD which occur naturally. These can create differences in the way they understand situations, socialise and learn. They may also have differences in attention, mood and other processes.
<b>One Page Profile</b>	A One Page Profile shows all the important information about a person on a single sheet of paper. There are three simple headings: what people appreciate about me, what's important to me and how best to support me.
<b>One planning / One Plan</b>	Essex's approach to the Graduated Response. One planning is a process which is used to create a One Plan: a collaborative plan of support.
<b>PRU</b>	An educational setting for pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools/settings.
<b>Quadrant</b>	A geographical area in which Essex County Council support is structured. These are Mid, South, North East and West.
<b>Reasonable adjustments</b>	Changes that a school/setting must make so that all pupils can access and enjoy their education.
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow all people to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.
<b>Self-injury</b>	A coping strategy used by individuals to manage their emotions. This might include pulling hair, picking/scratching skin, hitting self, cutting, etc. Also referred to as self-harm.
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
<b>SPA</b>	Single Point of Access for contacting EWMHS.
<b>Special School</b>	An educational setting which provides specialist education for pupils with a SEND.
<b>STP</b>	Sustainability & Transformation Partnerships. Local NHS organisations and councils working together to improve health and care in the areas they serve. There are 3 which cover Southend, Essex & Thurrock: Mid & South Essex, Suffolk & NE Essex and Hertfordshire & West Essex.
<b>Threshold</b>	A point at which criteria changes and indicates a need to alter/change provision.
<b>Tier / Level</b>	A category of need or support which is defined by criteria and varying degrees of intensity.
<b>Transition</b>	A point of change, such as changing year groups or moving to a new school/setting.

<b>Trauma Perceptive Practice (TPP)</b>	The Essex approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional wellbeing. This is a free comprehensive training programme for all Essex schools/settings.
<b>Window of Tolerance</b>	The window of tolerance is a term used to explain and help adults understand the stress response system. Every individual has a unique window of tolerance. When they are within their window of tolerance, they feel regulated, calm and able to learn, love and play to the best of their ability. When they experience a stressor, making them feel worried or scared, they are pushed outside of their window of tolerance. The task for the adult is to widen the window.

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