SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Working together to keep our young people safe

Secondary | February 2025

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The week of 3rd to 9th February marks **Children's Mental Health Week**, and this year's theme is 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself.' It's a wonderful opportunity for parents and carers to open up conversations with their children about mental health and well-being.

What does 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself' mean for our young people?

As children grow, they face new challenges, responsibilities and opportunities to discover who they are. The theme *Know Yourself, Grow Yourself* encourages self-awareness and personal growth, two essential building blocks for mental health and well-being.

Why self-awareness matters

Self-awareness is the ability to recognise and understand your emotions, strengths, weaknesses and values. For children, this skill is crucial as they navigate friendships, academic pressures and personal identity.

When children are self-aware, they can:

- **manage their emotions-** recognise when they're feeling stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed and take steps to cope.
- **make better decisions-** understand their values and priorities, which helps them avoid peer pressure.
- **build stronger relationships-** communicate more effectively and empathise with others.

How personal growth builds resilience and confidence

Personal growth happens when young people challenge themselves to learn, improve and step out of their comfort zones; it's about progress, not perfection.

Through personal growth, young people can:

- **develop resilience-** learn to bounce back from setbacks and see failure as a stepping stone to success.
- **build confidence-** gain a sense of achievement by setting and reaching goals.
- **adopt a growth mindset-** believe that abilities and intelligence can improve with effort and persistence.

The key is to help your child view challenges as opportunities to grow, rather than obstacles to avoid. For example, struggling with a difficult subject at school can become a chance to develop problem-solving skills and perseverance.

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Understanding anxiety and depression

Anxiety and depression are common mental health challenges that can affect young people, just as they do adults. While it's normal for young people to feel occasional stress or sadness, persistent or overwhelming feelings may signal a deeper concern.

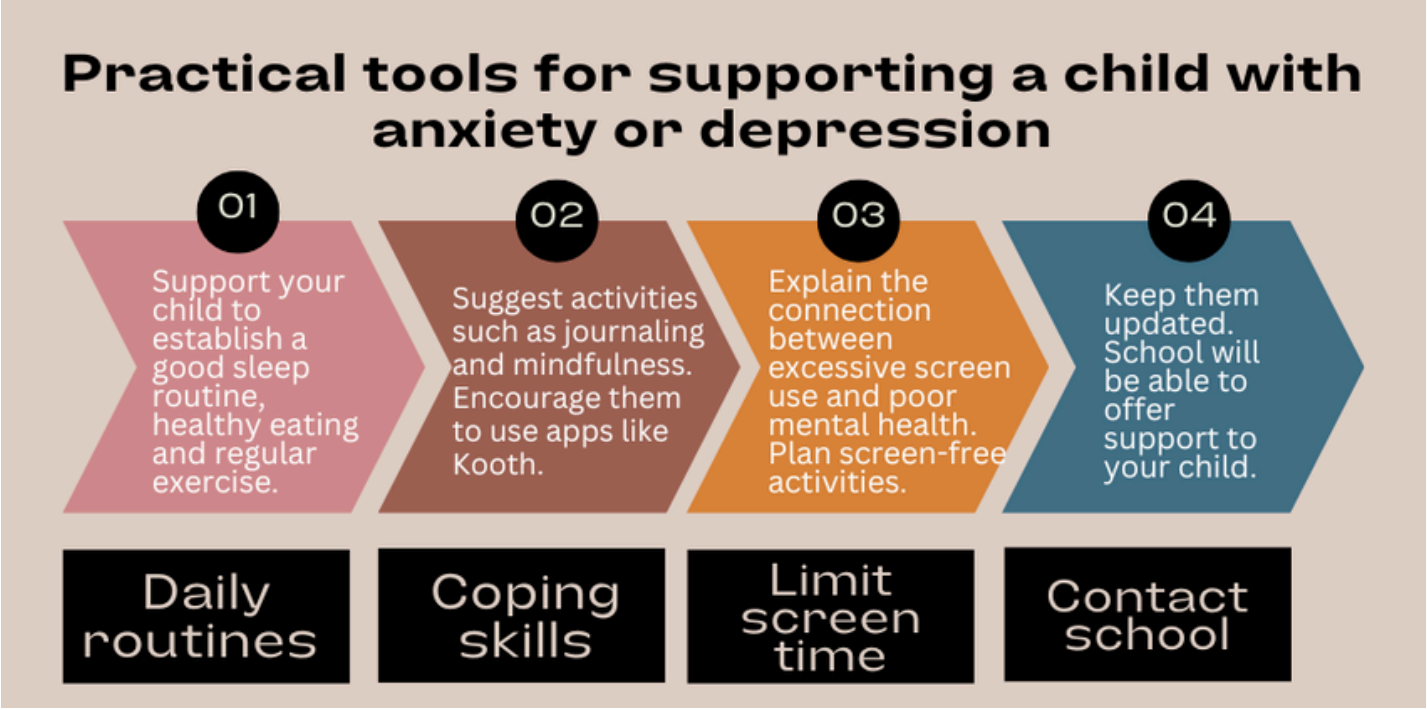
Anxiety is characterised by excessive worry or fear that can interfere with daily life. It might show up as trouble concentrating, avoiding situations or physical symptoms, like headaches or stomach-aches.

Depression involves feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or a lack of interest in activities that a child once enjoyed. It can also manifest as irritability, fatigue or changes in appetite and sleep patterns.

It's important to recognise the signs of anxiety and depression early. Some common indicators include:

- difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- avoiding social interactions or activities
- a drop in academic performance
- frequent complaints of physical ailments without a clear cause
- expressions of hopelessness or low self-worth.

By understanding these challenges, parents can take the first step in supporting their child's mental health and seeking help when needed.



Kooth: A digital mental health resource

Kooth is an online mental health platform designed to support children and teens aged 10 to 25. It provides a safe, anonymous space where young people can access resources, connect with peers and speak with qualified counsellors.

What Kooth Offers

1. Online Counselling: Young people can chat with trained counsellors in real-time or leave messages for support.
2. Peer Support: The platform includes moderated forums where users can share experiences and advice.
3. Self-Help Tools: Kooth offers articles, activities, and goal-setting tools to help users develop coping strategies.
4. Anonymity and Accessibility: Available 24/7, Kooth ensures privacy, making it easier for children to seek help without fear of judgment.

Find out more here.