



Senseforschools

It's okay not to feel okay

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OBJECTIVE

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An informational brochure aimed primarily at teachers, containing information on mental health in the context of secondary education in a condensed and concise manner

SENSE wants to create in-service training offers to equip secondary school teachers with the KNOWLEDGE, RESOURCES and SKILLS needed to succeed in providing low threshold PROMOTION, PREVENTION and EARLY INTERVENTION in students' mental health.

Relevant professionalisation of teachers improves pupil's conditions to participate successfully in school and social life, which in turn provides a better foundation for a fulfilling adult and working life.

The SENSE consortium of partner from DE, AT, BE, ES, EE, led by Universität zu Köln, pursues its objectives by:

- **Analysing how secondary school teachers can assess, preserve and strengthen student's mental health.**
- **Producing an awareness-raising and informational brochure.**
- **Developing in-service training formats and a toolbox.**
- **Launching a wide communication strategy to promote the project and the issue of mental health and well-being in school.**
- **Applying professional project management.**

PARTNERS:

DE
AT
BE
ES
EE



INTRODUCTION

Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological and social well-being, including the ability to manage stress, maintain healthy relationships and make informed decisions (WHO, 2001)



These mental health problems have a negative impact on various aspects of adolescents' lives, such as their academic performance, personal relationships, self-esteem and overall development.

For this reason, adolescent mental health is an issue of great importance and concern in today's society. Most mental disorders first appear before the age of 14 (Kessler, 2011) and three quarters before the age of 25 (Kessler et al., 2005). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of strengthening mental health. WHO (2021) points out that one in seven adolescents worldwide suffers from a mental illness.



INTRODUCTION










Adolescents therefore account for 13% of the burden of mental disorders internationally. In other words, many disorders begin in adolescence and, for this reason, it is essential to prevent, detect and avoid them (Costello et al., 2003; Kessler et al., 2005; Paus et al., 2008).

Adolescence is characterised by biological changes (pubertal maturation), as well as psychosocial developments such as identity development, desire for peer acceptance, increased conflict with parents, desire for independence, increased experimentation and risk-taking behaviours, and the beginning of romantic relationships (Curtis, 2015; Patel et al., 2007; Sawyer et al., 2012; Steinberg, 2015; Yeager, 2017). During this period, children are exposed to challenges and stressors such as bullying and economic pressures (Romeo, 2013). All these changes pose risk factors for developing psychological, social and health difficulties (Dopheide, 2013; Yeager, 2017), as adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the emergence of symptoms of emotional instability (Godfrey et al., 2019) and to disorders such as depression or anxiety (Kessler et al., 2005; Vannucci et al., 2018).




RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

RISK FACTORS

-  **Physical health problems**
-  **Stress and traumatic events**
-  **Parental genetic dispositions to suffer from mental illness**
-  **Substance use and addictions**
-  **Substance use and addictions**
-  **Restricted living conditions**
-  **Social isolation**
-  **Migratory history**
-  **Low parental educational level**

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

-  **Family support and open communication with parents**
-  **Residential stability**
-  **Supportive relationships with significant adults**
-  **Social support**
-  **Participation in extracurricular activities**
-  **School support, highlighting academic success**
-  **Mental health awareness**
-  **Participation in mental health promotion activities**

References: Goodwin & Davidson, 2022; Musselman et al., 1988; Pan American Health Organization in 2022; Degenhardt et al., 2013; Hasin et al., 2015; Lund et al., 2010; Klipker et al., 2018; Reiss, 2013; Holt-Lunstand et al., 2010; Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2022; Barnes, 2006; Bettge, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 2004; Laursen & Hart, 2013; Pan American Health Organization, 2022; Eccles et al., 2003; Suldo et al., 2012; Masten, 2014; Catalano et al., 2004; Patalay, 2017; Rushton et al., 2002; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Rushton et al., 2002



KEY ASPECTS FOR TO PROMOTE THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ADOLESCENTS



Disorder/Symptoms



Well-being



FINDING HELP & SUPPORT



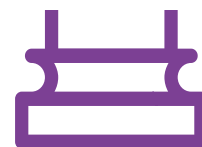
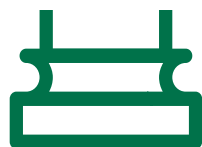
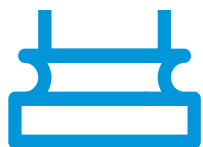
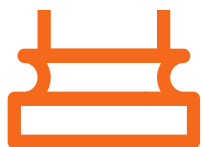
LEARNING ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS



HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



HOW TO FLOURISH



Symptom level

Flourishing

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusively, it can be stated that the prevalence of mental health problems has been an issue for the last decades. Research has shown that around one in five children and adolescents is experiencing mental health problems. This situation became increasingly worse due to the COVID-19 and the severe impacts it has had on the whole population, and the prevalence of mental illness has inflated substantially. That is why it is so important to help and accompany in mental health.

The importance of the involvement of school in the mental health promotion and well-being and in the prevention is crucial and must play an essential role in their identification as an early preventive measure for the mental health and well-being of adolescents.





CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this sense, it will be necessary to train teachers to promote the mental health of their students and to act as “early mediators” or as an “early warning system” of mental health problems.

This requires working in a preventative manner in a coordinated way between teachers, parents and students, and all partners involved in formal and non-formal education, giving importance to the students well-being and mental health needs and promoting early prevention actions. The previously introduced key aspects and protective factors have shown positive effects on children and adolescents. Moreover, schools must develop good practices and specific actions such as the good practices proposed below to protect the well-being and mental health of adolescents.



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