



Saturday is dignity day for mental health

World Mental Health Day 10 October 2015

Instead of stigma and isolation young people experiencing mental health problems deserve dignity. In schools as much as in wider society children at risk of mental health problems need to be heard and not dismissed. They must feel able to talk about their problems – without the stigma of being thought a troublemaker.

The World Federation of Mental health have designated October 10 as World Mental Health Day, and this year's theme is Dignity. Ill-informed attitudes about mental health within an organisation – including schools - only make it more difficult for young people with everyday mental health problems to seek help.

Anyone experiencing depression, stress, low self-esteem, loneliness deserves the respect of having their problem taken seriously. If it's something that's difficult to talk about it will be hard to seek help and support from teachers. We all hope that a cry for help from a student will be given the dignity of a sympathetic hearing.

In schools the leadership team need to have created the culture within the school that allows an individual to ask for help. Who should be aware of this approach to mental health? All teachers, especially those with pastoral responsibility – and, of course, parents too.

Dr Julia Moss of Your School Mind says:

There is always a need to talk about mental health. I'd advise schools to get in touch with a team experienced at working on mental health issues with young people and within schools. Creating an atmosphere of respect and dignity for young people in distress is absolutely essential. A professional informed approach has to be the starting point.

Janet Kennedy, Nurse Consultant of Your School Mind adds:

If young people are to feel they can speak up about their problems and be listened to with dignity and without being stigmatized, then that's a healthy school culture. But training is needed to keep a watchful eye on those young people at serious risk in our schools.

As you will see from our website, professional advice from a specialist clinical team *Yourschoolmind* – medical and nursing experts - experienced in working with young people will ensure you can build for your school an effective strategy. We can offer a preventative whole school approach in addition to targeted interventions for those with existing mental health difficulties e.g. eating disorders, depression, self harm and anxiety disorders.

Your School Mind can bring a professional clinical mental health in education service to your school.

Contact us directly on the website to arrange for us to give you a free short PowerPoint presentation meeting in your school, to discuss your needs (you should allow an hour for full discussion). Our visits to schools so far have focused discussion of priorities and we have been able to equip schools with individual solutions. We look forward to hearing from you and visiting your school.

Julia Moss MB ChB, MRCPsych, MA (Crim)

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