

What are some of the common challenges / concerns you have about your child?

Challenges faced on is overusing technology i.e phones, ipads etc

Year 7 - dealing with issues around social media

Friendship issues whereby friends can be mean and bullyish?

Increase in suicidal thoughts around ages 14-18

How can I encourage my 15yo son to share his feelings with me?

The biggest challenge for myself as a parent is the demands on my time related to work and feeling disconnected from the family over the years as a result of this. COVID enabled me to re-connect and make positive changes, however, as a parent, one of the most difficult items to navigate is the mobile phone/devices that my daughter uses and them not being able to switch off or engage properly at home/with nature etc.

Schools its a challenge for them as in secondary school are provided with devices to work on

If children are missing intrinsic motivation, doesn't this also have to do with the parents who allow them to be exposed to stimuli they are not prepared for (by the parents) or cannot yet handle (brain development)?

My daughter is autistic and since return from lockdowns, etc. We have seen a significant deterioration in her behaviour at school, she is being expelled on a regular basis. School have not adapted despite saying they will. Her mental health is rapidly decreasing and they have no consideration. Punishment is not a one size fits all

hello I have been doing innerwork for 3 years aswell as getting help for my daughter through school and social services. She's a star but I still realise that I need help in actually connecting with her. She's 8 now and so sensitive as I still get stressed and then she thinks I hate her. I have done a parenting course and a conscious parenting course but somethings missing from me

My 16 year old son is crippled with anxiety and has not been in school since beginning of December. Very tough times . Supposed to be sitting GCSEs in 3 months. NHS overwhelmed and cannot assist. Have had to pay for private counselling for the last 10 weeks. CAMHs waiting list is 18 months

I worry about social media impact on my children and that they won't open up with me

Screen time - habits of playing 'Roblox' and social media such as tiktok/youtube!

I would like to be able to get my son to calm and slow down at times.

Low confidence and low self esteem for my 6 year old lad. Really heartbreaking.

When I was a kid when I got home it was a safe / sanctuary now with social media there is no hiding place this is the main driver for childrens mental health in modern life

My worry is the impact social media has on mental health - comparing yourself to others, pressure to look a certain way etc

Peer pressure, materialism, overwhelmed by tech and devices, lack of attention and reflection

Anxiety, SEN issues and NHS is too overwhelmed to help

Yes, waiting lists. We had to wait months last year but been lucky to get free counselling I realise.

Yr 8 child seeing school as pointless

My 9 year old needing an adhd assessment and the fact it could take 2 years to get one. at such a vital time

I worry about the impact of being a two parent working household and life being very hectic and then I am stressed as a result so cannot be as good a parent as I could be if we weren't both working to pay bills/mortgage etc

My Daughter is 10 and very anxious she worries about everything and is distancing herself from friends and activities.

Social media challenges, lack of creative licence in school and lack of outdoor free play.

the desire to spend time gaming in their room rather than getting out into fresh air and meeting friends in the park etc

My main concern is having a 7 year old understand that EVERYONE has worries in life and EVERYONE is sometimes wrong. Its not specific to them.

My 8 year old has severe anxiety (separation mostly). School unable to help and very difficult to find private child psychologists.

My main concern is my younger son, almost 7 years. He suffers with separation anxiety from me specifically. Cant be left at parties or clubs, i have to be there. He also gets concerned about e.g. burgler's getting into our house....

My daughter is 11yo and suffers from anxiety, particularly with how to play or chat to class mates.

Influencers on social media causing confusion

How to have difficult conversations around mental health with child as young as 5. One word this isn't quite right can change the feeling of the conversation with them

access to social media is a main concern amongst parents. i have tried to time-restrict access to Ipad for my daughter

How to normalise these conversations, methods and introduce this as a routine - like washing your face, brushing your teeth? How to gain their buy in?

My son (12) seems fairly open but how do I know if he's being as open/sharing as I'd want him to be as a parent.

My 15yrs old is very insecure about her physical appearance

Anxiety, camhs waiting times

I work as a learning Mentor and I've seen a huge increase in Anxiety among the children I work with.

Supporting my neurodivergent, 13yo daughter to cope with low self esteem due to issues at school with bullying and grades

No confidence, finding it difficult to socialise with peers and anxiety

Fear of not fitting in and having friends. Struggling to express her emotions fro. my 8 year old girl

My son 6 is beginning to display low moods., He's really struggling right now, he used to be so happy and carefree

My 6-year-old just doesn't speak to me about school and is upset daily. Has recently been ref to Elsa. Feeling like I don't know where to go and how to support her the best way.

Age 6 my daughter already is showing signs of anxiety. Lockdown had a significant effect on her emotional wellbeing and social development.

7 year old, struggling with frustration and anger and expressing these feelings in a healthy way . currently hissing and upsetting family members with tantrums

My children are exhausted which reduces their resilience - they're 5 and 8 and don't get much holiday and they are at school 8-6 4 days a week, 8-5 and 8-3pm on friday. they aren't good at relaxing without screens.

My son is 9 years old and struggles with his anger and regulating his emotions. The wait for CAMHS and CYPS worries me and the lack of support from a GP. I went to my GP begging for support and was told because he's fine at school there's nothing they will do. We're currently at CAMHS counselling once per week but I'm unclear on next steps and what support is available after that

Limited NHS resource. GP does not have knowledges to deal with it

My 6yo (after a year of chasing) was given an ASD diagnosis. The hospital says they 'Diagnose and discharge' which means there is no further support offered. With 4 young children and a demanding job it is really hard to know what to do.

I think allowing kids to be authentic rather than forcing them to constantly conform to the expectations we, as a society, adults and parents, place on them. Its too overwhelming for them.

- my daughter yr 8 waited 8 months to see the Ireach Team in school - not enough resources and ask the child and parent to do online things which does not work when a child needs support face to face or speaking with a person

How do we build resilience for issues of life coming down the line. Suicide attempts seem prevalent at local schools.

My 11 year old has anxiety, germ phobia and agoraphobia which developed during the pandemic. Unable to get help - even when she was unable to leave the house at all for several months

My 8yo has heightened anxiety, which seems to come to light over the lockdown period. We are still working through it, and obviously there is no one magic solution, but it feels an uphill climb with no summit.

I work as an emotional health specialist in a primary school and have a waiting list for children with emotional needs. My main concerns are children have less resilience.

Social media images etc, pressure to look a certain way

I don't want my child on social media/playing games online but he then gets left out of conversations at school

My 12 yr old son has low esteem. His go to place is I can't do it, I'm no good at the task - despite being a great footballer and top of his class. He also worries about all sorts of things in life that he cannot impact.

important for me to create psychological safety for my 7 year old so he can speak to me about anything - IF he wants to. Wish school would tell me about emotional / psych topics at parents evening rather than concentrating on academic subjects

need for feeling confident outside home as much as in home

It just seems like such a bleak world for children and young people entering into it, perpetuated by all the doom and gloom stories written by the media -it's overwhelming for adults, let alone for children and young people. Demand on services is at record levels and there just isn't enough money and support to help everyone in need

My 13 year old has mild depression and anxiety and will not engage with face to face support, although she chats online with support services I am not sure how effective these are.

My daughter suffers with severe anxiety. She has been supported at school with a counsellor but she can't sleep on her own at night and has panic attacks on a regular basis.

My Son is 3 years old, How do I look after his mental wellbeing to ensure he is resilient as he grows older ? Our lives are soo stressed, I basically want to be a good role model

15yr old daughter is massively affected by anxiety in social situations to the extent that they now self harm and have started making suicidal comments.

my issue is my 16 year old sons school giving punishments instead of listening to him and understanding his behaviour

How to tell the difference between genuine low self esteem, motivation issues or is it just normal lazy teenage boy stuff....GCSEs looming and conflict high.

How can I ensure I don't negatively impact the strength my daughter shows by trying to harness some of the traits that cause disruption. In effect - How can I let her be herself and fit into family life?

Generally low self esteem already and only 7

I worry what the impact of social media will have on my two children and they are only 4 and 1!! I dread the day they ask for an account

For us (we have a daughter in year 8) its peer pressure and social media that is the problem. I've also noticed all the kids seem struggle with anger and are always snapping at each other

Lack of understanding of neurodiversity in girls!

My 10 year old daughter has health anxiety that impacts her on a daily basis.

How to build resilience sessions needed in school for both children and parents.

Access to inappropriate age Social media... increase anxiety and mental health

Technology seems to be taking 90% of their time and the relationships and other aspect do not develop properly

Social media pressure to be perfect beautiful

observing more teenage girls with OCD issues

My six year old daughter is suffering with very bad separation anxiety recently. She gets upset going to school every day, and even with activities like gymnastics and swimming where I am there watching or nearby in the water she is still getting very distressed if I am not right next to her. She has dropped out of some activities that she used to enjoy like dance as she was getting too upset when I dropped her off.

My daughter is 12 and my husband and I divorced at the end of last year and she struggles to open up. She wont talk to me about it and she says she is ok. She talks to her teacher at school but I need her to open up. She becomes stressed easily thinking I am hassling her when I want to talk to her and she shuts down completely.

Boys being influenced by Andrew Tate

My 15yrs old cries before going to sleep almost daily. I don't know how to help her.

Resilience skills needed for children and parenting with positivity.

I have a 9 and 11 year old, the 9 year old is happy and confident but the 11 year old has very low self-esteem. The fact that the 9 year old tends to shine brighter sends the 11 year old further into despair and constant low mood

I left my 6-year old in tears going into school this morning. He is sensitive, quietly spoken and physically a bit smaller than his peers. I really want to help him increase his confidence and feel it's ok to 'take up space' and speak up.

Screen time - I am having to severely limit this. What started as a treat and a way for me to get some peace, has become an addiction that, when taken away, results in massive upset. I've noticed though, that putting rules around it and sticking to that (the biggest challenge) actually keeps everyone calmer overall.

It is really moving reading everyone's messages. It often feels like you're completely alone experiencing mental health issues with a child.

My 6 year old son doesn't seem to be able to manage his emotions, therefore his behaviour can be very trying and he can be so angry. He can be quite hyper and doesn't pick up on signals from others when he's become too much for them, so his behaviour then turns again. I don't know if this is normal for his age or not

My 8 year old struggles a lot to control his frustration when he gets upset and he starts shouting and hitting. I try to calm him down by talking to him but nothing seems to work. He is also very jealous of his sister (age 9) and I can't seem to find a good way to be more cooperative with her.

I see a therapist myself so understand some of the signs and how my daughter feel however that can just make my own anxiety worse as I know some things that will support but my daughter will not listen to me and we end up getting in to arguments as she can be very emotional - 13 and hormonal as well as having anxiety

Spending 2yrs telling people to keep away from each other then now people crowding and pushing past you is having a massive impact on my daughter.

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My son is 8 and struggled during the lockdowns - he is an only child. He has a lot of energy so we signed him up for kickboxing when he was 6. He was also really shy and timid at that age. He is so much happier and more confident now.

Emotional connection and empathy are so underrated

My 5 year old suffered separation anxiety when he joined school and he regressed in milestones. Also has low self esteem. Trying to rebuild his confidence

My 4 yo is quite uncomfortable in social scenarios, especially in and around large groups. He sometimes says something slightly anti-social or rude to strangers in order to get away from any further interactions. He is actually really good one-on-one with a bit of time to warm up. How can we support him as parents? Is this social anxiety?

I wonder about whether to intervene when my kids fight with each other. I think what i'm learning is that I should leave them to it most of the time as this is their way of building social skills - does anyone else have this?

Peer pressure, social media influencers and concerns of personal appearance, lack of focus, reduced 1:1 personal interaction of children, dopamine-triggering addiction of media platforms, reduced resilience, lack of boundary setting skills in parents and children, lack of direction in children or managing realistic expectations, anxiety and overwhelm...

My 15 year old is completely careless about Studies, homework, books...she only seems to care about her phone

Social media and overwhelming information can be detrimental to our children's development. Some kids have amazing skills to look for any information, video or trend on Tiktok or Instagram, and completely unable to maintain a conversation with a kid of the same age.

My 6yo started school in 2020 so had a couple of years of lockdown and then being sent home from school with the slightest sniffle. Hard to get him used to going into school on a regular basis now!

You are Awesome by Matthew Syed is a good lesson on growth mindset versus fixed mindset

Have 10 YO who gets exceptionally anxious, struggles with social interactions such as school, also panics at sight of dogs. Also 5 YO with a separation anxiety, so gets upset when anyone leaves, but then settles afterwards

My daughter (13) developed anorexia nervosa within weeks of going into lockdown in March 2020. Still needs help, been diagnosed with anxiety disorder but now considering whether she is neurodiverse and the ED and anxiety is a symptom. Find it hard to know if mental health/neurodiversity/extreme teenage behaviour - difficult working out what is at play here

Social media is the biggest problem, as there is no escape. Can be at home, happy and in a good place and in one post online it can all be ruined.

if your child isn't in the "IT" thing - be it in fashion or social media or latest game on tablets - they are left out of conversations. it's such a minefield out there and trying to limit the screen time is so tough

I'm overwhelmed with children that I work with but I always make sure every child is seen 😊

Thoughts regarding support provided by schools

Yes regarding the schools but you have to be pro active as a parent to engage with the school with regard to any issues

My 5 year old son's school recently held a mental health session for parents as to how to help themselves and their children, but they had to fund it themselves, and have said they've got no more funds for any further sessions.

Schools are inconsistent in support. Class teachers will often inadvertently undermine the good work done by SENCO or in school counsellors

My daughter has a communication card to be able to silently identify when she is anxious but teachers are ignoring it.

My daughter recently benefitted hugely from and ELSA (emotional literacy support assistant) intervention to help her with her 'growth mindset' - but it took 2 years of waiting for her to get access to this intervention

Schools are totally overwhelmed and totally underfunded - how can they possibly help!?

Schools are not doing enough but they are completely overwhelmed with this epidemic of poor mental health in children. I just keep getting told daughter isn't bad enough. She has early life trauma!

My daughter also gets frustrated when anything does not go to plan. She never used to be like this but I am sure it is part of the divorce and not accepting it. Her school are aware of her issues and her teacher is supporting her but no specific counsellor the school or a dedicated teacher to support

I volunteer as a mindfulness teacher at my local primary school - they are screaming out for support. The teachers are already burdened and are in the direct line of the aftermath of Covid.

Work together as partners

Schools do not have enough staff to deal with the increased mental health pressures and little to no help from the local authority

I am a Headteacher and committed to helping children understand their mental health and it is a real challenge for us. All adults need to understand their own mental health first - including teachers and parents and carers

OFSTED need to amend the strategy and the way schools are judged to allow everyone the space and resources that value creative lessons, more time for PE and play, which all help our mental health

Definitely seeing FOMO with social media / gaming. The kids have to be on every conversation.. replying instantly otherwise they are left out.

Wellbeing lead is great. Not sure all teachers understand anxiety so well and cannot take account of it (putting child on the spot to answer for example)

schools are desperate for help but some still say they don't know where to go or whats on offer. Ultimately it comes down to lack of funding for schools to buy services in and teachers having to do so much more then just their tesching role. they are so stressed themselves

This was a tricky one our school is doing a lot but I feel actually they need to stop doing some things - too much being crammed in is overwhelming for children and parents

Our school has a mental health nurse but even she made some triggering comments to my daughter re her ED - if the medical staff don't have the knowledge, unlikely the teachers will when that is not what they are trained to deal with.

wellbeing is high priority on all levels of learning. lots of schools are now employing a provision to support mental health and emotional development. I have been in this post for 10 years. In South Wales

My son has a bubble of certain teachers he can talk to at anytime if he needs it which is great but I think a lot of it has come to late even with our concerns being raised

Our school is fantastic but does not have enough support staff and the curriculum / government funding targets are not geared towards improving child mental health

My 6yr old was a struggling with focus and anxiety at the moment. I've this morning spoken to teachers about having a worry/feeling book/ box for him to access when he needs to write and talk about feelings.

I volunteer as a psychotherapist and the demands on our 'attention' are too much. So much pressure on being the perfect parent. The things that seem to work in my experience is slowing life down where possible, 'being' not 'doing' together, empathy and emotional connection

One slight concern for me is the idea that it's an individual 'problem' that needs the child to have tools to fix it themselves - however it's a societal problem needing everyone to work together, kids mustn't end up feeling like it's their 'fault' that they need to 'fix' themselves

Self-harming is v high in this age group. I have a 12.5 yr old daughter who is self-harming, and trying to 'nip'/stop it is a nightmare. Then you have a school that wants to exclude for carrying a weapon (pencil sharpener blades - they are pretty blunt). It is a parents nightmare. The self-harming is frequently learnt from peers, then perpetuated alone. We are currently undergoing ASD and ADHD assessment - so bad parents who did not spot this earlier.

I was given 4 pages of websites from a child support team on websites and apps for my daughter to use to manage her self harming. They didn't even speak with her just used GP referral and a 10 min conversation with me before deciding they couldn't help.

Neurodiverse children often really struggle in school, which effects their self esteem and mental health.

Tips, hints & thoughts from the audience

All feelings are ok it's how we manage them 😊

ALL emotions are normal and valid - its about how to understand them

leading by example

There is not enough emphasis on creative expression in schools - this is a great way for children to feel free to express themselves and where there isn't a pressure to achieve 'standards'.

My kids have started martial arts 3 years ago. Whilst I understand that it is not an answer to bigger issues - hence I am here - I do believe that it helped their self esteem and resilience immensely. Their confidence has grown which makes them less likely to be affected by bullying or negative influence. They have a sense of belonging to a supportive community which I believe is missing from this World due to the pace of life. Sport is underrated when it comes to developing and keeping a healthy mind for kids. Regular sport gets no mention for some reason.

Parents are the most important role model as children learn from watching us.

Share how they are feeling

What's happening to my body ?

What's causing this pain?

How can I cope with this ?

Now ours are 13 and 15 we've been able to share some of our own struggles with mental health, that lots of adults we know struggle etc. I think that has helped, particularly my daughter, realise she's not 'weird' etc and see that we might not always find things easy but do have generally fairly happy, successful lives

Music is another great avenue for expression that has been 'descoped' from regular school life

I agree Viktoria, we started our son in kickboxing when he was 6, he is now 8 and his confidence has grown so much. He is a sensitive boy so seeing his confidence grow with the sport is wonderful.

Ohh like the hand stroking, not seen that before

Interesting - my son asks me to stroke his hands at bedtimes!

My son asks me to scratch his head to help him relax and fall asleep

hand connections really help my daughter and figure of eight deep breathing technique

My daughter loves when I tickle her arm before she goes to sleep

growing up my mum always stroked my arm or hand, watching tv or in bed. it still relaxes me now as an adult and I still do it now to myself and now to my 2 year old and she loves it.

i love positive affirmations i use them myself as an adult

I had a moment this morning when my son had a meltdown. I did the breaths x2 and put my hand on my chest. It calmed me and I was able to connect with my son. And he stopped. He's told me before "take a deep breath!" So I know he's watching me

we have an affirmations jar at home too - really helped my daughter when she was younger (6, 7, 8,9, 10)

Love the affirmation cards - and it would be great to share them with your child and both have the same affirmations for a day

If either of my children say Hate. I acknowledge they feel that way and then get them to talk about why and what they hate.

I do the Rose Thorn Bud exercise with my children at evening. Rose is the best thing they've done today, Thorn the worst and Bud what they're looking forward to tomorrow. It's a quick easy way to get them to disclose if there is something that didn't go well for them (if they aren't good at opening up) but also they think about what is going to be good tomorrow. And it's obviously fine not to have any of them.

My children have used The Colour Monster at school

There isn't enough understanding of how anxious a neurodiverse child can feel at school. They are punished for their behaviour, rather than adults trying to understand why and seeing how distressed the child is. Curious compassion is vital, not punishment. If school is causing the anxiety, it's very hard to let go of the feelings as they have to go in everyday.

My children's school will start the emotions programme soon. We are role modelling at home, important to say out loud something that's happened in the day. I normally replay some work examples which might have annoyed or frustrated me in the day to my boys to know that it happens as adults too.

I can relate to the commands! My daughter and I agreed that instead of me coming in to her room and saying "why aren't you dressed you should be dressed by now!" we change it to "how are you getting on?" and that seemed to help a bit with letting her feel like she's not being told what to do all the time.

Role modelling - parents talking out loud about what they are doing, is also a good way of helping children problem solve and decide for themselves. Eg I am going to clean my teeth now to get rid of the plaque. Declarative language handbook by Linda Murphy is great for this.

I feel I need to learn to understand my own feelings and control the anxieties first so I can teach the same my children

Questions from participants

How to normalise these conversations, methods and introduce this as a routine - like washing your face, brushing your teeth? How to gain their buy in?

How to have difficult conversations around mental health with child as young as 5. One word this isn't quite right can change the feeling of the conversation with them

How do we build resilience for issues of life coming down the line. Suicide attempts seem prevalent at local schools.

Are the issues on the rise, or the fact we're more aware of it that's on the rise?

How can I ensure I don't negatively impact the strength my daughter shows by trying to harness some of the traits that cause disruption. In effect - How can I let her be herself and fit into family life?

I find it hard to not cry when my daughter tells me things as I don't want her to hide things to shield me!

How do you spot the early signs?

How do we acknowledge the fact that there are things we can't control

What can you do if you are separated and your children's other parent are toxic and knocking down the children's self esteem?

A taste of feedback

It is really moving reading everyone's messages. It often feels like you're completely alone experiencing mental health issues with a child.

This session has been so insightful!

thank you - some really amazing tips

This session has been so useful, thank you so much. The chat has been really interesting too

Thank you 😊 Awareness is vital

Thank you so much. I will reduce command and control to develop sense of self.

Vey useful session, thank you. Changing my commands to questions feels like a revelation. I'll be starting this today

This has been thought provoking. I felt lost on where to start. Now there are tangible changes to approach we can make.

This session has been so insightful, picked up some great ideas to try out

Lots of amazing takeaways from this session, thank you. My girls are 18 months and 3 and I'm hoping to build up the best tool kit I can to help them with all of these potential issues in the future (and now!)

Great session thank you - look forward to hearing more about this

Appreciate the depth of this session - such a huge topic to cover - great insights - thank you.

Thank you so much - brilliant session with some great practical tips

thank you to everyone for their comments, honesty, support - as Nadim said.....we are all doing the best we can x

Thank you very much Rachel and Nadim! Invaluable stuff

thank you, this was really helpful & nice to know so many other people experiencing the same struggles!

Thanks so much! CONNECTION is my #1 takeaway

thank you so informative and great ideas shared

Thank you so much, so good and makes a lot of sense.

super insightful!