

## Why is mental health important?

“...It is essential to our ability to perceive, comprehend and interpret our surroundings, to think and speak, and to communicate with each other...It is essential to our capacity to form and sustain relationships, and to pursue our daily lives...”

(Jenkins, unpublished, 1997)

“There is no health without mental health...Mental health and mental well-being are fundamental to the quality of life and productivity of individuals, families, communities and nations, enabling people to experience life as meaningful and to be creative and active citizens.”

(World Health Organisation European Declaration on Mental Health, 2005)

“We all have the right to good mental health. Everyone has the right to enjoy life, to be able to deal with its challenges and to share in a positive sense of well-being and a respect for equity and social justice”

(West Midlands Charter for Mental Health and Well-being, 2007)

Improving mental health:

- Increases emotional resilience, enabling people to enjoy life and survive difficulties and distress
- Improves outcomes for education, parenting, relationships and crime
- Enhances citizenship, giving people the skills and confidence to adopt meaningful roles in society
- Increases productivity
- Improves physical health

For families, mental health promotion strengthens relationships, promotes social and communication skills development, increases resilience and reduces anti-social behaviour in children.

In schools, mental health promotion raises levels of attainment, improves behaviour and is essential to achieve Healthy School Status.

There is also a moral argument that promoting mental health and well-being is intrinsically worthwhile, and that it is a fundamental responsibility of society to nurture mental as well as physical well-being.

Sources:

Making it Possible: Improving Mental Health and Well-being in England, Department of Health, 2005

Mental Health Promotion: A Quality Framework, Health Education Authority, 1997