



# Improving Children & Young People's Mental Health

An Introductory Workshop for  
Parents and Carers

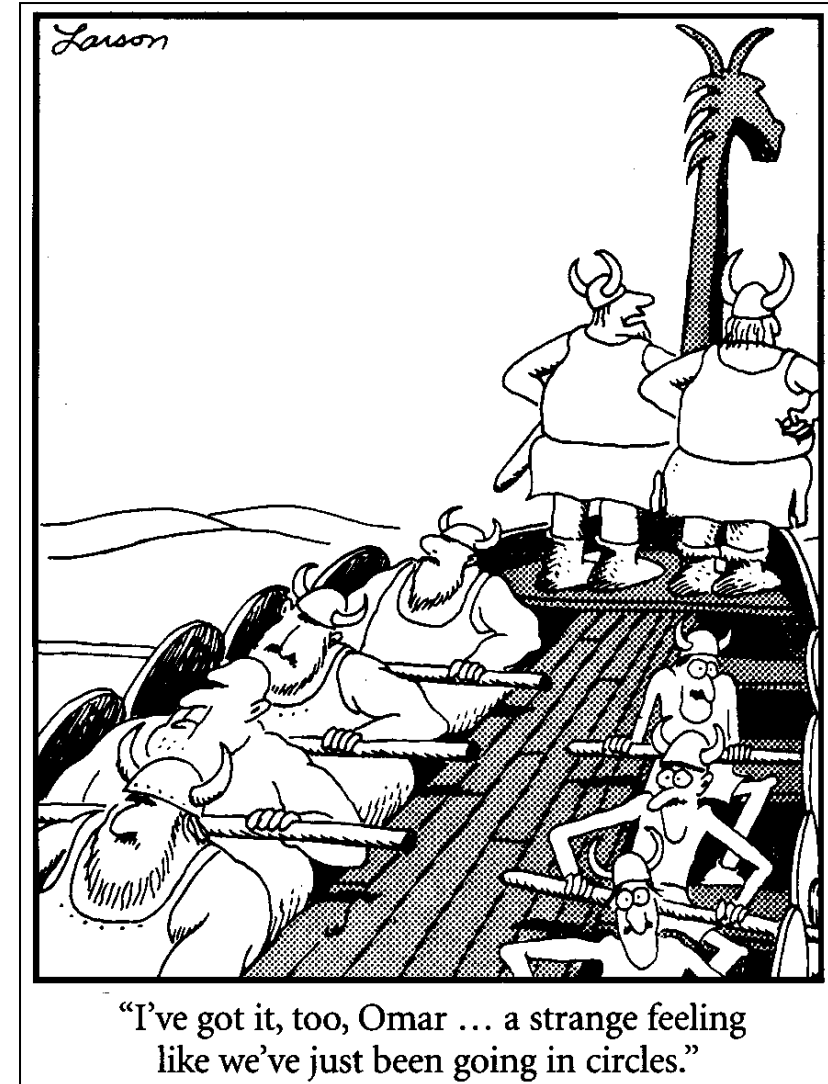


# Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020

- ✓ In 2017 the Office for National Statistics & NHS Digital conducted a statistical survey about the mental health of children and young people aged between 5-16 years. It included 3570 children, young people & families.
- ✓ The results suggested that 10.8% of children and young people as having a 'probable mental disorder'
- ✓ In 2020, one in six (16%) children and young people aged between 5-16 years were identified as having a 'probable mental disorder'
- ✓ 50% of adult mental health difficulties begin before the age of 14 years
- ✓ Why is this happening? More importantly what can we do to help?
- ✓ We need to change the way we support children with their mental health
- ✓ Parents and carers we need your help!

# Let's Do Something Different: Prevention & Early Intervention

- ✓ River parable
- ✓ Early identification and intervention leads to improved long-term outcomes for children
- ✓ Necessitates a significant culture change (and some bravery)
- ✓ Children and young people's mental health is everybody's business
- ✓ Aim: To improve children and young people's mental health by building a culture of understanding, early identification and early intervention

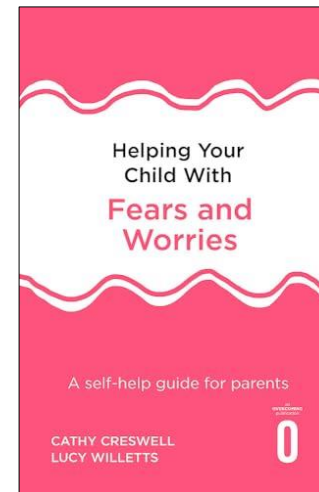


# Achieving Our Aim/Vision

- ✓ Formation of a working partnership between Blue Education & Training, Southridge First School & Langley First School (and you as parents/carers)
- ✓ Every adult around a child has a basic knowledge & understanding about children's mental health, and how to promote it!
- ✓ When you know better, you do better!
- ✓ How do we hope to achieve this?
  - ✓ The provision of whole school awareness and skills-based training for all school staff
  - ✓ Training in evidence based psychological interventions for school staff
  - ✓ Curriculum development work to help children build resilience and resourcefulness (understanding mental health/emotions, teaching children about helpful lifestyle habits , skills for problem solving, understanding and managing the physical symptoms of anxiety & supporting children to develop the skills required for being brave and facing challenges
- ✓ Teaching and training for parents and carers to align what is happening in school with what happens at home (consistency of approach achieves results)
- ✓ Parents & carers are the most powerful therapeutic influence on children's lives

# Why we need to facilitate parent training sessions

- ✓ Understanding and promoting children's mental health requires specific knowledge and skills.
- ✓ How many of us learned about mental health and wellbeing at school?
- ✓ It is a difficult area of parenting because what feels right is often wrong!





# Normalising Mental Health Difficulties



Mental health difficulties exist within a continuum. All of us can move up and down the continuum depending upon what is happening in our lives. Problems occur when we get stuck at the top end of the continuum

# What type of mental health difficulties do children experience?

- ✓ Anxiety is the most common type of mental health difficulty experienced by children (estimated prevalence: 15-20%)
  - ✓ Panic attacks
  - ✓ Excessive worry
  - ✓ Separation anxiety
  - ✓ Obsessive compulsive disorder
  - ✓ Social anxiety/shyness
- ✓ Children can experience depression, but it is rare (estimated prevalence: 1%)
- ✓ Eating disorders (anorexia/bulimia/food restriction)
- ✓ Neurodevelopmental disorders: Autism, ADHD, Tourette's Syndrome (1-2%)
- ✓ Habit disorders such as hair pulling/skin picking and excoriation (1-2%)
- ✓ Behavioural and conduct difficulties (not just naughty or bad!)

# Early Identification of mental health difficulties: Why is it so important?

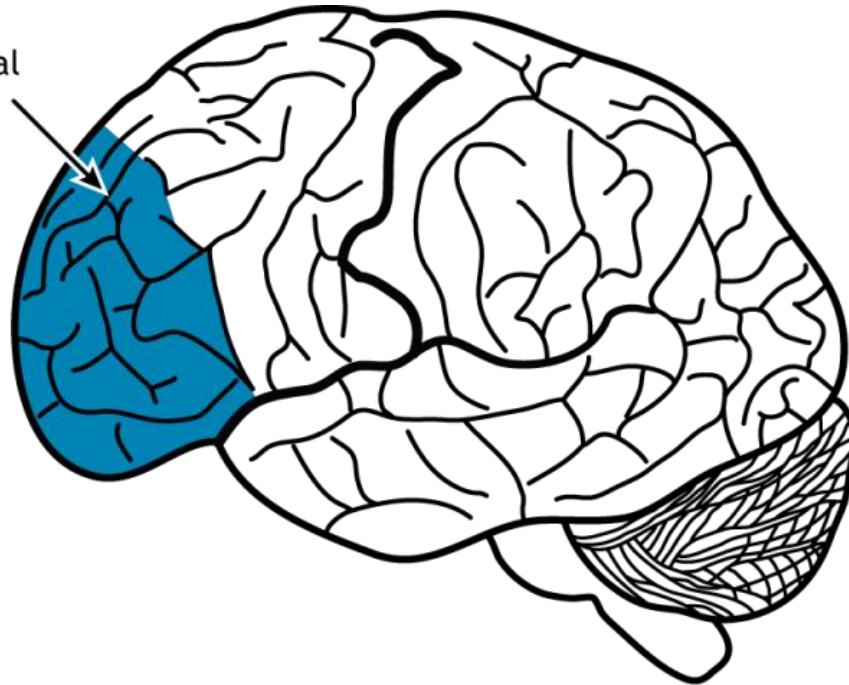
Mental health difficulties impact negatively upon learning

Negative impact on development and social functioning

Negatively effects a child or young persons concentration and attention

Inhibits abstract reasoning and reflection

Prefrontal cortex



Memory and retention (anxiety especially)

Difficulties can be chronic and lifelong (in the absence of treatment)

Early identification and early intervention are linked to improved outcomes



# How do mental health difficulties develop?

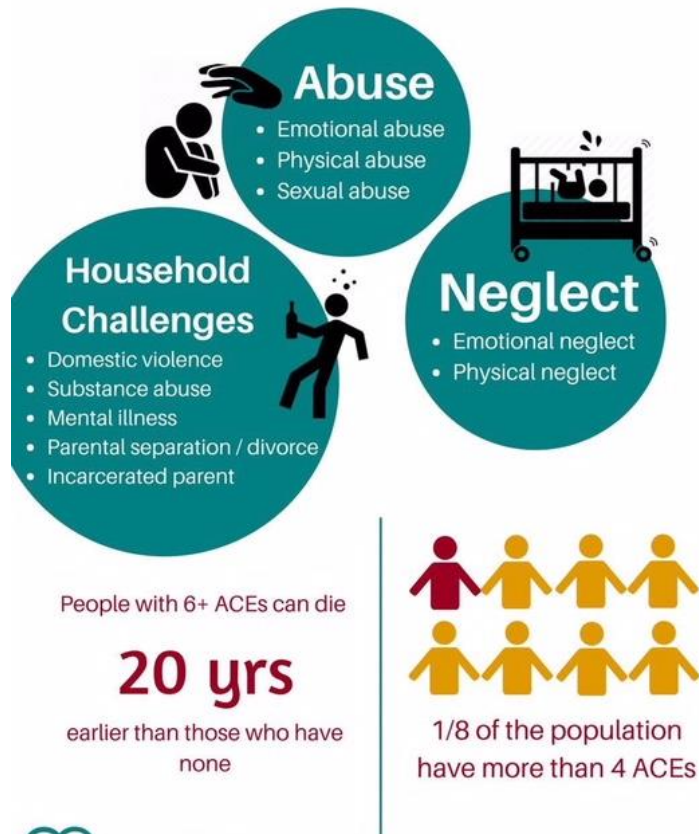
- ✓ There is no one reason! It is different for every individual
- ✓ A combination of biological, psychological and social factors
- ✓ Some of the common contributory factors include:
  - ✓ Genetics
  - ✓ Temperament (children who display extreme shyness/aggressive behaviours)
  - ✓ The development of persistent avoidance behaviours
  - ✓ The development of unhelpful thought processes about the world, self and future
  - ✓ Modelling of anxious behaviour/processes by significant others
- ✓ When we are considering how problems develop, we advocate very strongly for a culture of understanding not blame

# Adverse Childhood Experiences- Becoming ACE Aware

- ✓ ACEs highly stressful and potentially traumatic events or situations that occur during childhood
- ✓ Without early intervention the presence of multiple ACEs leads to poorer longer term health outcomes for children
- ✓ ACEs include
  - ✓ Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse
  - ✓ Living with someone who abused drugs/alcohol
  - ✓ Exposure to domestic violence
  - ✓ Living with someone who has gone to prison
  - ✓ Living with someone who has serious mental illness
  - ✓ Losing a parent through divorce, death or abandonment
- ✓ 67% of us have at least one ACE
- ✓ 1 in 8 of the population have more than 4 ACEs

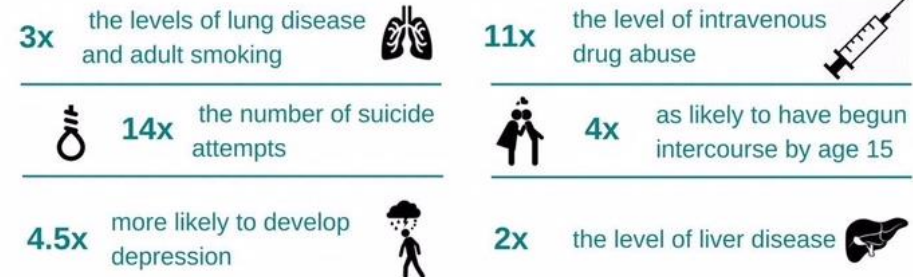
# Adverse Childhood Experiences

Traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing



[www.70-30.org.uk](http://www.70-30.org.uk)  
@7030Campaign

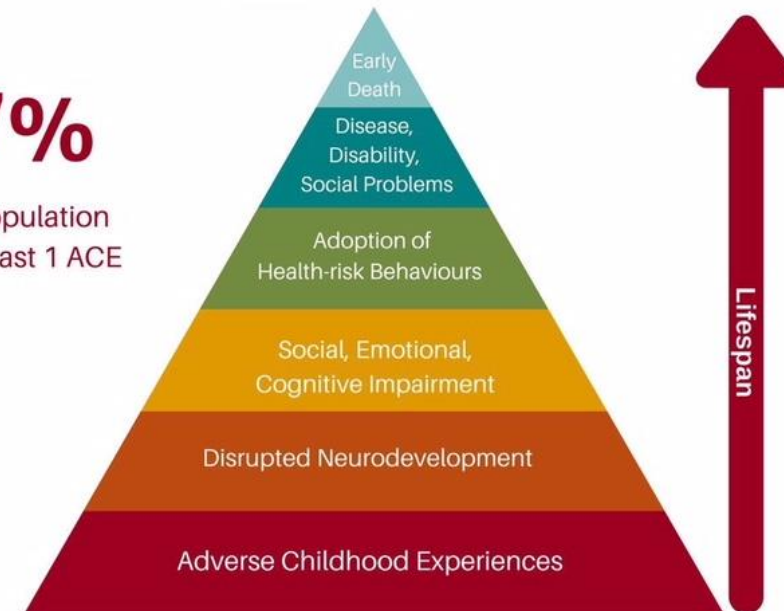
## 4 or more ACEs



“Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today”

Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics

**67%**  
of the population have at least 1 ACE



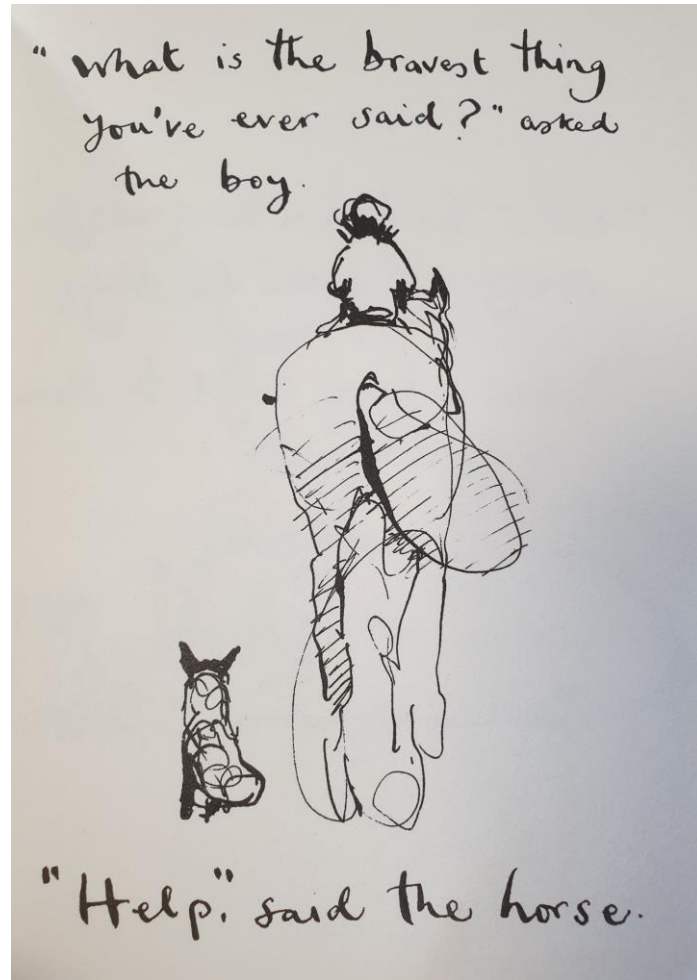


# Early Identification: Signs & Symptoms

- ✓ A failure over time to meet expected developmental milestones
- ✓ Persistent or extreme disturbance in mood
- ✓ Fear and avoidance of activities/new situations
- ✓ Anxiety within relationships (separation difficulties)
- ✓ Low self-confidence and poor self-worth (negative self-talk)
- ✓ Persistent physical or somatic symptoms (medically unexplained)
- ✓ Difficulties initiating and maintaining peer relationships
- ✓ Overanxious- worried about multiple topics (intolerant of uncertainty)

Number  
Severity  
Persistence  
Impact

# What to do if you're worried- seek help.





# Summary Slide

- ✓ Mental health difficulties are common in children and young people
- ✓ Children and young people can experience a wide range of difficulties (like those experienced by adults)
- ✓ The causes of mental health difficulties are multi-factorial
- ✓ Early identification and intervention leads to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people
- ✓ If we all work together offering consistency in approach, we can create real and lasting change for children and young people
- ✓ Parents & carers are the most powerful therapeutic influence on children's lives
- ✓ We need your help! Next time we will be looking at practical advice and strategies!