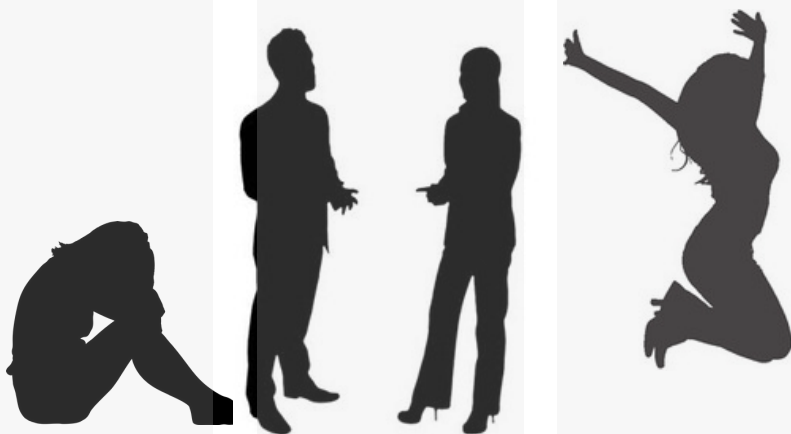


BE WELL

KILKENNY COMHAIRLE NA NÓG

A Booklet for Young People & their Families



Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg is one of 31 child and youth councils in local authorities across the country, which gives children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies.

Thanks to help from Youth in Europe, Kinsale Youth Support Services and Foróige Tramore Youth & Family Project, Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg has developed this booklet to provide information on mental health and the services that are available when help is needed.

When our mental health is well we can enjoy day to day life and we can get the best out of things. If it is not so good, help is available.



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What is Mental Health?

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is something we all have. Some people have described it as a feeling of contentment, well-being, being able to make decisions, being comfortable with ourselves and with others, being able to laugh, have fun and enjoy life. It is important to look after our mental health.

Minding your Mental Health:

Here are some things that help you to maintain good mental health, and which can help us when we start to feel down:

- Get involved and try out new things
- Keep active and eat healthily
- Appreciate what you have
- Accept yourself for who you are
- Develop your creative side
- Stay in touch with friends and family
- Talk to someone you trust
- Find some time each day to relax
- Set small goals and work towards them
- Ask for and accept help

What is Mental Health?

Everyday stresses with work, school, family and friends can make you irritable, unmotivated or withdrawn. This is normal and these feelings usually pass. However, if they don't go away, or if you notice changes in your behaviour or the behaviour of someone you know, talk to someone about your concerns or call a confidential helpline such as the Samaritans on 116 123

Some things to look out for might include:

- Withdrawing from friends, family, school or work
- Change in mood or unusual responses to situations
- Changes in sleep patterns – too much or too little
- Changes in eating patterns – too much or too little
- Doing things that don't make sense to others – or seeing or hearing things that others don't.

If you notice these changes in yourself or others, it might feel a bit scary. Don't worry – help is available. Talk to someone and ask them to help you to find help. For further information on mental health, please contact or browse the following:

- www.jigsaw.ie
- www.mentalhealthireland.ie
- www.yourmentalhealth.ie
- Childline 1800 66 66 66 / Text "Talk" to 50101

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Depression

When someone is feeling depressed they may experience changes such as:

Changes in
Eating & Sleeping

being
Moody

A lot of
Crying

Losing Interest
in activities

Getting into hassle at
School, Work or Home

Feeling Hopeless
or Helpless



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What is Depression?

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings usually pass within a couple of days. We often use the expression “I’m feeling depressed” when we’re feeling sad or miserable about life. If these feelings are interfering with your life and don’t go away after a couple of weeks, or if they come back over and over again, it could be a sign that you are depressed in the medical sense of the term.

Symptoms of Depression include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or 'empty' feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in hobbies or activities
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering things
- Insomnia, waking early or excessive sleeping
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide

Bipolar Disorder is the name used to describe a set of ‘mood swing’ conditions, the most severe form of which used to be called ‘manic depression’. With bipolar disorder moods can swing between low, high and mixed. It is important to note that everyone has mood swings from time to time. It is only when these moods become extreme and interfere with life that bipolar disorder may be present and medical assessment may be needed.

- Talk to your GP
- www.aware.ie

- www.reachout.com
- www.spunout.it

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Anxiety & OCD

Some common effects of anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) include:

Feeling Short
of Breath

Pounding
Heart

Repeated
Actions

Jelly Legs

Sweating
& Trembling

Muscle
Tension
& Headaches



Anxiety & OCD

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, uneasiness, feeling faint, sweating, having jelly legs and feeling your heart racing. When these symptoms get really bad it may lead to a panic attack. Panic attacks can be extremely frightening, however they are harmless and very treatable. Anxiety can affect both your physical health and your mental health. The symptoms can depend on a number of factors. They may pass quickly or may stay for a long period of time. It may be worth talking to your doctor or a counsellor about ways to reduce anxiety.

OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) is a form of anxiety where a person feels they have to do things repeatedly to prevent bad things happening to themselves or others e.g. washing your hands repeatedly. It is only when this behaviour gets in the way of your daily life that you may need to seek help.

If you or a friend have some of the symptoms, please see:

- www.ocdireland.org
- www.shine.ie
- www.teenline.ie
- www.yourmentalhealth.ie

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Eating Disorders

How you may recognise it:



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Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are not primarily about food, but can be seen as a way of coping with emotional distress or other underlying issues. For the person with an eating disorder, controlling food and the body is their way of relieving distress and achieving some degree of control over their life. Eating disorders can affect anybody, male or female. With appropriate help and support, people can, and do recover. They can be complex and there are variations in the typical signs and not all symptoms will apply to all people.

Symptoms can include:

- Refusal to eat enough
- Body & mind are starved
- Excessive thinking & talking about food
- Feeling worthless
- Binge eating
- Weight going up & down
- Trying to be 'perfect'
- Fear of being overweight
- Being underweight

Even if you don't have these symptoms, if you are worried or upset by something, it is important you find someone to talk to. Don't bottle it all up.

- www.bodywhys.ie
- www.bodypositive.com

Kilkenny Comhairle na nÓg circulated over **350 surveys** to young people across Kilkenny. We would like to thank the **160 people** who **took the time to respond**. The statistics contained in this booklet are based on the findings of that survey. We hope they will help give you a picture of the opinions of **young people in Kilkenny in 2017**.

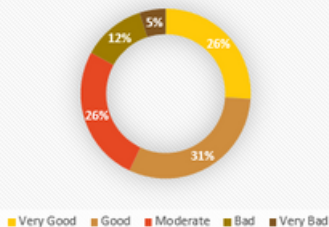
Age Profile of Respondents:

12 – 1%	13 – 14%
14 – 37%	15 – 18%
16 – 8%	17 – 13%
18 – 9%	

Gender Identity of Respondents:

Male – 61%
Female – 35%
Transgender – 3%
Other – 1%

Rating of Own Mental Health



In the survey, respondents were asked to describe their mood in the previous week:

25% had often felt easily *annoyed or irritated*

18% often had *outbursts of anger* they could not control

11% said they often *wanted to break or damage things*

18% had *rowed with someone* often

12.5% said that they had *yelled at somebody or thrown things* often

Another section asked how they felt about themselves:

45% said they were *satisfied* with themselves overall

14% felt that they were a *failure*

21% think that at times they are *no good* at all

40% felt that they have a *positive attitude* towards themselves

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In the last 12 months:

- 10% have been teased by a group 5 times or more often
- 20% have been part of a group teasing an individual at least once
- 7% have been attacked by a group 5 times or more often
- 6% have been in a group attacked by another group 5 times or more often
- 22% have been teased by a group at least once

During their lifetime:

- 14% say they have sent nasty messages to a group or individual through internet or by text
- 23% say they have received nasty messages from a group or individual through these means.

When asked how they felt about their physical appearance:

- 32% of respondents are happy with their body, while 13% did not feel at all happy
- 36% feel physically strong and happy, while 12% do not
- 13% often think that they are ugly and unattractive

When asked about sharing serious concerns with others:

- 39% of respondents have been told by someone else that they were thinking about committing suicide
- 24% have thought about committing suicide
- 8% have told someone they were thinking of committing suicide
- Over the past 6 months 6% had made an attempt to commit suicide

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Relationships & Sexuality

There are people in every country, culture and society thinking about their sexuality:

Gay? Heterosexual?
Lesbian? Bisexual?
Transgender?

Feelings

Relationships

Someone
to Talk To

Sexual
Attraction



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Relationships & Sexuality

Exploring your sexuality and developing relationships can be a positive and challenging experience during teenage years. Society can place a lot of labels on people – especially in relation to sexuality and relationships. At a stage where you are exploring this for yourself it is important that you take time to understand your own feelings.

There are a **broad range of sexual orientations** including: bisexual, gay, heterosexual, lesbian and transgender. As part of exploring their sexuality, it is **common for people to go through a range of feelings** and experiences before their sexual identity emerges.

If you **feel you need support**, or someone to listen in a non-judgemental way, be sure to have a look at some of the contact details below where you can avail of support and information free of charge.

- www.b4udecide.ie
- www.belongto.org
- www.cura.ie / 1850 622 626
- www.kilkennyrc.com / 1800 478 478
- www.positiveoptions.ie / Free text "List" to 50444

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Bullying & Cyberbullying

Bullying & Cyberbullying can take many forms:



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Bullying & Cyberbullying

Bullying is the ongoing abuse of another person through physical, emotional or verbal means often in the presence of others. The behaviour is repeated and persistent.

Cyberbullying is any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicates hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others. There are some things you can do if this is happening to you. Don't keep it to yourself. You have the right to tell someone, like your parents or a trusted adult, that this is happening.

If you are experiencing cyberbully there are some things you can do to help as well as telling someone you trust:

- Ignore it & do not respond
- Record/ screenshot the offensive message
- Block the bully from your account
- "Report" the user as being offensive

You have the right not to be bullied. Abusive behaviour is always wrong. Do not suffer in silence. HELP IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE. Start by telling someone you trust.

- www.bully4u.ie
- www.foroige.ie
- www.parentline.ie / 1890 927 277
- www.watchyourspace.ie
- www.webwise.ie

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Psychosis

If someone becomes very confused and appears out of touch with everyone else's perception of the world, they may be experiencing a psychotic episode. They may:

have strange
& disorientated
thinking

have difficulty
speaking

hear voices that
may not be heard
by anyone else

experience
paranoia

appear
quite flat

have
hallucinations

display strange
& disorganised
behaviour

have false
beliefs/ delusions



Psychosis

Some drugs such as hallucinogens, marijuana & amphetamines may trigger a psychotic episode. Treatment of psychosis usually involves medication. It is important that someone experiencing a psychotic episode seeks help from a doctor, psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist.

Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness characterised by disturbances in a person's thoughts, perceptions, emotions and behaviour. There are a number of signs and symptoms. They are divided into two groups: active symptoms that reflect new or unusual forms of thought and behaviour such as delusions, and passive symptoms which reflect a loss of previous feelings and abilities.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be experiencing some of the following symptoms, contact your GP:

- Having hallucinations
- Strange & disorganised thinking and/or behaviour
- Hearing voices that may not be heard by others
- Experiencing paranoia
- May appear quite flat
- Having difficulty speaking

- www.reachout.com
- www.shine.ie
- www.yourmentalhealth.ie

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Self-Harm & Suicide

Some signs to watch out for & some coping strategies to try:

**feeling
depressed**

**tell
someone**

**put off any
decisions to
end your life**

**Preoccupation
with death**

**Giving away
possessions**

**write down
your feelings**

**Ring a
crisis
helpline**

**avoid drugs
& alcohol**



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Self-Harm & Suicide

Self-harm is when someone deliberately hurts, cuts or injures him/herself. It is a communication of deep distress and should be taken seriously.

If you self-harm it is very important that you seek support. It might seem that nobody understands or that you are alone, but remember there is help available.

Suicide is not chosen; it happens when pain exceeds someone's resources for coping with pain. You are not weak, crazy or a bad person because you feel suicidal. It doesn't even mean that you really want to die – **it only means that you have more pain than you can cope with right now.** If you are feeling suicidal, **it is important that you keep yourself safe.** Try to remember that **thoughts** about taking your life **are just thoughts.** You do not have to act on them. Reach out to someone who can help. It is okay to ask for help.

What to do if you are concerned that someone has thoughts of suicide:

- Speak openly about suicide
- Show you care
- Listen
- Encourage a person to get help
- Samaritans 116 123
- Emergency Services 999 / 112
- www.mindingyourhead.info
- www.suicideaware.ie

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Grief

Some of the things you may feel or experience after losing someone:



Grief

To grieve is normal – and it takes time.

It is normal to feel a sense of shock when someone close to you has died.

Experiencing shock can mean you have a physical and an emotional reaction. You may feel dizzy, nauseous, dazed, numb or empty.

Everybody grieves differently and lots of things can affect the way that people experience grief. As the shock and numbness lessens you are likely to start grieving. There are different factors that may affect the way people grieve. Knowing these may help to understand yours and other people's reactions to loss. If someone's reaction is different to yours it does not mean that they care less.

Some reasons why people grieve differently:

- The type of relationship they had with the person
- Gender - males may be more likely to feel restrained while females may be more likely to share their feelings
- Cultural background - cultural groups express grief in different ways
- Other losses - the new loss may bring up previous loss, which can trigger more grief.

Help and support is available for you or someone you know who is grieving:

- www.bereaved.ie
- www.hse.ie / 1850 24 1850
- www.rainbowsireland.ie
- Talk to your GP

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Contacts

General

- Barnardos / www.barnardos.ie
- Childline / Text "Bully" or "Talk" to 50101 / www.childline.ie
- HSE Info Line / 1850 24 1850 / www.hse.ie
- ISPCC / 056 77 21685 / www.ispcc.ie
- MABS (Money Advice & Budgeting Service) / 076 107 2610 / www.mabs.ie
- Parentline / 1890 927 277 / www.parentline.ie
- Spunout / www.spunout.ie
- Foróige DRUM Youth & Family Project / 086 7736975 / 086 7736976 / www.foroige.ie
- Ossory Youth / 056 77 61200 / www.ossoryyouth.com
- Droichead Family Resource Centre (Callan) 056 77 55660
- Fr. McGrath Family Resource Centre (Kilkenny City) 056 77 51988
- Newpark Close Family Resource Centre (Kilkenny City) 056 77 23309
- The Mill Family Resource Centre (Urlingford) 056 88 38466

Contacts

Out Of Home

- www.focusireland.com / 056 77 94565
- www.respond.ie / 051 840 200
- www.southeastsimon.ie / 051 872 693

Abuse

- Connect / 1800 477 477 / Connect is a free adult phone counselling service
- HSE National Counselling Service / 1800 235 234
- National 24 Hour Helpline for victims of rape and sexual abuse / 1800 778 888
- One in Four 01 662 4070

Worried about a child?

- Contact the Duty Social Worker Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm on 059 913 6570

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This booklet was originally developed by Kinsale Youth Support Services.

Foróige Tramore Youth & Family Project also helped guide us in the right direction.

We would like to thank both organisations for their advice and support with this booklet.