



Help-seeking for children and young people in schools

Help-seeking is about communicating an issue or challenge to obtain support, advice or help. Asking for help can act as a protective factor for a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing.

Getting support early can help prevent small issues or challenges continuing, or even getting bigger.

What is help-seeking?

Help-seeking is a positive coping strategy.

Help-seeking could mean asking for assistance with day-to-day events such as learning experiences, and relationships (e.g. negotiating with peers on a task, managing anxious feelings or relationship breakups).

It could also mean seeking help for developmental queries or general health matters, including mental health. Examples include speech and language delays, understanding puberty or behavioural challenges.

Help may come in many shapes and forms. It could come from within the learning community or from external agencies, resources and organisations.

It may occur through daily interactions and conversations between educators, children and young people, and families. Other good sources of information and support are brochures, fact sheets,

reputable websites, family, friends and health professionals.

Support may be focused on the children and young people, their families or the school, or a combination of both. The goal in providing support is to find the best possible pathway to maintain or improve the wellbeing of children and their families.

Why is help-seeking important?

Seeking help is important because it can foster children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

There are a range of influences and experiences – both positive and negative – that impact on an individual's mental health. These influences and experiences are known as risk and protective factors.

Being able to ask for help can act as a protective factor because help-seeking can lead to accessing resources that support mental health and wellbeing.