

# Five Myths about School Mental Health

1

## ***'Mental health is not a school's job'***

Schools and colleges have an important responsibility to nurture the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people and the adults around them. A mentally healthy environment is essential for every other aspect of school life and general development.

2

## ***'School mental health is mainly about supporting young people with mental health issues'***

Schools do have a role in identifying issues and supporting young people, but they have a broader role in proactively supporting mental health and wellbeing, and preventing mental health issues from arising, rather than simply waiting for issues to arise.

3

## ***'You need to be a trained counsellor or medical professional to support mental health'***

There are times when young people need specialist support, but there is also a huge amount staff can do to reduce the likelihood they will get to that stage: creating nurturing learning environments, building trusting relationships, developing their resilience and other healthy habits.

4

## ***'Mental health issues are easy to spot'***

School staff need to be alert to what young people say and to subtle changes in their mood or behaviour. Mental health issues are not always easy to spot and can affect any child or young person, regardless of how well they seem to be doing, how stable their life seems, or how strong their friendships seem to be.

5

## ***'Children and young people will just grow out of their mental health challenges'***

Although childhood and puberty is a time of great change, young people do not necessarily grow out of their struggles with mental health<sup>1</sup>. In fact, left unaddressed these challenges may well persist and generate further difficulties in later life.

<sup>1</sup> Koplewicz, H., '7 myths about child mental health', Child Mind Institute, 2021