Prevention is better than cure!

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How mindset development can help prevent mental health issues arising

There's no doubt that youth mental health is declining in the UK; according to Action for Children, there's been a 65% increase in mental health medical ward admissions for young people over the last decade.

When children spend 6-7 of their waking hours at school, this is as much a problem for our education system as our health system.

Whilst mental health issues run deep and are influenced by an impossibly wide number of factors, there's one skill that can be learned to ease stress and manage anxiety in our classrooms: mindset development, which can help ease the burden of mental health issues brought on by stress.

Mindset development is all about giving you the tools to help you better respond to stressful situations. It's the process of shifting your beliefs about your abilities to reach a place where you believe your skills and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work.

It involves recognizing and moving past a "fixed mindset" – the belief that abilities are innate and unchangeable – to embrace challenges, persist through setbacks, and see effort as a path to success.

Gazing's Red2Blue method, developed and refined over the last 25 years, has been implemented in schools across the world, and we know the hugely positive impact it has had on children and teachers.

Stressing the point

Put simply, Red2Blue is a mindset development programme that helps you control how you react to stressful situations, allowing you to make better decisions, concentrate, and regain control of your emotions. A 'red' mindset means you are out of control, stressed, and thinking unclearly. The transition to 'blue' means you're calm, thinking logically and in control.

It may sound simple, and it is. That's the point. Mindset is a skill to be developed, not a problem to be solved. Emotional intelligence in a classroom can vary so widely that whatever solutions are being proposed need to be straightforward and not filled with complicated jargon. This way, they can be understood and implemented by anyone.

Helping pupils understand their own emotions and the emotions of others

Children as young as toddlers have shown an understanding of 'red head', meaning they're able to identify when they're feeling overwhelmed or angry. As those children get older, more skills can be added to their emotional toolkit, and they can practice understanding and managing their 'red head' state.

It also helps them communicate their feelings to each other and to adults. A child may not be able to articulate that they feel frustrated or stressed, but they can tell an adult that they're in 'red head'. In turn, adults can use this language to help children understand the emotions of others around them in a way that's clear, familiar and consistent.

If young people are able to better self-regulate, their engagement, their ability to focus, and their ability to learn well are likely to increase.

Benefits to staff

It's not just students that feel overwhelmed in the classroom; 2025 stats suggest

that teachers feel stressed at work a majority of the time. Almost two thirds believe that stress affects them more than 60% of the time.

The Shaw Education Trust implemented R2B across primary, secondary and specialist settings and is a perfect example of Red2Blue's success is in a primary school. One of the leaders reports that the Red2Blue ambassadors within her school are now able to identify the mindset of other children and can support them from a child's perspective.

This is hugely significant for teachers who struggle to manage their classroom, relate to their students and balance the emotional sides of learning with the academic.

Harnessing pressure in the right way

It's important to remember that pressure isn't always bad, especially if it comes from ambitious goals or a desire to do better. It's mentioned a lot that pressure is just as capable of pushing you forwards as it is of pushing you back. Well, it's more likely to push you forward when you are equipped with tools and a framework to handle it properly.

Harnessing that pressure and using it as a driver to improve results for students inside the classroom, and for teachers when it comes to especially stressful situations like inspections is the real benefit of a strong mindset.

Life beyond school

If young people can build mental strength during their school years, they'll enter adulthood with a learned skill that will help them in stressful situations throughout their life.

High pressure situations are not something we can avoid, so the best way we can prepare children for the real world is to show them how to think calmly, focus on what they can control, and transition to a 'blue head' state when it matters most.



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