

Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being: What Works Toolkit

Thrive®

Public Health Wales | Date of Review: 2021

This summary is part of a series produced for the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being What Works Toolkit. They are intended to help schools make informed decisions when choosing interventions to improve and promote mental well-being. The interventions reviewed are not endorsed by Welsh Government or Public Health Wales.

Public Health Wales, on behalf of Welsh Government, have examined the best available evidence for interventions to find out if they are effective in improving mental and or emotional well-being outcomes in learners or staff, when delivered in a school setting.

Further information about the methodology and how using evidence can support decision-making is presented as supplementary information.

Thrive®

The aim is to support the social and emotional development of learners by helping them regulate behaviour and learn about their emotions. It is designed to help children form trusting relationships and become more emotionally resilient.

Thrive® is a whole school assessment and planning based intervention. The on-line assessment tool identifies the needs of the school and individuals, then appropriate activities are selected.

Thrive® was developed in England by Jan Banks, a psychotherapist, Roe Lovelock, a social work trainer, Julia Bird, a Gestalt psychotherapist and educationalist, and Lynne Tarrab-Snooks an integrative psychotherapist and educationalist.

Further information about the programme is available from <https://www.thriveapproach.com>

Evidence rating:

Public Health Wales reviewed the best available evidence of effectiveness for this intervention in Autumn 2021. **An expert panel concluded that there is no research evidence on the effectiveness of Thrive®.**

Further information about how consensus on this evidence rating was reached is available within supplementary information.

Implications for practice:

Public Health Wales reviewed the best available evidence of effectiveness for this intervention in Autumn 2021. An expert panel concluded that there is no research evidence on the effectiveness of Thrive®.

Further information about how consensus on this evidence rating was reached is available within supplementary information.

If already using this intervention, schools should think about how they might assess the impacts for participants and the wider school community. Local Authorities and other Commissioners should consider how they can embed requirements for independent evaluation.

Aspect(s) of well-being it intends to support:

Thrive® aims to support an understanding of emotions and their triggers which is important to protecting individual mental well-being. It also facilitates development of trusting social relationships, another critical factor in promoting positive well-being.

[Find out more about mental well-being and the things that influence it here.](#)¹

Mechanism of action:

The developers state that the intervention is underpinned by Attachment Theory, with its focus on the development of trusting relationships between adults and young people, and Child Development Theory, which focusses on how to support healthy social, emotional and cognitive development as a young person grows.

By helping children and young people to learn about and regulate their emotions and behaviour the programme aims to help learners become more emotionally resilient so that they are better equipped to deal with life's ups and downs.

¹ <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/promoting-individual-and-community-wellbeing/>

Intended recipients:



Indicated (for those with early signs/symptoms)



Universal (for everyone)

The developmentally tailored programmes are suitable for all children, including those with early signs or symptoms of mental ill health. It can be delivered to individuals, groups or whole classes.

Age range: 4 – 18 years



Student

Resource requirement:



Delivered by the school

- To deliver schools must access individual facilitator online training from a licensed provider. Facilitator training duration can vary from 1-hour, 12-hours or 12-days depending on role.
- Staff require access to an electronic device to undertake training.
- Schools must subscribe for a minimum of 2 years at £2,536 per year. This covers costs for all training, resources, access to Thrive® online software package, and licences.
- Ongoing annual costs from year 3, covering a subscription to Thrive® online software package and CPD courses, range from £0-£1342.
- As delivery uses play, creativity and the arts to help expand how children and young people express themselves, learners require a range of resources for example, paper, pens, paints.
- Curriculum time for delivery can vary as Thrive® make recommendations via the training process as to how best to embed the approach. Typically, a combination of individual, group and whole-class support is deployed.²

Language:

Training is usually delivered in English. There are some resources available in Welsh, which include the parent consent form, a presentation that the practitioner can share with other colleagues and posters to display in the setting.

² All estimate costs dated 2021

Supplementary Information

In March 2021 Welsh Government published the **‘Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Mental and Emotional Well-being’**, with the objective of supporting schools to meet the mental health and well-being needs of their students and staff (Education Wales, 2021). One of the ten key requirements and actions documented in this framework was that schools should ensure they only implemented well-being interventions with a ‘sound or innovative and developing evidence base’. The What Works Toolkit aims to provide a summary of the evidence of effectiveness to help schools make informed decisions when choosing interventions.

Methodology

- Information was gathered about the intervention from documentary sources or through direct contact with the provider/developer.
- A review of the best available evidence found in the published literature was undertaken.
- A multidisciplinary panel of experts from health, academia and education agreed on the evidence of effectiveness and an evidence rating statement to support it.
- To reach consensus on an evidence rating, the outcomes considered are those that the intervention intends to improve. Mental and emotional well-being outcomes can include self-confidence or self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and relationship skills, as well as more clinical outcomes such as anxiety.
- The evidence ratings used in the review were:

Rating	Evidence
++	There is good evidence from reliable studies that this intervention is likely to have a positive effect on health and well-being.
+	There is some evidence from studies that this intervention is likely to have a positive effect on health and well-being but this is not conclusive.
+/-	There is some evidence from studies that this intervention may have a positive effect on health and well-being but further research is needed.
0	There is no research evidence on the effectiveness of this intervention or, what is available has significant methodological weaknesses preventing conclusions on effectiveness to be drawn
-/+	There is some evidence from studies that this intervention may be ineffective in improving health and well-being outcomes but further research is needed.
-	There is some evidence from studies that this intervention is likely to be ineffective at improving health and well-being outcomes but this is not conclusive.
--	There is good evidence from reliable studies that this intervention is likely to be ineffective at improving health and well-being outcomes.

- A full technical report with detailed information on the methods, findings, conclusions and recommendations is available upon request. Please email: hi-programme.support@wales.nhs.uk

Understanding mental health and well-being

Public Health Wales has developed a [Conceptual Framework for Mental Well-being](https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/promoting-individual-and-community-wellbeing/)³. This demonstrates the relationship between mental well-being and other health determinants as well as describing areas for action to promote and protect well-being. The framework presents the building blocks of individual mental well-being, how we think; how we understand our feelings and those of others; how we form relationships; how we understand and make sense of life experiences and how we see our place in the world.

It also recognises the importance of community mental well-being which arises from the connections, networks, and sense of belonging within a community; the shared identity and experience that comes from place, and from how power is experienced and shared.

The [‘Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being’](https://gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing)⁴ covers a pathway from prevention and promotion of good mental well-being to treatment of mental ill health. It is important that when considering interventions schools can understand where on the pathway an intervention is trying to act, and what aspects of mental well-being an intervention aims to improve.

Understanding and using evidence

There are many different types of evidence. It can come from formal research and evaluation, expert opinion, or lay knowledge and experience.

Certain types of research are more helpful than others in understanding whether an intervention or programme actually makes a difference. Usually, to answer that question fully, you need to compare those pupils, classes or schools who received a programme with those that did not. Other forms of evidence are really important to understand whether people found the programme helpful; whether it was easy to deliver or use.

The number of studies which have been carried out and the number of participants involved in a study are also important. We would have more confidence in a study on hundreds of people than one on 20 or 30 for example. The quality of the research, and how well it was carried out, are also important. We can be much more confident that the findings of a good quality study are true rather than by chance than we can poor quality studies.

Using evidence to understand whether an activity is achieving the aims it set out to helps to make the best use of available resources. Basing decisions on published evidence supports credibility and gives schools confidence in the approaches taken.

³ <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/promoting-individual-and-community-wellbeing/>

⁴ <https://gov.wales/framework-embedding-whole-school-approach-emotional-and-mental-wellbeing>