



Teenage Mental Health



These are the important points from a talk by John Murphy on Monday the 10th of May on "Teenage Mental Health" in Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles

- Keeping a **'Gratitude Journal'** (Like the "3 Good Things" part of the school diary) is a practical way to incorporate a positive mindset. Simple things like consciously appreciating the nice weather when we get it, being able to meet your friends in school or helping a family member with a problem are examples of the small things that can build up their mentality.
- **Sleep** was found to be the biggest factor affecting youth wellbeing. While 6 - 7 hours is adequate for most adults, research suggests 9 - 10 hours is ideal for kids.
- A good sleep pattern is achievable for all. Working with your child to **leave their phone out of their room at night** is a positive way of encouraging good quality sleep. A good suggestion by a parent was to turn the wifi off at a time that the child can agree on and then try to bring that time forward by a half-hour every week or so.
- Appropriate **exercise** recommendation is **60 minutes per day** for a teenager to support a positive mood. This can be all together or broken up. E.g. walking to school, walking the dog, doing farm work, walking with a parent can all be low-level types of exercises. Training/Gym work and sport is also a great way to meet these demands.
- Exercising with others as **part of a pair or group is even better** for the child. This can be part of a sports team, part of a walking/running club, meeting a friend for a walk/run/gym session. Even going for a walk and chatting on the phone to a friend at the same time can have great benefits.
- Important: Let your child **try as many activities as possible**, within economic means. Encourage them to try again at something if it hasn't worked the first time, or move on to another activity if they have not found their niche yet. e.g. things like kickboxing, karate, archery, golf may be foreign to some parents, but kids may love it.
- It is important for children to **see their parents** active as well.
- With regard to nutrition, **breakfast** was seen as a key component and some kids do not eat one at present. Even something small is good to break the fast of sleeping at night.
- Eating 4 - 5 times a day, with a mix between square meals and snacks is seen as manageable and adequate.
- If you find that your child doesn't listen to your suggestions (we as teachers know how that feels), then maybe enlist the help of an adult or older family member that they already have a positive relationship.