

Welcome

# Empowering Education

Understanding the impact of poverty  
on children's mental health

[platformwellbeing.com](https://platformwellbeing.com)



PLATF<sub>FORM</sub>



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SERVICE MANAGER FOR YOUNG  
PEOPLE'S POWER UP PROJECT

# About Platform

## Our vision

### **Sustainable wellbeing for all**

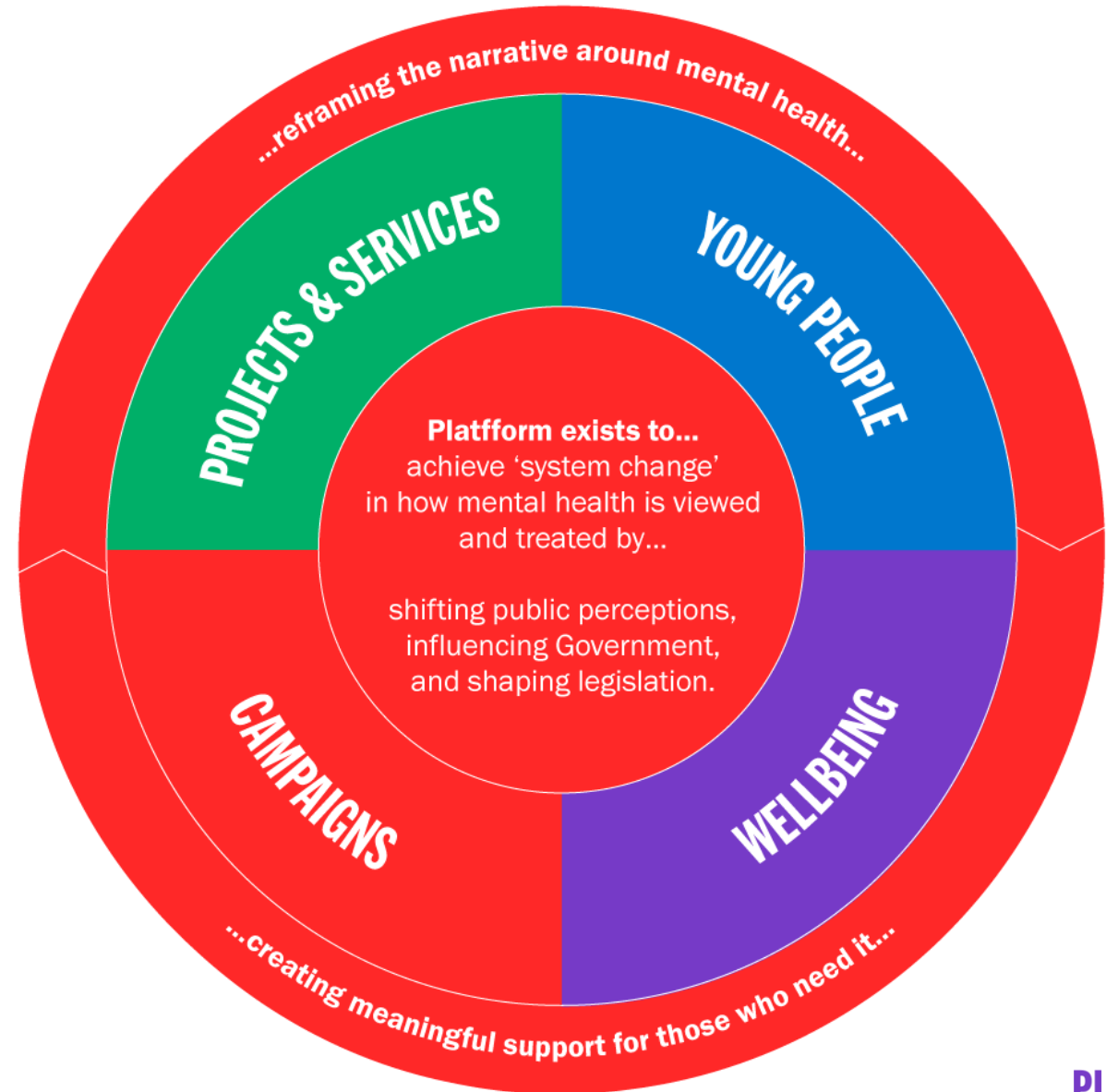
Sustainable meaning long lasting

Wellbeing meaning a sense of purpose, optimism, hope, agency, and direction

All meaning us, our community, who we work with, and wider human and non-human communities.

## Our mission

**To be a platform for connection, transformation, and social change**



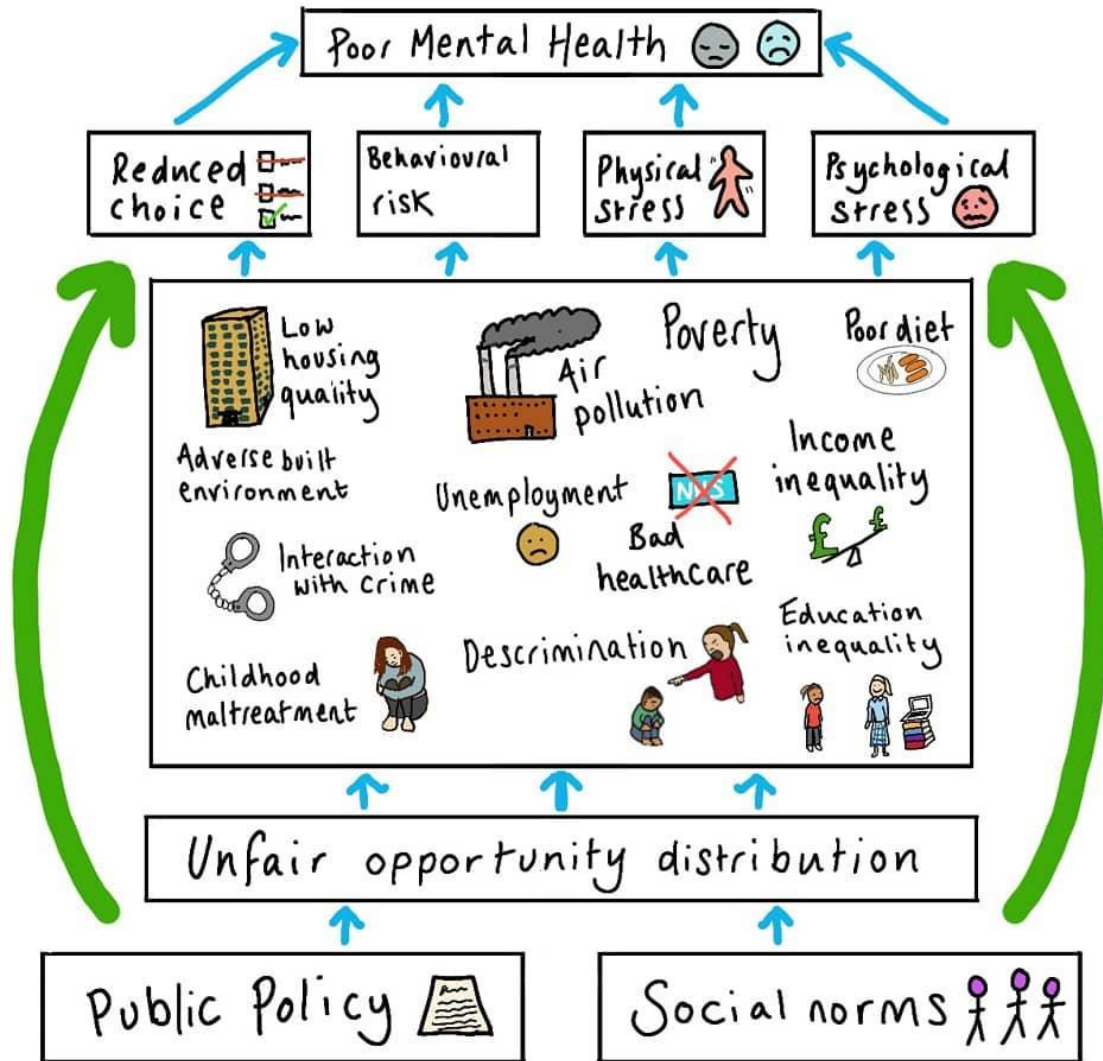
# Understanding the impact of poverty on children's mental health

Dr Jen Daffin, Community Clinical Psychologist  
Deputy Director of Relational Practice and Change

**At its simplest mental health is  
about nervous system regulation  
and connection to ourselves,  
others and our world .**

# Social Determinants of Mental Health

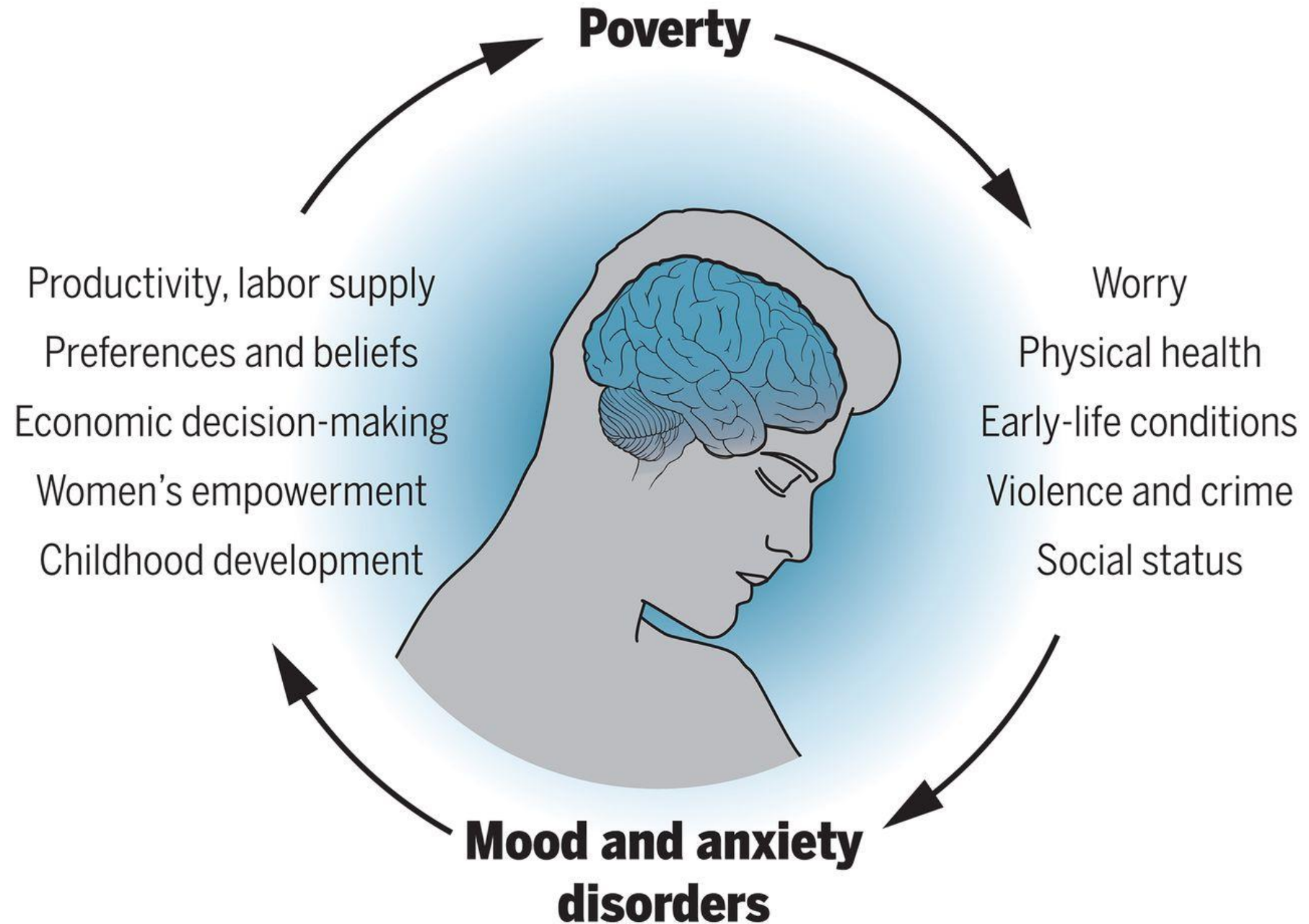
(Compton & Shim, 2019)



‘Mental Health’ is complex

@creative.clinical.psychologist

Your **postcode** is more  
important to your mental  
health than your **genetic code**.





**Traumatic experiences in childhood are frequently reported by people with a diagnosis of mental illness.**

- **85%** of people with a dx of **schizophrenia**
- **82%** of people with a dx of **personality disorder**
- **77%** of people with a dx of **affective disorders**  
including **major depressive disorder + bipolar disorder**
- **70%** of people with a dx of **PTSD**

## HOW POVERTY AFFECTS PEOPLE'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Decisions and behaviours play a vital role in helping people to avoid and escape poverty. This research summarises recent evidence on the influence of poverty and low socio-economic status on the processes underpinning decision-making.

### Key points

- Experiencing or growing up in poverty affects people's lifelong decision-making style. People living in poverty make decisions focused on coping with present stressful circumstances, often at the expense of future goals.
- Low socio-economic status is associated with worse performance in tasks measuring academic ability, and also in measures of the underlying cognitive resources needed to perform well in school.
- People low in socio-economic status often see themselves as less able to learn new skills and succeed at tasks. They are also less likely to perceive that their actions will affect how their lives turn out. This has important consequences for academic performance and health behaviours; the less people feel that their actions matter, the less likely they are to make choices aligned to achieving future goals.
- People in poverty are less likely to take risks and more likely to conform to and value tradition. This is reflected in stricter parenting styles and career choices oriented towards job and financial security.
- Living in poverty is associated with feeling excluded from society, which may explain its link to increased levels of aggression at school and in neighbourhoods.
- By shifting the focus from the specific kinds of decisions (e.g. education, family and financial) to the psychological, social and cultural processes informing decision-making in general (e.g. risk-taking or personal value orientations), policy-makers can address areas that affect people in poverty in a broad set of contexts.
- For many individuals living in poverty, the choices made are not always bad ones, but are adapted to the constraints of life with very few resources. Public engagement and education can challenge stereotypes about those living in poverty, and reflect the functional nature of decision-making for those on low incomes.

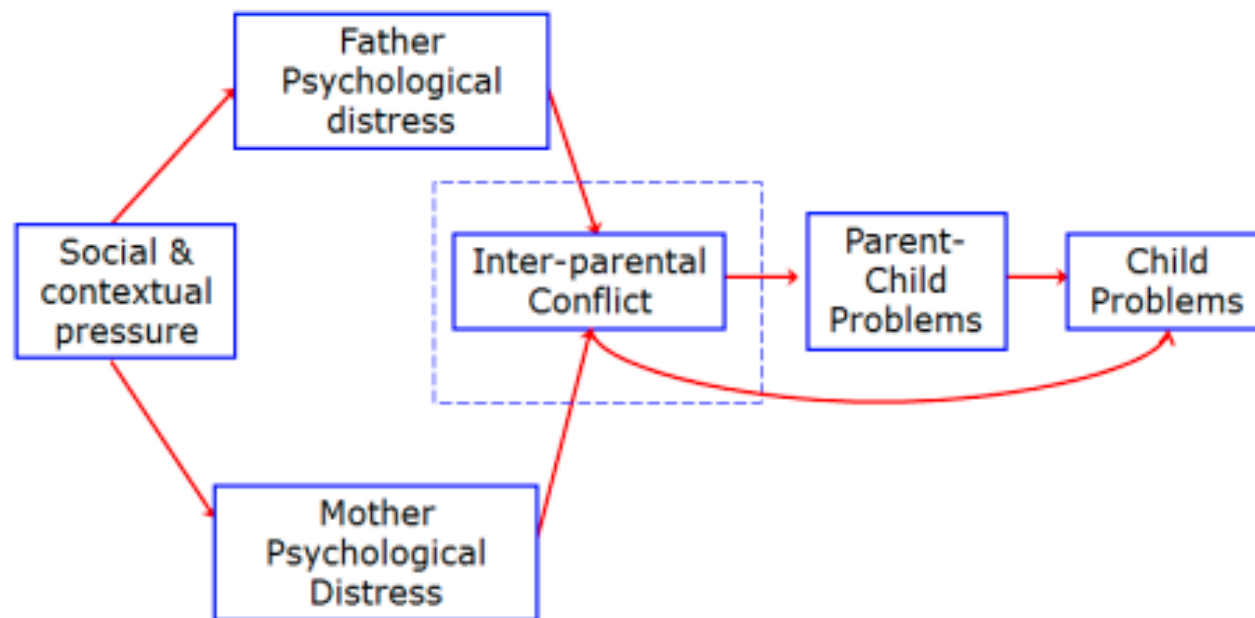


FIGURE 1

**A PROCESS MODEL OF FAMILY STRESS EFFECTS ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS: THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE INTER-PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP**



11/15/10  
And what if it's not the best of times, it's the best of times? (The best of times, the worst of times, the worst of times, the best of times.)

Struggling to get by creates stress, puts children at greater risk of adversity and makes families more likely to live in places that are unsafe and more polluted.

**Lifting people out of poverty leads to better mental health.**

## Millions of UK parents struggle with mental health, survey suggests

Unicef UK research says parents feel anxious, alone and unsupported, with poorest households hit hardest



Parents say the cost of living, a lack of childcare and fewer support services contributed to their anxiety. Photograph: Microgen Images/Science Photo Library/Getty Images/Science Photo Library RF

Millions of parents in Britain are struggling with their mental health, a survey suggests, amid the rising cost of living, a lack of childcare and fewer support services.

Sixty-one per cent of respondents revealed concerns about their mental health, with those on lower incomes most likely to be affected, a poll for the charity Unicef UK found.

Parents variously said they had felt overwhelmed (49%), anxious (43%), unsupported (36%) and lonely (26%) all or a lot of the time in the past 12 months.

Andrew Gregory Health editor

@andrewgregory

Mon 11 Sep 2023 05.01 BST



Denis Campbell Health policy editor

Thu 26 Aug 2021 06.00 BST



## Number of UK children unhappy with their lives rises - report

Children's Society says 'distressing' findings are warning sign of future issues for teenagers

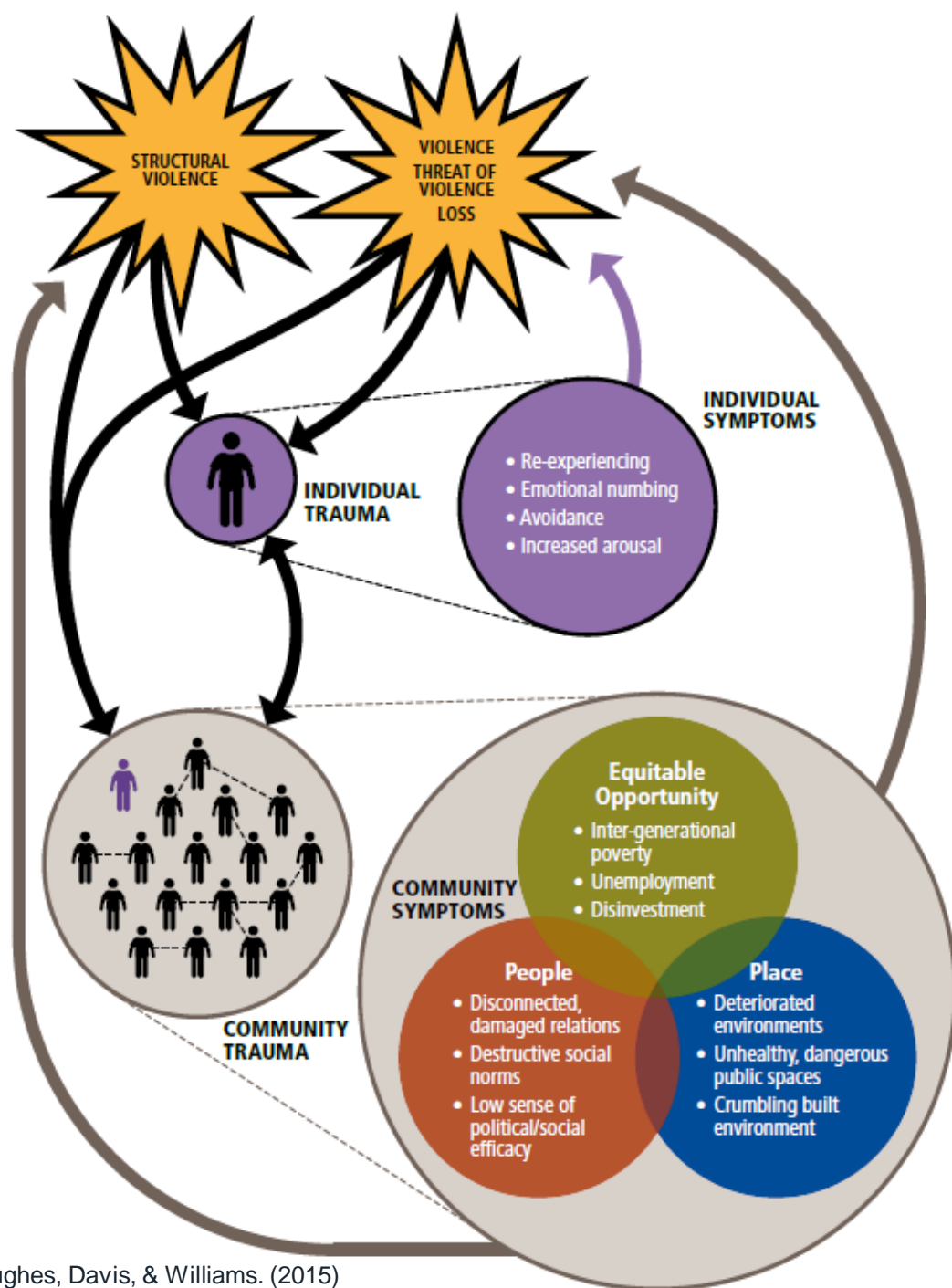


The Essex University research showed that almost as many boys as girls are now dissatisfied with their appearance. Photograph: True Images/Alamy

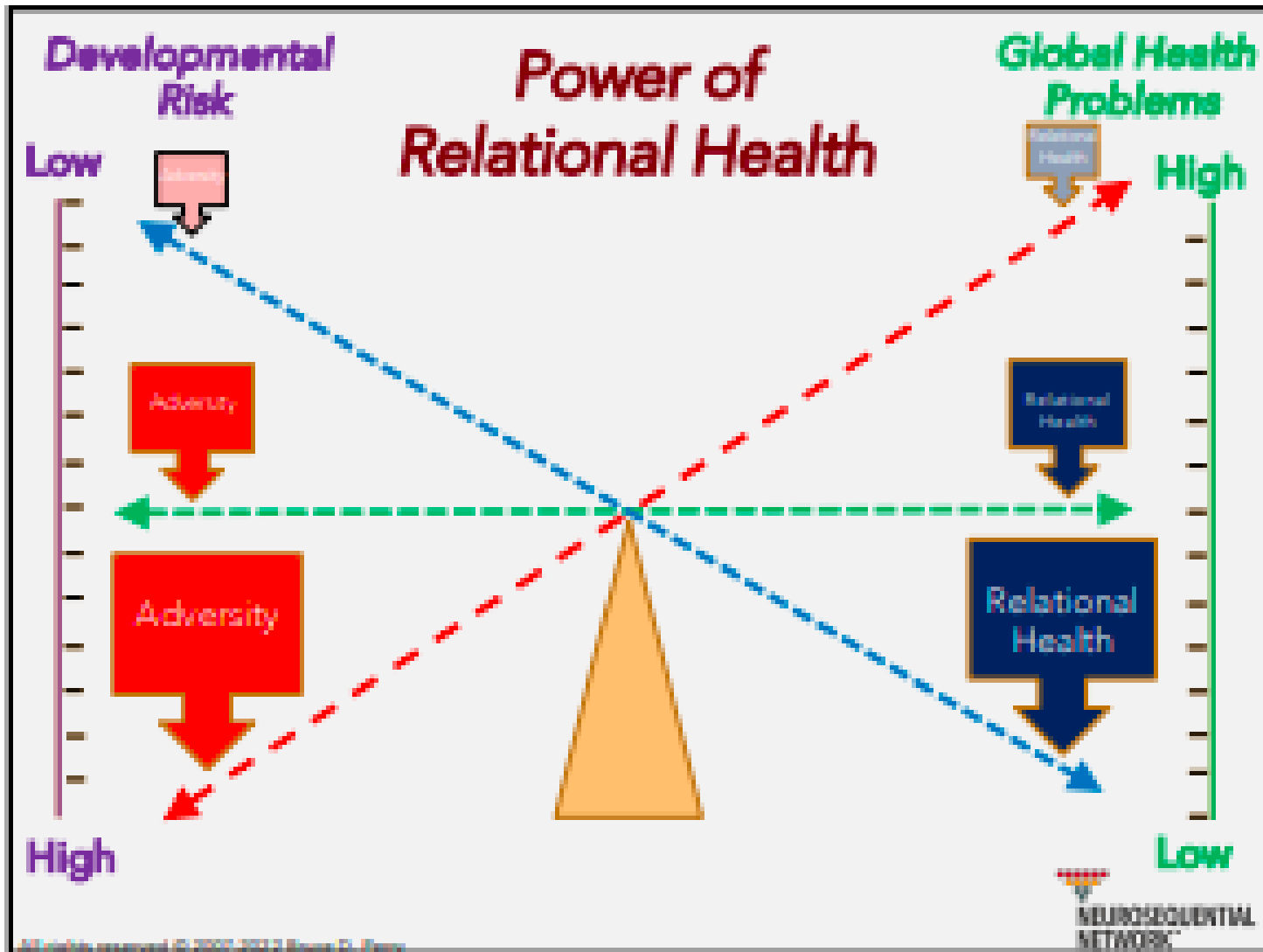
Growing numbers of British children are unhappy with their lives, with many worrying about school, friends and how they look, a report reveals.

The number of 10- to 15-year-olds who say they are not happy rose from 173,000 (3.8%) in 2009-10 to an estimated 306,000 (6.7%) in 2018-19, the Children's Society found. That 6.7% - one in every 15 young people - is the highest proportion in the last decade, it said.

The charity lamented the "significant decline in children's happiness over the decade", as measured by Essex University research before the Covid pandemic struck in early 2020.



We need to ask  
What's happening in  
our communities?



Research has found that our current connectedness (followed by our history of connectedness), and not our history of adversity, is the best indicator of our current functioning. ACEs aren't everything.

**Relational health is the determining factor.**





# The Bettws Early Learning Community



Enhancing community mental health understanding



Developing meaning making, storytelling and collective action skills



Reflecting, learning, taking action and sustaining change

## Embrace Community Healing



### Bettws

### Early Learning Community



# BETTWS EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY: our vision



To support **communication** and **language** development  
as well as the **social** and **emotional** development of  
children during their **first 1001** days and **crucial life**  
**transitions.**



We need a **different**  
conversation

We need a **trauma  
informed** approach  
to poverty

We need a **poverty  
informed** approach  
to mental health

# Dr Jen Daffin

Community Clinical Psychologist

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Platform.org



# Power Up Project

Lessons from young people

Natalie Coombs, Service Manager for Power Up Project

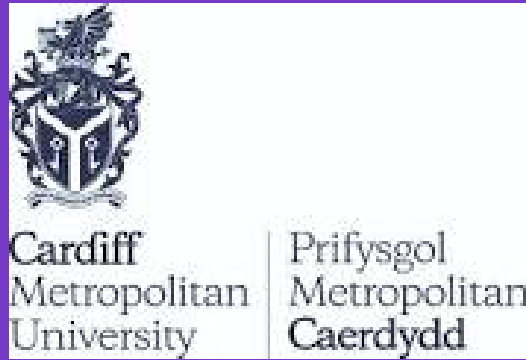
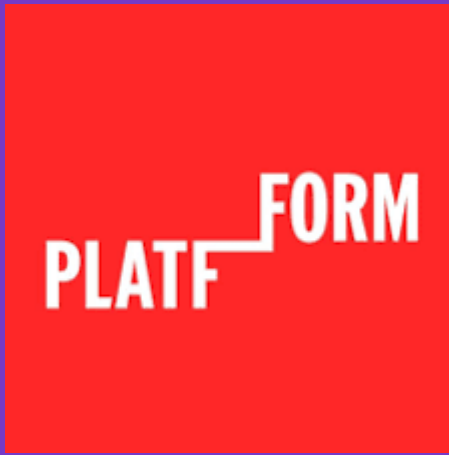
# What is the Power Up Project?

Power Up is a partnership, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, between Platfform and 9 other organisations, including statutory, third sector, and educational bodies.

The project is part of the National Lottery's Mind Our Futures Grant, which aims to put young people in the lead in terms of deciding what they need from future mental health provision.

The project runs across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, and we work with young people aged between 10 and 25.





# What is the project plan?

**Power Up is funded for 5 years.**

Year 1: Development Phase

Years 2-4: Service Delivery

Year 5: Exit and Evaluation

We have just completed our development phase, and are about to start project delivery.

# Our Development Year

During our development year, we engaged with 750 young people, exploring:

- What wellbeing means to them
- Positive and negative experiences of existing services
- What they wish others knew about mental health
- What worries them about the world
- What makes them hopeful for the future

# Young People's Thoughts on Poverty

**Poverty was a key theme across our findings, and young people brought up poverty, financial difficulty, and the cost of living crisis in many of their answers.**

- Young people are very aware of poverty and its effects, even primary age children.
- They recognise that poverty and financial difficulty contributes to wellbeing and mental health.
- They wished that other people knew that families having 'enough money', 'good hygiene' and 'enough food' affected children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

# What We Learned

- They also recognised that experiencing poverty can restrict the opportunities and mental health and wellbeing support that children and young people have access to.
- They noted that with a lack of financial resources, the ability to travel to locations or afford food and activities would become challenging.
- They expressed concern that therapy is often chargeable, and free therapy often comes with long waiting list – clearly a socioeconomic divide here.

# The Change Young People Want

Young people had a range of answers around things they would change about the world to make it a better place, particularly around poverty solutions.

- Improve access to good quality homes for young people and clamp down on rising rent costs.
- More support needed for people with low income but not 'low enough'.
- Free gyms and leisure centres for activities to do outside of school.
- Free sanitary products to those who need them to address period poverty.
- Stop classing 16 year olds as adults for prices of things e.g. trains, travel
- Equal pay for young people and adults - good minimum wage

Natalie Coombs

Service Manager

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# Who are Plattform Wellbeing?



Workplace Wellbeing



Talking Therapies



Education Wellbeing



Crisis Intervention



# Get in touch

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**Any questions??**

Thank you for joining us.

# PLATFFORM WELLBEING

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Compassionate Workplaces.

Thriving Teams.

We welcome your feedback:

<https://forms.office.com/e/pEkXRCJ5EB>

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PLATFFORM