

EBPU
**Evidence Based
Practice Unit**

A partnership of



Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families

Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health in Schools: A UK Perspective

Jessica Deighton

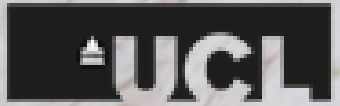
December 2019

Overview

- Background: what we know about young people's mental health and wellbeing?
- Risk factors
- Schools as a basis for universal prevention
- The wider system and protective factors
- Resilience approaches to support mental health
- Conclusions and implications

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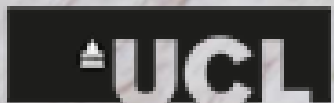
- Founded in 2006
- Collaboration between UCL, Faculty of Brain Sciences and Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

EBPU's vision is for all children and young people's wellbeing support to be informed by real-world evidence so that every child thrives



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Is committed to using evidence-based practices to provide the best informed and highest quality of care to children and young people. The Unit:

- Conduct research
- Develop tools
- Provide trainings
- Evaluate interventions
- Disseminate evidence



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Risk
Resilience
Change
Choice



Brief background to mental health problems



Brief background to mental health problems



Life expectancy



Average life expectancy



Smoker



Severe mental illness

Life expectancy



Average life expectancy



Smoker



10
yrs



Severe mental illness

Life expectancy



Average life expectancy



Smoker



Severe mental illness



Chesney et al., 2014

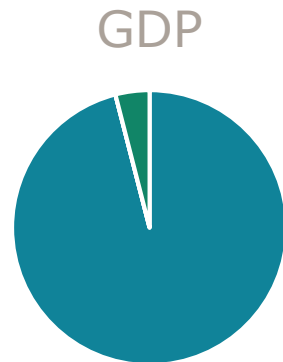
Prevalence and economic costs



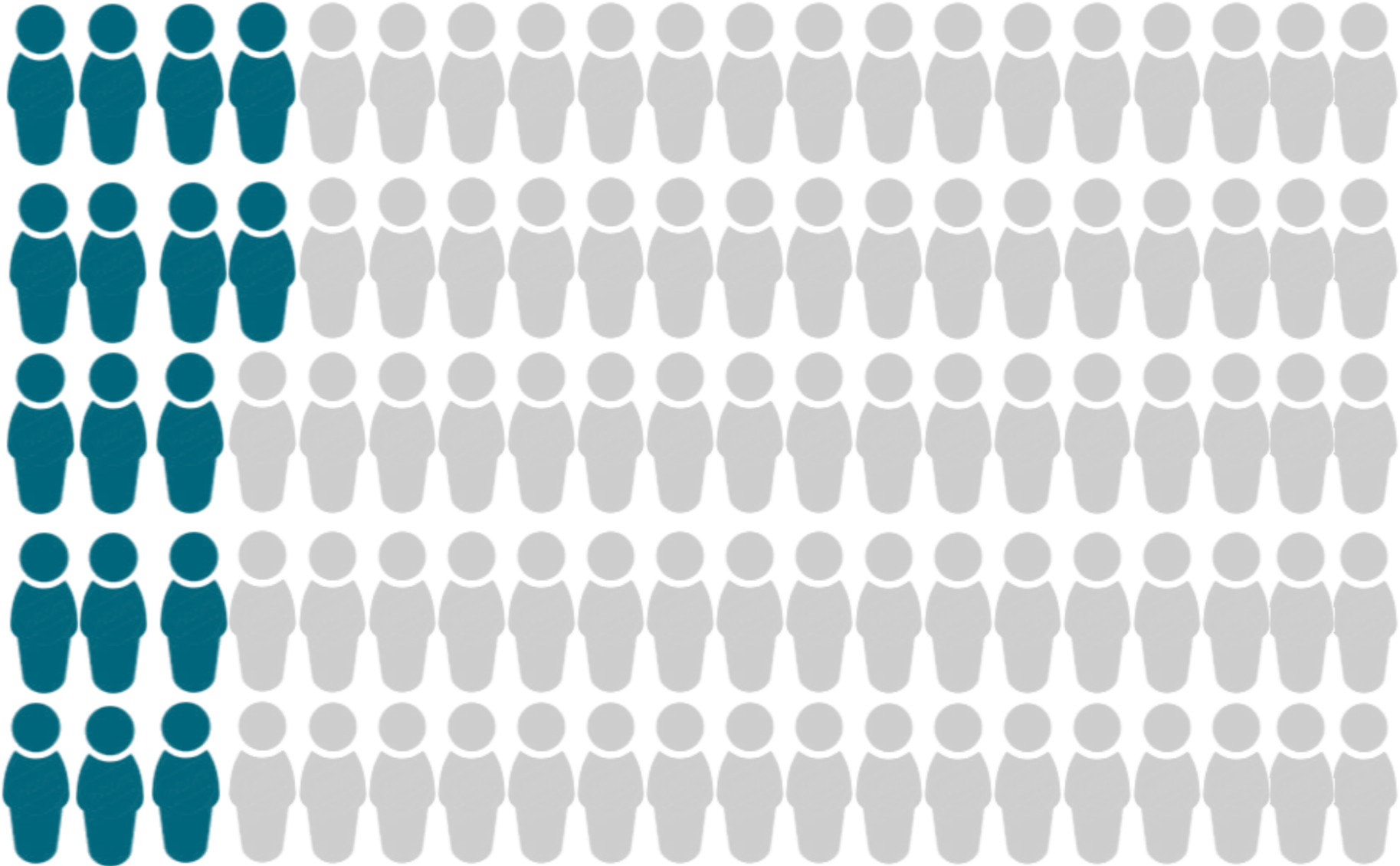
- Around 1/4 - 1/6 adults experience mental health problems

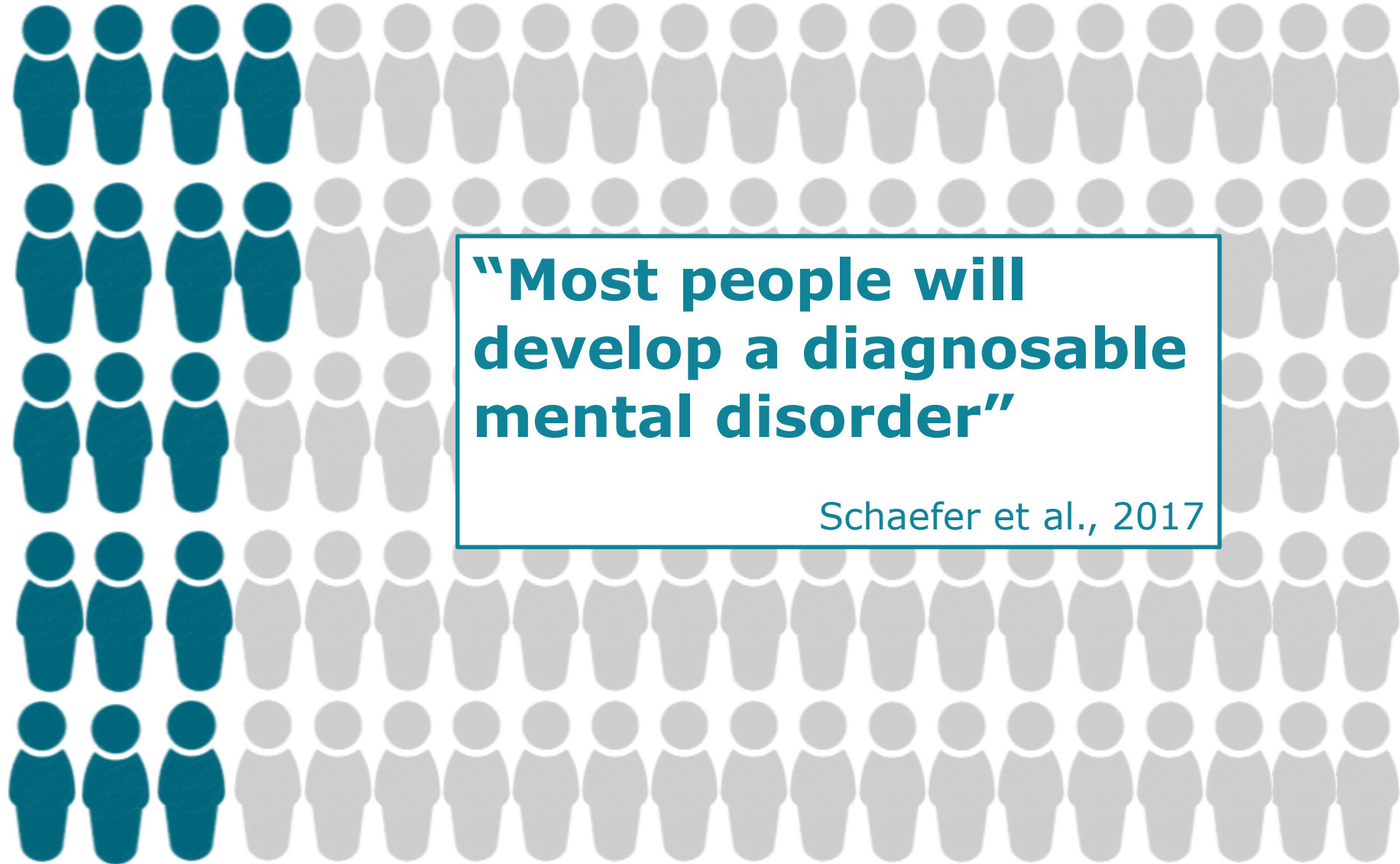


- 50% of all adult mental health problems begin before the age of 15



- Economic cost in UK of £94-£105bn each year

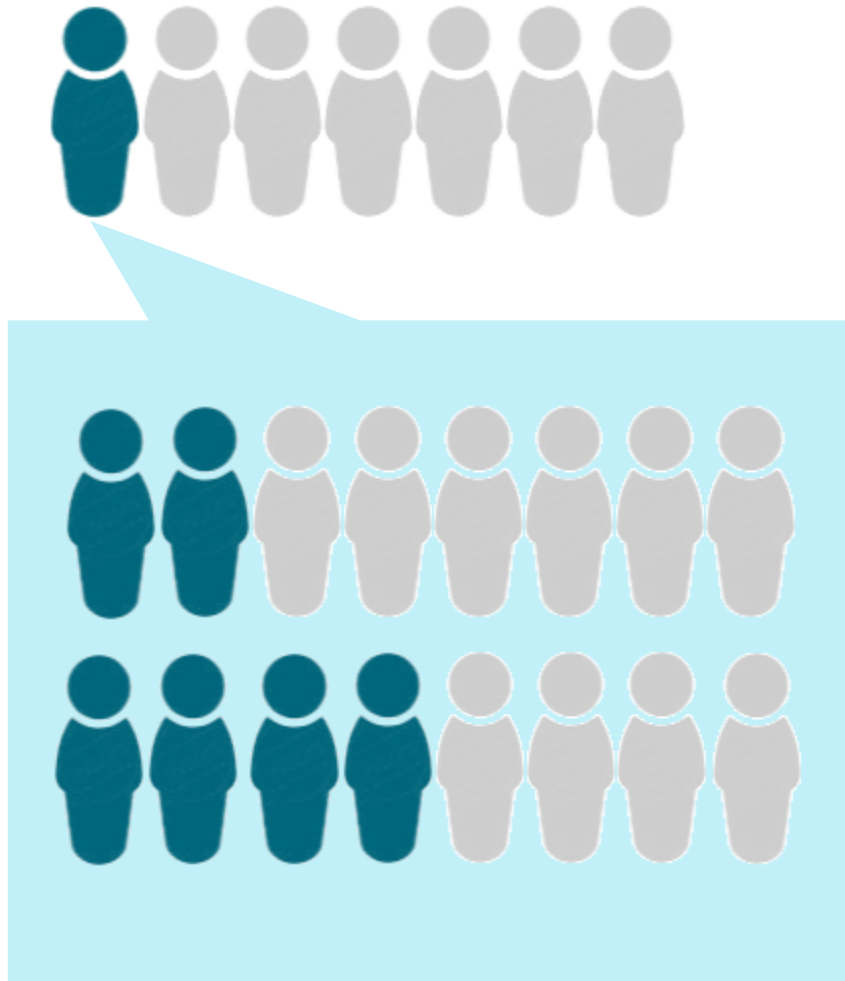




**What do we know about
mental health in school-
aged young people?**

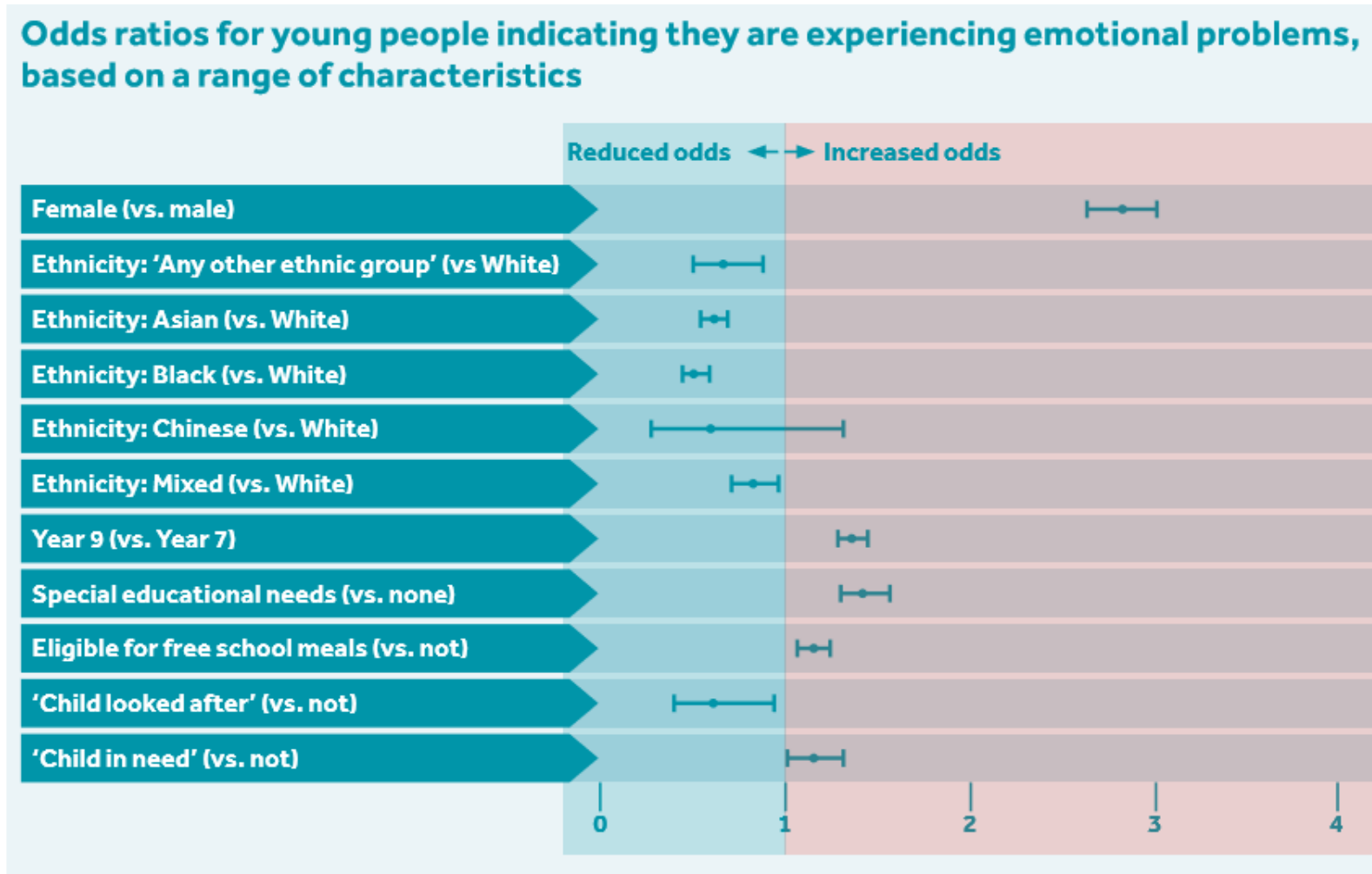


What about children and young people



- In the UK around 1 in 8 children and young people experience mental health problems
- Of those experiencing problems: 1 in 4 will have contact with a mental health specialist
- Just under half will seek support from teachers

What increases the odds of a mental health problem?



What increases the odds of a mental health problem?



What accounts for elevated prevalence?



“The violence in this area is proper bad. People get stabbed and everything. Come into school, it is totally fine. But when you are outside school and you see a gang, it is kind of scary. You just walk past them totally fine, but do not react because they will react back”

What accounts for elevated prevalence?



“(My mum’s) struggling on money. [What's that like?] Like, hard. [How do you feel about that?] Sad, because she can't pay the bills. She said she's really, really badly struggling to pay them”

What accounts for elevated prevalence?



“When I'm in my mum's house, I'm a completely different person. I'm always sad 'cause there's always something to argue over”

What accounts for elevated prevalence?



"I cried 'cause it, I've, [my dad's] never done it to me before. It was, like, it wasn't necessarily pain. There was no pain. It was just shock..."



What accounts for elevated prevalence?



“My mum kind of panics but, she, she... it's hard to explain. So basically she panics a bit, sometimes and she just gets really frustrated...”



What accounts for elevated prevalence?



“He mainly chose me. He pretty much ignored my friends but swore at me and called me names and stuff”

What accounts for elevated prevalence?





Summary so far...

50%

Half of all adult mental health problems start before the age of 14.

£105b

The wider economic costs of mental illness in England are estimated at £105 billion each year.

1 in 8

Children and young people aged 5-16 years worldwide have a clinically diagnosable mental health disorder.

25%

About a quarter of young people with mental health problems access specialist support.



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5%

Children and young people receive less than 5% of mental healthcare funding.

17 yrs

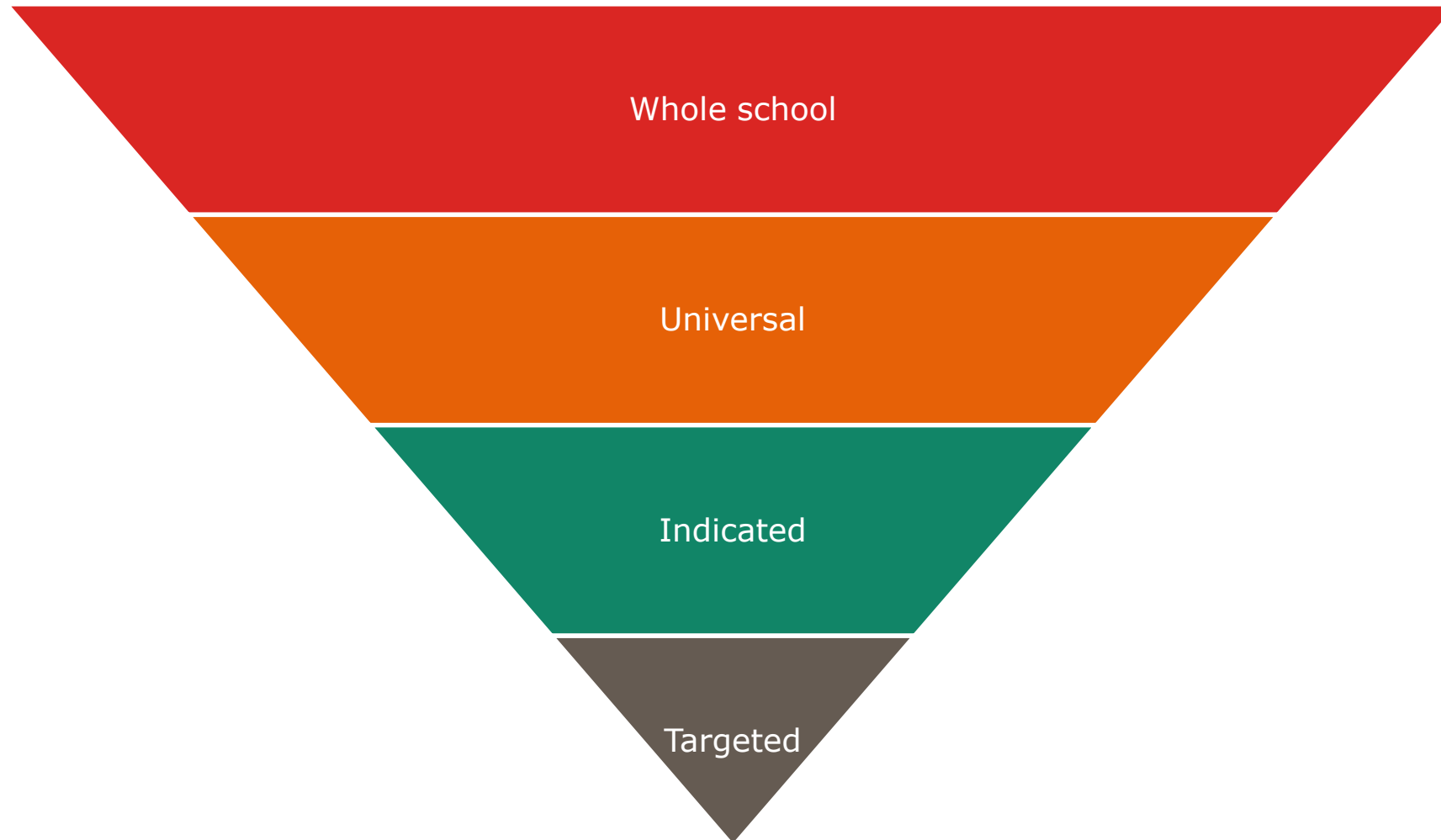
It takes an estimated 17 years for treatment options to be translated from research to practice.



Schools as a good starting point for prevention/early intervention

1. Schools are a universal access point for prevention and early intervention
2. Young people quite often turn to adults in school for support
3. Positive wellbeing in childhood predicts good outcomes in later life
4. *Fairly* good evidence that intervention in schools improves mental health

Range of interventions in schools



Evidence for universal approaches

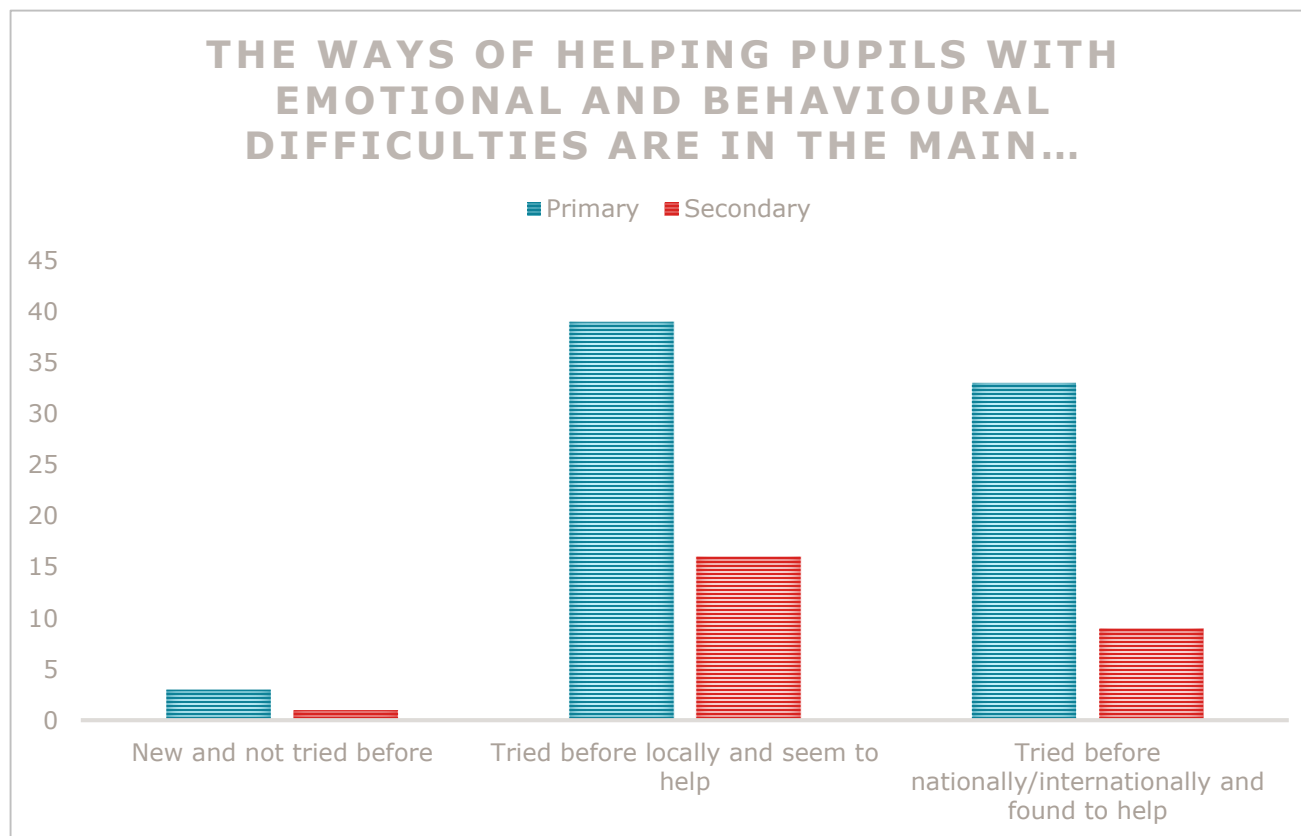
Common elements:

- provided in schools
- group settings
- discrete sessions over a series of weeks
- Led by professionals (or trained staff)
- skills-based
- CBT principles
- Engaging



The evidence gap

Evidence based approaches are not always routinely implemented



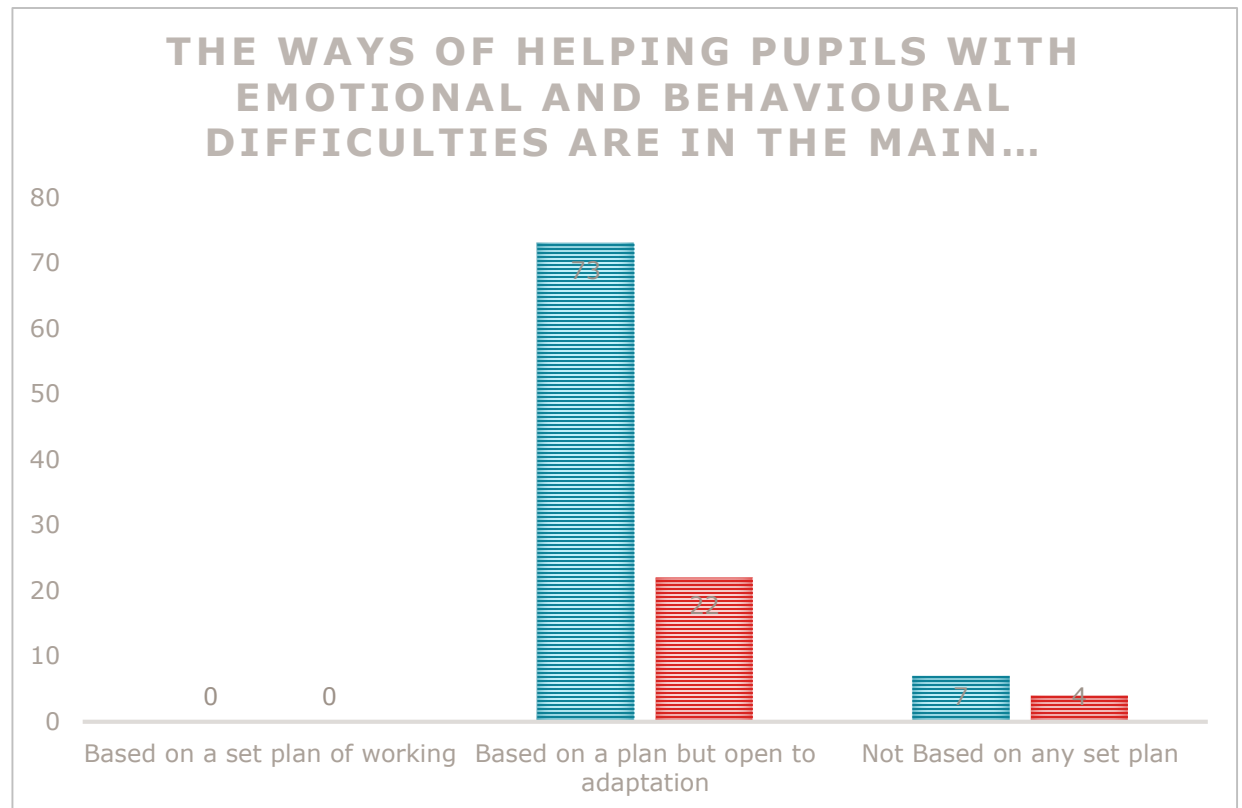
The evidence gap

But even well established interventions often have mixed findings

Those with good evidence can fail to translate to new settings

Effect sizes 2-3 times higher when programmes are implemented well versus not

Adaptation vs fidelity



Building the UK evidence base: Education for Wellbeing

Two trials developed after piloting:

AWARE

- Approaches for Wellbeing and Mental Health Literacy: Research in Education
- Year 9 pupils

INSPIRE

- INterventions in Schools for Promoting Wellbeing: Research in Education
- Primary: Years 4 and 5
- Secondary: Years 7 and 8



Education
for Wellbeing

AWARE

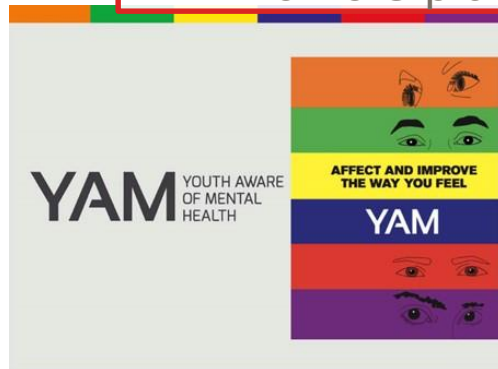
140 schools

YAM

6 sessions

External YAM practitioner and helper

Group discussion & role play

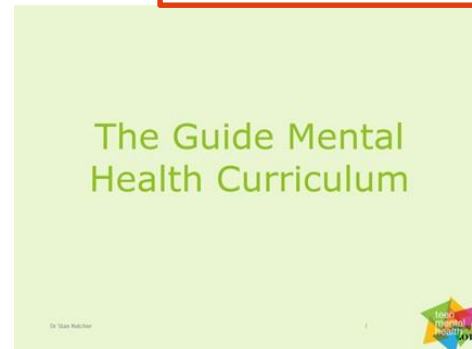


The Guide

5 sessions

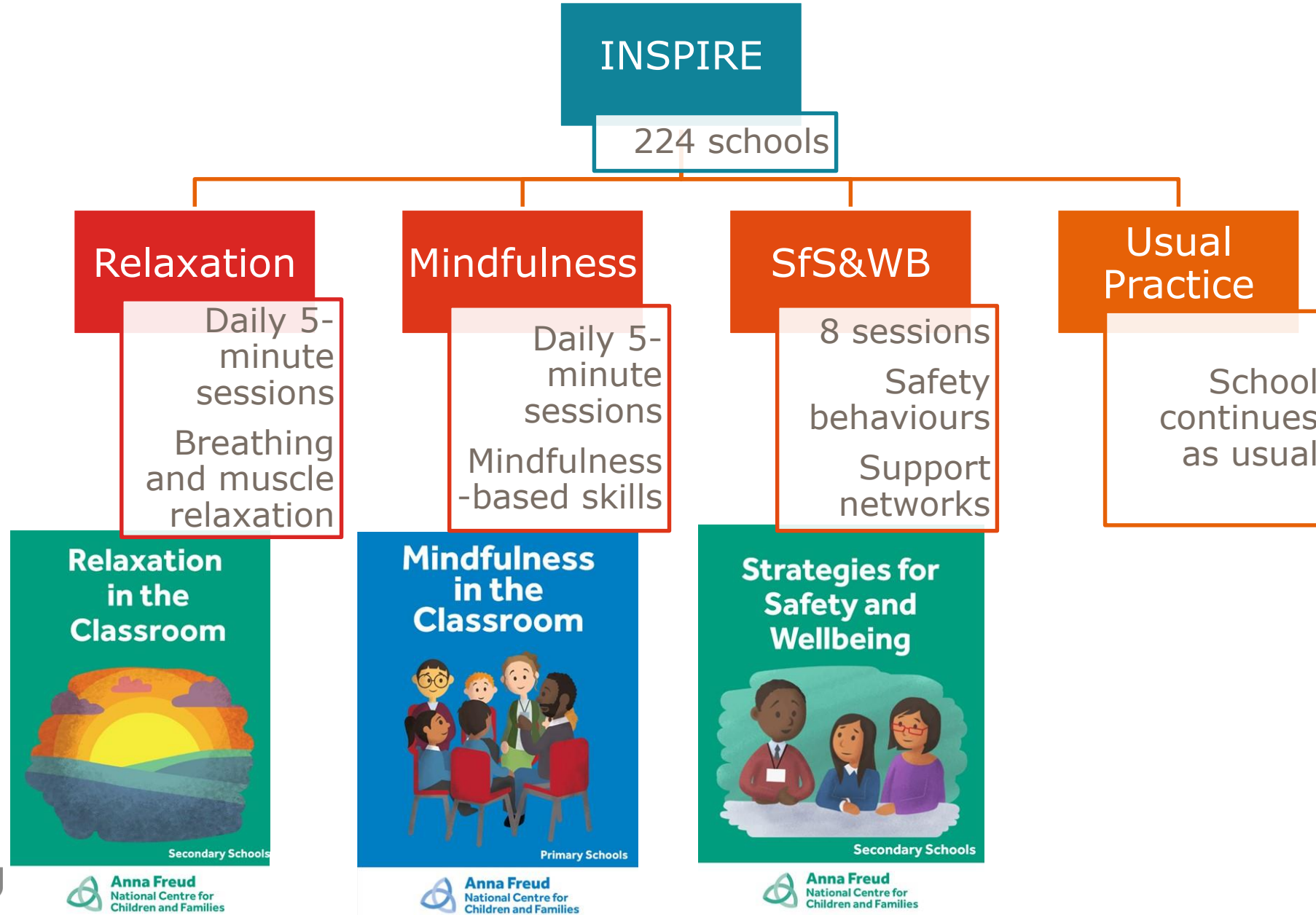
Teacher training to deliver

Taught sessions and discussion



Usual Practice

School continues as usual



Impact Evaluation

- Primary outcomes
 - Help seeking
 - Emotional difficulties
- Secondary outcomes
 - Attitudes
 - Interviews with school staff
 - Interviews with young people

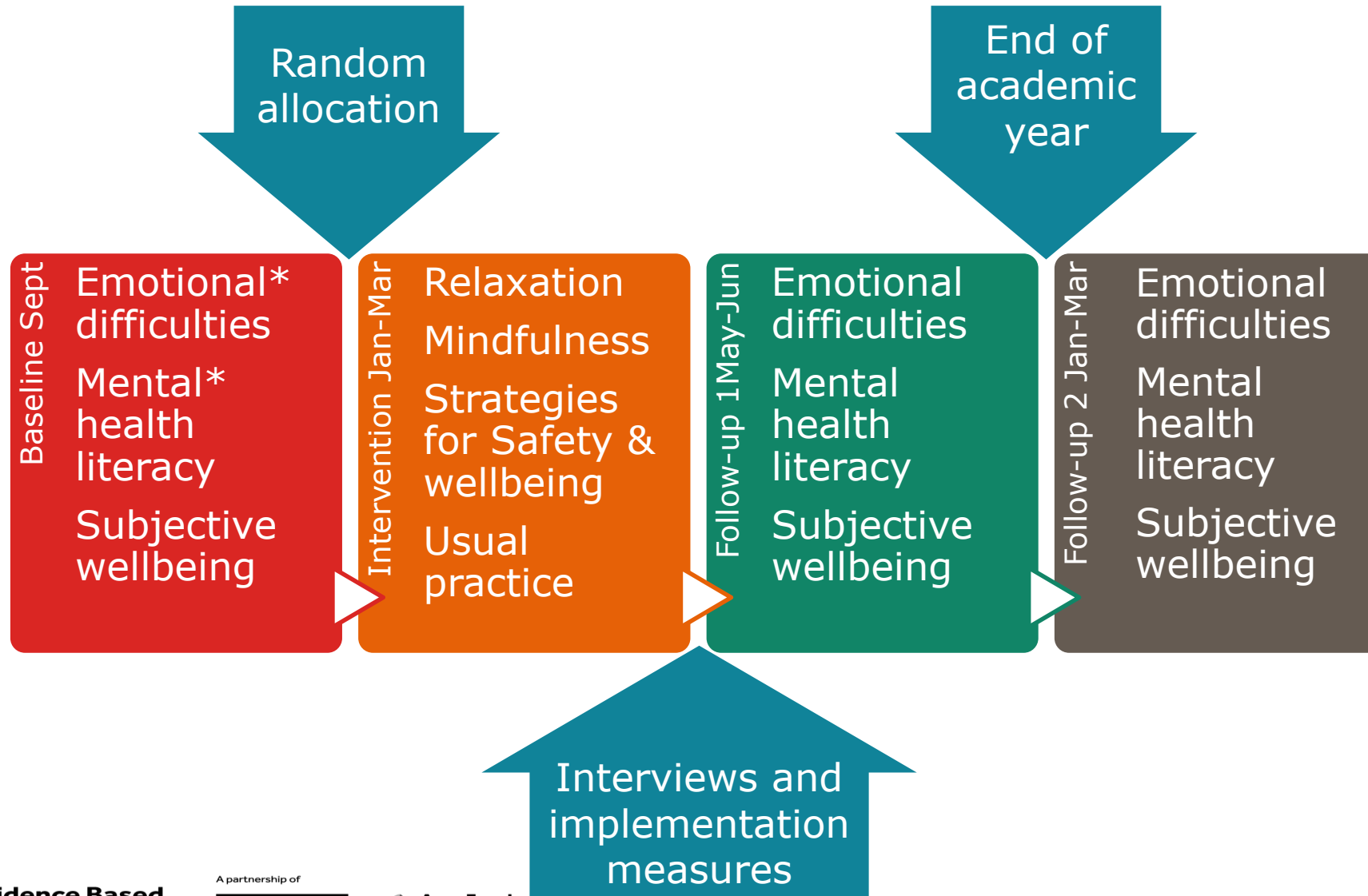


Process Evaluation

- Implementation
 - Implementation questionnaires
 - Interviews with delivery staff
- Context
 - Usual provision questionnaire
 - Interviews with school staff
 - Interviews with young people



INSPIRE



Learning to date #1: The importance of coproduction



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Learning to date #2: The importance of piloting



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Learning to date #3: Findings the balancing point between flexibility and fidelity is challenging



Universal school-based programmes: what we know so far from existing research

Are...

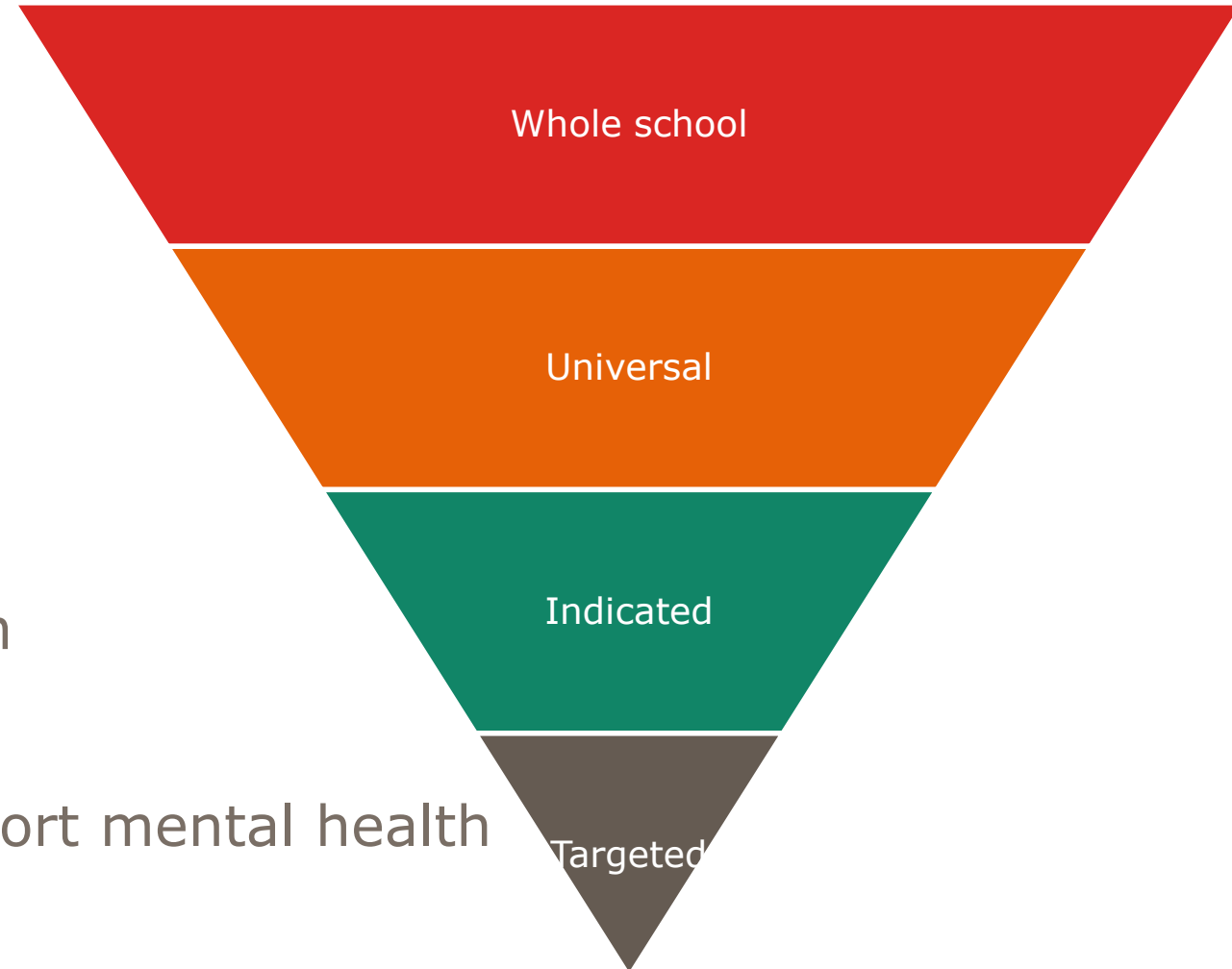
- Potential foundation for understanding of mental health and how to recognise when more help is needed
- Good way of building social and emotional skills

Universal school-based programmes: what we know so far from existing research

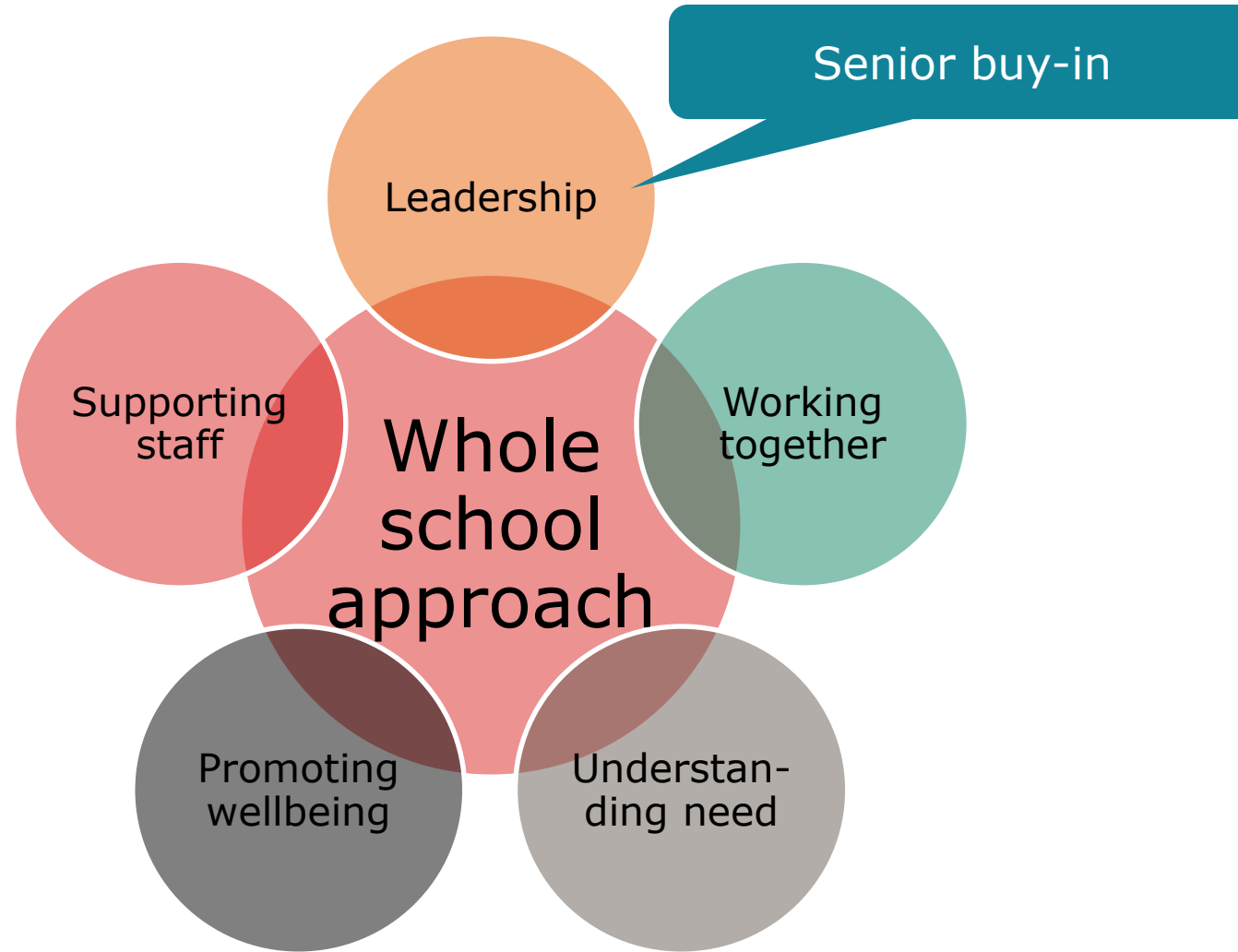
Are not...

- Going to work effectively in a vacuum
- A panacea

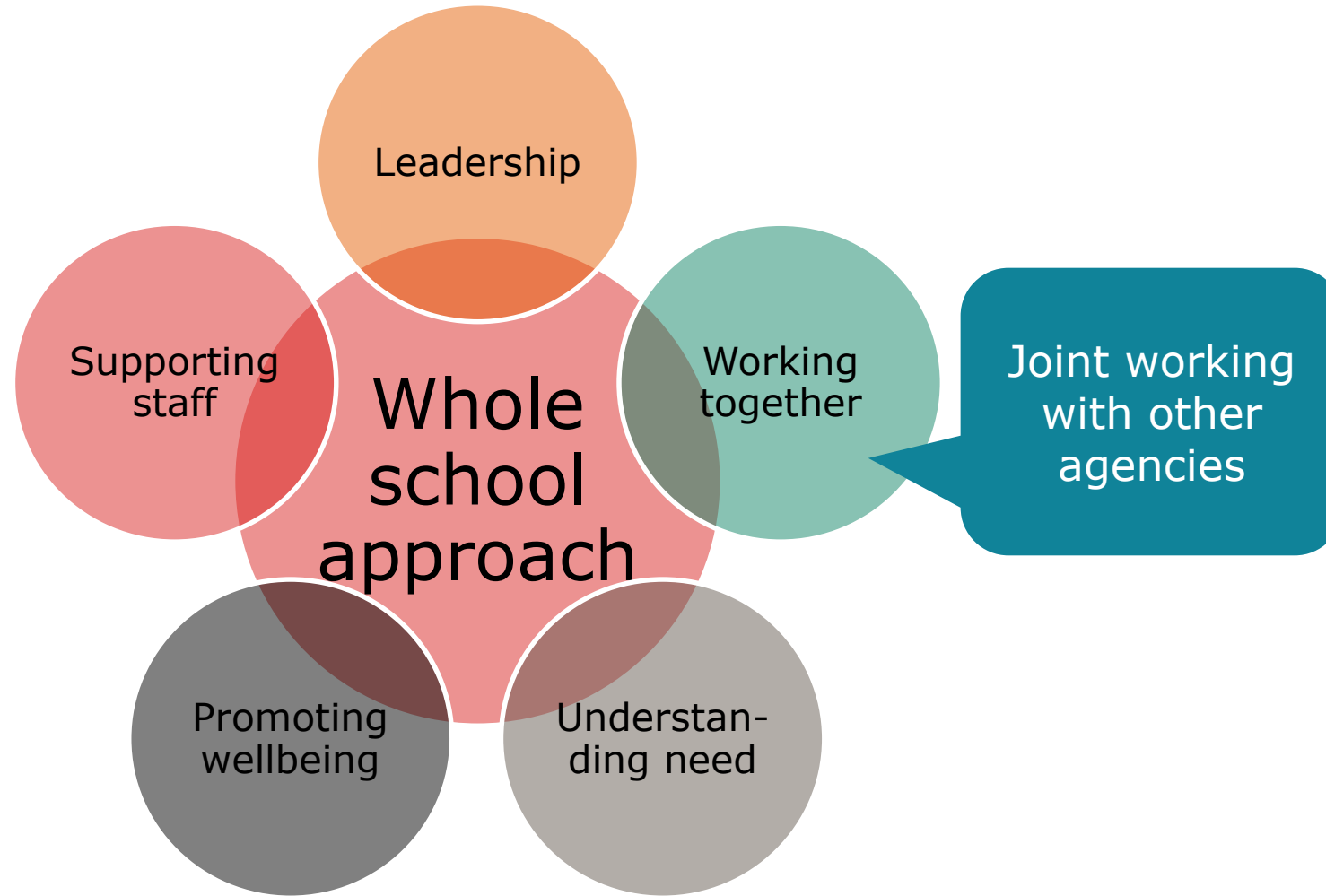
The whole schools system need to support mental health and wellbeing



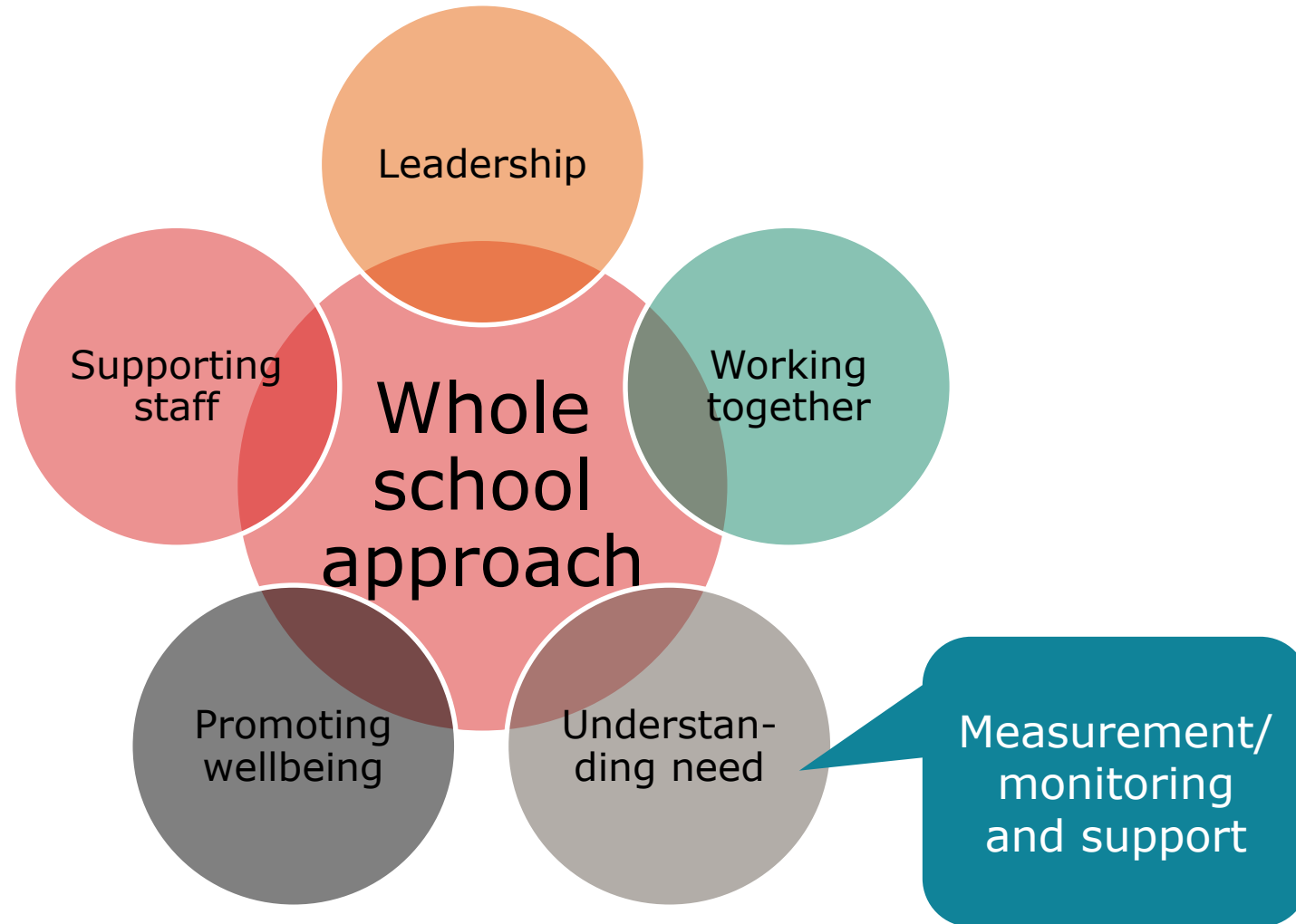
5 steps to creating a mentally healthy school



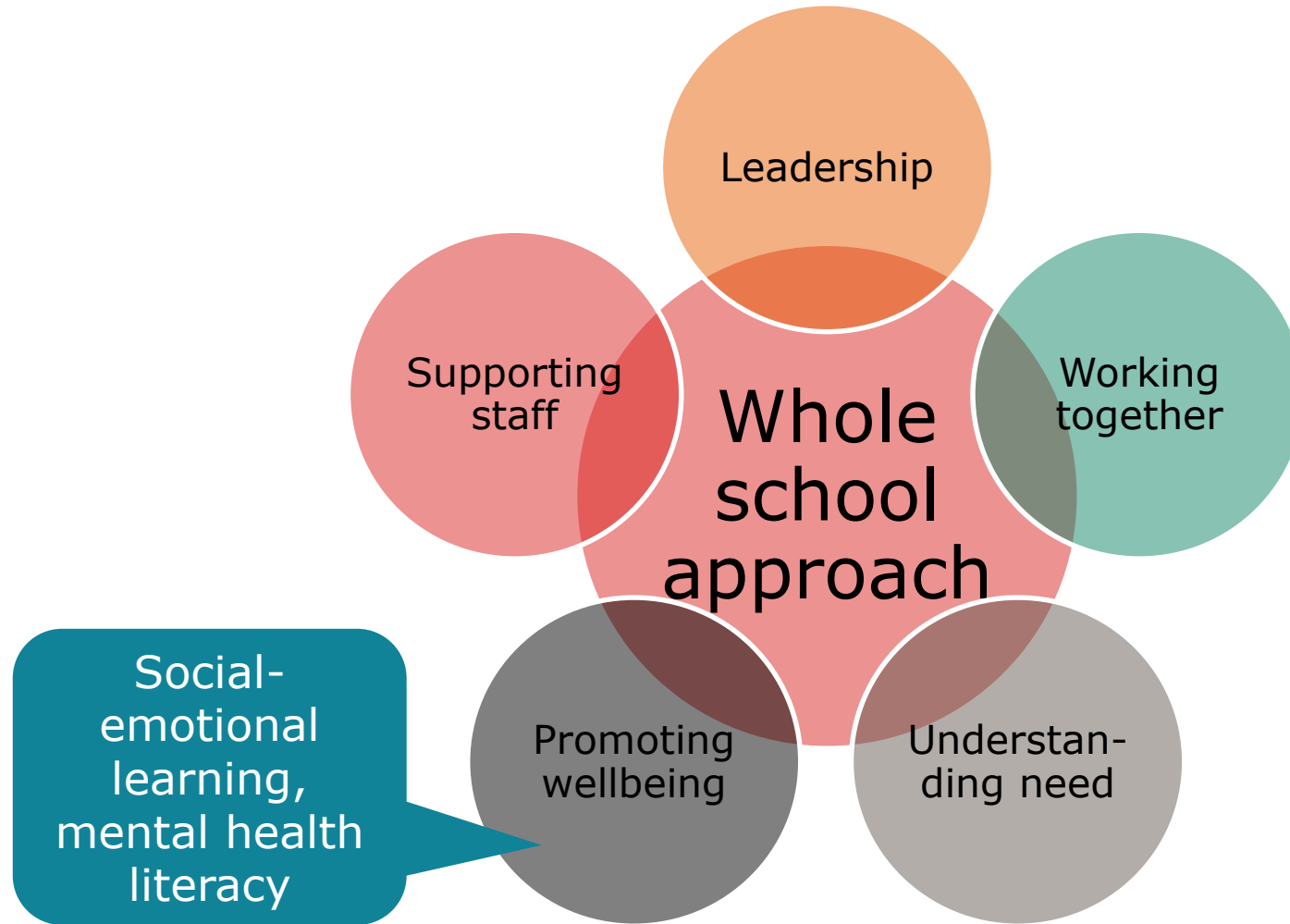
5 steps to creating a mentally healthy school



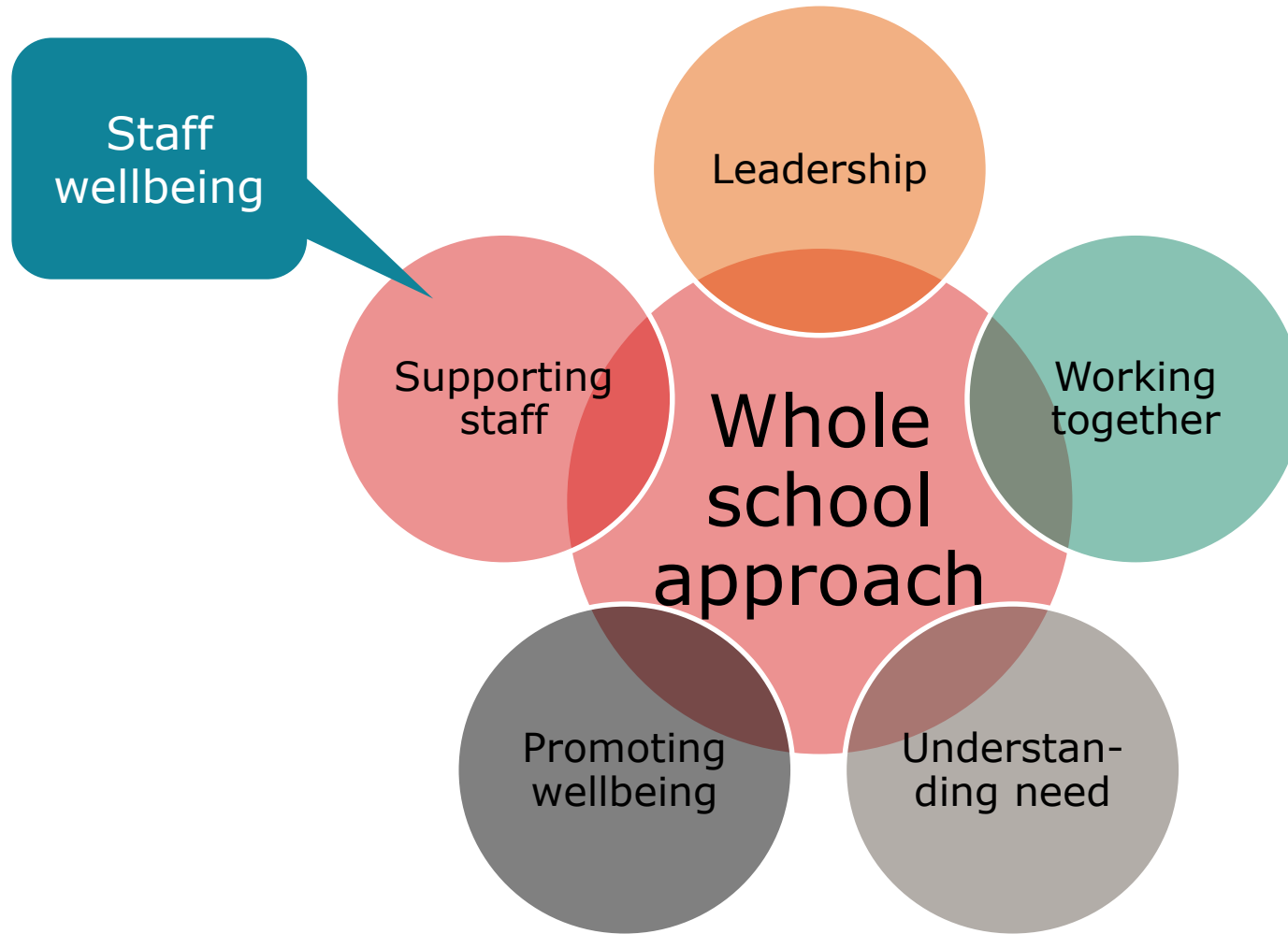
5 steps to creating a mentally healthy school



5 steps to creating a mentally healthy school



5 steps to creating a mentally healthy school



Key messages and implications

1. Mental health problems more common across the lifespan than previously thought
2. Mental health problems in children are significant and carry implications for later life
3. Risk and cumulative risk are important considerations
4. Universal programmes can provide a broad base for mental health support but work best in school environments that are already supportive of mental health and wellbeing





Thank you!

Any questions?

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/>

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