

Baroness Sheila Hollins

Speaking to Young People at Flame 2

I am a member of a Commission in Rome, which advises Pope Francis on how to keep children and young people safe

- Pope Francis is an amazing person, a very good teacher who understands people and the real challenges we face in our lives.
- The reason he asked me to advise him is because I am a psychiatrist who has worked with victim survivors of abuse. I talk about mental health in the House of Lords.

I want to talk with you about mental health because

- You are amazing young people and I want you to make the most of your lives and to make wise choices.
- Many of you will have mental health problems or know someone who has, perhaps a friend or family member. Mental illness is very common in young people. Sometimes it's connected to another illness you have and sometimes to something traumatic that happened to you.
- First let's think about what can make you ill and what can keep you well, and then importantly what you can do about it
- There are 2 words which might help you to remember 5 risky things, and 5 things you can do every day to keep well

So what can hurt our minds? 5 things that spell ABUSE

- Addiction- food, alcohol, drugs, sex, porn, Internet, smartphone
- Bored- why? You have the whole of your life ahead of you!
- Used- bullied, abused, powerless. But **it's not your fault.**
- Solo- alone, rejected, grieving
- Excluded- on the outside of the group, different in some way, no one like you
- **Avoid ABUSE** - if you notice a friend who is self harming, for example, don't judge them, don't ignore them, reach out to them.

So what can we do to look after ourselves?

- Give something -time, prayer, something you made
- Receive-be loved, love yourself-then love others. It's hard love someone else unless you learn to be loved yourself.
- Active-swim, run, dance - cannot be depressed when you are on the move
- Create- learn something new every day, make something - art, music. Enjoy God's creation. A teenage mum said to me that her baby daughter gave her life meaning.
- Engage-with life and with people in the real world. You can't hug a computer! But we all need a hug every day.
- **Do GRACE everyday** -
- Let me tell you about my sons experience at scout camp when he was a young teenager (he has a learning disability but the same could have been true if he had a mental illness, was grieving, had another disability such as cerebral palsy or autism, or perhaps lacked self confidence because he was fat). The scout leader thought his membership of a group would slow them

down-but the boys saw his enjoyment as worth more than winning the camp competitions. They won something more important- they won a friend for life.

If we do get unwell - where can we seek help?

- Talk to someone- this is the most important thing to do. Ring ChildLine if you can't decide who to talk to.
- Mindfulness is all the rage and it works. It's based on a long tradition of Christian meditation and prayer
- Professional help is available and your GP or the school or college counsellor are the best people to approach.
- ChildLine is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. www.childline.org.uk
- Young Minds - committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. www.youngminds.org.uk
- Time To Change is an anti-stigma campaign run by the leading mental health charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness. www.time-to-change.org.uk
- Young Carers - we reach out to young carers from all communities through out national and local programmes. www.youngcarer.com
- Young Carers - this site aims to bring together young carers from across the UK in an online space which is safe, fun and supportive. <https://babble.carers.org>

What would I like you take away from these thoughts today?:

- Avoid Abuse - help others
- Live in Grace
- Be the grace filled face of Jesus
- And remember-big hugs all round