R2I
SEMH Domain toolkit

What's Inside

SEMH Theory and definition
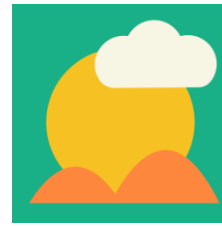
SEMH Universal Provision

Assessment Tools
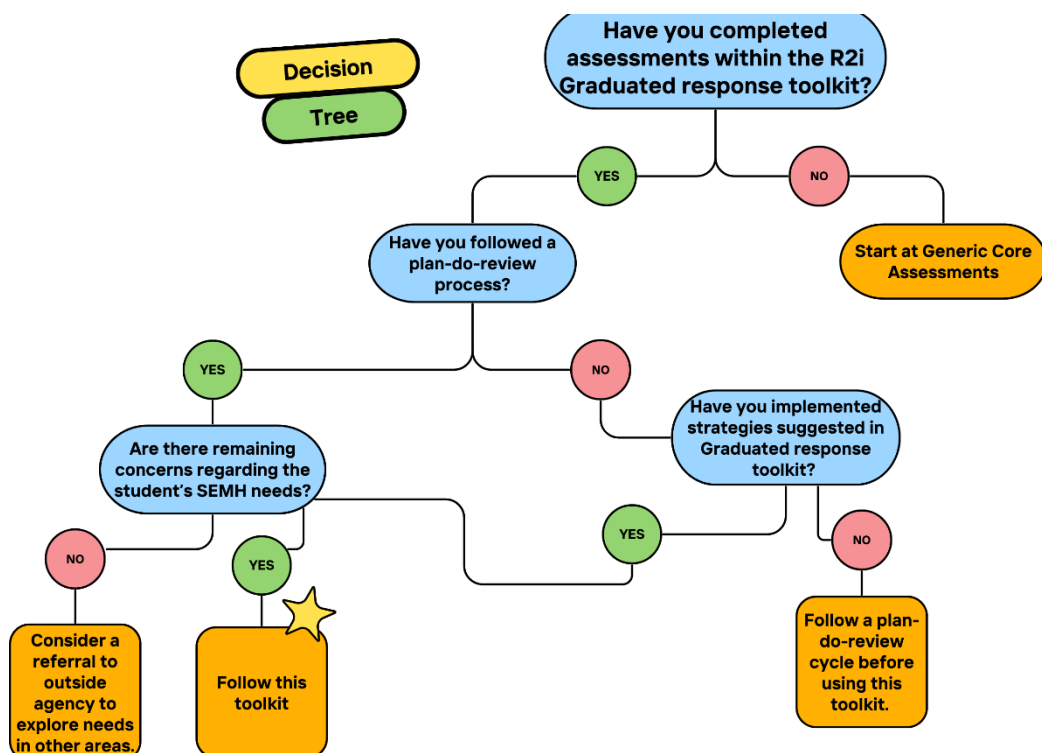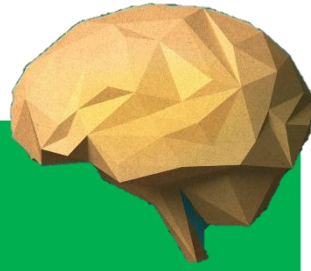
Intervention

Signposting

Purpose of Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to further support your exploration of identified SEMH needs and match this effectively to intervention. This toolkit follows plan-do-review cycles using the R2i Graduated Response assessments and suggested strategies. The decision tree below will support your assessment of whether this toolkit is suitable for use at this time.

Decision Tree

Have you completed assessments within the R2i Graduated response toolkit?

YES

NO → Start at Generic Core Assessments

Have you followed a plan-do-review process?

YES

NO

Are there remaining concerns regarding the student's SEMH needs?

Have you implemented strategies suggested in Graduated response toolkit?

YES

NO → Follow a plan-do-review cycle before using this toolkit.

NO → Consider a referral to outside agency to explore needs in other areas.

YES → Follow this toolkit

SEMH Theory

	Function	Teen Development
Prefrontal Cortex	Responsible for decision-making, impulse control, planning, and reasoning.	Still maturing during adolescence, leading to riskier behaviour and less foresight.
Limbic System	Processes emotions and rewards.	Develops earlier which can lead to heightened emotional responses and sensation-seeking behaviour.
Synaptic Pruning	Elimination of unused neural connections to increase brain efficiency	"Use it or lose it" principle—skills and habits practiced during adolescence are reinforced.
Myelination	Insulation of neural pathways with myelin to speed up communication.	Improves cognitive processing and coordination over time

Key elements of Teen Development

Can think deeper and more abstractly

More risk taking and less impulse contol

Moral reasoning develops

Cognitive Development

Exploration of identity

More self conscious

Hormone changes flutuating emotions

Emotional Development

Seeking autonomy

Relationships become deeper

Peers become central

Social Development
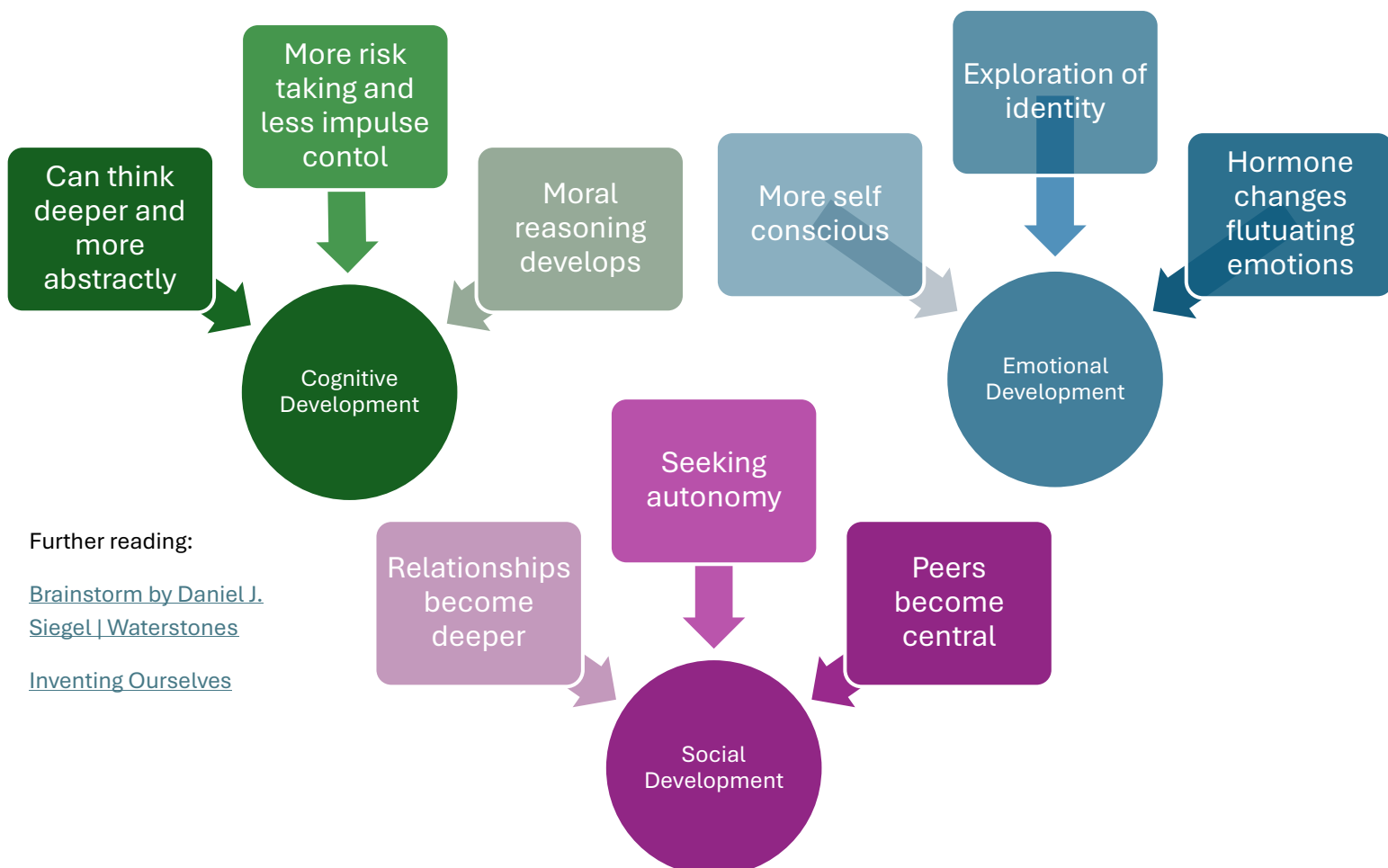
Further reading:

Brainstorm by Daniel J. Siegel | Waterstones

Inventing Ourselves

SEMH Research

DfE: Identifying and supporting children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs: a rapid evidence review.

Research report September 2025

Identification Tools

- Structured observations help identify needs and monitor progress.

- Teacher nomination is useful but less accurate than structured tools.

- Questionnaires like the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) are effective for screening ADHD and mental health.

Assessment Strategies

- Use multiple informants (parents, teachers, pupils) for a holistic view.

- Interpret screening tools cautiously; avoid using them for diagnosis.

- Focus on identifying areas of need that impact academic performance.

Support Approaches

- Whole-school strategies like token economies and check-in/check-out systems are effective with strong leadership.

- Classroom strategies include targeted praise, rewards, choice in instruction, and hands-on activities.

- A positive school climate fosters inclusion and engagement.

SEMH Definition

The difficulty in providing an absolute definition of SEMH needs is reflective of the diverse range of issues relating to presentation, assessment and prevention.

With consideration of existing research we have devised the following as a way of conceptualising SEMH needs for the purposes of this toolkit:

Social	**Social development** refers to how well you interact with others and form meaningful relationships.
	Communication Skills: Being able to express yourself clearly and listen to others.
	Friendships: Building and maintaining positive relationships with peers.
	Teamwork: Working well with others in group settings.
	Conflict Resolution: Handling disagreements in a healthy and constructive way.
Emotional	**Emotional development** is about understanding and managing your feelings.
	Self-Awareness: Recognising your own emotions and how they affect your behaviour.
	Self-Regulation: Being able to control your emotions and reactions, especially in stressful situations.
	Empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
	Coping Skills: Finding healthy ways to deal with stress, sadness, or anger
Mental Health	**Wellbeing** involves your overall psychological well-being
	Cognitive Functioning: How well you think, learn, and remember.
	Resilience: Your ability to bounce back from setbacks and challenges.

SEMH Universal Provision

Eight principles to promoting a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing audit (DfE Promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. A whole school or college approach, Sept 2021). Online audit nationalwsa.com

1. Leadership and Management

2. Curriculum and Teaching to Promote Resilience

3. Student Voice

4. School Staff

5. Parents and Carers

6. Recognising Mental Health Needs

7. Ethos and environment

8. Targeted Support

Social Development

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- **Student Assessment**
    - Student Questionnaire

      Social%20Health%20assessment_pupil%20

    - Sort Card Alternative
        - Support with analysing the data

      Social Development Card Sort 1.pdf

    - Scenario Assessment
        - Support with analysing the data

      Social%20Health%20assessment_comic%2(

- **School Staff Assessment**
    - Short Questionnaire

      Social Health assessment staff.docx

- **Home Assessment**
    - Questionnaire covering all areas of SEMH

      Family Views Questionnaire.docx

Intervention / Strategies

Universal:

- Restorative Conversations
- Comic Strip conversations
- Circle time
- Co-operative Learning
- Peer mentoring

SEMH Domain.pdf

Targeted:

- TalkAbout Social Communication intervention [The Talkabout resources - TASS](#)
- FRIENDS resilience programme [Friends Resilience](#)

Emotional Development

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	Self-Regulation: Being able to control your emotions and reactions, especially in stressful situations.
	Empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of others.
	Coping Skills: Finding healthy ways to deal with stress, sadness, or anger

- **Student Assessment**
  - Card sort activity
- **Staff Assessment**
  - Functional Behavioural Analysis
- **Home Assessment**
  - Questionnaire covering all areas of SEMH

Emotional Development Student

Secondary%20ABC%20Analysis-%20extend

Family Views Questionnaire.docx

Intervention:

Universal:

- Emotion coaching
- Key adult check-in
- Relationship approaches

EC 4 Steps Summary.pdf

SEMH Domain - Emotional Developme

Targeted:

- SEAL resources SEAL+intro+booklet_Redacted.pdf
- CBT-based interventions:
  - Think Good, Feel Good Think Good - Feel Good : A Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Workbook for Children and Young People
  - Homunculi [(PDF) The Homunculi: a flexible CBT approach to social and emotional wellbeing in children and adolescents on the autism spectrum](PDF The Homunculi)
  - Feelings Detectives [Introduction to Feelings Detectives — Feelings Casefiles](Introduction to Feelings Detectives)
- ELSA educational-psychology-service-brochure.pdf

Mental Health

Mental Health	**Mental health and wellbeing** involves your overall psychological well-being
	Cognitive Functioning: How well you think, learn, and remember.
	Resilience: Your ability to bounce back from setbacks and challenges.

- Student Assessment:
    - Anna Freud Resilience Survey Student Resilience Survey
- Home Assessment/ Consultation.
    - Risk and Protective Factors

Appendix V - Cumulative risk factor   R2i%20Parent_Family %20Assessment.docx   Scaling.docx

Intervention

- Universal
    - Senior Mental Health Leads (see MHST)
    - Trauma informed training (Can be provided by EPS and MHST)
    - Mentally Healthy Schools Anna Freud Toolkit for schools and colleges : Mentally Healthy Schools
    - Supervision for staff educational-psychology-service-brochure.pdf
- Peer Support Programme Peer Support Programmes for Mental Wellbeing in Schools & Colleges | Anna Freud
- Targeted: MHST (see signposting)

SEMH Domain Summary Action Plan

Child/Young Person's Name:		School:	
Age:		Staff Name(s):	
Class:		Role(s):	

Universal Provision
What have you implemented for universal provision for SEMH needs?

SEMH Focus and Assessments undertaken	Summary of Analysis *Eg Strengths Needs Hypothesis?*	Actions/strategies/quick wins	Date to Action	Date to Review	Rate Effectiveness *0=no impact 5=full impact*	Comments on Progress *Has the concern lessened/resolved/ongoing? What are our next steps? Why do we think this progress has or has not been made?*

Signposting

Social	Healthy Relationships	Act On It Now ;Relationships | Health for Teens
	CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation & How to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC
	Online Safety	Keeping children safe online | NSPCC
Emotional	Educational Psychology Service	educational-psychology-service-brochure.pdf
	Free Resources	https://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/emotional-well-being-pack-for-ages-13-18/ Emotion Exploration Worksheets for Teens | Therapist Aid
	Reading list	Books on wellbeing for teens | BookTrust
Mental health	NottAlone Website	Mental Health Support | NottAlone - Supporting Your Child
	Mental Health Support Team	
	Mental Health services	nottingham-city-mental-health-services.pdf
	Student focused apps	Home page - Mindamigo; The Mix