

Levelness

A metaphor for child mental health



The story you're telling:

Just as the levelness of a table is what makes it functional, the mental health of children is what enables them to function well in all areas of life.



Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:

Children Can't Have Mental Health;
Determinism; Fatalism; Mental
Illness Is Uncontrolled Emotions;
Mental Illness Is "Chemicals" or
"Genetics"



Concepts and ideas included in this frame element:

- **A child's mental health can be likened to a table that is either level or wobbly:** Helps to structure understanding that children do, in fact, have mental states.
- **A table needs to be level to perform its main function – supporting things:** Good mental health is about functioning, and it supports other domains of development.
- **If a table is wobbly, it's less able to support its load:** Points to the ways poor mental health disrupts learning and development in other domains.
- **If the floor is sloped or slanted, that affects the levelness of the table:** Communicates the role of the environment and the influence of multiple factors.
- **Tables don't level themselves, but could need anything from a sugar packet to a team of specialists:** Establishes the need for intervention, and range of interventions.