

healthyliving



HeadsUpScotland
National Project for Children and Young People's Mental Health

The voice of children and young people Discussion paper



Foreword

HeadsUpScotland is for all children and young people in Scotland. Consequently, we need to find a way to begin to discuss with children and young people what growing up, being educated and living in Scotland is like for them in terms of their mental health. Only those who are recipients of the services that we provide can say what it is like to experience receiving that service, no matter how good the providers may think it is.

Increasingly acceptance of the principle of children and young people's involvement is being turned into practice through a variety of participation activities across a range of organisations. HeadsUpScotland wants to support that process as far as possible and to turn our commitment into practice. We want to use the various ways that children and young people are presently engaged in making their views known and so we will work closely with a whole range of agencies who already have established systems for involving children and young people. Children and young people have views on what would support their mental health and we want to hear what they are. In addition, we'll be encouraging those agencies and organisations who work with vulnerable and mentally ill children and young people to think about how they ensure that the views of those children and young people are taken into account.

This document makes suggestions for the way forward for the statutory and voluntary sectors. It outlines what HeadsUpScotland, ably supported by Children In Scotland, Penumbra and Barnardo's will be doing to ensure that children and young people's views on their mental health needs are part of the planning and development processes.

This is no small task and we embark on this work with enthusiasm and anticipation - and some trepidation. Good luck to all those who will begin to turn this into reality!

Anne Clarke
4th October 2005

We would welcome comments on this discussion paper, which should be sent to:

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1. Context of discussion paper

In the autumn of 2002 the Scottish Executive commissioned a needs assessment of the mental health of Scotland's children and young people. The resulting Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) Report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health¹ was published in 2003.

As part of the SNAP process it was agreed that there should be consultations with children and young people from a range of backgrounds and in various settings, including schools, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health projects, youth groups etc. In addition to this a consultation event was held in Dundee in September 2002 which brought together a broad range of children and young people.

Feedback from this process indicated the very high importance that children and young people placed on being consulted. Successful engagement with children and young people, it was stated, demands that they are heard and feel understood.

As a result of these consultations, the views of children and young people helped shape the final SNAP Report and a separate report² on the consultations was published. One of the key recommendations of the SNAP report focussed on the importance of children and young people's participation in issues that affect their mental health and well-being.

The momentum of children and young people's involvement continued with a further conference in Edinburgh in 2003 called HEYU. 100 children and young people from across Scotland took part in the conference. Following this event and later that month, around 20 of the participants played an active part in an adult event in Dunblane, which considered the SNAP Report.

A number of these children and young people have continued to be involved in the Scottish Development Centre's (SDC) Young People's Research Project, The Penumbra Aberdeen Young People's Voice and Forum for Action on Self-Harm (FASH). The positive involvement of children and young people in these processes has highlighted the value of involvement in issues which affect mental health and well-being. It has also raised specific issues concerning good practice governing the participation of children and young people in the issues and services that impact upon their mental health and well-being.

1. "Needs Assessment Report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Final Report - May 2003" Public Health Institute of Scotland www.phis.org.uk

2. "Needs Assessment Report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Consulting children, young people and parents - May 2003" Public Health Institute of Scotland www.phis.org.uk

1.1 HeadsUpScotland

The National Project for Children and Young People's Mental Health (HeadsUp Scotland) was established by the Scottish Executive in April 2004 to contribute to the range of activity already underway in Scotland to improve the mental health and well-being of children and young people. The Project's key aim is to support the SNAP report implementation process. Its main activities are to:

- Ensure involvement of children, young people, parents and carers.
- Develop and deliver guidance to support local work to improve the mental health of children and young people.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships to improve the infrastructure for children and young people's mental health.
- Develop and improve the capacity of the workforce to support more appropriate interventions.

Participation should be thought of as the underpinning factor for all of HeadsUpScotland's activities. Involving children and young people relates to all of the main activities of the project. Guidance to support local work will need to be influenced by children and young people if it is to be effective. Work to improve the infrastructure for children and young people's mental health must involve them as key partners. Children and young people also have a key role to play in ensuring that interventions to improve mental health and well-being are appropriate.

The director of HeadsUpScotland asked Children in Scotland to lead a short-life working group to take forward work on involving children and young people. The group, which included representatives from statutory and voluntary sectors organisations working with children and young people, produced this discussion paper on the work required to ensure the meaningful involvement of children and young people in services that impact on their mental health and well-being. A partnership between Barnardos, Children in Scotland and Penumbra has been formed to lead on taking forward the actions in this discussion paper.

2. Mental health and well-being

"Mental health is the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity".

International Workshop on Mental Health Promotion 1997

Whilst the SNAP report acknowledges that there is no single accepted definition for mental health, it adopts the above definition to emphasise that mental health is both personal and social.

The mental health and well-being continuum ranges from promotion in schools, health services and community settings, through activities related to the prevention of mental health problems to the care of those children and young people experiencing mental health problems.

The National Programme to Promote Mental Health and Well-Being recognises that promoting mental health and well-being, and preventing and reducing mental health problems among children and young people requires action at home, in schools, colleges, universities, local neighbourhoods and other settings.

Children and young people should be involved in all of these areas.

Promoting mental health and well-being is the responsibility of everyone who works with children and young people. With this in mind, HeadsUpScotland will work with a wide range of agencies across the voluntary and statutory sectors to ensure the involvement of children and young people in all the areas above.

3. Our vision

HeadsUpScotland aims to promote emotional well-being in children and young people by ensuring that they:

- Are able to express their views freely in matters that affect them regardless of age, ethnic origin, race, religion, gender, social class, disability or sexuality.
- Have their views heard and taken into account by decision makers.
- Have access to information about their rights and how to ensure these are put into place.
- Have access to support, advice and advocacy services to ensure that their views are listened to and acted upon.
- Are provided with opportunities to express their views about their individual experience of using services and to participate in decision-making about their own treatment/care.
- Are provided with opportunities to participate in the planning and design of services that impact upon their mental health and well-being.
- Have a choice in how they participate including the right not to.
- Have their participation valued through regular feedback, access to accredited programmes and forms of payment for their time.

4. Defining participation

Participation refers to the range of opportunities for children and young people to express their views and opinions and to be involved in decision-making. There is no one way of involving service users and methods must be tailored to the needs and priorities of different groups and individuals. Participation involves children, young people and adults working together to find solutions and initiate change. The ongoing process by which this happens is often as important as the end results for service users involved in participation activities.

Since the UK ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991, increasing attention has been paid to the issue of participation, what it means and how it should be addressed.

Article 12 of the UNCRC states

"Parties shall assure to the child, who is capable of forming his or her own views, the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child".

When children and young people are asked what they think participation means they say things like 'taking part', 'being involved', 'learning new things', 'feeling valued', 'being listened to' and 'working together'.

4.1 Participation: contributing to good health

The right to participation is underpinned by a range of policy and legislation including:

- Children (Scotland) Act (1995).
- Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act (2000).
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- Protecting Children and Young People: The Charter.

In addition, participation has benefits for everyone involved in the process:

a) The benefits of participation to children and young people;

- Through the SNAP report, children and young people have identified being listened to as something that improves their sense of well-being.
- It creates opportunities for personal development, particularly among those who are often excluded.
- It helps to promote emotional well-being through the development of social networks and life choices.
- It can help children and young people challenge negative images and stereotype of mental health issues.
- It empowers them to be creators of services not just consumers of them.
- It enables them to share their experiences and learn from each other.
- Children and young people are given an opportunity to be part of a process of positive change.

b) The benefits of participation to local, regional and national services promoting emotional well-being in children and young people;

- Services can respond to the needs of children and young people from a more informed position.
- Involvement of children and young people helps to ensure that resources are used more effectively.
- Children and young people introduce new and innovative ideas.
- Services are more accountable.

c) The benefits to staff through personal development;

- Staff gain a greater understanding of the effects of mental health issues on the lives of children and young people and the impact these can have on emotional well-being.
- Staff develop effective communication skills for working with children and young people that will promote positive working relationships.
- Staff learn about 'what helps/works' directly from children and young people.
- Staff learn new, creative and effective ways of working with children and young people.
- Staff can advocate more effectively on behalf of children and young people.

4.2 Participation principles

It is important that everyone has a clear and shared understanding of what is meant by participation and of what makes participation work in every day activities with children and young people. The following participation principles have been developed in order to provide some clarity and shared ethos around these issues.

All participative practice should be based upon the over-arching principle that the key beneficiaries of participation must be children and young people.

Participation principles;

- Children and young people are valued and their views respected.
- Participation should be seen as an ongoing process rather than a series of individual events or activities.
- Children and young people choose whether to participate and choose how to participate from a range of options.
- Everyone is honest and open about the process, boundaries and limitations.
- Methods used must be on children and young people's terms.
- Children and young people have a clear idea of why they are participating and receive feedback on the process of what has happened to their views and ideas.
- An element of positive risk is encouraged when supporting children and young people to participate fully and creatively.
- Children and young people must be fully aware of what will be expected of them and what they can expect in return before any work is undertaken.
- To ensure that children and young people are able to participate sufficient time and resources must be allocated.
- Adults involved in supporting participation incorporate personal reflective practice into the process.
- Professionals committed to participation have a responsibility to examine their own practice and the structures within which they work in order to make opportunities for participation accessible, enjoyable, supportive and genuine.

5. Making it happen

To develop an effective and inclusive plan for promoting the participation of children and young people HeadsUp Scotland will take account of the different levels of participation and how best the views of children and young people can be sought at each level. HeadsUp Scotland will focus on promoting the participation of children and young people at;

- 1) **Service level - key services in their lives**
- 2) **Local community/regional level**
- 3) **National Level to influence policy (including HeadsUp Scotland)**

It must be remembered that the promotion of participation at a national level is unlikely to be successful if there is no participation at service level. Examples of participative practice at each level can be viewed in appendix 1.

A partnership between Barnardos, Children in Scotland and Penumbra has been set up to take forward the participation vision outlined in this document. The four main activities of the partnership will be to;

- 1) **Recruit and support a national development worker who will promote and support this participation agenda in Scotland.**
- 2) **Carry out a mapping exercise and research project to look at the current level of children and young people's involvement.**
- 3) **Develop and deliver a training programme on participation for children and young people and staff working with them.**
- 4) **Set up a Reference Group of national stakeholders who will meet on a four monthly basis to assist in developing a strategic and co-ordinated approach to children and young people's participation.**

However, all of this work should be underpinned by a strong partnership not only between the partnership and members of the reference group but also with other agencies working with children and young people's mental health and well-being at a local and national level.

Effective joint working will include;

- **Working with key partners to promote the adoption (by agencies) of the principles of participation and involvement to ensure a consistent standard across all services.**
- **Promoting a learning and sharing culture - learning from the experiences of others and sharing information via a range of mediums such as existing networks, web based resources and seminars.**
- **Promoting and facilitating joint participation approaches between lead agencies and children and young people.**
- **Ensuring cost effective participation by supporting and encouraging joint working and joint initiatives thus avoiding duplication or participation fatigue.**
- **The inclusion of the views of children and young people in the development of health and other services that impact upon children and young people's mental health and well-being (including HeadsUpScotland).**

5.1 Research

The working group acknowledged that a great deal of good work was taking place across Scotland to involve children and young people in services and, to a more limited extent, in the planning of services. To support the work of the National Development Worker the group identified that research should form a key part of the partnership programme.

The proposed study will have two phases. Phase one will focus on mapping participation in Scotland. This mapping study will inform phase two that will aim to establish staff training needs.

Phase one of the research

Aim

To map the extent and nature of children and young people's participation in mental health services and in services affecting children and young people's mental health (Action 5.3 in the HeadsUp Participation Plan).

Objectives

- a) To review relevant literature in order to provide a policy and research context for the mapping exercise.
- b) To engage with health boards, local authorities and voluntary organisations in Scotland to establish;
 - The extent and nature of children and young people's participation in mental health services and in services impacting on children and young people's mental health.
 - What organisational policies are in place, if any, on participation.
 - How prepared the organisations are to engage with the participation agenda.
- c) To collate this information in a database.
- d) To analyse the data.
- e) To produce a report setting out the literature review, findings and recommendations.

Phase two of the research

Aim

To identify the training needs of practitioners working in mental health services and services impacting on children and young people's mental health in Scotland, in relation to;

- Children and young people's mental health.
- Children and young people's participation in decision-making.

Objectives

- a) To analyse key national policy and guidance documents, and existing good practice standards, on;
 - The roles and responsibilities of practitioners working in mental health services and services impacting on children and young people's mental health, in relation to mental health promotion, prevention and treatment.
 - The roles and responsibilities of these practitioners regarding children and young people's participation in decision-making.

b) To engage with practitioners working in mental health services and services impacting on children and young people's mental health in Scotland, in order to establish;

- **Whether support and training on mental health issues and/or on participation is required.**
- **The most appropriate form for such training and support to take.**

c) To analyse the data.

d) To produce a report setting out the analysis of national policy and guidance documents, the findings from the research and recommendations based on the findings.

5.2 Training

Staff

Staff play a key role in ensuring that the views of children and young people are sought and acted upon in any organisation whether at a local or national level. Staff at all levels (including management) must have a real understanding of participation and the benefits that it can bring them, their organisation and the children and young people they have contact with.

Staff training should include;

- **Participation and children's rights (including what participation means to children and young people).**
- **Creative, innovative and effective methods, tools and processes for involving children and young people.**
- **Awareness of the issues affecting children and young people's emotional well-being and how these can be challenged and overcome and how positive mental health and well-being can be promoted.**
- **The impact that issues affecting children and young people's emotional well-being can have on their ability to participate and ways to ensure that participation practice is inclusive.**

This training should be offered on two levels;

- **Current staff including volunteers.**
- **Students on relevant courses.**

Involving children and young people in the training of staff can be challenging for many, but experience has proved that it can be powerful, thought-provoking and most importantly a great way to learn for professionals, agencies, children and young people. However, care must be taken to ensure that children and young people receive the support training and expenses (or preferably payment) that they need in order to take part in this process.

Children and young people

Children and young people should have access to training and support to enable them to;

- Feel confident about having their say.
- Understand issues concerning emotional well-being.
- Gain personal development skills which can have a positive impact on their lives.
- Facilitate training to staff on the key issues in their lives including what participation means to them.
- Help other young people through peer education methods in schools etc.

The HeadsUpScotland partnership will investigate current training programmes for children and young people and promote these within local and national services working to promote emotional well-being, and also those working to care for children and young people who have identified issues affecting their mental health.

5.3 Monitoring and evaluation

In order to ensure effective participation of children and young people HeadsUpScotland and key partners will promote two areas of monitoring and evaluation: evaluation and monitoring of involvement in the running and activities of HeadsUpScotland; and monitoring the extent to which children and young people participate in local level mental health promotion, prevention and treatment across Scotland. This will be done through a number of key activities;

- Evaluating and monitoring children and young people's involvement in the running and activities of HeadsUpScotland.
- As part of HeadsUpScotland reporting to the Scottish Executive the project will report on the ways in which it has involved children and young people in its work, including the evaluation of participation work in an external evaluation of HeadsUpScotland.
- Organising a national event for children and young people to report back on progress and contribute to ongoing future developments.
- Monitoring the extent to which children and young people participate in local level mental health promotion, prevention and care across Scotland.
- Producing a baseline study of existing participation led by Children in Scotland.
- Collating and sharing examples of good participation practice in the fields of mental health and well-being.
- Encouraging local and regional agencies to complete their own evaluation of the level and effectiveness of children and young people's participation in their services and promoting resources that can aid this process.
- Supporting the inclusion of reporting of action on participation in Children's Services Plans, Joint Inspectorate, Charter Mark Scheme, National Standards for Community Engagement etc.

5.4 Action plan

ACTION	KEY PARTNERS
Promote the benefits of participation and the participation principles to all agencies working with children and young people's mental health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation partnership (Barnardos, Children in Scotland, Penumbra) ● Children and young people ● HeadsUp Scotland ● Participaion Reference Group ● Local and national agencies working with children and young people around mental health and well-being issues
Support children and young people's involvement in the work of the National Programme.	
Promote and develop sustainable participation models (including structures, commitment and ethos) at service level, local level and national level.	
Link into existing participation networks and national developments in children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, in order to share and disseminate good practice.	
Explore mechanisms for children and young people to be involved in Community Planning and Children's Services Plans including identifying individuals in local areas with responsibility for this in their remit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation partnership ● Community Planning Partnerships ● Children and young people
Establish a national reference group of children and young people to advise on the work and direction of HeadsUp Scotland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation partnership ● Children and young people
Establish a national reference group of workers working in the areas of participation and/or children and young people's mental well-being in order to share practice and identify gaps.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Penumbra
Complete baseline research looking nationally at the current extent of participation work in children and young people's mental health and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children in Scotland
Work with a group of children and young people to develop a web-based resource for children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children and young people ● Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health ● Penumbra
Hold an annual event for children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The participation partnership ● Children and young people
Establish, test and promote guidelines for consulting with identified harder to reach groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The participation partnership ● Children and young people ● Agencies working with identified groups of Children and young people
Promote and support the involvement of children and young people in staff recruitment and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The participation partnership ● Children and young people
Explore and action options for ongoing accountability and monitoring of levels of participation in children and young people's mental health and well-being (e.g. Joint Inspectorate, 'Charter Mark' Scheme etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Development Worker; Young People's Participation ● Children and young people ● HeadsUp Scotland
Explore and action options for ongoing accountability and monitoring of levels of participation in children and young people's mental health and well-being (e.g. Joint Inspectorate, 'Charter Mark' Scheme etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The participation partnership ● Children and young people ● HeadsUp Scotland

Timescales for these actions will be agreed between the Participation Partnership, HeadsUp Scotland and the Participation Reference Group following consultations with children and young people and feedback from this discussion paper.

Appendix 1: Examples of good practice

Example 1: SNAP report

Project description:

Young people's consultation as part of the Scottish Needs Assessment Programme report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Scotland.

Project setting:

Young people in a range of settings:

Mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools (including Royal Blind School)

Looked After Children

People with experience of mental health problems in hospital and in the community

Young people from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups

Target group:

Cross section of young people

Young People's involvement:

Young people were consulted in their own local areas and were asked to comment on their experiences and what was being proposed by the SNAP Group. A day conference was also held in Dundee where young people who had been consulted came together along with other local groups of young people from Dundee. The consultations not only influenced the final thinking and recommendations of the final report but also led to the publication of a separate report on young people's views.

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Example 2: HEYU Conference

Project description:

Scottish Young People's Conference on issues affecting young people's mental health and well-being.

Project setting:

Edinburgh Hotel

Target group:

Scottish Young People 12+

Young People's involvement:

100 young people from all over Scotland took part in a day conference to hear how issues around young people's involvement had progressed since the publication of the SNAP Report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

They continued to support the idea of the ongoing involvement of young people in this issue and several of the young people contributed to an adult conference which considered the SNAP Report a few weeks later. Many have continued to be involved in young people's participation projects on an ongoing basis. A report of the event is available.

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Example 3: Health warriors

Project description:

Health Warriors are young people working with services to improve the health and wellbeing of young people (12-25) in Aberdeen. Health Warriors offer information, education, advocacy, peer support and opportunities to influence policy and change

Project setting:

In 2003 an investigative study was commissioned by Aberdeen LHCCs (now Aberdeen City Collective), "What we need is help wi' life basically". One of the study's findings was that young people in the area wanted to become involved in the planning and monitoring of their services. As result a young people's health group was set up by the Public Health Co-ordinator for Aberdeen and North LHCC, funded by the Aberdeen LHCCs' Health Improvement Fund.

Health Warriors which comprises young people from a variety of backgrounds, many users of health services, meets monthly in Aberdeen. The group includes members of Aberdeen Youth Action Committee and the Scottish Youth Parliament

Target group:

12 to 25 years of age

Young People's involvement:

Young people run and manage the group. All the office bearers in the group are young people. An adult representative from the health board attends the meetings and works closely with the group acting as their link with statutory bodies. The group usually meets once a month on a formal basis where minutes are taken and actions sanctioned.

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Example 4: Penumbra

Project description:

Penumbra Community Mental Health Projects

Penumbra is a leading voluntary organisation working in the field of mental health across Scotland. It has developed a range of user-led services and programmes in different areas of promotion, prevention and support.

These include Drop-Ins, 1:1 Counselling, Groupwork, Peer Education, Training and Consultancy, Self-Harm information and support. Penumbra has championed the involvement of young people in all areas which affect their mental health and well-being.

Project setting:

Community based settings including schools and youth groups.

Target group:

Primarily 16-25 but some project work goes from 12+

Young People's involvement:

Penumbra has developed "Young People are experts" as its core ethos. From the beginning young people have influenced all developments. Young people's involvement in an Action Research project on Self-Harm has subsequently informed the development of six dedicated self-harm projects which we run across Scotland and which continue to be user-led projects. Young people take part in the interviewing and selection of new staff, in training where many are employed as consultants and in media presentations about the Penumbra's work and mental health issues in general. It has developed a Peer Education Project on mental health in secondary schools where young volunteers identify the issues they feel most affect young people in their school and then go on to educate fellow pupils in interesting and innovative ways.

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Example 5: Talking2Ourselves

Project description:

A two year development project to support the participation of young people who are interested in issues of mental health well-being and want to carry out research. The project aims to generate ideas and materials on well-being and explore methods of communicating these in ways which are attractive and accessible to children and young people. The Young People's Research Group has been meeting since March 2004 to design and write material for a website Talking2Ourselves for young people in S2 and S3.

Project setting:

National. A range of groups across Scotland are involved, including school pupils and staff, and young people and staff from voluntary organisations, health services and local authorities. They are supported by a network of organisations, including the Scottish Development Centre and Penumbra.

Target group:

Young people aged from 13 upwards with an interest in research and web-site design.

Young People's involvement:

Young people have chosen to be part of this project because of their interest in information and research.

Young people in the Research Group have been involved from the start in making decisions about what it does. They made the initial decision to focus on designing a website. Members are increasingly running the group - chairing meetings, giving conference presentations. They plan to:

- market test the site
- promote the site within schools and community organisations
- update and edit the pages

The website will be launched in 2005.

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Example 6: Ardrossan youth centre

Project description:

Young people's project run for and by young people.

Range of services include:

- Drop-ins -average 40 young people
- Core Skills- literacy, numeracy, problem solving, communication
- Single sex work for both young men and women
- Journalist Group linking with Young Scot- consulting and reporting on issues affecting young people
- Healthy Eating

Project setting:

Youth Centre

Target group:

Young people 12-25 from three towns- Ardrossan, Saltcoates and Stevenson

Young People's involvement:

The young people raised the finances for the centre and now own and manage the centre themselves. Their management committee meets every Thursday night and make decisions, pay bills, discuss youth provision and discuss the general day to day running of the centre. They apply for ongoing grants and raise income by subletting the centre at various times.

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Example 7: Sorted not screwed up

Project description:

'Sorted Not Screwed Up' (SNSU): A mental health and well-being improvement initiative for young people (16-25 year olds) at Aberdeen Foyer (part of its Community Health Team). The service is fully integrated into the existing support provided by the organisation's housing and education and training workers. Assistance offered to young people including person-centred counselling, cognitive-behavioural therapy, health information resources, access to complementary therapies, promotion of arts/physical activity (fun!) and staff capacity building (e.g. training). We also aim to enhance service provision via linking up with external agencies and representing the needs of young people on strategic groups. A programme of training/consultancy has also been provided to youth workers out with Aberdeen Foyer via Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council's 'Choose Life' (suicide prevention) Local Action Plans.

Project setting:

Integrated into all Aberdeen Foyer accommodation and education sites in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The Marywell Centre near Aberdeen's city centre is the initiative's main HQ. Training and consultancy also takes place out with Aberdeen Foyer for youth workers supporting young people (Aberdeenshire and City).

Target group:

Young people 16-25 yr olds who are connected to Aberdeen Foyer in some way (e.g. tenant, participant on one of the education and training programmes, volunteer/work placement).

Young people's involvement:

Young people were involved in recruitment process of all SNSU and Community Health Team staff. They were largely involved in the needs assessment processes during SNSU's initial phase - during which they gave the initiative its name! Young people subsequently contributed considerably to the 3 year evaluation report on SNSU. Young people were involved in making a short DVD on some of SNSU music/mindfulness based activities. An Aberdeen Foyer 'Young People's Forum', comprising of elected young people, has been set-up to represent young people's views directly into the organisation, thus influencing best practice amongst the teams including the Community Health Team. Consultation of young people is naturally and formally integrated into SNSU's decisions around service provision and enhancement - they are the experts!

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Example 8: Walk tall and chill

Project description:

Orkney Walk Tall and Chill

Large young people's Open Space health consultation event. The aim of the event was to provide young people with an opportunity to voice their concerns about issues which affect them. There was also a wish that some young people would continue to influence the "involving young people's agenda" in the future.

Project setting:

Venue was the local night club in Kirkwall called Fusion

Target group:

All 300 S3 pupils from all over Orkney including the Outer Isles

Young People's involvement:

Young people were involved in planning the event and also helped facilitate groups on the day. The whole 2 day event proved to be extremely successful a multitude of issues were identified for future action with some changes already happening. It attracted a huge amount of media attention, which enhanced the publicity surrounding mental health and wellbeing, as well as issues affecting young people. Following the event a tremendous amount of young people were 'fired up' to take the issues forward.

The conference organiser asked the Young People's Planning Team how they would like to address the issues. The Young People's Planning Team decided that they would like to conduct interviews with the key people and write up the outcomes. They decided that the best way to feed back the findings would be to publish a magazine. The magazine was published and distributed throughout all schools in Orkney.

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