SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLES' MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY

1. Models for Young People's Mental Health

TYPES OF MODELS

UK POST (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology) research note summarises the types of service models being used to support young peoples' mental health. These models span approaches designed to appropriately intervene based on the severity of mental health conditions (Tiered model), approaches based within different settings (Schools-based, community-based models) or across organisations and settings (Whole-systems approach). Some examples are described (eg, community-based INTEGRATE model combining expertise of clinical and youth-work professionals with community workers to reach out to vulnerable young people).

Link to document:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/842176/sig_report.pdf

UNIVERSAL APPROACHES

A Public Health England led Special Interest Group in 2019 reviewed evidence for approaches to improve children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. They highlighted understanding of wider determinants affecting young people's mental wellbeing and whole-systems approaches, as well as recognising demographic and individual circumstances and including young people's views and use of asset-based approaches to build on young people's existing strengths, supportive relationships and environment.

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THRIVE

The THRIVE framework is a conceptual model for the development of children and young people mental health services. It is a person-centred and needs-based approach to support young people in increasing level of need: Thriving, Getting Advice and Signposting, Getting Help, Getting More Help, and Getting Risk Support. This framework includes consideration of socioenvironmental risk factors in prevention and promotion strategies, managing stressful life events, and designing services to meet different levels of support preferred or required by young people to meet psychological needs or risks.

Link to document:
https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/about-us/news/stories/accessible-summary-thrive-framework-now-available/

OTHER MODELS

- Model for Improving mental health for young people in care recognises holistic needs (eg. Relationships, hobbies, health) and importance of different settings: (eg. community, education, home)
  Link: https://www.scie.org.uk/children/care/mental-health/practice/model

2. Resources for community organisations

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE GUIDE

This comprehensive guide introduces mental health and wellbeing and provides evidence-based strategies, tools, and advice based on the GIRFEC framework and extensive consultations with stakeholders. The resources are aimed at improving organisations' capability in dealing with wellbeing concerns and support young people mental wellbeing and resilience.

Link to document: https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/24217/supporting-young-people-guide

INFORMATION AND ADVICE

These charities provide information about various mental health and wellbeing issues. Although mainly targeted at increasing awareness and self-care tips for young people, they also include advice for friends and family to support young people

- MIND: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/
- Children's society: https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/mental-health-advice-for-children-and-young-people/the-advice-resource-vault/advice-for-young-people-age-18-25
- HandsOn (Fife CAMHS): http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk
- Sleep Scotland: https://www.sleepscotland.org/education/information-and-strategies-for-good-sleep/

SIGNPOSTING

Ayemind (http://ayemind.com/resource-map/) provides a comprehensive list of websites and organisations that young people can seek additional support from. To list a few:

Digital tools for self-care

- My Journey App: originally developed by NHS Surrey and Borders for Early Intervention for Psychosis. Provides Mood monitoring, tips and advice https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health/early-intervention-psychosis-service/my-journey
- The Mix: emotional support through online group and one-to-one chat https://www.themix.org.uk
- Calmharm app for preventing self-harm: https://calmharm.co.uk
- Mindfulness apps: http://ayemind.com/resource/free-mindfulness-apps/

Mental health support

- Samaritans helpline: https://www.samaritans.org
- Childline helpline: https://www.childline.org.uk
- Breathing Space helpline: https://breathingspace.scot
- Big White Wall online forum, group and one-to-one therapy: https://togetherall.com/en-gb/

STARTING A CONVERSATION AND LISTENING

These guides and activity tools provide some advice on how to start a conversation and listen to young people's issues surrounding mental health and wellbeing including challenging topics on self-harm and suicide

- Aye Mind Check-in activity: http://ayemind.com/activities/check-in/
- YMCA Right Here guide (targeted at parents and carers): https://ymcarighthere.com/advice-support/parentscarers/
- Samaritans S.H.U.S.H listening tips: https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/if-youre-worried-about-someone-else/how-support-someone-youre-worried-about/what-do-if-you-think-someone-struggling/
- Young Minds Having a conversation about self-harm: https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/self-harm-having-the-first-conversation/
- Young Minds Responding to self-harm guide and video: https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/responding-to-self-harm-guide/ https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/responding-to-self-harm-video/
- YMCA Right Here Self-harm and suicide guides (targeted at self-help for young people but also contain tips for friends and family) https://ymcarighthere.com/shandsuicide/

ACTIVITY TOOLS

These activity resources are aimed at guiding organisations to use structured activities to support young people to talk or learn about mental health or wellbeing in groups or one-to-one, or manage their wellbeing at home

- Emotional Resilience toolkit. Includes tips and activities for youth organisations on how to promote resilience in young people https://www.seemescotland.org/media/8155/resiliance-toolkit.pdf
- On Edge: Activity plans developed by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde for raising awareness about self-harm and when to seek help https://www.seemescotland.org/young-people/resources/partner-resources/
- Loss and Bereavement. Targeted at schools. Includes information and tips for staff as well as activity plans to support young people experiencing loss and bereavement https://www.seemescotland.org/media/8151/whole_school_approach_to_lossandbereavement.pdf
- Mindreel videos for learning about stress and emotional management, and self-harm interactively: https://mindreel.org.uk/video/edge-learning-about-self-harm-millies-story https://mindreel.org.uk/video/young-persons-guide-stress-and-emotional-management
- Young Minds activity resources (mainly targeted at school setting). Includes activities and guidance for supporting young people, parents and staff wellbeing. https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/
- NHSGGC list of resources for schools. Resource packs to support resilience, learning about relationships. https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/media/262272/resources-for-schools2.pdf

TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

These online resources and courses help develop essential skills for supporting young people's mental health. Including developing practical and listening skills and increasing knowledge of signs and symptoms

- Aye Mind digital toolkit, developed to assist use of digital approaches to support young people's mental health:
  http://ayemind.com/toolkit/
- Minded: Online training resources for professionals and volunteers, aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding about mental health and wellbeing and increase confidence to identify, support young people, or signpost to services
  https://www.minded.org.uk/#More-About-Us
- MHFA England: Mental health first aid training (fees required)
  https://mhfaengland.org/individuals/adult/2-day/
- Listen Well Scotland: Training courses for listening skills (fees required)
  https://listenwellscotland.org.uk
- Young Minds resources to support organisations to include young people in the design of mental health support:
  https://youngminds.org.uk/youngminds-professionals/our-projects/amplified/amplified-resources/

3. GAMH Model

We consulted GAMH Young People's project workers about their experience working with the young adult mental health group pilot and young carers groups, and identified key components of the GAMH model for supporting young people experiencing mental health difficulties.

ETHOS

The GAMH Young adult mental health group (YAMH) and Young carers groups promotes the potential and strengths of young people in the face of mental health challenges. GAMH takes a non-judgemental approach to support effective self-management of mental health difficulties, normalising stressful and emotional experiences while providing listening and advice. While recognising the impact of mental health difficulties on various areas of young peoples' lives, GAMH inspires believe in, and promotes the potential and strengths of young people through creating opportunities in the community.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL SPACES

Activities held in a group setting create an informal space for young people to engage in conversations about mental health and wellbeing with project and sessional workers. Staff run the groups in pairs, to hold conversations with young people when the need arises, while making sure the activity continues to run smoothly. Additionally, assessments, reviews and space for 1-1 support provide formal spaces for workers to touch base with young people, or for young people to discuss things concerning them. Formal settings enable the use of more structured tools such as the I.ROC to discuss key areas of wellbeing. In informal settings, these tools can also be used as to guide conversation topics. Consultations with young people give a voice for young people to discuss issues and participate in decisions related to improving their mental health and wellbeing.

YOUTH-CENTRED APPROACH

Support and activities provided are aimed at encouraging young people to be in control, and to bring out the potential in young people. For example, activities provided at the Young Carers and YAMH groups are chosen with young peoples' input, enriches young people's lives and helps them developing interests and hobbies. This is important at the period of youth and can have a lifelong impact. The model also focuses on transitions, what young people feel ready for after the groups and this may vary between individuals who may want to start employment, further studies or pursue other interests. Staff act as mentors and treat young people as equals, playing a role not as an authority figure, but to work together with young people to support their choices and enhance their options. The model is guided by the One-Good-Adult principle, where service delivery is based around enabling trust building and consistency of staff members.

DRAWING ON COMMUNITY

Young people participate in activities together as a group and get to know each other over time. This builds a sense of Inclusion and especially benefits young people who have been isolated and lonely. The model of longer-term 6-9 months

group support enables this, in contrast to the typical short-term sessional engagement with statutory services. Further young people who may have fallen out from university, young people who have been excluded or disengaged from society, start building structure in their lives as they make plans to be out in the community. The YAMH and young carers groups plans activities by drawing on community links, partnering with other community organisations and using cultural and local attractions as spaces for young people to socialise and participate.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

GAMH provides a structured induction programme to ensure project workers and sessional workers have the relevant basic capabilities in supporting young people who have mental health concern. Additionally, due to the diversity of physical, neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions alongside mental health difficulties encountered at the community level, the model embeds flexibility in identifying training needs in a timely manner when the need arises. This includes connecting with appropriate community organisations to equip staff with basic information and training, horizontal learning, as well as regular team meetings to assess and put in place risk assessments and risk-management procedures, and shared decision making in novel or more complex situations.

4. What we have learnt

What are key aspects of community-based models for supporting mental health?

Models of support for young peoples' mental health highlight a complementary and unique role that community organisations play in the landscape of mental health promotion and prevention. The THRIVE framework was developed to guide development of mental health services, but also highlights how community-based organisations can play a role in supporting the different levels of need based on severity of mental health difficulties as well as young peoples' choice. While statutory mental health services provide targeted therapeutic activities to treat mental ill health, community organisations play a role in preventing mental health difficulties from becoming more severe such as by providing information and advice, encouraging self-management. In addition, community organisations promote wellbeing, focusing on socioenvironmental and psychological protective factors, that reduces the risk of mental health disorders in future, and strengthens' individuals capability to manage difficult emotions and approach stressful life events.

Community organisations vary in their target group, structure, approach and activities to support mental health and wellbeing. However, we can identify cross-cutting aspects that makes the community approach unique. For example, in Newnham, vulnerable young people are engaged with and supported through a 1-1 trainer-mentor relationship through boxing; at Growing Space, gardening is used to connect adults experiencing mental health issues, and to create relatable metaphors to express and talk about each individuals' unique experience. At GAMH, we have similarly learnt that space and activities are simple but key ingredients to allow human connection to flourish and this is an important part of recovery from mental health difficulties.

Link: Newnham case study where young people are supported informally, through boxing 1-1 trainer-mentor relationship
https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/RH-Newham-case-study.pdf

Link: Growing space – community gardening
https://mindreel.org.uk/video/growing-space

What can we do to make community based mental health initiatives more accessible and user friendly for young people?

Learning from existing approaches by community organisations who work with young people and our experience, we have identified what works and what hinders mental health wellbeing support, particularly in young people. Relationships are an important part of successful initiatives, for example, building trust between staff and service users and enhancing peer-relationships. Creating conducive spaces meeting different preferences also facilitates help-seeking especially in the face of stigma and discrimination and these can be formal, informal or even online. Community

organisations have the potential to innovate in how they can effectively embed space and build relationships for supporting mental health. For example, at GAMH, we have increased young peoples' participation in internal and external workshops on mental health, interactive awareness raising events, and protected space and time for young people to reach out for support.

Addressing Stigma: See Me Scotland highlights the impact of stigma in help-seeking and provides advice to overcome this
Link: *https://www.seemescotland.org/young-people/information-for-young-people/stigma-and-discrimination/*
Link: *https://www.seemescotland.org/young-people/information-for-young-people/talking-to-adults/*

What training and skills do community organisations need to deliver mental health initiatives for young people?

From our experience, these can be summarised into knowledge, skills and pathways. Staff need to be aware of issues surrounding mental health and wellbeing, have the confidence and skills to be able to listen, approach and talk about mental health and wellbeing, identify risks as well as be supported with risk-management procedures and protocols to ensure individuals can be escalated to appropriate services if the mental health condition worsens.