



# Priority Areas for Research to Improve Youth Public Mental Health



# Our approach to identifying priority areas for research

The Transdisciplinary Research for the Improvement of yoUth Mental Public Health (TRIUMPH) network has worked with young people, researchers, policymakers and practitioners to determine priority areas for future research into youth mental public health.

Our design-led and co-production approach involved a series of four workshops held across the UK between November 2019 and January 2020. Across the workshops, hosted in London, Cardiff, Glasgow and Belfast, almost 200 stakeholders including young people and adults with a range of expertise related to young people's mental health provided input into the TRIUMPH Network research priorities.

A template was designed to facilitate discussions at each workshop, with participants asked to reflect on current evidence / practice and gaps in knowledge, before identifying priorities for future research. Each workshop focussed on the TRIUMPH Network's three main themes around public mental health:

- Social connections and relationships
- Schools and other education settings
- Key groups who are at greater risk of mental ill health - specifically LGBTQ+ and care experienced young people.

The TRIUMPH Network also obtained input from a wider audience via an online consultation about research priorities for each of the three themes described above.

This report provides an overview of the priority areas for future research identified through this work, which will guide the direction of TRIUMPH Network research activities going forwards.





# SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & RELATIONSHIPS

## Building positive relationships that support good mental health and wellbeing

- How can we support young people to develop positive peer relationships, relationships with parents / carers, and relationships with other adults (e.g. teachers, youth workers)?
- What is the role of relationships in young people's resilience to respond to change and adversity?



## Whole system approaches to support young people's mental health

- How can we change culture to reduce stigma and support mental health and wellbeing?
- How can we reduce the impact of inequalities (e.g. deprivation, social inequalities, geographical area) on mental health and wellbeing?



## Social media and mental health

- How can we harness social media in a positive way to support mental health and wellbeing?

## Out of school and community settings to support mental health and wellbeing

- What is the role of youth clubs, social prescribing (i.e. referrals to local non-clinical community services) and outdoor activities in supporting youth mental health?
- What skills / support do parents and carers need in order to support young people and how can this be provided?

# SCHOOLS & EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

## **Building positive relationships that support good mental health and wellbeing**

- What role do schools play in developing relationship education?

## **Whole school system approaches to support young people's mental health and wellbeing**

- How can we change culture around wellbeing and attainment (e.g. policies, curriculum)?
- How could the school curriculum be modified to support young people's mental health?
- How can changes to the physical or structural education environment affect mental health and wellbeing (e.g. class size, timetable structure, built environment, physical activity, time outdoors)?
- How can we develop mental health literacy among young people to increase awareness and reduce stigma around mental health and wellbeing?
- How do we measure change in whole school / education setting environments?

## **Social media and mental health**

- How can education settings support the digital literacy of students and staff?

## **Supporting young people at times of transition**

- How can we support young people to develop the skills and resilience to adapt to changes in their lives (e.g. moving from primary to secondary to tertiary education, starting work, or moving in and out of different education settings)?
- What additional support should education settings provide to support young people through transitions?

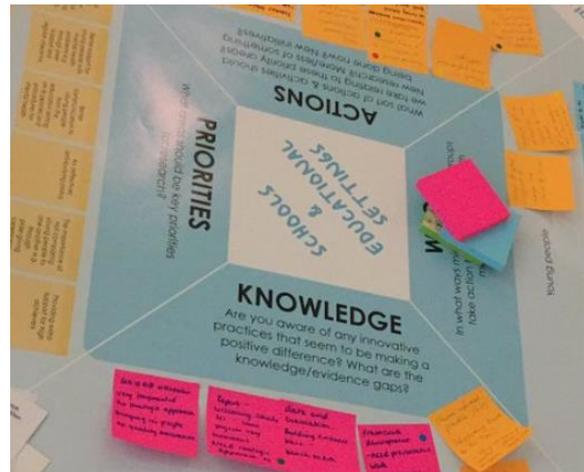
## **Improving links to mental health services and support**

- What processes and policies are needed to allow inter-agency working linked to education settings that provides consistent and appropriate support for young people?
- How should young people in education settings be involved in decision making around mental health services and support?



## Development and training for those who support young people's mental health and wellbeing

- What are the development needs of education staff (e.g. teachers, support staff, mental health specialists in education settings) in order to provide appropriate support to young people?
- What training is effective for staff in education settings?
- How can training on mental health and wellbeing be successfully implemented in education settings?



## Staff mental health and wellbeing

- What do staff in education settings need to support their own mental health and wellbeing?
- How can we effectively implement strategies or interventions that support staff wellbeing?

## Engaging with families

- How can education setting effectively engage with families, particularly parents / carers, to support them in understanding young people mental health issues?
- How can families work with education to provide a consistent support system for young people both in and out of the education setting?



# KEY GROUPS

## *Care-experienced young people*

### **Building relationships and networks that support good mental health and wellbeing**

- How can we support care-experienced young people to develop supportive peer networks?
- How can we support young people and their carers to develop positive relationships that are protective of mental health and wellbeing?
- How can we support care-experienced young people to develop positive relationships with social care, healthcare and education professionals?

### **Supporting care-experienced young people at times of transition**

- What are the key transitions for care-experienced young people and how do these impact mental health and wellbeing (e.g. in and out of care, leaving care, between services, educational transitions)?
- What are the challenges and opportunities in achieving positive transitions, and how can care-experienced young people be supported in managing these transitions?



### **Models of interagency working to support mental health and wellbeing**

- What are the needs of social care, healthcare and education professionals who support care-experienced young people with their mental health and wellbeing?
- What are the opportunities and challenges of different models to support inter-agency working?
- What are the impacts of different models to support inter-agency working on young people's mental health and wellbeing?
- How can we implement successful models of inter-agency working across different settings?

### **Development and training for those who support care-experienced young people**

- What are the training needs of adults (e.g. social care, healthcare, education, carers) supporting the mental health and wellbeing of care-experienced young people?
- What training outcomes are important to adults and care-experienced young people?
- How can mental health training be successfully implemented among adults who support care-experienced young people?

## Awareness, access and experience of services

- What are the service needs of care-experienced young people to support their mental health and wellbeing?
- What are care-experienced young people's experiences of current mental health services and support and how could this be improved?
- How can we increase awareness and access to mental health services and support among care-experienced young people? What are the potential impacts on inequalities?





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