

In October 2022 the TRIUMPH Network hosted a youth-led conference on mental health, bringing together over 50 young researchers and activists aged 14-25 to share their work and discuss possibilities for change. One activity at the event asked attendees to tell us the key messages that need to be shared with different audiences about youth mental health. This paper centres the attendees' words and suggests key themes emerging from these messages.

What do young people want other young people to know about mental health?

There is no such thing as normal - embrace your weird

Keep going. One step at a time

You are important and we are lucky to hear and see your stories

You are unique and amazing

It won't always be this hard. I promise you are not alone and there are so many people out there who care and want to help and can relate. Don't ever be scared to speak up.

Don't give up, eventually you will be taken seriously even if it might not seem like it at first

Talk, when ready talk. You'll feel better after. Trust in you.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

Be brave to use your voice and find trust in others to feel safe

It does get better

Support each other and keep fighting to get positive changes

You have and important voice and there are people out there who will listen when you use it

What do young people want school staff to know about young people's mental health?

Don't be scared to be that 1 person for a young person, it could change their life. Listen.

Ban prize-giving

Don't judge on first impressions and take times to listen to pupils

You don't need to be an expert or 'qualified' to simply listen

Be mindful of what a young person has experienced before the school day starts and how that might impact their day

Be mindful of those who you think are doing 'ok'

Don't be condescending to young people

Approach everyone with a trauma informed lens - all behaviour is communication

Teachers, be aware that mental health matters and impacts learning

If a pupil is struggling don't judge - speak to them! Ask if they are okay!

Mental health needs to come before academic achievement

If a person is bad when they are young it doesn't mean they are a bad person or will be a bad adult

Importance of pupil mental health and advice for interacting with pupils

Find out more about the TRIUMPH network

Website: <http://triumph.sphsu.gla.ac.uk>

Twitter: @TRIUMPHnetwork

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What do young people want parents and carers to know about young people's mental health?

Don't expect your child to learn from your mistakes, we are all on this earth to do our own learning. Be patient.

Don't belittle young people's problems

Mental health is as important as physical health

Don't be offended if your child doesn't want to open up to you

Understanding and listening is half the battle (not really a battle, we should all be working towards the same goal)

Keep talking and communicating. Make time to listen.

Talk to your child/young person – you were their age once

There's no comparison between what you experienced as a young person and their lives

Please ask young people and listen – don't assume you know them

It's 2022, get over your stereotypes

What do young people want health workers to know about young people's mental health?

Take time to work with young people at their own pace

This might be your 100th patient/client today but they have been waiting weeks/months/years to see you. Take a breath and give them the attention they need.

Please check in with us. Be human. You're human, not your job title.

Authentically listening goes a long way 😊

People need support not another referral

Don't be afraid to take care of your mental health as well 😊

Know how negative it is not to be considered to need CAMHS help after a referral

Acknowledging mental health can be the cause and the cure of many physiological diseases. Don't forget how important mental wellbeing is for our physical health

It's 2022, get over your stereotypes

Don't distrust young people's feelings – just listen

You are valued, the work you do is incredible and making a difference even if you don't realise it

Validate their feelings! No decisions without them.

Expertise in mental health is important but it is not 'better' or 'more legitimate' than the lived experiences of young people – everyone is unique so listen

What do young people want policy-makers and politicians to know about young people's mental health?

Listen to young people and act on their views!

Do what you say you are going to do

Find ways to get young people involved in policy design and implementation/monitoring

Listen to young people's experiences, needs and wants

Don't just turn up for photo opportunities! Listen and Act!

Children and young people need resources and support which is well funded so that you can hear them effectively

Where are young people's voices in local authority decisions? Why don't we have youth councillors?

Make sure the voices of non-verbal young people are also sought and included – which means having more time and effort

Use your data intelligently – what does the evidence say?

Listen to people and take action

Make more of an effort to talk to young people and use what they say

Be open-minded, willing to listen and act now!!!

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