

Voices of Care Project - Mental Health and Well-being Training and Training Pack

Aims and background

The aim is to develop training materials that can be used by young people to support other children and young people's mental health. The materials will specifically aim to support them to develop confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Over 50% of Looked After Children have emotional and behavioural health that is considered normal but they are often exposed to lots of complex mental health risk factors before they go into care. This makes them some of the most vulnerable people. Looked after children's earlier adverse experiences have an influence on brain development and attachment behaviours. The rates of emotional behavioural and mental health difficulties are 4-5 times higher amongst children in care than their counterparts (www.mentalhealthfoundation.org.uk).

Over time working with young people we have heard them express concerns for dealing with their wellbeing especially mental health. The idea of this project came from several months of research and listening to these groups of young people and also gaining an understanding of the national picture.

Almost 1 in 4 children and young people show some evidence of mental ill health; including anxiety and depression (ONS 2016). The Education and Health committee acknowledge that 50% of adult mental illness starts before the age of 15 and 75% has started before the age of 18 (House of Commons Education and Health Committees Children 2016–17 page 4).

How many people reach adulthood with poor mental health that could have been supported at an earlier stage if the right care and resources had been available?

The Plan

We would like to develop a training pack that will support young people in care to develop good emotional wellbeing and help highlight the challenges that young people face. The training pack will be developed and delivered by young people in care initially. The main aim of the pack is for Children and Young People to better understand their emotional / mental health needs. The training pack aims to deliver the following key aims and Objectives:

- **Developing confidence and self-esteem by developing practical tools which build resilience for young people in care**
- **Empower young people with the opportunity to shape and deliver training**
- **Supporting young people to deal with emotional health and wellbeing**
- **Help to combat the stigma of young people in care who have emotional needs.**
- **Support young people in care to create positive images about themselves and other young people in care.**
- **Creation of a training pack that helps to support young people in care to express their feelings and emotions**

The participation team are currently exploring funding options and partnerships with other professionals and services to ensure that the project is successful and sustainable. In line with the Participation Strategy 2019-2022 the project will eventually reach young people from a variety of settings. As the training model and skill set of the young trainers develops, the training will be rolled out to other children and young people in schools and youth groups. The idea is that some of these young people will become named trainers within their schools and groups and will deliver the training pack to their peers with adult support.