



PURE MENTAL NI

ALL-PARTY GROUP
ON MENTAL HEALTH

15TH JUNE 2020

ABOUT PURE MENTAL NI

- Entirely Youth-led
- Our focus is on education and awareness of mental health in schools
- Started back August 2019 after seeing shortcomings in schools and the experiences of too many young people – both people we know, and the general rise and high rates of poor mental health and suicide of young people in NI
- Youth mental health rates in Northern Ireland dwarf those of anywhere else in the British Isles, and half of all mental health problems arise by age 14 – so addressing youth mental health in NI is key – and we saw no better way of doing this than by focusing on the place young people spend over 30 hours a week – schools.

OUR FIRST YEAR

Research Within
Schools

Committees

Involved Young
People in the
discussion on
Mental Health

Rally

Fundraising
Video

Podcast

PROJECTS WITH SCHOOLS



Research with Schools



Forming Recommendations
Based on Research



Committees in Schools

PROBLEMS FACING SCHOOLS IN IMPLEMENTING MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Confusion and delay on organising services and courses

Schools paying for outside services, including essential counselling, out of their own, limited, budgets each year

Pupils are often unaware of the services available to them and may lack the vocabulary and information to articulate the problems they're facing or help they need - 81% of young people said that they would like their college or school to teach them more about how to look after their mental health. (Young Minds UK)

Pressure and on teachers when dealing with mental crisis due to lack of training - Only 40% of Primary School heads feel their teachers could deal with a pupil having a mental health crisis. (Teachers' Voice Ombudsman)

With budgets being cut more and more, schools struggle to fund even basic well-being services and education

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- A Directory for Mental Health Services - who does what, where and how quickly
- A School Mental Health fund which schools can access from the Assembly to pay for courses, counsellors, and outside services
- Make mental health part of the school curriculum
- Mental Health first aid as part of teacher training and follow up training
- Post-Primary style counselling services for Primary Schools
- Funding for Play Therapy services

SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

HOW SCHOOLS ARE GOING THE EXTRA MILE, DESPITE LIMITED FUNDS AND RESOURCES

Use of local community networks and funding - such as the Newry Hub

Utilising charity services – such as The Paths Programme to develop emotional literacy and resilience – the cost of which is £4,000 to start, plus £2,000 each year, which is not covered by the Department of Education

Allocating times of the week to work on resilience and mental well-being – e.g. mental well-being related homework each Wednesday

Events throughout Mental Health Week

Acts of Random Kindness (ARK) Weeks, Anti-bullying/Being a Good Friend Week.

Workshops and meetings for and with parents

MENTAL HEALTH ACTION PLAN



It's a great step in the right direction and we welcome it, but it is just a step. We hope this plan turns into an implemental strategy



Cost – where the £2.8 million initial cost will come from – will it be extra money given to the Health Department or existing money from their mental health budget?



Concerns regarding the appointment of a 'Mental Health Champion'



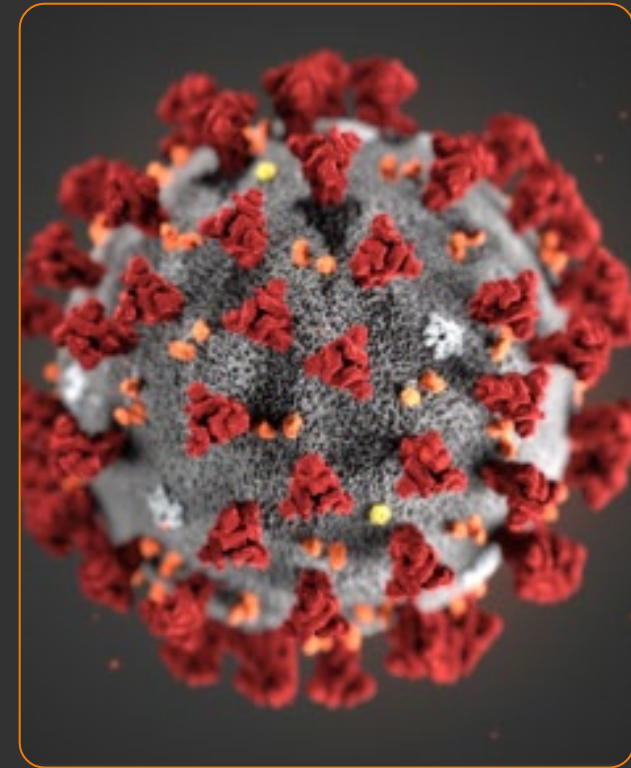
Little mention of schools or young people specifically

HOW THE ASSEMBLY CAN HELP US FULFILL OUR GOALS

- Involve schools in the discussion on youth mental health
- Increase funding a resources to mental health services in schools – Primary in particular
- A more cohesive transition from Primary to Secondary education
- Aim to have a counsellor in every school
- Take the pressure off schools paying for mental health services out of their own budget
- Reform of CAMHS – reduce waiting times
- Reducing the reliance schools need to have on outside services, especially for self harm
- Ensure school inspection take into account mental-wellbeing - Only 32% of Ofsted inspections reference pupils' mental health and well-being.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

- Transition Stages – P7, Year 12 and Year 14
- Exam uncertainty –GCSE, AS & A Levels
- Poor Home Environment – no school escape
- Loneliness - less social contact with friends
- Adapting to home learning
- Unable to attend school counselling services
- General anxieties and grievances about the virus
- Increase calls to youth services such as NSPCC



THIS WILL RIPPLE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE PANDEMIC

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

QUESTIONS?

