healthwatch
Worcestershire

Children and Young People

Health and Emotional Wellbeing Information, Advice and Support

Engagement and Survey Report

March 2017

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Health and Emotional Well-being Information, Advice and Support

Healthwatch Worcestershire has focussed our recent engagement with young people and parents and carers on their experiences of accessing information, advice and support about health and emotional well-being.

Why did we do this work?

Healthwatch Worcestershire identified engagement with young people and parents as a business priority following feedback received through our previous engagement and surveys; including our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Survey Report (February 2016) and our Parents and Carers of Children Under 5 Survey Report (March 2016).

This work has also been carried out to enable us to give feedback from young people and parents and represent their views as part of –

- Worcestershire's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Partnership Board
- Current development of 0-19 Services

College engagement with young people

We ran a number of sessions for a total of 59 students studying Health and Social care. One session at Evesham College in November 2016 and two sessions at Kidderminster College in January 2017.

We facilitated small group discussions, which then fed into larger group discussions and gained feedback to a number of specific questions on three main issues about health and emotional wellbeing –

1. Promoting positive emotional wellbeing
2. Accessing information, support and advice
3. School Health Service

What did young people tell us?

1. Promoting Positive Emotional Wellbeing

The young people told us that a main cause of anxiety and stress is the pressure they feel to meet the expectations of others. Both the expectations of their parents and school to do well and those of their peers to look and behave in the socially accepted way. They spoke often about feeling judged, compared to others and not being accepted for who they are. They also raised the anxiety caused by relationships, friendships, family problems and bullying. Many felt that social media had a big role in both placing expectations on young people and enabling bullying.

The majority of the young people did not feel that emotional wellbeing and mental health had been covered well at school. Many said that PSHE lessons were not seen as a proper lesson and often not taken seriously by pupils and in some cases the staff. They also felt that as they often had different people talking to them about issues, it did not always enable enough discussion and feedback from pupils or monitoring of their understanding. They also felt that often information given was telling them about things they should or shouldn't do, rather than more detailed explanations of the possible impact and consequences of their actions.

What do young people think would help?

i. **Take bullying seriously** – The majority of the young people felt that bullying had not been taken seriously enough at school. They felt that there were not serious enough consequences for those who bullied and in some cases they were told just to ignore them. Many felt that there needed to be clear messages to all young people about the serious impact bullying can have on others and that what they may see as banter may be very upsetting for others. They also felt that there should be lessons from a young age about cyber bullying and how to report it.

ii. **Enabling discussion and having someone to talk to** – The young people felt that making sessions about emotional wellbeing more interactive would mean they would get more out of them. They also felt it would be helpful to know they could follow this up with a one-to-one discussion if they had any specific questions or issues. They felt that the more children and young people were encouraged to discuss things, the more they would realise others felt the same way and concerns may not escalate to more serious issues.

iii. **Impact and realism** – Many different ideas were suggested of ways to convey messages to young people, including films, presentations and posters. A strong theme was making the messages realistic and giving explanations and impact.

2. Accessing Information and Advice

Young people generally felt that they were not given enough information at school about how to access help and support for emotional wellbeing or mental health issues. They felt that often it was something that was limited to a display or few posters and leaflets in one location, rather than something than ensuring that all pupils had been directly given the information or had easy ongoing access to.

What do young people think would help?

i. **Information cards** – Young people felt that there was more chance of information cards with contact details being kept and carried than leaflets, as they can be kept in purses, phone cases and diaries. They could also be either stored with or printed onto the back of ID cards worn on lanyards in colleges.

ii. **Posters where they will be seen** – such as on the back of toilet doors.

iii. **Keyrings** - with information printed on

iv. **Electronic cards** – that can be sent to smart phones so numbers can be stored on their phones

v. **Apps** – Many thought this would be good as it would be reliable, up to date and well laid out. However there were concerns about the number of Apps available and then not used. They also thought that some may not have enough storage to have the App or may not have a mobile phone.

vi. **Easy to find on-line** – They felt most young people would look on-line to find information, generally by doing a Google search and therefore it is important that any specific local information sites will flag up easily on Google.

vii. **Social media** – As many young people use social media, they suggested that this could be a good way for schools, colleges, youth groups and local organisations to promote information about emotional wellbeing and how to access support.

3. Accessing Support

The young people discussed the advantages and disadvantages of different types of support. Their comments included that the most important issues are confidentiality and others being aware that you are seeking support.

i. **Peer mentoring** – Although they thought that peers may understand the issues and be honest, there was concern about breaking confidentiality and feeling judged and uncomfortable.

ii. **Face-to-face counselling in schools and colleges** – Young people felt that this would be more reliable and confidential than speaking to other students and practically easier to access than travelling elsewhere. They would be familiar with the environment and some thought it would be an opportunity to have a break from lessons! However, there was concerns that other students would know you were accessing the service and that you may be going to see a member of staff you are familiar with and therefore may feel awkward or embarrassed. There was also concern that the school would tell parents that you are accessing counselling and break confidentiality.

iii. **Face-to-face counselling out of school / college** – Although there may be practical difficulties in accessing this and children and young people may be reluctant to go along in the first place, this was generally seen as a good option in terms of confidentiality and privacy. Some felt that it would also be good to be away from school, as this may be related to the cause of the stress or anxiety.

iv. **Specific on line support service** – Most of the young people felt that this is something that they would feel comfortable with accessing. They felt it would be seen as more confidential, private and anonymous and that this would give them confidence to talk about their problems. Although they did feel that in some cases that on line support might not be sufficient, as it might be more difficult for someone to demonstrate empathy and therefore it could be more difficult to open up about some things on line.

v. **Other sources of on line support** – When discussing on-line support services, the young people also discussed some of their concerns about seeking advice and information more generally on line and on social media. Both in terms of ensuring information is reliable and that young people are not exposing themselves to harm by sharing too much information or issues on line.

4. School Health Service

There was a mixed response from the young people about their awareness of School Nurses at their High School. Although most knew there had been a School Nurse, not everyone knew how to contact them and some said they had not been aware of them at all. This suggests that it may vary from school to school.

Of those who had accessed the School Nurse at High School, some said they had been helpful and enabled them to access support. However other feedback included: *having to wait a long time, no privacy, unsympathetic* and *no treatment plan.*

Potential barriers to children and young people accessing the School Nurse suggested were: *lack of confidence, too shy, embarrassment, not being able to see someone of the same gender, not being available, limited time, limited space* and *not being able to get in touch with them.*

Chat Health

Chat Health was started in January 2016. It enables children and young people age 11 to 19 to contact School Health Nurses by text message.

None of the young people we spoke to were aware of the Chat Health. This may be as they are college students, rather than High School students, although they should be able to access Chat Health.

Most thought that being able to text for advice would be a good idea, as it would be discreet and nobody needs to know. It would be easier for people to access as they would not need to make an appointment or travel somewhere at a specific time. They also felt that it might make people more likely to ask for help, be honest and feel confident.

However, they felt that it only being available during the day on week days was an issue, as it would be more difficult for children and young people to be sending text messages during this time, as they are at school or college.

How can School Nurses promote their role?

The young people felt that pupils would be more likely to visit the School Nurse if they knew who they were and that coming to an Assembly or coming into classes at registration would be good.

They also suggested using social media to promote their services – saying that although Twitter and Facebook were used, Snap Chat is the most popular.

They also thought that the ideas such as information cards, posters where you can see them and presentations, as with information about emotional wellbeing, would be helpful.

Parent Perspective – Feedback from Parent and Carer Survey

In order to gain additional feedback from a parent and carer perspective, we carried out a survey between July 2016 and March 2017, focussing on health and emotional wellbeing information and advice and School Health Services. This was completed by 65 parents and carers of school age children. The majority of these were complete on line. The survey was circulated by email and via social media by Healthwatch Worcestershire, a number of local voluntary groups and schools. Some hard copies were completed as part of our engagement with parent support groups.

Accessing information, advice and support

Responses to our Parent and Carer Survey suggest that parents feel more able to access information and advice about helping their children to maintain a healthy lifestyle than emotional wellbeing and mental health, and that they would welcome further information. The majority felt that the following would be either very or fairly useful –

- A specific website for parents and carers in Worcestershire (83%)
- Drop in sessions to seek advice when concerns arise (82%)
- Access to online learning about mental health and emotional wellbeing (81%)
- More information given by schools e.g. leaflets and on their website (77%)
- Information sessions by health professionals for parents to attend at schools (74%)
- Information sessions for parents to attend at other locations (69%)

When seeking information and advice about health and wellbeing of their children, 92% of the parents and carers who completed our survey, told us they had asked friends and family. The next most used sources of information were the internet / social media and school (both 85%).

Those who had used the internet or social media to find information had used –

- NHS Choices (72%)
- Google search (62%)
- Facebook (42%)
- Worcestershire County Council Website (26%)
- Mumsnet (21%)
- Worcestershire Mums Network (15%)
- Young Minds (6%)

78% said they would find an explanation about how to access support and relevant contact details 'very useful'.

School Health Service

We asked parents and carers if they felt they had been given enough information about the School Health Service / School Nurses.

- No – 68%
- Yes – 18%
- Unsure – 14%

We asked where they had received information from about the School Health Service / School Nurses –

- From school, as the result of a specific conversation about my child (25%)
- Information and updates given by the school (18%)
- School induction meeting / pack (15%)
- School website (5%)
- GP Practice (3%)

However, 44% of the parents said they had not received information from any of these places about the School Health Service.

When we asked parents and carers if they would contact the School Nurse if they were concerned about their child's development or emotional wellbeing only 37% said yes. 45% said no and the remaining 18% were unsure.

When we discussed School Nurses with parents attending a support group, a few parents told us they would be reluctant to speak to School Nurses about concerns as they would worry that information would be passed on to the school and that it may be used against them.

Overall, the feedback from parents and carers suggests that many do not feel they have enough information about School Health Services and that many would feel unsure about contacting them for advice about their children.

Recommendations - Children and Young People

Based on the feedback from young people and parents and carers, Healthwatch Worcestershire feel that the following recommendations should be considered by commissioners, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and schools and colleges as part of –

- Worcestershire's Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

- Current development of 0-19 Services

Promoting positive emotional wellbeing

1. Consider if the guidance to schools emphasises importance of issues highlighted by young people –
   a. Take bullying seriously
   b. Enable discussion and have someone to talk to
   c. Impact and realism

Transformation Plan 2.3 – *Schools are taking a whole school approach to promoting positive emotional wellbeing*

Accessing information and advice

2. Consider how information is produced and distributed to children and young people and the use of their suggestions, such as – information cards and targeting and distribution of posters.

3. Ensure that young people are made aware of on line information and resources – that these are easy to find via sites such as Google and NHS Choices and that they are promoted by schools and colleges and via Social Media.

Transformation Plan 2.4 – *A one-stop shop for information and advice around emotional wellbeing for children and young people and parents / carers*

Accessing support

4. Ensure that children and young people are provided with reassurance and information about confidentiality and privacy when accessing support.

5. Ensure children and young people are aware of Kooth on line counselling and support service and how to access this.

Transformation Plan 2.7 *Provide a high quality, evidence based online and face to face county wide therapeutic counselling service for children and young people with lower level emotional wellbeing needs*

School Health Service

6. Consider if it would be possible to extend the hours that Chat Health is available. As young people have found opportunities to visit School Health Nurses are limited and may prefer the anonymity and confidentiality of this service.

7. Ensure that schools and colleges are actively promoting Chat Health, so all children and young people are aware of it – including methods suggested by young people such as information cards and posters where they will be seen.

8. Consider how to increase awareness of School Health Nurses amongst children and young people – including the use of social media and opportunities to meet School Nurses in assemblies and registration.

Recommendations – Parents and Carers

On-line resources

1. Ensure that parents and carers are made aware of on line information and resources – that these are easy to find via sites such as Google and NHS Choices and that they are promoted by schools and via Social Media.

Additional sources of advice and information

2. Consider additional ways for parents and carers to access information, such as drop in sessions to seek advice and access to online learning about mental health and emotional wellbeing.

School Health Service

3. Consider how to increase awareness of School Health Services and working with schools to encourage them to include information on their website, induction packs and give regular updates and reminders in newsletters and via email.