

Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU)

EBPU
Evidence Based Practice Unit

A partnership of

UCL **Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families**

Developing evidence-based approaches to monitoring mental health and wellbeing in schools

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Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU)

Overview


- The current context
- Schools as a site for mental health support
- The development of a wellbeing measurement framework through HeadStart
- Wellbeing Measurement Framework
- Take home messages
- O3 offers for schools



Evidence Based Practice Unit (EBPU)

The current context

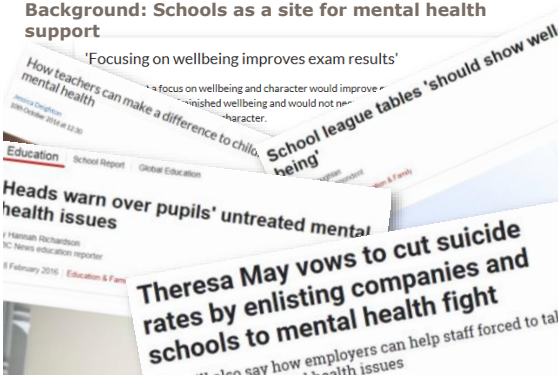
- Estimates of 10-20% of adolescents experiencing mental health problems (Green et al 2005)
- Increasing emotional problems in girls (Fink et al 2015)
- Children receive just 5% of mental health care funding despite making up 20% of the population (Kennedy, 2010)
- Only 20% young people with mental health difficulties will access appropriate mental health services
- Increase in average waiting times for specialist mental health services



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Background: Schools as a site for mental health support



Headlines include: 'Focusing on wellbeing improves exam results', 'How teachers can make a difference to children's mental health', 'School league tables 'should show wellbeing'', 'Heads warn over pupils' untreated mental health issues', 'Theresa May vows to cut suicide rates by enlisting companies and schools to mental health fight', 'Experts say how employers can help staff forced to take mental health issues'.

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Schools as a site for mental health support

- Increasing policy interest in prevention and early intervention in schools
- New green paper on children and young people's mental health to set out plans to transform services
- Specific focus on the role of schools

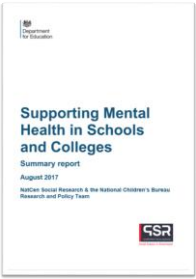


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Schools as a site for mental health support

- Increasing school based mental health support
- DfE report:
- Schools believe they have an important role in:
 - creating an environment where CYP feel safe and happy;
 - Identifying specific mental health needs;
 - Providing targeted support;
 - Referring/delivering specialist therapeutic provision.

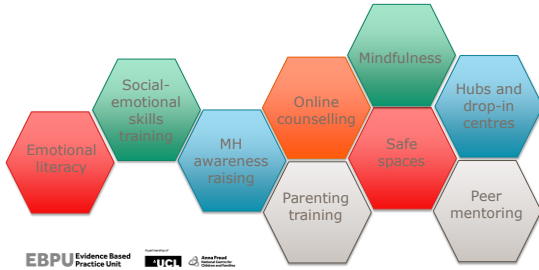


Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges
Summary report
August 2017
Nuffield Social Research & the National Children's Bureau Research and Policy Team

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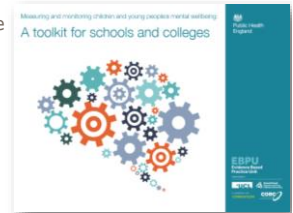
Schools as a site for mental health support

- More and more school-based interventions



But...

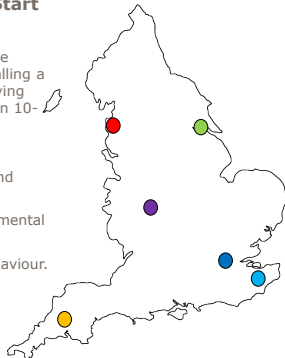
- How do schools get a sense of the needs and strengths for *their* student population?
- How do they know who might need more support?
- How do they know if the support provided is helping?



The development of a wellbeing measurement framework through HeadStart

HeadStart is a long term programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund, trialling a broad range of initiatives for improving resilience and emotional wellbeing in 10-16 year olds in order to:

- improve emotional wellbeing
- improve engagement in school and academic attainment
- reduce the onset of diagnosable mental health disorders
- reduce engagement in 'risky' behaviour.



HeadStart: the development of a wellbeing measurement framework

Aimed to coproduce a measurement framework that allowed assessment of the core outcomes (e.g., wellbeing, mental health problems, resilience)

Key criteria for selection:

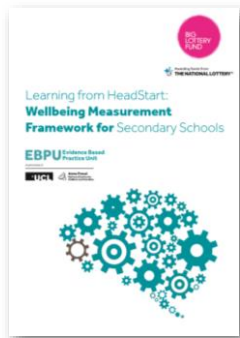
1. Measures included must have evidence of their reliability and validity
2. Questions included must be acceptable to teachers and young people
3. Must be feasible to undertake in a school class
4. Avoid duplication



HeadStart: the development of a wellbeing measurement framework

Process:

- 3 workshops Including 67 people:
 - 39 partnership reps,
 - 13 evaluation experts,
 - 8 programme delivery experts,
 - 5 funding reps
- Also consultation with school staff and children and young people



Wellbeing Measurement Framework

Child self report:

Wellbeing

- SWEMWBs

Mental health

- SDQ

Protective factors

- SRS
- Self regulation (Trait emotional intelligence questionnaire)
- Perceived stress scale

Item	Strongly Dislike	Dislike	Like	Strongly Like
The short wellbeing scale is a good thing to do	1	2	3	4
The short wellbeing scale is a waste of time	4	3	2	1
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Developing feedback

Progress and next steps

- The measurement framework has been via an online system with over 35,000 across England Spring/Summer 2017.
- Feedback will be received by 100s schools this Autumn
- Use existing data to estimate prevalence of mental health problems in children and young people in England
- We are about to roll out the wellbeing measurement framework more widely across England

Take home message for researchers

1. Implementation of school-based interventions is often complex and 'messy'
2. But... often promising practice emerges from schools that isn't captured by summative research
3. Developing psychometrically robust measurement frameworks can help to provide preliminary evidence about promising practices



Take home message for policy makers and commissioners

1. Routine monitoring of mental health and well-being in schools can give insight into the particular needs young people have and, therefore, the kind of support needed.
2. Whether approaches are evidence-based or not, outcomes should still be monitored in situ once the intervention is implemented to ensure the support is helping in the way expected.
3. This practice based evidence should be reviewed periodically to inform adaptation and future support.

Take home message for schools leads

1. Increasing focus on schools for mental health support means a vast range of interventions are now aimed at schools. Not all of these are evidence based.
2. In parallel, numerous surveys now exist to measure mental health, wellbeing, resilience, grit....
3. Often the most beguiling can be the least evidence-based.

Demand to see the evidence!!




Offers to schools:

Need help measuring pupil wellbeing in your school?

FREE support package available for 130 schools to implement the Wellbeing Measurement Framework, developed as part of the HeadStart programme, including:

- consent process administration support
- access to electronic survey
- analysis of survey responses

Find out more: www.bit.ly/WFsupport



Offers to schools:

Schools in mind

A free network for school staff and allied professionals.

- Termly newsletters and events
- Free downloadable resources to support schools
- Innovative new approaches to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
- Opportunities for schools to take part in research
- Opportunities to network with other school staff interested in wellbeing and mental health

• www.annafreud.org



Offers to schools:

Looking to recruit schools as part of a large evaluation of school-based mental health support

The project involves either

- Provision of mental health programmes direct to schools by trained professionals (secondary schools only)
- Training and support for teachers to deliver 1 of 4 potential whole-class mental health support programmes (primary and secondary schools)

If you are interested in hearing more, email EBPU@annafreud.org



Thank you!

Any questions?