

A NATIONAL VOICE

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getting young voices heard

**'Stable Homes, Built on Love'
Engagement Work - Feedback
Session 8 -**

**Supporting Mental
Health and Wellbeing**

Session 8 - Supporting mental health and wellbeing

The online session for children and young people took place on Tuesday 28 November 6.00pm-7.30pm.

The session focused on how professionals could best support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Who we heard from:

The workshop was attended by around 17 children and young people from across England aged 13-25.

We started by explaining 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' Mission 6:

We want to make sure adults working with children in care and care leavers know how to support them with their physical and mental health needs. We will give people more training on this. We will make sure children in care and care leavers can see doctors or nurses more easily.'

We interviewed Mark from the Department for Education (DfE) about DfE's work around physical and mental health at the moment.



What keeps children and young people, healthy, happy and well?

Having a sense of belonging

respect and understanding

safe environment

easy access to gps

Being taken seriously and listened to when speaking about my mental health

What I've gained experienced safe sleep

Love and support

healthy talking with others that are safe and in safe space

ability to do anything with out negative response

quick access to mental health support

Being listened to

no use of blaming language



Who supports children and young people with their mental health and wellbeing?

Who would you turn to if you needed support?

A word cloud where the size of each word represents its frequency. The most prominent words are 'family', 'friends', and 'avocado advocacy'. Other visible words include 'friend', 'personal advisor', 'youth worker', 'participation leader', 'my support workers', 'some i felt safe with', 'someone at school', 'extended family members', 'my pa', 'worker', 'my friends', 'my foster mum', 'specialist tutors', 'social worker for some yp', 'foster families', 'pa', 'doctor', 'managers at work', 'my boyfriend', and 'a student mentor - colleg mental health professiona'.

Who would you want to turn to if you needed support?

A word cloud where the size of each word represents its frequency. The most prominent words are 'family', 'friends', and 'family'. Other visible words include 'peers', 'support organisation', 'relatives no longer here', 'participation leader', 'support worker', 'social worker', 'siblings', 'sport workers', 'idols with life experienc', 'care experience', 'parents', 'cousins', 'pa', 'pastoral workers', 'youth worker', 'avocado advocacy', 'my parents', 'safe people', 'mum', and 'dad'.

What skills and knowledge do social workers, PA's and other professionals need to support children in care and care leavers with their physical and mental health?

Hands - What training/ resources/ support do professionals need to support children and young people with mental health and wellbeing?



Have a designated mental health professional within the team so that our professional have easy access to someone with more knowledge to get advice and guidance from to bett	Some trained as counsellors	trauma informed	understand were we are coming from	experience dealing with similar situations.
Not always filling out paper work	One to one time with young people to capture their views, thoughts and feelings	Mental health training	Enough staff so that they can give me time and not always rushed	Take me out to nice places when talking about things, food or a coffee or even bowling etc

Heart - What qualities or skills do professionals need to have to support children and young people with mental health and wellbeing?

empathy	all forms of communication mostly understand	Good listening skills, not just listening to the negative feedback but positive things too	understand where people are coming from	keep in touch with any new information that we need
know that all care experience are not the same and their mental health is not caused by the same stuff	Give me space if I need it, but equally don't ignore me and push me away	To feel safe... as well as great communication.	find the right information for the right age and right person	learn BSL/ makaton as that can help us who cant pay for an interpreter every time we need help
Be approachable	It is not a must, but having some sort of life experiences to be able to relate with young people	Trusting	Not judgemental	Caring and loving



What skills and knowledge do social workers, PA's and other professionals need to support children in care and care leavers with their physical and mental health?

Head - What do professionals need to think about when talking or supporting children and young people with mental health and wellbeing?

Understand triggers

Need to be mindful of my situation when talking to me

be there when we need you

to let us know what they would have to do with our talk/ information if it need to go in a different direction

know how to talk to us instead of triggering us at every talk

Don't make assumptions or quick judgements

Their mental state and mental health at the time of their talking as things may have changed

some people might be scared or nervous to share experience.

Treat us Individually and not like another case

We don't need to be patronised



What can health services do to be more aware and supportive of care experience?

How can health services (GP's, hospitals and mental health services) be more aware and supportive of care experience?

we all do not have the same experience and the same up bringing so treat us with more respect and help us with our specific needs

Too some providers that are referrals they treat me as just another number. Providers need to be more hands on and really listen to you

treat us like everyone else

miscommunication is a huge challenge with the office staff to scheduling referral appointments, lab work, etc..

keep us up to date with everything we need to know

help us when we need it don't push us to one side because of our experience

Get involved in events similar to this

our weight does not make our issues worse what does is you not listening to our issues make it worse

keep in regular contact.

let us know what is getting on with us so we know what is happening and what you are doing and giving us

cup of tea and taking a bath does not help

Covered prescriptions

understand

listen to us

Have a better understanding of the processes we have to go through while in care and have a better understanding on the physical and mental impact this could have on us so there m

use language that is appropriate to your client

Immediate support, not having to wait on waiting lists

talk to us and not to anyone else unless it is necessary

are experience is real

believe us

Help manage the condition, the concerns. Most professionals ease the synaptic process.

talking to our support workers does not help us. talking to us helps us even if our support worker have to re say or change the question for us to understand

need to know all forms of communication and be trauma informed too

be involved in participation events when relevant so they can get to know young people better and so we as young people know who they are and feel it isn't such a stranger

Have ALL your doctors be on the same page with your treatment. Work as a team!

keep up to date with the latest research

let us talk before you but in and say nothing is wrong when a lot is wrong and needs help

make us feel like we are listened too and understand

What would you want to happen now (in the next 2 years)?

All staff would know and understand us more

Shorter waiting lists, quicker MH support

Our past does not hold us back make others know that as we do know what is best for our self

All doctors know that our weight is not just our issues

therapy animals, school teachers understand and support us,

Free prescriptions for CEP

Better trauma informed practice

More training and education around mental health and well-being

more community platforms and better mental health services, education, resources, and support groups

Less deaths as a result of failings in relation to mental health and well-being

To know where we are coming from by listening to us and understanding our past to help our future

Less stigma

More professionals trained and in the role so we have more time with them

Transition help and more information to prevent us from failing after things end



What would you like to happen in the future (in the next 10 years)?

The UK government to know that care experience is a protected characteristic and needs to be fully put in place

For everyone to understand the care experience people are not all rude and braking the law

For mental health to not be taboo, for it to be talked openly about

A one stop in every county that provides ALL services at one location this including transportation to and from the facilities

More information to prevent us from more harm, homelessness, loneliness and push thing to one side

Less deaths as a result of failings with mental health support

Quicker support

Youth groups to be exist more

Help with the Clif

To have help for everyone does not matter on level of mental health needs

Trauma informed staff

Better understanding and support in place for mental health, support groups etc.

Stigma around mental health to be some what gone.. so people feel more comfortable in coming out and speaking about their mental health

Training for all workers with children and YP. Don't stereotype men - men shouldn't cry etc. see everyone as an individual, don't group and label them



Key messages to policy teams:

- Children and young people would turn to family, friends, foster carers, social workers and PA's for support with physical and mental health
- Children and young people believe that having a good relationships with someone would enable them to talk about mental and physical health more easily
- Children and young people think that children and young people need love and support, a sense of belonging, easy access to health appointments and being listened too and believed in to live a happy, healthy and well life
- Children and young people believe that there needs to be more training including being trauma informed, mental health first aid, for all professionals – social workers, PA's and foster carers
- Health services can be more supportive and aware of care experience by listening, being kind and having empathy for people with care experience
- Children and young people hope that in 2 years' time there is more training for professionals, less stigma, free prescriptions for care experienced people
- Children and young people hope that in 10 years' time mental health levels are lower (including mental health related deaths) and that there is quicker access to health support.



**Coram Voice, Coram Campus, 41 Brunswick
Square, London WC1N 1AZ**

**Tel: 020 7833 5792
Email: ANV@coramvoice.org.uk**

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