

# Notes from 9th Meeting of National Executive 2014-15

4th October 2014

**Attendees at this meeting: 22 out of 33 attended**

**John Sutton, Carlow; Conor McCabe, Cavan; Shauna Williams, Cork City; Jane Hayes-Nally, Cork Co; Maria Ferry, Donegal; Dylan Kennedy, South Dublin; Laura Hogan, DLR; Garreth O'Connor, Fingal; Ellen Butler, Galway County; Irene Ayaa, Kilkenny; Ella Mulkerrins, Leitrim; Thomas Ganley, Longford; Shay McArdle, Louth; Sofia Vajenina, Mayo; Cillian Byrne, Meath; Lily Cheung, Monaghan; Caoimhe Barnes, Offaly; Cáirthach O'Faoláin, Waterford County; Becky O'Connell, Waterford City; Niamh Tubridy, Westmeath; Macdara Roche, Wexford; Murray Kennedy, Wicklow**

## Focus of the ninth meeting:

- Presentation on the concept of the 'Five-a-Day for your Mental Health' by Gillian O'Biren, Headstrong
- Re-cap on decisions around recruitment of second-level students made at last meeting and examining where to go from there by looking at practicalities and logistics.
- Presentation of a new proposal by Participation Support Team around the national gathering and the best way to achieved our desired impact.



## Morning Session

### Presentation on the 'Five-a-Day for your Mental Health' by Gillian O'Brien, Headstrong

- Five-a-Day is more commonly associated with physical health so Headstrong decided to adopt a similar approach around mental health. They looked to an existing published paper: *Five Ways to Wellbeing*—developed from evidence gathered in the UK government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing. Their 'five-a-day' are: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give. These activities are simple things individuals can do in their everyday lives and are focused primarily on the mental health of adults.
- Based on this, Headstrong wanted to adapt and tailor these to young people's mental health and as a result came up with the five-a-day below. These have a very clear evidence-base and a lot of research was carried out to come up with these so in our work it is important that we stay true to them and don't change their meaning

- ◆ **CONNECT**
- ◆ **BE ACTIVE**
- ◆ **TAKE NOTICE**
- ◆ **GET INVOLVED**
- ◆ **GIVE**



#### **CONNECT:**

Reach out to others, connect with family, friends and places i.e. your community. Join clubs and groups.

#### **BE ACTIVE:**

Be physically active. Find an activity you enjoy—releases feel-good endorphins that improve your mood and mental health

#### **TAKE NOTICE:**

Be curious of the wonders of the world around you. Be aware of yourself. Be mindful.

#### **GET INVOLVED:**

Have a say in matters affecting you. Join clubs and groups. Make a contribution. Having a sense of purpose is widely known to have a positive impact on mental health

#### **GIVE:**

Do something nice for others. Volunteer.

## Morning & Afternoon Session

After Gillian's presentation, a short Q&A took place within the larger group and some comments and feedback on Headstrong's Five-a-Day model were fed back to Gillian.

### Comments and questions from the national executive:

- As a whole they group felt that the Headstrong model was good as it looked at the smaller stuff such as low periods in a person's life, instead of being focused solely on serious depression issues. In that way, it was felt to have a broad appeal and that most young people could relate to it and find something in it to help them.
- Some people felt that the ideas were not portrayed by the words representing them
- Some people felt that there was a lot more focus on physical health over mental health in schools.
- How do we get it out there? Suggestions: promote it in schools and online. Suggestion that a poster with the Five-a-Day could be posted on highly visible places such as toilet doors. Create a hashtag. Needs a multi-prong approach from many different levels.

### Small buzz groups session:

- Explore if the wording of the five-a-day is easily understood by young people
- Come up with suggested and more easily understood alternative words (if required)

Consensus could not be reached on some alternative wording. Some groups felt that some of the original words were not entirely clear but they couldn't think of a better alternative.

Decision: group to go away and think about possible alternatives and to bring to the next meeting.

#### • **CONNECT:**

Three alternative options but no consensus: Be social / Socialise / Interact

#### • **BE ACTIVE:**

Three alternative options but no consensus:

Move yer Body / Keep Active / Get Moving

#### • **TAKE NOTICE:** Two alternative options but no consensus:

Take a minute / Take a breath

#### • **GET INVOLVED:** Decision to keep as it is

#### • **GIVE:** Decision to keep as it is



## Afternoon Session

Some descriptions by the group of what the five ideas mean to them:

- **CONNECT**

Reach out: to family and friends.

Interacting with family, friends, and people with common interests

Not being afraid of reaching out to people you trust

- **BE ACTIVE**

Exercise and fresh air = a happier you

Be active through sports and exercise

- **BE AWARE:**

Be aware of your own feelings and those of others

Take a breath: don't let life pass you by

Pause for thought

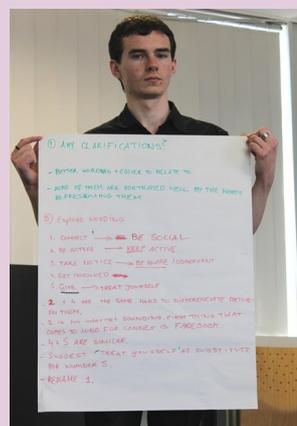
- **GET INVOLVED:**

Join clubs and groups in which you are interested

Get involved: in your community

- **GIVE:**

Give some time to yourself and to others



## Afternoon Session

### Session on partnership between DCYA Participation Support Team and National Executive:

#### WHO IS ON THE TEAM?

Staff of the DCYA Citizen Participation Unit (Anne, Bairbre, Eva and Marie)

Staff from Foróige (Martin and Edel) and from Youth Work Ireland (Suzanne and Karyn)

#### Role of DCYA Participation Support Team in working with the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive

To organise meeting venue, food, equipment etc...

To ensure the welfare and safety of member of the Executive

To work with Executive members in planning meetings

To design effective methods for group discussion and work

To facilitate at meetings

To ask adult decision-makers to work with the Executive or attend Executive meetings

To open doors for the Executive to access important decision-makers

To bring our individual and collective experience and skills to the work

Martin spoke about the relationship between the DCYA Participation Support Team and Comhairle, and also gave an insight into where we fit in the organizational structure of DCYA —please see attached two charts to illustrate this.

Anne, Martin and Karyn then spoke to the group about their own different backgrounds and previous positions held. The purpose of this was to illustrate that we are not just facilitators but also bring a very broad range of experience to the table and have skills that can be drawn on in the development of this recommendation.

#### Key Point:

This is an inter-generational partnership. You can't do your work without us and we can't do our work without you.



## Afternoon Session

### **Recruitment of second-level students to attend the event.**

How do we do this if we are not recruiting from within Comhairle?

#### **Options presented by Lily and Sofia, who attended last planning meeting:**

- To recruit through schools
- To recruit through youth organisations / clubs etc...
- To recruit through the AGMs (from those not elected onto Comhairle)
- To recruit by way of competition
- To recruit through social media and the website

The participation team have examined these five options at length since the last meeting and have a number of concerns around logistics, child protection and welfare.

- We have no control over young people who are non-Comhairle members or not affiliated with a youth organisation travelling on their own to an event in Dublin. This is not best practice when it comes to child protection and would never be allowed happen with either Foróige or Youth Work Ireland.
- Young people are unlikely to travel on their own to an event. When recruiting, this means we would be limited to inviting only 250 young people, by allowing them to invite a friend. With over 700 schools and thousands of youth clubs and projects, we would only impact on a very small number of young people.

#### **Alternative proposal by Participation Support Team**

\*To host a national launch in Dublin inviting media, key decision makers and relevant organisations. The launch would be run by the National Executive.

Then a week or so later, all 31 Comhairle host a local Let's Go Mental event—all on the same day all over the country. Would have a much greater impact and allow for much greater numbers of attendees. If each local Comhairle had 200 attendees, this would mean numbers of over 6000, as opposed to 500. Would attract massive media attention too and we could run a huge social media campaign in the lead-up.

General initial feedback was positive. Pros and cons will be discussed at the next meeting. Date below.

#### **Names taken for sitting on next National Executive planning meeting:**

Ellen Butler and Cárthach O'Faoláin—date to follow

**Next meeting Saturday 1st November 2014**