Notes from 2nd Meeting of National Executive 2014-15

22nd February 2014

Attendees at this meeting: 29 out of 34 attended

Aaron McGrath, Carlow; **Conor McCabe**, Cavan; **Siobhra Conway**, Clare; **Shauna Williams**, Cork City; **Jane Nally-Hayes**, Cork Co; **Maria Ferry,** Donegal: **Dylan Kennedy,** South Dublin; **Laura Hogan**, Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown; **Garreth O'Connor**, Fingal; **Kayleigh Power,** Galway City; **Daniel Porter,** Galway Co; **Conor Curtin**, Kerry; **Irene Ayaa,** Kilkenny; **Joy Turley**, Laois; **Ella Mulkerrins,** Leitrim; **Marion Lynch,** Limerick City; **Pearse Mulcahy,** Limerick Co; **Thomas Ganley,** Longford; **Shay McArdle**, Louth; **Cillian Byrne,** Meath; **Lily Cheung**, Monaghan; **Caoimhe Barnes**, Offaly; **Niki Warner,** Roscommon; Bertie Nesirky, Tipperary North; **Donagh Crowe**, Tipperary South; **Becky O'Connell,** Waterford City; **Cárthach O'Faoiláin**, Waterford County; **Niamh Tubridy,** Westmeath; **Macdara Roche**, Wexford, **Niamh Whelan**, Wicklow

Focus of the second meeting:

- Examining and discussing what mental health means to young people
- Coming up with their own working definition of mental health—this will form the basis of their work on their recommendation from Dáil na nÓg 2013
- Looking at the 'Good Stuff' that already exists out there in relation to mental health—what exists in their own areas, what good examples have they seen etc...
- Coming up with the best options for Group Communication between meetings

Comhairle na nÓg
National Executive

Morning Session

DVD Presentation: 'Time to start talking for your mental health'

- Session facilitated by a young person, Amy, from Headstrong Youth Advisory Panel (YAP). Talks from James Barry, Headstrong, and Nigel O'Callaghan, ReachOut.com

- Open-space session followed: split into smaller groups to look at 'What hurts'? and 'What helps?' your mental health.

So what do the National Executive think 'hurts' our mental health???

Some of their ideas below...
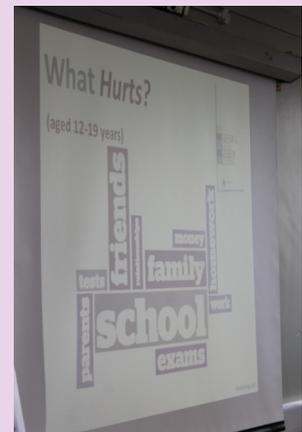

What 'hurts' our Mental Health?

- Bullying
- School (exams, homework, study)
- Peer Pressure
- Problems with family & friends
- Relationships
- Loss /bereavement (friends, death)
- Physical health / diet / lack of sleep
- Lack of control
- Disability and illness
- Sexuality / homophobia
- Loneliness and isolation / exclusion
- Discrimination
- Media

- Lack of support systems
- Self-image / poor self-esteem
- Gender
- Addiction (drugs / alcohol)
- Being judged / prejudice
- Racism
- Area / surroundings
- Religion
- Emigration
- The weather
- Expectations
- Failure
- Money
- Body image & media perceptions

Morning Session

So what do they think 'helps' our mental health???
Some of their ideas below...

- Family and friends
- Positive relationships
- Social Interaction
- Someone to talk to
- Success
- Time to think
- Music & hobbies
- Exercise & sports
- A good diet & enough sleep
- Good coping methods
- Looking nice
- Holidays—time away
- Getting help /phoning a helpline
- Encouragement & Compliments
- Relaxing / taking it easy
- Good self-esteem
- Having goals
- Good surroundings
- Acceptance
- Being financially stable
- Good communication

- Being able to express yourself
- Physical health
- Knowing your limitations
- Technology
- Light (good weather etc...)

Afternoon Session

Comhairle na nÓg
National Executive
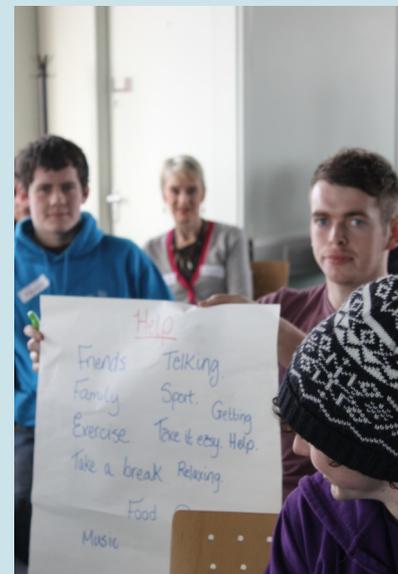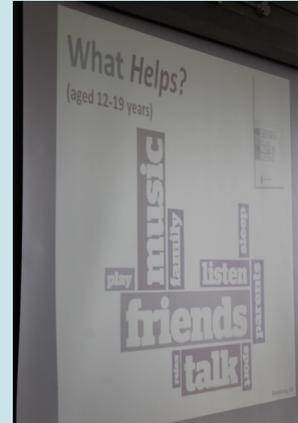
What is your definition of Mental Health: Group Discussion

- Split into smaller buzz groups to come up with their own 'youth-friendly' definition of mental health and what it means to them. Definitions written on coloured card. Each written out a number of times for later session,

- Came together as a group for a Feedback session to look at what came out of the different groups overall

- Split into different buzz-groups with copies of each groups' definitions—Aim: to examine / explore these definitions; look at whether they are clear and easily understandable; could anything be added / amended to improve the definitions.

- All definitions, including amended ones, stuck up on wall for voting purposes.

- Each person read carefully over the final definitions and voted for their top one.

So what was the top definition, as voted on by a majority
of National Executive members?

*'Mental Health is the state of the mind, and how we
cope with positive and negative experiences and
emotions on a day-to-day basis'*
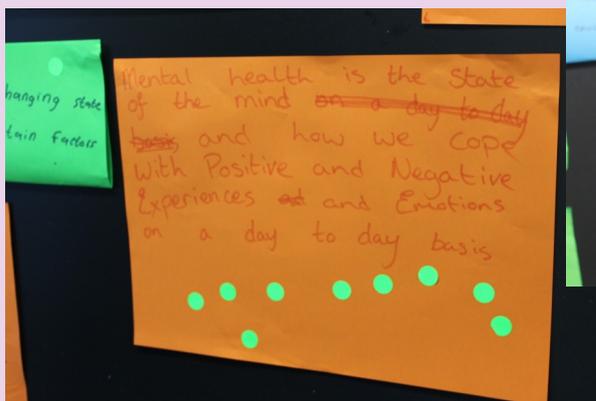
Afternoon Session

> ## What were all the other definitions that were put forward and voted on at the end of the day?
>
> - 'Mental Health is the condition of your mind at a certain point in time and can be measured by a spectrum ranging from good to bad, and everything in between'
> - 'Mental health is the coping with and changing of the state of the mind (from positive and negative emotions and thoughts) impacting how people look at what's around them, depending on their personal circumstances'
> - 'Mental Health is your mind's condition, a measurement of your ability to deal with all of life's ups and down'
> - 'Mental Health is a measurement of your ability to deal with all of life's ups and downs'
> - 'Mental Health is our internal landscape of emotions and thoughts you have towards yourself, be they positive or negative, and our ability to cope'
> - 'Mental Health is your ability to deal with all of life's ups and downs'
> - 'Mental Health is the changing state of mind, influenced by certain factors'
> - 'Mental Health is an internal landscape, a coping mechanism to balance day-to-day experiences which influence perceptions and emotions'
> - ' Mental Health is where we balance our day-to-day experiences, situations and emotions'
> - 'Mental Health is our state of mind where we cope and balance day-to-day experiences, situations and emotions'
> - 'Mental Health is the fluctuating state of the mind, influencing perceptions of your environment, depending on personal circumstances'
> - 'Mental Health is your general state of well-being and how your mind works to cope with different situations. It is just as important as physical health'

Afternoon Session

Thinking about your recommendation: where to go next??

Discussion on the 'good stuff' out there – stuff that they've seen, either through their own Comhairle or elsewhere, that's been successful in relation to mental health, e.g. Mental Health App in Louth, Cyber-Code and Mind matters in Waterford etc…

Examples given by the larger group:

Headstrong / Jigsaw – YAPs (youth advisory panels)

Craobh Rua Youth Club

i-Minds Conference, Laois

Retreat Day (videoed through social media)

Mind Matters – Waterford County

Dingle – meditation at lunch time

Mental health concert – Tipperary

Sparks – Donegal

Bullying – working with victims and making people aware of the things they can do - Laois

LGBT – Carlow Youth Service

LGBT Conference – Wicklow

Bullying / mental health campaign – Westmeath

Mental Health App – Louth

DVD and flag for Cyber-Bullying – Wexford

Day with different workshops & development of an app – South Dublin (Mind Mindr)

Decisions re: Group Communication options between meetings

- Facebook is not an option as a Closed Group forum as two members are not on Facebook. This would mean they are excluded from all group chats – goes against what everyone decided on the Group Contract about no-one being excluded.

- Google Plus set up by Karyn/Suzanne and a similar online forum set up already by Dylan Kennedy, South Dublin. To use Google Plus, all reps need to have a Gmail account, so if you don't have one already, please try to set one up, purely for this purpose. Both to be piloted before next meeting and a feedback session to be had at next meeting to discuss pros and cons. Karyn will be in touch with everyone by email.

- **Homework for next meeting**: research examples of 'Good Stuff' in your local area in relation to mental health (as above). We want to know what good examples are out there re: promoting positive mental health in your area, or examples of initiatives that have been successful in relation to mental health that you've seen / heard about / been involved with etc… either through your own Comhairle, or outside of Comhairle. All examples to be emailed to Karyn before **Monday 3rd March.** This research will form the basis of the next meeting so it's very important that we receive your info in advance.

Date of next meeting: Saturday 22nd March 2014