

## CREATING AN EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION TO RAISE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AND TACKLE STIGMA IN ADOLESCENTS IN THE UK: 'HEADUCATE'

**S. Parker<sup>1</sup>**, C. Robertson<sup>1</sup>, N. Allen<sup>1</sup>, J. Beezhold<sup>2</sup>, A. Bhutto<sup>1</sup>, R. Laverack<sup>1</sup>, L. Parry<sup>1</sup>, L. Piper<sup>1</sup>, R. Smith<sup>1</sup>, T. Wade<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Norwich Medical School, University of East Anglia, <sup>2</sup>Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Norwich, UK

**Introduction:** Against a backdrop of poor mental health education in UK schools a group of students from Norwich Medical School have formed a student society called 'Headucate' in order to create, deliver and evaluate an educational intervention for adolescents, initially to be delivered in Norfolk schools.

**Objectives:** To create an educational intervention that:

- Is the length of a standard lesson
- Is age appropriate and acceptable
- Contains appropriate signposting
- Contains content that challenges common myths and replaces them with knowledge
- Contains content that encourages empathy and understanding towards those with mental illnesses
- Is easily delivered in the same way each time so that its effectiveness can be evaluated

**Aim:** To create an intervention effective at tackling stigma and empowering adolescents to recognise signs of poor mental health and access services appropriately.

**Methods:** Lesson plan created after consultation with psychiatrists, a psychologist, a GP, a university outreach professional, a teacher and secondary school age children, then trialled and revised.

**Results:** Interactive workshop produced with 5 sections.

- 1) Myth vs Fact activity that dispels prevalent myths
- 2) Scenario based activity to demonstrate that mental health is a spectrum
- 3) An interactive presentation covering the most common mental illnesses and their symptoms
- 4) An activity focusing on talking to those with mental illnesses, furthering the scenario from the previous activity
- 5) A question and answer session. Every student leaves with a leaflet containing appropriate signposting.

**Conclusion:** We have created an educational intervention ready to be delivered and evaluated.