

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

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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.