

What's on your mind?

Engagement with young people, Buckie High School 13.11.2014



Figure 1: Young people were asked to describe themselves in three words

1. Introduction

The Moray Council and NHS Grampian are working in partnership with the wider community to develop a 10 year mental health and wellbeing strategy for all ages.

A series of events and activities have taken place to engage with people to gather their views and experiences which have shaped the development of the strategy.

The plan will set out the outcomes and priorities the community wants all partners to work towards in order to meet people's needs and achieve the best mental health and wellbeing possible for everyone in Moray.

2. Summary

Pupils had a low level of awareness that many of the things they do in their everyday life have an impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Many felt it was a lack of awareness and time that stopped them doing more.

Pressure at school, particularly exams, were the top area of stress for pupils along with the future, including getting a job or going to college/university. Of least concern was bullying.

Most pupils felt they could turn to guidance/PSE teachers when they had worries, as well as friends and other teachers. A small number felt there was no one they could turn to.



A high number of pupils identified barriers to their talking about their worries. These included feeling teachers were unapproachable and uncaring, not having time themselves or teachers being busy.

Pupils were worried about how to ask for help and the reaction they would get. They wanted staff to be more aware of mental health and how to start a conversation.

They felt it would help if both pupils and staff had more education on mental health, particularly from people who could talk about their own experiences. They were also keen to learn about the positive steps they could take to self-manage their mental health.

3. Process

A mental health and wellbeing information stall was set up during a careers fair held at Buckie High School on 13th November 2014, providing resources on addressing stress and highlighting the roles of national anti-stigma and helpline organisations such as See Me and Breathing Space.

Pupils were engaged in discussions around their mental health focusing on the links between physical and mental health and the five steps to wellbeing – give, keep learning, be active, take notice, connect.

An overview was presented of the work being carried out to develop the new mental health and wellbeing strategy for Moray and pupils were asked to help inform the strategy by completing a short paper questionnaire.

4. Responses

A total of 131 questionnaires were returned.

- Gender - 33% (n=40) were from girls; 15% (n=18) were from boys. 53% (n=65) did not answer the question. This question may have been missed due to the layout of the questionnaire
- Age – pupils ranged in age from 14-18. 41% (n= 52) were aged 15, 38% (n=48) were aged 16

5. Comments

5.1 Looking after your own mental health

Pupils were asked what they did to look after their own mental health. 126 comments were made.

Most pupils struggled to answer and were prompted by the initial discussion on the five steps for wellbeing.



Summary of comments:

- Keeping active and looking after my physical health – playing sport, exercising, eating healthily, getting enough sleep
- Connecting with others – talking to family and friends
- Giving – volunteering and fundraising
- Learning/taking notice – hobbies, reading, listening to music, school
- Self-management – smiling, thinking positively, relaxing, letting emotions out.

The comments are listed at Appendix 1.

5.3 What would help you do more?

Pupils were asked what would help them to do more to look after their own mental health. 83 comments were made.

Summary of comments:

- Having more time – less homework, less pressure at school, being more organised
- Information and support – more awareness, more encouragement, someone to help
- Connecting with others – more people to talk to
- Self-management – being able to relax, keeping a positive mind
- Opportunities – more clubs and activities
- Physical health – positive action on physical health.

The comments are listed at Appendix 2.

5.4 What worries you?

Pupils were presented with a list of 15 common areas of concern and asked to tick all which applied.

1.	Exams	111
2.	The future	98
3.	School	77
4.	Getting a job	72
5.	Going to college of university	67
6.	What others think about me	66

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7.	What I think about myself	51
8.	Relationships with my family	44
9.	Money	42
10.	My physical health	39
11.	Relationships with my friends	37
12.	Being happy	36
13.	My mental health	35
14.	Someone else's physical or mental health	29
15.	Bullying	21

A text box invited additional comments and 10 comments were made.

- Being lonely
- My self-harm
- Seeing others get bullied
- Getting ill; getting sick; my diabetes
- Over thinking everything and thinking too far ahead; trying to sound out ideas; where I stand with others, if I belong here or not
- Caring duties.

5.5 Who could you talk to at school about any worries?

Pupils were asked who they could talk to about their concerns. 108 comments were made.

The most common answers were:

1.	Guidance/PSE teacher	75
2.	Friends	37
3.	Teachers	23
4.	Parent or other family member	16
5.	Apex	4
6.	School nurses	4
6.	Home school link worker	4
8.	Adults, everyone	3

Other responses included:

- Guidance teachers I trust; teachers who have taught me
- Social worker; professional; helper

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- Don't like talking to people at school because not many people there care; I don't think there is anyone; no one really

Three individuals were mentioned by name.

5.6 What stops you from talking to them and what would help?

Pupils were asked to highlight barriers to approaching those they had identified and suggest solutions. 89 comments were made.

A small number of pupils said they did find it easy to talk.

Summary of comments:

- Attitudes and relationships - not approachable; uncaring; don't feel close to them. It would help if they were more approachable, more open.
- Lack of time – pupils not having enough time and staff being busy. It would help if times to talk were organised
- My concerns – worry about approaching staff; what to say; their reaction. It would help if there was less stigma around mental health
- Lack of understanding – others not getting how I'm feeling. It would help if there was more training and awareness around mental health.

The comments are listed at Appendix 3.

5.7 What could your school be doing to help young people maintain and improve their mental health?

Pupils were asked for ideas for change and improvement. 90 comments were made.

Summary of comments:

- Education/information – putting more emphasis on mental health in PSE and in general; increasing access to information; inviting people with lived experience to give talks
- Support – not waiting for pupils to ask for help; scheduling individual guidance meetings
- Self-help – offering lessons on how to support mental health and practice relaxation techniques
- Education for teachers – improved training and awareness for teachers on mental health



Comments are listed in full in Appendix 4.

Appendix 1: What do you do to look after your own mental health?	
Theme	Comment
Keeping active / looking after my physical health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise/keep fit/keep active/play sports x26 • Walking x7 • I go walks with my dog to clear my head • Running x5 • Play football x4 • Eat fruit and veg/healthily x9 • Cycling • Golf • Tennis • Gymnastics • Going to see the horses • Dance x3 • Sleep well x 8
Connect with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to/spend time with family x11 • Go out with/see/talk to friends x21 • I talk to my friends about my feelings/ how I feel/things that worry me/ talk about problems x5 • Talk to friends on line • Talk to social worker • Doctor • Talk to people x2 • Talk/communication x3 • Work x 5 • Keeping busy • Facebook • Socialise/go out x3 • Cadets • Take part in groups
Give	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer at local care home • Volunteer at British Red Cross • Teach x3 • Volunteering, fundraising, going abroad to help kids • Looking after pets

Appendix 1: What do you do to look after your own mental health?

Theme	Comment
Keep learning/take notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing • My hobbies • Go to BBs x2 • Playstation • School/study x7 • Keep on top of school work • I read a lot • Paint • Drawing x4 • Read x3 • Listen to music x7 • Play violent video games • Write
Self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive thinking x6 • Doing nice things • Smile/laugh x3 • Stay happy x2 • Stay happy and hang with nice people/surrounding myself with good people x2 • I take time for myself to collect my thoughts/keep a clear mind/have time to myself x3 • Sticking to a routine • Keeping busy/thing of something to do/keep myself amused x3 • Try not to get stressed/worried about things/think negatively x 7 • Be alone • Letting my emotions out • Take care of myself • I talk to my mum often and tell her what's on my mind • I think a lot about all aspects of my mind and share my concerns • I try to talk to those that go through the same stuff to help them too • Speak if I am angry • Relax /close my eyes and relax/relaxation and breathing exercises/rest x6 • Draw when stressed • Not listen to the voices in my head, see psychiatric nurse once every 2 weeks and psychiatrist regularly
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I never really think about it • Not much as I can't

Appendix 1: What do you do to look after your own mental health?

Theme	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I use a laptop in school which helps my writing problem Not really sure how to

Appendix 2: What would help you to do more?

Theme	Comment
More time/being organised/less pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having more time/making time x10 Being more organised at school/keeping on top of work x3 Less homework x3 Less pressure in school to do well x4 Have the right amount of work and play Motivation x3
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be more aware in school, someone to come in and tell us what we could do. I only know what I do and am unaware of any other ways Learning about what to do/how to help x2 Schools to help Positive encouragement, more knowledge More information on it x2 Having more information on relaxing more Education on mental health
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having someone there for me when I break down and need help. Support x3 Others helping Someone to help me when laptop is out of charge Help get some clubs set up for mental health Encouragement and hard work
Connecting with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to people Having more people to talk to having people I can trust, that care about me If there were more people close to me If I was more sociable Meeting more nice people Ensuring I always continue to share Less people Talking about issues Be with family and friends

Self-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relax x3 • Being able to contain emotions, • Not being afraid of people • Not care • Keep a positive mind • Be positive • If I didn't get stressed • Staying positive so I wont relapse and start self-harming again • Setting time aside to not study • Brain activities • Read
More opportunities/interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get out • Reading more • Stress relief i.e. boxing, swimming sports • More opportunities for exercise activities I enjoy x2 • Create more local clubs • More opportunities to socialise • More things to do in the area
Looking after my physical health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat better/healthily x 6 • Exercise/be more active x6 • Sleep well/more sleep x3

Appendix 3: What stops you talking to them and what would help?

Theme	What stops you?	What would help?
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grumpy • Some unapproachable • They don't seem to care; I don't think they honestly care; • get the impression some don't care x3 • They are intimidating; they scare me x2 • They would rather ignore a problem than solve it • Scared they will judge me; thinking they might judge me; them judging me; pressure from being judged; being judged x8 • Being rejected • Worried about their reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Them being more interested • More approachable • Be more open • Just be more open to talk to • If they were more open and willing for people to come to them about mental health issues
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No time; there never seems to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise a time



	<p>enough time x 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They may be busy; not always available; not enough time for you x2 • Guidance teacher never there 	
Worry/stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear; worry; being nervous; too shy; embarrassed x 12 • Other people x 2 • Maybe the reputation you might get • Scared to look weak, embarrassed • Worried about rejection • Stigma attached • Don't know what to say • Just shy to tell them private details about myself • Not easy to talk about certain things • I am confused what to ask help for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having less of a bad image about mental health • Advice about how to start conversations • How to put across what I feel • A form to fill out first
Lack of understanding/awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If other people don't understand; they might not understand how I am really feeling x3 • If they don't get what I'm on about • Don't think the thing I worry about is a problem • Worry that they won't be able to help • Sometimes I don't see the point. Sometimes they don't help • Might not understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More training in schools
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't have a close relationship • Not close enough to teachers • I don't trust anyone enough • Not wanting to open up to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they tell others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person to talk to outside of school
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find it easy • I do talk to them x2 • I already see someone about my issues and that I don't gain anything • Nothing, they are supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Appendix 4: What could your school be doing to help young people maintain and improve their mental health?

Theme	Comment
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Appendix 4: What could your school be doing to help young people maintain and improve their mental health?

Theme	Comment
Education/information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information/ useful information on mental health x4 • Raise awareness; posters about mental health x3 • More info on what bad mental health is/ more realistic education about mental health and mental illness x2 • Have an assembly x2 • Talks/talk about it more x 9 • Talks from anyone who specialises in mental health support/ people with experience of mental health x4 • More on mental health in PSE; more lessons/education on mental health x 10 • Hold little surveys like this one to track their students' mental health
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give help and advise x2 • Check-ups on people who seem vulnerable • Try approaching them/ ask more questions/ask if they are OK; teachers should ask direct questions x4 • Schedule one-to-one guidance meetings x5 • Help them when they are stressing out • Don't be as mean • Spotting the signs early • Being more understanding • Talking about exam stress more/more help with our worries x2 • Support days • Let them know they are there • Have energising fun people to talk to, down to earth
Self-help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach relaxation techniques/ yoga classes, Pilates x4 • Teaching how you can keep yourself mentally healthy • Show ways to help quit or to prevent harming when it's the only way you think you have • Make us more aware of it and be able to recognise if others need help
Education/training for teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for teachers x3 • Awareness among teachers x2 • Giving useful information and actually taking time to explain mental health • Actually giving helpful advice and getting them support • Offering advice in PSE class rather than relying on people coming to them • More training on how to notice things, how to deal with it
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of technology/apps x4

Appendix 4: What could your school be doing to help young people maintain and improve their mental health?

Theme	Comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clubs x3 • More social groups • Start new activities, and breaks and a laugh • Offering better after school activities • Making it more of a happy place • We already have PSE telling us a lot about mental health which is helpful • Physical exercise/ compulsory sports clubs to take their mind off it x2 • No school • Let them have a normal time at school and let them have a great school life like everyone else