

working things out

A therapeutic interactive DVD/CD-Rom containing the stories of young people overcoming depression and other mental health problems

Mater Hospital Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Dublin.

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Background

- Emerged from 'Challenging Times'- study of prevalence of depressive disorders and suicidal behaviours in young adolescents. (Fitzpatrick et. al, 2003)
- Mental health professionals conducted focus groups with young people who had been identified as having depressive symptoms following a screening process in a number of secondary schools in North Dublin city.
- Young people began to share stories of how they coped with issues such as parental separation, bullying, anxiety and depression.

Goals

- **Primary goal** - engage young people in a creative process through use of multimedia.
- **Secondary goal** - consolidating their coping skills, relationships, positive experience, improve self-esteem.

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The approach

- Practical- using Multimedia technology to help build relationships of support between mental health professionals and young people
- Narrative Psychotherapy Model
- Strengths based
- Asked them to be the “experts”
- The role of the young people in the production and design process.
- Psychoeducational
- Key motivation for participants
- Role of the facilitator

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Script development

- A process of co-construction where the therapist worked with the young person over a period of 8-10 months to build the narrative.
- Individual sessions/groupwork
- Narrative structure
 - described their experiences,
 - how they and their families were affected by these issues
 - what brought about positive changes in how they understood and dealt with their problems.

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Creating Graphics, Audio and other Content

- Creative exercises, writing song lyrics, poetry and stories that expressed something about them and their own coping strengths.
- Storyboarding animation sequences
- Photography, original art work, voiceovers, soundtracks
- Working in groups, collaborative work skills.
- Young people made choices about which areas of the production process they contributed to.
- Develop their own strengths

Final Content

- Final production includes ten mini-movies of the young peoples' stories and one song.

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Using WTO with Young People in Schools

- Social and Personal Health Education subject in Junior Cycle (14 yr. olds)
- The DVD has been designed as therapeutic learning tool for young people (and their families) who are experiencing similar mental health problems.
- To be used in a facilitated way by a professional, either individually or with a small group of adolescents.
- The aim is that on viewing the stories adolescents may feel a resonance or empathy with the story teller helping them feel 'not alone' if similar issues affect them.
- Focal point for discussion and relationship building, also engage the adolescent to open up and share their own story.

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Young Person Interviews

Why did you decide to take part in the Project?

“Just to basically share my experiences with other people who were maybe going through similar experiences and to maybe help them to find a solution”.

What did you like most about the Project?

“Working on the media I just liked using all the computers and the cameras and everything”.

“The graphics and stuff, like the stuff you had to do on the computer and whatever to get it all together. I’m interested in that kind of stuff.”

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Young Person Interviews

What did you like least about the Project?

“Probably the recording of the voiceovers. If you’re not a very good actor you feel yourself that you don’t sound very well. I didn’t think I sounded very well”.

Was there anything particularly useful or helpful for you in the Project?

“I just think really talking to people about the problems that I had and finding solutions to them and getting them over with”.

Do you think that the multimedia helped you to tell your story? Explain.

“It just made it more interesting for us to like tell the story, instead of us just talking into something, it helped you like just to explain yourself. We got to like take part in doing it, making it as well. So, I thought that was great.

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