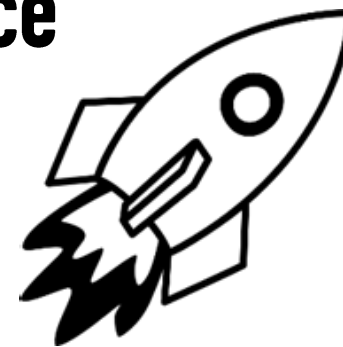


Devon CAMHS: Trailblazer Resource

Amplified Power Pack



CYP Presentation: Devon CAMHS Conference, December 2017

The Project

With support from YoungMinds, the LGBT+ Participation Group...

- Co-produced a digital insights survey for young people across the region, in order to collect data on LGBT+ experience of the MH system
- Took part in a creative workshop, identifying changes required within the local system
- Co-designed and delivered a workshop on 'how to communicate more effectively with LGBT+ young people', as part of CAMHS workers' regional conference

The Insights

The group designed and distributed a digital insights survey amongst their peers.

Survey respondents gave a wide variety of descriptors for both their gender and sexuality.

Their priorities for mental health treatment are much the same as any young people: confidentiality; effective treatment; trusting relationships with professionals; shorter waiting lists. The key difference was a need to be accepted and understood – this informed the top tips section of this document.

The Workshop (45 mins)

'Mistaken Identity' Icebreaker: In pairs, participants were asked to find out a series of things about one another, but were challenged to repeatedly use the wrong name for their partner. This was to simulate the feeling of disconnection that LGBT+ young people often feel

Five young people facilitated the workshop with 3 giving **presentations** that combined personal stories with supportive advice for staff on how to engage with LGBT+ young people

Q&A An opportunity for CAMHS workers to ask clarifying questions about their practice.



A word cloud featuring various terms related to gender and sexuality. The most prominent words are 'bisexual' and 'pansexual' in large, bold letters. Other visible words include 'lesbian', 'gay', 'heterosexual', 'queer', 'woman', 'give', 'bi', 'af', 'demisexual', 'questioning', 'prefer', 'curious', and 'label'. The words are arranged in a cluster, with some overlapping.



CYP Presentation: Labelling LGBT+ young people

[Starting with feedback from 'wrong name' activity and explaining the reasoning]

Some common concerns we know that CAMHS workers face:

1. Knowing what to do when you don't know what to do
2. Knowing how to react when faced with LGBT+ issues you haven't come across before
3. Knowing how to talk about it respectfully.

Key point: You don't need to know every label that exists and what they mean – just be open to the knowledge that there are lots out there and they often overlap

YOU HAVE
EXACTLY ONE
LIFE IN WHICH
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DO. ACT
ACCORDINGLY.

by colin wright

“Labels help define you but they are not you” – Act Accordingly, Colin Wright

- If a young person mentions a label in relation to themselves and you haven't heard of it before ask 'what does that label mean for you?'
- Understand that *who they are* comes first, a label is a way of summarising who they are
- Ask what the label means to them even if you've heard of it before and know what it is, it makes it seem more personal and allows the young person to explain how they feel if they wish to do so
- This gives you the vocabulary to respectfully navigate a situation when you've not heard of a term before

CYP Presentation: Labelling LGBT+ young people continued...

- When faced with a young person that is questioning their gender or sexuality, approach it with the idea that working out how you feel about yourself and your gender/sexuality should shape your label. The label shouldn't shape who they are or how they feel

It's okay to not know which label fits you, you know who you are better than anyone else

Find a label that fits how you feel instead of changing yourself to fit a label.

- You don't need to be covered in rainbows to show that you're LGBT+ friendly and open to talking about issues faced by LGBT+ young people, it's little things like using inclusive language and allowing the young person to explain how they feel without feeling pressured

When a young person sees that that's how you act, you're more likely to be perceived as an ally and someone they can open up to

For example, not assuming a young person is straight or cis (cisgender means someone who is not transgender)

Avoiding comments that may be seen as anti-LGBT 'that's gay'

- Advertising LGBT+ based groups or resources in shared spaces such as waiting rooms or corridors can make people more comfortable to talk about being LGBT+

CYP Presentation: What's In A Name?

What's in a name?

Many LGBTQ people use a name that is different from their birth name. They may not identify with their birth name at all.

Therefore using their birth name is rude, disrespectful, hinders communication and can be the same as not talking **to** the person but **at** the person.

Requests for workers when meeting new YP:

Ask "what do you want me to call you?", or something similar. This allows for use of preferred names as well as just nicknames.

Two things to bear in mind:

Don't question the name.

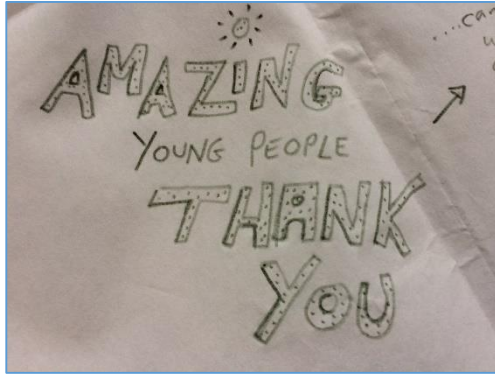
- Usage of a preferred name can help build trust, questioning it can damage that trust instantly.
- Don't be taken aback or question gender non-conforming names, it can hurt the YP's identity as it can take a lot of courage to come out with a preferred name.
- Allow the YP to discuss it in their own time, Gender and sexuality may affect a YP's mental health but is it not a sign or symptom of poor mental health.
- It is part of their identity and life, and while it can affect MH, it does not need to be treated.

Ask the question about what to call the YP when parents / guardians are not present

- YP might not have told their parents and it puts them in a tough spot.
- Furthermore, discuss with the YP what to call them if parents become involved in meetings as usage of a preferred name in that situation could make things worse not better.



Feedback from Professionals

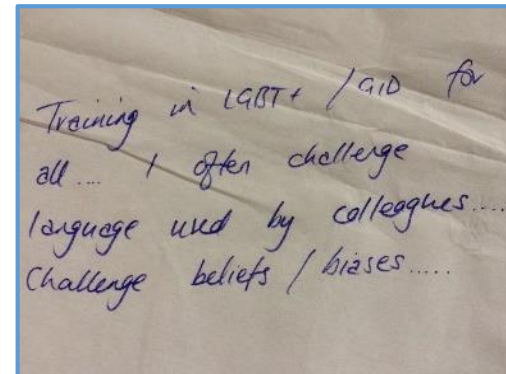
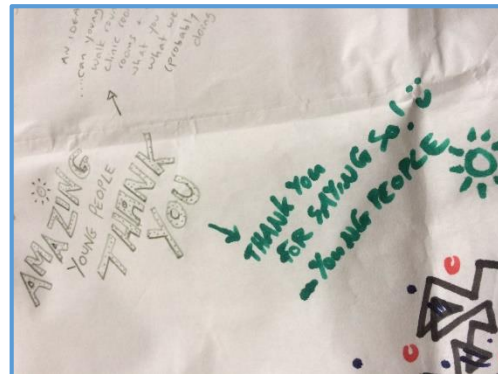
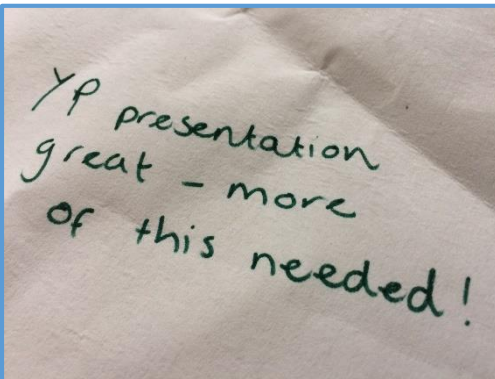
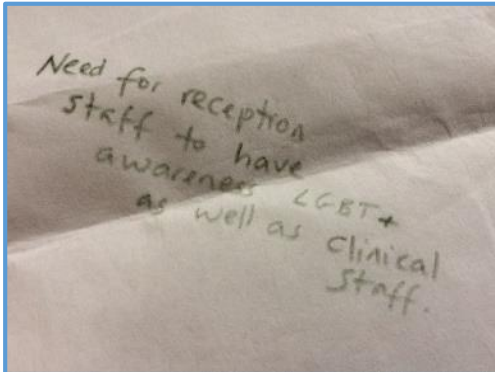


"I found the young peoples' presentation at the service day thought provoking as it helped me to think more about how I might broach certain topics with people. In particular I found the feedback from the YPs about directly asking how they would like to be addressed was very helpful. It has reminded me about the importance of keeping diversity in mind and not making assumptions."

"I was at the CAMHS day for the presentation and the young people were so open about their experiences that it helped me to improve my own practice by:

1. asking the YP what they prefer to be called
2. being aware when talking to parents of the potential issues e.g. the YP not wanting parents to know about their gender identify/sexuality, parental acceptance and awareness that I may need to support parents to seek support for their child/teenager
3. the presentation raised my awareness so that when I now meet parents of YP under the Tavistock clinic I can encourage parents to listen to their child's needs and inform them it might not be 'just a phase' (I recently heard this comment from a parent and was grateful to having seen the presentation!)

It was a great presentation so thank you."



Top Tips for Mental Health Professionals working with LGBT+ young people

Devon CAMHS Top Tips for working with LGBT+ Young People:

1. It's ok not to understand all of this.
2. Show positive signs that the service is aware of LGBT+ people as well as issues we face. Something as simple as a rainbow sticker on your door can make a huge difference – it tells the young person that you accept their identity.
3. You might be used to coming at language and ideas about people from a very clinical place; we're talking about our lives, us as individuals. Please remember that we're humans, not clinical objects.
4. LGBT+ isn't something you have to understand clinically. It's not an issue that needs to be solved.
5. Don't assume that my gender identity or sexual orientation is the cause of all the issues in my life – it may be related or it equally may not be!
6. We need caring people that are willing to listen and not just ignore your problems, no matter how small they might be, because “small” things can seem huge
7. Don't be afraid to ask open questions: “How would you like me to refer to you?” is a good one
8. Have a sense of curiosity about us as individuals, and the confidence to learn from us



“We need outreach campaigns showing an improvement of understanding LGBT+ people and our needs”.





Transforming participation across young people's mental health

youngminds.org.uk/amplified

 **#TeamAmplified**