Happy Easter!
Welcome to the second McPin Young People’s bulletin! Here, you’ll find out what’s happening in the world of children and young people’s mental health—especially at McPin. Keep updated with what our Young People’s Advisory Group (YPAG) are up to, who advise and help shape important mental health research projects! Most importantly, you can find out about some of the ways in which you can be directly involved in mental health research. We’ll be releasing these every four months. I hope that you find it interesting! :)

Best Wishes

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What have we been up to?

Our new logo is finally here

Co-produced by our Young People’s Network and our Young People’s Advisory Group (YPAG), we now have an official logo! The YPAG had put together some design ideas themselves in order to inspire the logo:

First YPAG meeting of 2019

Our YPAG consists of a group of 12 young people aged 13-24 who meet to help advise and shape mental health research projects. One of our new YPAG members, Charlotte Burgess, reflects on our first meeting of the year and how she found it:

The first YPAG meeting of the year – and my first meeting as part of the group was on the 9th February. Not only was this the first time I had ever done anything like this, it was also the first time I’d ever been to London by myself. After lots of planning and nervousness, I made it to London and even found the venue without getting lost!

We were given seats and I got chatting straight away with the other young people on my table. Everyone was lovely and very welcoming, and once we had all arrived we were introduced and told about the group and what was expected of us. First of all, we had an ice-breaker exercise to find out three facts about the person next to us – who knew it was so hard to think of anything interesting about yourself on the spot?!
Our first task was to read and give feedback on the January issue of the Young People’s Network Bulletin. We got the sticky notes out and after a bit of a fight about which group got the cute cat stickers (we won!), we came up with lots of things that we loved, thought could be included and what could be improved or changed.

Finally, we got to the part that I was most excited about. A researcher had come in with some preliminary thoughts for her research proposal about **Medically Unexplained Symptoms**. She explained her aims and asked for our feedback on a range of her ideas about how it can be adapted and shaped to include young people within the study and along the academic process. This was another opportunity to work with and get to know the other young people and we managed to come up with helpful ideas for her to think about.

Just before the end, we had some fun designing our new YPAG logo, and interestingly, many of us came with the same basic ideas! We then said all our goodbyes. After a quick detour to 221B Baker Street [the London address of the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes], I got the train home from my first, very enjoyable YPAG meeting and was very much looking forward to the next one!

*By Charlotte Burgess*

*The next YPAG meeting will take place later this month.*
Mental Health and Young People in the News

Young People's mental health has dominated the news recently. Here are some of the stories. You can find more updates on our Twitter and Facebook pages.

The Scale of the Problem

The BBC reports that the level of depression and reduced sleep in teenagers is rising dramatically. Click here to read more.

Services not solving the Problem

The Telegraph reports that young people’s mental health inpatient unit stays are longer than a year, when they should be under six weeks. Click here to read the article.

A Source of Hope through... School education

The BBC reports that schools will be teaching children and young people about relationships in hopes of improving mental wellbeing and resilience. Click here to read about it.

Action-Taking

The BBC reports that MPs are calling for social media companies to take more responsibility for the impact of social media on children and young people. Click here to read this story.
Here’s your chance to have your voice heard. We’re looking for young people aged 13-24 to write about a mental health topic of their choice. It can be related to personal experiences if you like. We’ll offer you a £20.00 Amazon voucher as a thank you!

What we’re after:

- An article between 600-1000 words about a mental health topic related to children and young people
- The article should mention mental health research, e.g. would you like to see more research done in this area? Is there some research that’s been in the news related to this area?
- Article must be suitable and appropriate for a young audience

Interested? Contact Rachel: rachetemple@mcpin.org
Your Say

Why we all need a social media detox once in a while

This edition is written by Erin Burtenshaw, 17 from Southampton. She talks about the potential harms of social media, drawing from her own experiences, and emphasises the need for more research.

If you were born after 1995, you definitely don’t know life without the internet, let alone social media. We are in the age of social media. You probably have Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, WhatsApp open right now... I know I do.

Everyday, I spend countless hours scrolling through the same apps. I don’t realise until the evening, when I lie in bed, how it affects my brain. I spend hours trying to get to sleep because I cannot switch off. I think about my day and who followed me. I think about why I don’t look like the girls who I follow on Instagram. I question why my friends are ignoring me when I can see that they were active ‘just now’.

If social media didn’t exist, you wouldn’t expect to hear from your friend all day, every day. You wouldn’t compare yourself to the models’ ‘perfect life’ and I’m sure you wouldn’t think about who followed you.

I first got Instagram when I was just 10 years old. I put my age as 30 and it was as easy as that. I would spend around 1 hour a day messaging my friends and finding other friends from different schools. This is when my social media ‘addiction’ started.

On social media, we only portray what we want the world to see: just the good things in our life. If anything bad happens, we overlook it, we don’t share it with all our followers, we keep it to ourselves. Keeping it to ourselves is a big problem because it can mean that we’ve forgotten or we never learn how to express our feelings in the real world. Take me as an example, I go to Twitter to rant, debate and vent about my day but I never speak openly about it in real life.

Yes, some things about social media are good - it helps us stay in touch with long-lost friends and family whom we otherwise might not contact ever again, for example.
But, it is now more normal to have conversations over our phones, using emojis or the occasional ‘LOL’ or ‘LY’, than it is to have a meaningful conversation face to face with a beloved. Social media becomes a problem when it dominates social interaction – when we spend more time online than we do having face to face, natural conversations.

Cyber bullying is also a major issue, with teenagers becoming more insecure and playground bullying turning online as soon as they get home. It is constant. They cannot get away from it. It’s on every app, every site. A study reported on by Unicef stated that ‘victims of cyberbullying are more likely to use alcohol and drugs and skip school than other students. They also are more likely to receive poor grades and experience low self-esteem and health problems. In extreme situations, cyberbullying has led to suicide’.

Social media gives teenagers a voice, a platform to be accepted and heard. But how can we protect ourselves fully when we do not know who is on the other side of the screen? Someone we don’t know may prey on us at our most vulnerable, as we begin to open up to them about our lives, just as we start to feel comfortable.

Social media wasn’t designed for excessive use, and neither were phones. Go back 15 years and phones were used to call somebody and receive the occasional text. Often the most use would come from playing ‘snake’ or Bluetoothing the new song you just heard to your cousin. Steve Jobs, the creator of Apple, did not let his children use an iPad - this makes me wonder, what was so bad that he wouldn’t allow his children to use what he had designed?

We are in an age where we revolve around our smart phones. I believe that not enough research has been done into the mental and physical effects on adults - let alone teenagers. The technology hasn’t been around long enough for extensive research to have been done, but it already feels like instead of improving our lives, making it quicker to access information and find out what’s happening in the world, it’s consuming aspects of our lives as well. We only have one life, we need to look after ourselves throughout it.

So I propose that you put down your phone for at least 2 hours a day - easier said than done I know - and talk to your friends, talk to your family, read a book or even just watch the TV. Express your feelings. Limit your time scrolling through endless amounts of content, looking at people who you are never going to be (and that’s a good thing, because you’re you).

We all need a social media detox. We all need to protect ourselves from the potentially harmful effects of social media on our mental health. In life, we have to worry about a lot. Social media shouldn’t be another worry.

YOLO, TTYL XOX
Get Involved!

Young people’s involvement in mental health research is so important, especially if we want research to be good quality and focusing on what matters the most. Here, we’ll share the latest opportunities to get involved in mental health research. Know about an opportunity for young people? Get in touch!

Sharing your thoughts about a new tool to help prevent mental health problems in young people for those most at risk

What’s the project?
King’s College London and The McPin Foundation are looking for **6 young people (aged 18-25)** with experiences of mental health problems and/or exposure to abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or bullying. They’re creating a tool which will help to identify children most at risk of developing mental health problems and other problems related to functioning.

What’s the opportunity?
You’d take part in two focus groups in London, whereby you will have the chance to offer your ideas and opinions about this screening tool. McPin staff also will be supporting these focus groups.

What’s required of me?

- Take part in 2 three hour focus groups by sharing your thoughts about the screening tool
- Be aged 18-25 with experiences of mental health problems and/or exposure to abuse, neglect, bullying or domestic violence. You will **not** be required to discuss these experiences
- Live in London

What will be provided?

- A **£90 voucher** per each focus group
- A london travelcard to reimburse all London travel
- Lunch and refreshments

I’m interested! Who do I contact?
You can get in touch with Rachel Latham to apply, or for more information: rachel.latham@kcl.ac.uk or phone: 020 7848 4315. **Deadline: 30th April**

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Join the Youth Mental Health LGBTIQ+ reference group

What’s the Project?
The [Youth Mental Health team](#) is looking for a diverse group of young people aged 12-25 to help advise research studies into mental health in LGBTIQ+ young people.

What’s the opportunity?
As a member of the LGBTIQ+ reference group, you’ll be occasionally invited to take part in group discussions about the Youth Mental Health Team research and how to best represent the interests of young people.

What’s required of me?

- Be aged 12-25 and identify as trans or gender diverse, attracted to the same gender and/or have an intersex variation
- Participate in group discussions about how to improve research in this area

I’m interested! Who do I contact?
If you would like to share your thoughts and experiences and contribute to research on how we can best support young people like you, register your interest by emailing LGBTIQ@telethonkids.org.au. Please provide your name, age and a brief statement about why you’re interested in taking part.
Understanding how Young People deal with mental health problems

What’s the Project?
The project is looking at how young people understand mental health problems, and what they would do if they experienced these difficulties. The researcher, Sofia Milheiro Pimenta, hopes that her research will lead to improved understanding of support needed for young people with these problems.

What’s the opportunity?
Young people will be asked to take part in an interview about their understanding of what a mental health problem is and how they might manage these difficulties.

What’s required of me?
- Be aged 11-14 years
- Take part in a 40 minute interview, either in person or online
- Share your thoughts on what mental health problems are and how you think they should be managed

I’m interested! Who do I contact?
For more information and to apply, you can get in touch with Sofia Milheiro Pimenta. You can also look at the consent forms below for more information: sofia.pimenta@strath.ac.uk

Consent form: tinyurl.com/consentchild Consent form for parents: tinyurl.com/consentparents

Children, Young People and Mental Healthcare Technology

What’s the Project?
This research project by the University of York is looking at healthcare technology and young people’s use of apps to manage a health condition.

What’s the opportunity?
This is a call to ask young people aged 11-18 to attend a session in York where the researchers will ask a series of questions to better understand the experience of using apps to help manage a health condition. The answers will be used to help shape and design the research project.

What’s required of me?
- Attend two meetings at the University of York (the first one is on Saturday, April 27th)
- Share your views and experiences of using apps to manage a health condition
- Be aged 11-18 years

What will be provided?
- Travel costs will be reimbursed
- A voucher will be offered as a thank you for attending the meetings

I’m interested! Who do I contact?
To register interest in attending the event, please email: Involvement@York.ac.uk or call: 07384 239062
Opportunity to advise on a virtual reality project for OCD

**What’s the Project?**
The McPin Foundation and Oxford VR are looking for 10 people aged 18+ with experience of OCD to help design a virtual reality therapy for OCD.

**What’s the opportunity?**
Drawing from your experiences of OCD, you would have the opportunity to help design a virtual reality therapy for repeated action OCD. This would involve meetings with other people with this experience, as well those involved in the project, to give feedback and advice on the therapy and study design.

**What’s required of me?**
- Be aged 18+ with experience of repeated action OCD
- Have accessed IAPT (CBT) services for OCD
- Live within reasonable travel distance of London and Oxford

**What will be provided?**
- A payment of £75 per each meeting attended with the wider team
- A payment of £60 per each smaller workshop
- Reasonable travel expenses reimbursed
- Lunch and refreshments per meeting

**I’m interested! Who do I contact?**
For more information, please click here. Or you can contact Rachel directly: racheltemple@mcpin.org

**Deadline: Friday 10th May**

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**Getting to know the other Networks**
Interested in learning more about the wider world of young people’s mental health research? Keep updated with the wider young people’s research networks. Check them out below.

- **Youth Public Mental Health**
- **Student Mental Health**
- **Young People and Digital Mental Health**
- **Emerging Minds** (still in development)
The next edition will be released in July. Got any questions or thoughts? Make sure you get in touch.

You are free to Subscribe or Unsubscribe to our network at any time (contact Rachel).

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