

Seniors' Mental Health Programme Harris Academy, Dundee



Young people within the Harris Academy school community identified that they would like to learn more about mental health and develop skills to support themselves and others. With this in mind, youth workers based at the school and The Corner in Dundee engaged S5 and S6 pupils in a mental health programme during 2019 and 2020. The students were signposted to the group or volunteered to participate due to their own experience of mental health issues.

The group evolved over the course of the year, meeting once a week to form a supportive peer network and raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing across the school. Young people highlighted the key focus topics to be: exam stress and anxiety, university / college expectations and life after leaving school. The group used school notice boards to display positive messages about their chosen topics around the school. The group created top tips for exams information which was widely circulated, as well as making a creative display of their 'advice to my First Year self'.

Direct Impact

All 20 participating young people (across two groups) saw improvements in their health and wellbeing and developed new skills. Two young people applied to study Community Learning and Development at university due to their experiences. 8 young people achieved their Scottish Mental Health First Aid: Young People Certificate.

Youth worker

"Young people showed an openness to talking about mental health with staff and peers which was a positive outcome of running this group."

NHS Partner

"Being a part of the Mental Health Champions group is something that has given me so much joy in the past few months... Talking to pupils and hearing their experiences and how much this group helps them gives me so much hope for them. So many teenagers struggle and knowing they have an outlet and a safe place to talk about how they feel is something that is so needed and I'm honoured to have been a part of it"

Young People

"The mental health champions group gave me the chance to discuss my feelings with other individuals that felt the same, this made me feel that I wasn't alone. This also made me feel part of a group which made my school experience a lot better and has helped me make friends which I find hard to do. It gave me somewhere to escape to and just relax in school. The group was amazing and an excellent idea."