

Mental health - SHE 3rd June 2021

How can we support a focus on mental health in everyday life at school beyond the time of corona, based on a strong focus on pupils' participation?

ULLA PEDERSEN 27. MAJ 2021, 09.07

Group 1 (Gemma)

Reflections on the voice of the pupils in the work with mental/emotional health and wellbeing

Key points raised by the young people include: Respect, every child's opinion should be heard, same opportunities for everyone, respect boundaries, opportunity to aspire to be what they want to be, more opportunities to interact with opposite sex, more group work, taught about mental wellbeing in school. better relationships with teachers, more emphasis on why we are studying In light of Covid- extra focus on mental health is needed. There is need for teacher models and resources around mental health. The way the teachers work with mental health is important. All staff need to focus on mental health and a reminder of this throughout the day would be good. – GEMMACOX3

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To keep school open is so vital and important in light of covid-19 .Greater emphasis on outdoor learning now since the pandemic which is positive and it has a link to good mental health. – GEMMACOX3

More involvement and support for parents who have to facilitate online learning – GEMMACOX3

To do evaluation with parents to find out what they want – GEMMACOX3

Listen to teacher, students and parents/guardians to shape what we do around mental health. – GEMMACOX3

Importance of physical education in improving mental health – GEMMACOX3

more opportunities to take part in physical activity using initiatives like step changes can have a positive impact on mental health – GEMMACOX3

Importance of arts, culture, physical activity/sport on mental health and ensuring school staff are aware of this so there are opportunities for pupils to explore this. – GEMMACOX3

Student/teacher ratio- smaller due to pandemic has had positive impact but not always possible. – GEMMACOX3

opportunity to improve the communication between schools and parents/pupils – GEMMACOX3

Sharing resources around outdoor learning and how best to do this would be welcomed – GEMMACOX3

using models to help teachers within the classroom and would be welcomed – GEMMACOX3

Ensuring training for all school staff- teaching, support staff, lunchtime staff in mental health as children don't always feel a connection with their teacher but may have a better connection with other staff within the school – GEMMACOX3

Group 2 (Tineke)

Reflections on the voice of the pupils in the work with mental/emotional health and wellbeing

Iceland: worked with student parlements for several years. The municipalities and schools are obligated to have. Pupils are involved in the work of different tasks: SDG's, children rights, ... they make a platform as for adults. They want to adress topics to the children and listen more to the young people. They organise meetings for childres in a way it works for the children. Sometimes there are meetings with pupils and adults together. They have to pay attention on the communication between children and adults. We can learn a lot from the children. It's not necessary to create a new parlement for HPS, but it can be a part of an existing parlement. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

Latvia: there are parlements, but there is no cooperation with HPS. They are more linked to the education sector and not to the health sector. It would be a wonderful idea to start a discussion about the possibilities. The previous year the focus was on the learning performance of the pupils. there is no ongoing researchese. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

Belgium (Flanders): schools also have parlements and we advise to discuss HPS in the parlement as well. Student participation is one of the succes factors of the HPS framework. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

Very interesting story of the young man from Slovenia. How can we work with the ideas from the students? It's very important that people who work with the students are very well trained to reflect on this things (eg. is this realistic and reflect on it with the students). It's very important to take their reflections into account. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

Focus groups about safety: big role of the participants, not all children want to participate, they are lazy, they don't want to think. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

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Iceland: more focus on whole school approach. Involved in Upright (European project). Focus on resilience, mindfulness. Research is almost finished. National mental health strategy with focus on schools (cf. slideshow on the SHEwebsite). The discussion on mental health @ schools is a very focused topic in the country. Schools are very enthusiastic. But the problem is that there aren't a lot of evidence-based programs in Iceland at this moment. But they try to find it. There are programs for the kindergartens and 1st and 2nd grade. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

Latvia: the opposite of Iceland. They don't have national programs. There is an idea to work on guidelines about bullying prevention. It's not a priority for the educational sector at this moment. It's important to convince them. They want to survive the crisis now and don't think about HPS at this moment. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

Maybe it's an idea to start with the teachers themselves to motivate them. They have to see the advantages. HPS is always about the school staff. Iceland has a lot of inspiration about that. – TINEKEVANSTEENKISTE

Group 3 (Annamaria)

Reflections on the voice of the pupils in the work with mental/emotional health and wellbeing

Alvaro: develop expectations, but also responsibilities are important also! From public administration: sharing practices. Showing good directions. To get real citizens. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Annamária: responsibility also very important! – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Liene: new areas in schooling program - putting in, than needed to take out also. Should ask children what they appreciate in their school.. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Liene: in schools they have Childrens Parliament, but nationally they do not have it. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Alvaro: there is Childrens Parl. but he knows not much now, he will look after them. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Annamária: we have Ch.P., which is working very regularly on school, regional and national level - it is a good idea from Scotland to put mental health on the themes of it. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

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Liene: in Latvia people do not know how to describe emotions. Weekly one or two or monthly one, dedicated to ask children about mental health and feelings. "Social skills" class exists, but it should be developed. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Alvaro: Legal framework in education for taking care of wellbeing and mental health. Taking care of vulnerable population. Help those students. Min. of Education's workgroup for mental health.

New cases to identify, who needs special support. They try to collect data on methods used in schools for better mental health.

– ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Annamária: holistic health promotion in Hungary as prescription because we have to reach all children's mental (and physical and intellectual) health - so this is how we support schools in their everyday work: we have prescribed and now we help them in their work. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Alvaro: school culture needs to be changed - see more in presentations. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Alvaro: good cooperation between education and health sector on the governmental level. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Annamária: In Hungary also a very good cooperation on the governmental level. Without this we cannot reach the better health of all children. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Liene: in Latvia there is not a good working cooperation between the 2 sectors, but she hopes it will be better. Health sector gives help to school in the network. – ANNAMARIASOMHEGYI

Group 4 (Branka)

Reflections on the voice of the pupils in the work with mental/emotional health and wellbeing

This is the right way: students should participate in every process in school setting for better wellbeing of all – BRANKADUKIC1

pupils and students can really surprise us with their maturity when they get the chance to be called out for things to do – BRANKADUKIC1

strong cooperation/interaction between adults is vital – BRANKADUKIC1

adults think for children (that is wrong habit or approach)...children know very much themselves – BRANKADUKIC1

...instead, we (teachers, school staff...) should just stimulate children to get their own ideas, suggestions...that is more beneficial in the way of the effectiveness – BRANKADUKIC1

have to distinguish children from young people (youngsters) when we approach to them, because they have different characteristics – BRANKADUKIC1

we have to make sure or to enable children to stop/slow down, not just to rush into action all the time...that way we could get the best of them: to get to know their identity, their local community, the freedom around them and the participation rights...to get to know also the rights of the others – BRANKADUKIC1

we have to enable children to "live their experience" and to understand that their actions always impact others in the school setting..."who am I in the classroom"? – BRANKADUKIC1

In Bulgaria: working with older young people - also sexuality education is important...how to work as trainers themselves; their own responsibility for the others too – BRANKADUKIC1

tolerance should be learned...adults should prepare the young people for all that...also to hear the voice of others, other groups of population – BRANKADUKIC1

How can we support a focus on mental health in everyday life at school beyond the time of corona, based on a strong focus on pupils' participation?

if school wants to be HPS: have to describe/understand the healthy climate in the school...it has to show the understanding of children's needs..."you have to create healthy school climate, you can't just rush into "the health " directly...to comprehension – BRANKADUKIC1

to be aware, that pupils are individuals...what makes them feel good about their selves... – BRANKADUKIC1

creating health climate is a glue to all other HP activities in the schools to support MH of children – BRANKADUKIC1

the foundation of the childrens rights: participation, equity, sustainability...that should be "it" – BRANKADUKIC1

criteria for healthy climate: not to have them too much...should be pleasant, should be the part of school setting: positive educational climate – BRANKADUKIC1

school parliaments represent the criteria for all children's needs – BRANKADUKIC1

positive relationships between teacher and pupils; sometimes parents play the opposite role to the schools ambitions to create a positive (they have to high requirements and to many of them...that disperse the focus) – BRANKADUKIC1

school systems are slow, conservative – BRANKADUKIC1

different assessments are putting pressure on teachers and pupils (stress, anxiety) – BRANKADUKIC1

school rules should be made together with pupils...democratic rules that everyone would accept and participate (1st thing to strengthen pupil's voice in everyday life) – BRANKADUKIC1

2nd thing: to hear pupils out...what's going on in their lives and incorporate that in everyday learning process...ear full of students... – BRANKADUKIC1

schools are asking pupils to reflect on topics schools are mentioning...it should be other way around – BRANKADUKIC1

participation is a dialogue not "topics put in advance" to discuss – BRANKADUKIC1

adults in school setting should show the compassion, their own emotions ...not just to follow the curriculum and timetables – BRANKADUKIC1

if teachers put something else in the class outside the curriculum (to get closer to pupils), they feel stressed and accountable for...so there are reservations... – BRANKADUKIC1

schools have to be very brave to change the process of teaching to be more likeable to pupils...trainings on that for teachers are missing – BRANKADUKIC1

Group 5 (Veronica)

Reflections on the voice of the pupils in the work with mental/emotional health and wellbeing

Portugal: national parliament and every school has a parliament, discussion with parliament and deputies, they request answers – VERONICA VELASCO

Portugal: students involve in each school work team – VERONICA VELASCO

Italy-Lombardy: students councils involved – VERONICA VELASCO

Italy-Lombardy: students involved in many HPS activities through participatory processes – VERONICA VELASCO

Lynda: very difficult to involve students – VERONICA VELASCO

I meant to say it is very difficult to involve students, teachers and parents if the school management does not see the importance of a health promoting school. The example I gave was of the health coordinator of one school who is retiring and they are at a loss since they have not yet understood if or whether she will be replaced and by whom nor by when : (this school just signed up the SHE network of Piedmont). In the group we also discussed how important it is to have several teachers involved in health promotion, teachers who come from various subjects and not only Science—as it is in Italy. In fact, Veronica told us that the schools they work with in Lombardy understand that this is not about a project but a vision. In other words, the idea is not for the school to become a health promoter for a few months but to have this be part of their vision. – ANONYM

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Barriers: difficult to implement strategies in a systematic approach; students' opinions are given in an informal way – VERONICA VELASCO

Teachers comments are not always supportive – VERONICA VELASCO

Strategies: health promotion curriculum mandatory (Portugal), guidelines for teachers, mental health is the first theme, intensive training for teachers, specific programs, collaboration with psychologists, services, municipalities, include in the citizenship curriculum, funding for special programs developed with children – VERONICA VELASCO

– VERONICA VELASCO

Inequalities, digital device – VERONICA VELASCO

now schools have realized the importance of mental health – VERONICA VELASCO

Some schools always open – VERONICA VELASCO

Parents: school for parents, peer to peer strategies, inequalities problems, communication between parents and teachers – VERONICA VELASCO

Teacher well-being: projects, partnerships with services
– VERONICA VELASCO

A group in each school is necessary: several teachers,
representative of students, representative of parents, and health
professionals, school psychologist – VERONICA VELASCO

Group 6 (Electra)

Reflections on the voice of the pupils in the work with
mental/emotional health and wellbeing

Regular space in the timetable in secondary education for
interaction, mentoring, discussing ideas which also led by pupils
through their councils -in Spain. – ELECTRABADA

Mental health challenges of pupils and the difficulties of teachers
to address them. How do we deal with pupils/ problems during the
lockdown such as motivation, peer relationships as they are left
without professional help in the school? The information comes
through the web tool "This is Me" in Slovenia. Pupils raise the
issues about relationship difficulties regularly at the This Is Me
counselling website. – ELECTRABADA

How do we ensure that pupils' voices are heard in a more formal
way in terms of mental health/wellbeing? – ELECTRABADA

In northern Macedonia, pupils or teachers can go to talk about
emotions, relationships with the paedagogist or psychologist in the
school. There is a project related to build capacities among pupils
related to mental health issues focusing on bullying in school
violence. Through the project pupils express their feelings and
recommendations and then the schools see how these can be
implemented. – ELECTRABADA

To what extent does pupil's voice influence school's decisions in
terms of mental health policies, activities etc? – ELECTRABADA

In Spain there is a focus in protecting the pupils' wellbeing in
times of change. Mental health as a subject have become a primary
focus in education. Schools include psychologist and resources for
pupils but the pandemic created the need for pupils expressing
their problems outside the classroom. There is proximity between
health and education during the Covid-19. – ELECTRABADA

Students'views and concerns for specific subjects and mental
health care through programmes for their parents during this year
of the pandemic. – ELECTRABADA

More workshops needed for pupils to express their need to make
space for mental health in the curriculum. – ELECTRABADA

It is a process to give voice to pupils in workshops and then it is
another process to ensure that the pupils' needs are intergrated
within the school agenda and decisions. There needs to be a
communication channel for this- it doesn't really exist at the
moment (also channels between ministries). – ELECTRABADA

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pupils' participation?

Extending pilot activities

Projects, such as This is Me, that reach out to young people
outside the schools are important to continue.
Continue working together between health and education
during the Covid-19 crisis.

Expansion and integration of mental health programmes within the everyday life.

Train teachers and train pupils for peer to peer ambassadors for
mental health education.

Use technology with social media for mental health.

Systemic national level changes for making space for wellbeing in the curriculum

Group 7 (Suzanne)

Reflections on the voice of the pupils in the work with
mental/emotional health and wellbeing

Val - do you have any impact with teachers on learning in school
about real life issues? How do you use your knowledge for a better
life? In traditional subjects, eg, maths etc - very little. There is a
Children's Parliament in Slovenia though. However we do not feel
school prepares us for life at all. Therefore, gifts need to listen to
the research that tells them what young people need-what aspects
of life are important. – ANONYM

Russia conducted surveys to find out about what children and
young people age 10-18 need in terms of health topics. Gender
differences in responses and also differences in age - needs of
adolescents. Mental health challenges more prevalent in urban
area than rural. Psychological and social support in place to
support MH. Data collected around students who like
school/bullying/ etc is monitored – ANONYM

Slovenia- voices are crucial-we are working for them. Teams of
counsellors and specialists can support individuals or classes
around building better relationships. They organise camps etc
– ANONYM

Val-the number of young people with MH issues has increased.
They won't go near a support/psychologist unless severe issues;
going up – ANONYM

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pupils' participation?

Teacher training is key to ensure that understanding and support
of MH of young people is better addressed in schools when
teachers are qualified and working – ANONYM

Student bodies/pupils are key to hearing and supporting pupil MH
– ANONYM

Russia-MH should not be stigmatised. Teachers and school staff must monitor incidences of issues that have a negative impact on MH. Teacher taught how to behave, how to talk and how to talk
– ANONYM

freely. Some schools have psychologists on site or trained teachers in MH; students also participate by putting on shows/presentations around MH. High incidence of bullying in some schools – ANONYM

Slovenia-teachers are key in identifying young people with MH issues and offer opportunities to address these. No specialist subject for this rather they are added into other subjects. This is me and mindful programmes are very good but it is difficult to find the time in the curriculum. Instead it is offered through camps - problem solving, stress management and self-efficacy ; to think positively - positive school – ANONYM

climate - mutual respect so that pupils can be more successful and satisfied with life. Schools to create own school and classroom rules and values. Additional training required for teachers on MH- this is key. Require to have a specialist subject for Mental and emotional well-being – ANONYM

In Slovenia there are a number of organisations who work with schools actively around MH. In local communities there are centres for social work working with schools – ANONYM
