



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



Act-Belong-Commit: A feasibility study on the adaptation of a community-based mental health promotion initiative in Irish community settings

Principle Investigator: Professor Margaret M. Barry, University of Galway

Researchers: Patricia Harte and Tosca Keppler, University of Galway

Funded by: Health Service Executive, Ireland

Background

This study aims to determine the feasibility of adapting and implementing a universal mental health promotion initiative in Irish community settings. Act-Belong-Commit is a community-based mental wellbeing programme that was originally developed and delivered in Australia, and has since been adapted and implemented in Denmark, Norway, Faroe Islands, and Finland. This initiative encourages people to engage in activities to promote their mental wellbeing that align with three evidence-based behavioural domains - Act (do something, keep active); Belong (do something with someone, keep connected) and Commit (do something meaningful and valuable to you). Act Belong Commit employs a social franchising approach and operates at an individual, community, and broader societal level. This initiative is promoted by partner community organisations and supported by a media campaign.

Evaluations to date report positive programme effects for individuals' beliefs and behaviours concerning mental health and increased public awareness of community organisations that provide mentally healthy activities. Based on consultations with international partners and findings from process and impact evaluations from Denmark, it is expected that adaptations will be required to tailor the programme to the Irish context and that training and education materials for community and voluntary staff will need to be developed prior to piloting the intervention in Irish communities.

This research explores the implementation readiness of two purposively recruited community sites in Ireland to adapt Act-Belong-Commit to the Irish context and to develop a mental health promotion training framework for staff in the community and voluntary sector to support the implementation of the initiative in Ireland.

Aims and Objectives

This study aims to explore the feasibility of implementing Act-Belong-Commit in two community settings in Ireland.

Specific objectives include:

To undertake consultations with community and voluntary partners to determine the implementation readiness of two purposively selected communities

To adapt the international mental health promotion campaign Act-Belong- Commit to the Irish context and develop a scalable model for delivery in Irish communities

To develop a training manual and educational material for mental health promotion for staff in the community and voluntary sectors in Ireland

Design and Methods

This collaborative research project with the HSE is concerned with identifying, mapping, and consulting with key stakeholders in two community settings in Ireland. The implementation readiness of the two communities was assessed by conducting a series of semi-structured stakeholder interviews. The Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (www.cfirguide.org) was used to guide the discussions. Original programme materials to support implementation are currently being adapted to the Irish context using the ADAPT-ITT and EMV frameworks and in conjunction with key stakeholders. Finally, the development of a mental health promotion training framework is underway; its development has been informed by findings from the key stakeholders consultations and findings of a scoping review of evidence on mental health promotion frameworks for staff in community and non-healthcare settings.

Findings/Results

Stakeholder Consultations: A total of 52 key stakeholders in the area of health and wellbeing across both communities participated in the consultations, which were held online (Zoom platform) and in-person. Both community groups considered the Act-Belong-Commit framework to be a simple, tangible framework that would allow for a coordinated approach to mental health promotion in Irish communities. However, contextual differences emerged in terms of levels of deprivation and need, and perceived community readiness for implementation in both communities. The findings from the consultations will be used to guide the approach to the pilot implementation in both communities, which is anticipated to begin in January 2025.

Scoping review of mental health promotion training frameworks: A review of the national and international literature was conducted in March 2024, following the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) five-stage framework. In addition, key websites were searched for resources on mental health promotion training and contact was made with international experts, including members of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) Global Working Group (GWG) on Mental Health Promotion and research teams involved in implementing Act-Belong-Commit in Australia, Denmark and Finland. Findings show there is a dearth of robust evidence on mental health promotion training and education frameworks and a lack of available resources that could inform the development of a bespoke training framework to support the implementation of Act-Belong-Commit in Irish community settings. However, key points from this review point to the importance of

using accessible language, collaboration with key stakeholders and end-users, and the need to consider train-the-trainer approaches and hybrid models of delivery. Findings from this review and the stakeholder consultations are currently being used to develop the mental health promotion training framework.

Dissemination: Conference presentation, reports for the HSE, and journal publications

Conference presentations to date:

Harte, P., Keppler, T., Barry, M., Walsh, O., & Clarke, A. (2024). A collaborative study to determine the feasibility of adapting and implementing a universal mental health promotion programme, “Act-Belong-Commit”, in Irish communities (HSE Health and Wellbeing & Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway). Oral presentation at the Annual Health Promotion Conference, 16 June, 2024, University of Galway.

Reports:

Harte, P., Keppler, T., Barry, M., Walsh, O., & Clarke, A. (2024). *The Act-Belong-Commit Programme Implementation Readiness Assessment: A report on stakeholder consultations in two Irish Communities*. A report prepared for the Health Service Executive, Ireland. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway.

Harte, P., Keppler, T., Barry, M., Walsh, O., & Clarke, A. (2024). *A review of international mental health promotion training frameworks for staff in community and non-healthcare settings*. A report prepared for the Health Service Executive, Ireland. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway.

Patient Public Involvement:

The involvement of partner organisation staff and potential end-users will play an important role in the adaptation and co-creation of culturally appropriate resources for the implementation of Act Belong Commit and the development of the mental health promotion training framework.

Consultations have taken place to identify potential partners in both communities; it is anticipated that once key stakeholders are identified and engaged in these partner organisations, workshops will be held to “theatre test” and pilot drafts of the implementation resources and training framework.

Knowledge Translation:

Research findings to date have been shared via be-spoke presentations and reports with key stakeholders from both communities in order to inform and shape the next stages of the process.