

Computerised mental health promotion in alternative education: The requirements of Youthreach students and staff

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Tuuli Kuosmanen

NUI Galway Hardiman PhD Scholar

Supervised by Prof. Margaret Barry

Discipline of Health Promotion, School of Health Sciences, NUI
Galway, Ireland

Overview

- Background
- The PhD study
- Phase 1: Requirements analysis
 - Aims and objectives
 - Methods
 - Findings
 - Conclusions

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Background

- Benefits of computerised delivery:
 - Reach and access
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Anonymity
- Computerised mental health promotion and prevention interventions (Clarke, Kuosmanen & Barry, 2015)
 - Effective in improving wellbeing and reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in youth
 - Module based, supported delivery
 - cCBT for depression and anxiety

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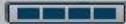
FEELINGS

THOUGHTS

UNWARPING

DE-STRESSING

PROGRESS



This is another example, to illustrate that it's not the event that causes the depression – it is your interpretation of the event.

Car breakdown :(

It's raining, your car breaks down and you miss meeting up with your friends at the movies. How do you feel? What are your thoughts? (Click on the characters to see their thoughts).



***"JUST MY LUCK...** this always happens to me... its typical of my life...why didn't I get a lift with the others... It's too late now, I'll just go home and mope. No one will miss me anyway. I suppose they won't be able to fix the car in time for my trip next week".*



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Guide

I am going to be your Guide. I'm here to show you how SPARX works and help you learn new skills. I also hope that you'll have fun along the way.



Background

- Limited evidence on the use with vulnerable young people, including those who leave school early
 - In the EU, 11% leave mainstream education before completing secondary school (European Commission, 2015)
 - Early school leavers have poorer mental health and social outcomes than their peers (Freudenberg & Ruglis, 2007)
- High attrition rates
 - Need for implementation focus to improve the reach and impact of computerised programmes (Clarke et al., 2015; Fleming et al., 2016)
 - Requirements Development Approach (Van Velsen et al., 2013)
 - Exploring context of delivery and stakeholder values and requirements

Explores the use of computerised programmes in an alternative education setting, Youthreach

- **Phase 1: Qualitative analysis of student and staff programme and implementation requirements**
- Phase 2: Cluster RCT examining the effectiveness and implementation of computerised MHP at Youthreach

Requirements will be used in Phase 2 to *guide implementation* and *develop process evaluation measures*



Youthreach



- Ireland's National Second-chance education programme for early school leavers
- 110 Centres with over 3700 students
- Young people aged 15-20 years
- Student-led approach
- Social, economic and educational disadvantage
- An estimated 30% in need of mental health support (WRC Social and Economic Consultants, 2007)

Phase 1

Aim: To explore the needs and preferences of students and staff in order to guide the implementation of computerised mental health promotion interventions at Youthreach

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Objectives

- Identify **factors influencing the implementation** of computerised mental health promotion programmes at Youthreach
- Explore the **values** of Youthreach students and staff relevant to the delivery of computerised mental health promotion
- Identify the **programme, content and implementation requirements** of Youthreach staff and students in relation to computerised mental health promotion

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- Requirements Development Approach (Van Velsen et al., 2013)
 - Contextual Inquiry
 - Identifying stakeholders and mapping the context of delivery
 - Requirements elicitation
 - Interviews, focus groups etc.
 - Data translated into
 - Values (an over all ideal or interest)
 - Attributes (a summary of the stakeholder need)
 - Requirements (a technical translation of the attribute)

Use expression	Value	Attribute	Requirement
<i>'A lot of the words are big and confusing which would make it hard for some people to understand.'</i> (Student)	Easy to use	Appropriate language	The programme uses language that is simple and jargon-free
<i>'Found it boring reading about negative thinking persons and thoughts'</i> (Student)	Fun and engaging	Positively framed content	Content focuses on positive mental health and wellbeing

Methodology

- All 110 Centres invited to participate
- Online Staff Survey (n=21 Centres)
 - Aim: to map the context of delivery
 - Completed by staff on behalf of Centres
 - Perceived mental health needs of students, Centre resources, current practices, skills and competencies of staff...
 - Response rate 76% (n=16)
 - 12 coordinators, 4 SPHE teachers
- Four Centres invited to take part in student workshops and staff discussions to further explore values and requirements

Student workshops (n=32)

- Participants viewed two programmes, MoodGYM and SPARX, followed by semi-structured discussion
- Technical, content, implementation needs & preferences
- Mean age 16.7 years
- 52% male

Staff discussions (n=12)

- Staff asked to view programmes before discussion
- 4 coordinators, 2 SPHE teachers, 2 teachers (other), 2 student trainees
- 25% male

- Mental health issues reported as prevalent by the staff
 - Staff encounter mental health issues daily
 - Positive mental health, improving coping skills and developing communication skills
- Most Centres provide access to counselling, however, not always in a timely manner
- Staff engaged in promoting the mental health of students
 - All staff discussing mental health topics with students weekly
 - All but one staff member felt that promoting student mental health was part of their job and felt equipped to do so
- Computer facilities and skills adequate

Values

Student values	Staff values
Easy to use	User friendly (students)
Fun and engaging	Supporting students
Meaningful	Easy to implement
Being in control	Beneficial for the Centre

Easy to use

- Brief
- Self-explanatory
- Use limited amount of simple and jargon-free language

Fun and engaging

- Activity-based and interactive
- Colourful
- Social networking and personalisation
- Positively framed content

'If you didn't like it, you wouldn't pay attention' (Student, female)

'..more interesting and fun then if you'd be playing with your friends..' (Student, male)

Meaningful

- Clear purpose
- Credible contents
- Practical advice
- Tailoring and personal feedback
- Tracking progress
- Coping, self-esteem, managing and talking about feelings, helping others

'I didn't like the way it says that it will make your life better like... 'cause nothing really can like only you can like...It's kind of putting it out a bit too much like.' (student, male)

'I would like to learn how to be able to talk to someone about your problems or if you are not feeling well (upset)'. (Student, male)

Being in control

- Personalisation
- Anonymity
- Optional attendance

..they have a lot of control themselves as well, that it's not myself giving them solutions you have to find them and come up with them themselves, which is good. And the fact that it's anonymous, they don't have to share anything with you, if they don't want to. (Staff)



Staff requirements

Supporting students

- Delivery in a structured environment
- Provide information on student wellbeing
- Encouraging student engagement

‘..I feel it needs close monitoring so that any issues can be dealt with. I would not like the young people to do this programme alone in case they are overwhelmed or uncomfortable with the materials..’ (Staff)

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Easy to implement

- Flexibility
- Imbedded in curriculum
- Fit into existing class structure
- Supported by all staff
- Ongoing support from research team

'...there are always issues around attendance...we will be afraid that you wouldn't be able to get back into it if you'd miss a week, that's what happens with a lot of kids..' (Staff)

'Time constraints- best intentions could fall to the side.' (Staff)

Beneficial for the Centre

- Soft Skills Framework

‘So it’s also good for literacy, it ticks an awful lot of boxes for us.’ (Staff)

‘We are now, I suppose, required to measure soft outcomes. And that would fit well with that...’ (Staff)

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Conclusions

- Computerised mhp at Youthreach seems fitting
- User friendliness especially important because of low concentration and literacy levels among students
- Use gaming and persuasive technologies may increase relevance and engagement rates
- Need to focus on positive mental health
- Students value of being in control further emphasises the importance of user friendliness, as well as puts extra pressure on staff to build trust and create more favourable attitudes among some students

Conclusions

- Staff support needed to ensure that students engage fully and to monitor adverse effects
- Staff require information on student wellbeing, yet students may want to stay anonymous
- Both, structure and flexibility required in programme delivery
- Providing additional benefits to the Centre may increase programme sustainability
- Ongoing support for staff more important than training at the start

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Thank You!

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