

Positive Mental Health Boxes

Report Card

2020

Context and background

Research completed by Mind found over two thirds of young people (68%) felt their mental health had deteriorated during lockdown, with boredom and loneliness the key contributors. According to the Mental Health Foundation's research as many as four out of ten young people have felt lonely due to the Covid 19 restrictions.

“Being totally isolated is really hard and making me realise how much I actually need people and how much I miss touch. I really need a hug. I feel so lonely. It makes me feel like giving up. I am fighting so hard not to.” Survey participant, young person

Given the challenging circumstances for agencies currently supporting young people it was agreed that developing 'Positive Emotional Wellbeing Boxes' could support addressing some of this issue. These boxes were filled with seven days of fun activities and resources, and were targeted to those supporting some of the most vulnerable young people across the Northern Trust area.

The boxes were designed and developed by local young people facilitated and coordinated by Fresh Minds Education. They are a local social enterprise who develop emotional wellbeing resources, products and deliver evidence-based training programmes and workshops.

The initiative was funded by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Mid and East Antrim Loneliness Network and was part of a campaign to tackle loneliness and help young people to connect during the pandemic lockdown. Mind research also found connecting with family and friends online is the most popular way to cope amongst young people; and these boxes helped to do this.

How much did we do?



500 young people received positive mental health boxes focusing on connection from 30 organisations which included:

- Peer Letter
- Ice-Cream Sundae kit
- Character Strength & Positive Affirmation Card Set
- Paws4Thought Doodlebook
- Paws4Thought Pen
- Positive Wall Poster
- Learning Vouchers (Baking, Digital Photography, Yoga & Animation Lessons)
- Positive Minds Magazine
- ZenPack
- Hot Chocolate Stirrer
- Shower Pod
- And lots of videos and vlogs and private website pages created by Young people to support mental health



How well did we do it?

“Loneliness is a major issue in society and has been particularly prevalent during the Covid-19 lockdown. It is vital that as a community we work together to address this issue, reaching into communities to help those who may be suffering from isolation and loneliness.

“This is a practical attempt to reach out to the most vulnerable in our community through a collaborative approach. We can achieve so much more when we come together to make sure no one feels forgotten during the Covid 19 pandemic and beyond.”

Marjorie Hawkins, Chairperson of the Mid and East Antrim Loneliness Network

Many of the young people supported by Start360 services are working hard to manage life events. Covid 19 has been another significant event in their lives.

It has been challenging for young people to remain connected during Covid 19 - with family, friends, learning, work and support. Being connected is a key factor in protecting against loneliness and isolation.

The Positive Mental Health Boxes are a fantastic way for Start360 to further support the young people we have been working with through Covid 19. A great resource which again highlights the opportunities that can be made real through collaborate working.”

Gerry McVeigh, Co-Chair of CYPSP LPG
Antrim/Ballymena and Assistant manager of Start 360
Youth Engagement Service

Loneliness can affect anyone from teenagers and young adults, new parents, carers and recently bereaved, to students, older people and those with disabilities. During Covid-19 the lockdown restrictions have exacerbated this issue for everyone, not least our young people. Through these packs we are reaching out to our community during this difficult time to reassure them they are not alone and we are in this together.”

Hugh Nelson, NH SCT

"A lot of thought has gone into the preparation of this box with a view to making the individual receiving it, not only to feel special with the gifts but engaged with huge levels of positivity through the words in the book and the drawing activities.“

Network Personnel

Is anyone better off?

Young people who received the boxes feedback



"(It helps to) build yourself up instead of tearing yourself down"

"I have received the package from Network Personnel. Everything in the package looks very useful. I think it will definitely keep me going for a while."

"I am over the moon with this box, it has come about when I needed it. Thank you for thinking about me!"