



Mental Health in Colleges: Challenges and Opportunities

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About FE

- 20000 14 to 15-year-olds attending colleges on a full or part time basis.
- 744000 16 to 18-year-olds study in colleges : 433000 stay on in schools
- 75000 16 to 18-year-olds undertake an apprenticeship at college
- 1.9 million adults study in further education colleges

Further Education Offer

- Technical and professional education for young people at all levels
- GCSE and A Levels
- High proportion of Level 1 and 2
- 17% of students have learning difficulty or disability
- 17% of 16 to 18-year-olds were eligible for free school meals compared to 9% in maintained schools and academy sixth forms

The Challenge

- **50%** of mental health problems are established by age 14 and **75%** by age 24

The FE Challenge

- 85% of colleges reported an increase in students with disclosed mental health issues
- 81% reported having significant numbers of students who had undisclosed mental health difficulties.
- 74% of colleges referred students experiencing mental health crises to A&E in 2015/16
- FE students do not receive DSA; in house mental health support varies widely between colleges

The FE Challenge

- **Wrong demographics**
 - disproportionately recruits from areas of greatest deprivation
 - 16-18 transition
 - Many students fall between CAMHS and Adult Services
- **Wrong geography**
 - Multiple geographies commissioners and providers
- **Wrong part of education system!**
 - Greater understanding of schools and universities

Recent Issues

- English & Maths
- BTEC changes
- Home schooling

Opportunities

- Culture of further education
- New Government initiatives addressing young people's mental health
- Potential to work across agencies

Holistic Approach



Whole college approach to student and staff wellbeing

- Focus on mental health and resilience, not just mental ill health
- Create college wide wellbeing strategy
- Embed wellbeing into all students' tutorial programmes
- Link with sports department
- Some examples of good practice available at www.acer.ac.uk/resources and on AoC website mental health resources

All Staff Development

- All staff approach:
- Linked to an organisational mental health strategy
- Use free resources: www.minded.org.uk
- need to consider how embedded within college setting
- Develop support mechanism for staff

Focused Staff Development

- Create capacity in organisation
- Introduce Mental Health First Aid training for some staff
- Other specialist training:
 - Suicide prevention
 - Dealing with self harm
 - Look at who can help with this – some colleges now able to opt into free CCG funded training

Further Opportunities

- Potential for funded Children and Young Peoples Wellbeing Practitioners in colleges
 - e.g. Ashton Sixth Form College and Tameside FE College are going to receive funding via CCG to employ a Wellbeing Practitioner to support young people with low level mental health and wellbeing issues

In Summary

- High level of concern but also of commitment
- Importance of developing college wide strategy for developing student resilience and well being
- Staff development – which staff need what
- College relationship with health service – what you can give each other

The image features a teal background with a large, faint, semi-transparent watermark of the letters 'AOC' in the center. The watermark is composed of overlapping circular and curved shapes. Overlaid on this background is the email address 'Liz_maudslay@aoc.co.uk' in a red, underlined font.

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