

PROJECT SUMMARY



Enabling parents to support young people with mental health problems: an exploratory research project

Background

The Sir Halley Stuart Trust has funded AYPH to undertake an exploratory study looking at how the parents of young people with mental health problems navigate the system in partnership with their children in order to get the services they need. Mental health problems in teenagers are very common, but the reach of the statutory Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services is notoriously limited. Many families find themselves facing a struggle to get the help they need, particularly at an early stage in the development of problems.

Why is this important?

- The parents of adolescents are the most unsupported group of all parents
- Intervening to support parenting in adolescence is challenging for reasons to do with young people's lifecycle and fragmentation of appropriate services
- Yet parents are critically important to young people's health outcomes at a time when young people's self efficacy and self-confidence decreases, and mental health problems increase
- Help is needed to know how to navigate the health system effectively, rather than just providing parents and young people with knowledge about health conditions

Methods

The project will have four main elements:

- (i) **A scoping literature review**, to map out existing research on how families navigate services for young people's mental health problems.
- (ii) **Focus groups with parents of teenagers** to get their views on the barriers and enabling factors to getting help. We anticipate convening approximately six groups, potentially through links with parenting organisations and schools.
- (iii) **Participation work with young people**, to get their perspective on finding the right support. This is likely to involve young people who are service users, drawn from our existing contacts with youth participation groups in the health service.
- (iv) **Stakeholder event**, with providers and local strategic leads to discuss the findings and next steps.

Timing and outputs

The project will start on 1 October 2015 and will complete at the end of August 2016. As well as a report for funders, we will be sharing information with our network of members, subscribers to our e-newsletter and twitter followers. We also contribute to blogs and publish in academic and practitioner publications as a regular way of disseminating findings.

For further information, contact info@youngpeopleshealth.org.uk