

South Kerry Development Partnership CLG – SICAP Lot 19-3

SICAP Case Study 2018: *Managing Adolescent Stress; Causes, What to look out for, Coping skills, What parents can do to help.*

SKDP SICAP 2018 Plan - Goal 2 Action 11 Mental Health & Wellbeing (Emerging Needs)

SKDP SICAP Officer: Máiread O' Sullivan, SICAP Education & Training Officer

Project Description

A two hour information session for parents focusing on managing anxiety and stress and teaching some study skills and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques. The session included a half-hour slot on “Practical Steps for Managing Your Child’s Study Confidence to minimize Anxiety” explaining:

- the learning style and how it impacts a study plan
- Supporting a time management plan
- Building confidence through active listening

This was followed by an hour slot dealing with the causes and signs of stress and anxiety and some practical tips on how parents can help to reduce stress using CBT tools. Jigsaw Kerry gave a short ten minute piece explaining their free youth mental health service. Parents were invited to ask questions or make comment and each session was evaluated. The aim of this initiative is to strengthen parenting by providing supportive, effective and relevant information.

Identification of Need

Throughout the previous SICAP Programme the education officer reported that anxiety and stress were the most common underlying issues in all SICAP clients engaged. This was reported in all review reports to the LCDC locally. Referrals for CBT, play therapy, one to one counselling and art therapy were overwhelmingly because of anxiety and stress. The education officer supported both parents and young people to access therapies and very quickly realised that parents had little or no understanding of the causes of anxiety or how to support the management of anxiety in their young people, particularly at key times such as transfer to secondary and exam time. In discussions with the local CAMHS service they reported the same finding and it was agreed that a support for parents and teachers would be helpful in supporting young people to remain in education and to progress. The education officer held discussions with the counselling services in the secondary schools in South Kerry and they also identified the need for parental supports as much of their time was spent in the direct support for the young people and they did not have much opportunity to spend time upskilling parents and other teaching professionals.

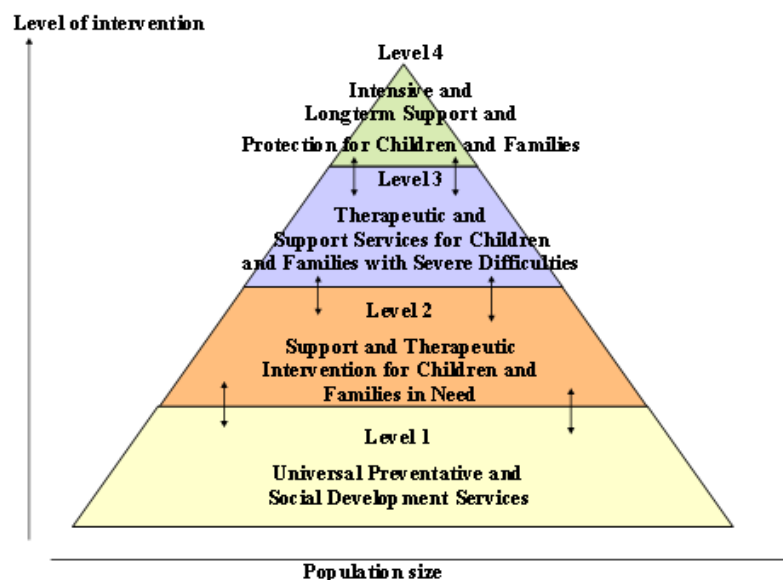
From June to October 2017 the Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (KDYS) undertook a parental participation project on behalf of Prevention Partnership and Family Support CYPSC. In the opinion of the parents and guardians surveyed the following issues emerged as the most

significant for children and young people. The table below highlights the opinions of parents across all ages and stages of child and youth development in Kerry.

Age of Child or Young Person	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3
0-3 years	Anxiety and stress	Bullying	Internet safety
4-8 Years	Anxiety and stress	Internet Safety	Bullying
9-11 Years	Anxiety and stress	Internet Safety	Participation and Inclusion in society
12-18 Years	Anxiety and stress	Internet Safety	Ways to socialise without alcohol
19-24 years	Anxiety and stress	Alcohol misuse	Depression

Core principles

To support parents by delivering information explaining the causes and signs of stress and anxiety and how to manage and support young people's stress better. Identifying the local services young people can access for further support and explaining the difference between Tier 1 universal supports e.g. Jigsaw Kerry and Tier 3 targeted supports e.g. CAMHS. Information was delivered in a non- threatening manner using plain English with an openness to answering any queries and concerns presented by parents. (Hardiker Model below)



What worked well?

The buy-in from schools to support the delivery of the sessions was a critical factor as the schools promoted through their own social media, text service and parents associations. Having the sessions prior to exam times when stress levels are high and parents are concerned with supporting study and the wellbeing of their young people is vital. Giving practical tips and tools parents could use immediately and handouts for future reference enhanced the long term effect of the information given. The length of the sessions, although it could have been longer, was manageable for parents to attend. It is always a challenge to get good numbers in attendance at evening events. A critical success factor is the positive relationship between the SICAP education officer and the school personnel, in particular the principals and counselling staff.

Barriers

Dealing with a topic so sensitive meant that some parents felt unable to attend in a group setting in the school their child attended. For some people they felt that this could be seen that their family was not functioning well and that their young person had serious mental health issues. The stigma related to mental health prevented some from taking part. As these were information giving sessions some parents wanted to discuss more in-depth issues which would have been better dealt with in one to one sessions. Time restraints within schools to allow the delivery of all programmes meant that one school was unable to accept the delivery of the programme. Lack of SICAP funding to offer the programme to all schools in the same school year was an issue. The SICAP programme runs from January to December whereas the schools year is September to June therefore the limited budget available does not allow the education officer to provide the same level of supports across all schools within the same school year. These programmes could be funded from a number of sources such as Healthy Kerry and CYPSC.

SICAP contribution, staff skills

This initiative was developed by the SKDP SICAP education officer as the need was seen in the previous SICAP programme. The education officer through previous working relationships had good knowledge of the professionals in the area who could collaborate on this project and through a number of meetings developed the session. The education officer works closely with all schools in the South Kerry area and therefore could positively influence schools to take on this initiative and promote same with parents. SICAP funding was used to deliver these sessions and the three facilitators were sub-contracted by the education officer to do this work. The education officer attended each session to MC the event and to give an insight into the SICAP Programme and local supports available to the target groups. It is difficult to measure whether there was an impact on those at risk of early school leaving but the education officer can report that one young man did return to school after being absent for 6 months due to the contact made with a parent at a school talk. The education officer has previous experience of working in youth mental health and has gained great knowledge of evidence based programmes available.

Outcomes

Parents reported increased confidence in supporting their young people, increased understanding of stress and anxiety and knowledge of knowing where to go to get further

supports. Referrals to appropriate support services were reported and enquiries increased as parents felt confident in seeking help in a non- stigmatised manner. The SICAP education officer had an increase in self-referrals of young people who were looking to access therapies such as CBT. Schools reported better engagement with parents concerning students where there was concern, in particular exam year students.

Engagement with target group

Attendance Numbers: Total 196

- 32 St Brendans College Killarney
- 52 Intermediate School Killorglin
- 47 St Brigids Presentation Killarney
- 65 Milltown Presentation

Offered to Killarney Community College but they were unable to accept at the time.

Target groups engaged included those from disadvantaged areas, Traveller and Roma families, lone parent families, new communities, disadvantaged children and families and the emerging needs category of *individuals struggling with a mental health issue*. The majority of those in attendance had little or no knowledge of the supports available within the community therefore these sessions encouraged future inclusion for the SICAP target groups.

Facilitator's feedback

"It was a great learning experience for not just the parents but also the facilitators, on what the concerns of students are and what strategies we can use to help them. The over-riding message that I gained from these sessions is that the level of anxiety amongst today's students seems to be getting worse every year and that parents are very concerned and unsure how to handle this. It is a very different experience to what they themselves went through in school, as social media has added an extra element of pressure. The expectation that students put on themselves to succeed and not allow failure, is the hardest element that many parents cope with. By helping parents recognize what anxiety signs to look out for and what they could do on a practical level through study support, managing deadlines effectively, active listening and awareness of the impact of stressors; parents seemed to feel more confident and surer of what they could do.

The attendance at the events was good and the input from parents was excellent. Giving parents a chance to discuss these issues openly and seek advice from trained professionals, was not only a help to the student's anxiety but also to the parents. Trying to fit everything into a two-hour evening session was difficult as there is so much to cover. If it was possible to do it over a longer session that would be of benefit to the parents that would be great but realistically probably not possible. Doing a range of talks specifically for exam year parents could also be effective, though attendance might not be as good."

Máiread , Manage my career

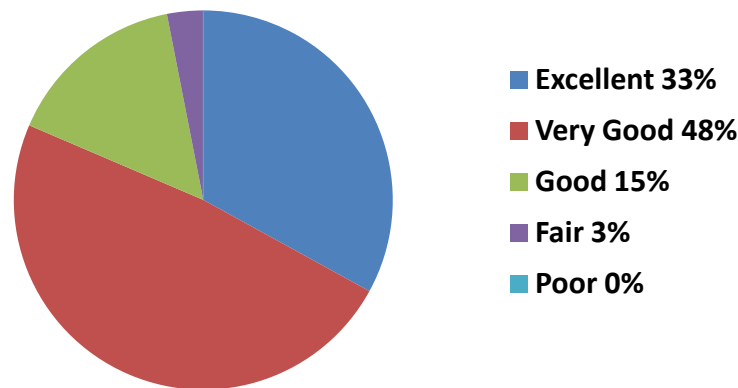
“The sheer number of attendees pointed to obvious need for talks/advice at parent level. The enthusiasm of parents to support their young people in managing stress and with their mental wellbeing came across strongly. There was Very positive feedback from parents and school staff after the sessions. Parents reported that the sessions helped also to signpost them to appropriate services in their community. Audience numbers, lecture format and time restraints prohibited more intimate discussion and elaboration of relevant topics.”

Noreen & Kay, CBT Therapist & Clinical Psychologist

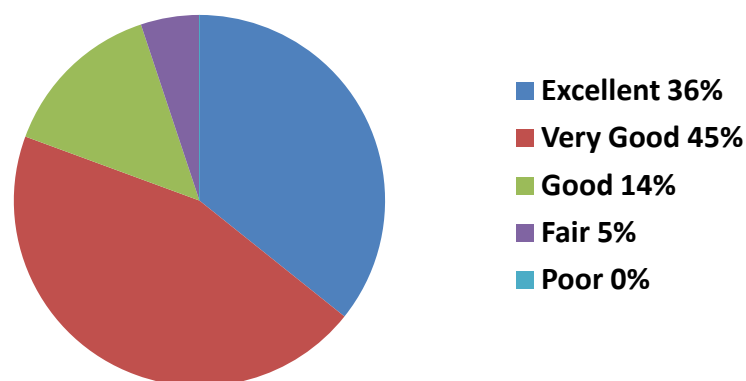
Feedback from Parents

*Feedback Report is based on data from 98 parents who completed Feedback Questionnaire

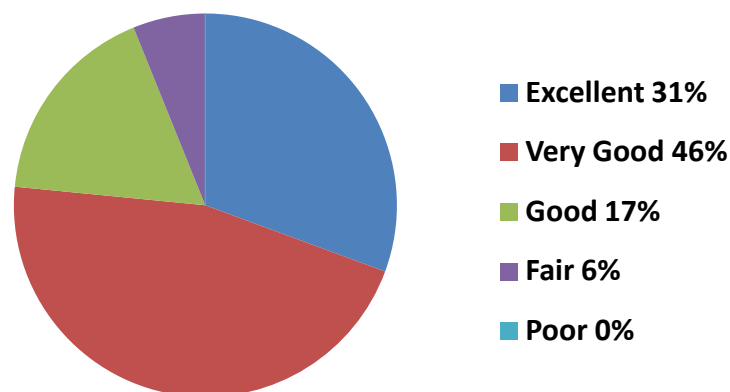
Q1. The presentation was concise and informative



Q2. How would you rate the Managing your Students Anxiety Presentation?



Q3. How would you rate the Adolescent Stress Management Presentation?



School Feedback

Last year we received an excellent presentation on adolescent stress anxiety and support in the Intermediate School Killorglin. The event was well attended and parents were highly complementary about the content. It was both very informative and practical. Parents were very keen to take on board the information and suggestions.

Mr. O' Dwyer, Principal Intermediate School Killorglin

Overlap with other plans e.g. LECP, CYPSC

The current SICAP programme is closely aligned with other plans supporting individuals and families in South Kerry such as the current CYPSC plan and the LECP plan for the County. As set out below both these plans have indicated the need and requirement of programmes such as this initiative therefore support and funding for such programmes should be encouraged into the future. The Kerry LECP 2016 – 2022 has identified health and wellbeing as being core to a good quality of life and parents with an increased understanding of stress and anxiety will be better able to support themselves and their young people to achieve better wellbeing. The current Healthy Ireland plan includes aims to improve both the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people in Ireland. As the Healthy Ireland Framework sets out, wellbeing is an integral part of health. Wellbeing reflects the quality of life and the various factors which can influence it over the course of a person's life.

What we plan to do 2018 – 2020 Kerry CYPSC Plan

Child & Youth Mental Health		
Priority Area	Objectives	Activities
Supports for Parents, Children & Young People through Interagency Collaboration	To ensure education for parents and YP is included in the plan to address anxiety, stress, bullying and other MH issues	<p>Developing the CYPSC website as a key resource/ signposting support/ information across agencies/partners for all MH info and training in Kerry</p> <p>Reconfiguring and launching the website (using social media) as a key platform for all MH info for everyone in Kerry</p> <p>Involving schools, parents and young people in this, eliciting their views, what their needs are in MH and specifically what is useful</p>

		<p>for the website (focus groups/ online surveys?)</p> <p>Promote & share Kerry CYPSC Child & Youth Mental Health information & resources via the Kerry CYPSC Website.</p> <p>Update information & resources as appropriate.</p> <p>Positive Parenting: parent information on developing positive CYP and parent relationships.</p> <p>Information on social media and its impact on CYP and child-parent relationship.</p>
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Recommendations for future delivery

- Further supports for parents in small group workshops exploring in depth tools to assist in the support of young people’s mental health and wellbeing.
- Increased funding to SICAP for initiatives similar to this one to be delivered both in schools and in the community setting. Link complimentary funding streams such as Healthy Ireland and CYPSC funding.
- Increased programmes for young people to support the increase of coping skills and resilience.
- Training for teachers on supporting students positively with extreme stress and anxiety issues.
- Strengthen the collaborative approach between schools, parents, community services and statutory services as are demonstrated in the successful delivery of this initiative.

Facilitators Bio

Kay O’ Sullivan, Mental Health Nurse/CBT Therapist

Noreen Horan, Clinical Psychologist

Kay has been working as a mental health nurse and CBT therapist both in the UK and Ireland, with both the inpatient population & in the community, for over 20 years, specialising in the area of child & adolescent mental health, diagnostics & intervention. Noreen has been working as a Clinical Psychologist for the past 20 years in the areas of Child Abuse, Autism, Community Care & Child Psychiatry, specialising in the area of child & adolescent mental health, diagnostics & intervention.

Mairéad O' Carroll

Mairéad has a Post Graduate Diploma in Career Guidance from the University of West Scotland, a Research MA in Student Retention, a Bachelor of Business Studies, is a qualified Career & Business Coach and has a Diploma in Education & Training. Mairéad is particularly interested in helping others find their most suitable course of study or career path for whatever stage of life they are. She sees this as an essential part of helping grow and develop the individual to help promote personal well-being and create a successful career.

