

# OUR REFLECTIONS UPON RESEARCH FINDINGS

During the workshop, we learned about the research findings from the projects which we advised on. Below, you can read all about the findings which we feel are key. Please note that some of these findings have not yet been peer-reviewed or published and are subject to change.

## THE ADAPT PROJECT

This research highlighted some of the ways in which the social-political barriers which are inherent within our healthcare systems, leads to care-experienced young people with Post-Traumatic Stress symptoms (PTSD) being alienated from receiving necessary evidence-based mental health support.

- Pathways to receiving treatment from mental health professionals were sometimes nebulous, and packages of support on offer were confusing.
- Oftentimes mental health assessments and support available did not involve young people themselves. This was a topic of conversation during our in-person research day. The question is not only why are young people's voices often not heard, but why are they seemingly erased entirely?
- It seems as though mental health services are distributed inequitably, with different service set-ups and availability of funding, which results in a postcode lottery across the UK. **We feel that where a young person is from should not impact their ability to receive care.**
- Mental health professionals seem to be left with a moral dilemma: do they give young people a diagnosis that may affirm the inner turmoil, even if this risks putting them to a system that may not be able to give them any support? Whilst withholding a diagnosis may prevent any stigma attached to the label, it could also prevent any hope of support access. If we don't validate the young person, they may lack understanding of their difficulties and experiences, and may interpret their difficulties and experiences as 'wrongness'
- Lots of services were trying to do better and working together, even in challenging circumstances.



## UNIVERSITY OF BATH

This research investigated whether the mental health needs of children in care and care leavers were being met by formal mental health services.

- It is encouraging that most young people who entered care with a mental health problem, who also had a health assessment, were referred to mental health services within 1 year of entering care (Phillips et al., 2023). However, placement instability and disengagement meant that support ended prematurely for many. This needs to change.
- Using interviews, the team revealed the unique and disruptive nature of being in care for support access, such as court proceedings, contact from biological relatives or concerns around addressing traumatic histories. Overcoming trauma and deciding to take the step to work through it is, from experience, big and scary in itself.
- The team found that young people were often more likely to turn to informal networks of support, such as friends or romantic partners. Worryingly however, there was still a large percentage of people who felt they had 'no one to turn to.'
- Finally, it seems that those with more PTSD symptoms were more likely to seek support from friends, family and mental health services than those with less. This means that perhaps symptoms such as nightmares or flashbacks are impossible to ignore.



The importance of centralizing the young person is evident throughout this research. It is only when others give young people the chance to believe in their understanding of themselves, that the young person will give others the chance to understand them. Trust is imperative for mental health support and recovery

If you would like to read more about the research being done by the Child Trauma and Recovery Research Group, visit our [website](#).

## OUR POSTCARDS

We identified findings which felt most important to us, and discussed "who" needed to hear "what". We made postcards with key messages, and then chose who to address them to, including: young people in care, the Government, foster carers and social workers. You see our postcards below

**YOUNG  
People  
R THE FUTURE**

As Time moves  
on, so do the young  
People, eventually  
They will be The  
adults ~~us~~

- Invest into  
them

To you  
All!

**MY MIND  
IS LOUD**



Care-experienced  
Dear young people,  
it's okay for things  
to feel overwhelming  
and scary. Tell  
someone how you're  
feeling. What's  
matter as much  
(if not more!)  
than what you show  
to the world.

it gets better - ask  
for help & you  
matter X.

**CARE  
EXPERIENCED**



Dear Care Experienced  
Young person! Just wanted  
to let you know that  
you are loved and valued  
regardless of your  
diagnosis. You should  
be involved in all/any  
conversation that pertains  
to your health including  
your mental health.

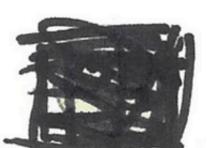
Remember to  
Speak up and  
Speak out!  
Mental Health  
Professionals can  
only help you  
if you tell them  
how you are  
feeling.

HELP GET  
ME SUPPORT  
BELIEVE ME  
WHEN I SAY I NEED IT!

Dear Social Workers, Foster carers and mental health professionals.   
Young people who have been in care need to be asked how they are feeling and about their mental health. Without taking away their control of their own health support, we need your advocacy to know who to ask for the help and support we need.

HELP ME  
GET WHAT  
I DESERVE !!

Dear Government,  
It's appalling that care experienced people face a post code lottery of what support they receive. We deserve equal access to services and to receive the therapy we need at the point of time we need it!  
Investing in early intervention will save money on other needs when we are older that have been chronically unmet.

LTM Listen To ME!   


Mental Health Professional  
It means they need more time. They might need a different approach. Environment, The professional could not be a good match.  
When a young person Disengages Listen to them...  
Doesn't mean They Ask Them...  
Don't want Help involve Them...  
(You wouldn't be here if it wasn't for us)

DON'T  
\* CARE \*  
FOR ME!

empathy  
WE TEND TO GET THE MOST 'ATTENTION'  
IN THE 'WRONG' WAY.  
WE WANT TO RECEIVE THE 'RIGHT'  
AND 'DESERVING' 'ATTENTION'  
THAT WE ALL !! DESERVE !!