

MY ISLAND WORKSHOP

co-produced by young people

- Individual islands drawn by young people
- Young people look at what makes a happy life on the island
- They learn about themselves and from each other



Introduction

We are Youthforia, the North West Youth Forum and we have been campaigning to improve mental health facilities for young people. As part of our campaign we secured funds from Awards for All to help us develop a training resource for schools and youth groups to raise awareness of mental health issues.

We asked 42nd Street, the Manchester based young people's mental health charity to work with us to develop the training. 42nd Street took our brief and came up with an idea for a session. They presented it to a Youthforia meeting where over 70 of us road tested the session and then gave feedback on how we found it.

This information was used to refine and adapt the resource and then it was road tested again with a smaller group of young people. A different group worked with 42nd Street on the design, so we feel this has been co-produced with 42nd Street. It is an opportunity to build empathy and to explore difference and commonality. When exploring the idea of good mental health there are lots of things most of us recognise as factors that make us feel safe and secure. However what makes one person safe will not always work for someone else.

This session is designed to be delivered by young people, youth workers, mental health practitioners and teachers and last 1 hour to 1½ hours depending on the size of the group. It is an introductory session.

Aim:

- To explore feelings and knowledge about mental health

Learning outcomes:

- Improved understanding of what contributes to a happy life for different people
- How to identify supportive relationships
- An understanding of the common things that make people resilient (protective factors).
- Improved personal and community resilience

Materials:

Flip chart, marker pens, pens/pencils, A4 paper, blank post cards, sellotape bluetack, evaluation forms

This session can be run with groups of up to 30 (skilled practitioners can use it in a one to one setting)

We recommend that young people who will be delivering the workshop have a training the trainer session so they understand the session and deliver in pairs, or co-deliver with a youth worker, mental health practitioner or teacher.

Timing What

Notes

Materials

10 mins Welcome and introduction

*Who are you and why are you all there?
What is the session for?*

20 mins Warm up (in pairs) – give everyone an A4 sheet of paper, pencil/pen. Ask people to put the pen on the paper to draw each other following the rule – look only at the person you are drawing. **DO NOT LOOK AT THE PAPER.** This is a gift you give to the other person.

Ask people to think about how it feels/felt to get that gift?

Share the feelings in the large group

What other gifts do you have to offer people? – Look at your portrait and write or draw those gifts, for example do you make people laugh, are you a good listener, are you a calm presence?

Have a walk round and look at other peoples' drawings and see if there are things you haven't thought about and things you might want to add.

Everyone has gifts to offer – if people are struggling, give them ideas.

*(You can extend this by getting people to find someone who has a gift they don't have or want to develop – what is it like to be outgoing?
What is it like to be shy?)*

A4 sheets of paper and pen/pencil for everyone

20 mins **The Island**
Everyone has a piece of flip chart and a marker pen. They are going to draw their island

Ask people to draw the outline of the island

Everyone should put themselves on their own island. Ask them to put all the things and feelings (draw or write) that make them feel happy, secure, wanted – that promote good mental health in them as individuals. It might be their family, a particular grand parent, a place, music...

Share your island in groups of 4/6 depending on the group size

How can the outside world help you replicate that sense of feeling safe?

Design a service that promotes good mental health and draw or write it on their own flip chart (either give out a new piece of paper or ask people to use the reverse side)

if you have a large group make your small groups no larger than 6 people - ideally you don't want more than 4 to 5 groups.

What support would make a good mental health service i.e. opportunities to socialise, someone to speak to at school, specialised services i.e. self harm services that are based in the community – what are your ideas?

Flip chart paper – one sheet per participant, marker pen

20 mins

Walk around the room and look at other peoples' islands - how are they different? Are they similar? Are there things the participants want to adapt on their own island now they have seen other ideas?

Ask people to go back to their own island and look at what they drew. Is there something they want to add or take away to what they have produced based on what they have seen or learnt by looking at other people's islands?

In groups of no more than 6 ask people to share their islands again. (this can be the same group as before or a different one)

Think about the things that are most important for you. Share them, what is the same, what is different? If there are different opinions think about how you can reach an agreement or compromise. Together take elements from each other's islands and through agreement (consensus) create a new island and a new 'good' mental health service that takes care of everyone

Go round and have a look at all the islands

Very important that people understand there are no right and wrong islands and they should not judge others.

Some people may not want to change anything and that is OK.

This can be done by ripping up other islands and putting them on a fresh bit of paper, securing through sellotape or blutack or by drawing things again.

Again it is important that people understand there are no right and wrong and they should not judge others.

Flip chart paper, pens, sellotape, blutack

15 mins

Hand out blank postcards, ask people to think back over the session

On one side of the post card write 3 things you can offer other people to make them feel safe, i.e. you are very friendly, a good listener etc

On the other side 3 things that make you feel safe, i.e. your friends, your family, books....

This card is our gift to you to take away as a reminder of what you have to offer other people who may need some support and what you yourself need to feel safe.

Evaluation

You could help by running through the different elements to refresh people's memories they could look at what they produced so far.

If they want people can carry this card as a reminder to themselves.

Do an evaluation, it will help us to improve the training.

Thank you.

Blank postcard and pen/pencil per participant

[Link to a number of evaluation methods produced by Brathay](#)