



Coronavirus Support *Live*

22-25 February 2021

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The Importance of Youth Voice! And how this can help us all to recover, rebuild and reconnect

Dr Niamh-Elizabeth Mourton



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The stark statistics.....

- At least 1 in 3 children have experienced an increase in mental health issues including stress, loneliness and worry.
- 66% of primary school children report feeling lonely.
- 73% of young people aged 16-19 said they were worried about the future and 59% saying that their well-being is being affected.
- 74% of children and young people report missing going to school and found it hard to maintain friendships during lockdown.
- The number of children meeting the CMO's guidelines (60mins) - 47% to 19%.



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Every generation has their own experience of what it is to be young – we must listen to our young people now, as only they have the lived experience of being young during this challenging time.



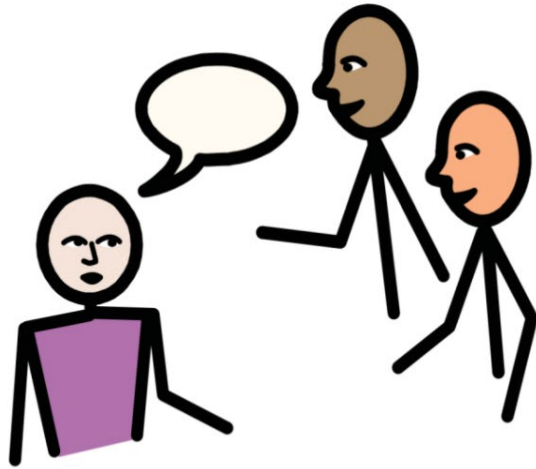
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Youth Voice – why is it important?

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)



🌐 UNCRC Article 12

I have the right to be listened to and taken seriously



🌐 UNCRC Article 13

I have the right to find out and share information

IT'S THEIR HUMAN RIGHT



What can we do?

- We can recognise young people's right to participate in decisions that will impact them.
- We can acknowledge the great skills and strengths and lived experience that they bring to the conversations we must have.
- Young people should be seen as valued stakeholders for helping us to recover, rebuild and reconnect.



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What can we do?

- Young people and school staff have all suffered considerably during this pandemic.
- For us to help recover, rebuild and reconnect for them, we must find ways to gain young people's perspectives on their present and on their future.
- In a rapidly changing world, where we are coming to terms with the short and long-term impact of COVID-19, we must hear how young people have been impacted and what they think will work for them when we return to 'normal' school life.



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What is stopping us?

- We have our own agenda.
- We just do not ask!
- We are very busy (and don't get round to it)
- We have problems in recognizing and understanding young people's modes/purposes of communication.
- We make assumptions which gives poor evidence.
- We don't empower them to take ownership.
- We are afraid ourselves of hearing the reality of what has happened.



And that is ok.....

COVID-19 has shown us just how fragile and human we all are.

In order to move forward, we must embrace the impact it has had on us all.

We must acknowledge together the impact it has had on us and on our young people and really listen to their views and work with them (not for them) on how we can rebuild from it.



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If we ask – what do we hear?



- Young people want to be asked – it makes them feel valued and a sense of reconnection.
- Young people want everyone to be heard – including their peers who are engaged and those who are not. They see the value in hearing all sides of the story.
- Young people feel empathy for what you are going through too and they really want to help.



Keziah Gilbert

As a member of the YST Youth Board I aim to be an advocate for physical activity for all young people, focusing on sport for education and sport in rural communities. I appreciate the power sport possesses to change lives, it has changed my life and will continue to change many more.



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Jess Lonnen

Many students feel intimidated by the prospect of PE and sport. They don't have a community they can turn to, to relieve the burden of stress, allowing negative thoughts to spiral out of control. I would love to help show these young people that PE and sport is for everyone.



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Young People see the value of PE, physical activity and school sport.

- Seen as vehicles for boosting wellbeing amongst peers.
- Young people are eager to help you to be able to collectively ease the social and emotional impact of COVID-19 using PEPAS.



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Call to Action - Ask!



Even better empower your young people to ask.



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Why Peer to Peer?

- Students feel more comfortable and open.
- Young people understand each other better as they share a similar lived experiences.
- Empowers young people to be in more control of what is being decided for them
- Young people are experts on youth issues.
- Freer talking about issues to people of their own age compared to adults.



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Youth Voice Toolkit:

- Empower your young people to be the insight investigators.
- Work with them on questions that need to be asked.
- Decide on best way to collect insight.
 - Surveys, suggestion boxes, interviews, insight posters, inclusive focus groups.



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Youth Voice and You

Allow your young people to be part of all the areas of their recover curriculum.

From helping you with the insight collection, to the analysis, planning, designing and even delivery.



YST Youth Board - Youth Voice Initiative



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Ask and it is given.....

Children, after all, are not just adults-in-the-making. They are people whose current needs and rights and experiences must be taken seriously. — Alfie Kohn

"The future belongs to young people with an education and the imagination to create."— Barack Obama

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."
— Ryunosuke Satoro



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Thank you

Dr Niamh-Elizabeth Mourton



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Decathlon will make additional donations to YST once we hit an agreed target – so every £ you spend on kit and equipment will help to raise crucial funds for YST as we start to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.



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May Virtual CPD week

National School Sports Week

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