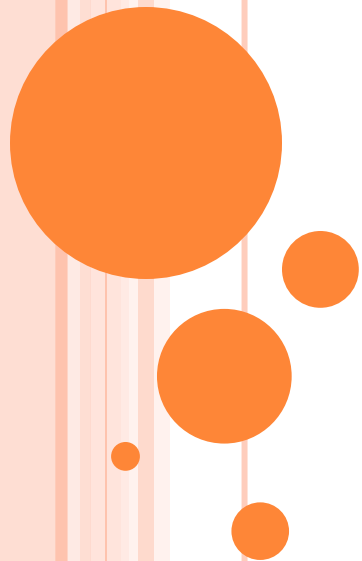


COUNSELLING AND THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD



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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- Need for early intervention – prevalence of difficulties; prevention of later difficulties
- School based counselling around the world
- Reported benefits of school based counselling
- School based counselling in the U.K.
- Need to establish evidence base in Ireland
- Survey developed by research team in Dublin City University



INTRODUCTION

The national guidelines on promoting positive mental health and suicide prevention among school aged children focus exclusively on the post-primary school sector and emphasise **the need for early identification and timely intervention** for any young person attending secondary level education experiencing mental health difficulties.

(Department of Education and Skills, 2013).



PREVALENCE

- The World Health Organisation estimates that up to 20% of children and adolescents worldwide experience a disabling mental health problem.
- Anxiety disorders are one of the most common forms of psychological distress in childhood and youth (Cartwright-Hatton et al., 2004) - prevalence as high as **21%** (Kashani & Orvaschel, 1990) with most studies estimating around **10%** (Carr, 2006)



LONGER TERM IMPACT

- Negative consequences on **educational attainment and social functioning** (Pine, 1997)
- Significantly increases the risk of **developing mental health difficulties in adulthood** (Mattison, 1992)
- More likely to be **excluded from school** and more likely to **leave school** without obtaining educational qualifications (Green, McGinnity, Meltzer, Ford, & Goodman, 2005; Parry-Langdon, 2008)
- Later intervention is **economically inefficient** (Nobel Laureate Economist Dr. James Heckman, 2000)



ACCESS TO HELP

- Frequently, childhood anxiety is **overlooked** as these children are likely to be shy, cooperative and compliant (Essau et al., 2012)
- Children from **disadvantaged communities** are less likely to receive intervention and more likely to discontinue attendance prematurely (Misfud & Rapee, 2005)
- Problems with attendance at child and adolescent mental health services in Ireland (Brierely, 2012)



OIREACHTAS SPOTLIGHT REPORT ON *WELL-BEING: PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS (2012)*

- Research shows mental health promotion is most effective when it takes place early in a person's life, therefore school may be a favourable location for such programmes to take place.
- The WHO's Ottawa Charter (1986) refers to the importance of the school as a setting for mental health promotion. It has also been found that there is a strong relationship between health, classroom performance, participation and student attitudes.
<http://www.healthpromotion.cywhs.sa.gov.au/Content.aspx?p=154>
- However, while researchers argue that mental health programmes are most effective between the ages of 2-7 (Clarke & Barry, 2010), many of the programmes available around the world target children older than this.



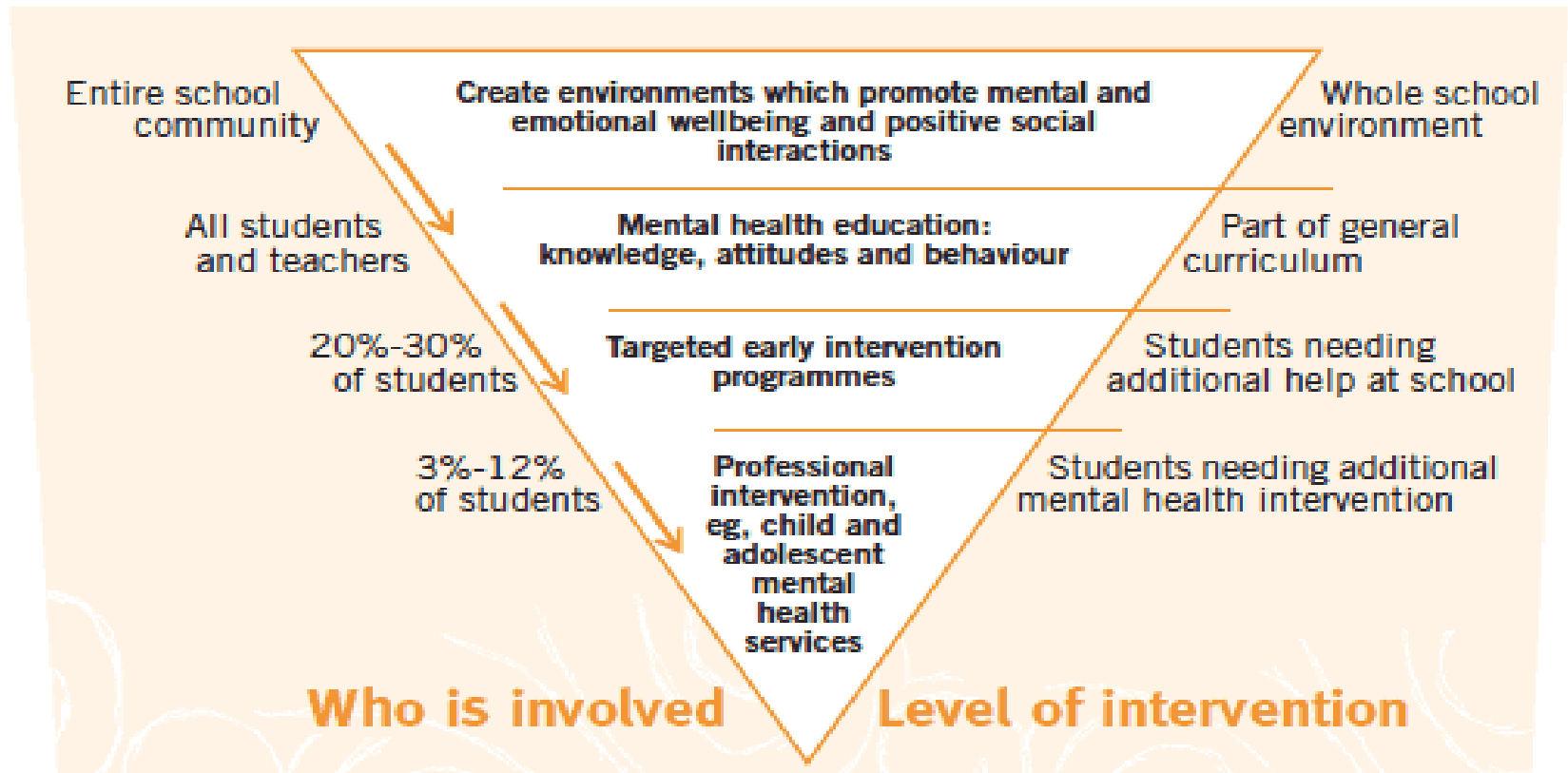
THE COST OF NOT INTERVENING...

- Without intervention, emotional and behavioural problems in young people may be less amenable to intervention after **eight years** of age, resulting in an escalation of **academic problems, antisocial behaviour and eventual school drop-out** in later years.

Clarke, A.M. and Barry, M. (2010). An evaluation of the Zippy's Friends emotional wellbeing programme for primary schools in Ireland.



FOUR-LEVEL , WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO SCHOOL CHANGE (WHO)



PREVALENCE OF SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELLING INTERNATIONALLY

- British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (2013)
- Findings of a scoping of state funded school-based counselling services for children and young people in 90 countries.
- An integral part of the education system in many parts of the world. In many other parts it is developing a firm foothold or emerging as a valuable way of supporting learning, as well as a range of health related concerns.
- The counsellor's work is understood to be specialised, requiring specific training and development opportunities, and involves a range of professional activities and responsibilities within the school setting.



SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELLING - MANDATORY

- Austria
- Bahamas
- Botswana
- Costa Rica
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Gambia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Hong Kong
- Iceland
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Japan
- Jordan
- Macau
- Malta
- Malaysia
- Nepal
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Norway
- Philippines
- Slovakia
- Singapore
- St Kitts
- S.Korea
- Sweden
- Tanzania
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turkey
- Venezuela
- Uganda
- Vietnam
- Portugal
- Romania



SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELLING IS MANDATORY...

- in 32 (of 50) states in the USA
- in 3 (of 10) provinces within Canada (Alberta, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island)
- in 1 (of 6) states in Australia (New South Wales)
- in 3 German states (Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria and Nord-Rhein Westfalen)



COUNSELLING IS PROVIDED IN PRIMARY, MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS (BACP, 2013)

- Argentina
- Australia
- Bahamas
- Belgium
- Belize
- Botswana
- Brazil
- Czech Republic
- Chile
- Denmark
- Egypt
- Estonia
- Finland
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guyana
- Hong Kong
- Iceland
- Israel
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jordan
- Macau
- Malta
- Nepal
- Norway
- Romania
- Serbia
- Singapore
- Slovenia
- South Korea
- St Kitts
- Sweden
- Taiwan
- Tanzania
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turkey
- UK
- Venezuela



SCHOOL-BASED COUNSELLING IS WELL ESTABLISHED BUT NOT MANDATORY...

- Australia
- Belgium
- Belize
- Botswana
- Brazil
- China
- Croatia
- Ecuador
- Georgia
- Greece
- Holland
- India
- Israel
- Kenya
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Saudi Arabia
- Serbia
- South Africa
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Thailand
- Taiwan
- UK



SCHOOL COUNSELLORS (BACP, 2013)

- In the majority of countries where counselling is mandatory, counselling is positioned at the intersection of two professions, namely education and counselling.
- School-based counselling is well established in 62 countries across the globe and in the early stages of development in a further seven.
- More school-based counselling is delivered by **teachers** than by psychologists, professional counsellors or social workers. It is commonplace for school counsellors to have **dual training in teaching and counselling or psychology** and will be experienced in working with classes and groups of students, as well as with individuals.



IMPACT OF SCHOOL BASED COUNSELLING

- Studies in other jurisdictions indicate that parents and children have reported ***significant improvements in children's emotional difficulties following engagement in school-based counselling*** (Lee, Tiley & White, 2009; Thompson, 2013)
- Teachers have reported ***improvements in behaviour and mood*** (Sherr et al., 1999)
- Improvements in children's psychological wellbeing have also been accompanied by ***improvements in school ethos*** (Malberg et al., 2012).



SCOPING STUDY – UK (BACP, 2014)

- In 2007 the UNICEF Report Card 7 [4] stated that the UK had the lowest levels of child wellbeing
- By 2012, nearly 50% of schools in Britain had school counselling (Atkinson, 2013)
- Scotland – commitment for all pupils by 2015
- Wales - £4.75m accessible counselling services Year 6 & secondary (16-18yrs)
- N.I. – primary school-based pilots: time4me
- England – responsibility of local authorities
- BACP (2014) – scoping study



LANDSCAPE IN U.K.

- Primarily humanistic and pluralistic approach; smaller number of psychodynamic, CBT, behaviourist
- Play informed (78%), art-informed (59%); storytelling informed (46%), psycho-educational informed (32%), music informed (24%), drama informed (20%).
- Family problems (25%), trauma and abuse (22%). Friendship and bullying (22%), bereavement (16%), anxiety (13%)
- Number of sessions: organisations (5-76, mean=15); independent counsellors (2-31, mean=14)



EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH

- Such benefits appear to be acknowledged through the direct provision of psychological supports at both second and third level education sector in Ireland, but not at primary school level.
- Unlike many European countries there is little provision of school counselling for children attending primary schools in Ireland.
- This is concerning given that it is estimated that 1 in 3 children are likely to have experienced some type of mental disorder by the age of 13 (Cannon et al., 2013).



NO RESEARCH AT NATIONAL LEVEL

- In Ireland it is not known what the perceived demand for such provision is at primary school level, how the minimal provision available is configured and what needs it meets among this student group.
- In Ireland, programmes such as Zippy's Friends, Mind Out and the Jigsaw Meath Project are being implemented in schools with positive outcomes being reported.
- School-based programmes can have positive effects for students in terms of:
 - behaviour and self-control
 - social and emotional skills
 - ability to learn and achieve academically
 - problem-solving in social settings
- Oireachtas Spotlight Report on
“*Well-Being: promoting mental health in schools*” (2012)



STUDY – DCU RESEARCHERS

- Aim: to establish a knowledge base of the current demands and provision of counselling services in primary schools in Ireland.
- The study consists of
 - Phase 1: an online survey
 - Phase 2: interviews with principals and counsellors in schools that currently provide counselling support for primary school pupils
- Goal: to establish evidence base for prevalence of need and
- E-Scéal circulated 12th June, 2015



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