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Ask Normen Newsletter



Welcome!

Welcome to the Ask Normen newsletter...created this month as part of the national Takeover Challenge – an annual engagement project which sees organisations across England opening their doors to children and young people to take over adult roles. It puts children and young people in decision-making positions and encourages organisations and businesses to hear their views. Children gain an insight into the adult world and organisations benefit from a fresh perspective about their work.

This Takeover day, the Mental Health Stigma Programme (MHSP), a Northamptonshire engagement project, took over the Ask Normen newsletter and we have remade, revamped and redesigned this newsletter. We have written our own articles, voicing our thoughts and opinions on mental health and telling you exactly what we do to help stop mental health stigma! So for one issue only, say goodbye to your usual newsletter and welcome the MHSP Participation group – you can read all about MHSP in the next article!



About MHSP

The Northamptonshire Mental Health Stigma Programme is an NHS and County Council initiative that is driven by young people aged 11 - 18 to:

- Help spread the message that 'mental health is everybody's business.'
- Increase awareness of mental health needs, draw attention to the stigma and discrimination experienced by young people with mental health needs and challenge the negative perceptions of mental health needs
- Raise awareness amongst young people about mental health issues, stigma and where they can access help and support
- Encourage young people to take responsibility for tackling mental health stigma
- Work with you people to develop services that are accessible and in settings that young people are comfortable in.



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Stress

For young people between the ages of 10 and 18 stress appears to be something which is inevitable. It is in particular unavoidable for this age group as this is the age where we first become exposed to exams and the pressure they force upon us. Exams may cause young people all kinds of stress, because we are constantly reminded of how important they are and what could happen if we don't get the best results.

This pressure may cause a mental health need, such as anxiety, because a failure to perform well can lead to a fear of not succeeding in the 'real world', what we need is reassurance that while exams are important, one bad grade is not going to be the end of the world.

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Subjectivity

In England, statistics show that females are more likely to be diagnosed with mental health conditions than males. Why is this the case? Are women more prone to becoming mentally ill, or can it be said to be a problem in the way mental health disorders are diagnosed?

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Appearance

The media has been an influence on how people perceive themselves for as long as it has existed, regardless of whether or not we choose to acknowledge this, it's the truth. Unfortunately, the constant message thrown down young people's throat is that they need to achieve this unrealistic standard of tall, slim yet curvaceous or tall, muscular with perfect hair.

Ask yourself, what kind of impact does this have on us? It influences young people to put their body in danger, developing insecurities and mental health disorders – and for what? To be a size 0? To have a thigh gap? To reach the

media's perception of beauty and perfection? It's rather hypocritical isn't it?

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Bullying

Statistics show that over 56% of young adults have been bullied based on their appearance. Appearance is cited to be the number one aggressor of bullying, with over 51% saying they were bullied on what they looked like. And as we know from our last article, this is mostly due to social media in the modern society - it teaches us that appearance is very important.

Young people need to understand how to accept and be proud of how they look and respond to, and deal with bullying. It's also just as important to tackle the bullies themselves to make them realise the potential damage they can cause. Dealing with bullying head on will reduce or even stop negative comments and attacks, leading young people to become more confident in themselves and significantly improving their mental health.

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Northamptonshire Mental Health Awareness Day

Don't forget that Friday 10 February 2017 is Northamptonshire Mental Health Awareness Day!

It is a day planned by our group, to raise awareness about mental health and empower students to TALK OUT LOUD about how they are feeling - whilst raising money for mental health charity MIND at the same time. We aim to remove the stigma surrounding mental health and bring to light the importance of seeking help for any mental health needs that young people may have.

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