



Towards a 'Skills for Life Passport'.

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Background & Introduction

One suggested strategy to improve levels of help-seeking for mental health problems is to increase population levels of mental health literacy (Chambers et al, 2015; Gulliver et al, 2010; Jorm 2012). This includes knowledge and beliefs about psychological difficulties, which may aid their early recognition, management and prevention (Dooley & Fitzgerald, 2012). Enhancing mental health literacy has become a goal of national mental health policy in Ireland, the UK and Australia - Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Ireland, 2014), Mental Capital and Wellbeing (Government Office for Science, UK, 2008), Fourth National Mental Health Plan (Australian Department of Health and Ageing 2009).

The State of Mind Sport programme was established in England in 2011 with the aim of using the power of sport to tackle stigma and to improve the mental health, wellbeing and working life of sports players and their communities. So far, this educational programme has been delivered to over 8000 sports players, staff and 'fan ambassadors' in the North of England and has been nominated as an exemplar programme in promoting positive mental health (MIND UK, 2014).

State of Mind Ireland, a partnership between UCC, CRSI and the HSE wants to get people talking about positive mental health, to raise third level students' awareness of positive coping strategies, utilising social media to show how to access help and to build community resilience via participation in Sport. We aimed to embed the State of Mind Programme into the Irish University context both North and South commencing in March 2015 in University College Cork.

Interventions

The key components involve a 45 minute presentation followed by a 30-45 minute skills group which will improve students understanding of how stress may affect them, how best to cope with difficult periods / transitions in College using the '5 ways to Wellbeing' and Mindfulness, and how best to seek support when it is needed (using the concepts of early intervention and the protective effect of 'one good adult', that is a coach, lecturer or other person of responsibility to support students who are stressed). The State of Mind Ireland Programme is part of a wider framework utilising blended learning in partnership with the HSE, UCC, ReachOut Ireland, SHINE, and ALL-Island-All-Active aimed at facilitating on-going dynamic improvement in the following areas of third level students' life experience:

Programme Framework:

Building HOPE - A 'Skills for Life Passport'

Health & Wellbeing:	Mindfulness, Balanced approach to Diet, Exercise, Alcohol & Sleep
Opportunity & Curiosity:	Connecting with Community, Sport and Culture
Personal Resilience:	Positive Self-Regard, Problem Solving
Emotional Intelligence & Empathy:	Compassionate Stance towards Self and Others



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Proposed Benefits

- We believe that early intervention will empower students by promoting mental fitness - that is their level of resilience (ability to bounce back from adversity) and wellbeing.*
- The concept of the 'State of Mind Family' incorporating players, fans and their communities is integral to the ethos of the entire project. We believe that this has the potential to build community resilience and to enhance active citizenship.*
- The 'Skills for Life Passport' could form part of the students' Academic Transcript and demonstrate to future employers that the students have been trained in a holistic adaptive skills based intervention for mental health promotion.*

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