

Welsh Youth Consultation on: **Suicide and Help Seeking Behaviours**

A Positive Choices Project

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Background

- Positive Choices project aims to reduce the rates of suicide in Wales
- Need identified to gather information on suicide in young people
- Funding obtained for post of Youth Agency Liaison Officer (time limited)



Consultation Exercise

- From October 2008 until May 2009 consultation exercises were carried out across Wales involving 172 young people
- The sites were: Aberdare, Cardiff, Cardigan, Llanelli, Machynlleth and Monmouth



Aims of the consultation exercise

Youth Agency Liaison Officer to explore and obtain information on:

- Existing knowledge around the issues of suicide
- Attitudes around suicide
- What help seeking behaviours if any young people could identify
- Ascertain what services they may access
- Ascertain what resources and 'who' may they turn to for help

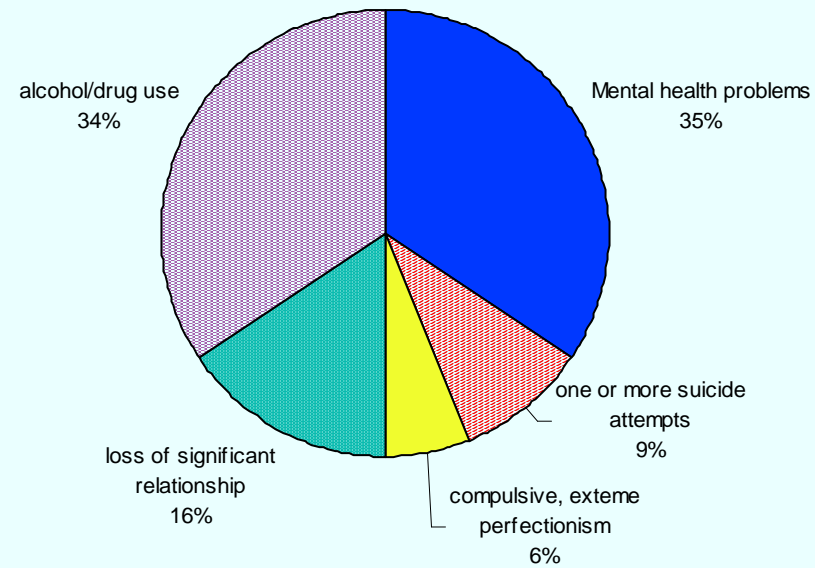


Generally

- 69% believe that those with thoughts of suicide are lonely and depressed
- 73% believe that suicidal thoughts and attempts are a problem amongst young people today
- Interestingly when asked if they thought young people who attempt suicide are just looking for sympathy only 1% of females agreed compared to 31% of males who said 'yes'



Perceived risk factors



When asked about ways of getting information...



- The overwhelming results were that information and advice was needed that was readily available and non-stigmatising.
- Approximately a third of the cohort identified that advice was needed on how to build resilience, self-esteem, cope with stress and provide strategies for dealing with difficult situations.

Findings



- **15 What kind of information do you think that young people would benefit from?**
-
- Information and advice on issues that affect young people and where they can go for help and support • 24%
- Information and advice on someone who has had first hand experience. • 8%
- How to increase self-esteem, confidence and well-being (resilience building) • 10.4%
- How to better support networks, e.g. family and friends • 4.6%
- Advice for young people on looking at the positives in their lives/how to cope with stress and difficult situations • 9.8%
- Consequences of suicide on communities • 4%
- Counselling services • 6%
- No one is ever alone • 4%
- Listen to people in trouble • 3.4%
- Symptoms of mental health conditions to raise awareness • 0.5%



Best way of giving information?

- Nearly a quarter wanted a website and thought internet forums may be useful
- 28% wanted the media to present information
- 31% wanted information to be given in schools/colleges



Barriers to accessing help

- a. afraid parents/guardians will find out 47%
- b. peers will find out 29%
- c. not sure of the services and don't know what to access 36%
- d. don't know how to ask for help 36%
- e. worried of being labelled and this staying on their medical record 26%
- f other 11%



Ways forward...

- Young people clearly stating that they want factual information & strategies to help them cope with difficult situations
- Factual information needs to be given via a multi-faceted approach using multi-agency involvement
- An open culture where it is ok to discuss suicide is essential



What next?

- Further research & consultation needed in this area
- Services need to respond to the needs identified by young people if they are to be effective
- Continue to deliver ASIST training for those working with children & young people



Recommendations:

- Proactive health promotion approaches NB these need to be adaptable
- Proactively promote available existing services to increase awareness
- Ensure rights to confidentiality are made explicit
- Education involved in delivering information

Thank you for listening.

Any questions?

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