



Suicide Prevention Participation Network

Reflections on Youth Advisory Group work on the One Good Adult Resource

October 2023

Background

As part of our work to deliver the new Suicide Prevention Youth Advisory Group, Children in Scotland and University of Stirling have also been asked to facilitate a wider participation network. The aim of this group is to support us to continue to hear from a wider range of young people and the practitioners that work with them.

The Participation Network ensures that [Suicide Prevention Scotland](#) can hear from practitioners about their experiences of working with children and young people with experience of suicidality.

Across a number of meetings, the group considered what it means to be a good adult in relation to suicide prevention and when working with a young person in crisis. This document should be considered in conjunction with the Youth Advisory Group summary which I have also shared.

This short summary paper highlights the Network members' views on the subject. We believe these views can support future development and implementation of the One Good Adult approach, support the wider work of Suicide Prevention Scotland in understanding the views of practitioners, and inform and influence professional practice more widely.

Participation Network's views on being a good adult

Broadly speaking, members of the participation network recognised the definition of a good adult as described by the Youth Advisory Group (see the above link to the summary paper for detail). There was clear understanding of the need for relationship-based and trauma-informed support. There was also understanding of the need to be welcoming and open with young people so that they know they are safe to share.

Members of the group also highlighted the importance of consistency of staffing to allow relationships to develop so that young people feel safe

within a service or group. However, there was a consistent reflection from members of the network about the impact of funding and capacity on realising this. A lack of sufficient funding or indeed a lack of long-term funding mean it can be hard for organisations to retain staff and ensure longer term support.

There was a reflection that approaches like One Good Adult need to be embedded in systems, rather than being an individual approach. This means identifying ways for this to be embedded across the delivery of a service within culture, practice and policies to support all to take it forward.

Practitioners were also clear about the need for greater support and more opportunities for reflective practice. They feel that to be a good adult and to provide support to young people in crisis they need opportunities for reflective practice and also for training on dealing with vicarious trauma. However, many also reflected that what young people identify as being important when they are in crisis are skills that staff already have, and we need to support people to understand how skills can be transferred.

Network members also reiterated views that have been raised by the Youth Advisory Group that staff in different settings may be more likely to be seen as a good adult. Across both groups there was a feeling that third sector organisations are more trusted in this area. This suggests there may be particular work needed to support those in statutory or clinical services to consider the One Good Adult resource.

Summary

Members of the network have clear reflections about what it means to be a good adult when a young person is in crisis. The qualities identified by young people resonate with them and they deem them as important.

They have also identified the support they need for delivery, including training, support and supervision. They also clearly recognised the limitations on their ability to take on this role in the context of short-term, inconsistent funding.

We believe this evidence can support the implementation of the resource and the wider development of policy and practice relating to suicide prevention.

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