

GET INTO SUMMER

Thrive Edinburgh and StressLESS Collaboration

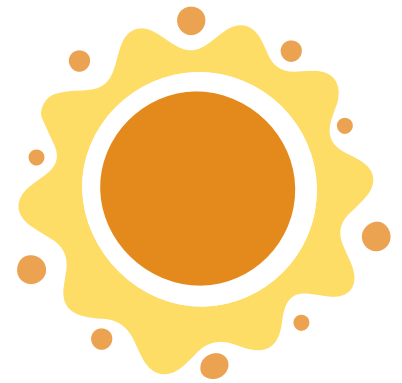
Project Summary Report



Contents

Introduction	3
Thrive Edinburgh Organisations	4
StressLESS Background	5
7 Ways to Stress Less	6
StressLESS Training	7
Overview	7
Training Evaluation	8
StressLESS in Practice – Get into Summer	11
Overview	10
Addressing Inequalities	10
Implementation of StressLESS	11
Activities Delivered	14
Scran Van Summer Tour	16
Reflections and Learning	18
Mechanisms of impact (Results)	20
Overview	15
Young Person Reflection Session	17
A closer look at StressLESS with Goodtrees Programme Leader	19
Staff Focus Groups	20
Looking Forward	22

Introduction



The Mental Health Foundation Scotland partnered with Thrive Edinburgh and secured funding from the Scottish Government Get into Summer funding scheme to support the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Scotland during summer 2021.

We know from our [Coronavirus: Mental Health in the Pandemic Study](#) and [Coronavirus and Adolescent Mental Health Study](#) that young people have consistently reported increased feelings of loneliness, anxiety and suicidal thoughts and feelings during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Get into Summer aimed to ensure that children and young people most impacted by Covid-19 were supported to create opportunities to socialise, play and reconnect over the 2021 summer holidays. In particular, the funding hoped to target young people aged up to 25 from low income households who may otherwise struggle to access such experiences during the holidays. The Scottish Government cross-agency Covid Education Recovery Group recommended that the focus was on the wellbeing of children and young people, and we were pleased to be part of delivering such an important piece of work.

The Thrive Edinburgh collaboration is an innovative new strategy for improving the mental health and wellbeing of all citizens in Edinburgh. We worked with 22 community based youth organisations as part of the Thrive Edinburgh collaborative who were working with young people in communities across Edinburgh.

These organisations were delivering summer activities for children and young people across the city including in the outdoors, the arts and various trips and visits. The Get into Summer funding allowed them to enhance their planned activities, expand their reach and provide a vital wellbeing focus.

Staff from the 22 organisations were offered training from the Mental Health Foundation Scotland in the use of the StressLESS Facilitator Pack to use and adapt as part of their summer activities. The aim of this was to provide engaging and interactive ways to facilitate conversations and empower young people with the tools and strategies to protect and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

This report will provide some background on StressLESS, outline the training and implementation approach of StressLESS in this context, highlight some of the key activities that were undertaken over summer and offer reflections and learning from our project evaluation with staff and young people.



Thrive Edinburgh Organisations

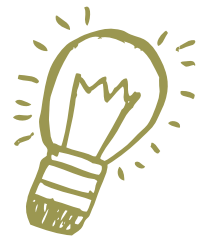
A special thanks to the 22 Thrive Edinburgh organisations who participated in the Get into Summer collaboration.



StressLESS Background



Originally developed through funding from the Health and Social Care Alliance, the StressLESS Facilitator Pack was designed in collaboration with practitioners and young people from a number of health organisations supporting those with long-term health conditions.



The foundation of this original project was based on the understanding that children and young people with a long-term health condition are twice as likely to suffer from mental health problems and that the stress linked to living with these conditions can have a significant impact on their physical health.

Ultimately, StressLESS aims to offer creative and engaging ways to explore themes in mental health and wellbeing with young people, encouraging them to find what works for them to be able to look after their mental health with the same emphasis that they have been taught to look after their physical health.

The co-production of the pack aimed to ensure that the topics and activities were inclusive to young people with long term health conditions, while flexible enough to be used by organisations and schools with varying resources and remits.

StressLESS is not intended as a crisis or distress management tool. It is a mental health promotion tool designed to support all young people with coping strategies and self-care techniques for maintaining good mental health and managing in times of stress. This includes understanding when and how to ask for help in the right way, should they need it.

The structure of the pack is centred around the *7 Ways to Stress Less* and facilitators are provided with different activities to use with children and young people to help them develop skills and techniques in each of these areas to support their overall mental health and wellbeing. The activities are interactive, creative and reflective and are flexible and adaptable for tailoring to a wide range of young people.



7 Ways to Stress Less



1. You do you

No one knows you better than you. So when it comes to looking after your mental health, take some time to get to know what makes you feel good.



4. Stay in touch

It's good to feel connected to people – it makes you feel cared for and part of something.



2. Have fun!

Make time regularly to do things you enjoy. If you enjoy doing something, it probably means you're good at it, which can make you feel like you're achieving something.



5. Take a break

Change is good for your mental health, like a change of scene or a change of pace. It helps you step away from all the things on your mind or your 'to do' list.



3. Talk it out

Try talking about your feelings regularly. You'll probably talk to different people about different things, and some people are particularly good listeners.



6. Feel-good factor

Looking after your physical health is amazing for your mental health! It can release chemicals in the brain that make you feel good.



7. Share your care

So far we've focused a lot of being kind to yourself. Caring for others, and keeping up positive relationships with other people, is also really good for your mental health.



StressLESS Training



Overview

There was a significant opportunity for the Mental Health Foundation to influence the mental health and wellbeing of young people across Edinburgh through the direct activities that the 22 organisations were delivering to large numbers of young people over summer.

We felt that StressLESS suited the nature of the fun and engaging summer activities and was an adaptable resource that staff could draw on to suit their respective community settings.

We delivered training online with the aim of getting staff comfortable with utilising and adapting StressLESS activities as part of their Get into Summer activities. The aim of this was to help staff facilitate conversations and empower young people with the tools and strategies to protect their mental health and wellbeing, in engaging and interactive ways.

Key components of the StressLESS Get into Summer training:

- Delivered online via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions but used digital tools and interactivity to improve engagement
- Utilised activities from the StressLESS pack to convey key messages and learning while developing familiarity with activities and components of the pack
- Embedded a confidence scale via Zoom polls to gauge how confident staff felt in discussing mental health and wellbeing with young people before and after training
- Provided an introduction to mental health and wellbeing with a focus on young people and staff wellbeing
- Ensured staff had protected time to familiarise themselves with the StressLESS Facilitator Pack and workshop solutions to any questions together



1 full day
training course



10
training days



72 staff trained
from 22 organisations

Training Evaluation

All staff that attended the StressLESS training were asked to complete a pre and post training evaluation survey.

We received 62 complete responses to the pre-survey which aimed to understand what staff hoped to get out of the training, how confident they felt in their knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellbeing, and their confidence in talking about these topics with young people they work with.

We received 51 complete responses to the post-survey which asked respondents about their satisfaction with the training they had received and the extent to which they now felt confident about their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing, and talking about and using the StressLESS pack with the young people they work with.

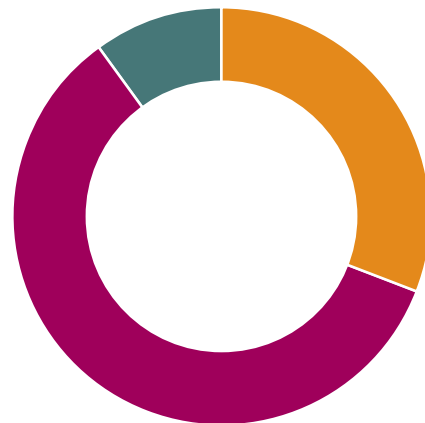
For the purposes of this report, we have presented some of the key findings from these evaluation surveys which demonstrate an overall high level of satisfaction with the training and positive developments in knowledge around mental health and wellbeing as well as confidence in facilitating conversations with young people around key StressLESS topics.



Training Satisfaction



How confident do you feel in using the StressLESS pack with your young people?



- 16 respondents (31%) reported they felt 'extremely confident'**
- 30 respondents (59%) reported that they felt 'very confident'**
- 5 respondents (10%) said they felt 'somewhat confident'**

Knowledge about mental health and wellbeing



Confidence in facilitating conversations about mental health and wellbeing with young people



“The training was pitched perfectly, I haven’t been on training that has been so valuable, good use of time and I can really see the benefit of the resource before I’ve even had the chance to start using it. Looking forward to getting the chance to use it now.” Training Participant

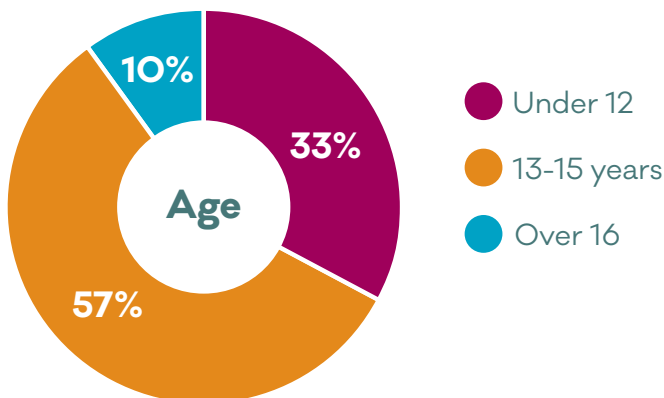
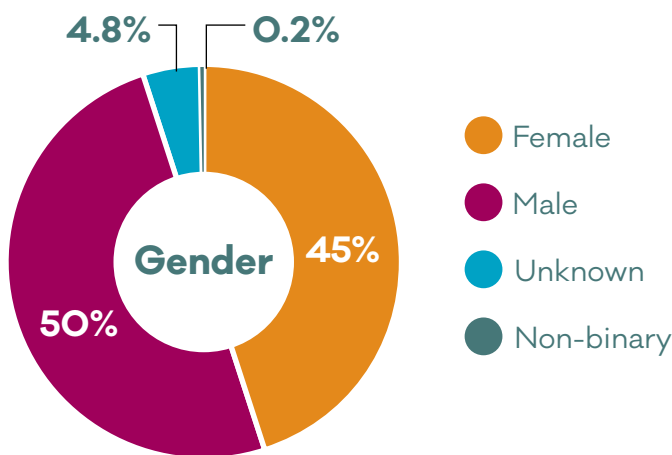
N.B. Due to a lower number of responses to the post-training survey, direct comparisons cannot be made between pre- and post-survey findings. Therefore, findings serve as an indication of overall change.



StressLESS in Practice Get into Summer

AROUND 2,400* YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN THIS GET INTO SUMMER PROGRAMME

Overview

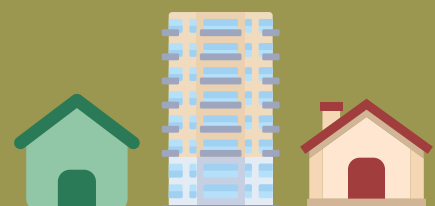


*2398 young people
N.B. Data drawn from monitoring data submitted by organisations to Mental Health Foundation at project mid and end points

Addressing Inequalities

The organisations involved noted that many of the young people involved in Get into Summer:

- are living with complex needs
- have caring responsibilities
- are living with disabilities
- are from a care experienced background
- are experiencing homelessness
- are experiencing mental health problems
- are lone parents



Addressing Inequalities

The organisations worked hard to address the inequalities and barriers that young people faced which may have impacted if and how they engaged in the summer activities. Here are some examples:

- Young people were offered free activities, meals, snacks and transport
- Young people were supported to stay connected through:
 - access to mobile top-ups
 - providing them with tablets, laptops and free software
 - giving out art resources, materials and equipment so that they could fully participate in activities
- Participation in activities often led to further opportunities for training and development
- Provision of childcare and facilitation of fully inclusive family activities
- Staff were sensitive to the emotional and wellbeing needs of all young people and their families
- Co-production and participation with young people in the design and the delivery of the summer programme activities
- Activities delivered across locality to encourage more uptake
- Consideration given to possible territorial issues between groups of young people when planning activities



Wildside Nature
@wildsidenat

Today our brilliant group of young zoologists learnt about Scottish mammals, native & non-native species, made dens & beaver 🦫 dams & played animal behaviour games! Lots of learning & fun! Thanks @Cyrenians1968 @MHFScot & @iThriveEdin for supporting this session! #GetIntoSummer



Implementation of StressLESS

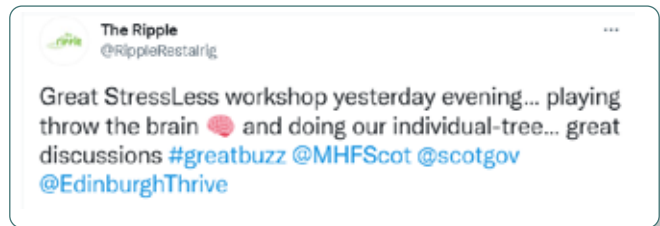
Each organisation received hard copy folders of the StressLESS Facilitator Pack and a 'Brain Box' with the necessary tools and resources for delivering StressLESS activities, providing an off the shelf box that could be taken to various locations over summer.

Although there are eight modules in StressLESS with full session plans provided for each, due to the nature of the Get into Summer programme, there was no expectation that organisations would be able to deliver a structured programme during their summer activities.



Alternatively, organisations were provided with the knowledge and skills to be able to draw on relevant and appropriate activities, key messages or discussion types for their young people and the context in which they were delivering activities over summer.

The organisations adapted the resources in a variety of ways from simply interpreting key messages and weaving these into conversations with young people through to implementing full creative activities in a youth work setting. More detail is provided in the Reflections and Learning section of this report.



Activities Delivered

OVER 50 ACTIVITIES DELIVERED

LOTS OF DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES WERE DELIVERED AS PART OF THIS GET INTO SUMMER PROGRAMME, THESE INCLUDED...

12 TRIPS AND VISITS:

- Alton Towers
- Canal boats
- Laser tag
- Blairdrummond Safari Park

13 SPORTS AND GAMES:

- Mini Olympics
- Archery
- Roller blading
- Scavenger hunts



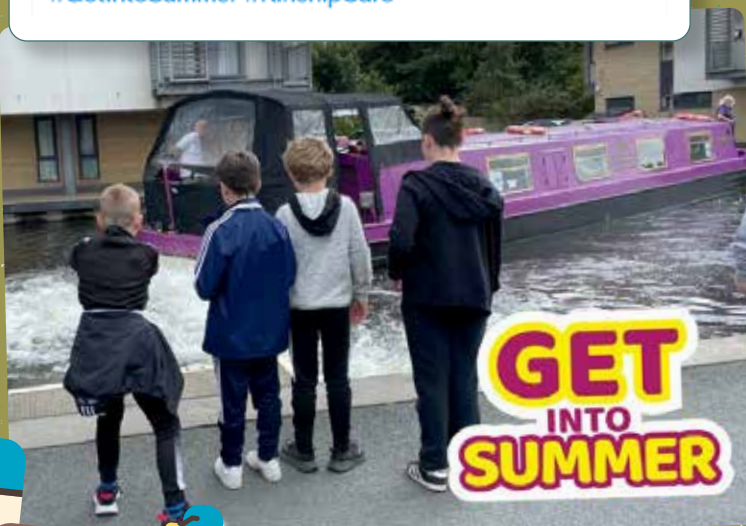
The kids from #SchoolsOut enjoyed their day at Big Hearts Olympics today! 🏅🏆🥇

#SchoolsOut #GetIntoSummer #BigHeartsOlympics #Olympics



A fantastic afternoon on the canal for our Kinship Care families who all had the best time on their boat trip 🚤☀️

#GetIntoSummer #KinshipCare



"I haven't been swimming in the sea for years and it's literally made all my anxiety go away, when can we go again?" Young Person



GIRLS DAY TODAY! 🥰 Hair cut, colour & styles at @EmmaHallhair, then nails done by technician, before a stroll through toon for a slap up lunch at @Ivyedinburgh!

Thanks to @EdinburghThrive, @MHFScot & @YouthScotland for the Summer Programme funding!



Emma Hall hair and 7 others
8:08 PM - Aug 4, 2021 - Twitter for Android



4 MUSIC AND THEATRE ACTIVITIES:

- Making music
- Radio workshop
- Singing
- Play writing

4 CHILL OUT ACTIVITIES:

- Movie day
- Cooking
- Baking
- Pride picnic



6 ARTS AND CRAFTS ACTIVITIES:

- Sculpture making
- Graffiti art
- Leather workshop
- Jewellery making



Big Hearts @bighearts
 A fantastic afternoon with @immarkmartin creating some fun radio shows!! 🎧🎵
 #SchoolsOut #GetIntoSummer #BigHeartsRadio

Wildside Nature @wildsidenat
 Brilliant first day with a budding young bunch of birders from the #Gracemount area of #Edinburgh taking part in our "Young Ornithologists" up at the ace @YouthVision1 site in Pentlands, thanks to @Cyrenians1968 @MHFScot & @iThriveEdin for supporting this session! #GetIntoSummer

8 OUTDOOR ADVENTURES:

- Rock climbing
- White water rafting
- Mountain biking
- Den building
- Young ornithologists



Wildside Nature @wildsidenat
 Had a great day running our "Young Ornithologist" session with an amazingly knowledgeable flock of juvenile birders up at the @YouthVision1 site in #Pentlands by #Edinburgh! Thanks to @Cyrenians1968 and @MHFScot for supporting this session! 🐦🌳
 #GetIntoSummer #ConnectWithNature



Scran Van Summer Tour



In addition to running a youth work programme of activities, Scran Academy embarked on a Scran Van Summer Tour, ensuring that young people across Edinburgh had access to hot, healthy food and fun activities over summer.



6 LOCATIONS

East Pilton
Muirhouse
Pilton Retreat – Ratho
West Pilton
Moreduin
Gorgie

17 DAYS
over summer

744
MEALS

445
for young people

288
for adults



"Having the StressLESS training was so helpful to give me the confidence to direct some conversations I had with some of the young people who helped on the Scran Van. There were elements from both the training and the StressLESS kit which I ended up using – being able to talk about ways to recognise and manage stress thanks to the "take a break" module, and also talking about relationships and communication from the "talk it out" module. We continue to use parts of the StressLESS toolkit in our Academy educational sessions too, so it's had extra benefits we didn't expect."

Will Bain – Scran Academy Catering Manager

 **Will Bain**
@Will_Scran

☺️ it's bilin' at West Pilton NC with the gang from @she_scotland and @CircleScot, serving up some of Claire's amazing sausage and mash and hot dogs for hungry bellies! #ScranVan summer program happening in actual summer! ☀️ @MHFScot @EdinburghThrive



 **Will Bain**
@Will_Scran

Back with our pals @PiltonYouthProj with awesome volunteer Kirsty and the legend that is Connor. Mac and cheese going down a treat as ever! Connecting young people and creating positive experience with food 🍴 thanks to @MHFScot and @EdinburghThrive ❤️



4:31 PM · Jul 7, 2021 · Twitter for Android

"We love the Scran Van!"
Young Person

Reflections and Learning

Overview

This section highlights some of the key reflections and learning from the delivery and evaluation of the project. It is important for us to highlight some of the key limitations of the project before moving into the various areas of reflection.

KEY LIMITATIONS:

- **Timescale:** this project was initiated at short notice and as such this affected some components of the project including:
 - **Monitoring and Evaluation:** the short timescale impacted our ability to implement a concrete monitoring and evaluation plan with all organisations and stakeholders involved
 - **StressLESS Facilitator Pack:** the short timescale meant that we weren't able to adapt and tailor the content of the StressLESS Facilitator Pack for this context
- **Online one-day training:** the StressLESS training had to be delivered online due to COVID-19 restrictions and for only one day due to time restrictions on project delivery

Despite these limitations, we were able to deliver an impactful project and we are thankful to have received feedback and insight from a number of sources, some of which are explored in more depth in this and earlier sections.

KEY FEEDBACK SOURCES:

- Staff training pre and post surveys
- Mid and end point monitoring data from organisations
- Young person reflection session and staff interview with Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre
- Staff focus groups
- Social media content from organisations

“The difference has been huge especially with learning from the StressLESS pack and the opportunity for staff to take part in training and be able to use the training so practically and effectively directly with young people in need. This is a huge positive from the experience.” Youth Worker



“For the young people who participated, impact included increased confidence, new skills and learning, exposure to new activities, improved confidence and team-working skills, enhanced connections with local outdoor spaces and increased understanding of mental health issues.”

Youth Worker



In summary, the Get into Summer experience had impact in the following key areas:

- **Fun:** young people had opportunities to have fun, laugh, play and feel good about themselves.
- **Friendships and reconnecting:** young people were able to reconnect with old friends and make new friends, which was central to promoting positive wellbeing.
- **New experiences and reengaging with activities:** young people had the chance to do things they never thought they could do or would have had the opportunity to do. They were supported in a number of ways to overcome barriers to accessing these opportunities and were able to overcome fears to try new things. It was a summer of discovery and rediscovery for many young people which led to a lot of joy, pride and sense of achievement.
- **Enabling connection for vulnerable groups:** organisations were able to provide specific, positive and supported interventions for more vulnerable groups.
- **Challenging perceptions about mental health and wellbeing:** staff and young people were encouraged to shift their assumptions about mental health and wellbeing, and focus on promoting emotional wellbeing for all rather than diagnosing and treating specific mental health conditions.
- **Deepening relationships between organisations:** the experience has allowed many of the community based youth organisations to work together more closely and resulted in joined up working and sharing of practice.
- **Mitigating risks associated with poverty:** many socio-economic barriers were mitigated including food, transport, cost of activities and access to equipment. The activities were inclusive and accessible to all and went a long way to tackling the stigma and shame often associated with living in poverty.

Young Person Reflection Session

A reflection session was held with 24 young people from Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre who had taken part in the Get into Summer programme and activities.

The session was facilitated in person by **Mental Health Foundation Young Leaders**, a partnership with **Leaders Unlocked**. We worked with the facilitators to familiarize them with StressLESS and the Get into Summer programme and they then designed the reflection session for the young people.

The peer led approach was beneficial in this setting because it meant the session was informal and there was opportunity for the facilitators and young people to connect and relate well with each other.

The aim of the reflection session was to gather the young people's experiences of taking part in the Get into Summer programme and how they felt about taking part in StressLESS activities. The reflection session was engaging and promoted lots of discussion. The key findings are summarised below.

“When you feel like you're stuck, you get stressed and anxious. But since the workshops, I feel like I've been out of my house most days of the week.”

The young people really enjoyed taking part in the various trips which included go karting, mini golf, white water rafting and trips to places like Blackpool and Alton Towers. They reflected that going out on these trips helped them with their mental health as it provided an opportunity to spend time with their friends, socialise and even work through some of the stresses in their lives as a group, rather than alone. The Get into Summer funding allowed the young people to take part in these trips which they usually wouldn't have been able to due to their financial circumstances.

“Before, if you were feeling stressed or something, you're by yourself. But here, you're with your pals and you get to go on trips with people, instead of having to deal with it yourself.”

Throughout the reflection session, the



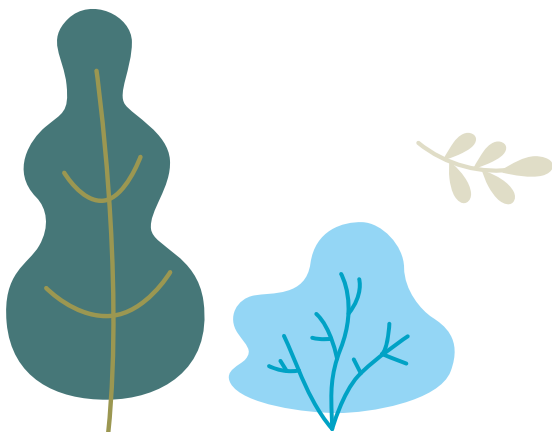
young people said that they found the StressLESS activities engaging and fun and that they helped them to understand mental health and wellbeing better. Speaking about mental health with other young people through the various activities allowed them to feel more comfortable expressing themselves and talking about mental health without feeling judged.

“This has given us an understanding that there are people that we can speak to that will help.”

The young people indicated that through these activities and the associated discussions, they realised that there are actually people they can talk to about their mental health, such as the youth workers within Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre, as well as their friends and family. They noted that they feel more confident in approaching other people about their own mental health, but also about listening and supporting someone else.

“It’s given me a confidence boost to speak to people... I know that if I was struggling with mental health or physical health that I’d speak about it. If I broke my leg, I’d speak about that, so if I was struggling with depression, I’d speak about it with someone.”

When the young people were asked what the



biggest causes of stress are in their lives they said tests and exams, gang and territorial violence, and social isolation. The young people felt that the support offered for their mental health in school doesn’t always meet their needs and they would welcome more on this. However, they were thankful for the StressLESS activities which provided useful tips on building resilience around how they can look after themselves if they are feeling stressed. They noted techniques such as removing themselves from situations, rising above them, and trying not to react in an aggressive way.

“I’ve been taught and read on social media that mental health is bad... I liked that it was explained that it’s not just negative things that are associated with mental health, it could be things like happy memories, you could be happy... it’s not all sad.”

A closer look at StressLESS with Goodtrees Programme Leader

John Beatson, the Programme Leader at Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre, spent some time with our Mental Health Foundation Young Leaders to share his reflections on delivering StressLESS as part of the Get into Summer programme and activities.

“It was so effective in the way that they felt positive about themselves, you could see them buzzing.”

Ultimately, John’s reflections were incredibly positive in that he felt the StressLESS Facilitator Pack provided activities which sparked new approaches to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of the young people he and his team work with. The StressLESS activities helped to raise awareness of how young people can help each other with their mental health but also how youth workers and other staff can tailor their support and approaches for these young people.

“[The activities have] given us a lot to think about and to take forward to our next stage... how to take on the stuff they’ve been working on and the ideas that they’ve used so that we can respond to what they want and what they think works. Because we don’t have all the answers.”

In particular, John highlighted that the young people had the opportunity to develop personalised coping mechanisms for managing stress such as listening to music or speaking to family members. Sharing these coping mechanisms with each other helped the whole group explore different

ways they can support themselves and each other better. Importantly, John reflected that the StressLESS activities helped to break down some of the taboos and negative connotations around mental health.

“The programme and toolkit is great... being able to get [the young people] to speak about things that they didn’t particularly like speaking about.”

The Get into Summer funding really allowed Goodtrees to offer young people living in areas of multiple deprivation opportunities that they would never have been able to participate in otherwise. These opportunities included a lot of the factors that we know protect mental health and are part of the ‘7 ways to stress less’ such as having fun, connecting with others, doing things that you are good at and sharing your care with others. Notably, John highlighted how many of these activities involved young people really challenging themselves and the benefit that this has on them when they then push themselves out of their comfort zones in other areas of their lives.

“One of the things that worked quite well for us was the idea of physical versus mental. If you’ve cut your hand or you’ve got an infection in your hand you’ve got to get antibiotics to help it because otherwise, if you leave that it’s going to get worse and worse. And we were saying it’s the same for mental [health]. It’s that idea that if you didn’t get the help you need for that... it’ll manifest as something worse. And I think that was a good way of breaking it down to them.”

Staff Focus Groups

The Mental Health Foundation Scotland carried out three focus groups and two interviews with 13 staff in total from the various organisations in the Thrive Edinburgh collaborative who had attended StressLESS training and delivered activities as part of Get into Summer.

The aim of the focus groups was to explore:

- staff confidence in talking about and promoting good mental health
- the StressLESS Facilitator Pack content and approach
- how organisations applied StressLESS as part of Get into Summer activities
- thoughts around the next steps and sustainability of a project like this.

Here are some of the key themes that arose during these focus groups:

StressLESS Training

Overall, staff had a positive experience with the online StressLESS training, noting that it was informative, helpful and enjoyable. In particular, staff enjoyed having discussions with other people doing the training so that they could share their learning.

Although some found the online component of the training unenjoyable, many others felt they had little time to do the training so it actually made it easier to access than a face-to-face training session. Some staff expressed that they hoped their colleagues would be able to complete the training in future as it would benefit their wider teams.



StressLESS Facilitator Pack and Brain Boxes

In general, staff reported that the activities in the Facilitator Pack were good and that their children and young people enjoyed taking part in them. In particular, the ice breakers were popular and some staff mentioned using these when they had time waiting for people to arrive or during transport to activities.

Additionally, staff felt that activities such as 'My Picture of Health', self-care activities and activities about the impact of stress on the brain were particularly effective. Some organisations raised that they would be keen to see some content relating to additional support needs, sexual and gender identity, nature, and myth busting around mental health and wellbeing.

Although one staff member highlighted liking the colour coding of the pack, it was raised that more indexing of content would be beneficial for finding appropriate activities quickly. The Brain Boxes supplied to organisations were helpful, particularly for creative organisations who enjoyed using the art supplies.

Audience Adaptability

The Get into Summer activities were delivered to a huge variety of young people of different ages, genders and backgrounds. As such, staff highlighted that more guidance on adapting language and activities for different groups could be beneficial. It was noted that boys and girls tended to react differently to activities, with the girls enjoying arts and deep discussion and boys enjoying more physical and competitive activities.

Although staff stated that the activities were often difficult to include in the range of fun activities going on, many staff reported that they found the pack useful as more of a guide, finding it easy to interpret, adapt and embed key learning into the work they were already doing, as opposed to carrying out specific structured activities.

Staff in the focus groups reflected the intention of the StressLESS pack in that they felt it should be used as a universal, preventative tool rather than a mental health crisis intervention for young people already in distress.

“Most useful resource we’ve had in about a year and a half.”



**“Written really well...
Don't have to wade
through lots... Simple...
A delight!”**



For some staff who were working with young people with diagnosed mental health conditions who were often more cautious of support due to negative experiences with services, they were able to adapt the activities by using creativity to spark discussion instead of delivering activities fully. One staff member working with children with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and anxiety noted that often these children struggled to engage and would freeze up during activities and discussions, but they did not experience this with StressLESS activities.

Expanding Digital Access

Due to the nature of their activities and trips, staff reflected that having access to the StressLESS Facilitator Pack content in an easily accessible digital format would be really useful. Additionally, staff proposed that developing StressLESS content in a digital form, possibly integrated with social media platforms, would help boost engagement and solidify learning for young people.

Finally, it was highlighted that an area of content development could be around the topic of social media and mental health and wellbeing.

Staff Confidence

Overall, staff reported feeling more confident having conversations about mental health with children and young people over the course of the summer. They reflected that the tools in the StressLESS training and Facilitator Pack had given them opportunities to grow their confidence as they used them more over time.

However, some staff members did express that they were aware that they were not mental health experts and as such, they still found some conversations difficult.

Future of StressLESS

On the whole, there was a positive response to StressLESS with many staff saying that they will use it in the future and will encourage others to do the same, stating that it should be widely available. In particular, one staff member said that the pack was helpful, especially when “some workers are feeling overwhelmed with the amount of mental health work. Anything that gives us help with those conversations is helpful. It's keeping heads above water.”

Looking Forward

The Get into Summer Thrive Edinburgh and StressLESS collaboration offered a meaningful, extensive and inclusive opportunity to promote the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Edinburgh over summer 2021.

Staff across the 22 organisations were equipped with knowledge, tools and resources that enabled them to empower young people to manage their mental health and wellbeing. We hope that these organisations will be able to utilise, adapt and implement this learning in their work with young people well beyond the completion of this project.

We have been delighted to hear of organisations already taking steps to finding new ways of enhancing their approach to mental health and wellbeing in their work. For example, Citadel Youth Centre has already developed Wellbeing Boxes for young people where each box incorporates the five senses and provides different activities for young people to promote a sense of calm and healthy wellbeing.

At the Mental Health Foundation, we will be working to reflect on the learning from the implementation and evaluation of the project and exploring opportunities for developing StressLESS on a larger scale and in different settings across Scotland.

A final, massive thank you to the Mental Health Foundation Scotland research team and Mental Health Foundation Young Leaders for their support with evaluation, the Thrive Edinburgh team and all organisations across Edinburgh who participated in this Get into Summer programme, and importantly, all young people and families who participated in activities over summer.



“This programme has made a huge difference to young people. It has helped them overcome some of the barriers they face around meeting new people and being in new environments. It has enabled them to communicate with one another and work together to achieve outcomes.”

Youth Worker



“One of the great things was being able to provide these new and rewarding experiences for these young people... For a lot of these young people the places we go are places they’ve never been before... it’s being able to provide these opportunities free of charge and creating that space... [for young people] to be able to challenge themselves.”

Youth Worker





 @mhfscot

 @MHFScot

 scotland@mentalhealth.org.uk

 mentalhealth.org.uk

