

New learning tool supports staff working with children and young people in crisis.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, HEE, working with Healthy Teen Minds, has developed a free online training tool based on the We Can Talk training package.

The tool supports all staff who work in hospitals to develop their skills and confidence to support children and young people who present in a mental health crisis. It took just six weeks to design, develop and produce.

The service user and hospital staff

Research suggests that children and young people do not often have a positive experience of attending hospital in a mental health crisis. Hospital staff also report they do not feel confident in being able to offer appropriate support for young people presenting in crisis.

With this in mind, HEE commissioned [Healthy Teen Minds](#) to co-produce the [We Can Talk](#) training package with input from hospital staff and young people, as well as mental health experts. They asked children and young people what they thought hospital staff should know, and asked hospital staff what they wanted to learn.

This remains central to the design and development of the online training tool, which has been developed by young advisors with lived experience of mental health crisis.



The one-hour training tool encourages thinking about providing the fundamentals of compassionate care. It can also be read on smaller devices such as a mobile phone or tablet, allowing for flexibility.

The outcome is that hospital staff, including non-clinical workers such as receptionists, security guards and porters, who have undergone the training feel they are much better equipped to support children and young people who present in a mental health crisis.

Robin Barker, Director of Healthy Teen Minds, said: “As a mental health nurse working in child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), I saw young people presenting in a mental health crisis come into hospital and witnessed members of staff who were experienced at dealing with distressed young people

lose their skills. They would often avoid the issue and the person and end up being the worst version of themselves.

“This online training tool equips hospital staff to be able to support children and young people who present in a mental health crisis. I’m thankful HEE champions genuine co-production. Nobody in the health field puts more investment into projects involving lived experience.”

[Access We Can Talk online training package.](#)

The story so far

Prior to creating the online learning tool, the We Can Talk face-to-face programme had been rolled out in 40 acute trusts. Since its launch, 152 different trusts have seen at least one member of staff take the course, with many keen to join the wider project when it resumes face-to-face training later this year.

Healthy Teen Minds worked with the Child Outcomes Research Consortium to analyse the data. To date, there have been over 10,000 people signing up to use the tool.

- 84% of those work in a hospital setting.
- 84% of those hospital staff who started the course completed it.
- 96% of staff encounter children and young people with mental health difficulties at least occasionally in their roles.
- 41% of staff had not received any previous training.
- 97% of staff said they expected the online learning tool would have a significant or moderate difference in the way they perform their roles.
- 99.6% of staff who used the online training would recommend it.

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