PlayBoard Conference 2019 Workshop Notes

Building emotional resilience in children and young people
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The workshop focused on activities that Action Mental Health use with children and young people in both primary and post primary schools. Two programmes (Healthy Me (primary) and Provoking Thought (post primary) discussed.

Both programmes are aimed at:

- Raising awareness (mental health)
- Reducing stigma
- Developing coping mechanisms
- Building resilience

Play activity and interactive learning enables sessions to be delivered in an engaging way.

**What do we mean by emotional resilience?**

[www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com)

Participants were invited (via mobile phones) to log into the website above and using a code were able to access a shared cloud space. Each person typed in what emotional resilience means to them in words. The following word cloud was developed and discussed:

![Word cloud image]

**Post–its exercise**

Aimed at looking at pressures and stresses amongst young people. Using (two) colored post-its young people write ‘internal’ and ‘external’ pressures anonymously onto the post its and then attach to named flip chart sheets. This gives the facilitator the opportunity to address some of the issues. Fear of failure usually comes out as one of the strongest worries.
Building ability exercise
A volunteer stands at the front of the group. Other participants are asked to think about (for example) something that they love in their life that they couldn’t live without. They are then encouraged to come up and take a ball and lay it on the volunteers outstretched or folded arms and shout out one of their can’t live without things. Over time the volunteers start to drop the balls as the burden to hold them becomes too much. This opens the discussion to talk about how one ball is okay but that when they add up things become more difficult. Can be used for various topics. Aims to empower children to deal with situations/issues etc.

Feelings exercise
Uses a picture of a sad face, happy face etc. to discuss feelings (good with younger children).

Emoji exercise
A volunteer stands facing the group with the facilitator standing behind them and places emoji cards behind their head for the group to see. They then need to tell the volunteer how they would feel to describe the emoji. The volunteer has to try and guess – they are given three guesses.

iPad activities suggested for teenagers include:
Kahoot
Mentimeter
Q

Pickers (downloadable activity)

![Picker Card](image)

Each child is given a picker (as above) card with A, B, C, D. On the large screen they are given questions with A, B, C, or D answers i.e. How often do you make time for your own mental health and wellbeing? This question was posed to adults in the workshop but in reality they would be more child friendly. The child holds their finger on the relevant answer:
A Daily
B Weekly
C Maybe once a month
D Hardly ever

The facilitator images their answer and the app collates the responses. Discussion can then be had on how people have answered.

Other strategies discussed included mindfulness, breathing techniques, listening games, self compassion and self care activities.