



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

School Pupils and Teachers Across Lanarkshire to Get Mental Health Stigma Training

SCHOOLS across Lanarkshire have joined up with a leading mental health programme to tackle stigma and improve mental health for young people.

A total of 40 staff, and 120 pupils are being trained in in Scottish Mental Health First Aid, and See Me's 'What's on your mind?' pack.

The What's On Your Mind pack is for young people and the adults in their lives, to help build confidence on discussing mental health, look at the impact of stigma and discrimination and how we can tackle it.

Teachers and pupils began their training in May, and once it's complete the staff and pupils will be able to take the pack back to teach in their schools, potentially reaching all 6197 pupils in Lanarkshire. Training is also being run in North Ayrshire, and The Borders, reaching 23,000 pupils in total.

Getting young people to talk about mental health is a key focus for See Me. A survey released as part of their FeelsFM campaign in September revealed that only 26% of young people would tell someone they're finding it difficult to cope, and 62% thought that people are treated unfairly if they have a mental health condition.

See Me youth volunteer, Sally Nimmo, 24, is helping to train the pupils. She said: "When I was in school we didn't get anything on mental health, we didn't know what mental health was. In PSE mental health was disregarded, so I think this is really important to give the kids space to talk about things which they have maybe never spoken about before.

"The more opportunity you give young people, the more comfortable they become in speaking about it. I think getting young people to ask questions about suicide is really useful, because they probably will have never done that before, and it is a really useful skill to have."

Kirsty Grant, a home economics teacher from Holy Cross High School, said: "We have trained 25 teachers in Scottish Mental Health First Aid and 19 pupils.

"We wanted to do the training because there was a real need, particularly in supporting pupils struggling with anxiety and teaching them that what they feel is normal.

“It is really important for everyone to know that we all have mental health and to be aware of how to support yourselves and others. We don’t expect people to be counsellors, but we wanted to make our pupils and teachers aware that listening is important.”

John McGilp, the headteacher at Coltness High School, said: “We wanted to do the training to make sure that our school is an institution whereby people feel safe to talk about their feelings and more in particular any challenges they have.

“Health and wellbeing is the most important aspect of school life and mental health challenges are becoming more prevalent. It is therefore important that we allow pupils the appropriate environment to allow them to express any negative feelings that they have and also promote a culture where they feel it is okay to express these feelings.”

Rachel Bottomley, a development officer at Stigma Free Lanarkshire, said: “What struck me the most during this pilot project was the level of commitment and enthusiasm from everybody involved, but in particular the S5’s from across Lanarkshire.”

Laura Sharpe, See Me’s education and young people manager, said: “Too many young people feel they can’t speak about how they are feeling, often because they worry about being judged or dismissed.

“To help young people recover from mental health conditions they need to be able to speak about it, to get care and support quickly.

“So we are delighted that schools across Lanarkshire want to help equip adults and young people to have these important conversations on mental health and tackle the stigma which still exists.”

You can find out more at <https://www.seemescotland.org/young-people/>.

ENDS...

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Schools taking part are **Cardinal Newman High School, Coltness High School, Holy Cross High School, Lanark Grammar, St Aidan’s High School, Trathacen Academy**
2. See Me is Scotland’s National programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, enabling people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

We do this by:

- Mobilising people to work together and lead a movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination
 - Working with people to change negative behaviour towards those with mental health problems
 - Ensuring that the human rights of people with mental health problems are respected and upheld
3. Follow See Me on Twitter or Instagram @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/seemescotland, or at www.seemescotland.org
 4. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief

