



Understanding the experiences of young people

Summary of data gathered

Summary of FeelsFM Campaign One

FeelsFM first launched in October 2018, as part of the Year of Young People. See Me created the campaign alongside young people from across Scotland, with experience of struggling with their mental health, and creative agency Studio Something. It has generated thousands of conversations with young people about mental health. During the initial campaign we engaged nearly 5000 young people and heard their views on what makes it easier, and what makes it harder to talk about their mental health.

We found:

- Stigma is a significant barrier to young people opening up about their mental health. They have told us they fear not being listened to, not being believed or not taken seriously by adults if they did raise an issue, and fear of the consequences of speaking out.
- Young people want to be able to have open and honest conversations about mental health, but need environments where they feel safe to do so.
- They need someone they can trust to speak to, who will listen, respect and support them. That could be a professional, parent, carer, family member or friend.

LET THE



DO THE TALKING

Interim Report

In September 2020 we carried out a review of FeelsFM, to see how the platform was being used after the campaign finished. The data showed a clear rise and fall of users on the site, in line with the school terms and week days, suggesting that the platform was mainly being used to generate conversations about mental health in schools, perhaps as part of the FeelsFM WOYM (What's On Your Mind) activity. As FeelsFM was not actively being promoted, it is good to see that it was still being used in a key target area.

Looking at the usage, we also saw that FeelsFM linked in well with other See Me activities, for example around Time to Talk day and as a activity for our workplace partners, showing it is a popular platform when people are looking to talk about mental health. There were 25,000 views on the platform from the end of 2018 to September 2020.

The study showed little variation in numbers of people accessing the site through the pandemic compared to before, with 6000 views in the seven months between September 2019 and March 2020, and 5000 views in the six months from April 2020 and September 2020. However there was a drop in numbers of people responding to the questions as many are repeat users and may have already responded. This indicates to attract new young people to FeelsFM it was important to promote the site and make changes to the questions we ask.

FEELING



Research and Analysis

Based on the review and the large amount of positive feedback from young people, partner organisations, schools etc, as well as the continued engagement with FeelsFM, we decided to update the platform, to find out more about the issues young people are facing, relating to mental health stigma and discrimination. To establish where the updated platform needed to focus, we started by reviewing evidence from the first FeelsFM report, to see where certain issues needed more exploration. Although interactions with adults and with peers was high, feeling judged or dismissed by both groups was an issue.

We sought advice from our Children and Young People's Steering Group, made up of representatives from across the sector, on what they thought needed to be looked into in more details. They suggested that family interactions was an important area to get more data on.

We met with the Scottish Government, who advised that both families and understanding stigma in gypsy traveller communities were high on their agenda. We then carried out a detailed process of finding out from our youth champions what themes and issues they felt would be worth exploring. We held focus groups, did one on one interviews and surveyed our youth champions to surface their opinions.

Our data gathering highlighted:

What is the stigma that children and young people face?

- 'Attention seeking'
- Adults assuming you are lazy and assuming it's all related to your age
- Not being listened to or heard or taken seriously by adults who have the power in a dynamic
- 'You don't know what's going on, you don't know well enough' - adults assuming they know better
- Lack of awareness from adults around the troubles and difficulties young people face
- Experiences are different, adults don't know what it's like to grow up currently
- Social media's impact
- Belittling experience, 'You're too young to feel like that'
- Condescending treatment from adults, 'It's just your hormones'
- Young people don't get much power or say in their lives

What is the gap in knowledge around mental health stigma and discrimination for young people?

- Mental health is more than anxiety and depression/ there needs to be more focus on severe and enduring
- Supporting each other
- Younger age groups
- Employment
- Families
- Suicide
- Impact of COVID

What can help to make it easier for young people to speak about their mental health? Young people find it easier to talk about their mental health when:

- They feel comfortable having conversations
- They know how to support each other
- They know where to get information
- They have a better understanding about mental health
- They know how to educate each other
- When they understand what stigma is in school now

Where, and which young people are experiencing mental health stigma, and what evidence do we need to change that?

- At home
- In work
- Young males
- In NHS and services
- In schools
- From adults

SPREAD THE FEELS



From all areas of our research on FeelsFM we could see that interactions with adults was a common area that all groups believed was important. This included interaction within families, those in education and other adults who young people go to for help and support.

Before moving forward with this data, we wanted to see if the opinions gathered through the FeelsFM review was representative of young people across Scotland. To establish this we commissioned Censuswide to carry out nationwide polling of 1000 young people, aged 16-24, across Scotland. The polling affirmed the data gathered through FeelsFM, it found:

- 66 per cent think that young people are dismissed by adults when they try to speak about their mental health
- 72 per cent have struggled with their mental health
- 51 per cent wouldn't tell someone if they were struggling with their mental health
- 67 per cent say that families can be dismissive when a young person says they're struggling
- 39 per cent think teachers take them seriously when they say they're struggling with their mental health
- Positively, 54 per cent think that young people's mental health has been taken more seriously since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (in March 2020).

TUNES FOR WHEN YOU'RE



Establish new focus for FeelsFM 2.0

HAVE YOUR



The data shows a clear picture that interactions with adults, in a variety of life areas, was one of the most important issues for young people.

Young people also thought it was important to know more about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

See Me worked with a group of youth champions to form the questions we needed to ask, to find out what the issues were, why they were happening, and what could help.

The group decided to follow a similar format to the original FeelsFM, by looking at what helped, and what made it more difficult in key life areas.

The questions were:

- When young people are struggling to cope with their feelings, how can adults help?
- Could you tell us how adults can make it difficult for young people struggling to cope with their feelings?
- If a young person is struggling to cope with their feelings, who would they worry about telling and why?
- How can families help young people struggling to cope with their feelings?
- How can families make it more difficult for young people struggling to cope with their feelings?
- If a young person is struggling with their feelings, how can people like doctors and teachers show they are taking them seriously?
- Do you think the COVID pandemic has made adults take young people's feelings more or less seriously, and why?

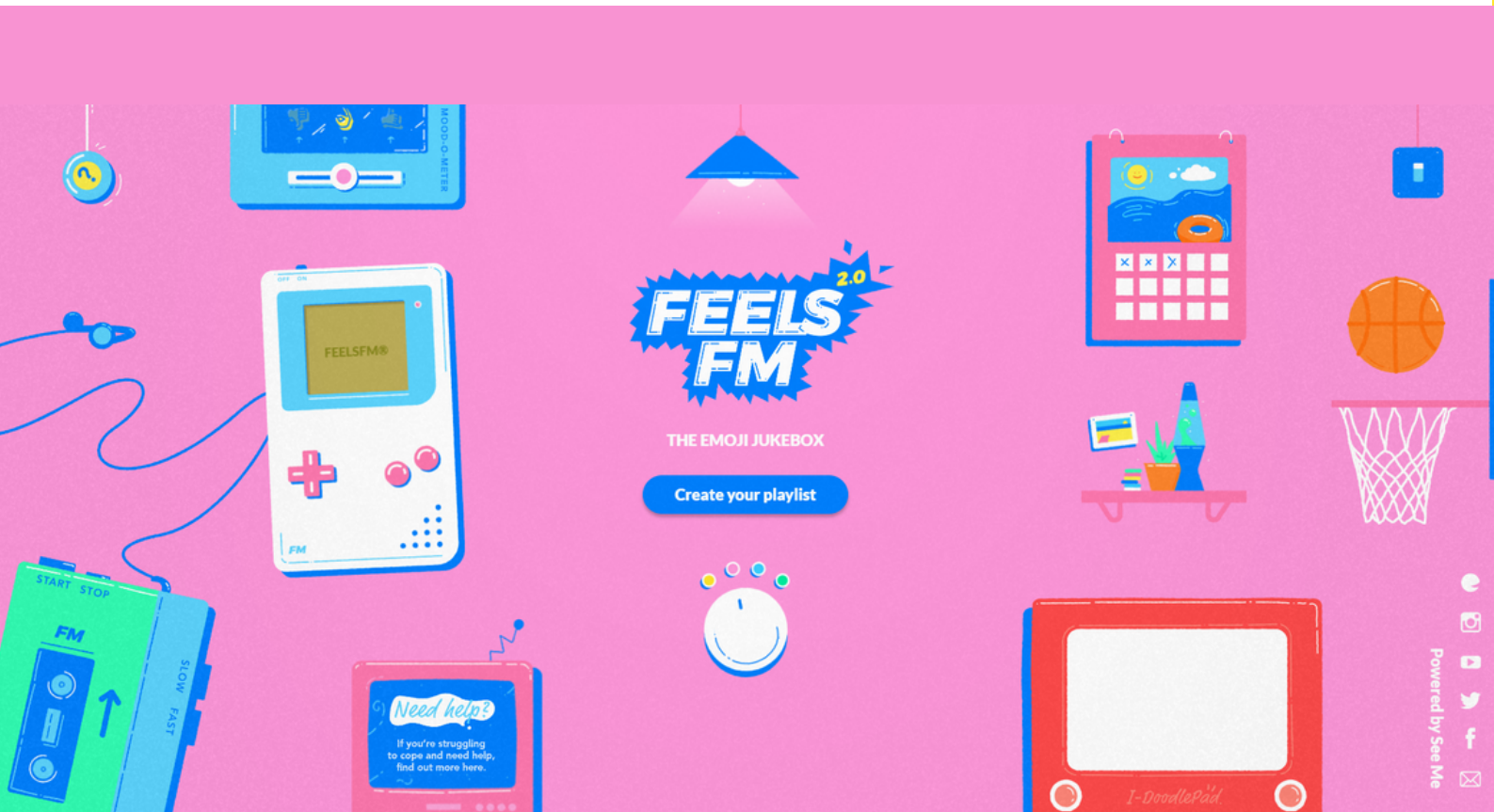
Platform Development

To encourage new users, and returning users to the site we wanted to freshen up FeelsFM.

Working with creative agency Studio Something, we created a refreshed look for the platform. This included new games, a basketball to dunk and an Etch a Sketch to play with, alongside Snake from the first platform.

The style was changed based on feedback. We opted to go for a retro 80s look. Along with new questions, we created new playlists, and changed the genres, from 'pop, rock and RnB' to 'Fun, Quiet and Loud'. Feedback we had from young people was they didn't know what RnB was, and when we asked for what genres we should have, the list was over 20 long, so splitting them up another way made sense.

As well as being able to listen on Spotify, we also added a new option to view all the playlists on Youtube. This was after feedback that the original FeelsFM wasn't as accessible for those with hearing difficulties, so the music video element opened it up.



Who we reached

We launched FeelsFM 2.0 in June 2021, and in the month we ran the campaign, the platform had 8303 views.

To drive this engagement we launched the new campaign in the media, with the support of two of our youth champions who shared their story and encouraged young people to visit the site.

We also promoted the platform to our partners and other stakeholders, on social media, and through advertising. Reach for the two week campaign period included:

Media:

- Good Morning Britain STV news bulletins
- Capital Scotland news bulletins
- The release was also picked up by The Herald, Metro, The National, Sunday Post, Evening Telegraph, Courier, Press and Journal and Evening Express.

Twitter:

- Over 130 tweets using #FeelsFM, reaching 498,611 people
- 300 Twitter engagements

Instagram:

- 2292 reached on Instagram
- 105 Instagram interactions
- 17 Instagram stories viewed 2800 times
- Hashtag post reach of 16,000

Facebook:

- 42,241 reached through advertising
- FeelsFM posts shared 29 times
- 33 reactions on our posts
- Reached 6000 through organic posts
- 150 Engagements

Snapchat:

- 991,499 people reached through advertising

We had a number of partners share posts to help promote social media, including:

- Aye Mind
- Carers Trust
- Children's Health Scotland
- Health and Social Care Alliance
- Mental Health Foundation
- My Rights My Say
- NHS Tayside
- Penumbra
- Respectme
- Routes to Work
- Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)
- Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival
- Scottish Youth Parliament

Since the relaunch, FeelsFM 2.0 has been used 27,924 times, by 13,796 users.

Demographics

Since the relaunch, the site has been used by 58% females, and 42% males.

The top rated places for users (in descending order) are:

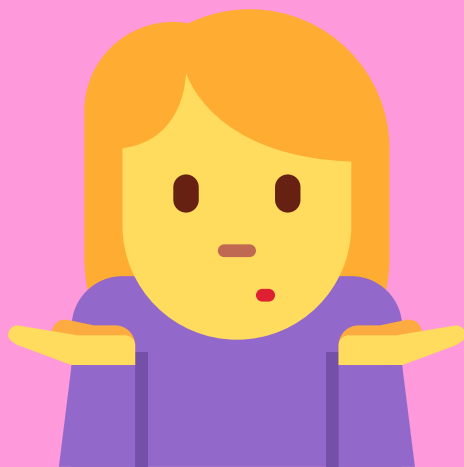
1. Glasgow
2. Edinburgh
3. Aberdeen
4. Livingston
5. Hamilton
6. Birmingham
7. Dunfermline
8. Kirkintilloch
9. Dundee
10. Stirling
11. Ayr
12. Perth
13. East Kilbride
14. Paisley

WE'RE ON



What we found

FEELING



We had nearly 600 responses to the questions from young people during the month the campaign ran. This section covers what young people told us to the questions we asked. Each section summarises the answers, and includes direct examples of what young people said.

Families

The FeelsFM 2.0 site asked the young people two questions about family life in relation to mental health.

The first question posed to the young people in relation to family life is, 'how can families help young people struggling to cope with their feelings?'. Young people indicated that families can help through:

Providing support. Examples –

- 'Help them'
- 'Provide appropriate comfort and support for young people who are struggling to express their emotions and cope with their feelings'
- 'Ask them what's wrong and support them'.

Using arts/music. Examples-

- 'Spend time doing art together'
- 'Listening to Music'.

Signposting to professionals. Examples –

- 'Share information and resources';
- 'Getting the young person the help they need'.

Encouraging communication. Examples –

- 'Encourage open and honest dialogue'
- 'Be non judgemental and open to talk'
- 'Open communication without awakening fear'.

Understanding. Examples –

- 'By being a lot more patient and understanding of how much this pandemic had affected them'
- 'Give them some space'
- 'Allow them to speak and listen to them understand them'.

Listening. Examples –

- 'Listen'; 'Talk to them'
- 'Listening. I think that sometimes we are so terrified of what the problems could be that we don't really listen.'

The second was, 'we want to find out how we can help young people to be more open when they are struggling to cope with their feelings. Can you tell us how families can make that difficult?'

Respondents indicated that families can make it more difficult through:

A lack of support and communication. Examples include –

- 'Families sometimes don't listen/give enough support to the child'
- 'Parents don't listen sometimes'
- 'By not giving them an invitation and a safe space to talk about their feelings.'

Lack of understanding. Examples –

- 'By not understanding'; 'by thinking that we are still young and we don't know things.'
- 'If they aren't understanding'
- 'They think we are just being dramatic'

Dismissing feelings. Examples –

- 'Shutting down kids feelings'
- 'Sometimes people can be made to feel their feelings aren't valid or 'true'.'
- 'Compare to your issues to theirs'.

Negative experiences. Examples –

- 'By not listening. By over managing, no freedom. By not realising that kids have valid points of view'
- 'Unnecessary comments'
- 'Making it more stressful'

There was also a subtheme of arguments. Examples –

- 'Arguing';
- 'Shouting at me'
- 'Arguing, not listening to each other, talking over the top of each other'.



OR



Adults

The FeelsFM site explores the role of adults in helping young people cope with their mental health and how adults can make it easier, or more difficult.

The first question explored the role of adults; 'When young people are struggling to cope, how can adults help?' The themes highlighted include:

Communication. Examples –

- 'Ask us what's up and go from there'
- 'By talking to you and reassuring you'
- 'Listen without giving advice'.

Understanding. Examples –

- 'They can try to understand our issues better.'
- 'Adults should remain compassionate, open minded, and understanding.'

Providing support. Examples –

- 'Provide appropriate comfort and support for young people who are struggling to express their emotions and cope with their feelings'.

HAVE YOUR



The second question explores how adults can make it difficult for young people to talk about and cope with feelings; 'Could you tell us how adults can make it difficult for young people struggling to cope with their feelings?' The themes include:

A lack of communication. Examples –

- 'Parents don't listen sometimes'
- 'It can be stressful especially when the adults don't give you a chance to speak and don't listen'
- 'They don't offer a safe space for them to talk about how they feel'.

Stigma. Examples include -

- By off putting remarks such as "pull yourself together" or "it's just your age".
'Telling them they do it for attention'
- Degrade and disregard their feelings and troubles because they are "insignificant" and "they don't affect adult life".

Lack of understanding. Examples include –

- 'Don't understand'
- 'Adults don't understand young people'
- 'By not getting "it"'.

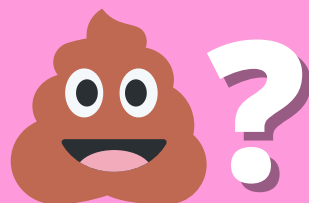
Dismissing feelings. Examples –

- 'Told you deal with it. It's life'
- 'Dismissing emotions young people feel that are very real'
- 'Telling us to grow up or get over it, that it's not that big a deal'.

High expectations/pressure. Examples –

- 'Too much pressure'
- 'They could set certain expectations for young people. This would then in turn be manifested in young people's minds, and whenever those expectations may fall short, feelings of unworthiness are felt.'

FEELING



FeelsFM also asks the question, 'If a young person is struggling with their feelings, how can people like doctors and teachers show they are taking them seriously?', to explore how professionals can help young people to speak about mental health and feelings. The themes highlighted are as follows;

Listening non-judgmentally. Examples –

- 'By dedicating good quality time to properly listen to them'
- 'Listen to them. Be non-judgemental.'
- 'Listening and not being patronising'.

Training in mental health. Examples –

- 'Explain that they have mental health first aid training'
- 'To learn the warning signs and to be given basic mental health training in order to find them the best help suited to them possible.'

Understanding and acknowledgement. Examples –

- 'Be kind and understanding.'
- 'By acknowledging their presence'
- 'Don't talk to them like they are children, treat them like equals and be open to understanding what they are going through.'
- 'By checking their understanding and following through on promises'.

Support. Examples –

- Give them comfort and genuine, kind words'
- 'Setting aside time to talk to them. Setting up a catch-up meeting'
- 'Make them feel seen and heard'.

TURN IT UP!



Who can young people talk to, and who can't they open up to

This section of the analysis explores who young people can and cannot talk to about their feelings. The question, 'If a young person is struggling to cope with their feelings, who would they worry about telling and why?' was asked.

Young people highlighted several groups, this includes;

Parents. Examples –

- 'Parents as don't want to upset them'
- 'Parents because fear of being judged'

Friends/family. Examples –

- 'Friends for fear of being judged.'
- 'Family and friends because they don't know what kind of reaction they are going to get and it can be scary talking about how you feel.'

Teachers/school staff. Being dismissed as attention seeking, not being taken seriously.

Young people highlighted the reasons why they worry about speaking to the above groups of people including;

Confidentiality concerns/ lack of trust. Examples –

- 'They don't want people to spread their feelings around or tell someone they don't want to know'
- 'Everyone in case they tell anyone else'
- 'They could be worried about telling someone they don't trust'.

Judgement. Examples –

- 'Friends, they might be then made fun of'
- 'Peers in case they are judged'.

Upsetting/difficult. Examples –

- 'Parents as don't want to upset them'
- 'Too shy'
- 'Family. Since they might worry about them over reacting'.

Stigma including the sub themes of self-stigma. Examples –

- 'Their friends - due to shame'
- 'Their friends as they will be embarrassed because it's not cool to share how they feel'.

Lack of understanding. Examples –

- 'They might worry about telling their friends in case they wouldn't understand'
- 'Parents as they might get upset or not understand'.

Dismissing feelings. Examples –

- 'Probably parents or adults because they will probably think they won't care or won't take it seriously.'
- 'They might dismiss it as a phase or not being as important or real as adult problems'.

Impact of COVID

The FeelsFM site also explores the impact that COVID has had on young people's mental health, and mental health stigma and discrimination. It asked: 'Do you think the COVID pandemic has made people take young people's feelings more or less seriously, and why?'

Those who felt the pandemic has made people take young people's feelings less seriously suggested this is due to:

A focus on other issues. Examples –

- 'Less seriously because I think people were ignored for other 'real' problems like people dying from COVID.'
- 'Less because services are a lot more stretched'.

Stigma. Examples –

- 'I think the pandemic has harboured a belief that everyone should be using this time to do a million things and transform their lives and their wealth and their health which doesn't acknowledge how people might have been feeling this whole time.'
- 'People are more aware of mental health now, but more likely to dismiss it as "because of COVID" or "this year has been hard for everyone".'

Young people who felt that the pandemic has caused people to take young people's feelings more seriously have indicated that this is due to:

Raising awareness of mental health and reducing stigma. Examples –

- 'It has normalised the talk of mental health.'
- 'More focus on mental health.'

Worsening mental health. Examples –

- 'More people are struggling.'
- 'Yes because mental health has gotten worse'.

Isolation. Examples –

- 'Yes because the pandemic has created more isolation for young people which has seen a drive in eating disorders, suicides and depression.'; 'more as a lot of people had to suffer alone'

Checking in. Examples –

- 'People looking out for each other to see if they are okay'
- 'It has also positively impacted as schools and such are checking in on pupils more frequently'.

Conclusion and learning

Through the second FeelsFM campaign, we have seen that it is a site that continues to be popular with young people. However the completion of questions was lower than the original campaign. This in part will be due to users being more familiar with the portal, , and there was also a smaller advertising budget for this campaign, limiting the reach.

The updated playlists helped to boost engagement.

Since the campaign ran, we have seen that the site continues to be used. There are peaks, when we launched our See Me, See Change schools resource, during Time to Talk Day, and when we launched our See Us campaign in 2021.

While the platform may have peaked in its engagement as a national campaign tool, it continues to be helpful in terms of supporting young people to have conversations on mental health.

Outreach through partners continued to be an important method to reach young people, and encourages engagement. Snapchat was also successful in boosting the numbers of young people taking part.



Recommendations

Below are a set of recommendations for changes needed, at national level, to improve the lives of young people struggling with their mental health. These are based on what young people have told us through the campaign.

See Me will take action on these, which is set out below each section, however to achieve these it will need wider action from government, through developing or updating policies and commitments around young people. These could impact/support schools, colleges, universities, third sector and charities.

Families

- Develop an educational resource for families and carers of young people, to know how to have conversations about mental health, in a way that will not make a young person feel invalidated, or judged.
- Empower families to know how to talk, listen and communicate with young people about how they are feeling.

See Me actions:

- As part of the education and young people's programme of work for next year See Me will develop and test an approach to engage parents / carers/ families as part of the See Me See Change programme.
- The It's Okay To and What's On Your Mind conversation cards can also be promoted to help families have conversations.
- See Me to scope the possibility of backing up this information through the Scottish Mental Illness Stigma Survey



LET'S GET LOUD

Adults

- Action to help adults to understand that young people know what they are talking about, and deserve to be listened to. Perhaps via a national campaign.
- Stigma, dismissal, a lack of understanding and too much pressure were all highlighted as issues in interactions with adults. Young people should be empowered to have a more even relationship with adults when it comes to discussing their mental health. This is in all areas where young people and adults interact.
- Improved knowledge for adults, including where to help young people get the right help.
- Training in young people's mental health for adults responsible for young people's wellbeing should include the impact of stigma, non-judgemental listening, how to support and how to acknowledge what a young person is experiencing.

See Me actions:

- The Government's Mind to Mind platform could have some specific focus on the interactions between young people with mental health problems, and adults. See Me can look to provide case studies
- See Me developing new video resources which look at these interactions.
- Through the See Me See Change programme we have been working on empowering young people to have more even relationships with adults, by co creating an action plan for addressing stigma in schools. Could this be incorporated into the student action plan?
- The See Me See Change workbooks can also help improve knowledge for adults, as well as the What's on your mind card.
- On training, in See Me See Change we have staff session on the impact of stigma, non-judgemental listening and how to support. See Me will be adapting these for colleges and universities, as scoping how to do this in youth work.
- Update the See Me website and out information for adults page, to reflect this new knowledge
- See Me can work with Education Scotland, NES, HMIE, etc. to ensure that training (and implementation) helps tackle mental health stigma and discrimination experienced by young people.



Supporting Conversations

- Addressing issues which lead to parents, teachers and family being highlighted as the most difficult groups for young people to talk to about mental health.
- Create and provide information and support for young people and adults to have conversations which are not judgemental, upsetting and are confidential.

See Me actions:

- See Me will incorporate these new FeelsFM findings into the See Me See Change resources
- When developing the It's Okay to Talk resource, See Me will look at how this can benefit parents and carers.
- Through the See Us campaign and social movement, See Me will promote the resources available to help conversations.
- See Me created resources through the Aye Feel platform which can help to start conversations in youth work.

TUNES FOR WHEN YOU'RE

