HOW CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS POTENTIALLY AT RISK OF DEVELOPING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ARE IDENTIFIED AND HOW THOSE PROBLEMS SHOULD BE PREVENTED

Risk of mental health problems in this age range may be identified in a number of ways. Key people are family members, Education and Social Work staff, at the beginning children and adolescents themselves. Knowledge of the epidemiology of mental health problems, risk factors and how these children and adolescents may present facilities early identification.

Investment in training of professionals both at undergraduate and postgraduate level in normal child development and children and adolescent mental health is crucial to facilitate early identification and intervention. Good mental health is promoted by Government policy which facilitates a healthy environment for children and adolescent’s emotional and social development and intellectual learning.

Improvements in parental skills through parent training, improved physical and mental health, increased job opportunities, decreasing poverty are also key factors in addressing factors mental health problems in children and adolescence.

It is also important to recognise that not all mental health problems can be prevented however factors which promote mental well being are important for everyone.

What obstacles are there in identifying children and adolescents with mental health problems and how might they be overcome?

Obstacles include lack of awareness of: mental health difficulties in children and adolescents, available services and appropriate interventions. Stigma associated with mental health problems. Normalisation of mental health problems in this age range.

Obstacles can be decreased by promoting understanding of mental health problems in this age range.

What action is being taken to facilitate early intervention and what else can be done from a CAMHS perspective?

In Tayside Primary Mental Health Workers provide consultation and training to Education, Social Work and Health Service staff around the issue of identification of children and adolescents with mental health problems and early interventions. They will also be the mental health link person to all local schools. Mental health link work tasks, which will involve a number of professionals, are designed to facilitate recognition of mental health problems and appropriate interventions, and contribute to interagency service planning and development.

Exploring opportunities to increase capacity of CAMH service by modelling pathways and developing business case for increasing workforce levels.
How can access to services and ongoing support be improved?

Access to services and ongoing support can be improved by maximising the effectiveness of interventions by current professionals and increasing capacity where necessary, to meet the identified need for intervention. For maximum effectiveness this should be done in consultation with professionals, service users, children and adolescents and by utilising work already undertaken in Scotland, SNAP and the Framework for Promotion Prevention and Care and work around an appropriate CAMHS workforce in Scotland.

What problems are there around transition from CAMHS to Adult Mental Services and how a smoother transition may be achieved?

Particular difficulties arise around transition when criteria for CAMH services are different to criteria for Adult Mental Health services. Joint planning between CAMH services and Adult Mental Health services around the needs of young people aged 16-25 would be of benefit to address these transition issues.

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