HeadStart Kent

Overview

HeadStart Kent is a preventative programme for 10 to 16 year olds to help improve emotional resilience and avoid mental health issues in adulthood. It is a programme for young people and coproduced by young people.

We have one mission: To equip young people to deal better with difficult circumstances. To achieve this young people have told us what they need:

- “There is always somebody to talk to”
- “My wellbeing is not impacted by pressure to achieve and ‘be perfect’”
- “People around me understand wellbeing and how to promote it”

Resilience is described by young people in Kent as ‘the ability to be mentally strong and bounce back from the problems in life.’

HeadStart Kent helps young people understand and look after their own emotional wellbeing. It also helps ‘trusted adults’ (whether professionals or the public) have conversations with young people to recognise and build on their strengths. Evidence based tools fit with wider programmes delivered by practitioners to give an even better chance of success.
The HeadStart Programme includes three levels:

**Level 1:** The Kent-wide offer includes the Kent Resilience Hub, which is available to all young people, parents and those working in all schools and communities to increase knowledge and skills, promote evidence-based best practice and provide a range of tools and training resources. The Kent Resilience Hub can be found at www.HeadStartKent.org.uk.

**Level 2:** Universal Plus – We are working with priority groupings of schools and their local communities. This level will provide a number of developmental and training programmes for staff, activities for young people and their families, schools and community services. The training includes Resilience Domains, Mindfulness and Youth Mental Health First Aid.

**Level 3:** Additional – Within the geographic areas covered by the groupings of schools, this level will systematically identify young people who are impacted by family domestic abuse, have experienced trauma or adversity, or whose emotional wellbeing may be at risk. It will provide additional bespoke support to young people to build their resilience, recover from trauma or adversity and improve their emotional health and wellbeing. The new services include intensive and volunteer mentoring, family school transition group work and online counselling.

We are currently operational in Gravesham, Swale, Ashford, Canterbury and Shepway. During 2018 the programme will commence roll out to Maidstone and Thanet and in 2019, to Dover and Tonbridge and Malling.

HeadStart Kent is a five year programme funded by The Big Lottery and managed within Kent County Council.