



MH:2K is a pioneering new model for engaging young people in conversations about mental health in their local area.

Mental health conditions affect about 1 in 10 young people, with vulnerable groups particularly at risk. Young people have a unique and vital perspective on their mental health – the challenges they face, information they need, and what is and isn't working for them.

By harnessing young people's experiences and views, decision-makers can gain a deeper understanding of mental health issues in their area and new insights about effective solutions for prevention, support and services. They can better serve the diversity of their youth populations.

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How MH:2K works

In each local area, we deliver a six step model of activities:

- **Recruitment:** We recruit a core team of young people as 'Citizen Researchers', including those with direct experience of mental health issues and individuals from at risk groups.
- **Design Days:** The Citizen Researchers explore key national and local information about youth mental health, alongside their own views and experiences. The Researchers determine which mental health issues are most significant for their area. They receive training in research, facilitation and public speaking.
- **Roadshow:** The Citizen Researchers co-design and co-deliver workshops to engage at least 500 other young people on the priority topics. The workshops stimulate informal learning and gather young people's views on the challenges they face and potential solutions.
- **Results Day:** The Citizen Researchers help analyse and extract key findings. They work with local decision-makers to develop strong, practical recommendations for change.
- **Big Showcase:** The Citizen Researchers present their findings and recommendations to key stakeholders at a showcase event, including facilitated conversations about next steps.
- **An Expert Panel:** A panel of key local decision-makers and stakeholders informs the project's work throughout its lifetime.

MH:2K evaluation findings

The MH:2K model has proved highly beneficial to both decision-makers and the young people involved.

In 2017-18:

- 92.8% of decision-makers involved in the project said they found its recommendations 'very useful' and 98.5% 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they would do something new or differently as a result of the project;
- Young people involved in the project reported a range of benefits including increased knowledge of mental health issues (91%), improved hard and soft skills (eg presentation skills, confidence, 86-89%) and increased feelings of wellbeing and optimism about the future (82-86%).
- All five local areas who have run MH:2K to-date are now using its recommendations to inform their work, including Local Transformation Plans, School Wellbeing strategies, and the agenda and strategy for cross-organisational Children's and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Partnerships.

The project's recommendations cover a range of themes including schools, colleges and universities, social media, mental health services, professionals, families and relationships, communities, LGBTQ+ young people, young men, and stigma.

Testimonials

"MH:2K provided an opportunity to work together to destroy the stigma held by many in society about mental health. The project also encouraged self-development and growth in many different aspects. It was an amazing experience that I am thankful for and would encourage many other young people to take part."

MH:2K Citizen Researcher

"Working with MH:2K has been an incredible experience. We now have a better understanding of the pressures that young people in our communities face and the discussions between our organisations and the Citizen Researchers have given us fresh perspectives on how we can all work together to provide effective mental health to those young people living in our communities."

Chairs of NHS Greater Preston Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Chorley and South Ribble Clinical Commissioning Group

"North Tyneside CCG and Local Authority were keen to take part in MH:2K and were really impressed by the process which saw 27 of our young people taking the lead as Citizen Researchers. They did a fantastic job in leading the work and had over 500 conversations about mental health and the pressures that young people are under and experience. The findings from the MH:2K report have given us new insights and perspectives about how we can most effectively support good mental health for young people locally as part of our overall strategic approach."

Rachel Nicholson, Public Health Manager (Children) North Tyneside Council

Who's involved?

MH:2K is delivered by Involve, the UK's leading public engagement charity working in the field of participation, and social enterprise Leaders Unlocked.

In 2016-17 Oldham became the first local area to run MH:2K, supported by Oldham Council, Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group, and the Wellcome Trust. In 2017-18, the success of the project led it to expand to four more areas: Birmingham, Central Lancashire, North Tyneside, and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

MH:2K in your area - get in touch

We're currently seeking expressions of interest from new local areas that would like to commission MH:2K with a start date of January or September 2019. If you want to find out more or talk about potentially being one of these areas, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch with project leads Sarah Allan and Rose Dowling, using the contact details below:

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