

Hello and thank you from the Special Interest Research Group on Language and Communication Needs in Mental Health...

Thank you again for signing up to our SIRG mail list! Myself and the rest of the coordinating team have been delighted with the response so far to our topic, and we're pleased to hear that many feel we're on the right track pursuing the theme of the role of language needs in mental health. We'll aim to keep those signed up to our mail list updated about our progress this year. Below is a reminder of our aims, and also a request for some early input from the speech and language therapy community.

The aim of our SIRG

Our overarching aim is to develop and articulate the research questions we need answers to. What are the unanswered questions about language needs and mental health that research should seek to address? What are the most important questions we should aim to tackle first? We plan to consult clinicians, families, young people, and researchers on this topic to prepare the ground for big research programmes that will help improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people with language needs.

Consulting young people – involving SLTs in the consultation process

We are considering carefully the best way to consult young people with language needs about what research they would like to see done. We are aware that for this group of individuals, expertise in language needs, including how to make complex concepts accessible, is really key if we are to successfully capture their views. We are developing a short, structured activity that can be done (online if necessary) with young people. However, **our coordinating group feel that the best people to do this consultation may actually be the SLTs themselves**, rather than our research team. SLTs who already have a rapport with the young people, who are tuned into the particular communication needs of an individual, we think will make the most effective team to reach young people in a meaningful way. Therefore, **if you are an SLT, could we ask you to let us know...**

- Would it be feasible for you to consult one (or more) young people in your case load on our topic?
- Are there any concerns or barriers we would need to address to do this?

You can let us know your thoughts by replying to this email.

Were we to progress with this idea, we would run workshops with SLTs, ahead of them consulting young people. At these meetings, we would work through the aims of the activity, ways to record the conversation, considerations when deciding which cases to approach about the consultation, and ensuring that the activity meets ethical requirements.

We hope to bring you more news very soon!

Hannah, Melanie, Melanie and Vicki

SIRG: Language and Communication Needs in Mental Health

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