Network News: December 2021

Welcome to Network News, our update from the Emerging Minds Network.

This month...

We have lots to share with you, including:

- **The Emerging Minds Progress Report**, celebrating the achievements of the network and looking ahead to our final year of funding

- **A new report** from an Emerging Minds Cross-Sector placement scheme participant **on embracing complexity in research**

- **News from our Special Interest Research Groups** including a survey from Rethinking Education, and a new 'Spotlight on a SIRG' feature

- **Opportunities**, **Vacancies**, **Reports** and **Resources** from beyond the Emerging Minds Network

Emerging Minds News

Progress Report

Ahead of the final year of our funding from UKRI, we are delighted to share our interim Progress Report on what the Emerging Minds Network has achieved so far.

Highlights include:
- three funding calls and nine funded projects

- establishing 20 Special Interest Research Groups

- supporting early career researchers through three funded cross-sector placements, workshops, internships and our new GROW researcher development programme.

The report also gives you a preview of some of our plans for 2022.

Read on to find out more: https://emergingminds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/November-2021-Progress-Report-final.pdf

The Big Question Podcast

We are currently reviewing applications from our recent funding call focused on the 'Big Question Research challenge'. The funded projects will take place in 2022 and ask:

- Why even when we know 'what works' isn't this necessarily implemented in policy and practice?

- How do we improve evidence-based decision making?

- How can we successfully inform policy and commissioning decisions and ultimately increase implementation of research into practice?

Abi Thomson was our Research Challenge Investigator over summer 2021 and worked on a rapid scoping review of the available research ahead of the funding call.

Abi recently interviewed Lisa Nolan from the Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) about some of the issues around research implementation which we hope to address from the call.

Listen to the podcast here: https://emergingminds.org.uk/the-big-question-podcast/

And find out more about the funding call here: https://emergingminds.org.uk/emerging-minds-third-funding-call/

Embracing Complexity Report: Thinking differently about how we fund and prioritise research

Most people with neurodevelopmental conditions have more than one, but this group is often excluded from research.

PhD researcher Suzi Sapiets (Universities of Warwick and Kent) recently spent six months working with Embracing Complexity as part of the Emerging Minds Cross-Sector Placement Scheme to investigate how to improve research across multiple conditions.

Suzi is also one of the coordinators of our Special Interest Research Group, Embracing Complexity in Neurodevelopmental Conditions and Mental Health.

Suzi's new publication, *Embracing Complexity in Research on Neurodevelopmental Conditions and Mental Health* highlights the priorities, barriers and opportunities for research that considers multiple neurodevelopmental conditions.

Find out more, and access the report, here: https://tinyurl.com/embracing-complexity-report

Co-RAY Resource: Infographics on facing Change and Uncertainty

Based on the evidence-informed briefing produced by researchers and clinicians as part of the CoRAY project, designers from the University of Reading have worked with young people from the CoRAY advisory group to develop some infographics addressing the topic of Change and Uncertainty.

These infographics have been designed with a range of purposes in mind, including posting on social media and starting conversations in classrooms.

Facing an uncertain winter ahead, these resources are free for you to use and available here: https://emergingminds.org.uk/infographics-on-facing-change-and-uncertainty/

Debating Mental Health Project

As we enter another winter with covid we are reflecting back on winter 2020. We partnered with the brilliant Debating Mental Health and Didcot Girls' School to run a series of workshops over 6 weeks with a group of young women aged 13 & 14 years.

The workshops focused on developing skills and confidence in speaking in public as well as forming viewpoints and debating key questions in mental health.

The programme culminated in a virtual debate in December 2020 where the young women shared their perspectives on topics including: how we can build a mentally healthier world, what they learnt about themselves during lockdown and the role of social media and technology in mental health.

You can find the short film clips of the debate here: https://emergingminds.org.uk/debating-mental-health-can-we-build-a-mentally-healthy-world/

As well as a blog summarising the discussions here: https://emergingminds.org.uk/debating-mental-health-project-report/

Open Lab Meeting

We hosted our third Open Lab meeting on Tuesday 7 December on the theme of *Racism and children and young people's mental health in the UK*.

Our speakers were the successful applicants from our second funding call on Voices, Power & Attitudes, and had a chance to explain more about their upcoming research:

- Dr Shioma-lei Craythorne (Aston University) – Understanding young people's experiences of racially motivated appearance-focused bullying

- Dr Verity Jones (University of West of England) – Improving wellbeing and mental health relating to racism in 10-11 year olds: a Bristol case study

- Dr Yasmin Ahmadzadeh (Kings College London) – Transmission of experiences of racism, anxiety and depression in families (TRADE)

To find out more about their research visit: https://emergingminds.org.uk/funding-recipients/.

Recordings of their presentations will be available in the New Year.

Special Interest Research Groups (SIRGs)

Rethinking Education Survey

What do YOU think are the most important research questions for understanding young people's experiences of education during the pandemic?

In October, Rethinking Education held a workshop with young people, parents and carers, educators, mental health professionals and researchers to ask this question.

They have narrowed the list down to 30 priorities, and

now want YOU to help rank them.

The survey only take 5 minutes and can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/RethinkEdSurvey

Rethinking Education is a Special Interest Research Group funded by Emerging Minds working to ensure that wellbeing is an intrinsic part of all education provision.

You can find more about them here: https://emergingminds.org.uk/special-interest-research-group-rethinking-education/

Spotlight on a SIRG

ReASoN: Researchers & Students on Neurodiversity

What is it?
A national network of people who are neurodivergent or have a neurodevelopmental condition like Autism or ADHD, and researchers, professionals and charities who are interested in neurodiversity in higher education.

The focus of the network is on experiences of students and staff in higher education, specifically understanding how universities can or do support neurodivergent students with their studies and their mental health.

How can I get involved?
If you have any interest in the work of ReASoN you can **join their informal monthly online meetings** to network, discuss topics of interest, and hear from guest speakers.

To get involved with ReASon please email: reason-group@bristol.ac.uk.

To find out more about the network head to: https://emergingminds.org.uk/special-interest-research-group-neurodiversity-and-young-peoples-mental-health-in-higher-education/

Research Showcase

How school attendance data could play a crucial role in targeting mental health support for pupils

We are very excited to share a new paper published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* led by Professor Ann John who is based at Swansea University, and also sits on the Emerging Minds Leadership Team.

The study investigated school attendance in relation to individuals with mental and neurodevelopmental disorders or who self-harm. It found that these children and young people were disproportionately more likely to be absent or excluded than their peers.

"Children with poor mental health, who are neurodiverse or who self-harm often struggle at school. Absences and exclusions may provide a useful tool to identify those who require additional support. Early intervention will not only reduce immediate distress and difficulties for the young person but also may also interrupt poor life trajectories and improve outcomes in later life."

- Professor Ann John

To read the paper in full, please visit: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-0366(21)00367-9/fulltext

Related Research

You may also be interested in a recent webinar which brought together speakers from Square Peg, the Education Policy Institute, AT-Autism and Mind to discuss more of the latest research regarding school absence, mental health, and special educational needs.

Find out more on the speakers here: http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/events/understanding-persistent-absence-from-school/

And look out on the Excluded Lives website for a recording of the webinar coming very soon: https://excludedlives.education.ox.ac.uk/

'FRIENDS for Life' Programme Evaluation

A team led by Dr Michael Wigelsworth at the University of Manchester carried out an independent evaluation of the 'FRIENDS for life' programme in English primary schools. Dr Wigelsworth introduces the evaluation:

'With over 3,000 children taking part, this is the largest cluster randomised control trial of FRIENDS in the world - a universal, class-based cognitive behavioural therapy approach designed to prevent or address early signs of

anxiety and depression in children. Results showed no evidence of impact on anxiety or depression, including those pupils identified as 'at risk' through elevated scores at baseline. These findings contrast expectations from the wider literature base. However, valuable lessons were learnt in respect to the real-world difficulties in the implementation of school-based approaches, including the challenge of ensuring consistency and quality within the demands of a school timetable.'

To find out more and read the full evaluation report visit:
https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/files/82889819/FRIENDS.pdf

News From Beyond The Network

Opportunities

Funding Opportunity: Digital Society Network Plus Project

Deadline: 1 March 2022, 4pm

The successful project will develop a research agenda that explores people's relationships with technology and how technologies influence relationships. Applications are encouraged to explore the following themes:

- Harnessing Technology (e.g. how can people better understand the choices and impacts of using digital technologies)
- Power and Behaviour (e.g. seeking to understand the influence services and devices have over people and the social trends that result).

To find out more visit: https://tinyurl.com/digital-society-funding

Masterclass: Essential Guide to Grant Applications

Date: 15 - 17 February 2022

A free online masterclass hosted by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) on writing a convincing funding application with a good structure, flow and argument.

The three-day masterclass is for anyone thinking of applying for a research grant – either from NIHR or from other open, competitive, peer reviewed sources of funding.

If you have an idea for a health or social care research proposal but require help with writing a grant application, then EGGA is for you!

Book here: https://tinyurl.com/egga-masterclass

Webinar: Culturally Engaged and Sensitive Approaches to Mental Health Education (CESAME)

Date: 27 January 2022, 10.30am - 12.30pm

Free webinar focused on enhancing primary to secondary school transition and mental health experiences of young people from ethnically diverse groups in the UK.

Join researchers, practitioners, and young people from [The Glasgow School of Art](), [De Montfort University](), [Centre for Mental Health](), and [Leaders Unlocked]() at this webinar to hear about research outcomes from the [CESAME project]() and discuss implications of the findings for future practice and policy.

To sign up head to: https://tinyurl.com/cesame-webinar

Webinar: Using the new UKRI Funding Service

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is building a new Funding Service to replace Je-S, which will be released in stages over the next year. This service will make it easier for applicants to submit applications and obtain guidance in a joined-up way.

The webinars are aimed at colleagues working in Research Offices and will be available to book in the new year.

Find out more about the new Funding Service here: https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-were-improving-your-funding-experience/#contents-list

Vacancies

2x Postdoctoral Fellows, ATTUNE project, Queen Mary University of London

Deadline: 17 December 2021

Opportunities to conduct secondary analyses on the impact of childhood adversity & psychopathology as part of the MRC funded ATTUNE project investigating mechanisms and mental health impacts of adverse childhood experiences to co-design preventative arts and digital interventions.

Find out more and apply here: https://tinyurl.com/postdoc-queen-mary

Post-Doctoral Research Associate, King's College London

Deadline: 16 January 2022

Dr Slovak's group is seeking a highly motivated post-doctoral research associate with a strong background in Mental Health or Human-Computer Interaction. The £1.2 million project will envision, design, and test new conceptual models and mechanisms-of-delivery for interventions in the context of child mental health, and especially parenting interventions.

Find out more and apply here: https://tinyurl.com/postdoc-kcl

Funded PhD studentship, University of Sussex

Deadline: 9 February 2022

This PhD project will explore the transition from primary to secondary school as a key life experience that may influence body image, as well as investigating opportunities for early intervention at this life stage.

Find out more and apply here: https://tinyurl.com/phd-sussex
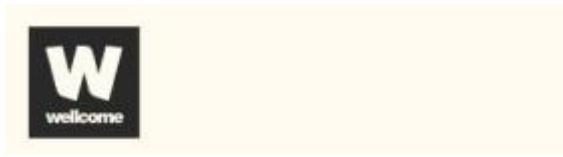
Reports

Two new reports from the Wellcome Trust

The role of science in mental health

This report shares the mental health findings from the Global Monitor, a survey of 119,000 people across 113 countries and territories. It highlights that people worldwide think mental health is important, but they are not sure that science can help.

To find out more visit: https://tinyurl.com/wellcome-global-monitor

What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and/or depression

This report provides a summary of the findings of 'active ingredients' reviews conducted by 30 teams worldwide.

The report covers possible active ingredients ranging from the cellular (e.g. gut microbiome, inflammation, SSRIs) to the societal (e.g. cash transfers, urban access to green space, addressing loneliness).

To find out more visit: https://tinyurl.com/wellcome-science-helping-yp

The Child of the North: Building a fairer future after COVID-19

This report, produced by the N8 Research Partnership and Northern Health Science Alliance (NHSA), and written by over 40 leading academics from across the North of England, reveals widening inequalities for children growing up in the North of England post-pandemic compared to those in the rest of the country.

It sets out 18 clear recommendations that can be put in place to tackle the widening gap between the North and the rest of England.

To find out more and read the full report go to: https://tinyurl.com/child-of-the-north

Resources

Research Zone Podcast

This brilliant new podcast, hosted by young people, for young people, aims to make sense of youth mental health research through a great range of interviews.

Listen to recent episodes on antidepressants, loneliness, putting research into practice and much more here: https://tinyurl.com/research-zone-podcast

Corona Chronicles: Back Chat animation created by children

'Our Voices', the powerful animation co-created with children aged 9-11 during the 2020-2021 global pandemic chronicling life, education and relationships in the early national lockdowns and school re-openings is now available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-tOFAL-nwU.

Creative toolkits (animations and activity sheets) Back Chat developed for working with children are free to use and available here: http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-855013.

Contact us: info@emergingminds.org.uk