



Knowledge and Library Services (KLS)

Impact stories

Title: A KLS literature search helped in the production of a Risk Factor Intelligence (RFI) evidence synthesis report on the effectiveness of school-based lessons on influencing children and young people's knowledge and attitudes towards mental health and emotional wellbeing

User testimonial: *"Having Nicola Pearce-Smith embedded in the project team was invaluable. Nicola was involved in the early discussions so was able to develop a search strategy that was perfectly tailored to our requirements. She also wrote sections of the methods to ensure the data searching aspects were appropriately documented in the report"*
Dr. Caryl Benyon, Head of Health Information, Research, Translation and Innovation

About the RFI Evidence Synthesis: *"The way you help make the evidence understandable and summarise it in this way is enormously helpful for busy commissioners and policy makers"* **Claire Robson, Programme Manager, Children, Young People and Families Team**

Challenge: Mental health problems are prevalent in children and young people and half emerge before the aged of 14. The government intends to introduce mandatory Health Education in all schools alongside statutory Relationship and Sex Education in secondary schools and Relationship Education in primary schools from September 2020. This will include requirements for pupils to learn about mental health and wellbeing. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommend that schools can be a place to foster social and emotional skills. The aim of this work was to answer the following research question: *how effective are school-based lessons in influencing children and young people's knowledge and attitudes towards mental health and emotional wellbeing?*

Solution: The Project Team consisted of Researchers in the RFI Team and an Information Specialist from Knowledge and Library Services. The Information Specialist conducted a comprehensive, systematic search of the literature in order to identify the relevant evidence. The Researchers critically appraised the quality of the papers and synthesised the literature to provide key findings on what the body of evidence showed. An Advisory Team of topic specialists was convened to help guide the process and interpret the findings. External peer reviewers provided their expert opinions.

Impact: The report has been shared with policy officials in the Department for Education and disseminated to PHE Centre teams. The report is available online (<https://phelibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/syntheses/>) and an e-poster was presented at PHE's 2018 conference.

Success factors: The Researchers work closely with the Information Specialist to ensure the searches identified the literature needed to fulfil the research question. The Information Specialist wrote the search process section of the report in order to ensure this was accurately recorded. Having an Advisory Team of topic experts helped to guide the process and to ensure the final report was fit for purpose.

Lessons: The process of searching the literature and extracting the relevant information is a time-consuming process. Synthesising the literature on complex public health interventions is challenging due to differences in the population, intervention, outcomes and context across papers. Having the Information Specialist on the Project Team ensures the search is comprehensive and accurately reported. Having an Advisory Team of topic experts ensures that the project is informed by an understanding of, and application to, local practice

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