

**A showcase of research projects supported by eNurture
Monday 17th January 2pm to 4.40pm**

Project Summaries

Prototyping TangToys (Tangible Toys to Improve Mental Health): Explorative work for designing digital technology for and with Children with Intellectual Disability

[Eiman Kanjo \(Nottingham Trent University\)](#)

The use of technology is commonplace in many homes and schools. Increasingly school based approaches are being explored as a way of addressing children's mental health within school contexts to address problems like mood, affective and developmental disorders in children and young people with Intellectual Disability. Integrating technology within the whole school approach could lead to reduced levels of distress, improved mental health and improve communication among children and teachers/parents. This project addressed the unmet need for the availability of interventions for children with Intellectual Disability by developing an approach to technology development that emphasises therapeutic benefit using co-design techniques.

The project:

- Explored how the co-creation of wearable and tangible interfaces can change the ways in which children with Intellectual Disability interact and communicate with their Peers, Teachers and Families, and what this can mean for their mental health (e.g., tackling Diagnostic Overshadowing).
- Identified the risks and opportunities stemming from the co-design of such technologies using both quantitative and qualitative methods when working with students with Intellectual Disability, their families, schools and professional agencies to improve their mental health outcomes.
- Identified how we co-design future research objectives and methods of dissemination of this new knowledge with our end user communities to best engage present and future practice models aimed at promoting positive mental health and reducing negative mental health trajectories for young people with Intellectual Disability (including those with Special Education Needs).

Exploring understandings of digital resilience to inform the development of a Digital Resilience Scale (DRS) for 'pre-teens' (9-12 year olds)

[Simon Hammond \(University of East Anglia\)](#)

Digital resilience (DR) is a term increasingly used by various stakeholders and cited as playing a key role in promoting positive, whilst buffering negative, influences of digital environments on young people's mental health. However, despite its uses, the research-informed evidence-base underpinning DR is embryonic. Interventions rely on low quality evidence, leaving practitioners to struggle to optimise content and/or delivery method(s) due to a lack of a focused robust evaluative scale.

Using the UKCIS definition of DR as a starting point, we developed a Digital Resilience Scale (DRS) to address this practice, research and policy gap. In the first instance, the scale will target 'pre-teens' (9-12 year olds) as this period is particularly important in promoting positive mental health trajectories. This project involved:

1. A literature review to develop conceptual knowledge, identify possible subcomponents and relevant previous scales (e.g. Patient Activation Scale, Scale of Protective Factors and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale);

2. Work with stakeholders (including young people, parents/guardians and children's workforce professionals) to co-produce an exploration of stakeholder's understandings of DR;
3. The development of initial pool of items for DRS.

Vulnerability, Online Lives and Mental Health: Towards a New Practice Model

[Aiman El Asam \(Kingston University London\)](#)

Vulnerable young people face many challenges. Practitioners and professionals address these; but are often unaware of the young person's digital life and the role that might play in their wellbeing and mental health. The main aim of this feasibility project was to develop an evidence-based practice model (Enable) that incorporates the digital aspect to enable interventions and support to be more effective. The objectives were to:

1. Examine the relationships between mental/emotional health and digital lives (internet-related experiences) amongst children and adolescents (Young People).
2. Explore frontline practitioners' opinions on digital lives/experiences of vulnerable young people relative to their mental health.
3. Propose a draft practice model to assist decision-making and alert users to contextual aspects of their clients'/patients' digital lives. Based on research, plus frontline skills and experience, teamed with online safety advice, this suite could be a vital contribution to the care of young people at risk.

Care leaver relationships, mental health and online spaces

[Autumn Roesch-Marsh \(University of Edinburgh\)](#)

Using participatory arts based group work and interviews with young people, focus groups with professionals, and knowledge exchange events, the aims of this project were: to better understand which social media platforms young people leaving care use to make and maintain relationships; what they hope for from these relationships; what they see as the risks and benefits of these environments for their relationships and their mental health; and what kind of training for professionals might improve support for young people. The objectives of the project were to develop and pilot some training materials for use with staff and young people around these issues and to apply for further funding to follow up key themes identified in the pilot study. Research methods comprised two exploratory focus groups; in-depth interviews with five individuals; and an interactive, creative art workshop to discuss ideas in a more fun and engaging way. We also worked with a group of young people from the Articulate Trust to produce a short animated film capturing some of the themes of the project for knowledge exchange purposes. We also commissioned eight care experienced artists to make works of art relating to the theme of social media and mental health. These artistic outputs will be going up on the website soon.

Empowering pre-teens online through a digital ethics of care framework

[Michelle O'Reilly \(University of Leicester\)](#)

Our preliminary research with 11-18-year olds led to a novel 'digital-ethics-of-care' conceptual framework which prioritises children's autonomy, empathy and caring practices online for mental health promotion and positive behaviour (O'Reilly et al., 2020). Our Adolescent Advisory Group (n=12) suggested this framework is equally important for pre-adolescents.

Our overarching aim is to explore whether this interdisciplinary, flexible theory of moral conduct online can be adapted for 10-11-year olds. We focus our energies on schools/peers; in digital societies, schools need new tools to address social issues. Evidence shows disconnects between moral reasoning and behaviour behind screens (Flores & James, 2013), negatively impacting the mental health of users and recipients.

We have four objectives:

1. Explore the relevance of the concept 'digital-ethics-of-care' to pre-adolescents.

2. Scope the benefits and challenges of a paired interview approach with children as researchers, using online data collection tools.
3. Test the feasibility of adapting co-production methods to an online space.
4. Co-produce several story-based moral scenarios with children for teachers to use in education and for us to use for a later larger-scale funding bid.

This provides a toolkit of methods and co-produced scenarios that have been quality-assured for use in developing educational outputs for schools.

Delphi study with young people, families and professionals to prioritise focus, content and digital tools in the co-development of digital tools to support young people with long-term health conditions

[Angeliki Bogosian \(City University London\)](#)

One in ten children will develop a long-term condition that limits their daily life substantially and demands extended care, supervision and self-management strategies. These conditions include diabetes, neurodegenerative conditions, cancer, sickle cell disease, asthma, and chronic pain, among others. Children and adolescents with long-term conditions have significantly higher rates of mental health problems compared to 'healthy' children. Chronic physical health concerns in young people also have a significant impact on parental stress and family functioning. The World Health Organisation calls for more research into potential interventions to support young people with a long-term condition. Little is known about the potential for digital technology to support good mental health for young people with a long-term condition.

Our overall aim is to prioritise the focus, content and tools with which to co-develop a digital intervention to support the mental health of young people with long term conditions. Our objectives are:

1. (FOCUS) to identify and prioritise key mental health themes to be addressed.
2. (CONTENT) to identify the most effective psychological techniques and interventions to be incorporated.
3. (TOOLS): to identify and prioritise digital tools (e.g. website, mobile app, social media, virtual reality) with which to co-develop a mental health intervention.

Third Culture Kids' Digital Environments and Mental Health

[Laura Cariola \(University of Edinburgh\)](#)

The term "Third Culture Kid" (TCK) describes children whose parents are in globally mobile employment, such as members of the armed forces, missionaries, and intergovernmental employees (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999/2009). TCKs accompany their parents, resulting in a transnational lifestyle that is constantly in flux. As such, TCKs tend to have unstable in-person networks with often only their parents as a constant in their lives. To maintain a sense of belonging and connectivity with their peers who share similar lived experiences, TCKs largely rely on digital technologies, including social media. Using an online-facilitated community-based participatory approach to better understand a largely under-researched youth population, we aim to answer the following research questions:

- How do TCKs engage and negotiate the interplay between online and in-person support networks?
- Specifically, how do TCKs use and experience digital technology differently to mono-cultural children?
- How do TCKs perceive the risks and opportunities of using digital technology, and how can these risks be minimised and the benefits enhanced?
- How do TCKs experience the relationship between their use of digital technologies and their mental health?
- What training do families and professionals need to support TCKs' safe use of digital technologies and positive mental health?

The negotiation of pleasure, risk and harm in young people's digital lives: A scoping project on the mental health and wellbeing implications of online 'transgressive' behaviours

[Bina Bhardwa \(Birkbeck University\)](#) and [Fiona Lacey \(Service Design Senior Manager at YoungMinds\)](#)

Our project is scoping study on young people's online 'transgressive' behaviours, such as 'sexting', cyberbullying, accessing extremist and pornographic material, posting images of sexual activity and drug-taking on social media, and gambling. Covid-19 has seen an intensified 'shift to the digital', but young people's perspectives on these changes and associated 'new norms', and the impact on mental health and wellbeing, are largely unknown. Critical of top-down, outdated, official narratives that construct binaries of online risk and opportunity, we recognise young people's agency in negotiating pleasure, risk and harm in their digital lives.

We will explore:

1. Impacts of Covid-19 on online 'transgressive' behaviours.
2. How young people variously draw and navigate boundaries between 'healthy'/'unhealthy', 'risky'/'safe', 'moral'/'immoral', 'illegal'/'legal', online behaviours; how conceptions of 'fun', 'excitement' and 'pleasure' intersect these boundaries.
3. Young people's views on policy, practice and legal responses to online 'transgressive' behaviours, and on the language and concepts used in digital safety information and education.
4. How socio-structural factors (e.g. access to digital technologies and digital literacy) shape online behaviours.
5. We plan to use the findings and methodological insights arising from the scoping research to develop larger-scale work on mental health and wellbeing implications of online 'transgressive' behaviours.

Supporting children's mental health through familial online relationships

[Rose Capdevila](#) and [Lisa Lazard](#) (The Open University)

This project will underpin our research programme on supporting children's mental health through familial online relationships. Within this broader trajectory, this proof of concept study will ask: How do young people make sense of their parents'/caregivers' online sharing? Research has highlighted the critical role of everyday interactions and relationships in producing and maintaining nurturing environments that support children and young people's development and mental health. Whilst research in the area of family digital practices is burgeoning, the focus has almost exclusively been on problematising children's practices; when parents are the object of study, the focus has been primarily on 'sharenting', rights, ethics and privacy (Lazard et al, 2019). This proof of concept study will explore how young people's experiences of well-being and mental health are affected by adult led social media practices, along with the affordances of different platforms, within the wider family ecosystem. Attention will be on supporting children's mental health rather than addressing mental illness. The future research funding bid, underpinned by this pilot, will investigate the dynamics of family online practices, harnessing elements of existing online practices to support constructive and protective engagements within the family on and offline through the development of guidance and design principles.