

# THE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH ANIMATION PROJECT LAUNCH EVENT

Thursday 9 May 2019 | Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland



#YMHanimate

## BACKGROUND TO THE ANIMATIONS

The animations are part of an RCSI study about young people's life experiences and mental health. The study involved in-depth qualitative interviews with a number of young adults who had previously taken part in a larger quantitative study. Findings from the qualitative study revealed a number of shared themes among the young adults who took part. These themes formed the basis of the animations. A smaller number of participants consented to direct quotes from their interviews being used to develop the scripts for the animations. As such, these animations capture the shared experiences of young people *using their own words*. Each animation is presented as though it is the story of one young person but each script is made up of a composite of quotes and experiences from a number of young people from the study.

## THE PROJECT

The Youth Mental Health Animation Project is a Health Research Board (HRB) grant-funded project as part of their Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination Scheme (KEDS). The project involved a collaboration between the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and the Institute of Art Design and Technology (IADT). It was supported by the Health Service Executive and SpunOut.ie. The animations were created by third year animation students in IADT who worked with the RCSI research lead over one term to translate the scripts into the animations that we are showcasing and launching today. In that way, this project is best described as *of young people, by young people, for young people*. It demonstrates the potential for research findings to be used in creative ways to create meaningful outputs that have the potential to have an impact on both an individual and societal level.

Uniquely, the project has created both English and Irish versions of the animations, providing a bilingual resource for young people across Ireland. Subtitled versions are also available.

## WHO ARE THE ANIMATIONS FOR?

The target audience for the animations is young people between the ages of 12 and 25. They will also be of value to parents, educators and other people with an interest in understanding young people's mental health. The animations are now available on SpunOut.ie. In time, they will also be available on the HSE website. As a resource for young people struggling with their mood, their connections with others or with their sense of self, the animations have the potential resonate with their experiences and to encourage them to reach out and seek support from people they trust.

## FURTHER PROJECT DETAILS

RCSI Project Lead | Helen Coughlan, Clinical Research Fellow, Department of Psychiatry Institutional Collaborator | Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)  
IADT Lead | David Quin, Lecturer in Animation  
IADT Animators | Sarah Benson, Joshua Brown, Charlotte Connolly, Jessie Desmond Schmidt, Conor Doyle, Hollie Hamill, Anna Hoare, Sabine Jansone, Rory Martin, Beren McCormack, Jack McHugh, Giorgia McKenna, Conor McNally, Daniel McNicholl, Saoirse Mitchell, Chloe O'Hara, Krizsha Perocho, Cassandra Sierevogel, Carylle Sanchez, Charles-Henri Sanson, Aisling Smith, Iobhar Stokes Rodriguez, Sarah Whyte, Key Woodlock  
IADT Sound | Tim Nerney, Geoffrey Perrin  
Project Supporters | Health Service Executive (HSE), SpunOut.ie  
Project Funder | Health Research Board (Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination Scheme)



## ANIMATION TOPICS/THEMES

There are five animations, each of which captures a number of themes and issues related to experiences commonly reported by young people in this and other studies.

### ANXIETY/IMNÍ

Themes captured in this animation include:

- Cognitive, emotional and physical aspects of anxiety
- Periods of transition as times of vulnerability for young people
- Resistance and ambivalence about help-seeking among young people
- The benefits of help-seeking when struggling with anxiety
- Counselling as a source of support
- Symptoms of anxiety often continue but can be managed with the right support and development of coping skills



### DEPRESSION/DÚLAGAR

Themes captured in this animation include:

- Cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social and physical aspects of depression
- The isolation that can accompany depression
- Resistance to sharing how one is feeling with loved ones
- Parents/guardians as a source of support
- GP and formal mental health services as source of support
- The importance of being able to make sense of one's own thoughts and feelings
- Getting through a period of depression takes time but is possible with the right type and level of support



### FEELING DIFFERENT/AG AIREACHTÁIL ÉAGSÚIL

Themes captured in this animation include:

- Negative self-beliefs commonly experienced by young people
- Subjective sense of being different to others
- Feeling under pressure to change oneself to be like others
- The challenges and impact of self-acceptance
- Positive impact of engaging in hobbies and activities that young people enjoy
- Benefits of meaningful friendships and connections with others who accept one for who one is



### BULLIED/BULAÍOCHT

Themes captured in this animation include:

- Negative impact of bullying on a young person's sense of self-worth
- Cognitive, emotional, behavioural, social and physical aspects of being bullied
- Positive impact of reaching out to a trusted adult and feeling understood
- Teachers as a source of support
- Positive impact of engaging in hobbies or volunteer work with like-minded others
- Importance of meaningful relational connections with others



### LONELINESS/UAIGNEAS

Themes captured in this animation include:

- Subjective experience of loneliness, of feeling lost and of not fitting in
- The pretence of happiness often expressed by young people
- The negative impact of bottling up emotions
- The value of sharing how you feel with others and realising you are not alone in how you feel
- The benefits of physical activity and hobbies
- Friends as a source of support
- The positive impact of meaningful relational connections with others

