

Autumn Term 2024 Newsletter

ISSUE 1

Welcome to the first newsletter of the WISDOM Research Network!

Please get in touch!

This is our first newsletter and we welcome input from schools to understand better what you'd like to read about here going forwards.

Our TERMLY NEWSLETTERS include:

- WISDOM Network Updates
- From Beyond the Network, e.g.:
 - Updates from schools
 - Interviews with experts
 - Spotlight on CYP mental health issues
- Research Opportunities for Schools

Working In Schools to Deliver On Mental health

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WISDOM Network Updates

The beginning of the school year, along with all the adventure it brings, is the perfect time to launch our Network.

We are passionate about getting mental health research into school communities, in order to benefit school staff, pupils and parents, as well as develop our knowledge and future mental health treatment options.

Thank you for joining us and sharing in our passion for the mental health of children, young people and their school communities!

From Beyond the Network:

The OxWell Student Survey: A Collaborative Effort for Positive Change



The OxWell Student Survey is a powerful example of how universities and education partners can work together to make meaningful improvements for our school students. In February 2023, over 40,000 students from Years 5 to 13, across 200 schools, participated in the survey. Local authorities, including Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Milton Keynes, and Liverpool, invited schools in their areas to take part. The survey covered a wide range of topics related to student mental health and well-being, with students completing it independently, typically during form time or an ICT lesson.

The data gathered has provided invaluable insights into the challenges students face and the most effective ways to support them. It has been used at various levels—by individual schools, local authorities, and even nationally—to shape strategies for student well-being. Over 40 researchers are analysing the data to further our understanding of today's students.

Some key findings include:

- **Self-harm:** The survey revealed that younger children are engaging in self-harm more frequently than expected. We also learned that images of self-harm are alarmingly prevalent in students' social media feeds.
- **Vaping:** Vaping patterns closely mirror broader issues of adversity, with higher rates of vaping among students who have been excluded from school, have parents with mental health challenges, or face economic hardship.

A central focus of OxWell is understanding how best to provide mental health support to school-aged students. The survey allowed us to map what we call "Networks of Care" — the various forms of support available to adolescents, from informal support (like friends and family) to more formal systems (across schools, websites and statutory services). This has highlighted the crucial role of informal networks, as young people often turn to these and find them most helpful. The data also helps identify groups of students who really seem to struggle to access effective support, such as gender-diverse adolescents and those who don't find their carers helpful, guiding us to tailor our services better.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that the next OxWell survey will take place in February 2025. This version will be shorter—around 15 minutes to complete—and will focus on improving care for young people while exploring their mental health risks and behaviours.

We invite schools to express their interest in participating [here](#) and will provide more details as we approach the launch. More information is available on our website.

We are deeply grateful for the time and effort contributed by our school partners and, most importantly, to the young people who have trusted us with their experiences. We remain committed to using this information to improve services and support for students.



Research Opportunities

Age Group	Research Title	Page No.
Primary & Secondary 6th Form Colleges Further Education (Aged 8 - 18 years)	Understanding Grief and Social Relationships in Children and Young People	3
Secondary 6th Form Colleges Further Education (Aged 13 - 18 years)	Developing an Understanding of Generalised Anxiety in Adolescents	4
Secondary (Aged 13 - 14 years)	Classroom Relationships and Mental Health	5
Secondary (Aged 12 - 15 years)	Supporting Autistic and Non-Autistic Young People and their Parent/Carer to Identify and Explore Signature Strengths: A Qualitative Study	6
Secondary 6th Form Colleges Further Education (Aged 16 - 18 years)	The Friendship Study	7
Secondary 6th Form Colleges Further Education (Aged 16 - 20 years)	Losartan and Emotional Processing in Adolescents	8

If you are interested in taking part in any of the above research activities,
please contact the WISDOM Research Network about becoming a member:

wisdom.network@psy.ox.ac.uk

