

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



#MyGPguide:

**Involving young people with lived
experience in suicide prevention
research.**

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A large, stylized graphic of the IMH logo. It consists of a large white circle containing the lowercase letters 'imh' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. This white circle is set against a larger, semi-transparent blue circle that overlaps with the background.



Suicide Prevention in Primary Care

- GPs are often the first and the last healthcare contact for those who die by suicide
- A trusted source for help-seeking for mental illness in young people
- Young people aged 16-24 visit their GPs the most to seek help for self-harm



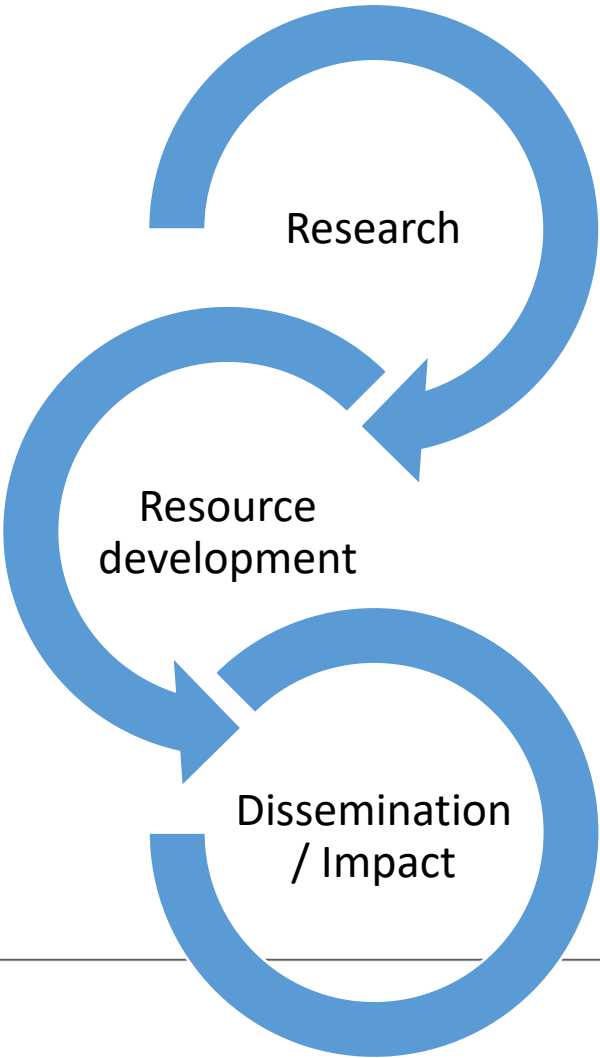
**Youth
partnership in
suicide
prevention
research,
policy and
practice**

Unfeasible

Risky

Potentially unsafe

Suicide Prevention - Youth Partnership & Co-design



Youth Advisory Group

- 18 young people aged between 18-25 with experience of or a strong interest in youth mental health
- Diversity in terms of cultural representation, ethnic background, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Role of Youth Participation Lead (YPL):
 - ✓ facilitate meetings between researchers and the YAG
 - ✓ process requests from researchers to involve the YAG in their work
 - ✓ help make it easy and comfortable for the YAG to be involved.



Article

Exploring the Processes Involved in Seeking Help from a
General Practitioner for Young People Who Have Been at Risk
of Suicide

- ❖ To understand and conceptualise the processes underlying young people's help-seeking **prior, during and following** a GP consultation.
- ❖ Explore **how, when** and **why** young people seek help from their GP when feeling suicidal.

Help-seeking

PRIOR

- Understanding & articulating distress
- Informal support network
- Perception of GP as a source of help

DURING

- Feeling safe enough & supported to disclose distress
- GP knowledge and skills
- Validation of concerns

AFTER

- Prior GP experience
- Availability of alternative support networks

#MyGPguide co-design process

- Develop a resource by young people for young people offering evidence-based, accessible, and practical tips to facilitate the best GP consultation and support for young people at-risk of suicide.
- Four online co-design workshops over a period of 6 months
- Online post-workshop meetings
- Email
- Jamboard



Brainstorming session

1st draft of
#MyGPguide

Review of 1st draft

2nd draft of
#MyGPguide

Review of 2nd draft

3rd draft of
#MyGPguide

Final comments & feedback

Video production

Before

Clearly defined terms of reference and ground rules

Consulting with young people about safety concerns, stressors → wellness plans

Safety protocols tailored to the needs of the project

During

Drawing upon lived or living experience to inform the development of the guide

Flexibility in how young people shared views and insights

Circular flow of knowledge

Demonstrating how feedback informed the development of the guide → transparency

After

Debriefing

Reflective practice



Acknowledging and validating all voices in the room



#MyGPguide



This Guide

We have put together a short guide to help young people prepare to talk with their GP about self-harm and suicidal experiences.

This guide was developed in partnership with young people from the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) at the Institute for Mental Health and consists of the following sections:



“

I was a kid, I was scared. I didn't know what the hell was going on. My childlike instinct was screaming inside of me 'this ain't right, you should be scared.' I guess deep down, below my mental health demons, deep down, I really did want to be helped, and I wanted that support

”

SOPHIA

Bringing someone to support you

Whether this is the first time you are visiting your GP or not, talking about self-harm and suicidal feelings can be difficult. You can bring a trusted friend, a family member, or anyone who can support you, with you to the appointment.

They can sit in the waiting area or they can join you in the appointment.

Before You Visit Your GP

Make a list

Visiting your GP to talk about self-harm and suicidal experiences can be frightening. When you feel under pressure, you might find it difficult to describe how you feel and why you feel like that. You can write down a list of concerns, problems or questions you have before your appointment as well as what kind of help and support you want from your GP. A useful resource to help you make such a list and plan what you want to talk about with your GP is [DocReady](#).

“

Booking an appointment is one of the first steps but it is a scary step to have to take. It is important to find your voice and do what is comfortable for you. You only need to discuss what is comfortable, however it will be helpful to go into as much detail as possible. You can do this!

”

KALEN

Before You Visit Your GP

Booking an appointment

You can ring your GP surgery and speak to the receptionist in order to book an appointment. The receptionist will ask you what the appointment is for.

This might come as a surprise and you might not feel comfortable telling them the reason you want to see a GP. If that is the case, you can say that the appointment is for a personal health matter.

It might be possible to book an appointment online. You can ask the receptionist about this.

When you book an appointment, these are some of the things you could ask the receptionist for:

- If it is possible to see the same GP you have seen in the past; or a different one. Be mindful, however, that this might not always be possible because of how busy GP practices can be.
- If you can see a female or male GP, as you'd prefer.
- If you can have a chaperone (e.g. practice nurse) who can accompany you in the appointment.
- If there is a GP in the practice who has experience or interest in mental health.
- If you can book a double appointment.

Safety Planning

During Your GP Visit

Keeping you safe

Self-harm and suicidal thoughts and feelings can come and go. It can be very difficult to manage these feelings, particularly if you are distressed and don't know what to do or who to turn to.

Ask your GP to help you make a plan to keep you safe. **This is called the safety plan.²**



Safety Planning

*Lizzie's
experience*



Confidentiality



After your GP visit

Things to keep in mind



When you are experiencing a suicidal crisis, you might feel trapped and lonely. You might feel there is no way out and that your family and friends are better off without you. This can be very distressing and frightening.

Visiting your GP is an important first step towards getting help and support.



Always remember that you have options; and you can discuss different options with your GP, family and friends before you decide what the right help is for you.



Many young people feel guilty for burdening their GP with matters related to self-harm and suicide. It is important to remember that your GP is there to offer help and advice for any health related matters, including mental health, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. **Your GP has your best interest at heart.**

After Your GP Visit

What next?

Referral to mental health services is often a lengthy and frustrating process. If your GP has referred you to a mental health professional, you can ask how long this process will take; and to keep you informed. Remember that sometimes it could take several weeks to see a mental health professional.

Things you can do in the meantime include:

- **Your GP can provide you with advice,** support and resources for self-harm and suicide (e.g. charities, helplines, local support groups). At the end of this guide, we have included some resources you might find helpful.
- **The safety plan** you have created with your GP is there to support you when experiencing suicidal thoughts or might be thinking of harming yourself. Your safety plan should also include a list of professionals or agencies you can contact during a crisis.
- If you feel comfortable doing so, you could **share with your family, your teacher and/or your friends** how you are feeling and let them know about your safety plan. This might help to keep you safe at times when you are struggling.
- Your GP might ask you to come back to see them in a few weeks (follow-up appointment). **This is so they can check how you have been feeling.** This is also an opportunity for you to ask for further support if you need it.

DISSEMINATION TRANSLATION IMPACT



Social media

Education sector

Academic publications

Health authorities in England

Webinars, podcasts, blogs

Primary care

BMJ Open Youth partnership in suicide prevention research: moving beyond the safety discourse



Joined Up Care
Derbyshire



Scan me!

2024 EU Prize for Citizen Science



Funded by
the European Union



Youth partnership in suicide prevention research: fostering authenticity, collaboration and empowerment.



**Congratulations to the
Institute for Mental
Health's Youth
Advisory Group!**

Honorary Mention for European Union
Prize for Citizen Science 2024



“This UK-based project pioneers youth involvement in suicide prevention research, showcasing how young people with lived mental health experiences become leaders in shaping clinical practice. With 12 engaged citizens, this initiative exemplifies meaningful youth engagement in driving mental health advocacy and systemic change.”

Jury statement

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Conclusion

- We cannot eliminate risk, but we can put in place robust processes that would help researchers mitigate risk.
- Safety protocols and procedures co-produced with young people.
- The role of youth participation lead is key in supporting both young people and researchers during the co-production process in a safe, productive, and ethically sound way.
- Training, supervision, reflective practice for researchers.
- Guidelines for the safe and effective involvement of young people with lived and living experience in suicide research (Webb et al, 2023)



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Thank You!

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<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.17069660.v1>