

Case Study – Preventing Suicide in Young People in the School Setting

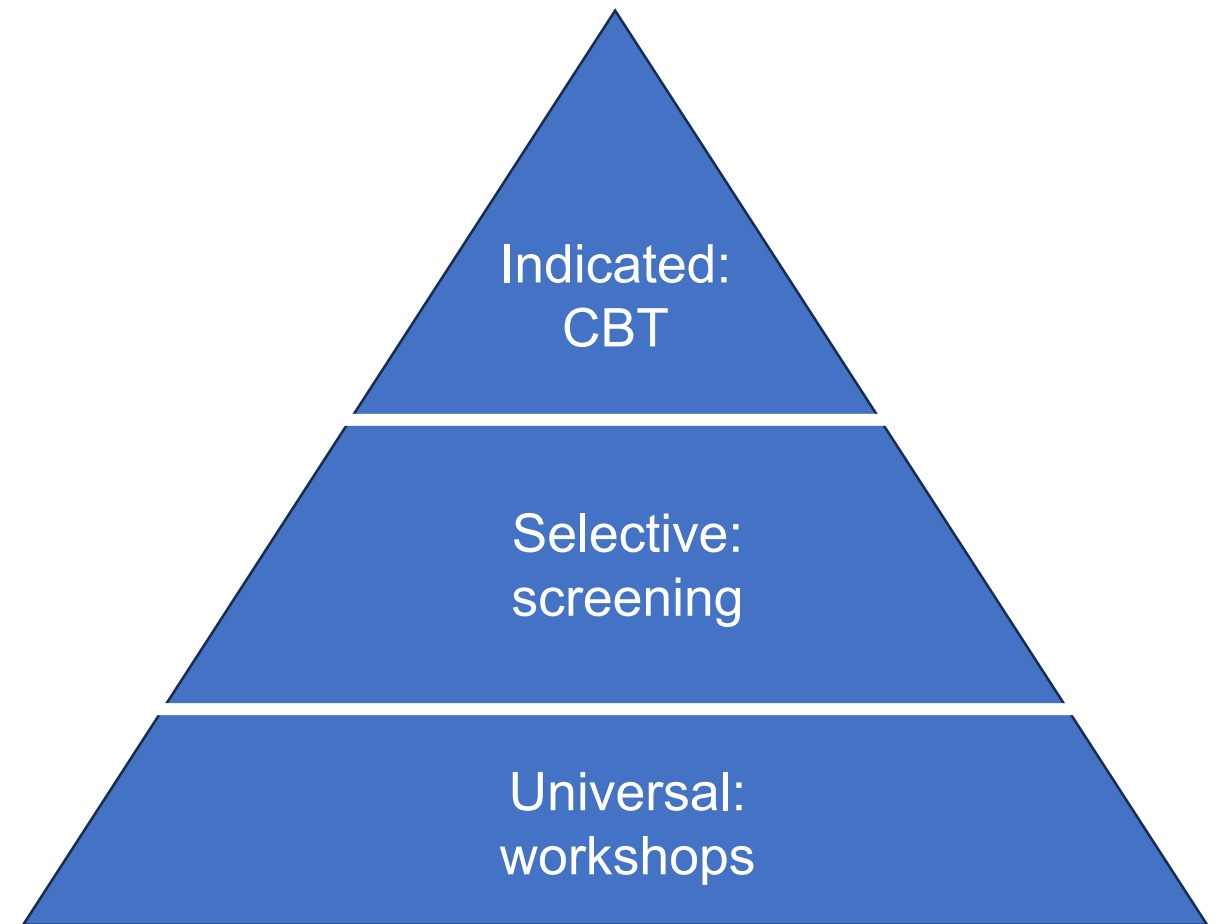
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- Suicide is the leading cause of death in young people under 35 in the UK
- Schools are a ‘universal access point’ for young people
- Young people are more likely to seek help from ‘informal’ sources of support
- Schools are considered an acceptable setting for suicide prevention initiatives
- RHSE guidelines Sept 2026: “secondary schools should consider how to safely address suicide prevention”

- Multi-Modal Approach to Preventing Suicide in Schools
 - Developed and tested in Melbourne, Australia
- Multi-modal approaches thought to be most effective (WHO guidelines)
- Aims to reduce suicide risk and increase help-seeking among young people
- Delivered to whole Year 10 group in secondary school





1. Universal psychoeducation workshop

- Whole year group
- Recognising warning signs, how to seek help, how to support others



2. Screening

- Suicide Ideation Attributes Scale (SIDAS)
- Identifying young people at-risk who have been experiencing suicidal thoughts



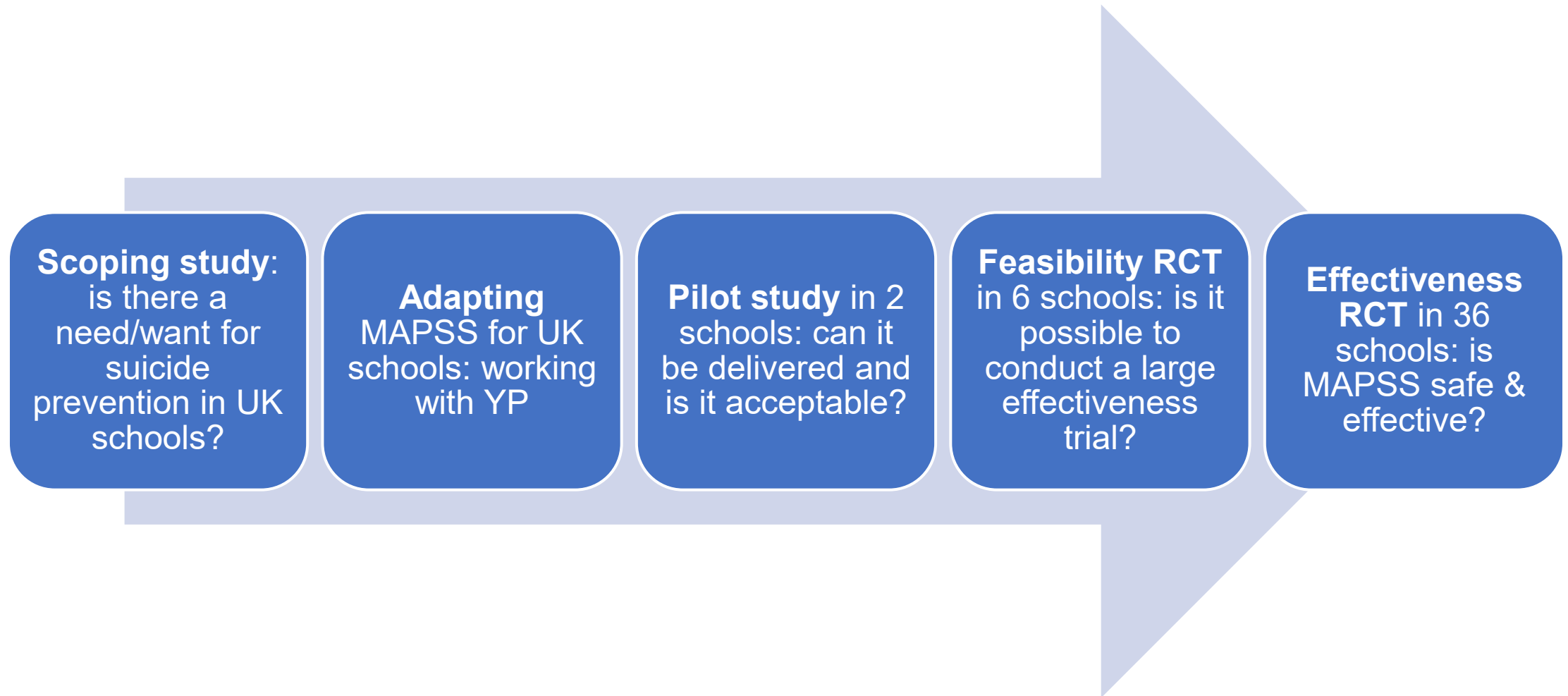
3. Reframe-IT (CBT)

- Offered to at-risk young people
- 8-week online, self-guided, suicide-specific CBT, delivered at school
- Video diaries and interactive activities to reframe unhelpful thoughts & identify ways to keep them safe



4. Training for school staff & parents

Testing MAPSS in the UK



The need for suicide prevention in schools

- High and rising rates of mental health issues
- Lack of current mental health support available
- Reaching a wide range of young people

*“There’s **100% a need** for it in schools” (SS)*

*“If some parents are like 'oh mental health isn't real, just get on with it, it's not a big deal' then **the only place they have is school**” (YP)*

*“The child can display [difficulties] and the family can request support from when it's level one... but until you're a high three or four, **nobody steps in**” (P)*

*“There is a huge need for teachers to have a bit of an understanding around mental health and how to manage these type of thoughts as well, because it sounds like **teachers are burning out** because of it” (HP)*

Raising awareness and reducing stigma

- Overcoming the ‘stigma’ of talking about suicide & suicide myths as a barrier
- Increasing education and awareness of warning signs, help-seeking, and how to ask questions

*“Hindsight is a wonderful thing isn't it? But if you think back and, if she was aware, if we'd have educated [her], **then it may not have come to her taking her own life**” (SS)*

*“The emphasis would be on **reaching out for help** and about how they can access help” (HP)*

*“If we talk about drugs and alcohol, there's no fear that kids are going to go straight out to the offy,... But there is a fear I think with parents that **as soon as we start talking** about self-harm and suicide, they're more likely to want to engage in that kind of activity” (SS)*

*“It's around education of the children themselves, to enable them to **identify that there's a problem or a difficulty**” (HP)*

School as an appropriate setting

- Staff lacking formal training, specialist knowledge, and/or confidence
- The importance of training and support for school staff, parents, and peers
- Barriers to consider (neurodiversity, cultural/family beliefs, previous experience)

*“When we were talking to staff they all felt like they were really, really **out of their depth** if somebody said anything about mental health” (SS)*

*“Working with a service with **autism**, CBT doesn't work” (HP)*

*“There could be a lot more psychoeducation and **resources for parents** available so that they've got the skills to feel equipped and able and confident to support their child” (HP)*

*“I think they do sometimes **tell their friends** about suicidal thoughts and then sometimes their friends don't know what to do... **everyone needs to be educated within the school setting**” (HP)*

Key components of suicide prevention programmes

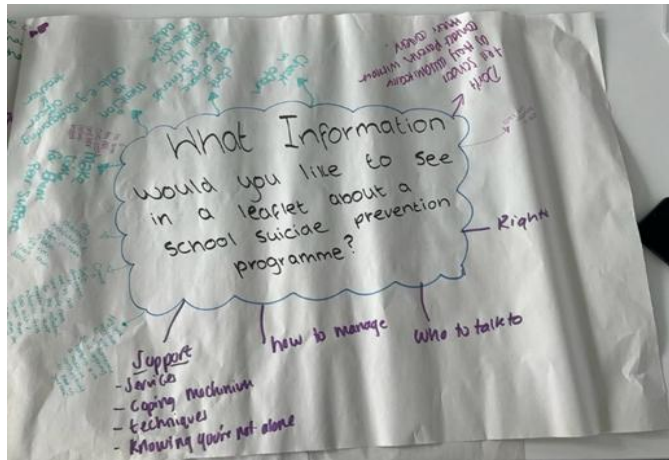
- When (age) & how to deliver (opt-out)
- Content & delivery
- The importance of choice & confidentiality
- Mixed views of online targeted interventions


*“It's sort of **easier to open up online**... because you don't have to face it and you don't have to face the person and tell them something that can be really uncomfortable”
(YP)*

*“**Don't make it seem like a lesson**... it just seems like it's going to be something boring... especially if you're not struggling with those problems. But obviously **it's still good to know in case you are one day**” (YP)*

*“If you are gonna talk about stuff like that, you'd want **the people who you actually know**” (YP)*

*“It could be **delivered to all** because we're getting students as young as 11 coming in with it” (SS)*





MAPSS Components:

AWARENESS WORKSHOP
A comprehensive 3.5-hour session called 'Breaking the Silence' by professionals from Grassroots Suicide Prevention.

SCREENING WITH SIDAS
A quick, confidential questionnaire (Suicidal Ideation Attributes Scale) to understand students' needs.

REFRAME IT-UK
An 8-week guided online cognitive behavioural therapy programme for those who need extra support.

KEEPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE

An Introduction to MAPSS

In collaboration with Liverpool John Moores University.

What is MAPSS?

MAPSS stands for Multi-modal Approach to Preventing Suicide in Schools

Programme for Year 10 pupils that aims to reduce suicide risk and increase help seeking among young people.

Developed in Australia, it's now being introduced to UK schools to help protect our young people.

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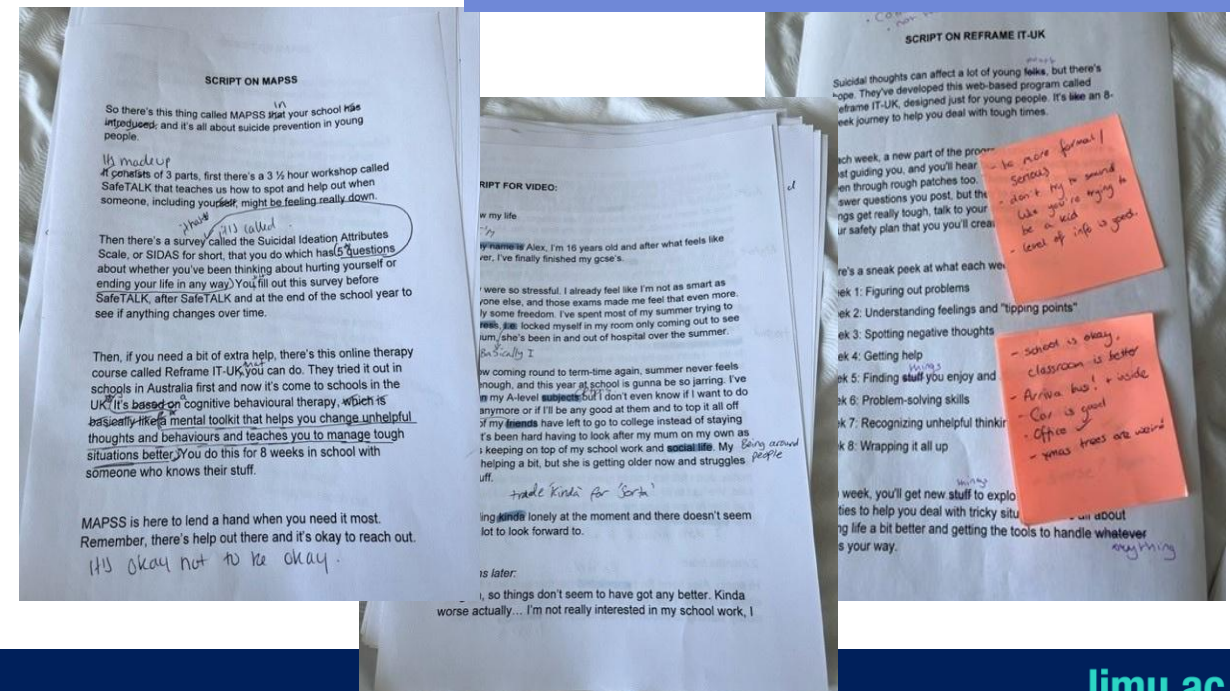
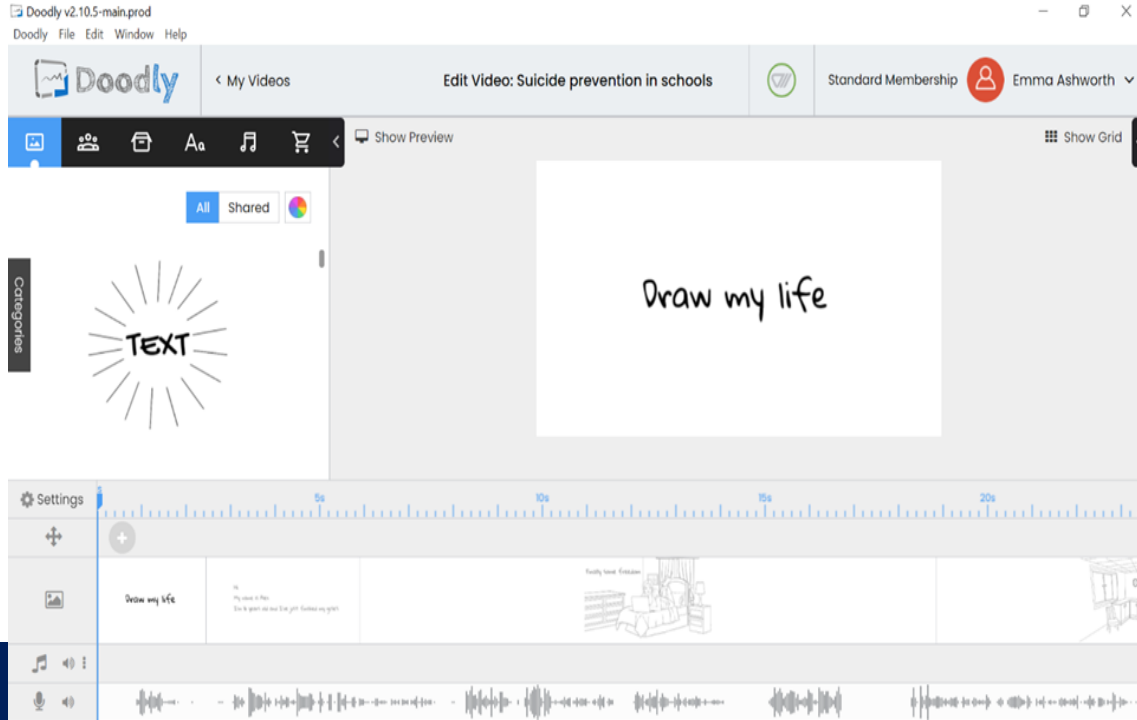
REFRAME-IT UK
An 8-week guided online cognitive behavioural therapy programme for those who need extra support.

Your Childs Participation in MAPSS

Intervention Schools	
1	Initial Survey
2	Breaking the Silence Workshop
3	Follow-up Survey
4	Reframe-IT UK
5	Final Survey

Control Schools	
Initial Survey	1
Follow-up Survey	2
Final Survey	3

Control schools will receive MAPSS following the completion of the study.

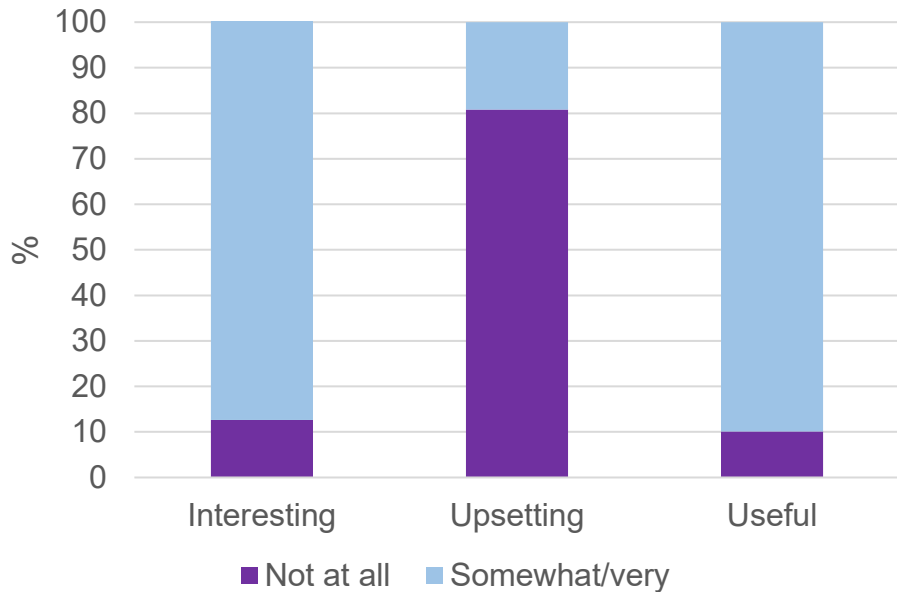


Feasibility RCT: Preliminary Findings

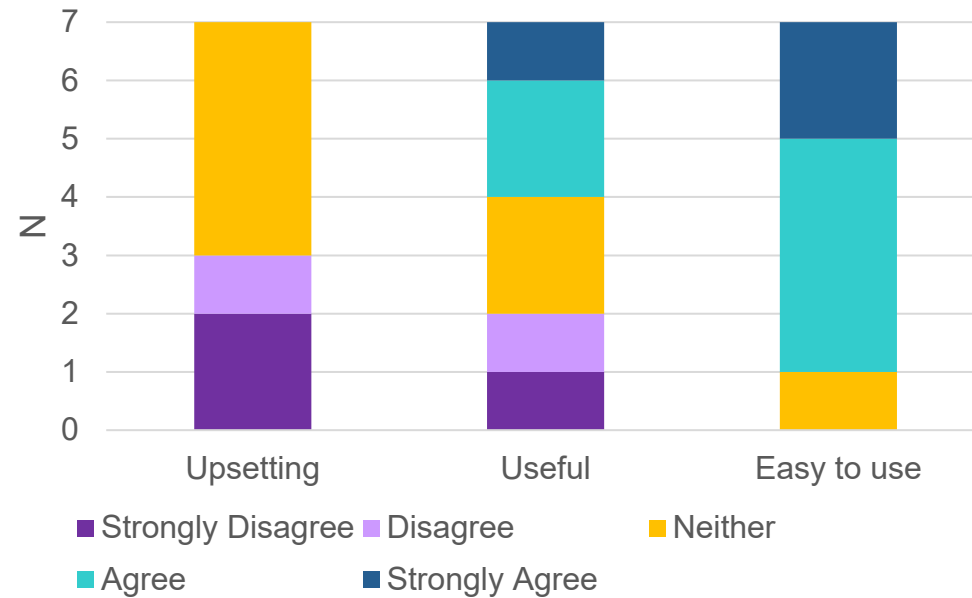
86% of students said they would recommend the training to other YP

6/7 students said they would recommend Reframe to other YP

Universal Workshop
N=250



Reframe IT-UK
N=7



Adverse event monitoring:

No safety concerns were raised over the course of the trial

A perceived need for MAPSS

- Increasing demand for suicide prevention
- School staff welcomed training
- Stigma remains among adults
- Increasing whole school awareness

*“Whilst it wasn't a comfortable topic, I realised actually they're probably a bit more **ready to have this conversation** than me or my generation are” (Facilitator)*

*“**Brings awareness** and then makes people more comfortable to talk about it” (YP)*

*“Our parents they're very middle class.. And it's almost like, desperate housewives ‘oh no, **not in my neighbourhood**, no, we haven't got a problem with that’... but we do... we know what happens in the area.” (Staff).*

*“The training that we had from POPYRUS about how to talk about it and how to frame questions was really helpful, because that **gave us the confidence** in those questions with the kids, about being objectively clear and have no room for being vague.” (Staff).*

Identifying young people at-risk

- Identification of young people 'under the radar'
- An opportunity to seek help
- Staff carrying risk

*"I thought they were helpful [questionnaires]... I think I knew someone was gonna realise that you need help... It made me feel a little bit better, knowing that **someone was gonna come** if I answered truthfully."
(YP)*

*"Well for me to **do it alone was a lot**, after the first survey I had to call home for nearly 30 girls" (Staff)*

*"I didn't even know the young people that had come up, like **I'd never even seen them before**, like I had to actually like, search their name and look for their picture."
(Staff)*

*"I didn't think as many people would have shown up as high and medium risk... if we had not took part, **I wouldn't have known** about those 10 young people" (Staff)*

Facilitators to Engagement

- Interactive nature of workshops
- Techniques learned in online targeted intervention

*“Made me **rethink some things**, like not taking things to heart and not thinking drastically.” (Reframe YP)*

*“Whenever I feel angry or anxious, I used the breathing **techniques I’ve learnt**” (Reframe YP)*

*“The videos were really good. **They were very powerful**...they went very quiet when they were watching. So, the videos really, really got attention... it wasn’t overpowering. I think it did stick in their minds too” (Staff).*

*“We had a few Year 10s who came to us initially after the sessions and said that they were **worried about a friend**” (staff)*

Challenges to Delivery

- Technology & timetabling
- Senior leader buy-in
- Engagement (YP & parents)

*“So, the biggest issue is always **technology**. We don't have a massive amount of capability in terms of IT... We also have to try and **find classrooms that weren't in use.**” (Staff)*

*“When it's just the one person trying to get it pushed through, when you're **waiting for other people to give their approval**, that's when it gets tricky.” (Staff)*

*“We had a couple of **behavioural issues**... it's managing that and **accessibility** I think is really important... you have people with all different ways of accessing materials and [who] have special educational needs.” (F1)*

*“I think we only had about 3 parents. That's frustrating because especially, for example, the cohort that I'm working with in Reframe-IT like, **why aren't the parents on it?** I just I don't understand.” (Staff)*

Learnings From MAPSS

- Safety is key
- Ensuring schools are equipped
 - A 'safety net' for increased disclosures
 - Ensuring adequate staffing with appropriate training & support
 - A whole-school approach e.g., Papyrus' Suicide Safer Schools policy template; trauma-informed policies
 - Safeguarding policies
 - Awareness of care pathways/signposting
- Myths & stigma remain issues
- Addressing parental stigma, cultural/religious barriers
- Adaptations for neurodivergent students
- Training everyone around the child
- Young people are wanting opportunities to seek help
- Postvention and support for YP & fellow students after attempts
- Co-production
- Waiting is not neutral
- The importance of saying the word



Thank You!

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