

Youth Mental Health

Resources Guidelines





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1. Introduction

These guidelines are designed to assist agencies to develop youth friendly mental health resources via print, online or social media. They may also be useful for agencies in choosing resources from other providers and sectors.

The guidelines will help to ensure that the information presented to young people is done so in a way that is relevant, attractive and accessible to them. The guidelines do not outline best practice regarding particular mental health topics or issues. Therefore it is essential before developing any resources to ensure that the content aligns with current best evidence and has specialist input, particularly if your agency does not work in mental health.

The guidelines have been developed by Youthline in partnership with Family and Community Services and combine best practice knowledge in youth development and information gathered from consultation with agencies and young people. Summaries of these consultations can be found as an appendix to the guidelines.

1.1 what are mental health resources?

Mental health resources can be found in print, online and on social networking sites. They can include generic information about topics that can impact mental health, such as stress, communication and relationships or more specific information about issues and diagnoses and in some cases medication.

They may also include information about services or direction for young people on where to access further information or help.

1.2 What is youth friendly?

“Youth-friendliness” is defined as products that appeal to youth and enhance accessibility. This may be because of language, look, location, pathways, technological means, depth of content and sense of privacy or safety. Youth friendly products reflect and respect the diversity of the youth population in Aotearoa.

1.3 How to use the guidelines

These guidelines are designed to provide youth specific information that sits alongside Rauemi Atawhai, the Ministry of Health’s guidelines for developing Health Education Resources. <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/rauemi-atawhai-guide-developing-health-education-resources-new-zealand>

The Ministry of Youth Development’s guide to youth participation Keepin’ it Real <http://www.myd.govt.nz/resources-and-reports/publications/keepin-it-real-2009.html>

The Werry Centre’s Evidence Based Age Appropriate Interventions – A Guide for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services http://www.werrycentre.org.nz/site_resources/library/Workforce_Development_Publications/FINAL_EBP_Document_12_May_2010.pdf

The National Mental Health Sector Standards and the Mental Health Commission’s Blueprint II <http://www.hdc.org.nz/media/207642/blueprint%20ii%20how%20things%20need%20to%20be.pdf>

Each topic or issue related to mental health has its own best evidence to ensure that the information presented to young people is accurate. These guidelines assist in ensuring that the presentation of that information is youth friendly and accessible.

The guidelines are structured under the following areas:

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Identify the need
- Involve young people throughout the whole project
- Provide feedback at the end of the project
- Review regularly

DESIGN

- Use colour
- Use images
- Use space
- Size matters
- Use interactivity judiciously

CONTENT

- Make sure content is in line with best practice
- Provide information on a range of topics
- Use plain language
- Consider literacy levels
- Consider translations
- Tell a story
- Be strengths based
- Use self tests
- Link to the next steps
- Offer practical advice
- Provide forum moderation
- Keep up-to-date
- Location & access
- Privacy really matters
- Use technology
- Face to face is still important
- Information must be available through appropriate channels
- Reduce stigma

Each area provides some key points to consider when developing or choosing youth mental health resources.



2. Development Process

2.1 Identify the need

This may come from themes in your work with young people and ideally from suggestions or surveys with young people or those around them, such as family/whanau, schools and community groups. Look at what resources exist already and think about whether they might need improving or localising instead of re-creating. Look at what other organisations might be in this space, and consider options for collaboration.

2.2 Involve young people throughout the whole project

Resources and information for youth, work best when they are targeted to and developed in partnership with young people themselves. Different groups, ages and demographics of young people should be consulted with depending on the topic or target focus of the resource in development, including youth mental health consumers.

Youth tasks might include:

- Reviewing existing resources
- Identifying topics/areas for development
- Adding local content to existing resources
- Design, content and appropriate media channels
- Promotion, distribution and access
- Testing of draft resources
- Review of the final product

Rauemi Atawhai provides a clear step by step process for resource development.

Methods of youth involvement might include:

- Surveys
- Focus group workshops
- Youth Advisory Groups/Youth Councils

Key Points to be aware of:

- Involve young people in the project from the beginning and provide them with meaningful and relevant tasks such as those listed above.
- It is important to consider barriers to participation, such as transport, literacy, marginalisation and cultural considerations and consider how these might be mitigated.
- Youth involvement works best when young people are well equipped to provide input, which may require training and development. This is particularly important when consulting with marginalised youth.
- This type of training and development can be provided through a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) process which is an ongoing group that have the opportunity to participate in a varied range of projects.
- Training and development processes need to focus on personal and interpersonal skills as well as the specific skill-set for the roles they will be undertaking, e.g. conducting surveys, designing resources.
- Youth advisory processes generally work best when working with a diverse range of young people, for whom the resource will be relevant, in a group setting, in a youth accessible space facilitated in a fun and appropriate way.

- Remember young people are not all the same, and a small group of young people do not speak for everyone. However, involvement of a cross section of young people who are trained and supported to participate in resource development will increase the likelihood of their youth friendliness.
- Young people need to be adequately rewarded for their work. This does not need to mean money, but may include food, vouchers, a simple thank you and the opportunity to be involved in other projects or aspects of the organisation.
- Mental health can be a tough topic - respect privacy, approach sensitively and provide clear support options.

While it is ideal for agencies to have their own Youth Advisory Group involving consumers, not all organisations have the capacity or capability to involve young people in a meaningful and ongoing manner. A number of youth organisations run Youth Advisory Groups that can assist on specific projects, while some schools and community groups run Youth Health Councils, which are designed to run and support health related projects. Best practice guidelines for these groups can be found at www.youthline.co.nz/yhc

See the Appendix for some best practice tips for establishing a Youth Advisory Group.

2.3 Involve whanau and communities where possible

Young people exist within the contexts of their families, whanau and communities. Resources will be more accessible to young people if they are endorsed by those around them.

Families, whanau and communities can also play a key role in providing information to young people, so consider how you might involve them in resource development and distribution.

2.4 Provide feedback at the end of the project

Young people love to be asked and involved but they can also become jaded if they do not see where their input has gone. It is essential to follow up with young people as the project is concluded. This can be done through a group meeting, letters, emails, texts or information on your website.

2.5 Review regularly

Information, language and images date more quickly than you might expect. Resources need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they are still appealing to and meet the needs of youth. A minimum two yearly review is recommended.



3. Design

3.1 Use colour

Young people told us that they like things to be light and bright but not over the top. Use of too many primary colours gives the impression that resources are designed for younger children.

3.2 Use images

Images of real young people in Aotearoa that represent their diversity help to make resources relevant.

This can be especially important for Maori and Pacific youth to see that the information reflects people 'like me'.

3.3 Use space

Too much text can be off-putting, while enough space can also help people navigate easily from one point to the next, either in print or online.

Boxes that pull out key points or quotes can help to identify the main points and clear headings and sections help to organise information.

3.4 Size matters

Providing print information that is funky and colourful must also be balanced with something that can be discreetly taken away, such as business card sized information.

3.5 Use interactivity judiciously

Interactivity such as avatars, videos and sound can assist young people to navigate websites and can also help to overcome literacy barriers.

However, young people want to choose when and how to use interactivity.

Features that load automatically can be slow to load, not work when the site is viewed from a smartphone, or take too long on a slow connection. They can also cause embarrassment when the site is being viewed from a public place, particularly if there is automated sound functionality.



4. Content

4.1 Make sure content is in line with best practice

First and foremost, any information must come from a best practice framework, be factual and non-biased. Each agency has its own wealth of knowledge and sources of best practice information; however the following can also assist in providing relevant information for mental health, especially if your agency does not specialise in this area:

The Mental Health Foundation provides a resource and information centre bringing together their own resources and those from other areas <http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/page/5-Home>

The Ministry of Health create a number of population level information resources which can be ordered and downloaded www.health.govt.nz

The following resource provides best practice information on delivering mental wellbeing services online, developed by providers offering online services through the National Health Service in the United Kingdom <http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Ramp%20A4%20Brochure%20V10.pdf>

Best practice for a particular topic may also influence design, promotion and access. For example it is not best practice to glamorise information about suicide in any way.

4.2 Provide information on a range of topics

Providing a mixture of both specific mental health related information and general health and lifestyle content online can help overcome the stigma associated with accessing information about mental health.

Practical information about mental health, such as mental health issues, how to identify them, how to deal with them and how to support friends is identified by young people as a key need.

Information about topics related to mental health such as relationships, living a healthy lifestyle, alcohol and drugs and gender and sexuality issues is also seen as useful to young people.

Ensure that information considers different cultures and identities so that young people can see the relevance to them.

Having information on a range of topics is especially important when using social media. For example, young people may feel it is ok to like a Facebook page that has information about events, activities and competitions for youth that also links them through to mental health information but would be unlikely to 'like' a page set up for dealing with anxiety, as this would flag to everyone they know that this is a concern for them. Offering competitions or prizes make it more socially acceptable to follow health related sites.

4.3 Use plain language

Language needs to be factual but not too technical. Rauemi Atawhai's section on 'health literacy' is useful in this area.

Language can date quickly. Use of slang, text language or popular phrases may lose relevance or could be seen as patronising. Youth Advisory Groups can provide guidance in this area.

4.4 Consider literacy levels

Some young people and their families have limited literacy, while some may be affected by learning disabilities. In print, images can help provide key information while online videos, sound and Youtube can be good sources of information.

DVDs may be helpful sources of information for those with no/limited internet access.

4.5 Consider translations

Family and friends are often one of the first points of call for information. Information in different languages for families on how to support young people will help young people to access information.

Consider using some everyday words in different languages, including Te Reo, to help young people see that information is relevant to their cultural context.

Full translations of material can be helpful, especially for migrant populations - these should be developed in consultation with these communities.

4.6 Tell a story

Real stories from real people help young people to see how the information is relevant to them. The people need to be young themselves and reflect the diversity of young people and their cultural contexts.

If you use celebrity endorsement, consider what links they have to the topic to help young people take their message seriously and ensure you include young people in decisions around who/what type of celebrities to use.

Any celebrity involved in health promotion messaging should be clear on safety and their responsibility as an ambassador to the topic/brand, now and into the future.

4.7 Be strengths based

Young people recognise that mental health is a serious topic. They want the facts but they also want messages that are strengths based, provide hope and normalise mental health and seeking help.

4.8 Use self tests

Young people find online self tests that help them identify issues and what to do next useful. It is important these have very clear information about next steps, and are cautious about providing diagnoses.

4.9 Link to the next steps

Information in print, online or via social media cannot provide the full picture. Link resources to additional information online, other services, ideas of places and people to go to and how to get additional copies of print resources.

4.9.1 Offer practical advice

Balance information about understanding mental health issues with ideas and suggestions to help stay mentally healthy or manage mental health issues.

Information about how to support friends and family members is also useful.

4.9.2 Provide forum moderation

If you use online forums ensure you provide ongoing moderation, this may include moderating posts before they are posted. The Tavistock Guidelines for providing online mental health services provide useful best practice information in this area. <http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Ramp%20A4%20Brochure%20V10.pdf>

4.9.3 Keep up-to-date

Information needs to be relevant and up-to-date, especially online. Consider what type of online platforms you provide and the information within them. Some might be static, for example information about helping a friend through depression, while things such as news items and competitions will change weekly or monthly and things such as blogs, forums and social media need to have activity every two to three days and to be monitored for safety reasons.



5. Location/Access



5.1 Privacy really matters

Young people want information to be easily accessible but also discreet.

Information can be best hidden in plain sight, such as large displays with a range of information in public places like libraries, common areas in schools, community notice boards, doctors surgeries and orientation packs for Universities and workplaces where it is not easy for people to see exactly what information young people are accessing.

5.2 Use technology

Young people identify social media and websites as the most useful ways to get information, however this must also be balanced with privacy which can be maintained through:

- Giving websites generic names
- Providing a mix of generic and specific mental health information
- Linking through to other information
- Using social media as a gateway to other information e.g. the Youthline Facebook site which provides general youth information, competitions, events etc and then links through to other information as needed
- Allowing young people to 'hide their visit'
- Phone apps with a generic looking icon
- Sending the information via email, post or smartphone app for further reference

Be prepared to invest the time to regularly update online resources and ensure they are being used safely if they have interactive features. (A summary of the issues to consider is included in the Appendix).

5.3 Face to face is still important

Young people recognise that information in print online and via social media is only part of the picture and want to be able to talk with adults about mental health.

Consider which adults young people may have strong connections to within their hapu, iwi and whanau, and activity based influences such as kapa haka instructors, church leaders, teachers and sports coaches as channels through which to distribute information.

Ensure your team and those you distribute any resources to understand the resources and can answer any additional questions young people have and provide information about where to next.

5.4 Information must be available through appropriate channels

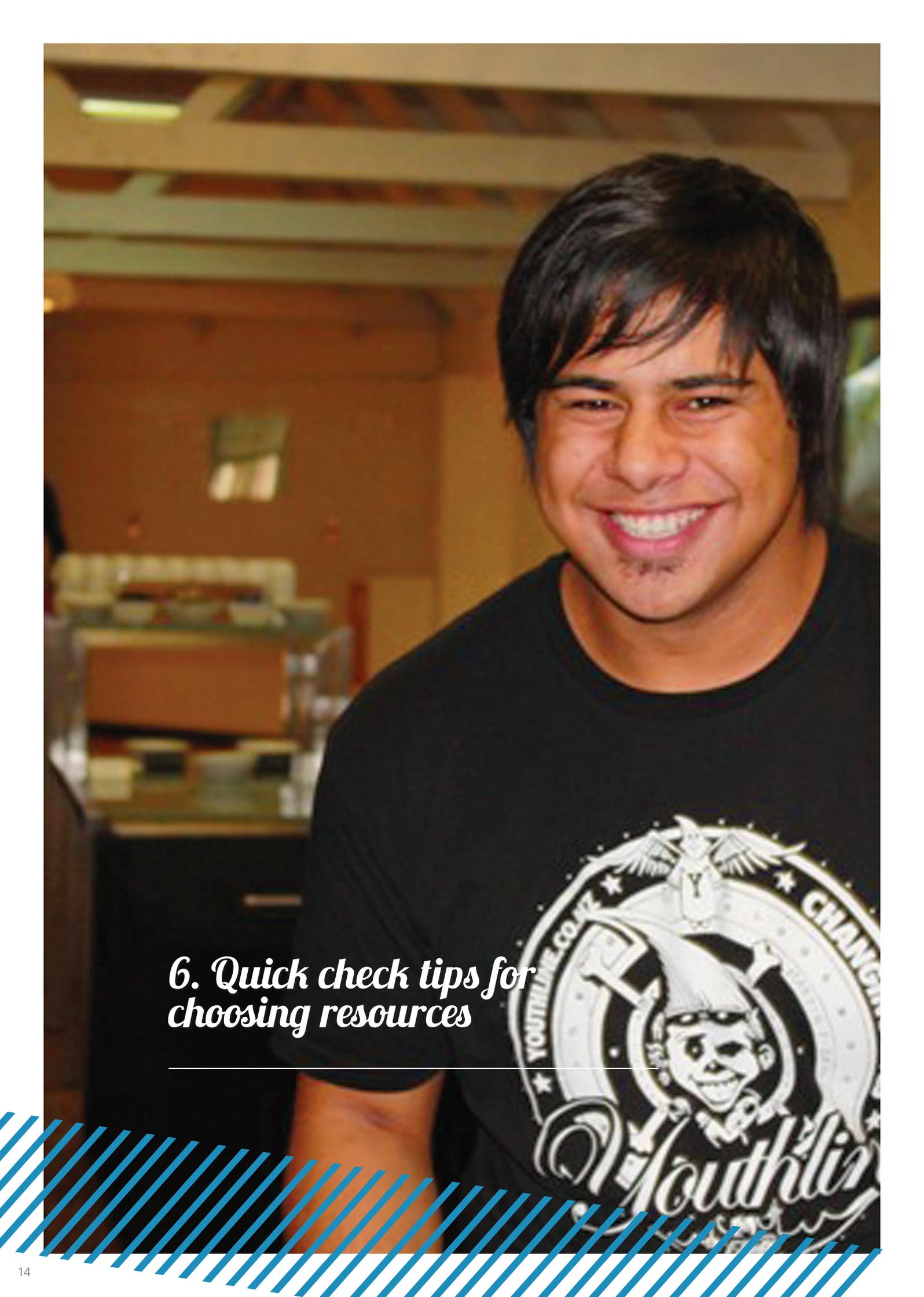
Health promotion information and basic information about mental health concerns may be best accessed via print in public places, or online via websites and social media.

Specific information, such as information about diagnoses may be best distributed by clinicians who can provide additional context and answer any further questions.

5.5 Reduce stigma

Normalising mental health is one of the key ways to improve access to information. Young people would like to see this happen creatively through advertising, concerts and community events that have a mental health theme.

Encouraging young people to ask for help, talk to someone and maintain hope are identified by young people as key messages about mental health.



6. Quick check tips for choosing resources

- Are they New Zealand based and relevant to the young people you work with?
- Is the information in line with best practice and if this is not your agency's area of expertise has the information been recommended?
- Do your team know about the resources and could they answer any questions or direct young people to the next steps?
- Do the resources match the literacy level of the young people you work with?
- Do the resources use colour, space and design to look attractive to the young people you work with?
- Can young people access the resources discreetly - either in a private space or amongst a lot of general information?
- Are translations available?
- Do you have a mix of mental health promotion, generic mental health information and specific information available?
- Do you have information via print and online?
- Do you have resources that offer practical tips and solutions?
- Do you have opportunities for young people to tell you what resources they like and want?

Appendix: The Risk Awareness Management Programme

RAMP

The Risk Awareness Management Programme is a resource for mental health providers considering offering online services. It assists providers to identify the user risks associated with providing online mental health services and the safeguards, safety measures, systems and processes required to mitigate these. Although developed in the United Kingdom for use in the National Health Service, the information is useful for New Zealand providers.

Some of the key points from the introductory pages of this document are summarised below.

The full document can be accessed online at:

<http://www.tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Ramp%20A4%20Brochure%20V10.pdf>

The benefits of online services

- Accessibility
- Privacy
- Normalises help seeking and reduces stigmatisation by being available via popular and well used media
- Increases consumer choice

Strategic considerations for developing online services

- The purpose of the service(s)
- The most appropriate channels
- Staff training needs
- Financial and capacity building requirements
- Monitoring and evaluation services

Types of online services

- Psycho education sites – providing information and may or may not include interactive elements
- Supervised peer to peer mentoring
- Online CBT
- Online psychotherapy/counselling

Four key areas of provider responsibility

- Data protection and respect of personal information
- Privacy and safety
- Informed consent
- Moderation and reporting pathways

Four categories of risk associated with online services

- Content risk - inaccurate, illegal or harmful
- Contact risk – inappropriate/unwanted contact between users
- Conduct risks – online behaviour including bullying
- Commercial risks – users being tricked or defrauded

Appendix: Celebrity Ambassadors

The use of an ambassador can potentially add credibility to a message and help to normalise mental health and reduce stigma. There is much written in marketing literature about the benefits and potential risks of using celebrity endorsement to enhance a brand, however there is limited evidence of the use of celebrity ambassadors in mental health promotion and their influence on behaviour change.

Young people can have mixed views about the use of celebrity endorsement and the following may be useful to consider:

- Does the ambassador have a connection with or personal experience of the topic?
- Is the ambassador a positive role model for young people?
- Have you consulted with young people about using an ambassador?
- Are there every-day role models or peers who could deliver the message?
- What group of young people will connect with this ambassador? Does this relate to your target audience? Are there some young people who will not connect with this ambassador?
- What are the potential benefits to your brand/topic in using this ambassador?
- What are the risks and how will these be managed?
- How will the ongoing relationship be managed to ensure it remains useful for both parties, including ensuring ongoing alignment of values?
- Will you have a written agreement with the ambassador, outlining how the relationship works?

The Ministry of Youth Development's report, "What Works in Social Marketing to Young People" provides a range of useful tips for creating campaigns aimed at young people.

<http://www.myd.govt.nz/resources-and-reports/publications/social-marketing.html>

This review notes that the consistent features of campaigns that have positive outcomes include targeting to the audience, creative marketing strategies, multiple communication channels addressing public policy and longer term campaigns with high funding and exposure.

Appendix:

Practical Tips From Youthline on YAGS

Advisory Groups aren't just about 'ticking the box' but are foremost about supporting and developing young people to reach their potential.

Establishing an Advisory Group for your organisation could be beneficial if your services are aimed predominantly at youth and you require regular input from young people. If you do not require input regularly, you may want to consider contracting existing Youth Advisory Groups to assist with your work, as maintaining connections with the young people in your YAG and ensuring there is ongoing activities planned throughout the year is an important aspect of ensuring the development of the group.

There are some key things to realise and be aware of if you are considering establishing your own YAG:

- Having a YAG is a two way process – young people should be offered training and development opportunities in exchange for giving up their time to be part of these processes. Training and development processes need to focus on personal and interpersonal skills as well as the specific skill-set for the roles they will be undertaking, e.g. conducting surveys, designing resources. Good youth development is good HR management!
- Having young people (ages 18-25) involved will help attract younger people.
- Be ready to be where young people are – social media groups (such as Facebook) are often a good way of keeping in touch between meetings (as well as email and TXT contact).
- Evaluate young people's experiences of your service, ask for their suggestions.
- Be flexible to accommodate school, study and work commitments.
- Recognise their contribution – Have meaningful rewards that are relevant to young people, e.g. Movie tickets, vouchers etc, and offer to supply a reference letter in recognition of their work with your organisation.
- Provide transport and considering barriers to participation such as literacy, marginalisation and cultural considerations and considering how these might be mitigated is essential for some young people to be able to participate.
- Take care with scheduling. Young people have less perceived power when negotiating time off with their workplace or school. Sometimes providing communication with work, school, parents will increase participation (and depending on their age, may be required).
- Being young is not enough! Choose the young people for their skills, not their youth.
- Give them tasks that are achievable and meaningful – ensure there is a robust process for feeding back to them on the impact of their feedback.
- Youth advisory processes generally work best when working with a diverse range of young people in a group setting, in a youth accessible space facilitated in a fun and appropriate way.
- Remember young people are not all the same, and a small group of young people do not speak for everyone. However, involvement of a cross section of young people who are trained and supported to participate in resource development will increase the likelihood of their youth friendliness.
- Mental health can be a tough topic - respect privacy, approach sensitively and provide clear support options such as Youthline's free helpline 0800 376633 and free TXT 234 number.
- Young people do not stay young forever – think about succession planning and bringing new people through the youth development process.

The Ministry of Youth Development also provide a useful guide on involving young people in your organisation <http://www.myd.govt.nz/resources-and-reports/publications/keepin-it-real-2009.html> and some information on the models of youth participation <http://www.myd.govt.nz/working-with-young-people/youth-participation-in-decision-making/youth-participation-models.html>

See page 17 of Rauemi Atawhai, the Ministry of Health's guidelines for developing health education resources, for useful questions to ask when linking with YAGs on resource development, <http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/rauemi-atawhai-guide-developing-health-education-resources-new-zealand>

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH GUIDELINES RESOURCES

What Providers Told Us

Agencies are less certain about utilising online and social media, but some are interested in developing in this area.

Non mental health agencies are sometimes uncertain about what information to recommend.

Discreet print resources are popular with young people, as are creative approaches such as video content.

Few agencies have access to a Youth Advisory Group.

Not all agencies involve young people in resource choice or development but feel young people give feedback about what they do and don't like.

Depending on the type of information, some is best given and explained by the clinician.

Ideas For Development

Ensure young people can identify with the design, language and content of resources.

Have one place where practitioners and young people can access good quality information.

Link to other websites, information and resources.

Normalise mental health and provide early intervention information.

Update online resources regularly and ensure interactive features are by choice.

Use youth friendly language - consider literacy issues.

Present information creatively.

Put information in places where young people are.

Some barriers to access for young people include; literacy levels and language used, stigma and concerns around confidentiality, resource design not reflecting young people 'like me', lack of access to resources for young people not in services and being unsure of where to go and who to go to.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH GUIDELINES RESOURCES

What Young People Told Us

ACCESS

Accessible, private & free. In person connection and online is equally important.

Resources should be clear on next steps.

Social media is a gateway to services and info websites.

Normalise mental health by advertising and placing info everywhere.

Smart phone apps and the ability to email/post online info to themselves for later.

User friendly websites.

CONTENT

Interesting/relevant/up to date information.

Real life stories.

Language options.

Self-tests and interactive online questionnaires.

Online message boards are good, as long as they are well-moderated and user generated.

Offer solutions.

NZ focus.

Prizes and competitions.

DESIGN

Colour – bright not child like.

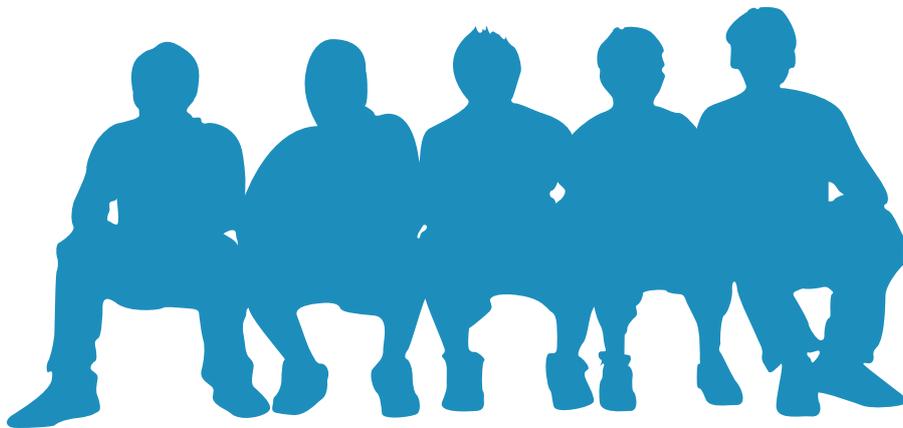
Videos and Youtube are good ways to get info across.

Clear layout and sections.

Pocket sized print resources.

Be careful when choosing celebrity endorsements – ensure they have a real connection to the topic.

Young people felt that messages of hope and normalising asking for help would encourage and assist their peers in being able to make first steps around help seeking.



Youthline
Changing lives.


MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora

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