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Clinical Psychology



Understanding the experiences of children and young people with special educational needs in residential special schools

(Vivian Hill, Elizabeth Pellicano, Scott Greathead and Lorcan Kenny, My Life at School)

Stream 3 of the wider project: Gathering feedback and measuring outcomes and change with Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities (LD)
Good practice example from 'Hearing the Voice' of children and young people with moderate, severe or multiple and profound learning disabilities

We were interested in hearing about helpful ways to listen to the 'voice' of children and young people with moderate, severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities. When we say 'voice' we mean communication, in whichever form works best for the child or young person.

We asked people to write a summary of what they are doing and send it to us. Below we list summaries of what people did, what was helpful and what were the barriers. The summaries contain lots of ideas that can be applied to working with children and young people of different ages with a range of complex needs across the levels from own life, through service development, training and research and community and cultural change.

Find more information here:

<https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-experience-measures/feedback-and-outcome-measures-for-children-and-young-people-with-learning-disabilities/>

Good practice example from 'Hearing the Voice'

Gathering feedback and measuring outcomes and change with Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities (LD)

WHAT WE DID

We looked at how the rights of children and young people in residential special schools, with a wide range of disabilities and special needs were protected in line with the UNCRC -United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We developed a wide range of techniques and approaches to gain the voices of children in young people who were pre-verbal or had emerging language and communication skills. The work is all detailed along with visuals in the report which is available on the Children's Commissioner's website.

We visited 17 residential special schools across England, seeing 83 children and young people from 8 years 3 months - 19 years 8 months with a range of SEN and disabilities, speaking with 32 parents and 114 members of school staff, including teachers, care staff, and school-based therapists.

WHAT HELPED?

We used ethnographic approaches, graffiti walls, Mosaic, PECs, photovoice, talk and draw as well as interviews with those young people who were verbal.

WHAT WERE THE BARRIERS?

Very few. The issues around informed consent with over 16s being the biggest obstacle for these young people to have a voice.

RESOURCES USED AND/OR PUBLICATIONS/WEBSITES TO SIGNPOST /REFERENCE:

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Good practice example from ‘Hearing the Voice’

Gathering feedback and measuring outcomes and change with Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities (LD)

- Krisson, E., Qureshi, M. & Head, A. 2020. Adapting photovoice to explore identity expression amongst people with intellectual disabilities who have limited or no verbal communication. *Br J Learn Disabil.* 2021;00:1–11.
- Pellicano, L., Hill, V., Croydon, A., Greathead, S., Kenny, L., Yates, R. (2014). *My Life at School: Understanding the experiences of children and young people with special educational needs in residential special schools.* Office of the Children’s Commissioner. London. *My Life at School | Children's Commissioner for England* (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs), PECS® | *Picture Exchange Communication System* (pecs-unitedkingdom.com)
- Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2014) “They still need to listen more”: A report about disabled children and young people’s rights in England. London: Office of the Children’s Commissioner.
[They_still_need_to_listen_more_a_report_about_disabled_childrens_rights_in_England.pdf](#) (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)