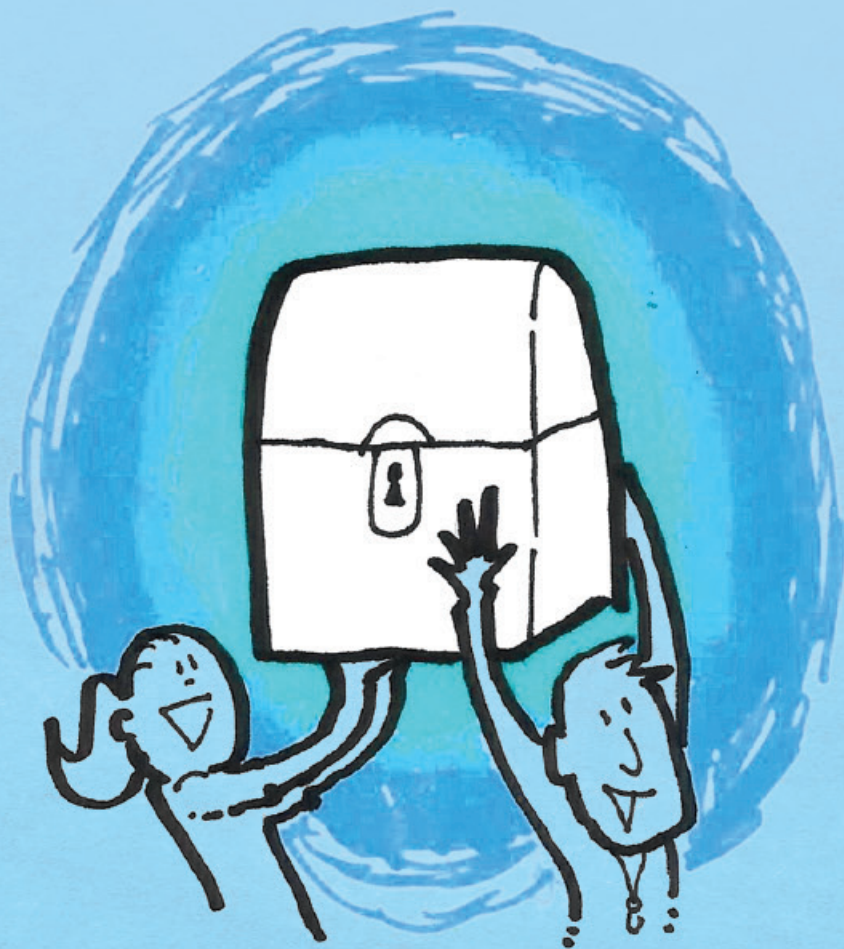


Lifemaps

*...the youth work journey
to build mental health*

⁷⁵
YouthAction
NORTHERN IRELAND



Lifemaps

mental health and well-being toolkit

An assessment and improvement toolkit for youth work



Introduction

This assessment and improvement toolkit supports organisations and groups to engage in a process of **self-evaluation** and to agree a **continuous improvement plan** for outcomes for young people's mental health and well-being.

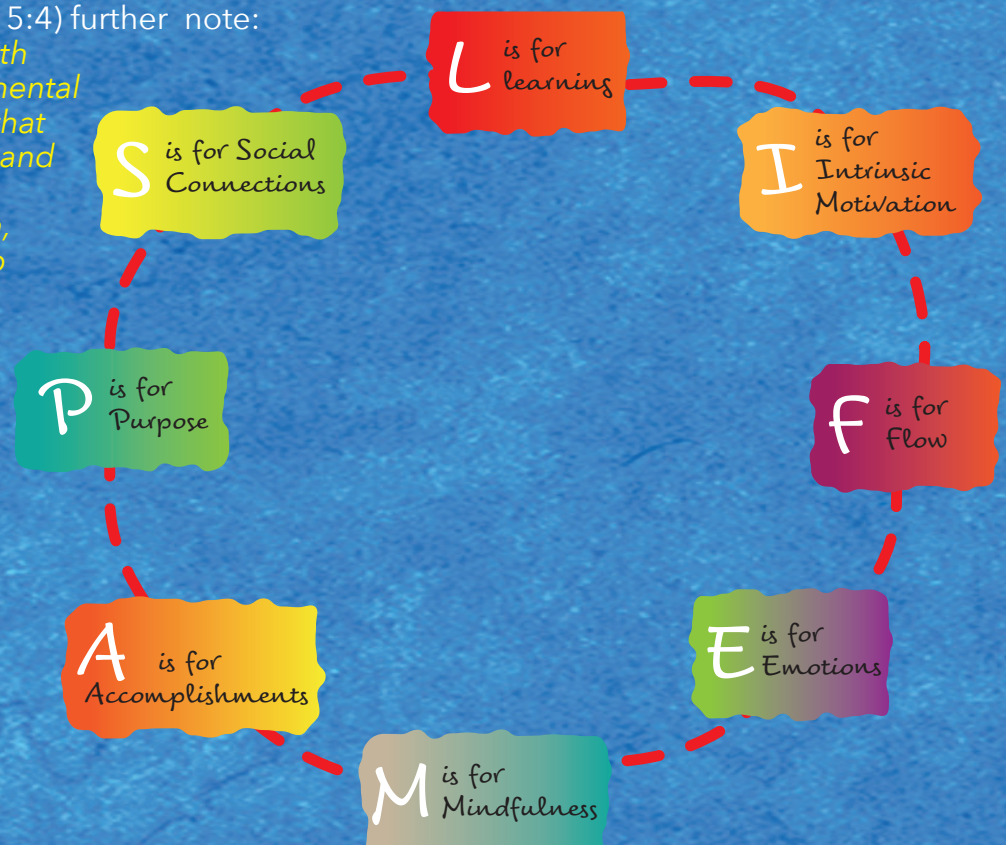
The toolkit is one of the *LIFEMAPS...youth work journey to build mental health* suite of materials. Other resources include the LIFEMAPS Research Report (2015), the LIFEMAPS resource booklet of practical ideas for improving mental health (revised 2018) and the Lifemaps Seminar Report (2019).

Mental health and well-being has been an issue fore-fronted by youth work organisations for many years. Youth work has initiated interventions that have supported young people to have better mental health. That is, improved self-esteem, increased self-confidence; and a sense of belonging. Preventative and early intervention work have yielded the best results and outcomes for young people, while also providing best value for money. McArdle and Ward (2015:4) highlight the role of youth work in building mental health, *'Youth work values both the individual and the community. This means that young people can derive both personal and community benefits - reducing an individual's or community's alienation, promoting a sense of belonging, building wider purpose and meaning.'*

This toolkit assists organisations to review and prioritise mental health interventions through youth work, so that young people can flourish and play active roles within their communities.

McArdle and Ward (2015:4) further note:

'The aim of any work with young people around mental health should ensure that a focus of programmes and interventions is around helping them to flourish, not simply trying to stop them feeling bad or the prevention of mental illness.'



Northern Ireland context

Mental health and well-being remains a priority issue affecting the lives and development of young people. Current policy and priorities in Northern Ireland reflects such need and youth work can make an important contribution.

Programme for Government Outcomes Framework (2016 - 2026)

- we enjoy long, healthy, active lives;
- we care for others and help those in need;
- we give our children and young people the best start in life.

Programme for Government Outcome Indicators (2016 - 2026)

- increase health life expectancy;
- improve mental health;
- improve child development.

Children and Young People's Strategy (2017-2027)

- physical and mental health;
- safety and stability.

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland Mental Health Charter

Department of Education Priorities for Youth (2013) DE Priorities (p14)

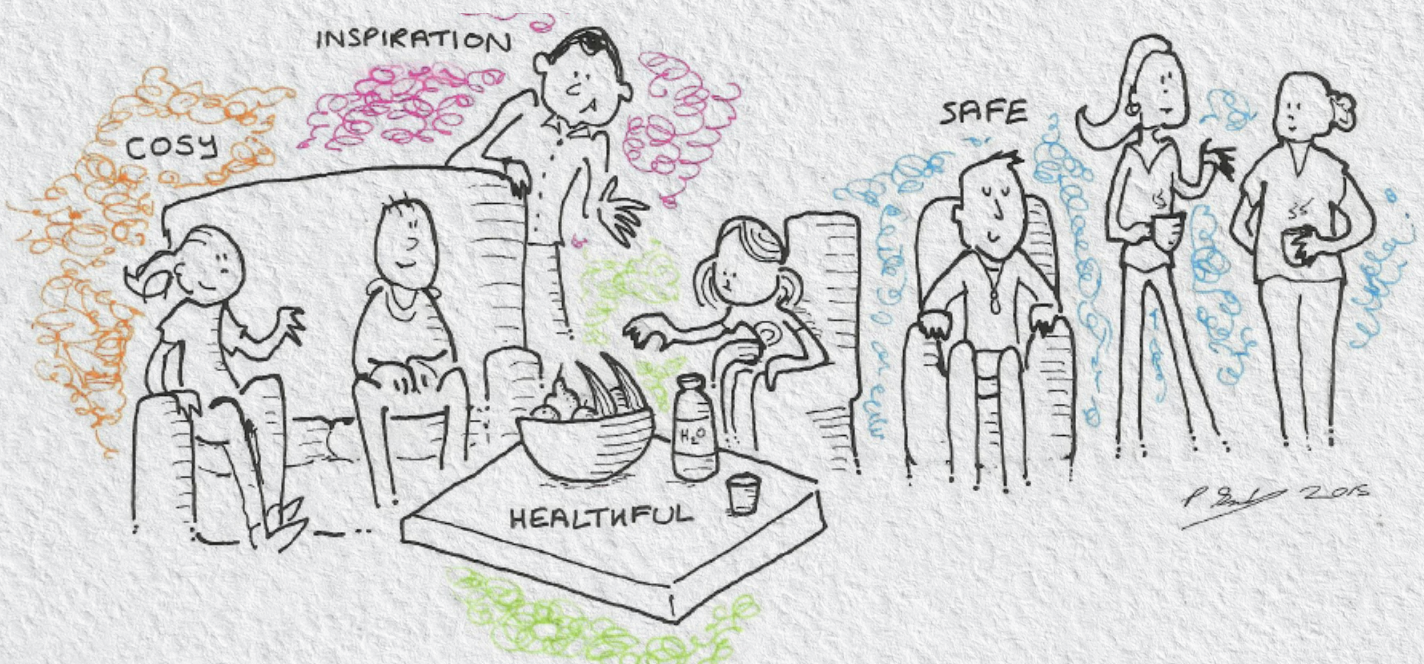
Education Authority Youth Service Framework of Expected Outcomes

- enhanced personal capabilities (confidence, resilience);
- improved health and well-being (life satisfaction, healthy choices);
- increased participation (belonging).

Education Authority Regional Assessment of Need (2017- 2020)

Making Life Better DHSSPS (2013 - 2023)

Underpinned by **Article 24 of the UNCRC** that every child or young person should enjoy the best possible standard of physical health and mental well-being.



Benefits and outcomes of using the Lifemaps toolkit

This assessment and improvement toolkit uses established areas of assessment and self-evaluation familiar to youth work in Northern Ireland. (The Youth Work Quality Assurance Framework {QAF} and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework).

The Youth Work QAF uses a self-evaluation grading, against a structured framework of **Developing Practice, Developing People and Developing the Organisation**, as follows:

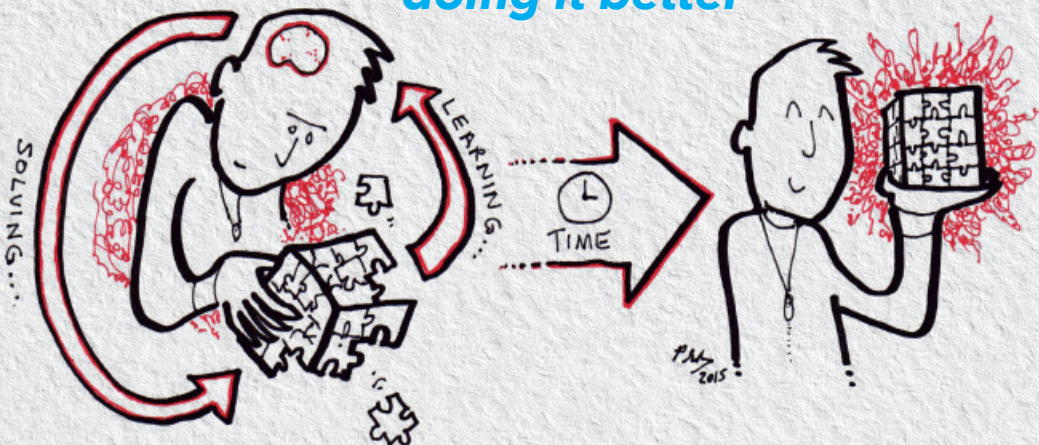
- Not in place
- Adhoc
- Getting there
- Well established

This same self-evaluation grading from the QAF will be used to self-reflect on **mental health and well-being** in relation to *developing youth work practice; developing people and developing the organisation*. From this an improvement action plan with planned reviews are identified.

This self-evaluation process will provide a purposeful assessment in which organisations can identify and name what practices and approaches they are currently taking, while also identifying some actions for ongoing improvement.

This is a full organisational approach, overseen by a self-identified internal quality assurance team, who share plans and actions with staff, volunteers and young people. It is an opportunity to recognise good quality practices, celebrate what is working, articulate impact and outcomes and further identify steps for progress.

Knowing what you do, learning from it and doing it better



Step by step guide

Step 1: TEAM

Identify a Quality Assurance (QA) team to oversee the process. Ideally involve one person from your board or committee, a senior manager, young people and a youth worker.

Step 2: STATEMENT

The Quality Assurance team identifies and agrees a **Statement of Intent** that outlines the organisation's commitment to improving mental health and well-being outcomes for young people. This is a practical vision with a set timescale, which is shared throughout the organisation.

Step 3: REVIEW

The team reviews the three core areas of *Developing Practice*, *Developing the People* and *Developing the Organisation*, according to the sections in the template. Each section has suggested questions, which will support your review. The team makes a short list of supporting evidence. Against each section the team then provides an assessment or grading of *Not in place*, *Adhoc*, *Getting there* or *Well established*. The evidence noted provides verification of how this assessment is made.

Step 4: COMPETENCE

Based on the QAF grading, the team then makes an informed decision on the overall competence of the organisation using the ETI Performance levels against each area.

Step 5: ACTION

From the overall review, the QA team identifies a few core actions for improvement. These improvement actions are based on the review process and findings. A person is appointed for progressing the improvement actions, and a date for review on the implementation.

The review, competence assessment and action plan are shared throughout the organisation and reviewed at planned intervals.

Celebrate success along the way

LIFEMAPS

Self-evaluation and Continuous Improvement Plan

STEP 1:

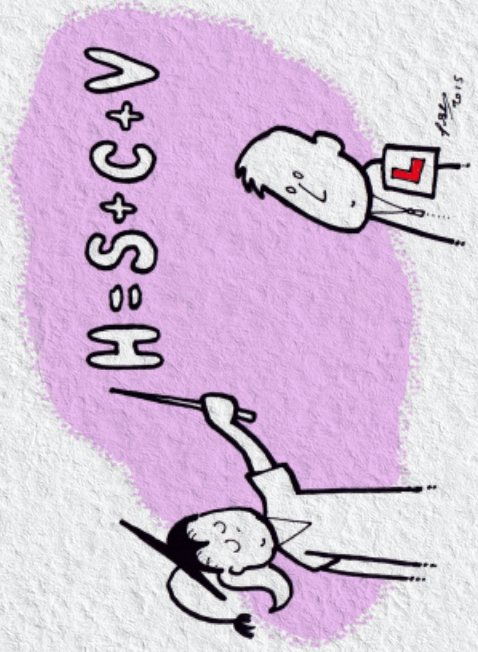
Name of Organisation:

Names of QA team:

Start date:

STEP 2:

Statement of Intent (including timescale for implementation):



STEP 3: Review

Area one ~ developing practice.

This section focuses on practice and youth participation and relates to the ETI Framework headings of *Quality of Provision, Outcomes for Learners, Care, Welfare and Safeguarding.*

Self-evaluation questions	List your supporting evidence	Grading/assessment	Rate your overall competence according to one of the ETI performance levels.
<p>Practice</p> <p>Priority issue ~ does your organisation identify mental health as a priority within its vision, strategies and programmes?</p> <p>Techniques ~ do your practices reflect a range of techniques that help to build positive mental health and well-being such as arts, sports, discussion, reflection?</p> <p>Outcomes ~ do your programmes have specific mental health and well-being outcomes?</p> <p>Targeted ~ do your practices target the most vulnerable young people?</p> <p>Approach ~ Do the youth work staff and volunteers embody approaches that reflect positive well-being?</p> <p>Methods ~ does your practice involve a range of group-work and one-to-one interventions to improve mental health and well-being?</p>		<p>Practice</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	<p>Tick one of the following for area one:</p> <p>Outstanding</p> <p>Very good</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Important areas for improvement</p> <p>Requires significant improvement</p> <p>Requires urgent improvement</p>
<p>Participation</p> <p>Planning ~ does your practice involve young people in co-designing.?</p> <p>Articulate ~ can young people recognise and articulate their learning outcomes and skills?</p>		<p>Participation</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	

Area two ~ developing people

This section focuses on practice and workforce and relates to the ETI Framework headings of *Quality of Provision*, *Outcomes for Learners*, *Care, Welfare and Safeguarding*.

Self-evaluation questions	List your supporting evidence	Grading/ assessment	Rate your overall competence according to one of the ETI performance levels.
<p>Practice</p> <p>Identify needs ~ have youth workers or volunteers identified mental health as a priority outcome?</p> <p>Knowledge ~ have staff and volunteers a good understanding of mental health issues, factors which affect young people's mental health (e.g. peer pressure, social media, stress factors) and inter-connections with wider factors (e.g. poverty, conflict)?</p> <p>Confidence ~ have staff and volunteers the confidence to develop relevant programmes?</p> <p>Resources ~ are there sufficient materials to support interventions?</p> <p>Leadership ~ do youth work staff and volunteers recognise the importance of their leadership in motivating and inspiring young people?</p> <p>Review ~ do youth workers help young people to review their learning and development? Can young people articulate new skills to improve well-being?</p>		<p>Practice</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	<p>Tick one of the following for area two:</p> <p>Outstanding</p> <p>Very good</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Important areas for improvement</p> <p>Requires significant improvement</p> <p>Requires urgent improvement</p>
<p>Workforce</p> <p>Support ~ are youth workers/ volunteers supported to develop and implement programmes that demonstrate mental health and well-being outcomes?</p> <p>Self-care ~ are youth workers/ volunteers supported with opportunities that support their own mental health and well-being?</p>		<p>Workforce</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	

Area three ~ developing the organisation

This section focuses on operational, volunteers, advocacy, governance, environment and culture and relates to the ETI framework headings *Leadership and Management*. How does the organisation look from the inside and how might it be perceived by those from outside the organisation?

Self-evaluation question	Supporting evidence	Grading/ assessment	Rate your overall competence according to one of the ETI performance levels.
<p>Operational</p> <p>Vision ~ is the organisation clear on its ideology and approach to mental health and well-being (preventative, positive psychology, assets-based etc). Is this visibly communicated?</p> <p>Strategies ~ do senior managers identify strategies for improving the mental health and well-being of young people, volunteers and staff?</p> <p>Resources ~ is there sufficient resourcing to support well-being strategies? Is mental health and well-being prioritised within funding?</p> <p>Sharing ~ does the organisation provide spaces to share best practices throughout the organisation? Does the organisation actively seek advice from outside?</p> <p>Staff development ~ Does the organisation ensure that staff/volunteers are skilled and supported to promote positive mental health and well-being?</p>		<p>Operational</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	<p>Tick one of the following area three:</p> <p>Outstanding</p> <p>Very good</p> <p>Good</p> <p>Important areas for improvement</p> <p>Requires significant improvement</p> <p>Requires urgent improvement</p>
<p>Advocacy</p> <p>With young people ~ does the organisation fully advocate with young people to improve services that enhance well-being?</p> <p>Partnership ~ does the organisation work with partners to grow practices that increase positive mental health well-being among young people?</p>		<p>Advocacy</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	

Self-evaluation question	Supporting evidence	Grading/ assessment	Rate your overall competence according to one of the ETI performance levels.
<p>Governance</p> <p>Agenda ~ is mental health and well-being an agenda item for the Board or Committee meetings?</p> <p>Understanding ~ does the Board/Committee understand issues that affect young people's mental health and well-being and have a wider analysis on factors that contribute to this?</p> <p>Listening ~ do the Board/Committee have opportunities to hear from young people about mental health and about youth work that has made an impact on well-being?</p>		<p>Governance</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	
<p>Environment and culture</p> <p>Visibility ~ are there visual displays of young people being happy and hopeful throughout the building, website, promotional materials?</p> <p>Approach ~ do staff and volunteers create a welcoming, relational, conversational first point of contact for young people and others?</p>		<p>Environment and culture</p> <p>Tick one of the following:</p> <p>Not in place</p> <p>Adhoc</p> <p>Getting there</p> <p>Well-established</p>	

Overall Assessment and Improvement Plan

Step 4

The self-evaluative assessment should provide an indication of how your organisation or group is doing in relation to improving mental health and well-being through youth work.

From this review and self-evaluation rate your overall competence according to one of the ETI Overall Effectiveness areas (HIGHLIGHT as appropriate)

- The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interests of all the learners.
- The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all learners.
- The organisation needs to address (an) important area (s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners.
- The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners.

Step 5

This process should help to identify **one or two key areas for continuous improvement** and which formulates an action plan with aligned responsibility and a period scheduled for review.

Action plan

List 2 - 3 specific actions for improvement

Responsibility

Name who will progress the actions

Review

Date for review and to consider what has been achieved.

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LIFEMAPS suite of resources includes:

- LIFEMAPS Research Report (2015)
- LIFEMAPS Resource Booklet (Revised 2018)
- LIFEMAPS Toolkit (2019)
- LIFEMAPS Seminar Report (2019)

Working in partnership with:

