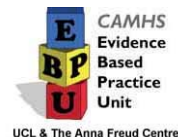


## **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Evidence-Based Practice Unit (CAMHS EBP Unit)**



Established in January 2006, this academic unit is part of University College London (UCL) and the Anna Freud Centre.

### **Aims**

The unit seeks to undertake research and other activity to promote outcomes-based and evidence-informed practice in relation to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) development

### **Guiding principles**

- To undertake research using methodologies appropriate to the complexities of the issues.
- To present research-based evidence with a tentativeness appropriate to the limitations of the findings.
- To present the evidence in forms that can best interface with natural ways people take on new knowledge (this may include detailed exploration of the best ways to present and share information in this area).
- To encourage practice that incorporates an appropriate awareness of the complexities involved in using evidence and outcome data to inform practice.
- To look to draw on a range of academic specialisms including cognitive psychology, sociology and systems theories as appropriate.

### **Ethos**

- All research is provisional and raises as many questions as it answers.
- All research is difficult to interpret and to draw clear conclusions from.
- Qualitative research may be vital to elaborate experience, suggest narratives for understanding phenomena and generate hypotheses but it can't be taken to prove anything.
- Quantitative research may be able to show hard findings but can rarely give clear answers to complex questions.
- And yet, despite all the challenges, it is still worth attempting to encourage an evidence-based approach, since the alternative is to continue to develop practice based only on assumption and belief.

### **Key areas of activity**

## Research

### **Targeted Mental Health in Schools – Evaluation Project**

The CAMHS EBPU has just won the tender to lead a major 3 year research project exploring the impact of the government initiative to provide targeted mental health in schools across England. This research is being undertaken in collaboration with colleagues at Durham University, the University of Manchester, the University of Leicester, the University of York and the Institute of Psychiatry, Kings College London. The project is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and starts in April 2008, continuing to April 2011.

### **Improving links between child mental health and education systems**

The CAMHS EBPU is involved in a collaborative research project looking at how to improve links between education systems and child mental health providers. The project is Department of Health-funded and is due to last 3 years starting in 2007. Professor Panos Vostanis of the University of Leicester leads this research.

## Training courses

### **Outcomes-Based Leadership**

The first CAMHS Outcomes-Based Leadership (OBL) launched in October 2007 and is now nearing completion. It is attended by selected senior managers and service leads and is designed to equip future leaders in this field with the skills to develop outcomes based and evidence informed services. A new intake will begin in October 2008.

### **Cognitive Behavioural and other Outcomes-Based Interventions with Children and Young People**

This UCL post-graduate certificate, diploma training course and MSc in Cognitive Behavioural and other Outcomes-Based Interventions with Children and Young People, will start in September 2008. The aim of this course is to promote an outcomes focus in child mental health practice that brings together evidence based practice not just from cognitive behavioural but also from other perspectives.

## Publications

### **Drawing on the Evidence: Advice for child mental health professionals (2006)**

A booklet that explains the latest research in this area to busy practitioners to help them make appropriate treatment choices. 10,000 copies have now been distributed across the UK and beyond.

## **Choosing What's Best For You: What scientists have found helps children and young people who are sad, worried or troubled (2007)**

A booklet that explains the latest research in this area to children and families to help them make treatment choices. More than 18,000 copies have so far been distributed across the UK and beyond.

## **A Mental Health Care Pathway for Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities: A resource pack for service planners and practitioners**

A resource pack for services to help them become more accessible to children with learning disabilities, more than 3,000 copies have so far been distributed across the UK and beyond.

## **Informing service development**

### **Promoting routine outcome evaluation**

The CAMHS EBPU works closely with, and supports the work of the CAMHS Outcome Research Consortium (CORC), which is an independent membership organisation with staff based at the EBPU, whose aim is set up systems to evaluate outcomes across child mental health services.

[www.corc.uk.net](http://www.corc.uk.net)

### **Advising on information systems for CAMHS**

The National CAMHS Dataset (NCDS) was originally disseminated in 2004 via CORC and the National CAMHS Support Service. This dataset identifies the key elements or information fields that services need to collect electronically, in order to develop a meaningful care record for children and young people with mental health problems. The NCDS was further developed during a CAMHS EBPU-led project in 2006, one of a number of *Do Once and Share* projects

### **Informing the development of accessible services**

Another 2006 *Do Once and Share* project developed a model of a care pathway for children and young people with a learning disability and mental health needs.

### **Advice and collaboration with other bodies**

The unit offers advice when requested to Department of Health, Department for Children, Schools & Families, and other national and international bodies as required. It looks to form collaborations with other relevant organisations.