

Target population: young people, aged 12-25, with mental health issues

Mission: advance the mental health of young people in Ireland by influencing change, strengthening communities and delivering services through our evidence-informed early intervention and prevention approach.

Centres: 13 nation-wide, located in Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Limerick, Meath, Offaly, Roscommon and in Dublin (five centres)

Funding: Jigsaw is a Charity, a Company limited by guarantee and a Health Service Executive (HSE) Section 39 agency. Jigsaw receives funding from the HSE and from fundraising.

Context

Jigsaw (formerly Headstrong) was founded in 2006 as a youth mental health charity in response to evidence that the system of mental health services for young people in Ireland was inadequate. Specifically, most young people were not accessing appropriate, timely, and responsive support when they needed help; and community-based service provision was insufficient in scope, fragmented, and uncoordinated.

It became clear, from Jigsaw's own research that in order to design a more responsive and appropriate system of services and supports, it would be critical to involve young people in the planning process. So Jigsaw, hand in hand with young people, set out to bring about systems change within the Irish mental health services by providing prevention and early intervention supports for young people and their communities so that young people could get the help and support where and when they need it. The services it provides aim to support young people at the most vulnerable time of their lives as they transition from childhood to adolescence and on to adulthood.

Values

1. Value young people
2. Show compassion
3. Progressive
4. Act with integrity
5. Work collaboratively
6. Driven by evidence

What this initiative is about

- **Early intervention and prevention approach** - the early intervention model provides tangible supports for young people before they reach the point of acquiring a formal mental health diagnosis.
- **Direct support** - provided by Clinical Support Workers. The role of Clinical Support Worker is suited to Clinical / Counselling / Educational Psychologists, Social Workers, Mental Health Nurses and Occupational Therapists. The Clinical Support Worker is part of the transdisciplinary Jigsaw team which provides brief therapeutic support to young people experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties. The Clinical Support Worker conducts assessments, delivers evidence informed brief interventions and participates in evaluation of the Jigsaw service. They also play a role in building the mental health capacity of frontline workers /volunteers and increasing the mental health literacy of the community. Each Jigsaw clinical support worker has key relationships with the wider child, adolescent and adult mental health services in their community which allows for integrated care.
- **Coordinated, seamless care** - each Jigsaw team is led by a senior clinician who is the key coordinator of care across the service and between other services. Jigsaw staff sit on local Children and Young Peoples Services committees which help to increase knowledge of each service and ensure that there are integrated and smooth referral pathways to provide as seamless a journey for a young person.
- **Capacity building**- along with the direct supports within the community setting, Jigsaw provides capacity building and education and training to a wide range of groups, including young people. Jigsaw uses an innovative approach to promoting and supporting youth mental health, in line with best practices of clinical, financial and operational governance. Youth participation is a guiding principle of Jigsaw's work and is a central feature of the design and planning of all Jigsaw projects.
- **Changing the way Ireland thinks about and responds to young people's mental health** - working with Government, the Health Service Executive and policymakers to make sure the right frameworks are being put in place to help Ireland's young people for generations to come.

Future

As part of our Strategic Plan for 2018-2020 Jigsaw aims to increase the number of services, further our integration within educational settings and provide more information and support to young people, their parents and others via an online e-mental health initiative.

Governance & management

Jigsaw aspires to place the needs and energies of young people and the wider local community at the heart of the thinking and planning of the service. The organisation is closely guided by a nationwide network of 130+ volunteer Youth Advisors, aged between 16-25, who help guide the organisation's strategy, recruit people, inform research, ensure the organisation stays relevant to those it supports and are central to work in reducing the stigma that surrounds mental health. Panel members may or may not have direct experience of mental health services but it is their interest and passion for youth mental health that is the main requirement for their participation. They help to raise awareness about youth mental health and why it needs to be taken seriously; build awareness of how Jigsaw support young people and their communities; best support young people with their mental health; and fundraise to support our services. Each Jigsaw Service across Ireland also has its own local Youth Advisory Panel drawn from the surrounding community.

Evidence/ impact

Jigsaw has supported, directly and indirectly, the mental health and wellbeing of over 25,000 young people across Ireland. In 2017 alone Jigsaw reached over 23,000 people, educating parents, youth professionals, teachers and other adults in contact with young people. Although a lack of control group limits interpretation of the study findings, the study of O'Keeffe et al (2015) provides emerging evidence that Jigsaw is an accessible and effective service which plays a key role in the continuum of mental health care for young people in Ireland.

Insights / lessons learnt

- Collaboration is important with statutory and non-statutory services at local, regional and national levels
- Young people need to be meaningfully involved in service design and delivery
- Build and show the evidence that your intervention works
- Some communities are early adopters, work with them and others will follow
- Build relationships locally, involve people
- Be transparent with your publics and funders – explain your work, funding and plans
- Seek to meet the policy makers and politicians – invite them to visit services and see first-hand the work being undertaken. Show them the solutions that you offer