

# 01. Stress/Contributing Factors

School/Performance related	Chronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Education system – points orientation</li> <li>- Academic system</li> <li>- Homework</li> </ul>
	Time/Event specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exams</li> </ul>
High Expectations	Parents	High parental pressure to succeed
	Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peer pressure to do things (go out, drink, smoke)</li> <li>- Peer pressure to fit in</li> <li>- Peer pressure to be different</li> <li>- Not wanting to feel isolated</li> </ul>
	School	
	Self	
	Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Media pressures</li> <li>- Americanisation of the Irish</li> <li>- Sex</li> </ul>
Problematic social interactions	Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being the eldest/youngest</li> </ul>
	Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making new friends</li> <li>- Friends taking frustrations out on each other</li> <li>- Bullying</li> </ul>
Substance abuse	Precipitant or reaction to stress	
	Social pressure to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bingeing</li> </ul>
	General alcohol/drug use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alcoholism</li> </ul>
Competition	Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sport gets more competitive as you get older</li> </ul>
	Education	
	Jobs & opportunities	

Transitions	Increasing responsibility	- Young people have adult responsibility without adult maturity
	Money	- Money problems - Debt problems - Having more money creates more problems - Things cost more nowadays
	Life changes	Divorce & Separation
	Balance	- School - Work/part-time jobs - Boy/Girlfriends - Family - Homework/study - Extra-curricular activities - Friends
	Concern about the future	- Career choice
Broad cultural themes	Internal	- Self-consciousness - Self-confidence - Ability to deal with conflict
	External	- Conflict between family and friends - Being judged by the way you dress - Being judged by the way you look - Being judged by your image - Being excluded from other groups because of your identity/image - The Law as restrictive force

Alienation from adults

- Parents/Family are threatening
- Young people not expected to have maturity so therefore have no control, young people have been given their place.
- *“Adults stress about young people which has a knock-on effect for young people and causes them stress”*
- Society’s negative image of young people

Health & Physical

- Tiredness
- Raging hormones
- Eating disorders & weight concerns
- Pregnancy
- Homelessness

Positive Moderators	Supportive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friendship – to encourage you and talk to</li> <li>- Hanging out with friends.</li> <li>- Peer pressure can be a positive influence.</li> <li>- Families can be supportive.</li> <li>- School can be encouraging (to get a job).</li> <li>- Small amounts of pressure can be motivating.</li> </ul>
	Social & Recreational outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cars</li> <li>-Dancing</li> <li>- Music</li> <li>- Discos</li> <li>- Sports</li> <li>- Exercise</li> <li>- Drink &amp; Drugs (in moderation)</li> <li>- Computer games</li> <li>- Having good craic</li> </ul>
	Free time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Holidays in general</li> <li>- Holidays are longer than for adults</li> <li>- Summer</li> <li>- Being young &amp; carefree</li> <li>- Do not <i>need</i> a job</li> <li>- Do not <i>need</i> to study, much</li> <li>- Freedom and comfort without responsibility.</li> </ul>
	Non-judgemental information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People being nice</li> <li>- Not judging</li> <li>- Information and access to support</li> </ul>

## 02. Mental Health Literacy

Neutral associations	Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “What’s going on in your mind”</li> <li>- The overall condition of your mind, if you’re healthy or not</li> <li>- State of mind</li> <li>- Sane/insane</li> <li>- Ability to make decisions</li> <li>- Everything you think and do</li> </ul>
	Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feelings and emotions</li> <li>- Levels of self-esteem</li> </ul>
	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not an everyday subject, people don’t talk about negative feelings</li> <li>- It is important – socially</li> <li>- Not widely talked about, people only consider their mental health when it goes wrong</li> <li>- Problems can be hereditary, run in the family.</li> </ul>
	Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance</li> <li>- Psychiatric units (St. Bridget’s, Ballinasloe)</li> <li>- Psychology</li> <li>- Counselling</li> <li>- Ritalin</li> <li>- Hard thing to define, people tend to focus on the negative due to historical approach to mental illness (e.g. locking people up).</li> </ul>
Negative associations	Disease/Medical model associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sick</li> <li>- Illness</li> <li>- Disability</li> <li>- Mentally Ill</li> <li>- Disease of the mind</li> <li>- People who need help with problems</li> <li>- Depression</li> <li>- Suicide</li> <li>- Eating Disorders (Bulimia, Anorexia)</li> <li>- Schizophrenia</li> <li>- Split personalities</li> <li>- Bi-polarism/Manic depression</li> <li>- Hallucinations</li> <li>- Delusions</li> </ul>

- Paranoia
- Anxiety – worried too much
- Stress – exams, public speaking
- Grieving
- Stroke
- ADHD

Trauma/Cause associations

- Domestic violence
- Young people's mental health problems: Depression (fitting in, being part of a group), Anxiety, confidence, bullying, eating problems.
- Mental health issues can lead to bullying.
- Cancer can lead to mental health problems
- Drugs can lead to mental health problems
- People don't realise they've got a problem.

Stigmatic associations

- Afraid of reaction
- Difficult to discuss
- Labels are hard to "f<sub>x</sub>" (?)
- Young people don't know enough about it
- Mental health is looked down upon
- Crazy – trying to hide what's really going on for them
- Men bottle it up
- Its hard to talk about – embarrassing
- Easier to access support for physical health problems
- More focus on the negative aspects of mental health
- Isolation
- Shame
- Embarrassment
- Denial
- Fear of being judged
- Anger
- Powerless

Stereotyped associations

- Lunatics
- Mad people
- Straight jackets
- Crazy
- "Iron maiden"
- Mental people
- Acting weird
- Lost your mind
- Padded cells
- Stereotypes
- Demented
- Psychos
- Murderers
- Insanity
- Handicapped
- Most people think of mental health as 'schizophrenia' but this is too specific.

Positive Associations

Well-being

- Happiness
- Relaxation
- Mental wellbeing
- Positive outlook
- Enjoying life
- Able to socialise
- Being happy with yourself
- Confidence

Emotional stability

- General stability
- Emotional stability
- The way you feel
- Feeling comfortable in yourself
- Open to new experiences

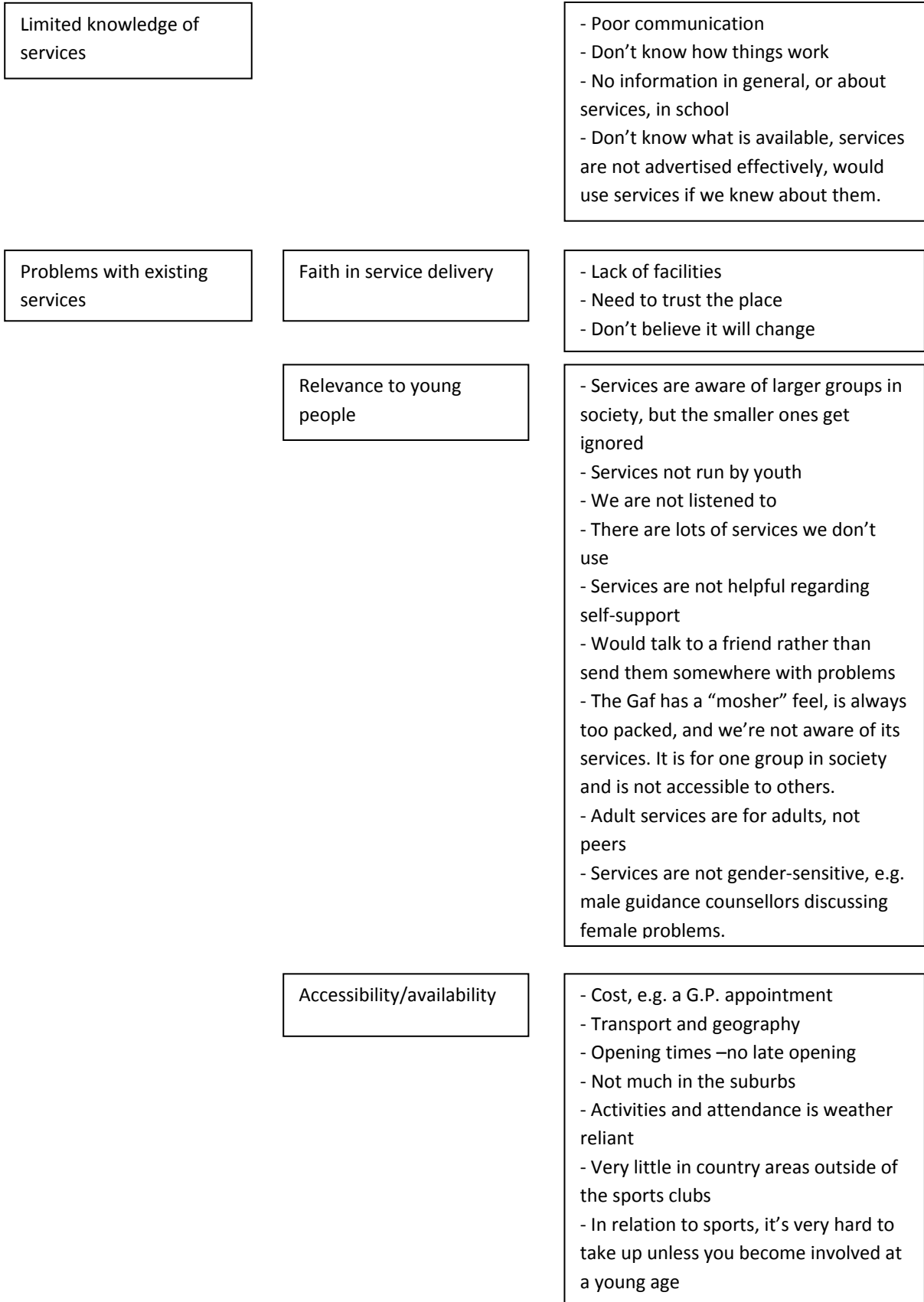
Rational thinking

- Positive thinking
- Thinking straight
- Avoid negative behaviour patterns (e.g. use of alcohol and drugs)

Support

- Role of family and friends
- Talking – about all that affects young people
- School – acknowledgement of efforts made
- A good childhood
- Women may talk about it with friends
- There is more information and awareness about mental health issues now, need to promote services.
- Security
- Balanced diet

### 03. Services & Supports



Schools

- No services in schools
- School is the best source of information but is not used
- School-based services are delivered by teachers; young people don't feel comfortable crossing those boundaries.

Services known to young people.

- Childline
- Foróige
- Sports
- Youthreach, peer support
- Doctor, G.P.
- I.S.P.C.C.
- Trócaire
- St Vincent de Paul
- FÁS
- GYIC - Galway Youth Information Centre
- The Gaf – we know information is available there
- Samaritans
- Barnardos
- An Tobar Nua
- FRANK – UK media-based drugs information service
- Children's centre in Taylor's Hill
- Red Cross,
- Civil Defence (visible)
- HSE
- Sports clubs, Gym

## 04. Coping

Drinking as coping

Affirmations

- Some do, but it is not effective in the long term
- Drinking is common, easily accessible, and can help you forget about your problems
- Drinking is more of an issue for boys
- Aware that alcohol is a depressant
- Drinking is often an image thing, rather than a coping mechanism
- Young people drink because they want to do it; they feel it is the right way
- Drink is not the real issue; the *real* issue is that there are few other options. There are a lack of social facilities, "*what else can I do?*"- young people drink out of boredom
- Drink is often used to help release emotions and feelings, and can help build confidence and have fun.
- Drink can help you escape reality
- Drink can help you problem solve
- It is often easier to get drink than it is to talk to someone about your problems
- drugs not as big a problem (cost is often prohibitive)

Contradictions

- Don't rule out ordinary recreational drinking, it is not always used to solve problems
- Drink is used more by older generations as a coping mechanism and is not as relevant for young people who have more (constructive) coping mechanisms as their disposal.

Seeking help as coping

- Talk to FRANK
- Specialised training could be learned
- A teacher you trust, or guidance counsellor (fears about anonymity are often prohibitive)
- A "shrink" (cost is prohibitive)
- Would refer a friend to a service if it was a big problem
- Medication

Talking as coping

- Family, siblings, grandparents
- Can ring Childline, but this is no help
- Talking to people who you trust
- Talking to people who will listen
- Talking to people who have had the same problem
- Talking to people who will be non-judgemental
- might talk to a supportive adult

Social and recreational as coping

- Creative endeavours
- Music (composing, singing, playing)
- Literature (reading, writing)
- Sport, especially team sports, very positive influence
- Physical activity
- Get a hobby
- Diving
- Dance
- Discos
- Keep busy

Self-reflection as coping

- Meditation – thinking out the solution to a problem, but not necessarily dwelling on it.

Acting out as coping

- Fighting
- Verbal and/or physical violence (especially when combined with drink)

Peer support as coping

- Friends

## 05. School-Based Services

Positives of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approachable, a chance to talk about your problems</li> <li>- Supportive of your choices</li> <li>- Good idea as a facility (on-site counselling service)</li> </ul>	
Problems with the service	Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The role of the guidance counsellor needs clarifying</li> <li>- Guidance counsellors are more focussed on career direction than emotional support</li> <li>- The guidance counsellor should have two defined roles; career guidance &amp; counselling support – no role confusion</li> </ul>
	Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often teachers <i>are</i> the guidance counsellors so young people wont talk to them because of preset boundaries, issue of comfort. Most students said they would use a personal support service if it was not a teacher-filled role.</li> <li>- Guidance counsellors are usually religion teachers or nuns (prohibitive if conflict is around sexuality, religious belief, etc).</li> <li>- Person should be approachable, understanding, experienced and non-judgemental, someone who is <i>not</i> a teacher, but who is also trusted and familiar.</li> <li>- Person should be specifically trained, professional, specialised and up-to-date</li> <li>- Needs to respect individual students and ignore reputation</li> </ul>
	Location	
	Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Patronising, judgemental, gossipy,</li> <li>- Often ends up stigmatising students</li> <li>- Service has issues around trust and confidentiality/privacy</li> <li>- Often not trained for this purpose, poor listening skills</li> <li>- Frustrated with the service that relies only on anger management programmes</li> <li>- Stigma: “Going for help is un-cool!”</li> <li>- Often not taken seriously</li> <li>- Gender issues abound</li> <li>- Often provide lots of information, none of which is useful</li> </ul>

- They will often tell you what to do than listen to you.
- They tend to steer you towards a career *they* would like you to have – feel under pressure, not given own choice so won't use the service.
- Needs to know how to relate/talk to/communicate with people
- Should provide open and honest information about services, and information on how to support friends when they have difficulties
- If external, should be affordable (free – “let the government pay for it”)
- Everyone should be approached weekly by the guidance counsellor to avoid the individual “standing out” as a student with a problem
- Should have ‘contracts of confidentiality’
- Promotion by leaflets, school visits, phone line, internet

Location

- Should be after school/out-of-hours for privacy
- Could operate a letter answering service to preserve anonymity
- Bring an external service into the school if school-based service, most would prefer to go to an external service for privacy. Similarly it could be a school-visiting service
- Comfortable surroundings, provide space – environment is important
- Not something that is obvious why you are going there.

## 06. Design

### Philosophies

- Non-judgemental, approachable centre, openness, age-appropriate, young staff
- Not “group orientated”, i.e. not aimed at one specific group
- Anonymity
- Change of mentality needed, can’t be embarrassing to go there
- Emphasis on peer support
- Emphasis on social, personal and health education
- Confidential
- A service that is realistic to young people and all issues that affect their mental health
- Reinforce family supports for young people.
- Young people need to be involved
- Preventative, maintaining positive mental health.

### Accessibility

- New name
- Modern facade
- City centre location
- A main HQ with lots of little offices
- Outreached to rural communities
- Would like to see Gaf-like initiatives in other areas
- Call it a “support service” rather than a mental health service
- Don’t call it a ‘clinic’ or ‘mental health services’
- Have it open on weekends
- Weekends and afterschool service
- Services should be free
- Services should be affordable
- Dedicated space for young people
- A place to hang-out, open to all types of young people
- A service would need to be free from group clichés
- Comfortable
- Service advertised by young people
- Need advertising (TV, radio, schools, posters, information days, and leaflets)
- School visits and information sessions were emphasised
- Make it well advertised and promoted
- Make use of transition year
- Service as part of school curriculum

Services

- Grinds & homework support
- Doctor facility
- Church presence, but not over the top
- Talk to priests
- No nuns or teachers
- Someone to talk to who will listen
- Mental health helpline
- Drug & alcohol rehabilitation facilities
- School based services
- Guidance counsellors
- Psychotherapist
- Counsellors
- Nurse
- Social worker
- STI clinic
- Free contraception and information on sexual health
- Information on eating disorders
- Tea & coffee facilities

Delivery methods

- Activities – sport, music, TV. (Sky, cable, football matches)
- Peer mentoring, especially around exam times
- Youth peer support groups
- Linked to the school and the school day
- Work a service for young people into the curriculum
- Make attendance at such services mandatory so no one can be stigmatised
- Help should be provided outside of school
- Embedded in other services other than mental health
- More Gaf-like services
- Face-to-face people available, not books and text
- Home services should be available
- “Talk to FRANK” service
- Freephone number (1800...)
- Web service
- Be aware that the service may be abused, i.e as a source of amusement (e.g. Childline)