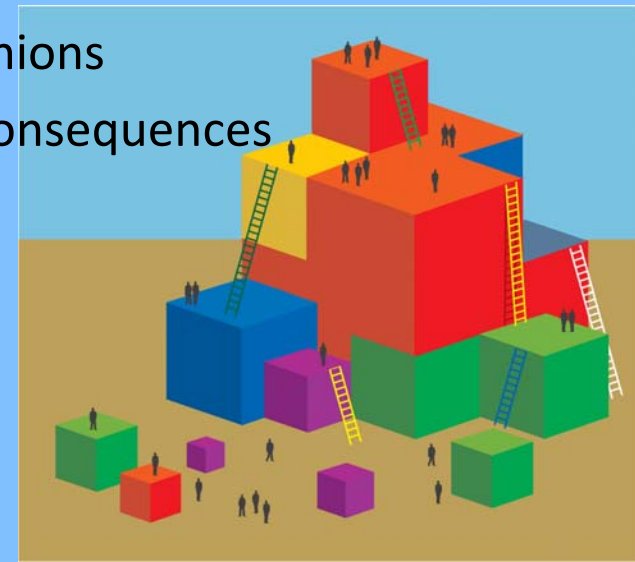




Themes & Issues Emerging from Interviews, Focus Groups, Survey, and Review of Prior Needs Research

Some Initial Points

- Review and discuss themes in an organized way
- Arrive at coherent set of needs statements to focus program design
- Not the time for problem-solving or suggesting solutions
- Most of the challenges not Kerry-specific
- Tendency to emphasize the negative and not consider strengths
- Start with conceptual framework to organize ideas & themes
- So far today, data has been more “objective” and quantitative
- Qualitative information is by definition quite personal
- “Breathes life” into quantitative data
- Many will have strong (sometimes conflicting) opinions
- Multiple perspectives on causes, correlates, and consequences
- Importance of open, blame-free discussion
- Create an environment for safe conversation, exercise tolerance, respectful listening



**Systems Framework for
Organizing Themes,
Structuring Needs, &
Targeting Interventions**

Macro
Level

Kerry

Community
Level

School

Families

Youth Services

Young
Person

Friends & Neighbors

Health, Mental Health,
Social Services

Community Services

West of Ireland

International

Community Informal Supports

Community Agencies & Programmes

Ireland





The Community Context

National/International Context



- “Celtic Tiger” – intense striving
- Pressures to succeed (money, jobs, clothing)
- International (American) media – images of success & style
- Media not sure about how to deal with suicide, other problems, but exerts powerful influence about images
- YP portrayed negatively in news, other media
- Religious institutions & spirituality

Broad Community Contextual Issues

- Community identity, pride of place, sport
- Coping with increasing affluence
- Affluence/deprivation contrasts
- Influx and influence of non-Irish people (tourists, foreign nationals, others)
- Highly vulnerable and excluded populations (e.g., Travellers)
- Changing economic and social opportunities
- Alcohol and other substance abuse
- Densely populated areas as magnets
- Rurality v. urbanicity
- Losing connections with neighbors, move away from farming and rural lifestyle
- Regional sub-identities & organisations (implications)



Some Issues Associated with Rurality in Kerry

- Sense of familiarity & sameness
- Dense social networks & supports
- Changing demographics & folkways
- Changing dynamics of religion & spirituality
- Farming becoming underclass, rural life disappearing, close bonds disappearing
- Unemployment & poverty
- Lack of transportation, psychological and physical isolation
- Anyone that stands out more readily seen, lack of diversity, social exclusion
- Transition challenges (e.g., from small rural primary schools to very large second-level schools)
- Language barrier in Gaeltacht areas
- Outmigration of young people
 - YP tend to leave Kerry due to lack of opportunity
 - Nothing to do here, manufacturing and other jobs unavailable or filled by others
 - Tend to go to Cork, Galway, or Dublin (less so), or to other countries for jobs or further education
 - Parents encourage YP to move away from farming, focus on bettering oneself and competing

The Service & Support Environment



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Social & Recreational Supports

- Dominant theme is there is nothing to do, especially if not into sports, leads to hanging around, winter is especially boring (summer can go to the beach at least)
- Some innovative programmes & initiatives providing opportunities (e.g., clubs)
- Lots of sport opportunity, good facilities, available to select few (GAA, sailing, Kerry Local Sports Partnership)
- Challenge is not to find space, but to properly staff & supervise
- Some sites open at only at select times
- Many would not access available sites due to social group or interests (e.g., music)
- Teens viewed with suspicion if hanging around town, barred from shops
- Insufficient time for YP to build relationships with youth workers
- Some PT jobs in tourist industry, but non-Nationals often take these now
- Transportation to activities is a huge problem (e.g., 2 buses per day to Tralee on Sat, 8 am and noon, last back by 3:30)
- Outreach programmes, use of community members for outreach
- Some programmes serve low numbers due to intensity, resources
- Numerous clubs developed through KDYS volunteers and staff
- Community centre spaces greatly underutilized
- Insufficient in rural areas especially
- Lack of broadband
- Bowling alley closed, aquadome and gym expensive

Kerry Local Sports Partnership (KLSP)

- Sub-committee of the Kerry County Development Board.
- Goals include: (1) providing a central information point for local sport and physical activity, (2) providing quality opportunities for education and training at local level, and (3) delivering a local strategic plan
- “The Kerry Local Sports Partnership and Irish Sports Council will jointly seek to encourage increases in levels of participation in sports and physical activity within the area, especially amongst specific target groups: children, older people, girls and women, people with disabilities and those who live in identified socially excluded communities.”
- ACTIVE 8 - programme designed for teenage girls in second level schools, peer-mentoring programme aimed to promote increased physical activity levels among teenage girls, senior students trained to mentor their junior peers through 8 weeks of physical activity.
- BEINGWELL - national health promotion course which takes a positive holistic and simple approach to health issues, focuses on the importance of individual choice and personal skills, group support, healthy environments and community-based responses in enabling individuals to maintain healthy lifestyles. The course is suitable for the adult population and older adolescents. The aims of Being Well are to promote good health and well being by:
 - Raising awareness of a positive concept of health
 - Providing information on specific health topics
 - Encouraging an understanding of the relationship between individual change and the need for a supportive physical and emotional environment
 - Developing personal skills and identifying community based resources and responses to
 - support and maintain healthy lifestyle choices.

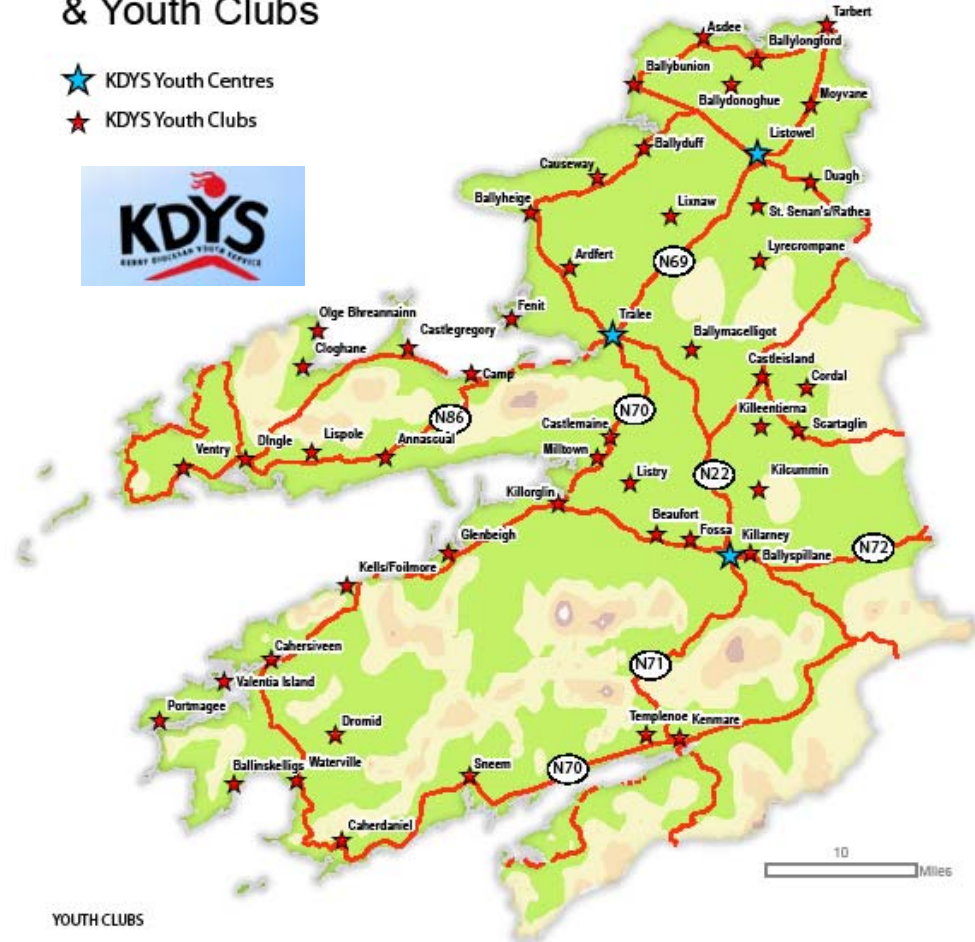


Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (KDYS)

- Voluntary youth organisation, 100 paid employees, 100s of volunteers to perform range of functions (clubs, school support)
- 46 clubs – volunteer based
- Workers based in Cahirciveen, Kenmare, Killorglin, Castleisland, Dingle
- Centres in Killarney, Tralee, Listowel
- Drop-in centres – Killarney, Listowel, Kenmare, Killorglin, Moyvane, Ballybunion
- Comprehensive training resources programmes – Assist, volunteers, diploma in youth and community work
- Prevention - eight schools w/ suicide prevention programmes, drugs & alcohol, crime diversion project, drug counselling
- School-based worker in Kenmare
- Springboard – family support, interagency work
- Transform Alley - led to youthReach in Ireland (out of school, high risk)
- Mentoring program in Tralee
- Support & coordination for youth programmes (e.g., youthReach, schools)

KDYS Youth Centers & Youth Clubs

- ★ KDYS Youth Centres
- ★ KDYS Youth Clubs



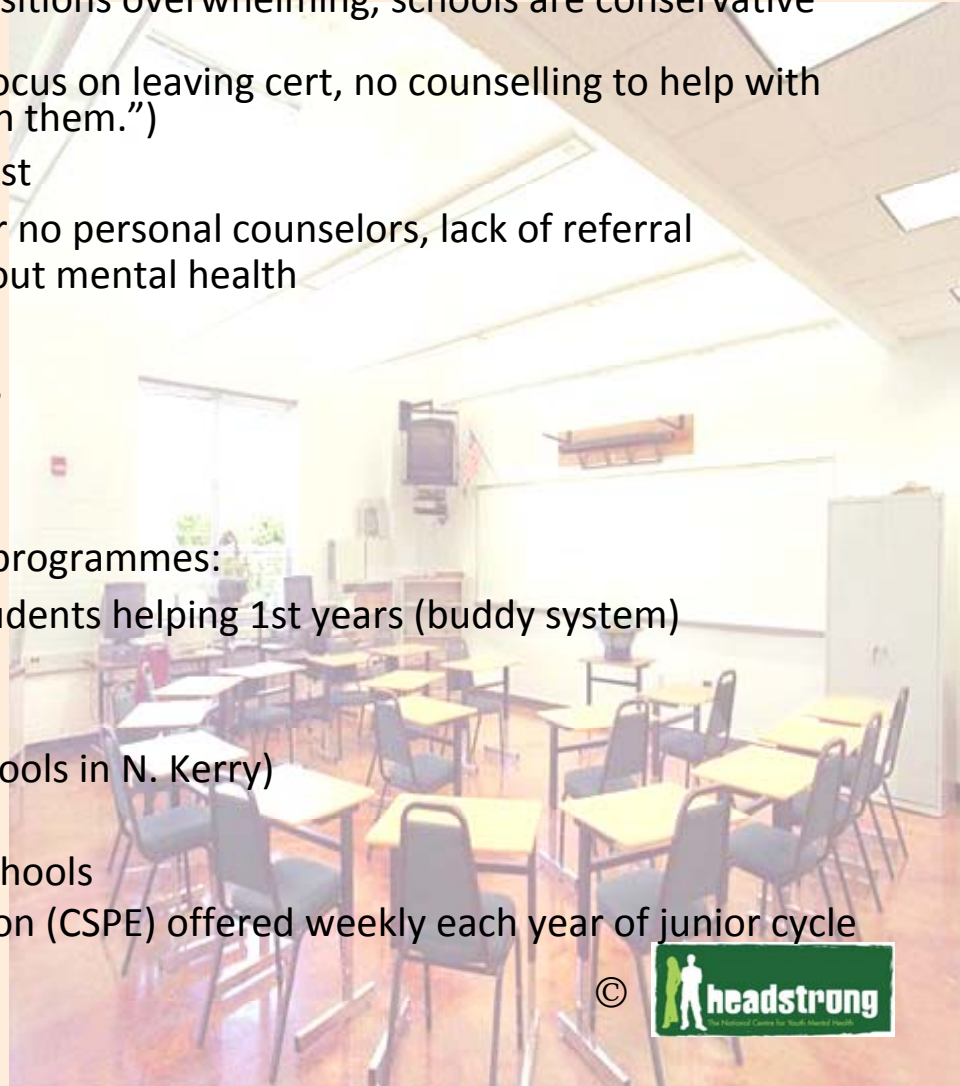
YOUTH CLUBS

Annascual	Castlemaine	Listowel
Ardfert	Causeway	Listry
Asdee	Cloghane	Lixnaw
Ballinskelligs	Cordal	Lyrcrompane
Ballybunion	Dingle	Milltown
Balydonoghue	Dromid	Moyvane
Balyduff	Duagh	Olge Bhreannainn
Balyheige	Fenit	Portmagee
Ballylongford	Fossa	Scartaglin
Ballymacelligot	Glenbeigh	Sneem
Ballyspillane	Kells/Foilmore	St. Senan's/Rathea
Beaufort	Kenmare	Tarbert
Caherdaniel	Kilcummin	Templenoë
Cahersiveen	Killarney	Tralee
Camp	Killeentierna	Valentia Island
Castlegregory	Killorglin	Ventry
Castleisland	Lispole	



Schools & Schooling

- 22 secondary schools in Kerry & three 3rd level schools (Killarney & Tralee Community Colleges, ITT in Tralee)
- Heavy stress on achievement, schools in competition for students, non-college track is devalued, marginalised kids excluded due to competition
- Culture of school can be like a production line, lots of stress, hard to be innovative, some schools large and impersonal, students can get lost, transitions overwhelming, schools are conservative (dress codes, respect)
- Many hours of HW in evenings and weekends, focus on leaving cert, no counselling to help with associated stress (“They’ve got the fear of God in them.”)
- Student issues about confidentiality, privacy, trust
- School mindset about personal problems, few or no personal counselors, lack of referral procedures, hesitance to open up discussion about mental health
- Limited parent involvement in schools
- Limited opportunities to engage teachers/adults
- Bullying is substantial
- Lack of balance in the curriculum – art, music
- Some school-based and school-related support programmes:
 - o mentor programme with transition year students helping 1st years (buddy system)
 - o home-school liaison
 - o after-school programmes (e.g., artist)
 - o LINK school completion programmes (6 schools in N. Kerry)
 - o visiting teacher (Travellers)
 - o KYDS suicide prevention programme in 8 schools
 - o SPHE and Civic, Social, and Political Education (CSPE) offered weekly each year of junior cycle
 - o MH Committee
 - o youthReach (Listowel, Tralee, Killarney)



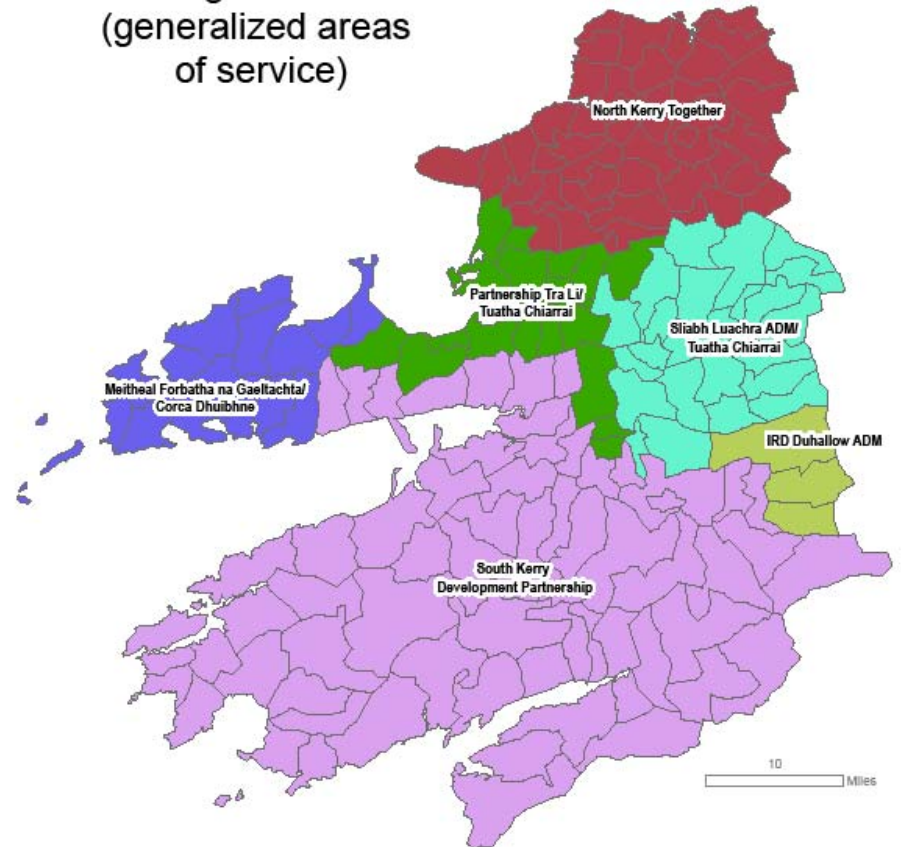
Learning Initiative North Kerry (LINK)

- *School completion programme, targets 8 - 18 year olds, provides additional resources to students through a variety of student support programmes, provides broad range of educational, social, mentoring and recreational support services to identified students within participating schools.*
- Support Services provided by LINK (through coordinator and 4 staff) are:
 - Individual learning supports in Literacy and Numeracy.
 - In class/team teaching - supporting students in class by supporting class teachers.
 - 6th class Transfer Programme incorporating Head Start in post-primary subjects and Transition programme.
 - After/Out supports through a number of projects including homework clubs, study support, project work and hill walking.
 - Holiday Programmes during Easter and Summer provide students with a broad range of fun, social, recreational and sports activities for children and young people from 8 to 18 years and in each of the six participating schools.
 - Broad Educational Activities provide schools with the opportunity to access a variety of educational and sports outreach opportunities, with the financial/organisational support of LINK.
 - Student Mentoring provides the student with the opportunity to discuss personal, social and educational issues.
 - Small group curriculum supports that are based on Literacy and Numeracy.
 - Group Link Teacher meetings are held on a quarterly basis to develop networking between Link teachers. Regular meetings are organised between the Link teacher and LINK personnel.
 - Parent work includes family trips, home visits, and information evenings on issue-based topics. Inter agency approach to encouraging the inclusion of parents in their child's education.
 - Monitoring and Evaluation is an integral aspect of the project where all schools have agreed a Framework to monitor LINK.
 - Inter agency work, networking to provide a child centred approach to initiatives in North Kerry.
 - Group work social and personal development programmes in primary and post primary schools.
 - Tracking and Attendance is undertaken locally at inter agency level.

Partnership & Community-Based Initiatives

- Services and supports for at-risk youth
- Education coordinators
- Informal learning services (music, drama, art)
- Training
- Psychological assessments
- Parenting programmes
- Literacy programmes
- Extra supports in schools
- Piloting new initiatives (e.g., MH and substance abuse)
- Coordinating services
- Community-based drugs workers
- Youth Cafés
- Training & support for unemployed
- Information on jobs
- Youth club support
- Summer programmes
- Counselling services

Community Development Agencies
(generalized areas of service)



Kerry Mental Health Association (KMHA)

The objectives of the KMHA are:

- (1) to promote positive mental health through research, local radio, newspaper articles, talks, National Public Speaking Project in schools, literature, promoting the Mental Health Resource Pack (Mental Health Matters) in all post primary schools, Directory of Services and Supports for Young People, mental health promotion poster, website and newsletter,
- (2) to support people with mental health problems through social housing, befriending, recreational programmes, holidays, breaks for carers, transport, sheltered employment and the provision of occupational therapy and IT equipment, and,
- (3) to advocate on behalf of people with mental health problems and their families and carers.

KMHA has nine (9) local branches (Tralee, Killarney, Castleisland, Listowel, Dingle, Cahersiveen, Kilorglin, Kenmare, Rathmore)



AWARE

- Voluntary organization that works with people with depressive illness and mood disorder.
- Educational work with families, schools, and community groups; support groups in local communities typically facilitated by people who come out of the groups themselves
- Providing information and support, not referral or treatment.
- Age range is 18+
- The support group in Kenmare has been replaced by a drop-in information service every Wednesday from 1.15-2.15pm. Killarney & Tralee support groups meets Tuesdays at 8.00 pm.
- ***Beat the Blues*** is a workshop session during a class period that gives basic information so that young people recognize the main signs and symptoms of depressive illness, and how to access support. Discusses stigma and the language people use about depression, and what prevents them from accessing support, exploring how they feel about depression, what they know about it. Transition year and above (typically 15 year olds). Doesn't target younger age groups due to lack of resources.



Counseling & Mental Health Services

- Stigma about accepting help & help-seeking, language to talk about mental health
- Challenges of outreach and follow-up,
- Specialised programs & support (e.g., Samaritans, Kerry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre, Positive Options – Crisis Pregnancy)
- No overnight or weekend services, lack of emergency supports
- Lack of integration and communication across services
- Transportation & access
- Crises handled by A&E, long waits, staff not trained for psychiatric services, no one to provide follow-up care
- Majority of YP could not cite a comfortable place to refer a friend in need of counselling, better to “talk to them myself”
- Job opportunities for MH professional (e.g., psych nurses) limited in Kerry, go overseas
- MH specialists unavailable to front-line providers and carers (teachers, youth workers, parents)
- Helpline perceived as useful but distrusted, TeenText available 6-10 pm, a bit impersonal, not widely used/known in S Kerry, no back-up
- Kerry Adolescent Counseling Centre near Mounthawk, cost (€60/session, sliding scale)
- South West Counseling Service underfunded, in jeopardy of closing
- HSE has family support & other programmes, but not linked with schools, public health nurses or family resource centres
- Holistic therapies and healing practitioners in Kerry numerous but not integrated



CAMHS

- CAMHS drastically underresourced (catchment = 140,000, should have 3 full teams)
- Partial team consists of 1 clin psy, 1 SW, 1 camhs nurse, 1 registrar in child psychiatry, 2 admin staff, and psychiatrist (missing senior registrar, 2 nurses, psychologist, sw, occup ther, and child care worker)
- Underfunding (compared to other HSE areas) may be partially attributable to HSE contractual arrangement (one of lowest resourced in Ireland)
- Promised 8 new consultant posts
- Most referrals come from GPs, then educational psychologists, some HSE funded counseling services
- About 50% of CAMHS caseload is adolescents and young people, emergency based, no beds for crisis stabilisation, long waiting lists, crisis-driven, conditions worsen, eventually harder to engage,
- Referrals complex, ADHD and conduct in younger adolescents, in older (14-16) disorders of eating, depression, psychoticism, anxiety, self-harm, conduct related to social/family problems
- Urgency and priority given to life-threatening and severe problems
- 16-18 year olds still not served
- Setting not youth-friendly, engagement problematic

The Individual & Family Context

Friend, Neighbor, Family Context

- Strong family connections, loyalties, protective impulse
- Friendship bonds in absence of adult supports (no longer priest, youth leader)
- Social networks not as tied to geography
- Peer pressures, peer culture, alienation from adults, perceived distrust by adults
- Enmeshed – everyone knows everyone else's business
- Taking YP to see someone is an admission of guilt
- Misinformation and stereotypes
- Parents are very busy, less time for family life
- Parents not very aware or knowledgeable about MH
- Parents may brush problems off too easily or overreact fear (both extremes)
- Family violence and conflict taboos
- Insufficient adult involvement in clubs, activities
- Role of alcohol in family and community life



Young People

Possibilities

- Many very capable and high achieving young people, taking advantage of opportunities
- Many supportive families with high aspirations
- Many resilient and self-sufficient young people
- Many success stories



Young People: Problems

- **Depression** -pervasive problem (associated with loneliness, bullying, boredom, stress, lack of emotional outlets)
- **Suicide & self-harm** – social and cultural context, major fear of parents & community, suicide more common in boys and self-harm more common in girls, high-profile incidents
- **Stress** - KMHA studies (2001, 2003) found:
 - 6% report high stress, 18% moderate;
 - 4% said they could not cope, cited their coping strategies as drugs/alcohol, blaming others, crying/screaming
 - Those who coped better stressed cited talking to someone, looking for help, time with friends
 - Qualitative analysis revealed deep distrust of authority figures, concern over confidentiality and privacy, perceived inability to get help
 - No difficulty getting YP to talk about problems
- **Substance abuse** - major problem, easily available, fills a void, begins early, “self-medication v. risk-taking
- **Verbal and physical bullying**, more common in early adolescents (tech makes easier)
- **High-risk behaviors** - drugs, alcohol, sexual activity, aggression
- **Family relationships** – conflict, not discussed, many troubled families
- **Learning problems** underlie many difficulties
- **Early school leaving**
- **Unemployment** - prospects limited within Kerry, PT employment seasonal, no money
- **Vulnerable subgroups**
 - Every town has a group of YP who are “on the edge”
 - Travellers as a unique challenge
 - Foreign nationals, gay YP face considerable isolation
 - Vulnerable social groups (e.g., Goths, Emos)
 - Hidden population of young people in need



Young People: Perspectives

- Missing is the clear voice of young people about what they need
- Don't feel respected or valued in community, low connectedness
- Pressure, pressure, pressure
- Anxiety, isolation, alienation
- Unaware of need for help or how to talk about it
- Stigma of mental illness, fear of discrimination
- Lack of knowledge about feelings, depression, stress, anxiety (myths versus truths)
- Minimization
- Self-reliance, reliance on friends
- Quite a lot of interest in the subject of mental health & well-being
- Parents “freak out” about depression
- “It’s OK to feel crap”
- It’s a lot about language
- Unsure who to talk with
- Self-image is a huge concern for YP (pressure to look and dress a certain way)
- Cope with sports, music, activity, socializing

