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A feasibility study of a personalised public mental health intervention for young women aged 14 to 18 years

Submission date
13/05/2025

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
22/05/2025

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
19/08/2026

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[X] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[_] Results
[_] Individual participant data
[X] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The current study focuses on the rising mental health difficulties among young women, with one in four aged 17-19 experiencing mental health challenges, an increase from previous years. Societal factors like socio-economic deprivation, trauma, and discrimination exacerbate these challenges, particularly for marginalized groups such as young women from LGBTQIA+, neurodivergent, and racial minority backgrounds. Recognising gender as a key structural determinant of mental health, the project aims to develop a targeted, inclusive intervention to improve mental health outcomes for young women across diverse backgrounds.
The intervention, 'My Story and Me,' is a digital, video-based mental health program designed to be both preventative and personalized. It draws on the theory of mentalisation, helping young women understand their own behaviours and mental states through the stories of others with shared identities. By hearing relatable experiences, participants can gain a deeper understanding of their mental health, feel more confident in communicating their needs, and engage with support services earlier. This approach is rooted in the belief that improving mental health literacy, reducing stigma, and involving young people in decisions about their care are essential for better mental health outcomes. The project also responds to the need for more accessible mental health interventions, with many young people unable to afford out-of-school activities or face long waiting times for professional mental health support. The program will foster mental health literacy, empower young women to seek help, and provide a platform for discussing mental health challenges that are particularly relevant to marginalized groups. This will ultimately help prevent the onset of mental health problems and promote wellbeing across the population.

This project aims to address the Public Health Research (PHR) call for research on: What interventions are effective to promote good mental health and wellbeing among young women aged 12-24? It builds on a previously PHR-funded project where, with stakeholders' consultation, the 'My Story and Me' logic model was revised, and data were analysed, highlighting mental health challenges among minoritized groups and young women. Narrative interviews were conducted, and a library of 50 videos has been developed to support the intervention. A feasibility study will be conducted across six sites, including schools and community

organisations, to assess the effectiveness and acceptability of ‘My Story and Me.’ This study will gather data on the intervention’s impact, engagement, and its comparison to typical mental health support practices. The findings will inform future trials and provide evidence on how to best support young women’s mental health in a variety of settings, helping to shape future public health initiatives aimed at improving mental health outcomes for this group.

Who can participate?
Healthy volunteer young women and girls aged from 14 to 18 years old

What does the study involve?
‘My Story and Me’ comprises 1) Watching a video of a young woman’s story, created by young women from different ethnic, LGBTQIA+, and neurodivergent groups, including those from multiply marginalised groups to represent the multiple intersectional influences through which identity and marginalisations are constructed, and 2) Creating your own story. Participants then record (speech, video, text, image) answers to three questions, mirroring those in the pre-recorded videos: ‘Who am I? What is My Mental Health Story? How would I Like to be Supported?’.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Possible benefits to the participants are the opportunity to have their story heard, which may help other young people like them in the future. Many people find taking part in research rewarding as they provide a valuable contribution to the development of knowledge.
Young people may find taking part in the interviews distressing. The research team is experienced in conducting research with families. Participants will be clearly advised in the information sheet that they are able to withdraw from the study at any time and signposted to sources of further support should it be required. Participants are also invited to bring someone along with them to the interview if they wish.

Where is the study run from?
Anna Freud Centre, UK

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
February 2025 to June 2026

Who is funding the study?
National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), UK

Who is the main contact?
mystory@annafreud.org

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Scientific

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Additional identifiers

Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
333239

Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS)
58099

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)
158909

Study information

Scientific Title
My Story and Me: A feasibility study of a personalised public mental health intervention for young women 14 to 18 years

Acronym
My Story and Me

Study objectives
This proposal aims to conduct a feasibility study to build to a future trial of ‘My Story and Me’. This feasibility study's overarching research question (RQ) is: What is the optimum approach to implementing the full trial of ‘My Story and Me’?
There are five specific RQs:
RQ 1. What is the optimum setting in which to conduct the trial?
RQ 2. How should parameters for the sample size calculation be refined?
RQ 3. What is a meaningful difference in the primary outcome measure?
RQ 4. What is the acceptability of ‘My Story and Me’ and a trial?
RQ 5. What is needed for the economic evaluation?

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 12/02/2025, UCL Research Ethics Service (Graduate School, North Cloisters, Wilkins Building UCL, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, United Kingdom; +44 (0)20 76792000; ethics@ucl.ac.uk), ref: 0692

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Non-randomized uncontrolled feasibility study

Study type(s)
Prevention, Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Public mental health intervention for young women

Interventions
The study builds on a 6-month Application Development Award, in which the public mental health intervention, 'My Story and Me' was developed comprising: 1) Watching a video of a young woman's story, created by young women from different ethnic, LGBTQIA+, and neurodivergent groups, including those from multiply marginalised groups to represent the multiple intersectional influences through which identity and marginalisations are constructed, and 2) Creating your own story. Participants then record (speech, video, text, image) answers to three questions, mirroring those in the pre-recorded videos: 'Who am I? What is My Mental Health Story? How would I Like to be Supported?'.

Participants will have access to the intervention between baseline and follow-up (7 months) and be able to access it independently. Only the young woman creating their story will have access to it. During the study, participant recordings will only be accessible to the participant. However, if participants wish, they could use recordings to help structure conversations with parents /carers, educators, or support providers. The platform aims to help young women understand and talk about their own mental health by hearing the stories of other similar young women, empowering them to seek support at an earlier stage. This would enable the network around the young person to have a better, quicker, and more comprehensive understanding of the young woman they are supporting and about how that young person understands their own experiences. There will be guidance on how to talk about your story with others and where to find support.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Depression and anxiety symptom scores measured using the 13-item Short Mood and Feelings Questionnaire (SMFQ) at baseline and 7-month follow-up

Key secondary outcome(s)

The following secondary outcome measures are assessed at baseline and 7-month follow-up, unless stated:
Validated measures:
1. Anxiety will be measured using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7)
2. Depression and anxiety will be measured using the 11-item RCADS
3. Social support will be measured using the 12-item Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)
4. Mentalising will be measured using the five-item Reflective Functioning Questionnaire Youth-5
5. Stigma will be measured using the 6-item Mental Health Knowledge Schedule
6. Quality of life will be measured using the six-item EQ-5D-5L and the nine-item CHU-9D

Non-validated measures:
1. Loneliness measured using a single bespoke question
2. Mental health empowerment will be measured using the Mental Health Empowerment Scale, with four items
3. Intervention acceptability will be measured using the seven-item Theoretical Framework of Acceptability at follow-up
4. Resource use will be measured using an adapted version of the CA-SUS
5. Demographic questions will be collected on age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, special educational needs, disability, care experience, and caring responsibilities; postcode of residence will be collected and mapped onto national data for area-level indices of deprivation at baseline
6. Randomization acceptability will be measured using a single bespoke question item at baseline

Completion date
01/06/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Young women and girls (using an inclusive definition co-produced with young people)
2. Aged 14-18 years
3. No active suicidal ideation
4. Not currently seeking/receiving specialist mental health support
5. Able to provide consent, including parent/carer consent for <16s

Participant type(s)
Learner/student

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
14 Years

Upper age limit
18 Years

Sex
Female

Total final enrolment
114

Key exclusion criteria
1. Outside age range 14-18 years
2. Active suicidal ideation
3. Currently seeking/receiving specialist mental health support
4. Not able to provide consent, including parent/carer consent for <16s

Date of first enrolment
01/10/2025

Date of final enrolment
31/03/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Anna Freud Centre
4-8 Rodney Street
London
England
N1 9JH

Study participating centre
Kirklees College
Huddersfield Centre
Manchester Road
Huddersfield
England
HD1 3LD

Study participating centre
Newham College of Further Education
East Ham Campus
High Street South
London

England
E6 6ER

Study participating centre
Investing in Children (Sjovoll Centre)
Sjovoll Centre
Front Street
Framwellgate Moor
Durham
England
DH1 5BL

Study participating centre
Invictus Wellbeing Head Office
Third Floor, E-Mill
Dean Clough Mills
Halifax
England
HX3 5AX

Study participating centre
Jo Richardson Community School
Castle Green
Gale Street
Dagenham
England
RM9 4UN

Study participating centre
King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls
Rose Hill Road
Birmingham
England
B21 9AR

Study participating centre
Tudor Grange Academy Worcester
Bilford Road
Worcester
England
WR3 8HN

Study participating centre
John Ruskin College
Selsdon Park Road
South Croydon
England
CR2 8JJ

Sponsor information

Organisation
University College London

ROR
https://ror.org/02jx3x895

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
National Institute for Health and Care Research

Alternative Name(s)
National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol article		06/06/2026	07/05/2026	Yes	No
Study website		11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes