



Paper, Planes and Pebbles: Explore the evidence for investment in creative approaches intended to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and/or young people in Wales.

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Introduction

- ▶ This presentation will be looking into the investment into creative approaches that enhance the health and well-being of children and young people.
- ▶ There are many approaches that can be adopted that can enhance the health and well-being of children and young people, this presentation will be looking into 2 creative approaches, which are play and drama.

– introduce what I will be talking about within the presentation. Discuss that I will be looking into 2 creative approaches to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Both of these approaches are known to enhance the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and this presentation will be looking into how these enhance health and wellbeing.

What is Well-being?

- ▶ New Economics Foundation (2012) defines wellbeing as being 'How people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole'.
- ▶ The Department of Health (2014, p. 4) discusses the link between positive wellbeing and life expectancy, and notes that 'High levels of wellbeing directly affect good health; It is estimated that high levels of subjective wellbeing can increase life by 4 to 10 years compared with low levels of subjective wellbeing'.

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What is Health?

- ▶ The World Health Organisation (no date) defines health as 'A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.
- ▶ Everyone suffers with mental health. Many suffer with good mental health; however many suffer with poor mental health.

Everyone suffers with mental health. Many suffer with good mental health; however many suffer with poor mental health. We all have up and down days.

Fostering a Positive Relationship

- ▶ Relationships are at the center of young people's health and wellbeing. Whether this be with school teachers, friends, family, neighbours or youth workers.
- ▶ Public Health England (2015, p. 7) notes that 'Recognising and supporting healthy relationships is central to improving young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing'.

Slide focuses on fostering good relationships, and why this is important for children and young people. These positive relationships can be with numerous people, such as family, friends and school teachers. There are many benefits of having healthy relationships.

Youth Work

- ▶ The key purpose of youth work is to 'Enable young people to develop holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential'. (LSIS, 2012, P. 4)
- ▶ Youth work can play a big part in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. This can be done through the delivery of informal and non-formal sessions.

Youth work can help provide informal and non-formal sessions around mental health and wellbeing to support young people. Youth workers are there to listen and to give advice and guidance.

Youth Work – Providing informal Activities to Young People

- ▶ Youth workers can provide informal and educational activities and sessions that can enhance and improve the health and well-being of young people.
- ▶ An example of an activity is the jar activity – Activity is designed to improve the health and wellbeing of young people.
- ▶ The purpose of the activity is to write positive words and statements about one another.
- ▶ Young people can look at these positive statements whenever they are feeling down.

The jar activity is from my practice. The purpose of the activity is to write positive words and statements about one another. Young people can look at these positive statements whenever they are feeling down

Creative Approaches of Improving Health and Wellbeing - Play

- ▶ There is a lot of evidence that suggests that play has positive benefits to children and young people's health and wellbeing.
- ▶ Tovey (2007, p. 13) notes that the 'Outdoors offers a unique environment, which is qualitatively different from indoors. It offers the space and a greater degree of freedom to try things out, to explore and experiment without the constraints associated with an indoor environment'.

There is a lot of evidence that suggests that play has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Tovey discusses that the outdoors offers a lot more than the indoors. Being outside offers more freedom and to experiment, compared to being inside where it is limited

Creative Approaches to Health and Well-being - Play

- ▶ It is also widely known that play contributes massively in the education of children and young people.
- ▶ A report written by Manwaring & Taylor (2006, p. 10) discusses that 'Play is recognised for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning'.
- ▶ Play also contributes to children and young people's physical activity levels, as Manwaring *et al* (2006, p. 10) notes 'Play is recognised for the valuable contribution it can make to increasing children's physical activity levels'.

Education is a big part of play. Manwaring & Taylor talk about play for the important contribution it makes to education and lifelong learning. Play can also contribute to positive physical levels, as Manwaring *et al* talks about the valuable contribution play has on increasing children's physical activity levels.

Creative Approaches to Health and Wellbeing – Play

- ▶ The World Health Organisation (No date) discusses some of benefits that physical activity have on young people, and notes that 'Physical activity has also been associated with psychological benefits in young people by improving their control over symptoms of anxiety and depression'.
- ▶ Article 31 of the UNCRC notes that 'Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities'.

Physical activity has many benefits to it. WHO notes some of these benefits as having psychological benefits in young people by improving their control over symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Why Play is Important

- ▶ Although there is a wealth of evidence that backs up the importance of play, there is, however, evidence suggesting that children and young people are not going out and playing as much as they should.
- ▶ This can be down to a number of things, such as video games, television and school work.
- ▶ Frost, Wortham & Reifel (2001, p. 92) notes that 'Presently, growing popularity of video games and internet activities, ranging from violent games, to 'chat rooms', to adult style gambling, have directed more of children's time away from spontaneous, traditional play'.

While play has got many benefits to it, there is an increasing number of children and young people that are not playing outside as much. This can be down to a number of things, such as video games and TV. Young people are being 'lost' in social media and technology, which has resulted in the decrease in going out and playing. There are also dangers from things like predators.

Why Play is important

Play can link to all of the five ways to wellbeing.

- ▶ **Connect:** Play allows for children and young people to connect and interact with others. Having social relationships are important because it promotes positive wellbeing.
- ▶ **Be Active:** Being outside can have a positive impact on children and young people's mental health. Mind (2013) notes that 'Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups'.
- ▶ **Take Notice:** Play allows children and young people to take more notice of the outdoors and of things around them.
- ▶ **Learn:** Children and young people engaged in play can learn a lot. Mind (2013) notes that 'Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life'.
- ▶ **Give:** Mind (2013) notes that 'Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.'

Play allows for children and young people to connect and interact with others. Having social relationships are important because it promotes positive wellbeing. Being outside can have a positive impact on children and young people's mental health. Play allows children and young people to take more notice of the outdoors and of things around them. Children and young people engaged in play can learn a lot. Play can give young people a sense of freedom.

Creative Approaches through the Arts

- ▶ Evidence suggests that children and young people health and wellbeing can be improved by being involved in drama workshops and creative activities.
- ▶ Bungay, Clift & Vella-Burrows (2012, p. 4) reaffirms this by noting 'There is a growing body of evidence that supports the notion that active involvement in creative activities can provide a wide range of benefits, including the promotion of well-being, quality of life and health'.

Evidence suggests that children and young people health and wellbeing can be improved by being involved in drama workshops and creative activities. Bungay *et al* notes that being involved in creative approaches can promote health and wellbeing

Benefits of Drama Workshops and Creative Approaches

- ▶ There are many benefits that drama has that can help children and young people.
- ▶ Drama can build up confidence and self esteem in children and young people. This is backed up by Bungay *et al* (2012, p. 9) who notes that 'The contribution of arts/creative projects in promoting a sense of self-worth, and life skills in young people is very clear'.
- ▶ Drama workshops can cover topics such as mental health, drugs and bullying. Not only will drama build up children and young people's confidence, resilience and well-being, but they can also learn about topics that are relevant within today's society.

There are many benefits that drama has that can help children and young people. Drama can build up confidence and self esteem in children and young people. Young people can learn about important issues, such as mental health and bullying.

Creative Approaches through the Arts

- ▶ Bungay *et al* (2012, p. 7) conducted research with children and young people around the effect that creative activities had on their health and well-being. They noted that 'Personal wellbeing concerns raised by children and young people during the drama workshops almost exclusively centred on social and emotional health rather than physical health'.

Theatre of the Oppressed

- ▶ The Theatre of the Oppressed was created by Augusto Boal in the early 1990's, who was a Brazilian theatre director.
- ▶ It is a type of theater that is designed for people who want to learn ways of fighting back against oppression in their daily lives.
- ▶ Boal created a type of theatre called forum theatre. MacDonald & Rachel (2000, p. 2) discusses how forum theatre was created, and notes that 'Forum theatre was developed in Latin America as a means of working popularly means of working popularly in theatre to tackle the overriding problems of the lives of ordinary people'.

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Theatre of the Oppressed

- ▶ Forum theatre performance involves a protagonist who can be replaced by people watching in the audience. The performance is played one through first, and then repeated from the start. The audience can stop the performance at any time and offer alternatives to the actions of the protagonist and try out another solution.
- ▶ Young people involved in this can learn more about society and things that are oppressing people in this day and age. It gets young people thinking about these issues in society, and ways that they can contribute to society.

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Theatre of the Oppressed

- ▶ Muscato (no date) notes that Boal 'Wanted to create something educational, something which taught people to actively deal with oppression in their real lives and start a conversation'.
- ▶ Muscato (no date) discusses the interest that Boal had between the performance and the audience, and noted that he 'Took a strong interest in the relationship between performance and audience. He observed that a passive audience member would project his or her desires to create change onto a character in the performance'.

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Links Between Drama and the 5 Ways to Well-being

- ▶ **Connect** – Drama allows children and young people to connect with others.
- ▶ **Be Active** – Drama can be physically active, you can be moving about quite a bit. Mind (no date) notes that 'Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being'.
- ▶ **Take Notice**: Drama allows young people to widen their self-awareness and can allow them to notice the world around them. Mind (no date) notes that 'Taking Notice is a step towards strengthening and widening our self-awareness'.
- ▶ **Learn**: Children and young people can learn more about drama as a subject as well as building on young people's self esteem and confidence.
- ▶ **Give**: Drama can give young people transferable skills, such as public speaking, working within groups and empathy.

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