



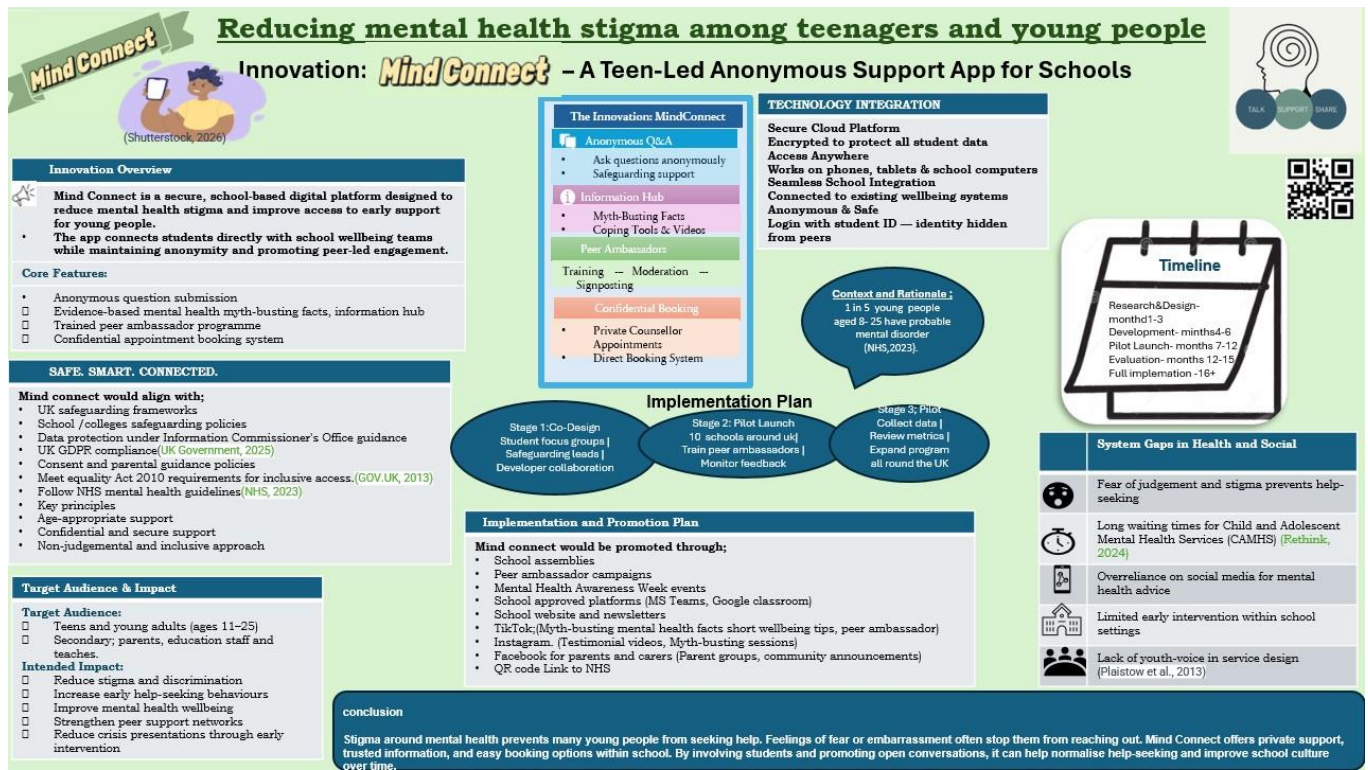
BMHP5014 Changemakers; Creativity and value creation

Assignment Title;
Component -2 Written Assignment (poster and Pitch)

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Every day, thousands of young people walk into school carrying emotional struggles that no one else sees. Even with greater awareness about mental health, teenagers and young adults still avoid seeking help because they fear being misunderstood or judged (YoungMinds, no date). In 2023, NHS data showed that 1 in 5 young people aged 8-25 were experiencing a probable mental disorder. I realised that fear of judgement, embarrassment, and concerns about confidentiality are powerful barriers. That is why I developed Mind Connect, a teen-led, anonymous digital support platform designed to be embedded directly within schools. Mind Connect is a safe and easy-to-use system within schools that helps reduce stigma and support early intervention. It connects students directly with school wellbeing staff in a way that protects privacy and encourages peer engagement. I wanted it to feel friendly and familiar, not clinical or intimidating. Because students attend school daily, it is a useful place to provide regular and early mental health support. The Mindconnect app is totally free for students to use. Introducing fees would create an additional barrier to access for young people. Mental health support should be accessible, confidential, and fair for all students, regardless of their financial situation. The main goal is to reduce stigma and improve early support.

Mind Connect differs from most existing mental health apps because it is directly embedded within a school or college and linked to the wellbeing team, rather than being a general app that anyone can download. While many mental health apps focus on self-assessment tools, mood tracking, or automated responses, Mind Connect enables students to submit anonymous questions directly to school staff without revealing their identity to peers. It also includes trained peer ambassadors who help promote positive mental health conversations and strengthen social support networks (Naslund et al., 2016).

The platform is built around four core elements. First, an anonymous question submission function allows students to raise concerns without revealing their identity to peers, reducing the fear of being judged. Secondly, an evidence-based information hub provides myth-busting facts and short educational videos to improve mental health literacy and challenge misinformation often found online. The trained peer ambassador programme empowers students to lead awareness campaigns, moderate discussions, and signpost their peers to appropriate help. Artificial intelligence can help prioritise student support by analysing anonymous feedback, online interactions, and well-being surveys to identify concerning patterns. It can recognise trends or keywords related to issues such as stress, bullying, or mental health concerns and flag them for staff attention. This would enable schools to focus on the most serious cases while still providing support to all students. Finally, I have included

a private booking system so students can arrange counselling appointments without the stress of approaching staff in front of others.

I have developed this innovation because I can see clear gaps in the current health and social care system (Islam et al., 2016). While specialist services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) play a crucial role in supporting young people's mental well-being, long waiting times can hinder access to necessary support. Many young individuals' needs are not met by the specified referral thresholds or face lengthy delays. This can have a negative impact on their mental health during this critical waiting period. Moreover, I have recognised that the voices of young people are often missing when services are designed. Support is often made without fully including them (Wright and Ord, 2015). With Mind Connect, I aim to engage young people in discovering solutions that work for them. Their input is essential for creating an effective support system.

The main group I aim to support is young people aged 11 to 25 in schools and colleges, especially those who are hesitant to seek face-to-face help. However, I also see positive impacts for parents, teachers, and school wellbeing teams. Parents and carers gain reassurance that structured, regulated support is accessible. Teachers and safeguarding teams benefit from clearer pathways for responding to concerns. School counsellors may receive earlier, more manageable referrals. Ultimately, my goal is to reduce stigma, increase early help-seeking, improve mental health literacy, and create stronger peer support networks.

I created a three-step implementation plan to make this innovation achievable and long-lasting. This project will begin with a structured co-design lasting between one and three months. In this stage, I would involve student focus groups and work closely with safeguarding leads. In addition, I would partner with digital developers to make sure the platform is secure, accessible and meets regulations. The second step would involve piloting the programme in ten selected schools across the UK, training peer ambassadors, and systematically monitoring engagement and feedback over a four- to eleven-month period. The final stage would involve evaluating well-being data and refining the platform prior to scaling it to additional schools.

In developing this innovation, I would develop a comprehensive budget that covers essential cost areas, including app development and technological infrastructure, training for peer ambassadors, safeguarding and regulatory compliance, marketing and promotion, programme evaluation, and ongoing annual expenses following the pilot phase. Instead of charging students, I will secure funding through school or college subscriptions, NHS early

intervention funding, grants from charities like Mind and Young Minds, and partnerships with universities (GOV.UK, no date, England, 2017). I will also collaborate with key organisations to strengthen Mind Connect, ensuring it is safe, credible, and impactful. These partners will include NHS England (linked to CAMHS pathways), Youth Mind, NHS and the Department for Education.

Ensuring safety and regulatory compliance is a fundamental priority in my design. Mind Connect would align with UK safeguarding frameworks, school safeguarding policies, UK GDPR and guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (Gov.uk, 2018). It would also adhere to NHS mental health guidelines and meet the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) to ensure inclusive access for all students. I would like to emphasise that Mind Connect is intended to work alongside specialist services, strengthening early intervention pathways and contributing to improved outcomes for service users.

From a technological perspective, I designed MindConnect to run on a secure, cloud-based, encrypted system. It would be accessible across smartphones, tablets, and school computers. Students would log in using school login details while remaining anonymous to peers. Authorised pastoral staff would have access to an administrative dashboard to manage responses and monitor safeguarding issues. Importantly, the platform is designed to integrate with, rather than replace, existing school wellbeing systems.

I would promote MindConnect through a combination of school assemblies, peer-led campaigns, and Mental Health Awareness Week activities. I would also use school-approved platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom to share information. Social media channels, including TikTok and Instagram, could be used to deliver myth-busting messages and brief wellbeing advice, while Facebook would support engagement with parents and carers. By combining school-based activities with digital outreach, I aim to encourage wider cultural change.

In conclusion, I created MindConnect because I believe that no young person should feel embarrassed or afraid to seek support. Stigma still prevents many from speaking openly. By offering anonymous access, trustworthy information, peer support, and discreet professional guidance within schools, I hope to make help-seeking feel safe and normal. To me, MindConnect represents more than an app; it is a step toward building a school culture where mental health is openly discussed and free from judgment.

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