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Introduction

This report is to explore the role as an EMHP, a profession that is designed to provide help to children and young adults who may suffer with mild to moderate mental health issues in schools and colleges. Mental health difficulties have become a growing concern globally among children and young adults. Approximately 10-20% of CYP are affected with mental health in England. The National Health Services (NHS) have provided a Mental Health Support team within the educational setting to help with children and young adults who suffer with any mental health issues. The purpose of today's report is to outline the responsibilities and the duties of an educational mental health practitioner; in this report we will be going through the skills and strategies required to perform the role as well as delivering evidence. Furthermore, for this report I will be identifying each skill with practical tools and strategies to demonstrate how practitioners can develop their professions and be enhanced on their capabilities for the role within a health and social care environment.

Understanding the role of an Educational Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP).

Educational mental health practitioner is a role that operates and specialises with the mental health support team to support educational settings and specialises with children and young adults who need the support. The aim of the role is to help access and improve the mental health support in schools and colleges by delivering low intensity interventions directly to the schools and colleges. The profession as a EMHP is to work with common mental health problems with students who suffer with anxiety, low moods, and behavioural difficulties.

The responsibilities a EMHP holds are too diverse and extend beyond one-to-one therapeutic sessions, as practitioners conduct mental health assessments to help guide self-help and cognitive behavioural therapy which will support the development of the whole school. As highlighted in a job description from East London NHS Foundation Trust a EMHP is expected to provide mental health and wellbeing support to children and young adults which involves you working close by with school and colleges staff, student's families/ parents, and external partners to address the mental health needs for schools and colleges. Jameire Vaughan, a senior EMHP describes her role as involving “clinical supervision, treatment or assessments with young adults, schools' workshop and team meetings”, illustrating the varied nature of the work. The duties a EMHP must perform are to develop a robust set of core skills.

Skills:

The essential skill for an EMHP is the ability to effectively assess and engage with children, young adult and their families to get an understanding of their lives outside of schools and colleges. Practitioners must always build a trusted therapeutic alliance with the students before starting any interventions, this is so that the EMHP is able to identify the nature and severity of the students' difficulties accurately. The context of an assessment is more than identifying the symptoms it requires the understanding of the persons educational and home environment. In a university of Exeter modules for EMHP training. Practitioners must learn “assessment and engagement skills particular to educational settings”. Which includes the use of “Routine Outcome measures and standardised assessment tools” so that you are able establish the change and monitor progresses. The skill is crucial whether a young person's needs are appropriate for low intensity support within the MHST or they are required to more specialist services to get them the right support. Effective engagement is about building empathy and having active listening skills to create a safe space so that the child or young adult feels supported as well as understood which is a fundamental to any therapeutic work.

Strategies:

An EMHP can utilise many different tools and strategies, but clinical supervision is a primary tool for development, trained and qualified EMHPs have weekly clinical supervisions from experienced supervisors to reflect and discuss cases and their techniques as well as deciding the suitable treatment path. Secondly a structured clinical role play and simulation provide a safe environment, the University of Southampton EMHP course uses clinical simulation and role play to help students develop competences.

Standardised assessment tools are structured assessments to help ensure a consistent approach of understanding is provided to the person's needs. By engaging with supervision visits are to help EMHP to get feedback on their counselling's and a better understanding from a 3rd eye point of view as well as building a strong foundation.

Evidence based interventions:

Evidence based and low intensity interventions are remotely informed by Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). The role of an EMHP was specifically developed to help those who have mild to moderate mental health issues. This role involves you to work alongside with the CYP and students' parents or carers to equip them with practical strategies to help manage their difficulties this usually last for 4 to 8 sessions to get a brief understanding. The interventions are designed for low intensity so that they are less complex and are often for self-help materials. Using guides as group programmes and self-help programmes are usually used to help both children/young adults and parents to deliver interventions. By using this intervention and continuing it requires commitment from yourself and the students and parents. A key tool to use is clinical session recordings and video assessments but EMHPs must have supervision and assessment purposes to do a video assessment so that they are able to get detailed feedback on their therapeutic techniques.

Engaging in continuing professional development (CPD) through workshops, courses or conferences is to ensure the practitioners stay about the updated evidence-based practises so that they can expand on their therapeutic skills. The last strategy is having self-practice or self-reflection interventions what I mean by this is by engaging in clinical work so that practitioners can reflect and evaluate on their strengths and weaknesses on difficult cases for a growth-oriented mindset for professional growth.

Collaborative working and school approaches:

As Jameire Vaughan said “the work of an EMHP is not possible without the partnership with our schools” meaning EMHPs aren't supposed to work alone they are meant to work with the school staff, students' parents and families, senior mental health leads and Special Educational Needs Coordinators. The phrase “whole school” within the mental health brings is the role about being involved with different people surrounding you as well as creating a healthy mental health environment. A EMHP needs to understand the educational context to

organise due to organisation structures, policies, pressures the school faces as well as exam and transitions the school and students face.

EMHP can use several different strategies, but the main 3 strategies are multi agency meetings and consultation, audit of a school's mental health provision and lastly peer support and consultation. Starting with the first strategy multi agency meetings and consultation is a practical forum where you would be participating in screen meetings which will be a weekly basis so that it allows you to understand other professions within the school or college, moving on to the second strategy audit of a schools mental health provision, EMHPs are required to assess a schools mental health which will have you having involvements with school leadership, policies, and areas of development which helps you build a systemic working. Thirdly peer support and consultation with colleagues amongst the MHST. To help discuss complex cases as well as sharing strategies for the harder to reach students, as well as problem solving systemic challenges to help build confidence. You can do this by participating in multi-agency forums, undertaking school level audits. And engaging in peer consultations. EMHPs can develop their collaborative skills on their role by doing this.

Conclusion:

This report has examined three essential skills that are required for this role within the health and social care setting. Becoming a EMHP needs a lot of practises and supervising as well as communication within a school/college setting. The 3 skills are assessment and engagement to build therapeutic relationships, to have the ability to deliver evidenced based and low intensity CBT interventions and to competence in collaborative working and whole school approaches. For each of these skills this report has identified the strategies of the profession and the profession developments. This includes clinical supervision. Structured role play, session recordings, continuing professional development, multi-agency meetings, and school level audits. As school continue to grow the role of an EMHP will always remain essential by providing accessible, timely, and effective early interventions within the mental health services.

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