

<b>Project &amp; Funder</b> LGFA Talk Project	<b>Staff Lead</b> Phil Glennon	<b>Support staff</b> Natalie Corbett Lauren McAreavey	<b>Report Date</b> 22.06.2021	<b>Next funder report date:</b> N/A	
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**Context:**

In Sept 2019, staff from NIYF and LGFA began exploratory conversations with the possibility of how both organisations can work in partnership to promote positive mental health with members of the LGFA. It was decided to pilot NIYF's 'LIFEMAPS' programme with 4 clubs of the LGFA (Tir Na Og, Creggan Kickhams, Lisnaskea, Ballinascreen) with the purpose of developing a bespoke programme / resource that the LGFA could utilise with the young people they coach and work with, as well as upskill the coaches of the clubs in the 'LIFEMAPS framework & methodology'.

A number of meetings took place between LGFA / NIYF staff from Oct – Dec 2020, where the methodology, milestones and timescale of the 'Talk Project' was developed with the following to be implemented:

- **Preparation & design of training for LGFA staff, respective club coaches and volunteers**
- **Facilitation of 3 Education days with LGFA staff, respective club coaches and volunteers**
- **Design, edit and production of bespoke 'LGFA Talk Project' training booklet**
- **Remote support for clubs during their delivery of the 'Talk Project'**
- **Graduation & Evaluation event**
- **Evaluation report produced for LGFA**

An update on each of the following areas follows.

**Preparation & design of training for LGFA staff, respective club coaches and volunteers:**

NIYF staff Phil Glennon, Natalie Corbett and Lauren McAreavey designed 3 Education Days for LGFA staff including coaches and volunteers from the 4 clubs in Jan / Feb 2020.

### **Facilitation of 3 Education days with LGFA staff, respective club coaches and volunteers**

In Feb / Mar 2020, two full days training took place that were facilitated by NIYF staff in both Belfast & Cookstown, where LGFA staff/club coaches & volunteers participated in 'train the trainer' LIFEMAPS training. A third and final day training was organised for March 2020 with the intention of finishing the project by May 2020.

In March 2020, NIYF would experience the global pandemic that is 'COVID-19', that would see NIYF premises close for the foreseeable future. All direct engagement with young people and adults would move to online platforms, as staff entered into their first 'lock-down' that required them to work from home for the foreseeable future based on Government & Public Health guidelines.

In May 2020, 90% of NIYF staff were placed on the 'furlough scheme' that would not seem them return to NIYF premises until Sept 2020. This significantly impacted on the ability to facilitate and complete the 'LGFA Talk Project' that would push the project into 2021. Due to the complexities of further lock-downs and restrictions, it was not possible for NIYF to reengage with the project until Feb 2021. The final third training day took place in Feb 2021, where NIYF staff highlighted their experiences of engaging with 'LIFEMAPS' online in the previous year, including the impact of social media, the impact of NIYF's 'Our Voices' research and the 'Lets Talk' training booklet was presented to LGFA staff, coaches and volunteers. Feedback was also sought from participants / clubs regarding their experiences of 'lock-down' and the challenges of engaging directly with young people.

In April 2021, a further online session took place with LGFA staff, coaches and volunteers. The purpose of the session was to explore participants views on the delivery of the 'Let's Talk Project', including any highlights, challenges and direct feedback from young people. Further editing of the 'Lets Talk' booklet took place during this time and presented to LGFA staff/clubs for approval.

### **Design, edit and production of bespoke 'LGFA Talk Project' training booklet**

Following the first 2 days facilitation with staff, coaches and volunteers that took place in Feb / Mar 2020, this then began to shape the training booklet, however this was paused until the project recommenced in Feb 2021. Various versions/edits of the booklets were produced until a consensus was reached on the final version. Final completion of the booklet took place in May 2021 and sent to the LGFA/clubs.

### **Remote support for clubs during their delivery of the 'Talk Project'**

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and subsequent lock-down and restrictions, it was not possible for NIYF staff to physically meet with the 4 clubs although this was something very much NIYF staff were keen on when coaches and staff were in the process of delivering the training with the young people they worked with. NIYF staff did make themselves available to all clubs providing email addresses and encouraged people to make

contact at any time with queries or concerns or questions.

### **Graduation & Evaluation event**

An evaluation took place with the 4 clubs in May 2021 which included the completion of a pre-evaluation questionnaire (pls see attached) that would inform the evaluation session, which included direct comments from participants in relation to their learning from the project, highlights from the project, changes that could be made to the project (please see attached). A graduation date is been planned by the LGFA for the 'Lets Talk' project.

Some other direct comments and recommendations moving forward from participants include:

- ✓ Need to get buy in from other coaches in the respective clubs to ensure that people / club is fully 'bought in'
- ✓ All coaches need to complete the training with NIYF staff from each club, this was strongly expressed by the clubs including possible individual club support
- ✓ The 'Lets Talk' Project should be facilitated when it 'suits' the club and the young people / timing is critical / but also project is needed more than ever with the impact of mental health by COVID-19. It can be difficult to put a structured timeframe to this work and never more so during a pandemic
- ✓ Other age groups of young people should be targeted including the involvement of all coaches
- ✓ The 'Lets Talk' project has definitely given young people a 'greater voice/more vocal' platform
- ✓ Gaelic football and the focus on coaching/training/matches should not detract away from this project
- ✓ COVID-19 and impact of lock-downs had a major impact on young people's mental health including a loss of confidence / being isolated and disconnected from other young people, staff and the club
- ✓ Confidence has grown in the ability of coaches / staff to facilitate the training with young people but yearly training is needed in terms of 'refreshing' and also with coaches who have not received the training
- ✓ Coaches need to build on this confidence and put it into practice but also the club as a whole / community
- ✓ There is a 'big issue' with the young men and huge gap regarding positive mental health, young men's communication is deteriorating
- ✓ A residential approach in terms of delivering the 'train the trainer' training would be welcomed moving forward
- ✓ A helpful resource would be the development of 'laminated letters' from LIFEMAPS methodology that can be used at different stages and times and also the development of a 'credit-card' sized resource that shows the model
- ✓ A need / approach to build 'lets talk project / LIFEMAPS' framework into coaching moving forward but again whole club buy-in needed
- ✓ The term 'languishing' was not used and this could be looked at moving forward in terms of reshaping the term, but the terms

'flourishing/flow' were used considerably

- ✓ The pressure of school work / exams / education should not be overlooked in terms of the pressures that young people face
- ✓ 'Checking in / Checking out' was a crucial process and should be fully encouraged in clubs
- ✓ NIYF can bring more weight as an organisation / buy in with clubs and coaches where staff from the clubs can advocate for the project / training moving forward
- ✓ This project / training could not have been more valuable when a 'tragedy' struck the club/community

**Evaluation report produced for LGFA**

Evaluation report send on 22/06/2021.