

## What are the Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)?

The Mental Health Support Teams were introduced to deliver mental health support and low intensity interventions to young people in primary and secondary schools and colleges across 20-25% of the country. Their aim is to enhance wellbeing of young people and reduce the waiting times for specialist mental health services.



## What do the MHSTs do?

MHSTs are unique in enabling young people to access help early before their difficulties become severe and require specialist services. The MHSTs also work with schools to promote the concept of a “whole school approach” to mental health and emotional wellbeing. This is to ensure that children and young people get the right help, at the right time, to stay in education and remain socially connected.



## What is the MHST research clinic?

The MHST Research Clinic is funded by the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) with the aim of conducting research to establish the effectiveness of this new provision (MHSTs) and whether the low intensity interventions, and delivery format, are suitable. We also aim to provide evidence as to whether the services offered are helping to protect children and young people against later difficulties and mental ill health.

We will also be undertaking some research with young people who you have body image challenges.

We will also be discussing with students and staff what research questions they would like answered.

We will then try to secure money to put a team together to answer these questions.



## Our research vision

There will be many learning opportunities in the clinic for the trust, clinic staff, clinical psychology trainees and other researchers, to undertake novel research as well as developing new collaborations.

Currently, there is little evidence and training to support young people with OCD, PTSD, Autism, and other neurodiverse populations in this context. We're hoping to undertake research with young people presenting with these difficulties following our initial work.

We also aim to further investigate the concept of ‘whole school approach’ and whether it is effective in building resilience and wellbeing to protect children and young people from more severe difficulties.



## Who we are

The clinic is co-led by:

Clare Dixon (Clinical Lead for West Sussex Mental Health Support Teams in Schools, SPFT and West Sussex County Council)

Faith Orchard (Lecturer in Psychology, University of Sussex)

Mary John (Clinical Research Fellow, SPFT and Head of Department of Psychological Intervention, University of Surrey).

With assistance from Emilia Robinson.



## Get in touch...

The clinic is not a referral-based service, however, participation and co-production are at the heart of MHSTs, involving CYP, parents and carers, local services, and schools/colleges. If you would like to provide input and ideas as part of the development of our research or help out with any of our ongoing research, please contact our clinic research assistant - [emilia.robinson@spft.nhs.uk](mailto:emilia.robinson@spft.nhs.uk).