Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Emotional health

Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
The young person was struggling with their mental and emotional health. They had self-harmed in the past and expressed anxiety and panic attacks. The young person had had an argument with mum and felt like they were not wanted. They felt they had no one to talk to.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
The young person was supported to discuss how they felt and to ascertain if they felt safe. Immediate support was offered by directing them to relevant websites and provided with strategies to look at to remain active and gain some space during lockdown, such as exercise. They were also encouraged to attend the school nurse drop-in clinic when school reopened.

The outcomes of the care provided to the young person:
The young person acknowledged that they found the websites to be useful as well as the supporting strategies offered i.e. looking at a daily plan of keeping active.

They had been advised to have a conversation with mum, which they were able to do and felt better for doing so.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
This was a supportive contact with a young person who was finding the lockdown difficult and had argued with their parent. There was a positive outcome, as the feedback indicated the young person had found the conversation helpful and felt better being able to talk to someone. The breathing exercises and suggested websites were found to be beneficial.

The Humber school nurse messaging service launched in June 2019.

The service supports 28,000 young people aged 11-19 in the East Riding area Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Jacki Scott, School Nurse, Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Emotional health

Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
The young person had previous poor mental health and was struggling more with this during the COVID-19 lockdown. They had lost their normal support networks, such as seeing close friends and their counselling sessions had ended. They had tried to keep to a routine but were unsure what else they could do to improve their emotional wellbeing.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
The young person discussed the reasons why they felt isolated and how they didn't feel they could talk to family members in the household. In the care provided, they were offered ways to relieve the stress levels and emotions they were experiencing. They chatted about the importance of exercise, sleep and eating healthily and encouraged to video call/phone friends for a chat. The young person was signposted to useful websites to help their emotional well-being during lockdown.

The outcomes of the care provided to the young person:
The young person was reassured that they are not alone and there is still support available to them. They were given some ideas and tools to be able to start to help themselves and were empowered to seek out other resources to help them during isolation.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
ChatHealth was extremely beneficial to this young person, in particular, as they were socially isolated and did not feel they could talk to others in their household.

The young person was thankful for the support given. Had it not have been for ChatHealth, they may not have been given this advice about coping mechanisms. Being able to chat to someone anonymously in this way really helped this young person.

> The Humber school nurse messaging service launched in June 2019.
>
> The service supports 28,000 young people aged 11-19 in the East Riding area Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Claire Douce, School Nurse, Humber Teaching NHS Foundation Trust

Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Emotional health

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
Several messages were received from 'Jonny' (name changed to protect confidentiality). He required support with his emotional health and wellbeing, and in particular, he wanted help with low mood and anxiety.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
Following introductions from the school nurse and advising of our confidentially policy, 'Jonny' was invited to discuss what he was worried about and what support he felt he needed.

'Jonny' identified quite quickly that he was feeling low and that he was suffering from anxiety, which had got worse over the last few months. He also reported that he self-harmed and wanted to 'end his life'. He felt he had no-one to talk to or support him and that no-one listens to him. With this information it was important to quickly establish the risk and whether the young person had suicidal intention. Alarmingly, Jonny reported he did have a plan to kill himself and this was something he wanted to do. However, he reported that he did want to be helped.

Due to these circumstances, it was essential for the school nurse to ascertain the young person's identity and location in order to clarify whether he was in a place of safety and whether he had someone near him who could offer immediate support. 'Jonny' willingly gave his name, confirmed that he was in school and he was 'in a room on his own.' He also gave the name of the school and agreed for contact to be made with the safeguarding lead at his school.

The outcomes of the care provided:
Following immediate contact with the safeguarding lead at the school, the school nurse supported staff to ensure that the needs of 'Jonny' were met. This included ensuring that he was safe, that he received the appropriate support and that his parents were informed and involved in his care.

No immediate risk was identified and Jonny was referred, by school staff, to the School Public Health Service. He was accepted for care by the Children and Young People Mental Health Service.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
The messaging conversation directly led to making the situation better for this young person and he was able to reach out and find the help he needed

Importantly, this positive outcome was achieved using a system that 'fits in' with what is already happening within the service. Furthermore, this digital approach to working with young people works well in the face of the challenges the service is up against. Such challenges include time, resources and the provision of cost effective care.

By communicating with young people using ChatHealth it has increased the reach and access of the service. It allows young people to gain support confidentially and anonymously and for this reason, perhaps allows us to reach young people who may not ordinarily speak to professionals. The voice of the child is listened to and responded to in a timely way. In this instance, 'Jonny' was risk assessed and signposted effectively to an appropriate service to support his emotional health and well-being.

The messaging service for Kent School Health Service launched in November 2016.

The service supports 27,000 young people in Kent Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Jean Ravenna, School Nurse Team Coordinator, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Emotional health

Children and Family Health Surrey

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
The young person was feeling worried about school work, being bullied and self-harm.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
The messaging conversation took place over five days; this helped to build some trust and rapport. It seemed that the young person wanted someone to listen and understand her. Advice was given to email her teachers and to talk to her mum about what she was experiencing. We talked about bullies and it was also discussed how mental health is more important than school work during the coronavirus lockdown situation.

The outcomes of the care provided:
An evaluation was sent at the end of the conversation and the service user said 'yes' that the service was helpful.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
It felt that this girl found it difficult to talk face-to-face with someone. ChatHealth gave her the opportunity to talk via text messaging in a safe environment.

The Hounslow school nurse messaging service launched in May 2016.

The service supports 60,000 young people across Surrey, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Lucy Honey, School Nurse, Children and Family Health Surrey

Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Eating disorder

Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
The young person messaged through ChatHealth seeking support for her eating problems. She had not been diagnosed or sought medical help previously but disclosed that she was restricting her eating to lose weight and tracking calories.

Significant concerns were raised when the young person wrote a long letter about her struggle with food, which she shared via ChatHealth, showing further insight into her problem with food and that she only eating 600 calories daily.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
Normally, a young person that triggers this level of concern on ChatHealth would be offered a face-to-face assessment in school. Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, such a visit was not possible. Therefore, the young person was offered a telephone call to support her needs which she was happy to accept as she hadn't realised that she could be supported in this way whilst at home.

Following this, a telephone appointment was arranged with a school nurse and a follow-up call to the young person's mother with her consent. This aftercare and support is still continuing, both the young person and her mother are engaging with the plan and receiving weekly support calls. Consent was also obtained to liaise with her GP about her difficulties.

The outcomes of the care provided:
This case is ongoing but the concerns about the young person's mental health have reduced. She has the support of her mother and has started to try to eat healthily. She has also returned to school part-time. The picture for this young person is looking a lot brighter due to the support she received via ChatHealth.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
The school nursing team would never have known about this young person and therefore would not have been able to support her without ChatHealth. This young person is unlikely to have sought help elsewhere.

ChatHealth enables young people, such as in this case, to reach out for support without having to look someone in the face and talk. They have a safe way to talk without feeling judged and they can set the pace of the conversation.

The messaging service for Southern Health school nursing service launched in September 2016.

The service supports 100,000 young people in Hampshire, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Monica Unsworth, Clinical Team Leader, Southern NHS Foundation Trust

Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Medical issue

Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
The young person had a medical issue with ongoing blocked ears that was causing hearing loss. They were not sure what to do in the current pandemic with limited access to healthcare and did not want to cause extra work for the NHS.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
The school nurse relieved worries about symptoms and reassured that GPs and healthcare providers are still open to provide ongoing non-coronavirus care. It was discussed how to look after the problem and stay safe, this gave them the confidence to seek further medical advice and know how to manage their symptoms long term.

The outcomes of the care provided:
Reassurance, advice and signposting were provided to solve the problem. It was a chance for concerns to be listened to and reduce related stress. The young person ended the conversation with an action plan of how to deal with the problem and the confidence to access healthcare in these difficult times. They also had information about the ongoing management of the problem and advice about when and how to seek help.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
On this occasion, the young person did not want to bother GP with their query but was clearly worried about the impact of not reporting symptoms. With reassurance and validation of their concerns they were able to call the GP to address the issue. Although a simple query, this gave a young person a positive experience with ChatHealth and the school nursing service, so they may be encouraged to use it again in future or recommend to peers. In a time when health services are so stretched and schools are closed, ChatHealth gave this young person someone to speak with safely and access to important healthcare.

The messaging service for the Dorset school nursing service launched in June 2017.

The service supports 80,000 young people in Dorset, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm.

**Hanna New, SCPHN School Nurse,
Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust**

Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Emotional health

Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
A 13-year-old messaged the service with thoughts that she might have ADHD or be "on the spectrum" due to comments from older sister. They were also struggling with anger, anxiety and fights with sister.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
The school nurse signposted the young person to numerous web-based support platforms, including Health for Teens and Young Minds. In addition, they were provided with grounding techniques to use. Further to this, advice and support was given to talk to trusted individuals including parents, school staff and friends.

The outcomes of the care provided:
During this contact, messages from this young person seemed quite manic to begin with. As the ChatHealth conversation went on it appeared to help to calm this young people. At a later date, the young person messaged back for a second time, suggesting that they felt supported by ChatHealth and that it helped them to cope.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
The young person stated that they often get support from a base within school, but as they were not currently attending school this was not available to them. ChatHealth provided them with an alternative to this school provision. The young person was very thankful and was grateful for the support provided. It seemed this young person simply needed an outlet and someone to listen and that is exactly what ChatHealth provided for them.

The messaging service for the Dorset school nursing service launched in June 2017.

The service supports 80,000 young people in Dorset, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm.

**Jenny Huddleston, Specialist Practitioner –School Nursing,
Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust**

Case study: Support during the coronavirus crisis – Sexual health

North East Lincolnshire Council

The issue the young person was experiencing and seeking advice for:
A young person sent a text to ask how long it would take to get an implant fitted, it was due to be done prior to lockdown and she wanted it fitting as soon as possible. They had already been seen by the school nurse who was arranging this to be done within school just before the schools closed.

The care provided by ChatHealth:
The young person used ChatHealth in an appropriate manner and was well supported and listened to by the school nursing team. Following this contact, the school nurse shared the young person's name and contact number with the sexual health team so they could contact them.

The outcomes of the care provided:
The young person was initially assessed over the phone and then attended local sexual health provision to be fitted with an implant. The young person was very happy that the issue was sorted out.

Impact of ChatHealth on this particular contact:
Without ChatHealth this young person would not have been able to receive the succinct service that they received.

ChatHealth has been helpful in the current COVID-19 lockdown situation in order to meet young people's needs as they arise, such as in this case study.

The messaging service for North East Lincolnshire Children's Health Provision launched in December 2016.

The service supports 9,000 young people in North East Lincolnshire, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Emma McCutcheon, Public Health School Nurse, North East Lincolnshire Council