

Q & A @ THE WELL CENTRE

Grey hair
Dandruff
Bald patch
Itchy scalp
Is this normal?
Headaches
Depressed
Worry
Panic attacks
Tiredness
Am I gay?
Is this normal?

Confidential
Relaxed
Informal

Sore eyes
Bags
Very teary
More Bags
Is this normal?
Ear ache
Bad earwax
Deafness
Hayfever
Nose bleeds
Flu
Shaving rash
Toothaches
Bad breath
Is this normal?

Confidential
Drop in
Nurse

Alcohol
Bullying
Assault
Infection
Flaky skin
Is this normal?
Sexuality
Drugs
Injury
Sexually transmitted diseases
Dead leg
Is this normal?

Confidential
Doctors
Youthworker
Safe

The Well Centre is a safe and confidential space in South London that provides local young people,

aged 13–19 years old the opportunity to meet and speak to a GP, nurse, counsellor, or youth-worker. It works on a drop-in basis. www.thewellcentre.org

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I DOCTORED LONELY AND THOUGHT ALOUND

*I doctored lonely and thought aloud
With all my patients' woes and ills,
'Til I found a website that vowed,
To improve my doctoring skills;
I'd choose whatever module pleased,
And press the buttons on my PC.*

*Or Mac if I was so inclined
And learn at any time of day,
Innumerable lessons all online,
I didn't even have to pay:
Ten thousand answers right by chance,
To make my PDP enhanced.*

*The case vignettes were clear, but they
Were not like patients that I see;
So website bookmarks thrown away,
For lack of non-conformity!
It all looked flash — but little thought
Was needed for the credits sought:*

*Now I don't want to even try
The biologically skewed
Questions, that have been formed by
Some computer boffin-dude;
No progress in consulting skills,
To help me, my patients, and their ills.*

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NEW RESOURCE FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Evidence suggests that young people who contemplate suicide or self-harm seldom seek professional support, but are more likely to turn to peers on social networks for help.¹ Indeed, the face of adolescent social interaction has changed radically in the past decade with increasing ease of access to online social media. This has also brought about the phenomena of cyber-bullying, predominantly involving teenagers and with its own consequences for the mental health of victims, as has been highlighted in press coverage of related suicide attempts.

Since its inception in 1999, the Beat Bullying Group (www.thebbgroup.org) has been working to raise awareness of and provide support for victims of online and offline bullying. Using a similar model of peer support and mentoring from trained volunteers, the group is now poised to launch MindFull (www.mindfull.org, @MindFullUK); an online forum aimed at children aged 11–17 years, encouraging access to mental health information and support.

The MindFull website is a closely moderated forum where users may chat with appropriately trained peer mentors, mental health professionals, and trained counsellors. Oversight by automated and manned systems to pick up inappropriate behaviour or safeguarding issues is in place, and all users may flag up concerns about other users to the site administrators at any stage. Volunteers spend a few hours per week online and are available to engage with users.

The official launch on 5 July was supported by speeches from OCD sufferer and Conservative MP Charles Walker, as well as Ed Milliband and Professor Tanya Byron. I also attended and spoke to the audience of my involvement and hopes to engage colleagues in supporting the venture and signposting young patients and their families to the website.

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1. Michelmore L, Hindley P. Help-seeking for suicidal thoughts and self-harm in young people: a systematic review. *Suicide Life Threat Behav* 2012; **42**(5): 507–524.