

Research indicates that gang members have a higher incidence of mental health illness, not just above the general population, but also above other entrants to the criminal justice system.¹ Providing support to these people is therefore likely to have significant impact on crime in London.²

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police (MPS) are developing Mental Health Awareness and Safeguarding Training (or MAST), to be made available for front line staff who work with young people and, in particular, gang members. We want to make it easier for these workers to identify and take the right support action when there are signs of mental health issues / emotional trauma.

We are trying to find some existing resources that might help us in planning this training, and we would like your help. Do you know of any online articles, journals, research papers, websites, blogs, vlogs etc that would give us some useful information about the following?

Mental health and gangs

- The link between mental health/emotional trauma, offending, and gangs
- Identifying risk factors in young people at risk of mental illness / emotional trauma, offending and gangs
- Vulnerability of young people to sexual predation by gangs and how this may be linked to mental health

Supporting a young person with mental health issues

- How a practitioners' behaviour can impact on a situation.
- Benefits of early intervention.
- Why it's a practitioner's role to take action (Case studies could be useful here)
- The concept of a 'therapeutic conversation' and how it can help.

Understanding and identifying mental health (MH) / emotional trauma (ET) Issues

- A general understanding of MH / ET, particularly those conditions affecting young people.
- Common symptoms of MH / ET.
- How mental illness presents in young people.
- How young people at risk of MI / ET can escalate.
- Risk factors in young people at risk of mental illness / emotional trauma, offending and gangs.
- Vulnerability of young people to sexual predation by gangs, and how this is this linked to MH.

¹ <http://psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/newsarticle.aspx?articleid=1726661>;

http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/pdfs/Bradley_Commission_briefing2_youngadults.pdf

² Changing Course Preventing Gangs Membership, US Dept of Justice, Office of Justice Programs; <http://www.londonhp.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/The-London-needs-assessment-for-young-people-with-complex-emotional-behavioural-or-mental-health-problems.pdf>

Delivering the training

- Are there any practical exercises that are considered to be particularly effective when delivering MH training? (e.g. role playing)
- Are there any case studies where things have gone well and wrong in the field of MH that we can learn from?
- Are there other training programmes that cover similar themes?

So if you know of any useful resources that we could tap into to help shape the training, please email them to simon.strick@met.pnn.police.uk