MENTAL HEALTH
RESEARCH MATTERS

Autumn 2022
campaign summary

Networks for change

In 2018, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) funded 8 mental health research networks. These networks are made up of academics, clinicians, third sector representatives, experts by experience and other individuals passionate about the transformative power of mental health research.

They tackle a variety of mental health research subjects addressing some of society's most pressing mental health challenges.

The networks embrace a collaborative ethos, connecting researchers from a wide range of disciplines, including technology, health, medicine, biology, social sciences, humanities and environmental sciences.

In 2019, Mental Health Research Matters was formed. Our goal was to bring together and amplify the work of the eight UKRI networks, including creating a campaign.

From 10th October -1st December 2022, we sparked an online conversation about:

- Why mental health research matters
- What good mental health research looks like
- How each of us could get involved and make a difference.

Here's what happened...

Mental Health Research Matters

What is the #MentalHealthResearchMatters campaign?

A digital conversation designed to get to the heart of why mental health research matters, what good mental health research looks like and how we can all get involved to make a difference.

Why is it important?

Everyone deserves to live happy and mentally healthier lives. We need more and better research so that people can get the right support at the right time.

Why did we work with UKRI mental health research networks?

Since they were founded in 2018, the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) mental health research networks have been addressing some of the UK's most critical areas in mental health research.

We wanted to celebrate their commitment to listening to and learning from experts by experience, collaboration across disciplines, addressing inequalities and working in partnership with organisations outside academia.

Who did we hope to reach?

Our goal was to inspire mental health researchers to create better research, encourage more experts by experience to get involved in research, and ask more clinicians and practitioners to engage with the latest research.

Who are we?

We are a cross-organisational team funded by UKRI. Mental Health Research Matters is a collaboration between The McPin Foundation, University of Oxford and Mental Elf.

#MentalHealthResearchMatters
IN NUMBERS

85.3 mil

Twitter impressions on the campaign hashtag between October 10th and Dec 1st 2022

4k

Tweets using the campaign hashtag from 2k different accounts

399

Webinar attendees across 5 online events
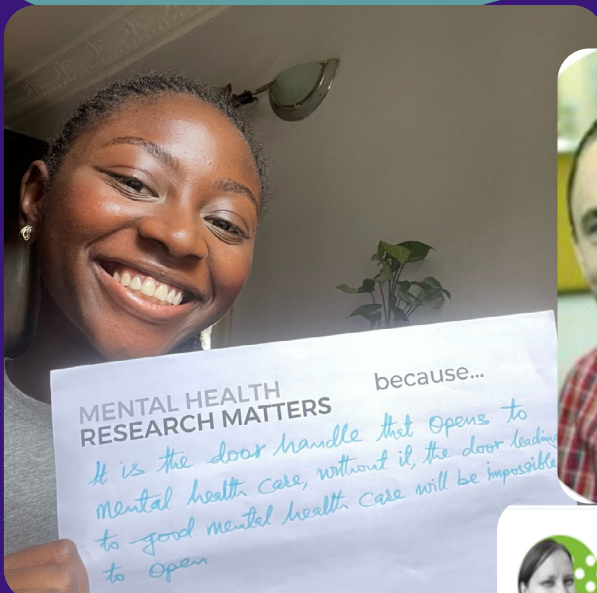
180k+

Views on campaign videos and clips

15

Blogs, covering topics such as antiracism in mental health research, lived experience involvement and why we need mental health research

100%

Organic reach - no ad spend!
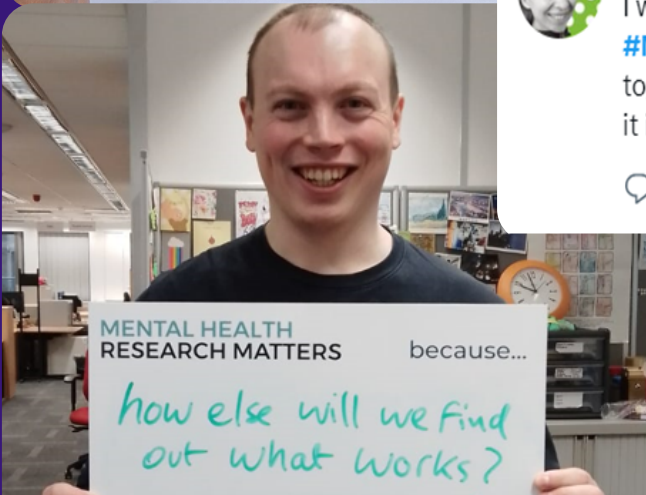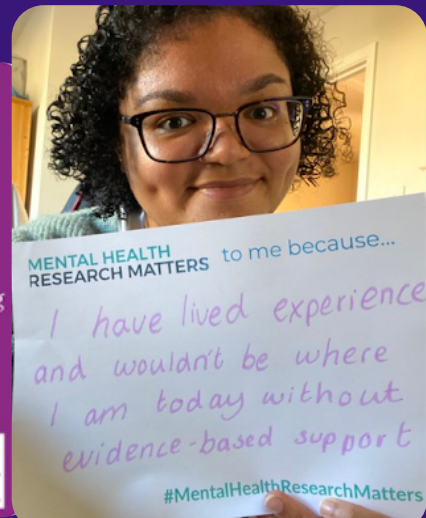
Why Does Mental Health Research Matter?

We asked you why mental health research matters.

Here's what (some of) you told us.

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH MATTERS because... It is the door handle that opens to mental health care, without it, the door leading to good mental health care will be impossible to open

66 Why does mental health research matter to you

"1 in 5 people suffer from their mental health. Mental health research is essential for improving their early diagnosis and providing effective care."

Jakub,
Senior Research Associate

CCNR

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH MATTERS to me because... I have lived experience and wouldn't be where I am today without evidence-based support

#MentalHealthResearchMatters

Incubator for Mental Health Research @MHRIncubator · 2h
I will be hosting this Twitter space this eventful week! To me #MentalHealthResearchMatters because it brings people to work together to ensure every person gets the support they need when they need it in order to live life with a sense of meaning and purpose.

♡ 1   ♡ 3

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH MATTERS because... how else will we find out what works?

NIHR SPCR @NIHRSPCR · 3h
We are proud to be working with @NIHRSPHR and @NIHRSSCR on the NIHR Three Research Schools Mental Health Programme. We are working together to improve the mental health of people and communities everywhere. #WorldMentalHealthDay #MentalHealthResearchMatters

Maria Loades
@MariaLoades

Replying to @AmeliaTalbot @n_higsonsweeney and 7 others

To me, it's a fundamental- we know so much about maintaining physical health and treating illness, and the same should be true for mh -》 all live our best lives ❤ do we need to find out what works and for whom, when and how to help all people to access it

4:41 pm · 10 Oct 2022 · Twitter for Android

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH MATTERS

Working together we can improve the mental health of people and communities everywhere.

Animated discussions about mental health research

We commissioned two animations to help promote the #MentalHealthResearchMatters campaign and share key messages.

We chose animations over filming as it gave us the creative freedom to explore complex topics in simple ways.

If you haven't seem them yet, click the video thumbnail to watch them - and keep sharing them on social media using the hashtag #MentalHealthResearchMatters.

This animation was created by Love and Logic

For our introductory animation, we focused on why mental health research matters, keeping a broad audience in mind.

The protagonists each had different challenges or stories relating to mental health - all connected to the different UKRI mental health research networks.

Thank you to the steering group for your excellent guidance in developing this!

This animation was created by Sixth Sense Media

Our second animation explored the campaign themes, looking at what we feel 'good' mental health research looks like. This animation was targeted at people involved in the world of mental health research.

We used real voices from the steering group and people involved with the UKRI mental health research networks, so they could say in their own words why these themes play their part in better mental health research.
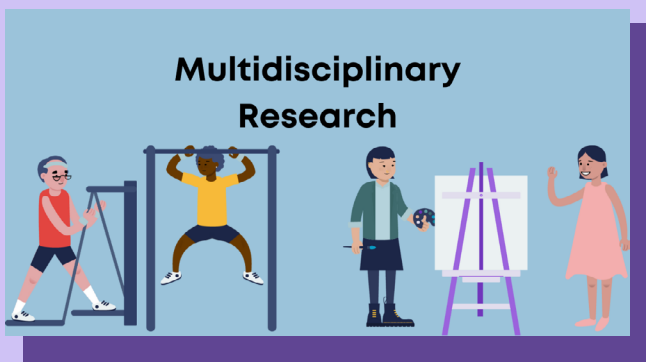
We believe good mental health research...

Inclusive research that tackles inequalities

is inclusive and addresses inequalities

Lived experience in research

listens to and learns from experts by experience

Multidisciplinary Research

collaborates with researchers across different disciplines

Partnership Working

works in partnership with non-academic organisations

Click on each theme for more detail, as well as examples of research embracing these values from across the eight UKRI mental health research networks.

Inclusive mental health research that tackles inequalities

We kicked off our webinar series on World Mental Health Day -10th October - with a discussion about how to create inclusive mental health research that tackles inequalities.

Dr Celestin Okoroji, Head of Research at Black Thrive led the conversation, and he was joined by four fantastic speakers from MARCH network, Closing the Gap, Loneliness and Social Isolation in Mental Health Research Network and Emerging Minds.

They discussed the role mental health research has in addressing inequalities, as well as practical tips for researchers to make their work more inclusive.

This is a must-watch for anyone looking to create more inclusive mental health research that explores structural issues that affect mental health.

Dr Celestin Okoroji

> **Part of the problem is we see mental health problems as a problem of the individual rather than a problem of the society and structures that we live in.**

Dr Praveetha Patalay - Loneliness and Social Isolation in Mental Health Research Network

Dr Praveetha Patalay

Watch the webinar on the Mental Elf YouTube channel

or mentalhealthresearchmatters.org.uk/videos

Multidisciplinary Mental Health Research How to do it (better)

The second #MentalHealthResearchMatters webinar delved into the benefits and challenges of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary mental health research.

Researching mental health across disciplines is rewarding, but not without its difficulties. Professor Kam Bhui, who led MARCH networks' Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group hosted the discussion, and was joined by guest speakers sharing their tips and tricks for working across disciplines.

Professor Nicola Shaughnessy encouraged researchers to embrace vulnerability and those in-between spaces in what she calls 'pyjama-wearing' thinking; Sylvan Baker asked the audience to think about how participation means different things to different people, and to adopt cointentionality into collaboration; and Cat Sebastian from Wellcome shared the organisations' progress and plans around funding more cross-disciplinary research.

UKRI mental health research network-funded researchers from more 'unusual disciplines' shared how their areas can add value to mental health research, covering subjects such as history, computer science, music and architecture.

Catch up with these on the Mental Elf YouTube channel.

Professor Kam Bhui

> **Cointentionality is really whoever is working, from whatever disciplines they are in has an agreed understanding on what the outcome is. Put another way, it's "We know what we're getting to, but not the route to get there"**

Dr Sylvan Baker -
Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Dr Sylvan Baker

Watch the webinar on the Mental Elf YouTube channel or mentalhealthresearchmatters.org.uk/videos

Experts by Experience in Mental Health Research

The Mental Health Research Matters steering group led the planning and delivery of this webinar.

Closing The Gap's Gordon Johnston hosted the event, and shared his key reasons why listening to experts by experience is essential for better mental health research.

He was joined by other steering group members and people with lived experience of mental health problems.

They spoke about their roles within the networks, the different types of lived experience involvement - from advisory roles to survivor-led research - and how they have personally benefited from getting involved.

This webinar is an excellent introduction to the varied and fascinating world of lived experience expertise in mental health research. We hope it will inspire more people to get involved and use their personal expertise to make sure their voices are heard, and therefore keep mental health research relevant and useful for the populations it seeks to help.

Gordon Johnston

This has given me courage.

I've met people who have had similar experiences to mine and have felt a sense of community and connection, and a safe space to turn our lemons into lemonade.

Catherine Fadashe - eNurture and McPin Young People's Network

Catherine Fadashe

Watch the webinar on the Mental Elf YouTube channel or mentalhealthresearchmatters.org.uk/videos

Partnership working with non-academic organisations

Dr Dan Robotham

Robin Hewings

Building successful partnerships with non-academic organisations is an important, but often overlooked in improving mental health research. These partnerships could be with charities, schools, businesses or even podcasters!

During the best partnerships, everybody benefits. Researchers can offer an impartial expert voice, an organisation may help researchers reach certain populations, and both parties can benefit from learning from different approaches to tackling an important issue that addresses mental health problems.

However, like with any type of collaboration, there are challenges to overcome.

For this webinar, speakers from charities, campaigners and researchers joined forces to share their successes and top tips for better partnership working.

A big thank you to Dr Dan Robotham, Deputy Director of the McPin Foundation for hosting this event, and Emily Lloyd, Network Coordinator at Emerging Minds for hosting a break out room.

"	Value that difference of approach. We see the world through a sympathetic but different approach and having good conversations about how to do that is something that is really important... Partnerships with organisations like ours is a vital way of making sure you have an impact."

Robin Hewings, Campaign to End Loneliness

Watch the webinar on the Mental Elf YouTube channel or mentalhealthresearchmatters.org.uk/videos

From Academia to Action: How can mental health research influence policy?

> **While we may talk about policymakers as an other - a mysterious small group of people in corridors of power, anyone who's involved in this, anyone who is producing research, creating evidence - we're all policymakers in one way or another.**
>
> Andy Bell -
> Interim CEO, Centre for Mental Health

Andy Bell

Professor Dame Til Wykes hosted our final Mental Health Research Matters webinar, which focused on turning research into policy.

An expert group of panellists joined her, including researchers who have successfully influenced policy, and people working with and for government organisations across the UK, Ireland and NHS England.

The panellists discussed the challenges that mental health researchers may face when trying to influence policy, as well as sharing tips for how you can have more impact with your research.

Although influencing policy is never a straightforward process, this webinar was jam-packed with practical suggestions, considerations and inspiring ideas, and felt like the perfect way to round off #MentalHealthResearchMatters.

Professor Dame Til Wykes

Watch the webinar on the Mental Elf YouTube channel or mentalhealthresearchmatters.org.uk/videos

BLOGS GALORE!

We produced 15 original blogs throughout the #MentalHealthResearchMatters campaign. Thank you to everyone who wrote one. Blog contributors included educators and teachers, included educators and teachers, a broad range of clinicians (from psychiatrists to dentists), and- to name a few!

If you haven't already, head to **mentalhealthresearchmatters.org.uk/blogs**

Mental health research is a team sport. People can have different specialties, different roles and different expertise, but we all have the same goal: to do better mental health research together that really matters."

Dr Sarah Knowles and Gordon Johnston - Mental health research is a team sport

We can't aim for deep and lasting change without engaging peer researchers with wide ranging lived experiences. Research must be community-led and incorporate interdisciplinary research perspectives"

Dr Arif Mahmud - Identity and Mental Health: University Muslim students' experiences of Mental Health

The great thing about research is that you can get involved any way you want with the right opportunity. Not all of us can take part in big projects due to things like illness, financial constraints, or simply not being comfortable with it. It's OK to do what works for you"

G - Expert by experience: how shaping research kick-started my career in mental health

There needs to be a wider acceptance of the nuances of people's experiences and that the boundaries between roles are likely to be blurred for many people. There are also hidden costs for researchers with lived experience, particularly the impact of the emotional labour that we are more likely to be asked for."

Dr Ruth Knight -The wisdom, privilege, and challenges of peer academic researchers in mental health research

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS
FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH MATTERS TEAM

" Personal highlights? Attending the TRIUMPH network event in Edinburgh and creating content with young people for social media. Reaching out to speakers for our five webinars and receiving such enthusiasm and engagement with the campaign from all of them and our audiences so huge thank you!"

Dr Vanessa Pinfold, The McPin Foundation

" My campaign highlight? Without a doubt, it was sharing dozens of examples of mental health research papers that have actually improved the lives of people living with mental health difficulties. Senior researchers shared their career highlights as irrefutable evidence of why #MentalHealthResearchMatters."

André Tomlin, Mental Elf

" Watching the steering group deliver their 'Experts by Experience' webinar was my campaign highlight. I built a great working relationship with them during the campaign planning, so I felt proud as punch watching them deliver a top-notch webinar with so much passion and professionalism!"

Daisy Armitage, The McPin Foundation

" It has been such a privilege to work alongside colleagues from the McPin Foundation and Mental Elf to amplify the broad range of fantastic mental health research that is going on and how it is changing lives. The team have really gone above and beyond to make sure that the campaign captured a broad range of voices and perspectives."

Professor Cathy Creswell, University of Oxford

A big thank you to...

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for funding the campaign. Your support gave us the means to deliver thought-provoking conversation starters, celebrate the mental health research networks and encourage more people to get involved in better mental health research.

The Mental Health Research Matters Steering Group for sharing your personal and professional expertise and shaping the campaign into something special.

The UKRI Mental Health Network Directors and Coordinators for your guidance, ideas, content contributions and support.

Everyone who created a blog, video, a 'leaders' tile, or spoke at a webinar. Your voices brought the campaign to life.

And finally, thank you to all the organisations and individuals who got involved with #MentalHealthResearchMatters. By attending webinars, tweeting, sharing a photo or creating your own content from scratch, you helped increase our reach and inspire new people to engage with mental health research.

MENTAL HEALTH
RESEARCH MATTERS

mentalhealthresearchmatters.org.uk