WHAT IMPACTS WELLBEING

NEGATIVE IMPACT / CHALLENGES

- BULLYING
- UNEMPLOYMENT
- DEATH
- LOSS OF FAMILY SUPPORT/REJECTION/REJECTION
- SELF-CONCEPT

POSITIVE IMPACT

- FAMILY & FRIENDS SUPPORT
- THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT
- MEANINGFUL HOBBIES
- PAID WORK

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLACEMENTS

- 5 lived with birth parents
- 14 adopted (3 by a family member)
- 7 in kinship foster care
- 11 in foster care

THE STUDY

- SO FAR, 48 young people and/or their foster/adopted/kinship parents/careers have taken part

CONCLUSIONS

The concept of wellbeing is very complex, and has been defined in a range of ways. According to Dodge et al. (2012), it is about having the psychological, social and physical resources needed to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. Here, the resources we have focused on are some health dimensions, self-concept and life satisfaction, although this study is exploring a range of others (e.g. social support).

Because of the yet small numbers of participants, it is difficult to draw confident conclusions. Most young people in the study are showing good levels of wellbeing (based on these dimensions), but there is a proportion that struggled in the past, with a few (still) struggling now. Placement type does not appear to be the main force behind any differences in wellbeing. While more young people in certain placement types appear to enjoy higher levels of life satisfaction or self-worth (i.e. adoption), the differences are too small. Also, in other respects, some young people in these same placements are showing difficulties, particularly in terms of mental health. A range of challenges are appearing to be tipping the balance of wellbeing. These include bullying, bereavement of close relatives/friends, unemployment, and family rejection. On the other hand, some factors are having a positive impact, including sense of belonging to a family, becoming a parent, support from friends and family, paid work, and therapeutic support.

Subjective Wellbeing

Mean values for each placement type

Concluding remarks

Comparing the well-being of care-experienced young adults in Northern Ireland

Does placement type matter?

Montserrat Fargas Maiet
Dominic McSherry

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

- were described by their parents/careers to be in a very healthy or healthy overall state of health (42 out of 48)
- The adoptive parents of 3 (out of 14 adopted young people) described their state of health as not very healthy/unhealthy. The same was true for 5 young people that were/had been in long-term foster care, & 2 others in long-term kinship care.

- were suffering from a long-standing illness or disability (16 out of 48)
- There were 8 adoptive young people, 5 who had been/are in long-term foster care, 2 who had been subject of a RO, and one who had been living with a birth parent.

- were having had behavioural problems (17 out of 48) (for 15, it was a current issue) according to their parents/careers
- These were 4 adopted young people, 8 who had been/are in long-term foster care, 2 in long-term kinship care, and 2 who had been subject of a RO.

- young people had been diagnosed with autism (out of 48)
- These were 2 adopted young people, 1 who had been/are in long-term foster care, and 1 who had been subject of a RO.

- were suffering had suffered from depression and/or anxiety (18 out of 48) (for 13, it was a current issue) according to their parents/careers
- These were 6 adopted young people, 4 who had been/are in long-term foster care, 4 in long-term kinship care, 3 who had been subject of a RO, and one who had been living with a birth parent.

- ever self-harmed, suicidal thoughts or attempted suicide (15 out of 48)
- These were 4 adopted young people, 3 who had been/are in long-term foster care, 4 in long-term kinship care, 3 who had been subject of a RO, and one who had been living with a birth parent.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE

EMAIL: m.fargas@qub.ac.uk

BLOG: http://blogs.qub.ac.uk/pathways

Wave Four has been funded by the ESRC E:S:R:C Economic & Social Research Council