MEETING THE NEEDS...

At the gap*, as we identify needs amongst the young people, we often come across those who display some aspect of mental health or mental wellbeing issues. Some research featured below gives some idea of the level of this problem.

Some significant statistics

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around 3 children in every class.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Other mental health problems include attention deficit and hyperactivity, affecting around 2 to 4 percent of teenagers.
- Surveys show that around 13% of boys and 10% of girls aged 11-15 have mental health problems.
- Half of all lifetime cases of psychiatric disorders start by age 14 and three quarters by age 24.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

As we are committed to meeting needs, we have been doing some research ourselves and are looking to build a database of helpful resources with the view of setting up a Mental Health Support Network for Young People in the Sutton Coldfield area and immediate surroundings.

How it could work...

By providing willing volunteers with Mental Health Awareness training, we would be equipping appropriate adults to work alongside a young person supporting them in whatever way we can, be that signposting them to local, qualified Counsellors or just being there for them so they have someone to chat things through with, offer guidance and support. There could be opportunities to maybe work with the family as well as the young person.

Functional Skills Education Project

The other area of concern for us is the amount of young people who, having fallen through the educational net, end up without basic functional skills that would allow them to get into apprenticeships, college courses or employment. One idea we have is to build a resource bank of suitably qualified tutors, made up of retired, part time or former teachers who could offer an hour a week for a set number of weeks to work with one of these young people in helping them attain their Functional Skills at Level 3. The other is that we are seeking to discuss partnering with a Christian charity who are already doing this work, with a view to establishing a set up in our area. We are currently seeking funding for this but we feel strongly that the Lord is in both this and the Mental Health project and we are praying (and would encourage you all to) that His will may be done.
The Summer holidays means that many of our young people are looking for work or just something to do with their spare time.

Two of them, Alice and Dylan (pictured left), agreed to give us a hand painting the hallways of Our Place Community Hub, where gapsville HQ is situated. They did a good, solid day’s work and we are mega proud of them...

One of our former drop-in visitors has been back to us to ask for help with her future plans now that she has finished school. Chelsey (right) is a very talented young lady, especially where carpentry is concerned and she has agreed to use those skills in Romania on a mission week next May...in the meantime we are helping her secure an apprenticeship in the area.

The gap* recently had it’s very first work placement candidate. Charlotte, (right) originally from York, moved to the UK from Spain last year and is currently studying at North Birmingham Academy. She is fluent in Spanish and wants to use this in her future career but has wanted to learn more about what it is like to be a young person in the UK.

…and lastly, some farewells to volunteers… Mim, who goes out to do a gap year in Uganda; Harry, who heads out for a 4 month placement in Bucharest, Romania and Becky who is off to Liverpool University. We want to say a huge thank you and wish you well in all you do!