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Happy, Healthy & Well - Creating a healthy future: A Youth Social Action Programme

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health is the membership body for paediatricians in the UK and around the world. Leading the way in children's health, we support our 20,000 members, and involve children and young people in everything we do.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that staying healthy and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can make a difference to how we respond to a disease and how a disease may affect us. We can prevent the impact of some illnesses by practising healthy habits and we can minimise the adverse way some diseases affect us by maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

We also know that we are most likely to continue a habit if we learn it as a child. Therefore, if a child learns to incorporate healthy habits in daily life, then she/he is very likely to continue the positive lifestyle as she/he grows into an adult and pass it onto the next generation.

The RCPCH has identified a need for empowering today's children and young people with the right knowledge to make healthy choices. This is even more important in the current world with easy access to information, to support their critical thinking to avoid misinformation, giving them skills to drive a positive change for a healthy future.

Together with young people, clinicians and youth workers, we have created a social action project resource to help the development of youth led activity to increase health awareness amongst children and young people. The resource includes a facilitation guide full of activities, background, template and links, plus a slide deck for facilitators to use with groups, an example slide deck from a young person on how to speak about health promotion with other young people and videos from paediatric medical experts to guide students in their research and thinking. The programme will support learning, influencing and leadership skills as well as empowering students with the right knowledge and tools to cultivate healthy habits for a healthier future.

Participation in the project can support local accreditation frameworks such as ASDAN qualifications or can be used as volunteering experience for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. This educational programme can be easily adapted to be used by teachers, youth workers or community groups as part of PHSE lessons or health and wellbeing programmes, with ideas to support students to use the social action project booklet to guide them and document progress.

We hope that you find this resource useful and look forward to hearing and seeing your social action projects in your local area. If you would like any further advice, information or guidance, please contact and_us@rcpch.ac.uk

Kind regards,

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