MINDOUT MAYO:

The implementation of a social and emotional learning programme in post-primary schools.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The promotion of children and adolescents' mental health and wellbeing is essential to ensure healthy development and positive social and health outcomes in adulthood. [1] School-based social and emotional learning (SEL) interventions are proven to be one of the most effective universal mental health promotion strategies for young people. SEL programmes demonstrate a range of positive outcomes for school students including; improving social emotional skills, mental health and well-being and academic outcomes, as well as reducing negative health and social behaviours (OECD, 2015; Barry, Clarke & Dowling, 2017; Durlak et al., 2011; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Taylor et al., 2017). However, variable and poor-quality implementation can impact negatively on the outcomes that can be achieved from well-designed and evidence-based programmes (Durlak, 2016; Durlak & Dupre, 2008). Programme evaluations require further attention to assessing the implementation process and the multi-level factors that lead to stronger or weaker implementation quality. By identifying these factors, strategies can be designed to create more optimal conditions for programme delivery that will increase the likelihood of achieving programme outcomes.

This study reports on a process evaluation of the implementation of the MindOut social and emotional learning programme in six post-primary schools in Mayo. MindOut is a universal SEL programme for post-primary school students (15-18 years old) in Ireland and was designed to be delivered by teachers through the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. The findings from this study are informed by the perspectives of key school stakeholders, including teachers who are providing the programme, students who are participating in the programme, and school principals who are supporting the programme. A partnership with Mental Health Ireland, Mayo MHA, Mindspace Mayo, HSE Health and Wellbeing and the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway was created to support the implementation and evaluation of the MindOut programme in Mayo schools. This project was commissioned and funded by Mental Health Ireland. The findings reported here should be considered and interpreted within the context of implementation during COVID-19 school restrictions, which impacted significantly on programme delivery.

AIM &OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to monitor the level of implementation quality across participating schools and identify the factors that acted as facilitators or barriers to the effective implementation of the programme.

The key objectives of this study are:

- To monitor participating schools' level of implementation quality across several implementation dimensions (e.g., dosage, adherence, adaptation, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness).
- To identify the contextual factors that impact on implementation quality based on a guiding implementation framework (CFIR).
- To propose strategies that can target these influencing factors in order to enhance future implementation quality of the programme.

METHODS

This study involves a process evaluation, employing a mixed methods approach to investigate the implementation of the MindOut programme in post-primary schools in county Mayo. Data were collected from teachers, principals and students across three different time-points: pre-delivery, delivery and post-delivery. This study draws on a variety of different quantitative and qualitative research methods (e.g., questionnaires, focus groups, interviews) from multiple sources. This research was carried out with six schools and is based on data collected from teachers (n=11), school principals (n=6) and students (n=88) across the six school locations.

MEASURES

A mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in the study. The quantitative measures included the Teachers' Pre-Delivery Questionnaire and Weekly Reports and Student Post-Delivery Questionnaire. Qualitative measures included pre-, mid- and post-delivery focus groups with teachers (pre- & mid-), principals (pre-) and students (post-) as well as post-delivery interviews with teachers and principals. An overview of the different measures used across each of the study time-points (pre-, mid- and post-delivery) is shown in the figure below. Quantitative methods were used to answer the first study objective in relation to the schools'

level of implementation quality across multiple dimensions, while the qualitative data provided insights into the second study objective by identifying the multi-level contextual factors that impacted on implementation quality according to each of the participant groups.

Figure 1: Overview of measures used in the study

*T= Teachers; P= Principals; S= Students

ANALYSIS

A number of indicators were selected from the quantitative instruments based on their ability to reflect the core dimensions of implementation (e.g., Dosage, Adherence/Fidelity, Adaptation, Quality of Delivery & Participant Responsiveness)(Durlak, 2016; Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Dane & Schneider, 1998). School classes were scored across each of the indicators and scores were compared across schools. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques [9], and the main themes were mapped onto the constructs for the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) (Damschroder et al., 2009).

FINDINGS

Demographics

A total of six schools were involved in the process evaluation in the process evaluation, involving data collection from11 teachers, 6 principals and 88 students. All of the teachers (n=11) that participated in this evaluation were female. There were four female principals and two male principals involved in this study. Of the 88 students that completed the student questionnaires, 63% were female, 35% male and 2% identified as 'other'. The mean age of participants was 17.4 (SD=.58).

Quantitative Results

Dosage

Due the COVID-19 restrictions, which resulted in a later start to the programme as well as school closure for three months, one school (two classes) was required to cease delivery of the programme after five sessions. Only one class was able to complete the programme in its entirety. A majority of schools (n=7) completed at least eight sessions and the average number of completed sessions was M=8.4 (SD=2.8) ranging from 5 to 13.

Adherence

In relation to the sessions that were implemented, teachers reported adhering to an average of 77% of the session activities. However, this score ranged across the schools and classrooms from the lowest adherence of 47% to highest adherence of 100%.

Adaptation

The average score for adaptation across the eleven participating schools was 48.8% (SD=31.7) (range = 0%- 100%). This indicates that on average, schools adapted almost half of the completed programme sessions. Based on the qualitative feedback from the questionnaires, it became clear that these adaptations related mainly to adjustments to accommodate the pandemic restrictions on physical distancing in the classroom.

Quality of Delivery

The average rating by teachers of quality of delivery was 79% (range = 58%-98%). All scores from students from the same class were averaged for a total score. The average rating of quality of delivery according to students was 72% (range = 42%-98%). Correlations were completed between the student and teacher ratings of quality of delivery; however, these were not found to be correlated, (r (97) = .523, p=.149).

Participant Responsiveness

Teachers were asked to rate students on their interest and engagement across all completed sessions on a five-point Likert scale. The average interest score was M=3.97 (SD=.67) and the average engagement scores was M=3.96 (SD = .78). Students were asked to rate the programme across four items related to responsiveness (e.g., relevance, understandability, usefulness and interest) on a five-point Likert scale. These scores were combined for a total score and this was averaged across students from the same class. The average score of these

items across schools was M=3.35 (SD=.84). Students were also asked to rate their experience of the programme overall from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent). The average rating for overall experience according to students was 6.7 (range = 4.9- 9.2). Correlations were conducted to determine the relationship between students' rating of their teachers' delivery and their rating of their overall experience showing a strong correlation, (r (88) = .80 p=<.001).

Qualitative Results

Through this qualitative process, factors that might have facilitated or hindered implementation quality of the programme were identified. All of the codes and themes that emerged from the data were mapped onto 23 of the 39 CFIR constructs across all five domains (Characteristics of the Innovation; Characteristics of the Individual; Inner Setting; Outer Setting and Process). One additional domain 'Characteristics of the Participants' and four additional constructs (Relevance; Delivery Methods; Provider-Participant Relationship; and External Environment) were also created based on the study data. The six domains and 23 + 4 constructs are reported below.

Characteristics of the Innovation

- Design quality & packaging *(quality of materials; access to all resources; additional requested resources)*
- Adaptability *(ability to adapt sessions for needs)*
- Complexity *(user-friendly)*
- Relevance* *(age-appropriate; relatable content)*
- Delivery Methods* *(engagement through videos; interactive activities)*

Characteristics of the Provider

- Knowledge and beliefs about innovation *(attitudes; enjoyment; perceived benefits; interest)*
- Self-efficacy *(confidence)*
- Other personal attributes *(level of preparation; skills; facilitation style; previous training)*
- Provider- participant relationship* *(relationship with students; relatability; awareness of students)*

Characteristics of the Participants

- Knowledge and Beliefs about the innovation *(values towards the programme; mindset; attitudes)*
- Other Personal Attributes *(group comfort levels; group dynamic; group resistance; class size)*

Inner Setting (School)

- Networks and communications (awareness of students' needs)
- Culture (supportive of wellbeing; supportive environment)
- Implementation Climate (whole-school awareness; shared responsibility; internal MH support)
- Tension for Change *(need to prioritise wellbeing in school; Senior Cycle needs)*
- Compatibility *(alignment with wellbeing policy; alignment with other resources)*
- Relative Priority *(need to prioritise wellbeing as much as academics; level of importance)*
- Leadership engagement *(reliance on teachers; lack of awareness; level of support; communication with management)*
- Available resources *(time; space; IT)*
- Access to Knowledge and information *(information about supports; information about the programme)*

Outer Setting

- External Policy *(wellbeing; academic prioritised)*
- Cosmopolitanism *(awareness of local organisations; access to support services; relationship with local organisations)*
- External environment *(Covid restrictions; school closures; Covid impact on student engagement; Covid impact on teacher pressure; school crisis)*

Process

- Planning *(timetabling; space; class size; group dynamic; staffing)*
- Engaging *(training)*
- Champions *(person of responsibility; SPHE/wellbeing coordinator)*
- External change agents *(implementation support; delivery support planning support; school visits)*
- Formally appointed internal implementation leaders *(team of teachers; gender balance; qualities and experience)*
- Key stakeholders *(parents; guidance counsellors)*

Implications & Recommendations

In interpreting the study findings, it is important to take into account that the study was undertaken in a particularly challenging year for schools, with closures and disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted severely on programme delivery and completion. Despite this, the findings indicate some key components and factors of implementation that that supported good quality implementation. While research, practice and policy continue to focus on, and prioritise, the use of effective evidence-based interventions, there are other critical elements that are equally important for the success of a programme, including effective implementation and the promotion of enabling contexts. Effective implementation is

composed of a combination of multiple dimensions including dosage, adherence, adaptation, quality of delivery and participant responsiveness. Therefore, the assessment of implementation within programme evaluations needs to use multiple measures and multiple informants to better capture what is actually happening. The study findings also demonstrate the applicability of all of the CFIR's domains to capture the contextual factors that impact on the implementation of MindOut in complex school settings. Using these findings, stronger enabling contexts can be created by using strategies that enhance facilitating factors and reduce the barriers identified by participants. Based on the data, a number of practical strategies and recommendations can be identified that have direct implications for practice and policy. These are presented below.

Practical Strategies and Recommendations

Characteristics of the Innovation

1. **Programme Quality:** Utilising programmes that include good quality, structured materials, which are user-friendly.
2. **Programme Relevance:** Selecting a programme that is relevant to the needs of the target population.
3. **Programme Strategies:** Ensuring programmes for young people include a variety of different teaching strategies.

Characteristics of the Provider

1. **Staff Selection:** In selecting teachers/staff members to deliver the programme, consideration needs to be given to their personal attributes is important.
2. **Programme Training:** Training is vital in preparing teachers to effectively deliver the programme and building their self-efficacy.

Characteristics of the Participants

1. **Increasing Students' Attitudes and Beliefs**: Improving students' attitudes towards, and value placed on, the programme is an important factor for strengthening participant engagement and responsiveness.
2. **Group Selection:** Consideration of the particular group of students that the programme is being delivered to is important to increase participation levels.

School Context

1. **Supportive School Environment:** Wellbeing is not only promoted at a curriculum level but also through the policies, culture, ethos and environment of the school.
2. **Leadership Engagement:** Leadership engagement is a strong factor leading to implementation quality and programme success. While the principal is the main leader within the school, leaders at other levels such as champions (e.g., SPHE coordinator, guidance counsellors) may also engage in leadership roles around the implementation of the programme.
3. **Whole-School Buy-in:** There is a need for strengthening whole-school buy-in of the programme by a wide variety of stakeholders including staff, students and parents.
4. **Programme Prioritisation:** The level of importance attributed to the programme and its prioritisation alongside other more academic subjects is important for quality implementation.
5. **Access to Resources and Information:** Resources which are necessary for programme implementation need to be readily accessible. This includes sufficient time to prepare and deliver the programme. Other resources that are important to this programme include adequate space for programme delivery and access to technology resources.

External Environment

1. **Policy Alignment:** Aligning programmes with clear national and school-level policies is key for programme success.
2. **Community Partnerships:** Efforts to strengthen partnerships between the school and community is important as these community partnerships can provide implementation support to schools. Additional funding, resources and structures are likely to be needed from Government and national bodies to ensure that this support can be provided.

Implementation Process

1. **Planning for Delivery:** Important planning considerations include adequate timetabling, including a dedicated space in the timetable, access to required resources, class size, group dynamic, year group and staffing arrangements.
2. **Implementation Team:** Having a strong implementation team of diverse individuals who are dedicated to the implementation of the programme is crucial. Selecting a

strong programme champion to lead the team, drive and sustain the intervention is also key to its success.

3. **Programme Providers:** Appropriate selection of teachers to deliver the programme is key to quality of delivery and implementation quality overall. It is also important that there is a team of teachers (two or more) trained within the school to deliver the programme to not only act as a source of support for teachers involved but to also help with sustainability of the programme year to year.
4. **Implementation Support:** Providing external ongoing implementation support and consultations to schools will lead to higher quality implementation and programme sustainment. Relationships between the school and the external implementation support team should be identified and established early on to allow for ongoing support during planning, delivery and long-term implementation of the programme.

The above key lessons from the findings of this evaluation are especially important for those working in practice and who plan on implementing or supporting the implementation of MindOut or other SEL programmes in schools. By considering the multi-level factors that impact on implementation quality and identifying practical strategies to control for these, the school contexts will be more enabling, implementation will be more effective, and both of these factors will help lead to greater programme success.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of a range of factors in influencing the quality of implementation in schools. In the context of a particularly challenging year, the provision of implementation support by local partners assisted with ensuring continuity of programme delivery by providing support to teachers and principals. The findings point to the importance of implementation support to ensure high quality implementation of school-based SEL programmes. This support is critical to maximise programme impact and to ensure that positive outcomes can be achieved. A number of other strategies were also identified which aim to strengthen facilitating factors, while reducing the presence of barriers to implementation. A combination of these strategies, alongside a strong implementation support system, are recommended for high quality implementation that leads to positive programme outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

International evidence shows that school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes can have a number of positive impacts on young people, including improvements in their social and emotional skills, mental wellbeing and academic outcomes as well as reducing a number of negative social and health behaviours (Barry et al., 2019; Barry et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2011; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017; OECD, 2015; Taylor et al., 2017). While the evidence provides a strong rationale for the introduction and delivery of SEL programmes in schools, poor implementation quality can jeopardise the effectiveness of these well-designed, evidence-based programmes, particularly when they are scaled up and delivered outside of controlled research conditions (Greenberg et al., 2005). In other words, evidence-based programmes alone are not enough to impact on outcomes, they also need to be aligned with high quality implementation in order for programmes to be successful. Research has shown that several factors operating at multiple levels can impact on the strength of implementation quality. The development of strategies to manage and address these influencing factors are needed to strengthen implementation and thus programme effectiveness. Therefore, further research is warranted to better understand the influencing factors that impact on implementation in complex school settings. By identifying the factors that lead to stronger or weaker implementation, strategies can be designed to support the development of more optimal conditions for programme delivery.

A partnership with Mental Health Ireland, Mayo MHA, Mindspace Mayo, HSE Health and Wellbeing and the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway was created to support the implementation of the MindOut social and emotional wellbeing programme in Mayo schools. This project was commissioned and funded by Mental Health Ireland. The research element of this project was undertaken by the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway and involves a process evaluation of programme implementation in the participating schools. A description of this study including the main findings is reported here.

MindOut is a universal SEL programme for post-primary school students (15-18 years old) in Ireland, which is based on CASEL's (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) competency framework (CASEL, 2005) and was designed to be delivered by teachers through the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. A large-scale evaluation of MindOut was carried out with DEIS post-primary schools in Ireland to assess the effectiveness of the programme and the process of implementation (Dowling et al., 2019; Dowling & Barry 2020 a, b).

The findings from this study demonstrated that the MindOut programme had a number of positive effects on students' outcomes in relation to their social emotional skills (e.g., improved coping skills and emotional regulation) and mental health (reduced stress, depression and anxiety). Although the study demonstrated initial positive findings, the evaluation also assessed level of implementation and the impact that this had on programme outcomes. This phase of the study revealed that variability in implementation was evident across participating schools and that only those schools that implemented the programme with a high degree of quality demonstrated a significant impact. This finding highlights the importance of implementation and the need to consistently monitor its quality alongside programme outcomes. This study also identified that a number of multi-level contextual factors can contribute to the quality of implementation in schools. Understanding the factors that may facilitate or hinder a programme's implementation quality is useful in developing targeted strategies to influence these factors and thereby ensure stronger implementation and best possible outcomes. Building on these findings, the purpose of the present study is to monitor the implementation of the MindOut programme across six post-primary schools in Mayo and to explore the critical factors that impact on implementation quality and the key ingredients necessary for successful and sustainable delivery of the programme in Irish schools. The findings from this study are informed by the perspectives of key school stakeholders, including teachers who are providing the programme, students who are participating in the programme, and school principals who are supporting the programme.

Objectives

The key objectives of this study are:

- To monitor participating schools' level of implementation quality across several implementation dimensions (e.g., dosage, adherence, adaptation, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness).
- To identify the contextual factors that impact on implementation quality based on a guiding implementation framework (CFIR).
- To propose strategies that can target these influencing factors, in order to enhance future implementation quality of the programme.

Background

Mental health promotion in schools

Mental health is fundamental to the overall health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and populations and therefore, the promotion of mental health should be a priority for all (Barry et al., 2019). The importance of promoting young people's mental health during their developmental years has been widely documented and recognised for contributing to their overall health, wellbeing and quality of life and leading to a number of promising outcomes for young people in school, work and life more generally (Barry et al., 2017, Durlak et al., 2011; OECD, 2015). Schools play a critical role in promoting and protecting the mental health of young people (Barry et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2016; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017; OECD, 2015). The school is a setting where young people spend a majority of their time and where a significant amount of their development takes place (Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Roeser, Eccles and Sameroff, 2000). Schools provide greater opportunities to reach a majority of young people, including those that are harder to reach, with 90% of young people aged 4-17 from OECD countries in education (OECD, 2020). The pre-existing organisational structure of the school and its mission-policy alignment with mental health promotion makes it a supportive setting for the introduction, delivery and scaling up of strategies and interventions (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Policy

The role of the school in promoting the mental health and wellbeing of young people is not a new concept and is supported by a number of international policy documents (WHO, 2014; JA-MH-WB and EU, 2016). In Ireland, several policy documents recognise the importance of promoting mental health of individuals, communities and populations including *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone* (DoH, 2020), *Connecting for Life* (DoH, 2015) and Healthy Ireland's *Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025* (DoH, 2013). A number of policy documents also acknowledge the critical role that schools play in supporting the mental health of young people as recognised in the *Wellbeing Policy Document and Framework for Practice 2018-2023* (DES, 2019), the *Wellbeing in Primary and Post-Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion* (DES, HSE, DoH, 2013) and *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 2014-2020* (DCYA, 2014). Additionally, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has implemented guidelines for wellbeing in Junior Cycle, which includes 300 mandatory hours dedicated to wellbeing within the new curriculum (NCCA, 2017). Though these guidelines have been created for lower-level secondary school students, there is not the same system focus and support for wellbeing for Senior Cycle students.

Social and Emotional Learning

Educators, parents, policy makers and other members of the educational community recognise the responsibility that schools have to not only support students' academic learning and development, but also the development of the 'whole child' (Bridgeland, Bruce and Hariharan, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2019; Greenberg et al., 2003; Greenberg et al., 2017). This holistic view of education recognises the importance of nurturing and supporting the development of students' social and emotional learning in addition to their cognitive development. This provides young people with the best chances for achieving positive life outcomes including educational attainment, employment and overall health and avoiding several emotional, behavioural, social and academic difficulties (Durlak et al., 2011; Guerra and Bradshaw, 2008; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2001; OECD, 2015). Competence-enhancement programmes that support the development of social and emotional skills and learning have not only demonstrated positive impacts for students' wellbeing but for their academic competence

as well (Durlak et al., 2011; Kickbush, 2012; Zins, 2004). This realisation helps to prioritise social and emotional learning on the agenda for schools and the educational sector. The term "social and emotional learning" or "SEL" is used as an umbrella term in the field of education to describe these types of competence-enhancement programmes. SEL is defined as the process of acquiring and applying the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand, manage and navigate through life successfully (CASEL, 2015; Elias et al., 1997; Osher et al., 2016). The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) suggests that SEL consists of five interrelated sets of competencies: self-awareness; self-management; social- awareness; relationship management; and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2015). Further information on each of these competencies can be found on CASEL's website (www.casel.org).

There is well-established and consistent international evidence from meta-analyses and systematic reviews that demonstrates the positive impact and long-term benefits of school-based SEL programmes for young people. Effectiveness studies indicate positive outcomes in relation to young people's social, emotional and behavioural development, their overall mental health and wellbeing, and their academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Taylor et al., 2017; Weare and Nind, 2011). However, even though there is strong research to support these types of programmes, poor implementation quality can mitigate these positive outcomes resulting in weaker or even null programme effects. This can be particularly true when evidence-based programmes are scaled up and delivered outside of controlled research conditions and implementation quality and intervention outcomes become diluted (Durlak, 2016; Durlak & Dupre, 2008). In Europe, there is a lack of robust evaluations for promoting the mental health of young people, with even fewer studies reporting on the implementation quality of these interventions (Kuosmanen et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important that the implementation, scale-up and transferability of SEL programmes to other cultural contexts, including the European context, receives further investigation.

Formula for Success

The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) in the United States developed a 'Formula for Success' to highlight the critical ingredients that are necessary for achieving expected programme outcomes. This formula highlights the importance of three distinct but related concepts: i) Effective Interventions ii) Effective Implementation and iii) Enabling Contexts.

Figure 1: Implementation Formula for Success (Adapted from NIRN, 2013)

Effective Intervention

The first concept, which is the one that often receives the majority of attention across research, policy and practice is having an 'Effective Intervention'. It is important that a selected intervention or programme is not only underpinned by strong evidence and theory but it is also well-designed and embodies the key characteristics of effective programmes. A review by Clarke and colleagues (2015) report on a number of key characteristics for effective school-based SEL interventions including structured materials, competence enhancement approaches, interactive delivery methods and provision of teacher training. Additionally, Durlak et al., (2011) found that the most effective SEL programmes were those that included four core practices reflected by the acronym SAFE: (i) Sequenced activities that are coordinated and connected (ii) Active forms of learning (iii) Focused on developing one or more skills and (iv) Explicit about targeting specific SEL skills. While an evidence-based and effective intervention is essential to the success of the programme, it is not enough on its own to guarantee intended outcomes. The other two critical ingredients for successful programmes will now be outlined.

Effective Implementation

The second concept is 'Effective Implementation' and this relates to 'how' the intervention is implemented. Implementation is generally defined as a specific set of planned and intentional activities designed to integrate evidence-based programmes into real world settings (Durlak, 2015; Fixsen et al., 2005; Powell et al., 2015). Implementation quality refers to the degree to which these described planned activities are implemented as intended (Dusenbury et al., 2003; Carroll et al., 2007; Durlak et al., 2016). Extensive research demonstrates that implementation quality is a key predictor in programme outcomes and the success of an intervention (Dusenbury et al., 2003; Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Wilson, Lipsey & Derzon, 2003; Sklad et al., 2012). In other words, when implementation quality is high, intervention outcomes are more likely to be evident, however, when implementation quality is poor, programmes may fail to achieve the expected outcomes (Durlak & Dupre, 2008).

Despite the evidence in support of the importance of implementation quality, the implementation of evidence-based programmes in schools is often weak and incomplete (Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Durlak & DuPre, 2008; Lendrum et al., 2013; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002; Greenberg et al., 2005; Forman et al., 2009). This is largely due to the influence of contextual factors in real-word settings that impact on levels of implementation quality (Dusenbury et al, 2005; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 2002; Ringwalt et al, 2004). These contextual factors will be discussed in more detail below but first the key components of effective implementation will be examined. Many researchers acknowledge that implementation is a multi-dimensional construct and, therefore, it should be monitored and assessed as such (Durlak, 2016; Dane & Schneider, 1998; Berkel et al., 2011; Dusenbury et al., 2005; Durlak & Dupre, 2008). Durlak & Dupre (2008) suggest that effective implementation is a result of eight key components which are shown in Box 1 below. Efforts to strengthen these components will contribute to more effective programme implementation and thus stronger programme outcomes. While it might not always be possible to monitor every component, it is recommended that implementation is monitored across several dimensions to paint a more comprehensive picture of the implementation process (Dusenbury et al., 2003; Durlak, 2016; Durlak & Dupre, 2008). However, though it is recognised that implementation process is influenced by many components, most studies continue to focus on a single dimension, mainly dosage or adherence (Berkel et al., 2011; Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005).

Box 1: Key Components for Effective Programme Implementation

- Dosage – how much of the programme was delivered.
- Adherence/Fidelity - the degree to which the core components of the programme have been delivered as intended.
- Quality of Delivery – how well the programme was delivered by the provider.
- Adaptation – what changes if any were made to the original programme.
- Participant Responsiveness – to what extent do the participants engage with the intervention.
- Programme Differentiation - how unique the programme is compared to other programmes.
- Monitoring of Control Conditions – how might the control conditions overlap with the programme condition.
- Programme Reach – how much of the eligible population took part in the programme.

(Adapted from Durlak & DuPre, 2008)

Enabling Contexts

The third and final concept in the formula for success is 'Enabling Contexts'. It is understood that implementation occurs in complex multi-level systems (Lyon, 2017). A number of contextual factors (e.g., policy, leadership support, school climate, resources, training attitudes etc.) are likely to impact on a school's ability to implement a programme with high quality (Dusenbury et al, 2003; Fixsen et al, 2005; Greenhalgh et al, 2004; Lyons et al., 2019; Rohrbach et al, 2006; Wandersman et al, 2008). In order to improve better implementation and thus stronger programme outcomes these contextual barriers and facilitators that hinder and/or promote implementation quality need to be addressed (Kaplan et al., 2010). Addressing these factors across multiple levels simultaneously helps to create contexts which are more conducive to stronger implementation and programme success (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Greenhalgh et al, 2004; Klein & Sorra, 1996; Lyons et al., 2019; Rogers, 2003).

These levels of factors typically include:

- intervention characteristics (e.g., programme)
- provider factors (e.g., teachers)
- organizational factors (e.g., school)
- external factors (e.g., policy context, partnerships, environment)

Some of the influencing factors that have been found to be linked to implementation quality in schools include sufficient training, time and support for staff to complete their responsibilities (Han & Weiss, 2005; Kourkoutas & Giovazolias, 2015; Shepherd et al., 2013), presence of knowledge, skills and access to good resources (Bauer et al., 2015), supportive networks within the school (Langley et al., 2010), mission-policy alignment and available external implementation support (Forman et al., 2009). It is important to study and identify the contextual factors that may be enabling or hindering quality implementation. It is particularly useful to highlight those factors which are malleable and may benefit from the development and introduction of strategies to create better conditions for implementation (Powell, Proctor, & Glass, 2014). Targeted and tailored implementation strategies have the potential to alter these multi-level contextual factors to facilitate greater opportunities for successful and effective implementation (Powell et al., 2012).

Therefore, although research, policy and practice tend to prioritise and focus on designing and the introducing evidence-based 'effective interventions', these alone will not lead to strong programme outcomes. Instead, it is necessary for these evidence-based interventions to be coupled with additional actions including 'effective implementation' and 'enabling contexts' to ensure best outcomes (Durlak et al., 2015; Fixsen et al., 2010; Metz, Blasé and Bowie, 2007). Implementation frameworks provide a map and shared language for identifying contextual factors and guiding the development of implementation strategies. These frameworks will now be discussed.

Implementation Frameworks

Implementation frameworks provide an overview of key ideas and concepts that can shape the implementation process helping to guide researchers and practitioners in this process. Nilson (2015) posits that there are three different types of implementation frameworks: (i) those that describe/guide the translation of research into practice (ii) those that help to understand what influences implementation quality and (iii) those that evaluate implementation. The focus of this report is on the second aim and relates to determinant-type implementation frameworks. These types of frameworks provide a strong foundation to guide the collection of information on the key attributes, facilitators and challenges that relate to quality implementation (Flaspohler et al., 2008).

There has been a vast number of determinant-type implementation frameworks created to assess factors impacting on implementation quality. Generic implementation frameworks for non-school settings can be applied to the school context to better understand implementation in this setting. Additionally, frameworks have been developed which are more specific to the school or youth context (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Durlak and Dupre, 2008), however, evidence of the application of these frameworks in guiding programme development, delivery and evaluation is more limited in comparison to the more generic frameworks. An introduction to two different frameworks, one generic (CFIR) and one context specific (Ecological Framework for Implementation) is provided below.

Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR)

The CFIR is one of the most widely used and cited determinant implementation frameworks, which was compiled from 20 different existing implementation theories and frameworks across 13 scientific disciplines (Damschroder et al., 2009). The CFIR is composed of 39 constructs that influence on programme implementation within complex systems (Damschroder et al., 2009). These are organised under five domains: 1) *Intervention Characteristics* (key characteristics of the programme); 2) *Characteristics of Individuals* (characteristics of the provider/implementer); 3) *Inner Setting* (factors within the organization); 4) *Outer Setting* (factors outside the organisation); and 5) *Process of Implementation* (strategies related to supporting implementation) (Damschroder et al., 2009).

Though the CFIR has been used mainly in clinical research (Kirk et al., 2016) it has also been used in a number of health policy and intervention studies. Some studies have also demonstrated its application to school-based health interventions and have shown its ability to capture key influencing implementation factors within these complex settings (Hudson, Lawton & Hugh-Jones, 2020; Leeman et al., 2018; McLoughlin et al., 2020).

This comprehensive framework was selected for use in the current study due to its ability to identify factors in a complex and multi-level context, its relevance and applicability to a wide range of settings-based interventions, as well as its evidence of effective use in previous studies (Damschoder et al., 2009; Kirk et al., 2016; Powell et al., 2014).

Ecological Framework

Another relevant implementation framework was created by Durlak and DuPre (2008) based on a review of over 500 health promotion intervention evaluations for children and young people. Through this review, the authors identified 23 constructs which they mapped onto a multi-level framework and referred to this as the *Ecological Framework for Implementation*. Similar to the CFIR, Durlak and DuPre's (2008) framework highlighted factors across five levels: 1) *Characteristics of the Innovation;* 2) *Characteristics of the Provider;* 3) *Community* 4) *Prevention Delivery System* (organisational capacity); and 5) *Prevention Support System*.

While several parallels can be drawn between these two implementation frameworks, there are also slight differences that make each unique. Both frameworks identify factors through a multi-level framework that draws on similarities from the socio-ecological model of health determinants (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McLeroy et al., 1988). While the CFIR may be more comprehensive in its integration of core constructs from frameworks across diverse fields, the Ecological Framework is more context specific and relevant to the current population. Therefore, both frameworks were selected in order to determine the 'best fit' for the current study.

MindOut Programme

The MindOut programme is a universal SEL programme, for post-primary schools students designed to be delivered by teachers through the Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. The content of the programme is based on CASEL's five core competencies for social and emotional learning i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2015). The programme is comprised of a teacher manual, with structured activities and resource materials which promote the development of these social and emotional competencies. The 13-session programme employs interactive teaching strategies (e.g., collaborative learning, structured games, scenarios, videos etc.) and engages students in a number of social and emotional skill-building activities in order to support their social and emotional development and overall mental wellbeing. Further details on the development of the programme can be found in additional papers (Barry et al., 2017; Dowling et al., 2016). To date, there have been over 500 teachers trained in the MindOut programme across the country.

For the current study, national and local partnerships were developed between Mental Health Ireland, HSE Health and Wellbeing Improvement, Mayo Mental Health Association (MHA), Mindspace Mayo and the Health Promotion Research Centre at NUI Galway to support the implementation of MindOut in selected schools in Mayo. Mental Health Ireland provided funding, expertise and support for the project, including the support of a MHI Development Officer at the local level who offered participating schools professional development training for staff in 'Five Ways to Wellbeing'. The HSE provided support to the partner organisations in implementing the MindOut programme in local schools and delivered the initial two session online training to all teachers who participated in this study. The HSE team were also on hand to assist the local partnerships with any issues or queries that arose from teachers during the course of programme delivery.. The local partners, Mayo MHA and Mindspace Mayo acted as the direct implementation support for schools in delivering the programme and were responsible for supporting schools in relation to the roll out of the programme. This entailed providing support to school principals on initiating the programme, liaising with teachers on a monthly basis on the implementation of the programme, and serving as the first point of contact for teachers and schools in ensuring they felt supported in delivering MindOut. Due to the pandemic these supports were mainly conducted via phone calls or online meetings. NUI

Galway were responsible for carrying out the evaluation and providing regular feedback to the project partners concerning the quality of implementation, factors impacting on implementation and implementation support. The project partners met online on a monthly basis beginning in September 2020 to discuss the project and to share knowledge, expertise, resources and research findings. This project will continue for another two years and the key learning points from the evaluation will be embedded into the implementation support offered to schools in the future years.

There were six schools in Mayo that participated in this evaluation and each of the teachers delivering the programme within these schools were required to participate in the mandatory national MindOut training offered by the Health Service Executive (HSE) prior to delivering the programme. This training is typically facilitated in person, however, due to COVID-19 restrictions, all the teachers but one, received training online. The teacher who did not participate in the online training had already received training in-person previously and had prior experience with delivering the full programme. Delivery of the programme began after mid-term break at the beginning of November 2020. There was a 3-month disruption in delivery between January - March 2021 due to school closures as a result of COVID-19 and therefore, the typical 13-session programme had to be extended over a longer time period, with many schools only finishing their last session in May 2021. This is not how MindOut is intended to be delivered and it is likely that this type of disjointed delivery could have negatively impacted on participants' experiences, implementation quality and programme outcomes. Additionally, while the MindOut programme employs a number of interactive teaching strategies for engaging and encouraging participation of students, many of the activities and methods of delivery (e.g., group work, games, movement activities) had to be adapted to abide by COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines. Given that the MindOut activities were strategically developed in an effort to engage young people, it is likely that these adaptations, which made the programme less interactive, may have impacted on participants' engagement, attitudes and willingness to participate as well as teachers' quality of delivery given that they were now more restricted. Therefore, it is important that the following results are interpreted by taking into account the unusual circumstances of this year within the context of COVID-19 and the consequences this may have had on programme implementation.

METHODS

Research Design

This study involves a process evaluation, employing a mixed methods approach to investigate the implementation of the MindOut programme in post-primary schools in county Mayo. This research was carried out with six schools and is based on data collected from teachers (n=11), school principals (n=6) and students (n=88) across the six school locations. This study draws on a variety of different quantitative and qualitative research methods (e.g., questionnaires, focus groups, interviews) from multiple sources.

Sample & Recruitment

A list of all post-primary schools in Mayo where teachers had previously been trained in the MindOut programme was provided by the Health Service Executive. These schools (n= 9) were sent information on the project and this was followed up by a phone call from the local Health Promotion Officer to determine if they would like to participate in the study. Upon initial review of the supplied list of schools, one school was ineligible as it was a YouthReach Centre rather than a post-primary school and was, therefore, removed from the list. Two further schools chose not to participate due to the fact that they were either already in the process of delivering the programme or that they no longer had a teacher trained in the programme due to staff turnover.

Ethics

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee in October 2020 (Ref: 2020.10.002). Teachers and principals provided written and verbal consent to participate in the questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. Students participating in the focus groups provided written consent from themselves and informed consent from their parents before participating. This study was designed and conducted in a manner that ensured confidentiality and anonymity of all participants.

Participants

The final sample included six schools, with six principals and eleven teachers delivering the programme. An overview of the profile of each school including the number of teachers trained and number of classes receiving the programme can be seen in Table 1.

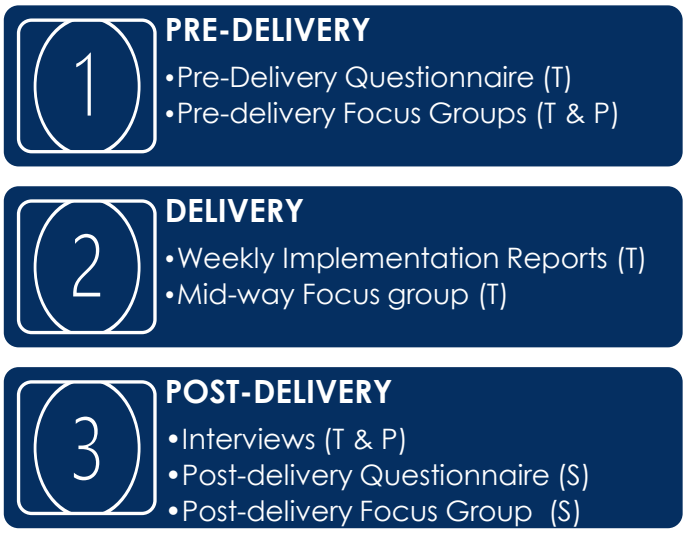
Table 1: Description of participating schools

School	School Size	Type	DEIS	# of teachers trained	# of teachers delivering	# of classes participating	Year Group	Number of students
School #1	335	Mixed	No	3	2	2	5th	28 24
School #2	674	Mixed	No	3	2	2	6th	26 17
School #3	208	Mixed	Yes	2	1	1	6th	16
School #4	420	Girls	No	1	1	1	5th	24
School #5	481	Mixed	No	3	2	2	6th	24 22
School #6	466	Mixed	No	3	3	3	5th	25 22 22
Total				15	11	11		

Data collection

Data were collected from teachers, principals and students across three different time-points: pre-delivery, delivery and post-delivery. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all data were collected either online or over the phone. An overview of the data collection process is shown in Fig.2.

Figure 2: Overview of data collection process



*T= Teachers; P= Principals; S= Students

Measures

A mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed in the study. The quantitative measures included the teachers' pre-delivery questionnaire and weekly implementation reports and student post-delivery questionnaire. Quantitative methods were used to answer the first study objective in relation to schools' level of implementation quality across multiple dimensions. Qualitative measures included pre-, mid- and post-delivery focus groups with teachers (pre- & mid-), principals (pre-) and students (post-) as well as post-delivery interviews with teachers and principals. The qualitative data provided insight into the second study objective by identifying the multi-level contextual factors that impacted on implementation quality according to each of the participant groups. An overview of each of the process measures used during this study, across each of the three data collection phases of the project, are described below.

Phase 1: Pre-Delivery

Pre-Delivery School Readiness Questionnaire (Teachers)

Teachers were asked to complete a School Readiness Questionnaire at pre-delivery. This questionnaire included demographic items such as gender, age, grade taught, years of teaching

experience and previous experience in delivering the programme. This questionnaire also included a number of items that related to schools' level of readiness. The Teacher Questionnaire assessed teachers' (i) attitudes towards the importance of wellbeing; (ii) attitudes towards the programme; (iii) skills and confidence following the training; (iv) perceptions of school leadership support (v) perceptions of the school environment; and (vi) perceptions of current SEL and mental health promotion activities in the school. The questions that were used in this questionnaire were adapted from a number of relevant resources. Questions relating to the attitudes towards mental wellbeing and the MindOut programme were adapted from the Organisational Readiness Questionnaire (Arthur et al., 2020). The Implementation Leadership Scale (Aarons et al. 2014) was used to assess school leadership support and includes four subscales: Proactive Leadership, Knowledgeable Leadership, Supportive Leadership and Perseverant Leadership. This scale is validated (alpha = .95) and has be adapted for use in educational settings (Shapiro et al., 2019). Additional questions related to the school environment and current mental health promotion practices were adapted from the Mental Health Promotion Self-Evaluation Questionnaire in the Wellbeing for Post-Primary Schools Guidelines (DES, HSE, DOH, 2013). All of the items related to school-readiness were measured on a four or five-point Likert scale.

Pre-Delivery Focus Groups (Teachers and Principals)

Focus groups were carried out prior to delivery of the programme with two separate groups of teachers (n=10) and principals (n=5). Both teachers and principals were asked to discuss their thoughts on what they perceived to be potential facilitators and barriers to implementing MindOut in their school. Principals were also asked to discuss the level of support that they felt they needed to promote mental wellbeing at a wider whole-school level.

Phase 2: Delivery

Teacher Weekly Reports (Teachers)

Teachers were asked to complete Teacher Weekly Reports online via Google Docs following the delivery of each MindOut session. The 13 weekly questionnaires were designed to provide information on the implementation of each individual session. These weekly reports assessed a number of items related to implementation including; programme fidelity and adherence to

activities, adaptations, difficulties with delivery, students' engagement with the session, overall experience of the session and suggestions for improvement.

Mid-Delivery Focus Group (Teachers)

Half-way through the delivery of the programme, another online focus group was carried out with the teachers (n=9). Given that teachers had now experienced delivering the programme partially, they were asked questions in relation to their overall experience of the programme. The questions related to identifying the facilitators and barriers they experienced when implementing the programme as well as the level of internal and external support they were given in delivering the programme.

Phase 3: Post-Delivery

Online Interviews (Teachers and Principals)

Interviews were carried out with all of the teachers (n=11) and principals (n=6) at post-intervention via Zoom. Teacher interviews were completed at school-level, which meant that all teachers from the same school attended one interview. Principal interviews were conducted separately on a one-to-one basis. Therefore, six teacher interviews and six principal interviews were completed during this phase of data collection. During these interviews, teachers were asked similar questions to the mid-delivery focus groups in relation to their experience of delivering the programme and the support they received. Principals were asked about their experience of the programme being delivered in their schools and the level of support they provided. Both teachers and principals were asked specifically about the facilitators and barriers to implementing the programme in their schools. During this phase of data collection, some of the questions were guided by the implementation framework to prompt participants to speak about implementation across multiple levels.

Student Post-Delivery Questionnaire (Students)

Online questionnaires were used to assess implementation of the programme from the students' perspective. Students were provided with a link to the online questionnaire from their teachers and a class ID code so that their answers could be linked to responses from other students in their class. This questionnaire was adapted from the 'Student Review Questionnaire' used in the national evaluation study (Dowling et al., 2020a) and asked students to report on their experience of the programme through Likert scale questions. These

questions primarily related to the implementation dimensions quality of delivery (teacher preparedness, enthusiasm, confidence, overall delivery etc.) and participant responsiveness (engagement, interest, understanding, overall rating etc.). Students were also asked to report on their experience of the programme through open-ended questions to provide feedback on what worked well, what did not work well and how the programme could be improved.

Focus Group (Students)

Focus groups were also conducted with students from a sub-sample of schools (n=3). Schools who were delivering the programme to 5th year classes were selected to participate, as 6th years were preparing for their Leaving Certificate exams and were under added pressure. These focus groups allowed for a detailed insight into students' experiences of the implementation of the MindOut programme (e.g., perceived need, quality, relevance, impact, engagement) and provided students with the opportunity to identify facilitators and barriers to the implementation of MindOut from their own perspective. Students were shown a visual image, which included the key implementation framework domains, to help prompt there discussion around these. Some of the language used for these domains was simplified to enhance students' understanding (e.g., programme factors, teacher factors, school factors, wider factors (outside of the school) and the added dimension 'participant factors'. Before asking the students to discuss factors related to each of these categories, the researcher provided a brief explanation of each.

Analysis

All quantitative data were assessed using SPSS (version 26). Descriptive statistics were run on each of the items within the School Readiness Questionnaire. Quantitative data were obtained from the Teacher Weekly Reports and Student Post-Delivery Questionnaire. A number of indicators were selected from these measures based on their ability to reflect the core dimensions of implementation (e.g., Dosage, Adherence/Fidelity, Adaptation, Quality of Delivery & Participant Responsiveness) (Dane and Schneider, 1998; Durlak, 2015; Durlak and Dupre, 2008). Teacher indicators from weekly reports were scored across all of the completed sessions to produce and average score. Student indicators were assessed at a classroom level and, therefore, an average score for each of the indicators for all students in the same class

was used. The indicators selected were also previously used in the national evaluation study where a similar analysis process was undertaken (see Dowling et al., 2020a).

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which were applied to the focus group and interview feedback from teachers, principals and students. Recordings were transcribed using a software programme on Zoom (Rev.com). Transcripts were initially read through by the researcher while listening to the recordings to identify any transcription errors and then read through again for familiarity with the content. First, meaningful units of text were highlighted, summarised and coded by the researcher through a deductive approach guided by both the Consolidated Framework Implementation Research (CFIR; Damschroder et al., 2009) and the Ecological Implementation Framework (Durlak & Dupre, 2008). A comparison of the main constructs from both frameworks was carried out based on initial analysis of the pre- and mid-delivery data. This initial test determined that the CFIR was able to integrate on all of the same constructs from the Ecological Implementation Framework, while also capturing a number of other constructs not included in the latter framework. Therefore, the CFIR was selected for use during the full analysis of the data across all three time-points. Guidance on using the CFIR, including definitions of each construct as well as how to code these, is available on the CFIR website (cfirguide.org). While coding of the data was completed primarily through a deductive approach, inductively derived codes were also identified in order to fully capture all of the feedback provided by participants which may not have fit into the original implementation framework. The deductive codes from the CFIR codebook, as well as the inductive codes, were used to develop a coding scheme by the primary researcher. Another researcher who was external to the study double coded a sample of the focus group transcripts and identified if any additional codes were required or if any existing codes did not fit. Both coders met and discussed the codes and revised these where necessary. Inter-rater reliability of the coding process achieved 88% agreement.

RESULTS

Demographics

A total of six schools were involved in the process evaluation and this consisted of teachers (n=11), principals (n=6) and students (n=88). All of the teachers (n=11) that participated in this

evaluation were female. There was a distribution of ages for teachers participating but the majority of teachers were between the ages of 40-49 years (n=5). Table 2 provides a breakdown of the descriptive findings for teachers that relate to the delivery of the programme. There were four female principals and two male principals involved in this study. Of the 88 students that participated in the student questionnaires, 63% were female, 35% male and 2% identified as 'other'. The mean age of participants was 17.4 (SD=.58).

Table 2: Teacher Demographics

	N	Perc (%)
Age		
20-29	3	27%
30-39	1	9%
40-49	5	46%
50-59	2	18%
Years at the school		
Less than 5	5	46%
5-10 years	3	27%
10+ years	3	27%
Total years teaching		
Less than 5	3	27%
10+ years	8	73%
Trained in SPHE		
Yes	9	82%
No	2	18%
Delivered SPHE previously		
Yes	11	100%
No	/	/
Delivered MindOut previously		
Yes	1	9%
No	2	18%
Partially	8	73%
Another trained teacher		
Yes	10	91%
No	1	9%
Class period time		
40 minutes	8	73%
60 minutes	3	27%
Subject MindOut taught in		
Religion	7	64%
SPHE	1	9%
Career guidance	1	9%
Special MindOut class	1	9%
Year delivered to		
5th	6	55%
6th	5	45%

Quantitative Results

School Readiness

A majority of the questions relating to school readiness were rated positively by teachers. All teachers agreed or strongly agreed that there was a need for wellbeing programmes, like MindOut in schools. Additionally, 91% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students' mental health and wellbeing affects the learning in the classroom and that the MindOut programme would positively influence students' mental health and wellbeing. Most teachers (82%) also agreed that MindOut could positively impact on teachers' own wellbeing. Teachers were asked to rate aspects of principal leadership from the Implementation Leadership Scale (ILS) (Aarons et al., 2014) and principals were rated highest for supportive leadership (e.g., leader's support of teachers' adoption and use of intervention), (M=4.15; SD=.775); and weakest for knowledgeable leadership (e.g., degree to which a leader has a deep understanding of the intervention and implementation issues), (M=3.66; SD=1.01). Overall, teachers rated the school environment positively, especially in relation to staff morale, relationships and students' wellbeing. Finally, in relation to the current curriculum, all teachers rated 'often' or 'always' in relation to mental health and wellbeing programmes being offered and delivered in Junior Cycle but only 45% teachers agreed with this statement for Senior Cycle. A full description of each of the scores from the Pre-Delivery Questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 (Table 5).

Level of Implementation Quality

Implementation quality was assessed based on key indicators identified from the Teacher Weekly Reports and the Student Post-Delivery Questionnaire. A description of the results for each of these dimensions across school classes is provided in Table 3. The school (two classes) that was required to terminate delivery of the programme after Christmas did not participate in the student questionnaires and, therefore, these data are not included.

Table 3: Level of Implementation Quality Across Dimensions

School	Class	Dosage		Adherence	Adaptation	Quality of Delivery			Participant Responsiveness			
		# of sessions completed	% of programme complete (Teacher)	% of programme sessions adapted (Teacher)	Average % of each session completed (Teacher)	Mean rating of teacher delivery elements (6) (Student) [b]	Rating overall delivery % (Student) [a]	Rating of delivery % (Teacher) [a]	Mean Engagement in Sessions (Teacher) [b]	Mean Interest in Sessions (Teacher) [b]	Mean rating of response (4) (Student) [b]	Rating programme overall % (Student) [a]
1	1	6	46%	100%	47%	3.81	76%	58%	3.00	3.33	2.71	63%
1	2	6	46%	0%	67%	3.42	71%	65%	2.33	2.67	3.50	66%
2	3	12	92%	46%	100%	4.44	86%	98%	4.78	4.78	3.70	74%
2	4	13	100%	50%	100%	4.63	89%	93%	5.00	5.00	3.53	77%
3	5	11	85%	45%	72%	3.26	54%	75%	3.55	3.45	3.23	61%
4	6	10	77%	70%	96%	4.64	89%	92%	4.20	4.00	3.66	74%
5	7	5	39%	20%	64%	/	/	82%	4.20	4.20	/	/
5	8	5	39%	0%	86%	/	/	84%	4.00	4.00	/	/
6	9	8	62%	63%	75%	4.47	98%	76%	4.25	4.25	4.15	92%
6	10	8	62%	80%	78%	3.31	68%	80%	4.60	4.40	2.83	65%
6	11	8	62%	63%	71%	3.26	42%	66%	3.75	3.63	2.87	49%
		8.4	**65%**		**78%**	**3.89 (.95)**	**72%**	**79%**	**3.96 (.78)**	**3.97 (.67)**	**3.35 (.84)**	**67%**

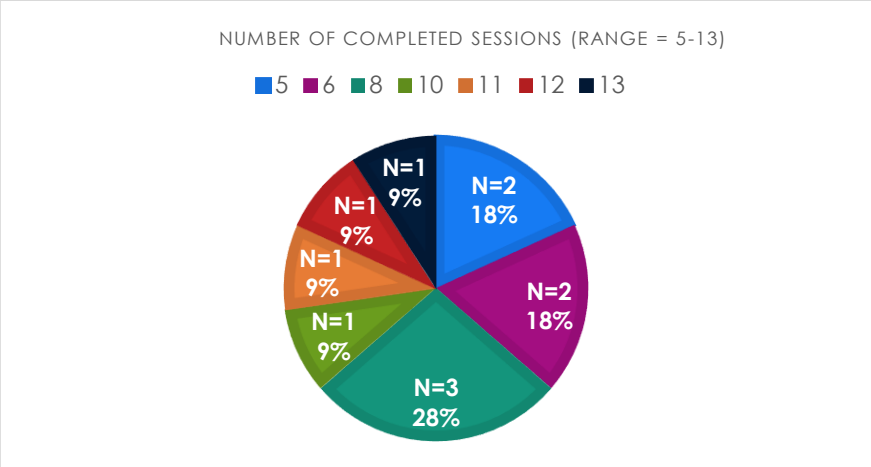
[a] Rated on a Likert scale with range 1-10 rating (1=Poor; 10= Excellent)

[b] Mean values rated on a Likert scale with range 1-5 rating (1=Poor; 5 = High)

Dosage

Due the COVID-19 restrictions, which resulted in a later start to the programme as well as school closure for three months, one school (two classes) was required to cease delivery of the programme after five sessions. Only one class was able to complete the programme in its entirety. A majority of schools (n=7) completed at least eight sessions and the average number of completed sessions was M=8.4 (SD=2.8) ranging from 5 to 13. Seven classes completed at least 60% of the programme and of these, four completed at least 70% of the programme.

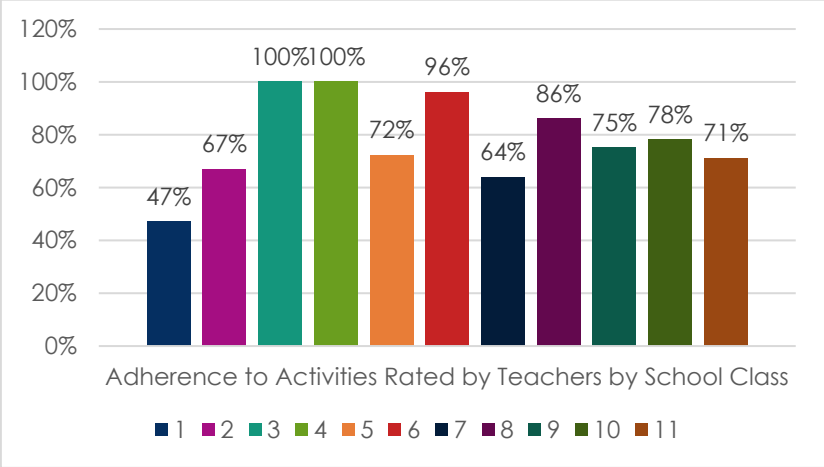
Figure 3: Number of Total Completed Sessions (Dosage)



Adherence

In terms of adherence to the programme, following the delivery of each session, teachers were asked to report on the percentage of the session that they completed from 10% - 100% (rating 1-10). Scores were averaged across all completed sessions for each school. In relation to the sessions that were implemented, on average teachers reported adhering to 77% of the session activities, however, this score ranged across the schools and classrooms with lowest adherence of 47% to highest adherence 100%. Figure 4 shows the scores for each of the eleven participating classes.

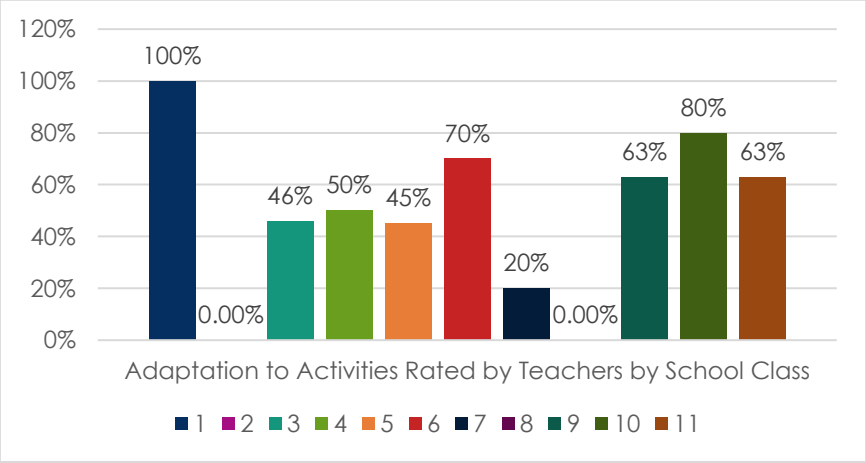
Figure 4: Percentage of the Programme Activities that were completed (Adherence)



Adaptation

Adaptation was assessed through Teacher Weekly Reports whereby teachers answered 'yes' or 'no' to the question 'Did you adapt the session in any way?" If answering 'yes', teachers were asked to report on how they adapted the session. The average score for adaptation across the eleven participating schools was 48.8% (SD=31.7) (range = 0%- 100%). This indicates that on average, schools adapted almost half of the completed programme sessions. According to the teachers' qualitative responses, the primary reason for session adaptation related to COVID -19 restrictions (e.g., adapting games, group work etc.) so that students would not be in close contact with each other. Figure 5 shows the scores for each of the eleven participating classes.

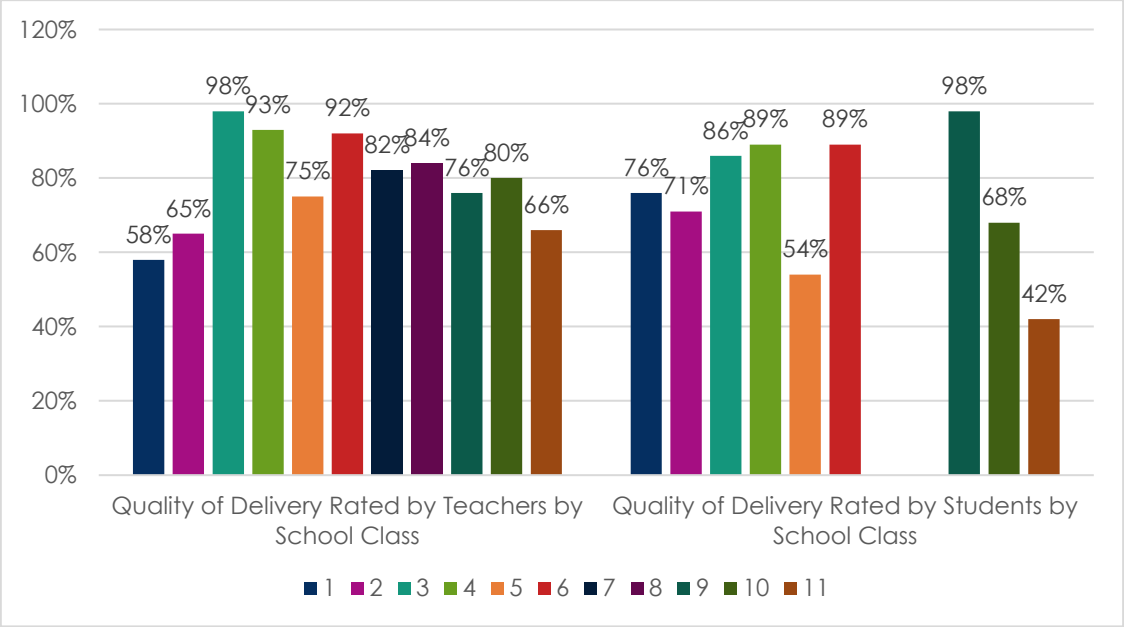
Figure 5: Percentage of Adapted Sessions (Adaptation)



Quality of Delivery

Quality of delivery was assessed through both teacher and student measures. Teachers were asked to rate 'how well' the delivery of each session was from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent). Ratings across all completed sessions were combined for a total score. The average rating for quality of delivery according to teachers was 79% (range = 58%-98%). Students were also asked to rate their own teacher's delivery of the programme from 1-10. All scores from students from the same class were averaged for a total score. The average rating of quality of delivery according to students was 72% (range = 42%-98%). Students were also asked to rate teacher's delivery across a series of six different measures of quality of delivery (e.g., confidence, enthusiasm, criticism, showing appreciation, engaging and preparedness) on a five-point Likert scale. These scores were combined and then averaged across students within the same class. The average score for teachers across these six measures was M=3.89 (SD=.95). Correlations were completed between the student and teacher ratings of quality of delivery, but these were not correlated, r (97) = .523, p=.149, meaning that teachers and their students did not rate quality of delivery similarly. Figure 6 depicts the scores for overall quality of delivery according to both teachers and students for each of the eleven participating classes. Student data for classes 7 & 8 were not available.

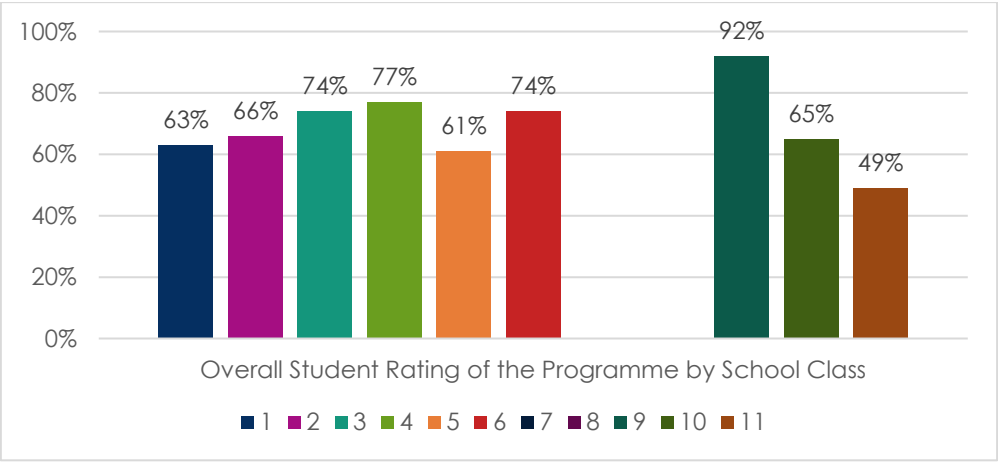
Figure 6: Overall Rating of Teachers' Delivery According to Teachers & Students



Participant Responsiveness

Participant Responsiveness was also assessed through teacher and student measures. Teachers were asked to rate students on their interest and engagement in the session across all completed sessions on a five-point Likert scale. These scores were averaged for a total interest and total engagement score for each class. The average interest score was M=3.97 (SD=.67) and the average engagement scores was M=3.96 (SD = .78). Students were asked to rate the programme across four items related to responsiveness (e.g., relevance, understandability, usefulness and interest) on a five-point Likert scale. These scores were combined for a total score and this was averaged across students from the same class. The average score of these items across schools was M=3.35 (SD=.84). Students were also asked to rate their experience of the programme overall from 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent). The average rating for overall experience according to students was 67% (range = 49%- 92%). Correlations were completed to determine the relationship between students' rating of their teachers' delivery and their rating of their overall experience of MindOut. This analysis showed a strong correlation between the two variables (r (88) = .80 p=<.001). This meant that students who felt their teacher delivered the programme well, also rated their experience more positively and those that rated delivery poorer had more negative experiences of the programme.

Figure 7: Students' Overall Experience of the Programme (Participant Responsiveness)



Qualitative Results

Focus groups and interviews were conducted to ascertain study participants' views on the implementation of MindOut. Through this qualitative process, factors which might have facilitated or hindered implementation quality of the programme were identified. Teacher focus groups occurred at pre-and mid- delivery, principal focus groups occurred at pre-delivery only and student focus groups occurred post-delivery. Additionally, interviews were conducted with teachers and principals separately at post-delivery. The qualitative data from all respondents and timepoints were grouped together in Table 4 to enhance the richness of the data. All of the codes and themes that emerged from the data were mapped onto 23 of the 39 CFIR constructs across all five domains (Characteristics of the Innovation; Characteristics of the Individual; Inner Setting; Outer Setting and Process). During the pre-delivery phase, 15 of the 39 constructs were identified, during mid-delivery 17, and at post-delivery 23 constructs were visible from the data. Appendix 2 (Table 7) provides a breakdown of the three different time-points for data collection and the constructs that were evident during each of these.

Figure 8 depicts the main themes that were highlighted by teachers, principals and students as impacting on implementation quality in relation to the CFIR framework. The original CFIR does not include factors which relate to the recipient or participant, in this case the students. Recognising the impact of participant or student-level factors on implementation quality is crucial in strengthening delivery and overall success of a programme (Chaudoir, 2013). Therefore, for this reason we posit that the CFIR framework domain 'Characteristics of the Individual' should be divided into two separate domains, one for factors related to the provider and one for the programme participants. The constructs associated with the participant domain (Knowledge and Beliefs & Other Personal Attributes) are similar to that of the provider domain. We have also created four additional constructs based on the study data which relate to the domains of; Innovation (Relevance & Delivery Methods), the Provider (Provider-Participant Relationship), and the Outer Setting (External Environment). These constructs are not included in the original CFIR but are critically important to the implementation of school-based programmes and are, therefore, included here. Table 4 provides a description of all of the constructs, which were present in this study, along with a description of the construct and the identified themes which related to each construct. Extracted quotes for each of the constructs and themes can be found in Appendix 2 (Table 8).

Figure 8: MindOut implementation domains and constructs matched to the CFIR framework

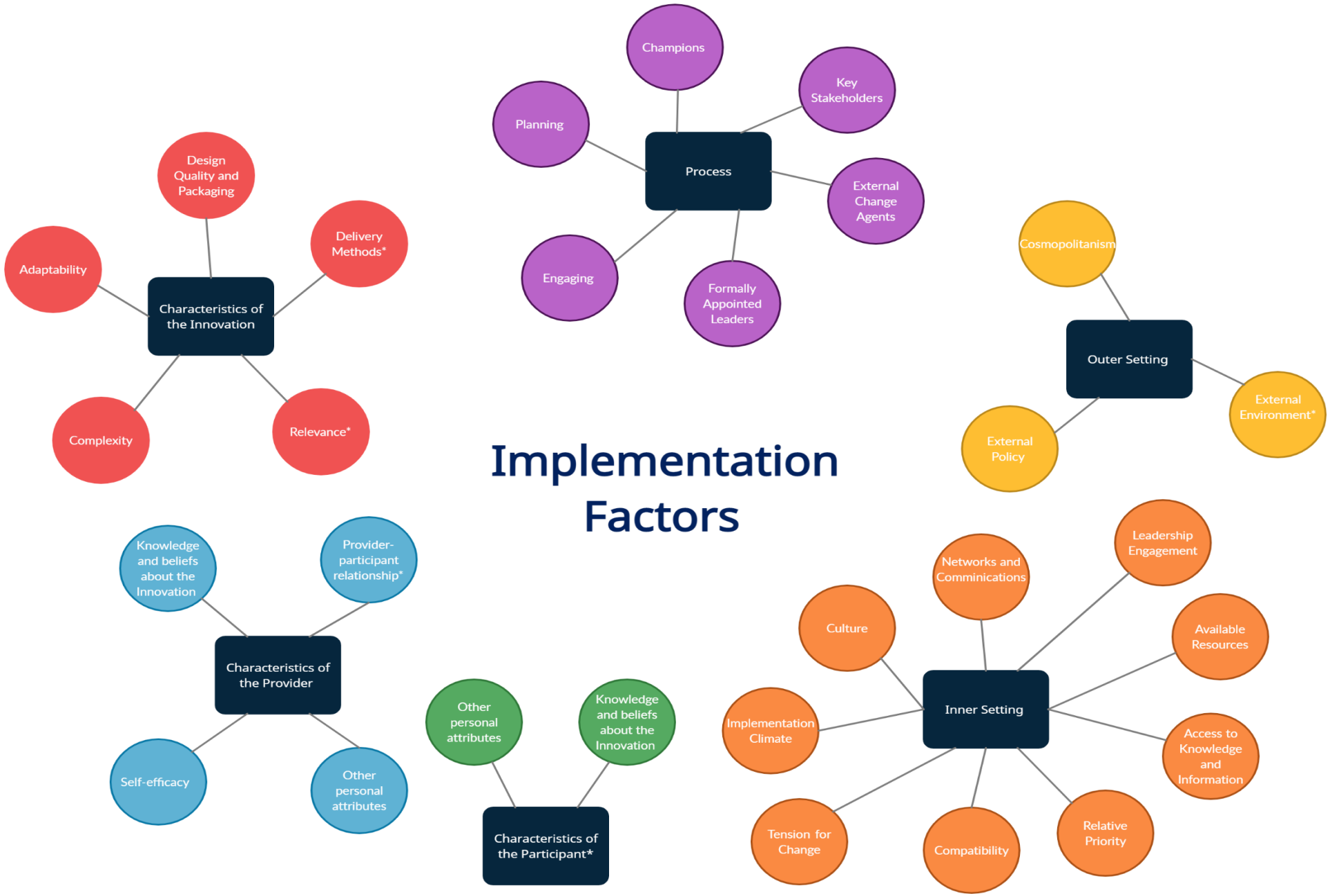


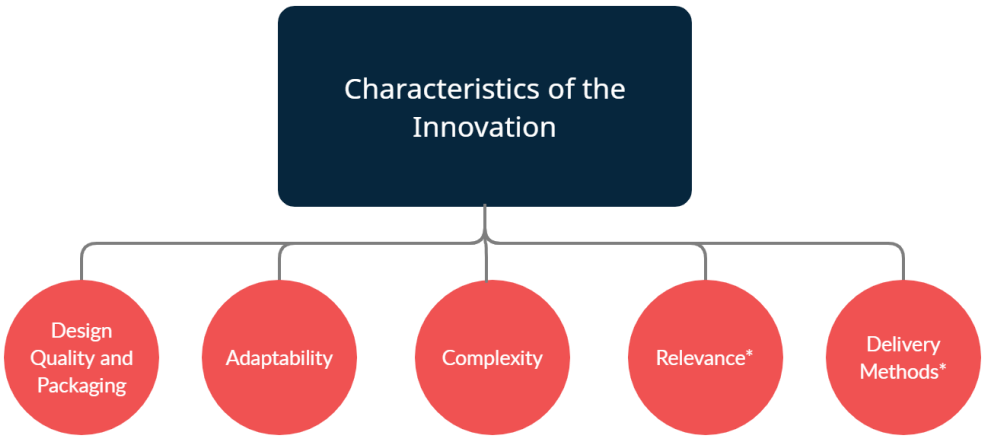
Table 4: MindOut implementation constructs and themes linked to the CFIR framework

Constructs	Description	Themes
I. Characteristics of the Innovation		
Design quality & packaging	Perceived excellence in how the materials are presented	• Quality of materials • Access to everything needed • Additional requested resources
Adaptability	The degree to which an innovation can be adapted, tailored or refined.	• Adaptation of sessions for needs
Complexity	Perceived difficulty of the materials	• User friendly
Relevance*	Stakeholder's perception of the relevance of the programme content for participants.	• Age-appropriate • Relatable content
Delivery Methods*	Stakeholders' perceptions of the strength of the delivery/teaching methods used	• Engagement through videos • Interactive activities
II. Characteristics of the Individual (Provider)		
Knowledge and beliefs about innovation	Individuals' attitudes toward and value placed on the innovation.	• Attitudes • Enjoyment • Perceived benefits • Interest
Self-efficacy	Individual's belief about their ability to carry out the innovation	• Confidence
Other personal attributes	A broad construct to include other personal traits.	• Level of preparation • Skills and competences necessary for delivery • Facilitation style • Previous Training
Provider- participant relationship*	The relationship between those delivering the programme and those participating in the innovation.	• Relationship with students • Relatability • Awareness of students
III. Characteristics of the Individual (Participant)		
Knowledge and Beliefs about the innovation	Individuals' attitudes toward and value placed on the innovation.	• Value/importance of the programme • Mindset/Open mindedness • Attitudes
Other Personal Attributes	A broad construct to include other personal traits. Individuals' comfort with participating in the intervention	• Group comfort levels • Group dynamic • Group resistance • Class size

IV. Inner Setting		
Networks and communications	The nature and quality of formal and informal communications within an organization.	• Awareness of student needs
Culture	Norms, values, and basic assumptions of a given organization.	• Supportive of wellbeing (whole student) • Supportive environment
Implementation Climate	The capacity for change, shared receptivity of involved individuals and the extent to which use of the innovation will be supported and expected with the organisation.	• Whole-school awareness • Shared responsibility of staff • Internal MH support
Tension for Change	The degree to which stakeholders perceived the current situation as needing change.	• Need to prioritise wellbeing in school • Senior cycles students' needs •
Compatibility	The degree of tangible fit between the meaning and values attached to the innovation and how those align with individuals' values and needs and how it fits within existing systems.	• Alignment with wellbeing policy • Alignment with other resources
Relative Priority	Individuals' shared perception of the importance of the implementation within the organisation	• Need to prioritise wellbeing as much as academics • Level of importance
Leadership engagement	Commitment, involvement and accountability of leaders and management with the implementation of the programme.	• Reliance on teachers • Lack of awareness • Level of support • Communicating with management
Available resources	The level of resources dedicated for implementation and ongoing operations.	• Time • Space • IT
Access to Knowledge and information	Ease of access to digestible information and knowledge about the programme and how to incorporate it into works tasks	• Information about supports • Information about the programme
V. Outer Setting		
External Policy	A broad construct that includes external strategies to spread innovations including policy, regulations, recommendations and guidelines.	• Wellbeing • Academics prioritised
Cosmopolitanism	The degree to which an organisation is networked with other external organisations.	• Awareness of local organisations • Access to support services • Relationship with local organisations

External environment	A broad construct that includes environmental factors that could impact on implementation of the innovation.	• Covid Restrictions • School closures and programme loss • Covid impact on student stress, engagement and behaviour • Covid impact on teacher stress/pressure • Exposure to trauma
VI. Process		
Planning	The degree to which a scheme or method of behaviour and tasks for implementing an innovation are developed in advance and the quality of these.	• Timetabling – planning early; selecting class; double class • Space • Class size • Group Dynamic – gender split; year group; comfort levels; disruptiveness • Staffing – staff turnover; implementation team
Engaging	Attracting and involving individuals in the implementation and use of the innovation through education, training and similar activities.	• Training
Champions	Individuals responsible for supporting, marketing and 'driving through' an intervention.	• Person of responsibility • Wellbeing/SPHE coordinator
External change agents	Individuals who are affiliated with an outside entity who formally influence or facilitate innovation decisions.	• Implementation Support • Delivery Support • Planning Support • School visits
Formally appointed internal implementation leaders	Individuals from within the organisation who are formally appointed with the responsibility for implementing an innovation.	• Team of teachers • Gender balance • Qualities and experience
Key stakeholders	Individuals from an organisation that are directly impacted by the innovation.	• Parents • Guidance counsellor

Characteristics of the Innovation



Characteristics of the Innovation

Three constructs in CFIR's 'Characteristics of the Innovation' domain were described by participants as influencing implementation quality. These were: i) *Design Quality and Packaging* ii) *Adaptability* and iii) *Complexity*. An additional two constructs were created from the data that did not fit into any of the original CFIR constructs: iv) *Relevance* and v) *Delivery Methods.*

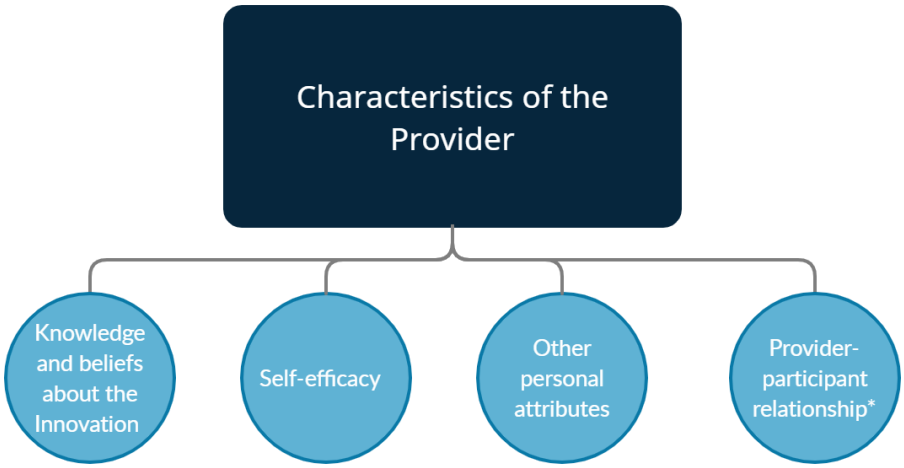
Design Quality and Packaging relates to perceived excellence of how the innovation is bundled and presented. Both teachers and principals made reference to this construct by discussing the importance of having well-structured and well laid-out materials to ensure higher quality implementation. Teachers also discussed a number of other resources that could be helpful to them and their school in implementing the programme in the future including: a workbook/journal for students; programme posters that could be hung up around the school; visual/brief overview of the programme to share with staff, students and parents; and a 'one-stop' website with links to support services.

Adaptability refers to the degree to which the innovation can be adapted. Teachers discussed the need to adapt the materials to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions and making the sessions their own by 'tweaking' the materials.

Complexity refers to the perceived difficulty of the innovation. Many teachers spoke about how user-friendly and easy to deliver the materials and resources were. *Relevance* refers

to how relatable and relevant the programme content is for the programme participants. Students and teachers commented on the importance of ensuring that the programme content was age-appropriate and relevant to young people's lives to increase participant engagement. Overall teachers and students were positive when describing the relatability of the materials and felt that the content accurately reflected the current lives and situations of senior cycle students.

Delivery Methods relates to the perceived strength of the delivery methods used. Both groups of students and teachers spoke about the need for interactive strategies such as games and group work, as well as videos, to ensure stronger engagement. Though the MindOut programme incorporates many interactive methods, use of these within the sessions was restricted this year due to the COVID-19 social distancing measures in the classroom. Sample quotes from students and teachers on this domain are depicted below.



Characteristics of the Individuals (Provider)

Three constructs in the CFIR's 'Characteristics of Individuals – Provider' were highlighted by participants as impacting on implementation quality; i) *Knowledge and Beliefs about the Innovation,* ii) *Self-efficacy* and iii) *Other Personal Attributes*. A final construct was added based on the feedback, which was titled iv) *Provider-Participant Relationship.*

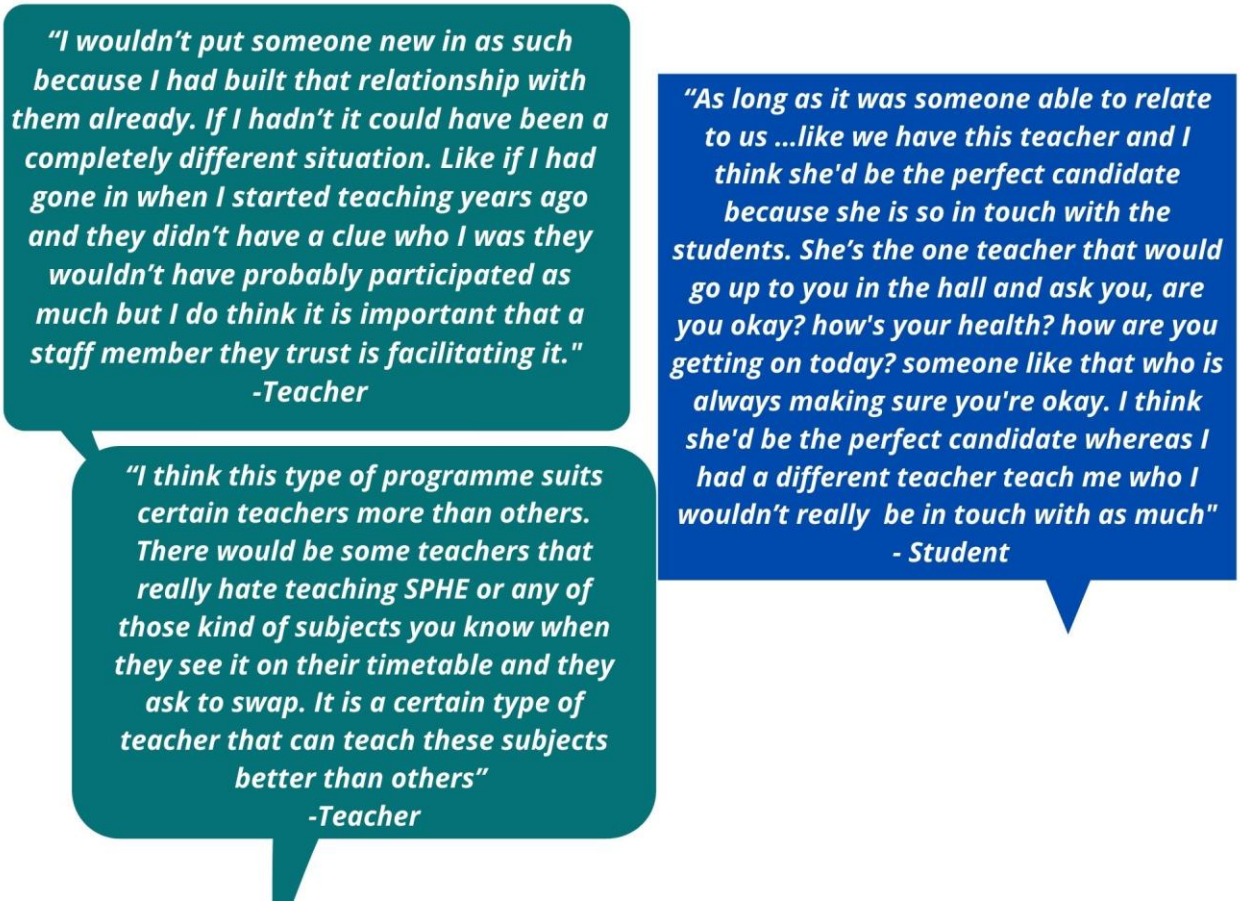
Knowledge and Beliefs about the Innovation concern the individual's attitudes toward, and values placed on, the innovation. When teachers were asked to discuss their experience of the programme, responses and attitudes towards the programme were very positive and teachers reported valuing the programme highly. Students discussed the importance of having a teacher who is enthusiastic about the programme and demonstrates a visible desire to deliver it. Other aspects of knowledge and beliefs discussed included, reported enjoyment of delivering the programme and the perceived benefits of the programme, which were reflected through teachers' accounts of how they felt the programme positively impacted on their students' confidence, skill development and help-seeking.

The second construct, *Self-efficacy* reflects the individual's belief in their ability to deliver. Teachers spoke about their level of confidence in delivering the programme sessions and made reference to the resources, training and previous teaching experience in equipping them to deliver. Teachers also discussed that they felt their confidence in delivering would improve after repeated delivery of the programme.

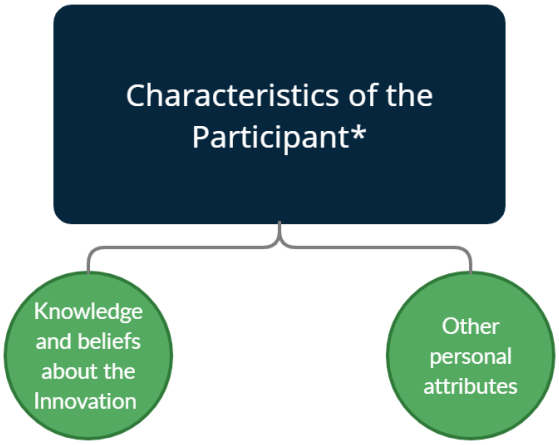
Other Personal Attributes is a broad construct, which includes personal traits that may impact on implementation. Some of the important attributes that were identified by participants in this study included the teachers' level of preparation, presence of skills and competencies necessary to deliver including both technical skills and delivery skills. Facilitation style was another key attribute that was identified, with teachers and students agreeing that teachers should be able to 'facilitate' discussion with the students rather than 'teaching or lecturing' them. An interest in wellbeing and teaching SPHE-type subjects, as well as training and experience in delivering SPHE, were also highlighted as important attributes in the successful implementation of MindOut, as recognised by teachers, students and principals. Sample quotes are illustrated below.

The last construct, which is not included in the CFIR, but was shown to be an important construct to include for this domain, is the *Provider-Participant Relationship.* This refers to the built relationship between those delivering the programme and those participating. This construct was particularly important from the students' perspective. Students spoke about the importance of having a good relationship with the teacher delivering the programme. They felt

that a teacher who is open-minded, who demonstrates genuine concern for students' wellbeing regularly, who they are able to relate with and who they feel comfortable sharing things with, would be the ideal person to deliver this programme. Teachers also discussed the importance of being aware of the students that they have in the group before starting the programme and getting to know the students beforehand if they don't already. Teachers who were more aware or had previously taught their class group ahead of time felt that this helped facilitate a stronger bond with the students and increased participation.



Characteristics of the Individuals (Participants)

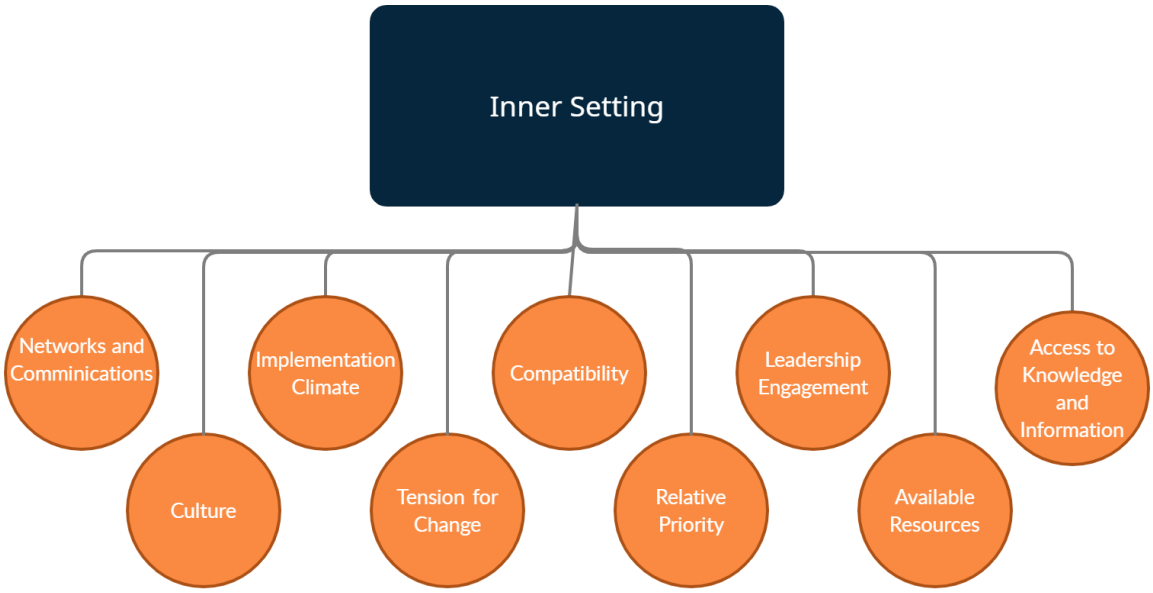


Characteristics of the Individuals (Participants)

Two constructs in the CFIR's 'Characteristics of Individuals – Provider' domain were also highlighted in the new 'Characteristics of Individuals– Participant' domain. These constructs were; i) *Knowledge and Beliefs about the Innovation* and ii) *Other Personal Attributes.* As before, *Knowledge and Beliefs about the Innovation* relates to the attitudes and values the individuals place on the innovation. The individual in this circumstance is the participants or students participating. Teachers and principals both discussed the need for students to value the programme and understand the importance of learning life skills. Many felt that the importance of the programme was overshadowed by competing academic priorities, particularly during this academic year due to missed time in school.

The second construct *Other Personal Attributes* refers to broad constructs or personal traits of the individual, in this case this related to attributes of the class group. Teachers and students discussed the importance of levels of group comfort and believed that groups which had some level of familiarity with each other were more likely to participate and implementation would be easier. Class size was also discussed by teachers who felt that smaller class sizes would promote better participation and engagement from students. Teachers also spoke about group dynamic and felt that certain groups would be easier to implement the programme with than others (e.g., more talkative and chatty; less disruptive). Group size and delivery methods were two strategies for dealing with the group dynamic with both teachers and students suggesting

that a smaller class size and increased group work activities would provide better opportunities for all people to share and not feel overwhelmed in a larger group. The final attribute of the group that teachers and students identified that could impact on implementation is group resistance, with teachers reporting that 'big personalities' might influence other students' ability or desire to participate, while students echoed this by saying that if others in the group demonstrated negativity towards the programme, they would be less likely to open up and participate.



Inner Setting (School)

Nine constructs in the CFIR's 'Inner Setting' domain were discussed by the participants in this study. These constructs included; *i) Networks & Communications ii) Culture, iii) Implementation Climate, iv) Tension for Change, v) Relative Priority, vi) Compatibility, vii) Leadership Engagement, viii) Available Resources* and *ix) Access to Knowledge & Information.*

Networks & Communication refers to the nature and quality of formal and informal communications within an organisation. Teachers spoke about the importance of communicating and having a basic understanding of their students' mental health and social issues so that they are aware and prepared if something comes up.

Culture, which refers to the norms and basic values of the organisation, was also discussed by participants during the evaluation. All groups of participants spoke about the importance of having a school that values and supports wellbeing at a whole-school level. Students spoke about the importance of a being in a school environment where they are treated as equals, free to share their opinions and feelings, and feel supported by the school.

Implementation Climate reflects the shared openness of involved individuals to an innovation and the extent to which the innovation will be supported within an organisation. Students

spoke about issues with the programme being isolated to one class and felt that it was forgotten about outside of the specified class time. All groups felt that the programme and wellbeing needed to be acknowledged and accepted at a whole-school level and that it was a shared responsibility of all staff to support the programme, not just those that are delivering it in the classroom. Additionally, students spoke about the importance of having the opportunity to speak to someone in the school outside of class time about their struggles. One school principal spoke about their schools' access to a teacher who was trained in counselling and felt that having this internal level of support was very positive for the students as a first point of intervention and helped to alleviate some of the pressures for external organisations.

Tension for Change relates to the degree to which stakeholders perceive the current situation as needing change. All groups spoke about the need for wellbeing to be taught in schools due to the high levels of stress, anxiety and emotional problems that students face. Students in particular spoke about the importance of supporting wellbeing for Senior Cycle students given the lack of programmes for their age group and the influx of new challenges and stressors in their lives.

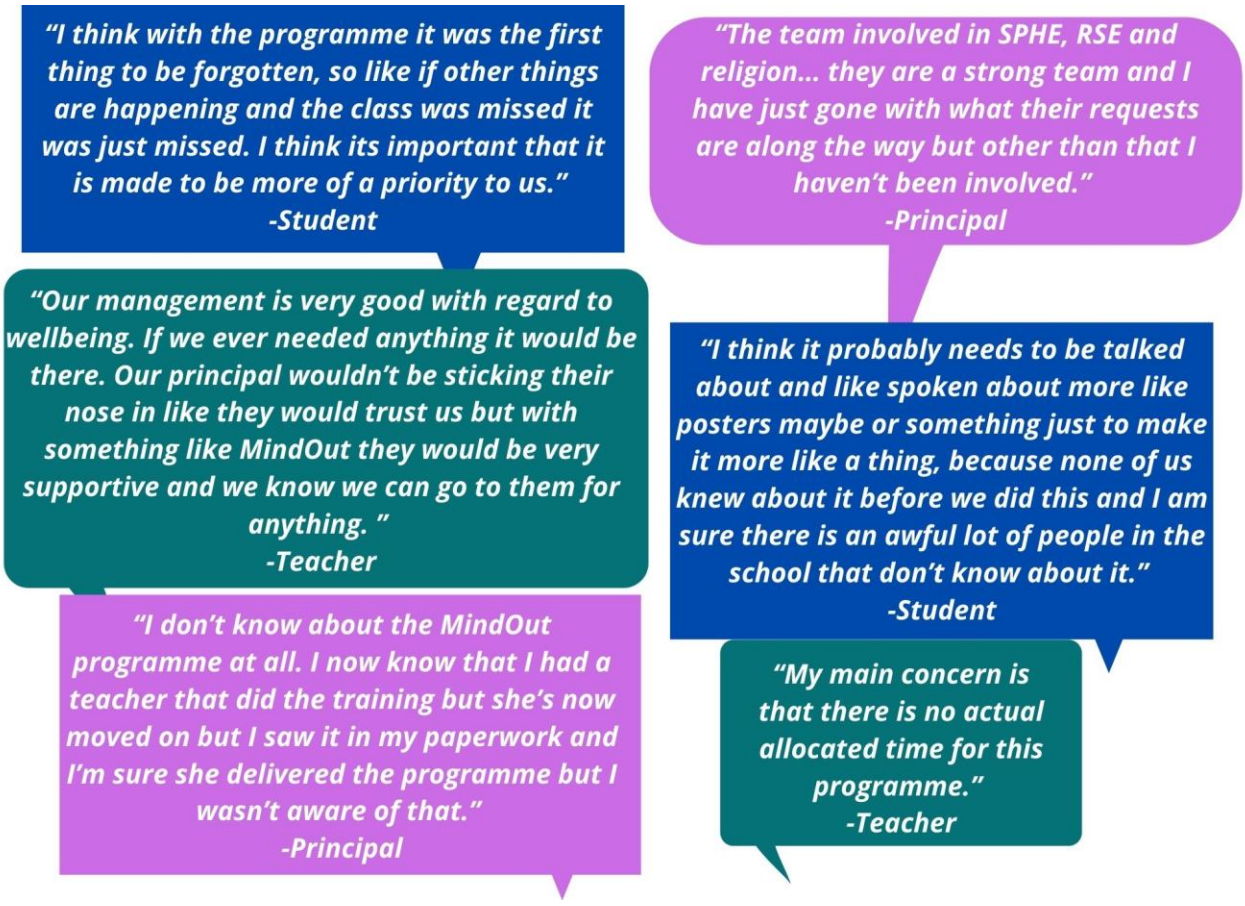
Relative Priority concerns individuals' perception of the importance of the innovation. All groups (teachers, students and principals) spoke about prioritisation of academic achievement in schools and suggested that there was a need for a shift towards prioritising wellbeing and life skills as much as academic subjects. Participants from each of the groups spoke about the importance of these types of programmes in schools, acknowledging the need for social and emotional skills to be taught as a subject. Students did express that they felt that the programme was not given the prioritisation it deserved and was the first thing in the school to be forgotten as academics took precedence. Teachers expressed the view that in order for the class to get the attention it deserves that a dedicated class should be created for wellbeing rather than slotting the programme into an available class in the timetable such as religion or study period. They believed this would help build stronger value and meaning to the programme.

Compatibility reflects the degree of tangible fit of the innovation within the organisation. The fact that the programme was in line with the core aims of wellbeing, as well as its visible links to other programmes (e.g., SPHE) and resources, were seen as facilitators for implementing the programme by teachers and principals.

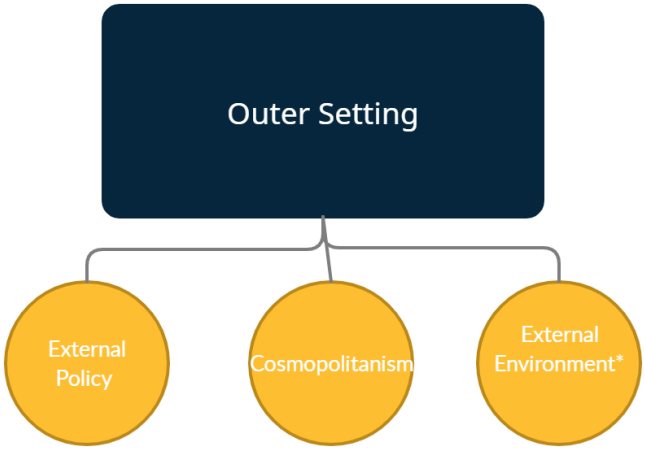
Leadership Engagement reflects the commitment and involvement of leaders to the implementation of the innovation. In terms of support from principals, overall, teachers felt supported and that they could go to their principal if they needed anything. Teachers reported that the biggest support they required from principals was in relation to planning and preparation, including adequate timetabling, access to resources and a meeting at the beginning of the year to "iron out details". When principals discussed their engagement with the programme, they all reported that they would be very supportive of any issues that arose but many principals were unaware of the details of the programme and its implementation. A majority of principals said that while they supported the programme, they put their trust and reliance on the teachers delivering the programme to approach them if they needed anything.

Available Resources concerns the level of resources within the organisation which is dedicated to implementation. Teachers and principals made reference to the resources that are needed in order for the programme to be effectively implemented and these resources included adequate timetabling, a suitable space/room and access to IT.

Lastly, *Access to Knowledge and Information* refers to access to information and knowledge about the innovation. Students and teachers expressed that there was a need to build more awareness of the programme by providing additional information through posters, staff meetings, visitor talks etc. and to increase whole-school communication around the programme. Students also expressed the need for more information about local and national support services within the school as they felt this information was not easy to access or find.



Outer Setting (External)

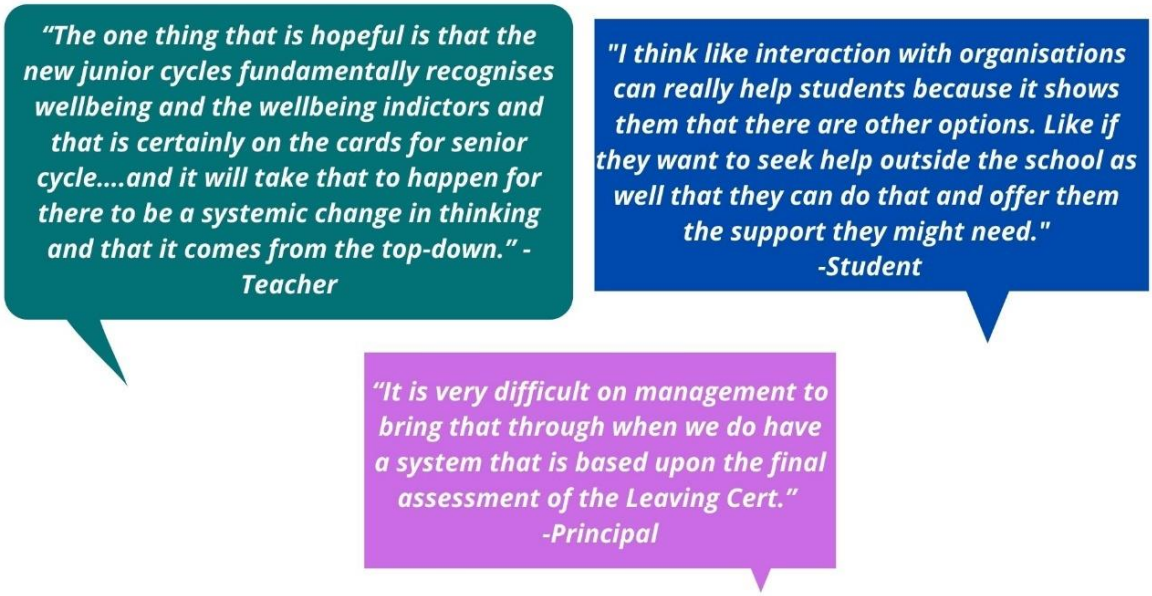


Outer Setting (External)

Two constructs in the CFIR's 'Outer Setting' were highlighted during the qualitative feedback; *i) External Policy* and *ii) Cosmopolitanism*. A third construct was created from the data, which did not fit into the existing Outer Setting constructs and this was titled *iii) External Environment.*

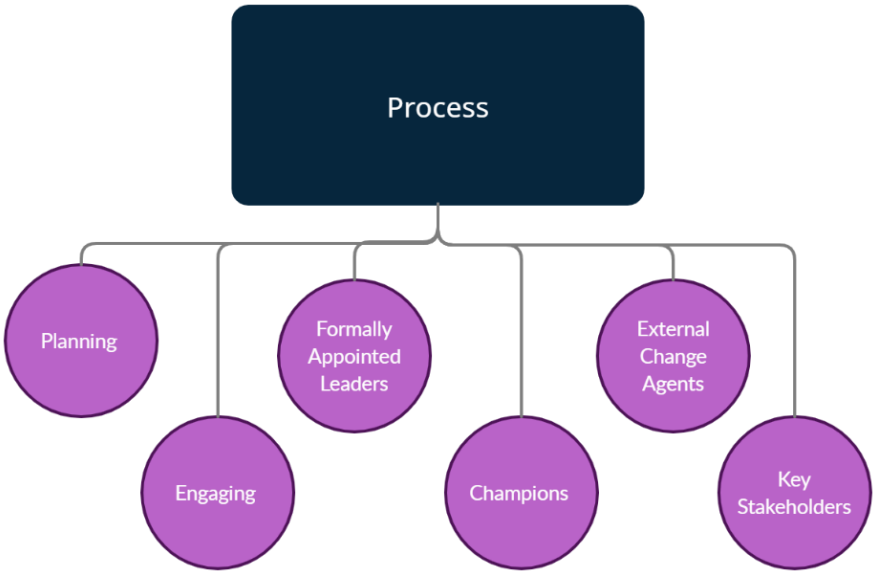
External Policy is a broad construct that refers to external strategies that impact on the innovation. In the case of this study, participants viewed the enhancement of policy and guidelines around wellbeing in Junior Cycle as a step in the right direction but noted that this government support was also necessary for the Senior Cycle years. Participants also spoke about the pressure being put on schools from the education system towards achieving academic results and identified this as a barrier to implementation of programmes such as MindOut.

Cosmopolitanism relates to the degree to which the organisation is networked with external organisations. A number of sub-themes around this construct were discussed, which mainly reflected the need to have strong relationships between the school and local organisations, to not only assist with the MindOut programme but to increase students' awareness of the support that is available to them. Students noted that social media can be a useful tool to build the relationship between the organisations and the school. One barrier that came up for schools was the lack of access to local services and knowing where to send students who required further support.



The final construct, *External Environment* was created to reflect social or environmental factors that may have impacted on the level of implementation. The development of this construct was particularly relevant this year due to the impact that COVID-19 had on schools and the implementation of the programme. All teachers spoke about the issues with COVID-19 restrictions, commenting on the difficulties they faced in engaging with the students, timing pressure and difficulty in carrying out all of the interactive activities and delivering the programme session activities as intended. Students also voiced that they felt the programme could have been more engaging if they were allowed to participate in more group work and the interactive exercises and games. Teachers and principals discussed the problems COVID-19 caused at the beginning of the year with planning and timetabling. All groups of participants also spoke about how the 3-month school closures negatively impacted on students' engagement and motivation to participate. Not only did COVID-19 have a direct impact on planning and delivery of the programme, but it also impacted it indirectly by creating added pressure on both students and teachers. This added pressure on students caused them to be more reluctant to participate due to the academic stress they were experiencing. Teachers felt very pressured this year due to COVID-19 and many stated that they felt this impacted on their overall quality of delivery of the programme. In addition to COVID-19, one school was faced

with a crisis near the beginning of the programme and this caused a halt in programme implementation, initially impacting on students' engagement with the programme. However, teachers reported that this unexpected crisis also brought more meaning to the programme and to the importance of mental health and wellbeing, and as result, they witnessed more engagement from students when they recognised the need for, and importance of the programme lessons.



Process

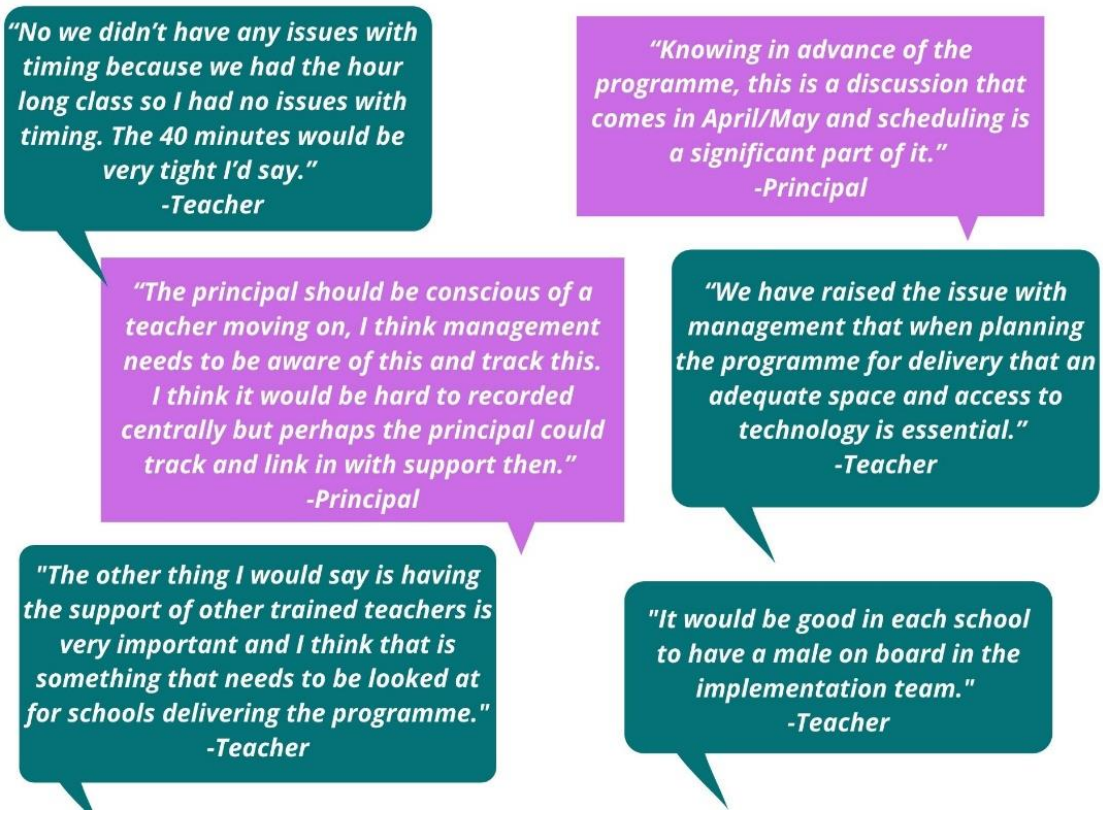
Six constructs in the CFIR's 'Process' domain were discussed during the feedback from study participants. These constructs included; *i) Planning, ii) Engaging, iii) Formally Appointed Leaders, iv) Champions, v) External Change Agents,* and *vi) Key Stakeholders*.

Planning concerns the degree to which tasks for implementing an innovation are developed and the quality of these. A number of important considerations were highlighted by teachers and principals in relation to the planning process. Timetabling was perhaps the most referenced task with participants discussing the importance of early planning, selecting an appropriate class for delivery of the programme (e.g., not a free/study class) and consideration of a double-class period to alleviate pressure and facilitate better implementation. Other considerations during the planning period that were identified included, access to an appropriate space, class size, year group and group dynamic. Based on feedback from teachers, a space in which there is room to move around and where IT is available is important for delivering MindOut. Additionally, teachers suggested that an ideal class size for delivering MindOut would be 20-22 students and that schools should plan for delivery to a class of similar size. Increasing numbers would negatively impact on classroom management and organisation while decreasing numbers (e.g., < 10) could negatively impact on the interactive nature of the programme. With the current evaluation being carried out with 5th year and Leaving Cert

students, a majority of teachers voiced that stronger implementation was more likely to occur with 5th year students. Teachers and principals did feel however that there needed to be some type of support for promoting wellbeing of Leaving Cert students and that perhaps a top-up workshop could be provided. In the national evaluation of MindOut (Dowling et al., 2020), the programme was delivered to Transition Year (4th year) and 5th year students. In this study, teachers reported fewer barriers to implementation when the programme was delivered to 5th years as 5th year faced fewer disruptions and was more structured. Therefore, when schools are planning for implementation and deciding on what Senior Cycle year group to select they should consider the findings of these two studies which point towards 5th year being the most optimal year for delivery. The other key task during the planning phase was staffing considerations. Teachers and principals made reference to the importance of having a strong implementation team, ensuring timetabled staff are trained, being aware of staff turnover and preparing for staff leaves.

Engaging refers to attracting and involving individuals in the implementation of the innovation. One key aspect of this construct that was discussed by participants was training. Teachers all agreed that the training was useful and equipped them with the skills they needed to deliver. Some participants suggested a refresher training would be useful and also that the training prepared them better to deal with some of the tougher situations that they could face.

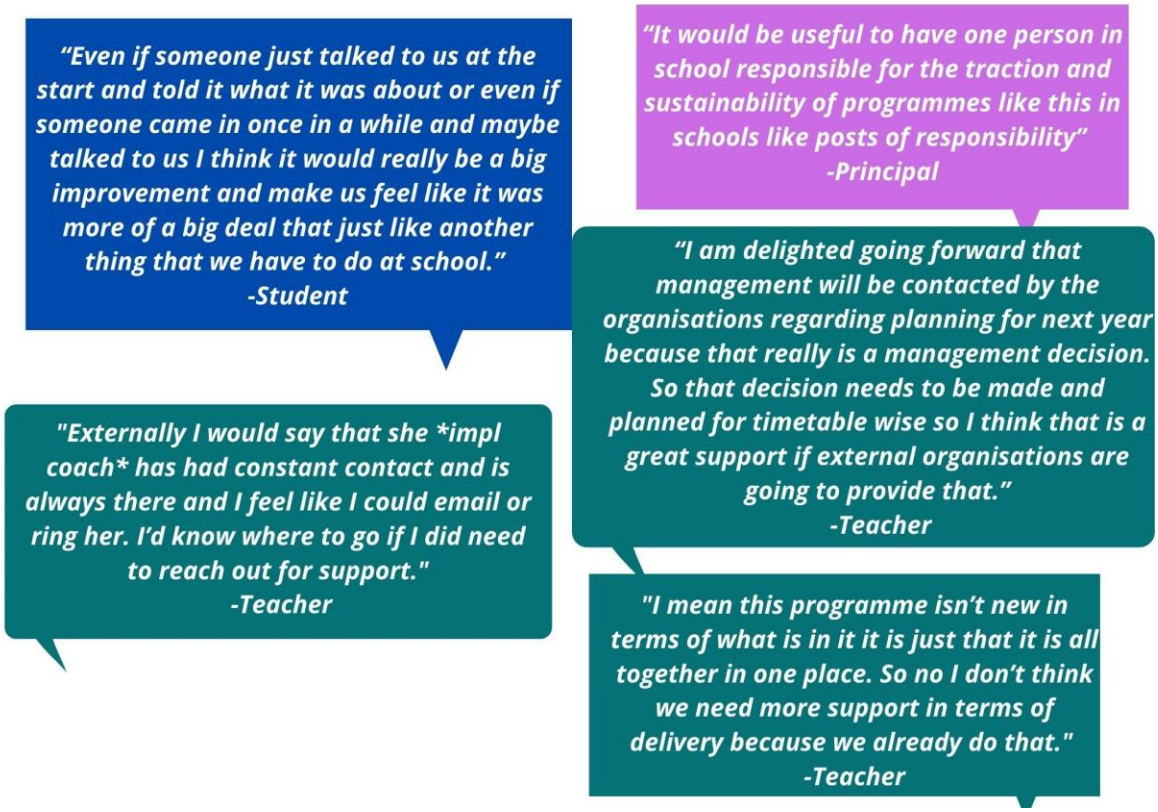
The other constructs for this 'Process' domain related to key individuals who play a role in the implementation of the intervention. The first of these groups is the *Formally Appointed Internal Implementation Leaders* and these individuals are those who are responsible for actually delivering the intervention. In the case of this study, teachers who are delivering MindOut would fall into this construct. Participants felt it was important that there was a strong implementation team with multiple teachers trained to support each other during implementation. They also commented on the importance of having the presence of both female and male teachers on board, especially in mixed schools. All groups discussed the importance of consideration for teachers' skills, qualities and experience when selecting teachers to deliver the programme. As described earlier within 'Characteristics of the Provider', teachers with experience in teaching SPHE, an interest in wellbeing and a good relationship with students were all highlighted as important.



Champions are those within the school who dedicate themselves to supporting the innovation. Principals spoke about the importance of having a person of responsibility who helps support and sustain these programmes in schools. Some principals spoke about having a SPHE Coordinator, Wellbeing Coordinator and wellbeing team and felt that all of these individuals should be aware of the programme and have the programme on their agenda to discuss during their meetings. *Key Stakeholders* are individuals within the organisation that are directly impacted by the innovation. Two primary groups of stakeholders were identified, guidance counsellors and parents. Participants felt it was important that guidance counsellors were made aware of the programme and aware of the issues that might come up, given that they would be the first point of support. Teachers also identified the guidance counsellor as a person of support for themselves if they needed additional help in dealing with student issues. Parents were also identified as key stakeholders and teachers felt it was important to communicate with parents about MindOut and make them aware of the work the school was doing to support wellbeing.

External Change Agents are the final group that were identified and these include individuals who are affiliated outside of the school who formally influence or facilitate innovation

decisions. The external change agents in this study related to the local organisations which helped to support implementation of the programme within the schools. Overall, all teachers and principals were very positive when asked about the level of external support offered and all felt that they knew where to go or who to contact if they needed additional support. The schools discussed how having an established relationship with these external organisations made it easier to reach out for support if needed. In terms of type of support, teachers felt that they were well equipped with the skills and knowledge to deliver the programme and did not need additional support for this. A majority of teachers and principals referenced planning support as the main support offering needed and felt that a meeting before the start of the year with management as well as those involved in planning for delivery (e.g., timetabling, space, class size etc.) would help strengthen implementation. Lastly, a majority of schools felt that having an external professional come in at the beginning of the year to speak to the students about the programme which would benefit by making the programme more meaningful for students and increasing their engagement from the beginning.



DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the level of implementation of the MindOut programme across participating schools and to highlight the key influencing factors which impacted on implementation quality. Based on the findings, it is clear that the level of implementation quality within this study was weaker across all dimensions in comparison to the national study, however, a main reason for these differences was the impact of COVID-19. Even though all schools experienced the consequences of COVID-19, variability in implementation quality across schools was still detected. While some participating classes were able to complete the entire programme and adhered to the majority of activities, other schools were unable to do this. Several factors could have impacted on these dosage and adherence scores, including the motivation and attitudes of the teacher delivering, the support of the school and the level of prioritisation the school placed on the programme as well as the attitudes and level of push-back from the students participating. Significant differences were also found between schools for Quality of Delivery, where some students rated their teachers' quality of delivery highly and others rated their delivery poorly. There was a strong correlation between Quality of Delivery and Participant Responsiveness, which suggests that the way in which the teacher delivers the programme largely effects how the students will respond to it. These findings highlight the importance that should be placed on strengthening quality of delivery through appropriate selection of teaching staff, good quality training and resources as well as ongoing implementation support. The findings also uncovered a number of other factors which impacted on implementation quality across multiple levels. These factors were mapped onto the CFIR framework under the core domains e.g., programme, individual (provider & participants), inner setting, outer setting and process. Consideration of these factors is important in developing strategies to reduce barriers and/or boost enablers which lead to more effective implementation. The following section further discusses the key findings in relation to the level of implementation quality of participating schools across the implementation dimensions, as well as the multiple factors that were likely to impact on this level of quality. The discussion section will then conclude by considering some of the key implications and recommendations of these findings.

Effective Implementation

In order to assess level of implementation quality for participating schools in this study, a number of key implementation components were monitored. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the overall implementation of the programme, acknowledging that implementation is a result of multiple dimensions and interacting moving parts. Although it has been increasingly recognised that effective implementation requires strength across each of the dimensions of implementation, research and practice tend to focus on single implementation dimensions such as dosage or adherence (Berkel et al. 2011; Domitrovich & Greenberg, 2000; Durlak & Dupre, 2008; Fixsen et al., 2005; Rojas-Andrade and Bahamondes, 2018). Focusing on only one of these dimensions to understand the implementation process can be damaging and misleading. For example, a school might implement the full programme in its entirety (dosage) but the delivery of this programme or 'how well' the teacher facilitates could be rated poorly (quality of delivery) and this puts programme outcomes at risk. Without full information around these components, it is impossible to accurately assess quality of implementation. Therefore, ongoing monitoring of implementation across multiple dimensions is necessary to ensure stronger implementation, more promising outcomes and long-term sustainment of interventions. This should be a strong consideration for those working in fields that strive to improve implementation of both practices and policies.

In this study, five implementation dimensions were assessed: dosage, fidelity/adherence, adaptation, quality of delivery and participant responsiveness. For Dosage, seven of the classes completed at least 60% of the programme whereas only four out of the participating eleven classes completed at least 70% of the programme. Only one class completed the full programme. Overall, these are relatively low scores for dosage, which are much lower than the previous national evaluation of MindOut (Dowling & Barry, 2020a), however, these scores as well as those scores for the other dimensions need to be considered within the context of COVID-19 and this is discussed in more detail below. Average adherence scores were sufficient (77%) but there was a clear variability in adherence scores across classes ranging from scores of 47% to 100%. For adaptation, on average schools reported adapting almost half (49%) of the programme sessions. Again, variability between schools was high for this dimension with some schools adapting none of the programme sessions and one school adapting all of the sessions. Quality of delivery was assessed through measures from both teachers and students.

Once again, there was clear variability between schools for both teacher rated (58% -98%) and student rated (42% - 98%) quality of delivery. Interestingly, the student and teacher data were not correlated with each other, suggesting that the way in which teachers perceived their own delivery did not match how students perceived their teacher's delivery. This finding highlights the importance of assessing implementation not only across multiple components but through multiple perspectives as well (Bruhn & Hirsch, 2017; Dart et al., 2020; Humphrey et al., 2016). A majority of the time, accounts of implementation components such as quality of delivery and participant responsiveness are provided by programme facilitators while the perspectives of programme recipients, who can provide valuable insights into these components, are often neglected (de Leeuw et al., 2020; Gresham & Elliott, 2014; McKenna et al., 2016;). Accessing feedback from multiple informants will help provide a better understanding of the implementation process and areas for improvement. Participant responsiveness was assessed through both teacher and student reports with noticeable variability found across schools. Student ratings of teacher quality of delivery were highly correlated with student ratings of participant responsiveness, demonstrating the importance of quality of delivery on student engagement and programme effectiveness. In the previous national study of MindOut, quality of delivery was the single most important dimension influencing intervention outcomes followed by participant responsiveness and therefore, these two implementation components should receive strong recognition when evaluating programmes similar to MindOut and assessing implementation.

It is important that the findings of this study are interpreted within the context of COVID-19, given the strong influence that this event had on implementation outcomes. For example, a majority of schools were unable to complete the programme in its entirety due to the 3-month school closure, which interrupted implementation and left schools with less time to deliver the programme. Adherence scores were also rated lower and adaptation scored relatively high. According to the qualitative feedback from teachers, COVID-19 restrictions made it impossible to deliver some of the interactive activities as intended and therefore, adaptations were required to abide by the government guidelines. Quality of delivery was also impacted by COVID-19, as many teachers felt they could not deliver the programme as intended due to classroom restrictions that limited movement and interaction with the students. They also noted the extreme pressure of teaching during COVID-19 and felt that this impacted on their

level of preparation and ability to deliver it as well as they wanted to. Participant responsiveness was also impacted by COVID-19 with teachers reporting lack of engagement from students due to the added pressure of academics and time lost from school. Therefore, while implementation of the MindOut programme within this study was slightly weaker compared to previous studies, it is likely that each of these implementation outcomes would be strengthened outside of the COVID-19 context.

The quantitative findings on effective implementation demonstrate the importance of ongoing monitoring of implementation components and the need to gather implementation feedback from programme recipients in addition to programme providers. The findings also highlight the importance of the teachers' quality of delivery on student engagement and enjoyment. The more engaged students are with the programme, the more likely we are to see intended outcomes. Therefore, it is important that strategies are developed to strengthen quality of delivery for all schools through appropriate selection of teachers, adequate training and resources, and ongoing technical implementation support. In this study, implementation support was provided to schools in the form of assisting principals in the roll out of the programme in their school, monthly check-ins with teachers and a first point of contact for schools should any issues arise during delivery. Providing these types of structured support offerings to schools is essential in equipping schools with the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to carry out the programme effectively.

Enabling Contexts

Implementation occurs in complex, multi-level systems and therefore, the provision of enabling contexts is also key for programme effectiveness (Lyon, 2017). As described earlier in this report, enabling contexts relate to the contextual factors (barriers and facilitators) that might hinder or promote effective implementation. There are a number of contextual factors that can impact on implementation quality, which occur across multiple-levels. In order to create enabling contexts, it is necessary to identify these contextual factors so that targeted strategies can be developed to enhance facilitators and reduce barriers. or reduce these. Evidence suggests that strategies which assess factors across multiple levels are more effective than those which target a single level (Beidas & Kendall, 2010). Therefore, in addition to

assessing schools' level of implementation quality, this study also identified contextual factors that were likely to have impacted on this. Identifying these multi-level factors is the first step in ensuring that the intervention is implemented in the most optimal environment.

This study used the CFIR implementation framework to identify contextual factors based on feedback from teachers, principals and students. Findings revealed that the CFIR demonstrated a high degree of applicability to the data with factors appearing across all five levels of domains and across 23 constructs. These domains included: i) Characteristics of the Innovation; ii) Characteristics of the Individual – Provider; iii) Inner Setting; iv) Outer Setting and v) Process as well as an additionally added domain 'Characteristics of the Individual – Participant'. This study, therefore, demonstrates how the CFIR can be successfully used to capture the multi-level factors that impact on the implementation of programmes in complex school-based settings.

In relation to the programme itself, having well-structured, user-friendly and easily adaptable materials were all seen to be facilitators of stronger implementation. Programmes that are perceived as not being complex and easy to deliver lead to better implementation outcomes (Carroll et al., 2007; Dusenbury et al., 2003; Forman et al., 2009; Greenhalgh et al., 2004). Teachers also spoke about additional resources that could be helpful in implementing the programme not only in the classroom (e.g., workbook for students) but bringing awareness to the programme at a wider-school level (e.g., posters, visual overview of programme; website). The incorporation of interactive delivery methods and relevant content were also seen as contributing to student engagement and quality implementation. Studies have shown the importance of developing and introducing programmes that are relevant, appealing and meet the needs of the target population (Pearson et al., 2015; Wind et al., 2008). The MindOut programme was developed with the input of both Irish teachers and Senior Cycle students and this involvement during the development stages is likely to have contributed to the strength, quality and relevance of the resources. It is strongly recommended that programme development and selection consider not only the strength of the evidence supporting a programme but also the practical needs of those providing the programme, and the personal needs of those participating to ensure stronger implementation, engagement and effectiveness.

Factors relating to the teacher that were found to impact on implementation quality included teachers' attitudes towards, and interest in the programme, self-efficacy, relationship with students, and personal attributes such as facilitation style, SPHE experience and level of preparation. Teachers' attitudes and perceptions of the programme, which include acceptance, compatibility and perceived value and effectiveness, appear to be strongly linked to implementation quality (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Forman et al., 2009; Wang et al, 2017). Self-efficacy has also been shown to impact on implementation and is strongly influenced by both strong professional development and training, as well as ongoing consultation and support (Domitrovich et al., 2008; Forman et al., 2009; Shapiro et al., 2021; Wang et al, 2017). Though the provider-recipient relationship is not an identified construct in the CFIR framework, within the school setting, the teacher-student relationship including teachers' interactions with students, their 'likeability' and their 'ability to understand students' (Rohrbach et al., 2007) as well as teachers' 'understanding of students' lives' (Hammond et al., 2008) have been shown to be vital in strengthening implementation outcomes and programme success (Eccles & Roeser, 1999; Pianta et al., 2012; Ringwalt et al., 2009). Researchers have recognised that there is a lack of sufficient attention to the effect of teacher-student relationships on programme outcomes (Gottfredson & Wilson, 2003; Smith & St. Pierre 2009). Based on these results, the importance of consideration for personal attributes in the selection of staff to deliver the programme is necessary for maximising programme success (Ringwalt et al., 2009). In addition, the provision of good resources, strong training, ongoing consultations and adequate time for planning and preparation will help to build teachers' self-efficacy and overall quality of delivery (Christiansen et al., 2021; Day et al., 2019).

Although the CFIR and other implementation frameworks do not recognise factors related to the level of participants, the research team felt it was necessary to add this level to the framework in order for it to be fully representative of the data from the teachers and students in this study. The findings revealed that the attitudes, perceived value of the programme, and motivation of the students were intrinsic to their engagement and in turn the quality of implementation. Chaudoir and colleagues (2015) discuss the importance of participant-level factors in predicting quality implementation and programme outcomes and suggest that failure to account for this level of factors is both a statistical and conceptual omission. Participants are key stakeholders and active agents in programme implementation and

therefore, buy-in and receptivity from this group is required (Chaudoir et al., 2015). Furthermore, it has been shown that students' interest and positive response to the intervention promotes teachers' level of implementation fidelity (Mihalic et al., 2008; Ringwalt et al., 2003). Other health promotion and health-related intervention studies have also acknowledged how factors related to the participants themselves (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, motivation, commitment to the intervention, needs, group dynamic etc.) can impact on implementation and programme effectiveness (Bergstrom et al., 2015; Lyon, 2017; Rojatz et al., 2017; Toomey et al., 2017;). Although the contextual factors related to this level might be more difficult to adjust or control for, the findings highlight the importance of consideration for these factors when possible. Selecting a group that have previously been in class together could help with comfort levels and group dynamics. Planning adequately for the programme can help with group size, and strategies to increase students' perceptions of the programme (e.g., local organisation visits) could help to improve students' attitudes, value and acceptance of the programme overall.

A number of factors related to the school setting were identified, some of which included stakeholder acknowledgement of a need for change, a shared perception of the importance of the intervention and aligning programmes with the values, mission and policies of the school organisation. Research has demonstrated that these factors all play a role in influencing adoption, implementation and sustainability of programmes (Forman et al., 2009; Hoagwood et al., 2006; Hudson et al., 2020; Leeman et al., 2018; Lyons et al., 2019; Nilsen et al., 2019). The findings also highlighted the importance of school culture and climate in supporting the implementation of MindOut by creating a setting which supports wellbeing at a whole-school level and sharing this responsibility across all staff, rather than isolating this support to one singular class. There is strong research which supports the idea that implementation of school-based programmes is most successful when they are integrated into the wider culture of the school, engage all staff and provide opportunities to reinforce skills outside of the dedicated class (Adi et al., 2007; Barry et al., 2017; Jones & Bouffard, 2012; Weare & Nind, 2011; Wilson et al., 2003). This study also outlines the importance of strong leadership engagement, access to necessary resources, and greater access to knowledge and information in enhancing effective implementation. Studies have shown that implementation is stronger when there is strong leadership engagement (Darlington et al., 2018; Hudson et al., 2020; Schonert-Reichl et

al., 2015; Thaker et al., 2008; Wanless et al., 2013). However, even when a principal volunteers their school to participate in the training of an intervention, the implementation of that programme within the school is not always supported through their actions and priorities (Wanless et al., 2013). Leadership engagement and support can take on many forms and it is still unclear as to what the ideal type of support might look like for principals in school settings. Leadership engagement could relate to the presence of positive programme attitudes, identifying the programme as high priority, maintaining motivation, supporting professional development, logistical support or even engagement in some intervention practices (Dadaczynski & Paulus, 2021; Kam et al. 2003; Mancini et al. 2009). Within this study, the level of engagement offered by principals related mainly to planning and management strategies with very few principals engaging with the programme further than providing resource support. Although planning (e.g., timetabling) and access to resources (e.g., space, IT) were identified as the most important type of support by both teachers and principals, studies have demonstrated that implementation of school-based programmes is more successful when further leadership strategies are used (e.g., communicating goals, creating a collaborative culture, motivating teacher training, observing delivery of lessons, pushing high-quality implementation) (Dadaczynski & Paulus, 2021; Fagan & Mihalic, 2003; Larsen & Samdal, 2008). A study carried out by Rohrbach et al., (1993) offered one-to-one meetings with principals around the intervention and its effectiveness and assessed the impact of these meetings on programme implementation. The study found that schools where these meetings occurred were more likely to have stronger implementation and deliver 20% more of the programme compared to schools where these meetings did not take place. Therefore, strengthening principal engagement should not only be about enhancing the planning process but should also focus on building their knowledge and awareness about the programme and requirements for effective implementation through training and support. Both one-to-one and group meetings were carried out with principals as a part of the current project. In general, principals were very positive about the support received from the local partners. They welcomed the idea of continuing with these meetings in the future as they found these to be beneficial in developing their understanding of the MindOut programme, what is required for better implementation of the programme, as well as sharing knowledge with and learning from other principals in the local area. Principals did suggest, however, that the one-to-one meetings happen earlier, preferably during April/May when they are planning timetables for the

following year, as many found it difficult to slot MindOut into the timetable after scheduling had already been completed.

In the Outer Setting domain, effective implementation of the programme was heavily influenced by external policies, specifically those related to wellbeing and the Irish education system. School efforts to support student wellbeing can be constrained by ad hoc policy environments which lack clarity around integrating wellbeing into educational settings (Powell & Graham, 2017). The *National Wellbeing Policy Framework* (DES, 2018) was released by the Department of Education and Skills in Ireland. This national policy framework acknowledges wellbeing as a Government priority, however, there is still a view from those within schools that the Irish education system prioritises academic performance outcomes while undervaluing the importance of social and emotional development and wellbeing, particularly for Senior Cycle students. Therefore, a clearer systemic shift is required, which places greater prioritisation on wellbeing for students in Senior Cycle and also provides increased support for implementation of such programming through funding, resources and supportive structures. This will help to enable schools to feel more supported in implementing programmes and wider school strategies on wellbeing. Establishing relationships and community partnerships between the school and local organisations was also deemed an important factor for supporting implementation, due to the added support and opportunities these partnerships create. Strengthening community partnerships throughout the process of implementation can create environments which encourage stronger leadership engagement, planning and delivery support, and future decision making (Boothroyd et al., 2017). These partnerships also have the ability to provide supports to school staff, students and families which goes beyond what the school can offer (Gross et al., 2015). In the current study, local partnership support was provided to schools through the local mental health organisations and local Development Officers. These partnerships were put in place to support and encourage schools in implementing the programme with high quality while also providing further support and access to mental health supports for students and staff. In particular, the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' training workshop was offered and provided to school staff by the local MHI Development Officer. This training gives staff the opportunity to learn and develop skills around promoting their own mental health and wellbeing, which not only benefits themselves but benefits the students' development and school environment as well. Efforts should continue within local

areas to strengthen these relationships between schools and communities to create better opportunities for knowledge translation, learning and support. The final factor identified which related to the Outer Setting was the impact of environmental factors (e.g., COVID-19; school crisis etc.) on implementation. The impact of COVID-19 on implementation has already been discussed earlier in this report. The other environmental factor that impacted implementation in one of the participating schools was the exposure to an unexpected school crisis. This event had a negative impact on the implementation of the programme initially, with the school ceasing delivery for a few weeks and student engagement decreasing. However, with the support and guidance of the external implementation support team, the school was able to continue with the delivery of the programme with confidence and additional support for staff and students was offered. The school reported higher engagement from students in the weeks following and believed that students recognised the importance and value in investing in a looking after their wellbeing. While external environment factors are often unplanned and can be difficult to control for, external implementation support can help schools in managing and coping with these unexpected events while supporting them to continue with implementation despite these difficulties.

The Process domain highlighted the importance of both planning and engaging for quality implementation. Timetabling was perhaps one of the strongest factors related to planning with teachers expressing the need for a dedicated place in the timetable for MindOut, double-class periods to alleviate timing pressure and scheduled time for teachers to prepare and plan for delivery along with other trained staff in the school. They also identified the need for planning around access to resources, group participants and staffing. The importance of planning and preparation to facilitate stronger implementation has been acknowledged through a number of studies (Durlak et al. 2011; Jones et al., 2018; Meyers et al., 2012). Training was also recognised as a key contributor to better implementation with teachers feeling more well-equipped to deliver the programme following the training and agreeing that receiving training was essential prior to delivery of MindOut. A number of individuals were identified for the role that they play in effective implementation which included; the person delivering the programme, the individuals dedicated to supporting and driving the programme, individuals external to the school who influence the delivery of the programme, and key stakeholders that are directly impacted by the innovation. Effective implementation is influenced by the input of

many people and efforts to manage these different roles in the implementation process is vital. The importance and qualities of the formally appointed leader or teacher delivering the programme has already been discussed. An additional group of individuals that are vital to the operations of a programme are programme champions within the school who have the ability to drive an intervention. Although these groups of individuals were not engaged during this evaluation, principals voiced that there was a need for 'persons of responsibility' who could drive the implementation of MindOut and alleviate the pressure for principals. Some of the suggested people that could fulfil the champion role as identified by principals and teachers included the appointed SPHE coordinator, Wellbeing Coordinator or staff on the wellbeing team. External change agents within this evaluation included the local partners that offered implementation support to school teachers and principals in implementing the programme. Overall, the feedback on this support was very positive with teachers saying that they found the check-in phone calls helpful to keep them on track and that knowing who to contact if they needed additional support was reassuring. Teachers commented that the individual providing local external support was easily accessible, approachable and understanding, which made them more confident and comfortable in reaching out for support if they needed it. Teachers and principals both also commented on the fact that having an established relationship with the local partners was beneficial to the implementation process. Studies have pointed towards the importance of a good relationship between the teacher and those offering implementation support as this leads to better communication and in turn more successful implementation (Downer et al., 2009; Wanless et al., 2013). Having the local partners involved in this project was also vital in ensuring the delivery of the programme continued following school closure and other external events and crises that happened in the schools in the course of this study. Teachers felt that this support during such a difficult and unprecedented challenging year was important in keeping them motivated and on track.

Research has demonstrated that in addition to training, post-training support (e.g., consultation or coaching, prompts/reminders, active problem-solving or technical assistance) is necessary for effective implementation (Lyon, 2017). Without the presence of an ongoing support system, implementation is likely to be weaker and the programme less effective (Elias et al., 2003; Fixsen et al., 2009; Lyon, 2017). Therefore, the organisation of implementation support systems is crucial and should receive adequate consideration when planning for the

adoption and implementation of programmes in schools. Lastly, key stakeholders such as guidance counsellors and parents who might not be directly involved in the programme but are impacted by the programme, should be considered as well. It is important that these groups of individuals are made aware of the programme and are knowledgeable about what students are learning so that they can provide support and help to strengthen these skills outside of the classroom. Linking in with key stakeholders during the planning and decision-making process can also be valuable. Therefore, planning, adoption and implementation of programmes within a school should involve the input of multiple informants who all play a part in supporting the programme and contributing to its success.

Implications

The findings from this study highlights some key factors or ingredients that are essential for programme success. While research, practice and policy continue to focus on, and prioritise, the use of effective evidence-based interventions, there are other critical elements which are equally important for the success of a programme, including effective implementation and the promotion of enabling contexts. Effective implementation is composed of a combination of multiple dimensions including dosage, adherence, adaptation, quality of delivery and participant responsiveness. Focusing on only one or two of these dimensions is ineffective and counterproductive resulting in weaker implementation and programme success. On the other hand, strengthening the quality across each of these dimensions will increase the overall quality of implementation. Many studies continue to focus on the dimensions of dosage or adherence when monitoring and measuring implementation quality. While these dimensions are important to the overall quality, they do not provide a full representation of the implementation process and conclusions may be drawn about implementation which are inaccurate. Moreover, dimensions which receive less attention such as quality of delivery might have a more significant impact on overall implementation and programme effectiveness than those dimensions which are more often cited. This study also demonstrated the importance of assessing implementation across multiple informants to ensure the viewpoints of all key stakeholders were considered when assessing the implementation process. Therefore, it is recommended that future research examining and assessing implementation quality should

consider the use of both multiple dimensions and multiple perspectives to provide a more accurate depiction of the level of implementation provided.

The study findings also demonstrate the applicability of all of the CFIR's domains to capture the contextual factors that impact on the implementation of MindOut in complex school settings. Using these findings, stronger enabling contexts can be created by using strategies which enhance facilitating factors and reduce the barriers identified by participants. A number of practical strategies and recommendations emerging from the data that have direct implications for practice and policy, are discussed below.

Practical Strategies and Recommendations

Characteristics of the Innovation

1. **Programme Quality:** Utilising programmes which include good quality, structured materials which are user-friendly and that all of the resources required for delivery are easily accessible. Resources which enhance implementation at both a classroom-level and whole-school level are recommended.
2. **Programme Relevance:** Selecting a programme which is relevant to the needs of the target population and includes culturally relevant and age-appropriate content. If scaling up a programme from a different context (e.g., country, age-group, setting) adaptations may be required.
3. **Programme Strategies:** Ensuring programmes for young people include a variety of different teaching strategies (e.g., collaborative working, games, discussion, videos etc.) as more interactive strategies strengthen engagement and participation.

Characteristics of the Provider

1. **Staff Selection:** In selecting teachers/staff members to deliver the programme, consideration needs to be given to their personal attributes including; attitudes, interest, group facilitation skills, experience in delivering SPHE or other interactive-type subjects, and their relationship with, and relatability to, students.

2. **Programme Training:** Training helps to build teachers self-efficacy and confidence in delivering the programme, builds their knowledge and beliefs about the innovation and helps to develop their skills and competencies that they will need to deliver.

Characteristics of the Participants

1. **Increasing Students' Attitudes and Beliefs**: Improving students' attitudes towards, and value placed on the programme is an important factor. A recommendation is to have an outside visitor attend the school at the beginning of the year to talk to students about the importance of mental health promotion and social and emotional learning so that they understand the benefits and the purpose of participating in a programme such as MindOut. Local partnership organisations that provide implementation support are well placed to provide this input.
2. **Group Selection:** Consideration for the group that the programme is being delivered to is important. While the group dynamic is sometimes difficult to control for, selecting a class that have previously been in a class together could enhance group comfort levels. The year group for the programme is also important, with 5th years being the most appropriate and recommended year for delivering MindOut.

School Context

1. **Supportive School Environment:** Wellbeing is not only promoted at a curriculum level but also through the policies, culture, ethos and environment of the school. Schools need to be clear in their efforts to support students' mental wellbeing and provide opportunities for students to share their feelings and seek support in a safe, open, respectful and trusted environment.
2. **Leadership Engagement:** Leadership engagement is a strong factor leading to implementation quality and programme success. Specific training or additional supports can help leaders to become more knowledgeable and informed about the intervention and better understand their role in enhancing or maintaining quality implementation. Leaders have the ability to influence the implementation climate by setting clear goals and expectations, making the programme a high priority in the

school, providing positive reinforcement towards those delivering the programme, communicating effectively and supporting staff with their needs in implementing the programme effectively. While the principal is the main leader within the school, leaders at other levels such as champions (e.g., SPHE coordinator, guidance counsellors) may also engage in leadership roles around the implementation of the programme.

3. **Whole-School Buy-in:** There is a need for strengthening whole-school buy-in of the programme by a **wide variety of stakeholders** including staff, students and parents. Buy-in from the wider school community can be facilitated through shared opportunities for decision-making around wellbeing and targeted communications around the programme such as school assemblies, staff meetings, teacher-parent meetings, social media etc. The promotion of wellbeing in schools is seen as a shared responsibility of all staff and not only the teachers delivering the programme.
4. **Programme Prioritisation:** The level of importance attributed to the programme and its prioritisation alongside other more academic subjects is an important influencing factor. Allocating a specific class in the timetable for MindOut or mental health promotion will help in making it more of a priority, as well as increasing whole-school awareness and communication around the programme.
5. **Access to Resources and Information:** Resources which are necessary for programme implementation need to be readily accessible. This includes sufficient time to prepare and deliver the programme. The MindOut programme is a 13-session programme with sessions intended to be delivered within 40-minute class periods, however teachers have suggested that this programme would benefit from double-class periods to provide more time for preparation as well allowing students more time to discuss important session topics without being interrupted by the pressure of time. Other resources that are important to this programme include adequate space for programme delivery (e.g., open classroom which allows for movement) and access to technology resources (e.g., computer, projector, internet connection etc.).

External Environment

1. **Policy Alignment:** Aligning programmes with clear national and school-level policies is key for programme success. Ensuring that SEL programmes such as MindOut are implemented with quality and sustained over time will contribute to the

implementation of national and school policies on student wellbeing. Further work is required to place wellbeing as a top priority for not only Junior Cycle, but also for Senior Cycle students and to put adequate structures in place to support the implementation of these policies.

2. **Community Partnerships:** Efforts to strengthen partnerships between the school and community is important as these community partnerships can provide implementation support to schools. As demonstrated in this project, community partners can support implementation by offering planning and delivery support, access to resources and reinforcement of mental health promotion at a community level, while also providing additional mental health support for school staff and students. Additional funding, resources and structures are likely to be needed from Government and national bodies to ensure that this support can be provided.

Implementation Process

1. **Planning for Delivery:** Adequate planning is required to support the delivery of the MindOut programme. Important planning considerations include adequate timetabling, including a dedicated space in the timetable without competing priorities (e.g., not a free/study class) and where possible a double-class period is recommended. Access to required resources including an open classroom with IT (e.g., computer, projector) is also required. In terms of planning for the group itself a number of things should be considered including class size (e.g., 20-22 students ideally); year group (5th year recommended); and group comfort levels. Lastly, it is important to plan staffing arrangements including timetabling trained teachers, supporting the training of new staff and tracking staff turnover.
2. **Implementation Team:** Having a strong implementation team is necessary for the success of the programme. A team of diverse individuals who are dedicated to the implementation of the programme from management to teachers and even parents is recommended. Selecting a strong programme champion to lead the team, drive and sustain the intervention is also key to its success. This individual should have a good relationship with staff but also be able to take charge and influence decision making. Some individuals that could take on this role could include the SPHE coordinator,

Wellbeing Coordinator, Principal or a teacher who has experience in delivering the MindOut programme in previous years.

3. Programme Providers: Appropriate selection of teachers to deliver the programme is key to quality of delivery and implementation quality overall. Specific qualities and attributes are discussed above under 'Staff Selection'. In addition to these factors, it is also important that there is a team of teachers (two or more) trained within the school to deliver the programme. Having multiple teachers trained in the programme will not only be a source of support for those teachers involved but it will also help with sustainability of the programme year to year and managing staff leave (e.g., maternity leave) and staff turnover. It is also recommended that each team of teachers delivering the programme is represented by at least one male and one female teacher, particularly in a mixed school.
4. Implementation Support: Providing external ongoing implementation support and consultations to schools will lead to higher quality implementation and programme sustainment. Relationships between the school and the external implementation support team should be identified and established early on to allow for ongoing support during planning, delivery and long-term implementation of the programme. Types of support these teams can offer include: increasing stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the programme, supporting principals in planning for implementation, monitoring implementation through check-in calls with teachers, providing first point of contact for schools if any issues arise, active problem-solving assistance, as well as sharing and providing additional information, resources and services with schools. It is recommended that a structured plan around the external implementation support that will be provided is decided and clarified ahead of time.

The above key lessons from the findings of this evaluation are especially important for those working in practice and who intend on implementing or supporting the implementation of MindOut or other SEL programmes in schools. By considering the multi-level factors that impact on implementation quality and identifying practical strategies to control for these, contexts will be more enabling, implementation will be more effective and both of these factors will help lead to greater programme success.

Strengths & Limitations

This study contributes valuable knowledge towards implementing school-based SEL programmes. Data were collected from teachers, principals and students in this process evaluation, which increases the credibility of the findings and provides a more comprehensive understanding of implementation from multiple perspectives. Additionally, the use of mixed methods approaches allowed for greater interpretation of the process of implementation. Quality of implementation was assessed through multiple components as recommended by research, while factors influencing implementation quality were determined using the CFIR framework. The comprehensive and multifaceted nature of the CFIR allows for a more systematic assessment of implementation factors compared to using less sophisticated frameworks or no framework at all. The number of schools participating in this study was small and, therefore, the quantitative data should be interpreted with caution. However, given that this study focused largely on identifying implementation factors, the smaller sample size was appropriate for a more in-depth investigation, while achieving data saturation. The fact that all schools were from one rural county in Ireland, as well as the fact that the participating schools self-selected to deliver the programme means that the generalisability of the findings may be limited. Another limitation of this study is that all of the data received including questionnaires, focus groups and interviews were self-reported and, therefore, the implementation data may be subject to participant bias. However, within the context of COVID-19 it was not possible to conduct more direct measures such as classroom observations as school visits were not permitted. Therefore, in the current study self-report data were selected as the most feasible method for obtaining rich implementation data from all stakeholders. Response rates from students were lower than expected and this was due largely to the timing of data collection, the use of online methods, and reliance on teachers to issue reminder to students. Again, due to COVID-19 restrictions it was not possible for the researcher to attend the schools and distribute the questionnaires to the students in person which likely impacted on response rates. It was decided that online questionnaires offered to students via a link would be the best option to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of their responses rather than a paper questionnaire which the teachers would have access to. Finally, the online nature of the focus groups presented a number of challenges in relation to connectivity issues, sound problems and providing equal opportunities for each person to speak. Although the evaluation study was

completed, it is important to note that this year was a particularly challenging year in which to undertake the study, in view of the school closures and disruptions to delivery of the programme during the pandemic, which impacted severely on programme delivery and completion.

CONCLUSION

Schools provide a strong setting from promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of students and the introduction of SEL programmes has been shown to be one of the most effective strategies for producing positive student outcomes. However, poor implementation of programmes continues to be an issue, which leads to lack of noticeable and sustained outcomes. It is vital that future research and evaluations prioritise the assessment of implementation quality alongside programme outcomes in order to accurately interpret the effectiveness of a programme. In order to enhance the level of implementation quality, enabling contexts need to be created, which aim to strengthen facilitating factors while lessening barriers to implementation. By identifying these implementation determinants across multiple levels, actionable strategies can be identified which will lead to stronger implementation. The findings from this study assisted in developing a number of these practical strategies which should be considered by programme developers, practitioners and policy makers in order to inform the design, adoption and implementation of future mental health interventions in post-primary school settings. In the context of a particularly challenging year, the provision of implementation support by local partners assisted with ensuring continuity of programme delivery by providing support to teachers and principals. The findings point to the importance of implementation support to ensure high quality implementation of school-based SEL programmes. This support is critical to maximise programme impact and to ensure that positive outcomes can be achieved.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Quantitative Data

Table 5: School Readiness Outcomes (Teacher Reports)

Wellbeing (1=Not at all; 5= A very great extent)	**Mean**	**SD**
Mental health and wellbeing affect learning in the classroom?	4.55	.688
Responsibility of the school to support the mental health and wellbeing of students?	4.36	.505
Responsibility of the school to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff?	4.18	.603
Focus (1=Not at all; 5= A very great extent)		
Need for wellbeing programmes at schools	4.73	.467
Programme positively influence students' mental health and wellbeing	4.55	.688
Programme impacts on teachers' wellbeing?	4.09	.944
Understanding of objectives and goals	4.27	.647
Achievable objectives and goals	4.00	.894
Objectives align with the mission and goals of the school	4.27	.647
Understand the theory behind the programme	4.09	.539
Importance of the programme from other staff members	3.91	.539
Support from school management in implementing the programme	4.27	.647
Timetabled adequate time to deliver the programme.	4.00	.894
The programme is a top priority	4.00	.701
Support for Implementation (1= Very much disagree; 5 = Very much agree)		
Received enough training	4.45	.522
Confident after training	4.27	.647
Received enough resources	4.45	.688
Knowledge and understanding improved	4.36	.674
Ability to manage preparation and coordination	4.09	.539
Familiar with Mayo MHA	4.00	.775

Familiar with Mindspace Mayo	4.00	.775
Familiar with NEPS	4.09	.539
Confident I will receive the necessary support	4.45	.522
Confident in my ability to reach out	4.64	.674
Leadership (1= Never; 5= Always)		
Proactive Leadership	4.03	.924
Knowledgeable Leadership	3.66	1.01
Supportive Leadership	4.15	.779
Persevering Leadership	4.06	.840
Management assist staff to work collectively	4.18	1.08
All staff feel their views are listened to and taken seriously	3.82	1.08
Staff receive recognition and support from management	4.00	1.09
Staff feel their efforts are noted and their work is worthwhile	4.00	1.09
Management support staffs' professional development.	4.55	.688
School Environment (1= Never; 5= Always)		
All staff contribute to promotion of a caring school environment	4.45	.522
There is high staff morale	4.36	.505
Respectful relationships between staff and between staff and students	4.36	.505
Students feel a sense of belonging	4.27	.786
Staff feel a sense of belonging	4.09	.831
Mental health and wellbeing of students is prioritised	4.45	.688
Mental health and wellbeing of staff is prioritised	3.73	.905
SPHE, SEL and Mental Health (1= Never; 5= Always)		
Social, emotional and mental health education are effectively implemented in the curriculum	4.73	.467
Programmes on mental health and wellbeing are delivered at junior cycle.	4.82	.405
Programmes on mental health and wellbeing are delivered at senior cycle.	3.73	1.10
The Guidance Counsellor works with the SPHE team in the planning and whole-school implementation of SPHE.	3.73	.786
Teachers are supported through access to continuing professional development to facilitate the delivery of the SPHE.	4.45	.522
An evidence-based approach is taken to respond to emerging issues impacting on the mental health and wellbeing of students	4.18	.874

Table 6: Details of Implementation Indicators

Dosage		
Teacher Weekly Report	Did you deliver this session?	No = 0 Yes = 1
Adherence		
Teacher Weekly Report	What percentage of each session did you complete?	10% = 0 100% = 10
Adaptation		
Teacher Weekly Report	Did you adapt the session in any way?	No = 0 Yes =1
Quality of Delivery		
Student Questionnaire	Please rate how often your teacher did the following: • Was confident. • Was enthusiastic. • Made critical or negative remarks. • Showed appreciation. • Kept students engaged. • Was prepared.	Never =1 Always = 5
Student Questionnaire	Please rate how well your teacher delivered the MindOut programme	Poor = 1 Excellent = 10
Teacher Weekly Report	Please rate how well you think you delivered the MindOut programme	Poor = 1 Excellent = 10
Participant Responsiveness		
Teacher Weekly Report	• Did students show interest in the session? • Did students engage and participate in the activities and discussions?	Not at all = 1 Very much = 5
Student Questionnaire	• The sessions were relevant for me • The sessions were useful for helping me deal with situations • The content of the programme was easy to understand • The session in the programme were interesting	Not at all = 1 Very much = 5
Student Questionnaire	• How would you rate the MindOut programme overall?	Poor = 1 Excellent = 10

Appendix 2: Qualitative Data

Table 7: CFIR Constructs Identified during each Data Collection Phase

	Pre – Delivery (T+P)	Mid-Delivery (T)	Post-Delivery (T+P+S)
Innovation Characteristics			
Adaptability		X	X
Complexity	X	X	X
Design Quality & Packaging	X	X	X
Relevance*			X
Delivery Methods*			X
Characteristics of Individuals (Providers)			
Knowledge & Beliefs about the Innovation		X	X
Self-efficacy	X	X	X
Other Personal Attributes	X	X	X
Provider-Participant Relationship*			X
Characteristics of Individuals (Participants)*			
Knowledge & Beliefs about the Innovation	X	X	X
Other Personal Attributes		X	X
Inner Setting			
Networks & Communications	X	X	X
Culture	X	X	X
Implementation Climate			X
Tension for Change			X
Compatibility	X		X
Relative Priority	X	X	X
Leadership Engagement	X	X	X
Available Resources	X	X	X
Access to Knowledge & Information			X
Outer Setting			
Cosmopolitanism			X
External Policy & Incentives		X	X
Unexpected Events*		X	X
Process			
Planning	X	X	X
Engaging	X		X
Formally Appointed Implementation Leaders	X		X
Champions		X	X
External Change Agents	X	X	X
Key Stakeholders			X
Total	15	17	23

[a] T= Teacher; P= Principal; S= Student

[b] '*' Denotes additional constructs and domains which are not included in the CFIR

Table 8: CFIR Constructs, Themes and Extracted Quotes

Constructs	Themes	Extracts from Focus Groups and Interviews (T=teacher; P= principal; S= Student)
I. Characteristics of the Innovation		
Design quality & packaging	Quality of materials	• Having a good programme that is clearly laid out and structured. (T) • The materials do look fantastic, I've had a chance to look at them and they do look great. (P)
	Access to everything you need	• I think it is excellent, I love how it is laid out there is very little prep apart from the first time doing it and getting used to it. But apart from that everything is there in the manual, the USB key, things have already been laminated. You know its all there for you just have to deliver it and I think that is one of the biggest attractions. (T) • Like the prep is done for you basically its just a matter of photocopying or making sure the videos work. Like I didn't have to make anything myself or look for any additional resources which was obviously great. But definitely you wouldn't need to be preparing resources because everything was there. (T)
	Additional requested resources	• Maybe if there was a visual data poster of how it works and how it would benefit their future that we could share with them… that would be helpful not just for students but for management and even parents. (T) • It would be useful if external support could provide a brief overview of the programme and a few slides that could give a snapshot for principals would be useful and highlighting the roles of the implementation team. (P) • To really embrace this programme we certainly need more of a whole-school approach. There could do with being more information being delivered in general to the staff about what is the programme is all about, the purpose of the programme, who is delivering the programme and is anyone else interested in delivering the programme and doing the training to get a few more involved. (T) • I think the journal would be good because its more personal and they can maybe write in there. And with the workbook it is something that they can refer back to as well. You might have students that are nonchalant about the programme but they could be the very ones that are listening the most and with the workbook they can have that and maybe refer back to it in 2 or 3 years time. (T) • I maybe think that the students should have to reflect on that at the end of this yeah at the end of every lesson little journal because of the junior cycle now a lot of reflecting is happening in SPHE and they'd be used to it. (T) • Maybe if the organisations could do up posters about it and leave gaps on posters where we can put in the time of the sessions and then maybe a logo and short write-up or something that could be on our social media. Maybe t-shirts, pens you know I get an awful lot of these things from organisations and they are only small things but it does create some awareness. You have to give something stature. (T)

		• I think that is a great idea to have a website and a one-pit stop to get everything in one place I think that would be great. I think that should be done nationally and locally just for mental health and not even just for kids but for adults as well. (T)
Adaptability	Ability to adapt sessions for needs.	• I've had to adapt them due to covid (T) • The resources are very good – I've adapted the ppt slides a little bit…no harm in making it your own a little bit (T)
Complexity	User friendly	• Our teachers have found the programme well structured and easy to use. (P) • I find the resources are very user-friendly (T) • I thought it was very user friendly, I loved that you could just bring the book up to the photocopier room and it was also you had the digital copy as well, which is very handy. (T)
Relevance	Age-appropriate	• There was some aspects you know, there was the emoji with the emotions. And I know that from your point of view, for like marketing and trying to get a towards our age group that that was probably useful point of view, but I know, especially among our age group, even emojis now I personally and I don't know if everyone connects with that well. (S) • I definitely felt it was geared towards 5th years. There was a more level of maturity and that's not to say TY's wouldn't have the same issues but massive issues come into 5th year and don't leave and I think they might have a little bit better of an understanding of what you're talking about compared to TY. (T)
	Relatable scenarios	• I liked how the scenarios were like realistic and like you could relate to them to your own lives. (S) • I think it was relevant to our age group, like all the scenarios and everything was basically real life situations that we might go through so yeah. (S) • The class in general worked well and just the things we talked about it hit all the stuff like that needed to be talked about you know how we're feeling and all that. (S)
Delivery Methods	Engagement through videos	• And I really liked the like seeing the videos that that really engaged everyone, and it was that part, we could see younger people talking about their problems related to us, so I thought that was a good idea. (S)
	Interactive activities	• Like the interaction by was the best part we did, I think it was like more fun and the funner it was the more we wanted to do it.. so yeah if it was more interactive maybe. (S) • It could have been more interactive like with group work and stuff but it was kind of hard to do that now with covid but yeah overall, it was good. (S)
II. Characteristics of the Individual (Provider)		
Knowledge and beliefs about innovation	Attitudes	• Like they didn't really fully understand the topic and just like they were just doing this because it was part of the syllabus rather than they wanted to do it. (S)

		• If the teacher's enthusiastic about the programme then all the students like follow your lead so then if the teacher isn't as enthusiastic then the students won't be willing to participate. (S) • I believe in the programme myself I think it is really good. I have to say from the first time that I trained in the MindOut programme I have been a big pusher of it. (T)
	Enjoyment	• But I loved doing it with them I never dreaded going into the class it was always fun and you know it was something different as well. I am an English teacher as well and you know going in and teaching Romeo and Juliet which is the same thing every time you teach it whereas this was different. (T)
	Perceived benefits	• There was one student who I saw such a huge improvement in. Like they would have a lot of things going on outside school and last year if I would have asked her to speak out in class she would have probably wanted to shoot me and after doing the programme or maybe actually about half way through it she was actually talking out in class without me even asking her to speak it was just brilliant. (T) • They did benefit from it and they could all find something at the end that they could each take away from the programme. (T) • On a positive, I had a student who shared his overcoming anxiety and we were all floored nearly and we all listened and it was so powerful. (T)
	Interest	• There's a good few teachers that would think oh SPHE what a load of crap and I don't know if that imparts onto students but I am totally into all of that stuff and I think it's great and I think its really important that they have these tools. I think if they do have SPHE training it would help them be more open to it. (T) • I think this type of programme suits certain teachers more than others. There would be some teachers that really hate teaching SPHE or any of those kind of subjects you know when they see it on their timetable and they ask to swap. It is a certain type of teacher that can teach these subjects better than others it just suits some characters better. (T)
Self-efficacy	Confidence	• I'm fairly confident and I have no worries about facilitating. (T) • I've delivered it to two classes and I have found that the second class I deliver it to is so so much easier because I've already delivered it once. I suppose the more you do it the easier it will be. (T) • I would like to get through to the end of the programme so that I feel more confident in delivering it next year. Right now you are really week to week wondering 'what's happening' (T) • I've taught SPHE for years and I taught RE as well so I did feel confident. (T) • I felt very much equipped to deliver it there was plenty of resources and I found it a very good programme. (T) • You know when you're just learning about a programme, I think I'd be better at it the second time around. The other teacher who is also the head of SPHE in school she had already delivered it and she was kind of selling it to me and I thought it sounded great but I think I will be at it the next time around. (T)

Other personal attributes	Level of preparation	• Yeah definitely she's very enthusiastic and like she put all her effort into the classes like it wasn't you know she was prepared like each week. (S) • It is very important that you are prepared ahead of time, making sure I know what is going on and I have the right resources. (T)
	Skills and competences necessary for implementation	• I had a lot of technology issues. I wouldn't be great with technology myself at all and I would find that very stressful going into class. (T) • As teachers I think that generally we would both be well able to deliver these types of programmes like we have the skills and we are committed. (T)
	Facilitation style	• Like she, let us talk openly and with other people and share our opinions so I really liked that. She still took us through it but she gave us the opportunities to discuss it and take it as our own. (S) • One thing I would say is like with the teachers like I feel like there was a lack of engagement, a lot of time it felt like they were just reading off the PowerPoint (S) • Our teacher delivered it really well I think she was open minded and everything and she interacted well, didn't push or anything yeah she delivered it very well (S). • I would see myself as a facilitator really more than anything and I really let students do all the talking. (T) • I think probably because of the delivery it was very much talk, talk and talk and you know that's really not part of my engagement with students generally. I really would have them at senior level working in small groups and feedback to the large group and you can get a lot of valuable stuff from them but that wasn't an option this year and that was disappointing. (T)
	Previous Training	• Having training and a background in SPHE definitely helps and it would be a grounding but I guess not a necessity. (T) • I do think my previous training has helped in terms of how to talk about things and how to address things if the child is struggling, so I do think something like that would be helpful… maybe not a training because I know it's not fair to put people under that pressure but maybe like awareness like a webinar or something. (T)
Provider-Participant relationship*	Connection/relationship with students	• It's not just about us coming into class sitting down and that this teacher with a PowerPoint just reading off the board that there's no there's no connection there, there isn't that human basis for it. So that's why I definitely think teacher factor is a big, big influence. You know it's really important that it is someone that we can relate to more. (S) • An open mind is important because a lot of people like don't express the real opinions and like if they don't have a good relationship with that teacher then they won't say what they actually feel. (S) • I wouldn't put someone new in as such because I had built that relationship with them already. If I hadn't it could have been a completely different situation. Like if I had gone in when I started teaching years ago and they didn't have a clue who I was they wouldn't have probably participated as much but I do think it is important that it is a staff member that they trust is facilitating it. (T)

	Relatability	• I really think that this teacher that was given to us uhm I just found it hard to relate to her because it just felt like class. (S) • As long as it was someone able to relate to us …like we have this teacher and she would be a good bit older than us and she's our school teacher and she also teaches us SPHE classes ..but I think she'd be the perfect candidate because she is so in touch with the students she always, she's the one teacher that would go up to you in the hall and ask you, are you okay like how's your health, how are you getting on today, someone like that who is always making sure you're okay cuz like I think she'd be the perfect candidate whereas I had a different teacher teach me who I wouldn't really be in touch with as I would be with this other teacher who is more in touch with us. (S) • The teacher should be like you know not like teaching it but should be like talking to the class as if their like not peers but like on the same level as them rather than like teaching like a normal subject because than it is easier for the students to talk about stuff as well, they feel like they can be related to. (S)
	Awareness of students	• Considering it was a woman delivering, like they need to be able to know like the lads situations as well, and not make comments about that stuff like that…like towards lads not opening up or whatever and be aware of the bad situations that they face. (S) • And then I would kind of know them myself because I had them in third year and then I had them again in TY for non-exam religion so just I suppose from that some of the kids would tell you what's going on. I do think because I am a non-exam religion teacher that sometimes they tell me too much (laugh). (T) • Maybe know the students too I just felt this year I was going into the group and I just didn't know them and so to maybe have the class yourself, maybe or even to know them from a different year, you know that kind of an awareness of you know, even the simple things like names. Because I never actually had the students, so it was that kind of I have to get to know them first of all, before I go and do this. (T)
III. Characteristics of the Individual (Participant)		
Knowledge and Beliefs about the innovation	Value/importance of the programme	• Students have asked 'why are we doing this' we have missed so much class from last year and now they are in 6th year and are focused on exams. There is some resistance from one group in particular. (T) • They did feel like we were robbing them of a class… especially the very studious students. I had two students come up to me on the first day and say 'Oh miss I am not doing this, this is my study period'. They weren't being rude but they genuinely felt that they didn't have time for this. (T) • As time went on I think they realised that it wasn't work that I was getting them to do but that it was just chatting and normalising mental wellbeing…once they came to realise that it was beneficial and I wasn't taking their class it was better. (T) • Students won't want to participate if they think they are going to miss an important academic class, particularly with their anxiety around content loss right now. (P) • I think leaving certs and the year that they had they didn't want to be focusing on SPHE or anything else. I just felt that some of them weren't open to the ideas behind it. (T)

		• So that was kind of your comment in here now 'you're taking our study class away' I think that was in a few of their heads And, and they weren't letting that go either you know, some of them did like absolutely like, but then there was others that was just kind of like this is our time like why are you coming in here talking like you know that kind of thing. (T)
	Mindset/Open mindedness	• The biggest challenge of MindOut or any of these types of programmes is changing the mindset…because while they see that this is the MindOut class, they need to realise that this is to develop life skills that they will use in life always and it is not just a class for learning but it is a class for life. (P) • It depends on how they're influenced by the programme itself, you know, participants, because they need to be open minded. (S) • If the people in your group aren't really open minded and they just sit there and slump that kind of has an effect on everyone else that's taking part in the programme. And if like people don't put their own input into it ..it like really affects the class group as a whole (S)
	Attitudes	• It's a class where you're not like Oh, I don't really want to go into it but every class we went into we really enjoyed it, like there wasn't any moaning about it. (S) • I liked how it was being talked about and being normalised. Because I know when let's say my parents went to school it was more frowned upon your mental health and all that but yeah it was really good to talk about it. (S)
Other Personal Attributes	Group comfort levels	• Group doesn't know each other all too well which I think impacts on their ability to share (T) • I feel that the group coming together as a class group is different as students are coming from junior cert, TY and new students as well. There is a lack of group cohesion as this programme is the first class where all of these students have been together. There is an element of them being more conscious of themselves. (T) • Like I noticed in my class, was people were too shy to say anything nobody would speak up unless they were like picked on by the teacher and said what's your opinion? What like I think that's kind of hard, because some people won't be as friendly with others in their class and they'd be afraid of what they would think. (S) • Smaller groups will definitely work better because you'd be more comfortable to really like be honest, for your opinions on things. (S) • The girls themselves because I know them and they know their class group they do tend to share things about themselves when they feel comfortable. It might take a couple minutes in the class but they do tend to share it eventually what it is that is bothering them. (T)
	Group dynamic	• I think the mixed class worked because you learn other people's situations as well and like that benefits you. (S)

		• Like everyone has different opinions and in a big group, it could sometimes might be the same people always say in their opinions, but it wouldn't always get hear other people's opinions but if it was smaller everyone gets to share. (S) • I was also really lucky I had an interactive group who spoke out and got involved and did the activities. (T) • The group that it worked better with there were less disruptive students and they were more chatty. (T) • Each year group brings a different dynamic with it, so we have a group now moving from TY into fifth year. I think I actually envisage the mindout would work better next year knowing the dynamic of the group. You know your group, and you know that you know you're going to encounter greater challenges with some of them more than others or some individuals and those individuals can have a high level of control over a large number of people. (P)
	Group resistance	• You have some students giving really silly answers that are way off topic and then you have quiet students that don't want to participate with these bigger personalities taking over. (T) • If you're in a group with people that you don't like get on with necessarily or like you just you don't really know or someone maybe that isn't interested and is just kind of turning their nose up at it it is going to be awful hard to express your own opinions. (S)
	Class Size	• Size of the classes has been very difficult to get the students to interact. (T)
IV. Inner Setting		
Networks and communications	Students needs	• I would have known about students issues from previous meetings and because I teach religion it is also seen as a wellbeing class so teachers tend to ask me to keep an eye out on certain students. In a non-religion class you'll notice it a lot more than say a maths class or whatever. From staff meetings you might be told about a particular student that might be struggling just to keep an eye on them but you won't get much information unless you need it or it is critical. (T) • I felt a bit nervous, to be honest, because you know, obviously we all get the staff emails you know what pastoral care emails and you know if if students are going through something you know to be mindful of this student, but literally that's all you know. You don't know what are they going through, I have no idea yeah there's a lot going on with students and I think you have to tread carefully like. (T)
Culture	Supportive of wellbeing (whole student)	• Having the school behind/supporting wellbeing is important. (T) • To get our physical health, emotional health, social health, and all that right …the academic challenges will be more fulfilled. (T) • Anything we can do in our schools to support wellbeing, we always try and do that. (P) • Wellbeing in general in our school is a priority. Wellbeing in our schools is well taken care of. • And like say just within in class itself like if teachers just ask like how you are doing now and again like to just talk because people might be really struggling and their schoolwork might deteriorate because of it and instead of teachers talking just about getting your homework done all that kind of stuff if they talk to

		like on a more personal level like "do you need help" if that makes sense? Yeah, I really think that could help with students' wellbeing overall. Like looking at and supporting other aspects of students' lives. (S)
	Supportive environment	• There should be an environment where you feel like they can share how your feeling and that social barrier that's sometime obstructed, you know what I mean and that it is an open environment like it's an egalitarian situation like we're all equal you know that we feel that we can share these things. (S) • You know you know that the school is always on your side. (S) • That you know, for what you feel your produce you know, in the sense that, if you have a good community if you have a culture that people feel safe and trusted and are able to come to you and speak and and that would have a ripple effect and that you actually get better teaching and learning as a result of this. (P)
Implementation Climate	Whole-school awareness	• And also make a clear to everyone else in the school not just the year that is being taught it. (S) • It was scheduled, you know, and the other teachers were made aware that we were going to be taking their class and they're going to be covering our class. And really to be honest that's all we needed from management. You do need them to timetable it otherwise you go into classes and you're like I'm here now I'm taking these and other teachers are like no you're not. (T) • I think it was supportive but a lot of it wasn't heard of outside of the class I think it could have been maybe more put out that we were doing the MindOut programme. (S) • To really embrace this programme we certainly need more of a whole-school approach. There could do with being more information being delivered in general to the staff about what is the programme is all about, the purpose of the programme, who is delivering the programme and is anyone else interested in delivering the programme and doing the training to get a few more involved. (T) • It's no reflection on our management or anything but I'd say a lot of the staff may not even know what is going on (P) • We were approached by management to present to the whole-school staff on MindOut and what we were doing. I did feel like it was worthwhile. It was good because none of the staff had a clue that it was happening. (P) • A couple of teachers have asked us since how we are getting on with MindOut or saying they have heard other students talking about the programme in class and it was nice to hear their support. (T) • I do think it is important that they know of it and that it doesn't just happen in a free class because if the whole-school staff didn't know it would lose its value. (T)
	Shared responsibility of staff to support	• It's really important that it is not seen as just our domain. It shouldn't be oh you know the MindOut teachers THEY'RE doing it. That it is a whole school approach. (T) • It's not healthy for the students in the school or for teachers in the school to think it is the same teachers every time because that takes away from the essence of it being a whole-school approach because it is associated with a certain group of teachers. (T)

		• It's all about awareness. Mental health is whole school its not just down to one person. (T)
	Internal MH support/counselling	• He's a teacher but he's just finished training in psychotherapy. But over the past couple years during his training, I had left a little bit of time for him off his teaching timetable for him to provide a kind of a level of intervention before it would have to go to mindspace or mayo mha or camhs or somewhere that we could do a little bit of school intervention and see. (P) • That's where I would see things need to change in schools having somebody internal that the students trust that we can do it quietly during day just they don't have to be going anywhere they don't have to be make an appointment. Now I'm not saying that we take over that road or anything like that don't get me wrong, but you know there's there's a level of the level of intervention, you know also. But we also know when we when we have our meetings I'll say ok, no know that needs to go to the next level…that it's outside our remit. But having something that could take away or alleviate some of the demands of these organisations by having professionals in the schools as well. (P) • Like it would be good if there was an opportunity for the teacher or if somebody outside came in and the opportunity to talk to a person because somebody might be like struggling within the class, but like they're not going to go out and say it in front of the entire class. There was no real kind of like opportunity for talking unless they did outside, but if there was a person that set like specified time to talk to each person (S)
Tension for Change	Need to prioritise wellbeing in schools	• This programme was like really important, especially for our year, like in school we're not really taught this as much as we should be, I think it should be a subject at school and not even just a program. (S) • I thought overall like it's an amazing thing to do, because we really like we do need this at our age. (S) • Cuz like these, these skills, like last forever like going to college and getting jobs like these are like problems we'll have to tackle for the rest of our lives, I think, like that's like getting them in and learning them now is so important yeah. (S) • I think I think it's important for every year group because I think when you're going through secondary school you go through a lot of like different phases. When you're a teenager like people mature and you can just go through a lot of things and might not know how to deal with it so I think it is very important to be reminded. (S) • Just speaking for myself, I know a lot of people have issues with mental health and stress and anxiety and all that and to make it feel more normalised and not strange and abstract. (S)
	Senior cycle students' needs	• Like we're going to sitting in one of the biggest exams in our lives next year it's obviously going to make us stressed so we're probably people needs more time allocated to wellbeing. (S) • I understand why it is not mandatory now because the courses are long and hard and those different subjects they need the time but I also think it's really important for us, cause we are under stress especially now with covid and everything we all had to do online school and we fell behind in a lot of courses so there is a lot more pressure on students so it is more important for us now than ever. (S)

		• I think it's actually more important for senior students to have wellbeing class. Because there are coming of age and going to face like lots of different like scenarios like you're going to you're coming to your legal age and you're going to be dealing with a lot more than a younger teenager is. (S) • Particularly for that age group of students as well, I mean, I know that lots of different ages, the kids are affected by different things, but I think at that age where they're transitioning from I suppose the younger teenager to young adults. You know, and the so many challenges of image and body perfection and how they're supposed to look and what they're supposed to think and what they're supposed to feel being presented them for them and then trying to balance that with the demands of school and demands of a syllabus and so on. And do you know that there's a still a huge body of people in the media that don't help at times suggesting that points are the only thing that matters. (P)
Compatibility	Alignment with wellbeing policy Alignment with resources	• You know, it hits the main targets for wellbeing, it's not just 'tokenistic' (P) • I mean the programme itself is excellent and it is very much in line with other programmes and resources so I couldn't take away from the programme (T)
Relative Priority	Need to prioritise wellbeing as much as academics	• What rings home to me is how do we move away from the idea that schools is just for academics…and its not just the students but the whole system. We need to look at how we change the thinking process about school. If these students could see that this time spent looking after themselves holistically could mean that their school work and life could be improved and more fruitful. (T) • Because we have religion now, and I think it's like it's more important than I think. (S) • I think this should be just as important, if not more important than other subjects. Like it's a life thing and like you'll need it for later in life and early life and all around. (S) • It's probably not talked about enough and not prioritised and everyone just thinks about your six or seven leaving cert subjects and I definitely think it should be an option in the future you know having a wellbeing class once a week to just talk about it. (S) • Because we are all aware of the importance of mental health and wellbeing but school is still very much academia based and sometimes if you are seen to be missing you're classes or students missing classes it can become an issue. (T) • I think it should be prioritised especially in senior cycle because it is so much more academically focus than junior cycle was and also like there are less SPHE and CSPE hours, and there are even less PE classes than there were before and now every class is like study and I think it would be a good change to like take the stress off of the study and a lot more emphasis on other parts of life that are very important to us. (S) • In an environment where there is so much focus on academia, you know it's that it is ok to be in touch with your feelings that it's okay to recognize your feelings, to be able to speak out, to be able to seek help. And we're in a school trying to yes you're trying to promote your school and trying to say yes of course academia and points are very important, and whatever but they're not the making of ya in fact they can be the breaking of ya. (P)

	Level of importance	• It is a change of mindset….even within the school, within the management, within the staff, within the students themselves…that's the biggest challenge…to make everyone realise it's [emotional wellbeing] not worthwhile….it's imperative. (T) • I think with the programme it was the first thing to be forgotten, so like if other things are happening and the class was missed it was just missed. I think its important that it is made to be more of a priority to us. (S) • I think they are important because it's like really realistic and it's not just like just say in maths like we could be learning about stuff that you might never use again but, like to say, for this, you could like apply it all to your own life and like it's really good for us. (S) • The strategies from the programme are very useful for them for school and life after school. (P) • The programme is like 40 minutes a week and then for the rest of week is kind of just forgot about. (S) • With the school as well, like they were saying it is a very like isolated one like one class a week thing I think like branching out higher and like include other subjects as well, so you're talking about it in other subjects on the syllabus. Like make it more personal and interactive for everyone. (S) • yeah it is a challenge (to prioritise wellbeing) because there's a lot of people, and you know some some staff because we would not place value on it. Just because I place a high value on it doesn't mean to say everybody else does. (P) • I think to get the benefits out of the MindOut programme. Like if you ask the girls where are you going to next they say oh we have religion you know whereas we should let people know around the school that this is actually happening we have a MindOut class or we have wellbeing hour or whatever you want to call it. I know the girls mentioned that to me themselves that it should be a class on its own. I know timetabling is an issue in schools so its not their fault either. (T)
Leadership engagement	Reliance on teachers to seek support	• At the moment I'm really relying on the teachers but I can see why it is so important that management is aware and on board. (P) • Hopefully from guidance from my teachers I would know what needs to be timetabled. (P) • The team involved in SPHE, RSE and religion… they are a strong team and I have just gone with what their requests are along the way but other than that I haven't been involved. (P) • We should probably bring it up more with meetings with management and perhaps that's why we are not being asked about it so maybe we need to bring it up more. We need to highlight it more in our school and perhaps more support would come? (T)
	Lack of awareness	• I don't know about the MindOut programme at all. I now know that I had a teacher that did the training but she's now moved on but I saw it in my paperwork and I'm sure she delivered the programme but I wasn't aware of that. (P)

	Level of Support	• Our management is very good with regard to wellbeing. If we ever needed anything it would be there. They wouldn't be sticking their nose in like they would trust us but with something like MindOut they would be very supportive and we know we can go to him for anything. We are very lucky they have an open door policy and we can go to them for anything really. We hit the jackpot there. (T) • You just you need them to be on board for timetabling and that's basically it, I mean our principal was great because they checked in you know they wanted to know how we were going on. (T) • Well, I think they got you covered like they have been just very helpful just anytime we needed it if there was a time even like for the training sessions or anything it was sorted and you know it was brilliant like that we kind of did it in school time like, and you know it was just everything sorted for us so yeah it was.(T) • From our perspective management are very much behind the programme and they were eager for us to be involved in it. (T) • I was speaking to the VP today and they were very obliging of getting the soft classes and they know the importance of it. (T) • They kind of have the power to let it into the school. Like for us to do it, it was the principal that let us like be taught it. If the principal is open to it, it will obviously thrive better in school. (S)
	Communicating with Management	• From the beginning we need to have a group and a meeting with management to introduce MindOut and highlight with them what we need from them for delivering it. (T) • It is more of a conversation at the beginning of the year with management to iron out these details because it would help with implementation. (T)
Available resources	Time	• My main concern is that there is no actual allocated time for this programme. (T) • Appropriate timetabling is needed. (P) • All of the content is so good so I didn't want to miss out on anything but I had to because I didn't have the technology or the time. Maybe in different circumstances in a different room, with more time I could have performed better. (T) • Timetables are quite limited we would have very little time to timetable this outside of the 7 standard subjects in the 42 periods a week but I think all schools would be under that type of pressure too. (P)
	Space	• Having a suitable room is crucial (T) • We are experiencing severe space issues in our school (T)
	IT	• I was in a room where there was no laptop or technology (T) • The room I am assigned to there is no laptop or screen and this is a problem. (T)

Access to Knowledge and information	Information about supports	• And yeah I remember like I visited another school and I thought that this is such a great idea that the students are in touch with like places where people could get help and there was numbers all over the school of places where teenagers get help and I've never seen a number in this school. I think, its really important to implement that and tell the school that helplines should be around for us to get help if we need it. (S) • I like think the school was good with it there was like posters on the wall and that. (S)
	Information about the programme	• I never heard of it before we started doing I don't think many people have heard about it and I think it probably should be more talked about it, I think it's probably not talked about enough. (S) • I think it probably needs to be talked about and like spoken about more like kind of like posters maybe or something just to make it more like that this is a thing, because none of us knew about it before we did this and I am sure there is an awful lot of people in the school that don't know about it. (S) • I didn't really hear much about it outside of class. (S) • The other thing is next year if a capable 5th year comes back and gives their perspective on the programme to the incoming group just before the programme starts I think that reflection would be great. (T)
V. Outer Setting		
External Policy	Wellbeing	• You know, wellbeing is part of junior cycle curriculum but not so much senior cycle. (P) • The one thing that is hopeful is that the new junior cycles fundamentally recognises wellbeing and the wellbeing indictors and that is certainly on the cards for senior cycle….and it will take that to happen for there to be a systemic change in thinking and that it comes from the top-down. (T) • Funding I suppose they really decide if a subject should be mandatory. And they can encourage our schools to create more like programmes like this through funding (S)
	Academics prioritised	• It is very difficult on management to bring that through when we do have a system that is based upon the final assessment of the LC. (P) • We are absolutely so right in saying that students need this …but emotional intelligence is just not looked after in our education system at the minute. (T)
Cosmopolitanism	Awareness of local organisations	• I think like interaction with organizations can really help students because it shows them that there are other options. Like if they want to seek help outside the school as well that they can do that and offer them the support they might need. (S) • I do think your partnerships are very good, because I know you're partnered with Mindspace Mayo and other groups like that, because I do follow them through social medias and I do think that was definitely a very good step because social media is such an impactful things today..and I think that having that basis that where we can even connect from home to see you both your updates and information, everything that that is encouraging. (S)

	Access to services	• We don't have places to send these students. So I think that's a huge issue you know. I absolutely see the benefit of this programme but where is it going to go for the students. Like I would have felt this year if I had have had my full go at it. (T) • We had a few students come up to us about issues purely as a result of the MindOut programme and talking about taking five and anxiety etc. but in terms of outside support it was so difficult to access anything this year. You know you were hearing about appointments with Mindspace but appointments were maybe 12 weeks away so you know it was literally referring students to their GP so that was very very difficult. And then you know we as teachers in schools are left trying to pick up the pieces. We are at the frontline trying to help the students and we have nothing to offer them. So we have to be very conscious of that..if we are having these programmes and we are maybe bringing up some of these things in class that we have somewhere to send them. (T)
	Relationship with local organisations	• We also did a fundraiser in the school and half of the proceeds went to Mindspace Mayo and so that helped us to form a stronger relationship and awareness of them and they provided us with lots of resources, loads of flyers, posters, t-shirts and hats we got loads of stuff. So it was nice to see that as well. (T)
External environment	Covid Restrictions	• I also find that, not just in MindOut but other classes as well that it is difficult to stay at the top of the class.. I would like to be able to walk around the room and engage more with the students but that isn't possible right now with the rules [covid]. (T) • Group work activities aren't going on at all… there are X's on the floors and that is where they have to stay. .In a non-exam class trying to get them to engage is difficult without group work but our guidelines tell us we aren't supposed to. (T) • There is more pressure to have the room back to where it was and sanitisation. There are just all of those little things related to covid that are impacting on the running of classes. (T) • I think covid also had a big impact on how we started off this year. There was so much going on in schools logistically with timetables and everything. (T) • Like we can't actually like go near each other kind of have to like stay away from each other and like that's really hard to like get involved. (S) • I'd say like if it wasn't for covid they definitely be like more interactions with different people in the class, so my be better to share things like rather than in front of the full class. (S) • I think it would be a lot better without the covid restrictions because you know, obviously, when you're put in groups like you can actually talk to their students and like kind of open up more and get opinions and feel like you're not alone in your opinion. (S) • One of the negatives was the covid restrictions so I would have to change some of the activities to suit the restrictions. I've done MindOut now for the last few years so it probably wasn't as successful as previous years. They still did some of the group work but they are a meter apart so it wasn't really the same. (T) • Trying to do this type of programme within the context of covid was just so difficult. All of the activities are hugely important to the programme and the way they are done is hugely important and we just couldn't

		do that this year. You tried to adapt as best you could but if you couldn't have them moving around or passing their pages around or in close contact with each other it was very restricted. (T)
	School closures	• Yeah no I think the missed months like detrimentally impacted the programme so like the break, it kind of split it up and, like went out of people's minds and it kind of lost the flow of the program. (S) • I think it was delivered alright like, I suppose we missed a bit because of the lockdown and stuff and it definitely did like make us less interested and when we came back nobody really wanted to do it but then as we got on with it like the last couple of weeks everyone seems to be interested in it again so wasn't too bad. (S) • I know the break in the middle wasn't ideal but obviously there was nothing we could do about that. (T)
	Impact on students stress and engagement	• It was a struggle because you are trying manage from a classroom management and disciplinary perspective and we all had to up our game.. and it wasn't really their fault they just had an abundance of energy. (T) • And then, when we came back in, and we hope to kind of hit the ground running again and we thought that it was the right thing to do, that they needed that they were stressed, there was anxiety, you know accredited grades. There was still so much uncertainty when they came back whether they were sitting exams we thought that's exactly what they needed I mean the stress was ridiculous it was yeah it was too much nearly at that stage, it was can you study I mean they asked, and they were asking their geography teachers and can we have study class for another subject. If would have been the wrong thing to do to push it but besides covid I wouldn't say there were any challenges, really. (T)
	Covid pressure on teachers	• So it was just an extremely busy time since easter so I can say I probably didn't do the programme justice from that perspective it was really difficult to really give it what it deserved. (T) • I certainly felt the pressure of it – it just wasn't happening. Schools across the whole country were in a difficult place. (T) • If you have a class before you're going into MindOut essentially that's five minutes gone because. You have to sanitize before you leave one class and then back in sanitized that's about five minutes gone before you turn on the computer. And so, essentially it's seven minutes gone from the session, this is what I felt and I was conscious that there was a teacher coming in, after me that I had to sanitize. Like I was watching the clock and just as a conversation is going you like okay moving on so that was a lot of pressure. (T)
	School Crisis	• We also had a *crisis* in the school and to me that gave more of a meaning to the programme about how important it is for us to mind ourselves….I would have found higher interest then and that it was given more priority for young people. In light of what had happened there was more engagement in the classes because of the realisation of the importance of minding ourselves. (T)

		• It took a long time for the students to engage but I feel like they were listening and taking it in….that was the mood in our school anyway and still is somewhat. (T)
VI. **Process**		
Planning	Timetabling:	
	Planning early	• Knowing in advance of the programme, this is a discussion that comes in April/May and scheduling is a significant part of it. (P) • Having timetable done in September and then trying to slot MindOut in last minute was a challenge. (P) • Timetables are quite limited we would have very little time to timetable this outside of the 7 standard subjects in the 42 periods a week but I think all schools would be under that type of pressure too. (P) • Because the programme came to us a little bit after we had started the academic year we found, we had already our timetable in place and that because of that our numbers were quite big in our classes and I know the staff felt that if the numbers were smaller that it might have been better. But we were in a position that we couldn't change anything (P) • I think this year the timetable wasn't set in place and resources weren't in place for a third person in (T)
	Selecting Class	• If we want them to take it seriously than we shouldn't be using a free class. Why isn't it taken from English, Irish, Geography….I know it can't be in 6th year but the other years. They aren't going to take it seriously if you're doing it in their free class. (T) • It is timetabled at the end of the timetable after Irish, English, maths. We thought about rotating it around so no one class takes a huge hit but then some students might not want to participate if they feel like they are missing an important class. (P) • When *imp coaches* are talking to management, they need to strongly stress that the class is not taking away from something just as important like PE. (T) • I would start considering it now for the timetable first of all and that there is space there and its not just put into different classes like a free class or study class. So it definitely deserves to be on the timetable whether it's a rolling module or 12 weeks of MindOut and then a study period but its important that the students know that it is there and that it is part of the timetable. (T)
	Double class	• We are allowed one class for delivering the programme but there is certainly a need for another class. For preparation and for the nature of the subject matter we are dealing with. I would be rushing from one class to another and for the proper delivery of such an important programme I feel that there needs to be more time allocated there. (T) • It deserves two classes in any school. (T) • We are delivering it two times a week through RSE. It allows us the opportunity to split them if we need or complete the programme earlier. (T)

		• No we didn't have any issues with timing because we had the hour long class so I had no issues with timing.. I probably had too much time some weeks. The 40 minutes would be very tight I'd say. (T) • Its important to make life easier for us rather than throwing more work on us. If you know that there is going to be x amount of training sessions and x amount of time for reflection that that is automatically factored into the timetabling. That's where two classes to deliver would be important. One for delivering and one for planning, reflecting, meetings and training. (T)
	Space	• We have raised the issue with management that when planning the programme for delivery that an adequate space and access to technology is essential. (T) • The classroom is very big as well and the IT wouldn't be great… I think that needs to be highlighted for management of schools who want to engage with the programme (T) • I feel like if there's maybe more of like an informal setting like that may be better because like yeah it just felt like really formal. (S)
	Class size	• We also have large groups and it was felt that if the groups are smaller it would be easier to implement.talking 28-30 students. (T) • Class size of about 20 students works well. (T) • Group size as well can impact – if the group is too large 28-30 it is very hard to get through it all. (T) • Maybe do it in a smaller group. (S)
	Group Dynamic: Gender split Year group Comfort	 • Possibly separating the boys/girls for certain sessions… they might feel more comfortable with expressing themselves. This is something that should be considered in advance of the programme so planning could be put in place. (T) • Mixed schools can pose a challenge depending on the dynamic of the group but at the same time it is good when they are together also as it works well. (T) • We're doing MindOut with 6th years because management felt they needed it. (T) • Looking back, I would rather deliver to TY or 5th year that they might have been more receptive this year. (T) • It would be better with TY or 5th years, not ideal with 6th years especially in the current context. (T) • Group doesn't know each other all too well which I think impacts on their ability to share and open up. (T) • I feel that the group coming together as a class group is different as students are coming from junior cert, TY and new students as well. Lack of group cohesion as this programme is the first class where all of these students have been together. There is an element of them being more conscious of themselves. (T) • But I thought, maybe if there was like a bonding day at the very start of the course. Like cause that would like force people to talk to other people in their year that they haven't talked to and maybe then they would feel more comfortable to speak up in the course. (S)

	Disruptiveness	• Like you'd be more open to talk to smaller groups than say something in front of the whole class and someone that knows your situation as well. (S) • I have two classes, one is a more positive experience …they are more receptive. The other group is very difficult as there are very vocal students and once they get going it is very difficult to bring them back. (T) • You have some students giving really silly answers that are way off topic and then you have quiet students that don't want to participate with these bigger personalities taking over. (T)
	Staffing: Staff turnover Implementation team	 • The principal should be conscious of a teacher moving on, I think management needs to be aware of this and track this. I think it would be hard to recorded centrally but perhaps the principal could track and link in with support then. (T) • The other thing I would say is having the support of other teachers is very important and I think that is something that needs to be looked at for schools delivering the programme. (T) • It would be good in each school to have a male on board in the implementation team. (T) • I also had a teacher who had taught it last year so she was supportive as well. I didn't really need support in delivering because everything I needed was there in the pack but I definitely felt if I needed the support I could go to her.
Engaging	Training	• The training was good, I'm fairly confident and I have no worries about facilitating. (T) • I think the training was very helpful. (T) • Refresher training would be helpful for people who have been through it and might need some upskilling. (P) • If you were going to give the teachers the job of doing it I think that they need to go under some sort of training or something I don't know. (S) • We did it online and we were just taking one session between two people so you just listened to everyone feedback but you weren't really experiencing the sessions. Maybe a full day course where we are there in person rather than online and maybe doing some of the actual activities when this is all over. (T)
Champions	Person of responsibility Wellbeing/SPHE Coordinator	• It would be useful to have one person in school responsible for the traction and sustainability of programmes like this in schools 'posts of responsibility' (P) • There needs to be that joined up thinking and development in terms of personnel to ensure that these programmes get traction we need someone flying that flag. (P) • I think it's very important that the SPHE coordinator really knows the programme even more so than the principal because I think we have responsibility for all that goes on in the school but we might not have

		that direct micromanagement that is going on so maybe the SPHE coordinator will be meeting with their team more during the year than I would be. (P) • We have a wellbeing team and a wellbeing coordinator in the school as well to support the programme. (P)
External change agents	Implementation Support	• I always know where she is and can reach out to her we need support. (T) • Externally I would say that she has had constant contact and is always there and I feel like I could email or ring her. I'd know where to go if I did need to reach out for support. (T) • Well I found the external support very good and very approachable. When they would ring it was good you could tell them about anything that was going on it was more like chatting to a friend rather than someone who was providing the programme. (T) • Just to know that there was somebody there if you know, there was something to do with the session or anything like that they had a question about like like we knew, she was at the other end. Or that we were at the other end of an email or phone call, and it was just great to have that, especially because it was our first year doing it like and we were kind of like. You know, we will be fine or you know, is there anything else we need to know about it, or whatever, so it was just great to have that to know, even if we never did need it just to know that there was somebody there to be able to contact like so yeah. (T) • Extremely supportive I have to take my hat off to work that they do. The professionalism their dedication to it, everything that they do is just you know if I hold them in very high esteem. And we would have had that working relationship, you know it's not new to me this year. (P)
	Delivery Support	• I mean this programme isn't new in terms of what is in it it is just that it is all together in one place. So no I don't think we need more support in terms of delivery because we already do that. (T)
	Planning Support	• It is very hard to accommodate things on timetables and obviously academia is important and I don't take away from that. I suppose more support for planning for next year. Is it going to run, what are we going to do? There was a support for a meeting at the beginning but that should be a given. I don't know if the organisations are reflecting with management about the programme but I think that that is very important. If there is engagement there with the organisations than I think that would be very supportive. (T) • I am delighted going forward that management will be contacted by the organisations regarding planning for next year because that really is a management decision. So that decision needs to be made and planned for timetable wise so I think that is a great support if external organisations are going to provide that. (T)
	School Visits	• Even if someone just talked to us at the start and told it what it was about or even if someone came in once in a while and maybe talked to us I think it would really be a big improvement and make us feel like it was more of a big deal that just like another thing that we have to do at school. (S)

		• We have had local organisations come in before when we do a wellbeing week. So we would be very open to having them come into the school and we'd be very supportive of that. I do think it helps to hear from somebody else as well. (T) • They are a wealth of knowledge as well and I'm sure that they want to come to schools rather than just being like this is what we're doing for class today, you know if we could maybe have a guest speaker for two hours workshop kind of thing and I think it will make it more relevant for them, and also, it will be great for them to actually realize these you know these facilities are there. (T)
Formally appointed internal implementation leaders	Gender balance	• In relation to delivering, especially in a mixed school I think it would be wonderful to have a male on board. So it challenges the message that it is only the girls that will talk or that are open. It would be good in each school to have a male on board in the implementation team. (T) • If there was access to one (male teacher) it would be no harm because the lads might open up more to a male teacher as well. (S) • Gender balance is a big thing. We are in a mixed school and yet for all of these types of programmes it is a female domain. (T) • Yeah I'm a female the deputy is a female and a lot of the teachers are female. We have some male teachers, but I really I was very, very conscious that our boys, in particular needed somebody that they could offload to you know just in confidence. (P)
	Team of teachers	• I think having three teachers trained is very positive in that they can help each other and keep each other going and then next year if one isn't available there's still others there. (T) • That no one stands alone, it is lovely to have someone on the ground in the staff that you can check in with. (T) • Having a strong team of teachers for SPHE/RSE is important. (P)
	Qualities and experience	• I think you'd be doing a great disservice to students, if you were to give the Mindout programme or indeed SPHE to a teacher that just couldn't be bothered. (T) • A teacher that would be confident in doing it and would know that students and be willing to let them get what ever they need to get out of it. So I do think that would be important. Maybe the likes of an SPHE teacher or someone involved in different wellbeing initiatives at junior cycle it would be a big help and they would probably find it a lot easier to teach it you know in facilitating it rather than someone who is doing exam subjects all the time because it is a big change. (T)
Key Stakeholders	Guidance Counsellors	• I think it is important to have another teacher trained and maybe the guidance counsellor as well so that they know what its all about and they have an idea that its being implemented so that you kind of have that network in the school. My guidance counsellor asked if they could have a copy of the programme so they knew what was being covered and I think that was sent to them. I don't know if maybe the

	Parents	guidance counsellors should be involved in the training as well but yeah more than one teacher implementing it would be good because you'd have that support. (T) • The guidance counsellor is great here and it is only a matter of talking to her if I have any concerns and the religion teachers would help out if I needed. (T) • It would be good to have guidance and counselling involved too so its not just seen as one class. (T) • I sent the letter out to the parents so that they were aware of the programme just so that they could see that the backing was there from the school. (T) • In normal times we would have our parent-teacher meetings so we would have discussed wellbeing there and then I did mention it in their reports as well that we sent home this week so parents know what we did. Also our Facebook page online a lot of parents follow that so it was addressed there that the students were taking part in MindOut. During these times the best way to communicate with parents is through online or the students themselves. Normally what works well is a text message from the school because then you know they are receiving it, then you're not depending on the social media or the kids themselves to communicate it. (T) • Then people in the school would know it is going on. You know even parents 'oh they don't do anything for mental health in the school' but we do its just hidden in different subjects. Like there is loads going on in the school our school is full of wellbeing and things going on. (T)

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