



The role of context in youth mental health and addiction issues: a qualitative study on social deprivation in Limerick City and Dublin South Inner City

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Publication date

01-01-2013

Published in

10th Annual Psychology Health and Medicine Conference;

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Document Version

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Citation for this work (HarvardUL)

Schaffalitzky, E., Leahy, D., Armstrong, C., Bury, G., Cussen-Murphy, P., Davis, R., Dooley, B., Gavin, B., Keane, R., Keenan, E., Laham, L., MEAGHER, D., McGorry, P., McNicholas, F., O'Connor, R., O'Dea, E., O'Keane, V., O'Toole, T.P., Reilly, E., Ryan, P., Sanci, L., Smyth, B.P. and Cullen, W. (2013) 'The role of context in youth mental health and addiction issues: a qualitative study on social deprivation in Limerick City and Dublin South Inner City', available: <https://hdl.handle.net/10344/4599> [accessed 25 Jul 2022].

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Title: The Role of Context in Youth Mental Health and Addiction Issues: A Qualitative Study on Social Deprivation in Limerick City and Dublin South Inner City

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Background/aims: Youth mental health and substance use issues are common in areas of urban social deprivation. Early intervention can potentially prevent youth from advancing addiction, participating in criminality, and mental illness progression, but services struggle with youth engagement. In order to tailor interventions for these specific social contexts, it is important to gain full understanding of how social deprivation cultivates mental health and addiction issues. The aim of this study is to describe how the specific contexts of Limerick City and Dublin South Inner City influence these issues, so early interventions reflect the difficulties of addressing them in this context.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 37 healthcare professionals and 20 young people attending a range of different clinical sites in Limerick and Dublin. Inductive thematic analysis was carried out, with codes collaboratively generated from the data and arranged into themes.

Results: The themes produced were evocative of Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Model of Development, progressing from smaller to larger societal influences: The Individual Young Person, Family and Peer Groups, The Local Context, and Irish Society. From the larger influence of drinking in Irish culture, to the familial influence of living with parents who struggle with addiction, it is clear why youth in both deprived areas are susceptible to developing problems in the future, and why classic interventions may struggle for success.

Conclusions: Recognition that young people in Limerick and Dublin are at risk of mental health issues, and understanding the factors involved, is useful for creating early interventions specific to these contexts that users feel are appropriate to their needs. Taking these factors into account indicates who to target early, and how to engage them, for improved outcomes.

Abstract Category: Lifestyle and Health