

Further supports for reducing anxiety and promoting resilience

In 2016 a new youth work programme to support young people experiencing anxiety will be provided by Carlow Regional Youth Service:



The FRIENDS for Life programme was developed in Australia for children and adolescents to reduce anxiety and promote emotional resilience. The FRIENDS programme is a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) based early intervention and prevention programme focusing on anxiety and depression. The programme is group and skills based. The FRIENDS programme is part of a number of series of programmes:



Fun FRIENDS (ages 3-7)

FRIENDS for Life (ages 8-11)



My Friends Youth Resilience Programme (ages 12-16)



Adult Resilience Strong Not Tough.

The programme takes the form of 10 weekly CBT sessions of one hour, with two booster sessions recommended at 4 and 12 weeks after programme completion. The sessions provide children and young people with opportunities to understand how feelings affect behaviours; learn relaxation techniques; recognise and understand different emotions; learn how to change negative thoughts into helpful thoughts; develop problem solving skills and coping skills and build the support of teams. There is a structured manual for both the children and youth versions which specifies the goals of each session and gives advice on delivery.

The FRIENDS programme comes with a wealth of empirical literature that supports its effectiveness and efficacy. Most notably the programme has been endorsed by the WHO (2004) who states that 'FRIENDS' is the only anxiety intervention that '*appears to be efficacious across the entire spectrum, as a universal prevention programme, as a targeted prevention programme as a treatment*' (p.43).

For information about delivering FRIENDS Programmes in your service please contact Leighann Ryan Culleton @ **Carlow Regional Youth Service** on leighann@carlowys.ie or 085 2780307