



EDUCATION OBSERVATORY

## **Sociological perspectives on the mental health and wellbeing agenda in educational settings**

**A one-day conference hosted by the Education Observatory,  
University of Wolverhampton and the British Sociological  
Association Sociology of Mental Health Study Group**

**Wednesday 9th June 2021, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. (British Summer Time)**

**A virtual event via Zoom**

**Organiser and Chair: Dr Lydia Lewis, Institute of Education,  
University of Wolverhampton**

In the UK and other countries, there is currently a salient mental health and wellbeing agenda. This agenda is playing out in education policy across the education system, including schools, colleges and universities, as well as in adult community learning (ACL), early years settings and workplace training. In formal education, a key driver has been heightened concerns about children and young people's mental health, and the importance of the agenda has been ratcheted up by the recent COVID-19 crisis. Educational settings have been viewed as key sites for intervention. For adults, some shifts in mental health policy towards social, as opposed to medical, responses to mental health need have strengthened the role educational services such as ACL can play within this public health arena.

In this wide-ranging social, political and policy context, the aim of this symposium is to explore the mental health and wellbeing policy agenda in education critically across different settings, including schooling, further and higher education, adult community learning and work-based learning. Speaking from multiple national contexts, contributors will draw on the insights offered by sociological perspectives to explore the questions, problems and dilemmas raised by the mental health and wellbeing agenda for education. This will involve scrutinizing the educational, social and political effects of the discourses being adopted and the kinds of responses to perceived need being advocated for educational settings, and seeking to identify links between developments across a range of sectors. We will also consider possible responses to the agenda for education practitioners, policy-makers and researchers and what critical education practice can contribute in this area.

**The event is free to attend. To register or for queries, please email  
[lydia.lewis@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:lydia.lewis@wlv.ac.uk)**

## Draft Programme

9.30-9.40 am	Welcome - Dr Lydia Lewis and Professor Michael Jopling, Education Observatory, University of Wolverhampton
9.40-10.00 am	Introduction, Dr Lydia Lewis, <i>The mental health and wellbeing agenda in educational settings: themes and debates</i>
10.00-11.00 am	Keynote presentation, Professor Kristiina Brunila, University of Helsinki, Finland, <i>Towards desired futures? Future trajectories of precision education governance.</i>

11.00-11.15am - Break

11.15-12.15 pm	<b>Roundtable session 1: Schools</b>
	Professor Michael Jopling, University of Wolverhampton, <i>Vulnerabilities and mental health in schools</i> Professor Maria Tsouroufli, Brunel University, London, <i>Gendered and racialized 'vulnerabilities': The Intersectionality of violence and mental health in schools in the UK</i> Dr Josie Maitland, University of Chichester, Whole school approaches to promoting wellbeing : understanding schools as complex social systems

12.15-12.20 - Break

12.20 - 1.05 pm	<b>Roundtable session 3: Further education and work-based learning</b>
	Catherine Lisseman, University of Wolverhampton and Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, <i>Drawing on our emotional intelligence during the pandemic: tales from the NHS front line.</i> Professor Rob Smith and Dr Jonathan Gadsby, Birmingham City University, <i>Mental health and further education: what role for mental health nurses?</i>

1.05-1.30 pm - lunch

1.30 - 2.15 pm	<b>Roundtable session 2: Universities</b>
	Dr Alex Wade and Dr Fadia Dakka, Birmingham City University, <i>Non-Times from Non-Places: Space and Time in the Everyday Life of Post-graduate Research Students</i> Professor Danielle Landry, Ryerson University, Canada, <i>Mad student organizing and the emergence of Mad Studies in Canada.</i>

2.15-2.20pm - Break

2.20-3.05 pm	<b>Roundtable session 4: Adult community learning</b>
	Dr Lydia Lewis, University of Wolverhampton, <i>How Should we Respond to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Agenda in Adult Community Learning? Exploring the role of creative arts provision</i> Professor Mick Mckeown, University of Central Lancashire, <i>Critical pedagogy and mental health in a cooperative education centre: re-imaginings for worker and political learning.</i>
3.05-3.30 pm	Plenary discussion - key points arising and implications for research, policy and practice

**Sociology of Mental Health Study Group web site:** <https://www.britsoc.co.uk/groups/medical-sociology-groups/sociology-of-mental-health-study-group/>

**Convenors:** Professor Ewen Speed, University of Essex and Professor Nick Manning, KCL