

The Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Helen McEntee, TD, recently launched new resources designed in County Meath to support young peoples' transitions from primary to post-primary school.

Insert photo here with the following caption (Young people from Stagecraft Trim and 1st Years from Beaufort College, Navan attended the Mind the Gap Workbook and Video launch by Minister Helen McEntee, TD on Monday 16th January, 2017 in the Trim Castle Hotel. Also in the photo are Leonard Callaghan, Meath CYPSC; Christina Nestor, NSCP; Elma McMahon, LMETB; and Se Fulham, Navan Springboard Family Support Services).

One of the transformational goals of the National Policy Framework “Better Outcomes Brighter Futures - The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020”, is to support effective transitions. Children and young people experience a number of key transitions in their journey from childhood to adulthood including from primary school to post-primary school.

Navan School Completion Programme (NSCP) Staff team developed a booklet called ‘Transition Programme’ delivered to 6th class students in the Spring of each year. Its main aim is to assist young people successfully transfer from primary to secondary school. It encompasses exercises to help them negotiate teacher expectations, new environments and the journey from established social groups into new social relations.

When evaluated, the programme showed positive outcomes for the young people in NSCP Schools. NSCP worked with Navan Springboard, LMETB and the Meath Children and Young Peoples Services Committee (CYPSC) with generous funding from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), to redevelop and produce the booklet for use by all 5th and 6th class students in county Meath. There is an online DVD resource in addition to this booklet available on www.familysupportmeath.ie, www.cypsc.ie and www.lmetb.ie.

Those who attended the event included young people who participated as actors in the production of the video. They were Transition Year students from Scoil Mhuire Trim with Roisin Smith taking the helm as director, young people from Stagecraft Trim and 1st Years from Beaufort College, Navan, who also had experience using the Workbook. Other attendees included: Parents/guardians of the young people, Principals and Deputy Principals from Primary Schools in Co. Meath, Mr. Pdraig McCabe, Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) National CYPSC Co-ordinator, Ms. Aine O’Keefe, Ms. Sirena Campbell and Mr. Tony Walsh, Tusla Educational Welfare Service, Navan School Completion Programme staff who were involved in drafting the workbook, Navan School Completion Programme committee members, and Meath CYPSC members.

Minister McEntee, TD, noted at the launch that "Any kind of transitional period in someone's life can be difficult. This is especially the case for young people. Moving from one school environment into a completely different one can be very unsettling and so it's important to support that transition in whatever way we can. As Minister for Mental Health I believe we must educate our young people and teach them the skills to cope with the stresses and pressures they will face. We can only do that by working together and ‘Mind the Gap’ is a perfect example of that”. *Leonard Callaghan*, Co-ordinator, Meath CYPSC echoed Minister McEntee’s comments and commended the young people who participated in the design and production of the booklet and video that ultimately will support their peers as they transition

from primary to post-primary school. *Christina Nestor*, Coordinator, NSCP emphasised “We hope that you find this resource useful in assisting your young people ‘Mind the Gap’ between primary and post-primary school”.