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# YouthHealthTalk.org - a voice for young people

The website [www.YouthHealthTalk.org](http://www.YouthHealthTalk.org) is a unique, award-winner that is designed to give young people an opportunity to talk openly and honestly about what it's like to live with a health condition, sexual health, drugs, alcohol and other issues. Each condition or issue-specific section is based on a stand alone qualitative research project by researchers based at DIPEX, University of Oxford.

Unlike other health information sites, YouthHealthTalk.org is not just about medical facts, it features video and audio clips from interviews in which young people describe their real life experiences of health, illness and lifestyles. On the site, young people can talk about the things that matter to them, what has been difficult as well as what has helped and what they would like to see improved. Each section also has reliable information about different health conditions and links to other websites, support groups, books and videos. The website offers emotional and practical support for young people facing similar situations, helping them to realise that they are not alone.

"I wanted to be involved so that I could share my experiences and suggestions with others, and could give people the valuable support that I was searching for." Gemma, YHT Youth Panel

The website also helps parents, carers, family and friends to understand the issues involved from young people's perspectives and therefore how best to help.

Similarly, it supports the implementation of the National Service Framework for Children and Young People by providing a valuable educational resource for teachers, health care professionals and others

working with children and young people and by helping professionals promote positive outcomes by enhancing their understanding of young people and their real life problems.

"YouthHealthTalk can make a massive difference, give young people recognition, a reference point and, most importantly, a voice to be heard and related to." David, YHT Youth Panel

Young people are involved at every stage of each project via the Youth Panel which helps us to choose, plan and manage projects and guides the overall direction of YHT.

"I got involved with the young people's panel which helps to come up with ideas of how to take the website forward and reach out to as many young people as possible." Clair, YHT Youth Panel

## Volunteers wanted

At present, the site features young people with epilepsy, young people with long-term health conditions, sexual health of young people, teenage cancer, and diabetes type 1 in young people. Two further sites are currently in development and we are actively seeking volunteers\* to tell their story.

**1. Young people, weight & health.** We would like to hear from young people aged 16-20 who are struggling with their weight, or have been told they're overweight, or were overweight but have lost weight, including young people who have gained weight as a result of a medical condition or medication or who have developed a health condition as a result of their weight.

**2. Young people, depression & low mood.** We are looking for young people aged 16-25 to share their experiences of depression or persistent low mood.

\*Participants can share their experiences in an interview (face-to-face, or via the telephone or internet), and can remain totally anonymous if they wish. The projects have full ethics approval and the researchers have CRB clearance. For more information please contact Krysia (weight & health) email: [Krysia.canvin@dphpc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Krysia.canvin@dphpc.ox.ac.uk) or Ulla (depression & low mood) email: [Ulla.Raisanen@dphpc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Ulla.Raisanen@dphpc.ox.ac.uk)