



REACH turns 5!

The REACH project has had a fantastic year! Our fourth year of data collection finished at the beginning of the summer and has been hugely successful. We want to give a massive thank you to all the wonderful schools that we work with, both the staff and students for giving us so much of their time.

Most of the summer has been spent entering and then cleaning the data. This is no mean feat when the total number of students completing our questionnaire last academic year was 3560! We are super excited to start analysing the data we have collected over the past four years. We're not quite finished with data collection yet though. As we enter year five of the study, the team is gearing up to get back into schools for the academic year 2019-2020 and are raring to go!



REACH joins new research centre

We're really pleased to announce that REACH will be continuing next year as part of the new Centre for Society and Mental Health, an interdisciplinary research centre focusing on the impact that rapid social change has on mental health. You can read more about the new centre [here](#) or take a look at this [video](#) to hear what it's all about!

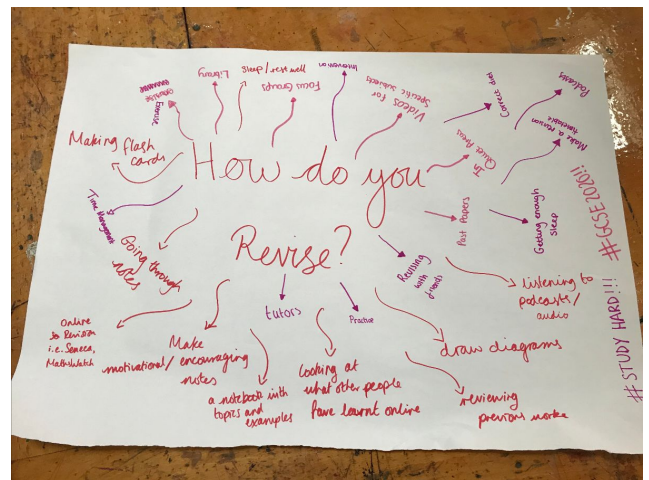
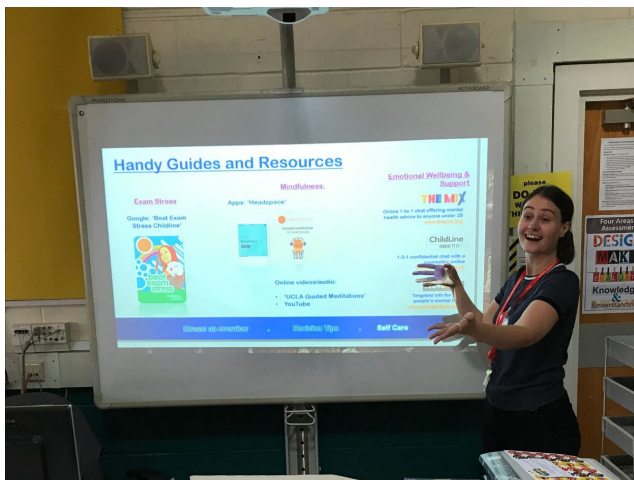
A HUGE thank you to the 2000+ REACH students who have already provided contact details so that they can remain involved in the study for this next phase! If you're a REACH student and haven't yet given your contact details but would like to stay involved, just drop us an email on reach@kcl.ac.uk

Events

As a way of giving back to our partner schools, we've been running assemblies and

workshops. As part of our mission to help young people around exam time, we attended a school parents evening aimed at providing parents with information and resources for how to support their children through GCSE revision and exam stress. We also spent the day with an amazing group of Year 11s who are gearing up for their GCSEs this year. It can be a stressful time for young people, but it was great to share some of the things we've learnt along the way about how to cope with stress and some handy tips for revising.

It's always such a great experience for the team to run these sessions and it was brilliant to hear about the incredible ways young people are supporting each other when it comes to exam stress and anxiety. Check out the pictures for some of the creative ways students brainstormed for different techniques for revision!



We also marked Mental Health Awareness week in October. Alice delivered some fascinating assemblies at one of our partner schools with the aim to provide some general information about what mental health is and how it can affect us. Importantly, these assemblies also provide a platform to challenge some common misconceptions about mental health, spark conversation and signpost students and staff to some helpful resources should they, or someone they know, be struggling with difficult thoughts or feelings.



**MENTAL
HEALTH
AWARENESS
WEEK**

Our New Blog!



The REACH team have started a blog! Here you can read posts about what we're up to and exciting new findings from the Reach study. This month, Alice writes

about an exciting event hosted by our very own King's College London.

In celebration of Black History Month, the Reach team attended a talk by Akala, the award-winning hip hop artist turned author, who was talking about his bestselling book, 'Natives'. During the talk, Akala spoke movingly about the core themes of his book, which include issues of race and class, historical and political factors that have shaped society today. He also gave great personal insight into these issues, providing examples from his own lived experience of growing up as a working class, mixed-race child in London during the 80's. For more details about the talk, check out the ReachOut blog [here!](#)

Work Experience

Over the summer holiday, we were lucky enough to welcome Millie to REACH HQ for work experience. We loved having Millie as part of the team for the week!

Here's what she had to say about her time with us...

"Working at REACH has been one of the best weeks of my holiday and I would recommend it to other students interested in any scientific research, psychology or psychiatry. I've spent the week sorting resources that are used in REACH schools, cleaning as well as entering data, and writing for the newsletter and website. The team involved me in the work as much as possible and offered great advice on university life and careers in science, so I've learnt a lot about how REACH operates and what life as a researcher is like. Overall, I've enjoyed myself, gained new skills and have something interesting and useful to put on my CV!"



REACH a virtual world

You might have heard of virtual reality (VR) in games such as Fortnite 360... But did you know that REACH uses this technology too? VR creates an immersive virtual world by putting a screen close to your eyes to block out any interference from the world around you. The technology can make you feel as though you've been transported to a new world by showing you images that change with your body movements.

As part of REACH, some young people have been taking part in our exciting virtual reality task. Unlike Fornite 360, we don't ask you to fight any monsters! Instead, we use a VR headset to take you to a virtual school canteen where you can meet lots of different characters along the way. We then ask a few questions about what you experienced. Using VR technology is not only fun for young people (and the REACH team!) but it also helps us to understand your thoughts and reactions to different social environments. Using this kind of technology can also provide valuable insight into how to develop new interventions for a range of mental health difficulties such as social phobia.



Staff Changes

We've had some important changes to our team with some bittersweet farewells but exciting new additions too!

This year we have said goodbye to Aisha, Dan and Katie. Aisha left to travel the world, Dan moved to Japan to take up a scholarship with the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, and Katie went to take up a secondment with a different KCL department.

We've welcomed Caroline (Research Co-ordinator), Lynsey and Alice (Research Assistants) to the team this year who have got stuck in with the busy Reach schedule and hit the ground running!

In other exciting news, Sam has left to start her MSc in Global Mental Health and

will then return to commence a PhD using Reach data!



Do you love data....? We're hiring!

We're looking for a full-time Data Manager/Scientist to work on REACH and INTREPID II. The job pack can be found [here](#), applications close 6th November, 2019. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in applying and would like to have an informal chat about the role, do get in touch with our Project Coordinator Gemma on Gemma.Knowles@kcl.ac.uk.



Use your voice! Become a REACH Champion!

Interested in learning some research skills? Passionate about young people's mental health? You could get paid £50 to tell us what *you* think about Reach!

We're looking for enthusiastic REACH Champions from our partner schools to join our Young Persons Advisory Group! As part of this exciting role, you'll be paid to tell us how you think we could be doing better and help us to shape the way we conduct our research. You'll also help to raise awareness about REACH and the important work that's happening in your school. Our past Champions have also helped us with ideas for events, website design and social media. There will also be opportunities for those who are super keen to do some work experience with us at King's College London! To be eligible to apply you'll be aged 14-20 and

have attended one of the schools that's taken part in REACH. If you'd like to get involved, please email reach@kcl.ac.uk for an application form.

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