Researcher BN: So, if you don't mind, would you be able to just kind of, run through, your age, gender, and your role at (name of organisation)?

SP2: Of course. So I am 36, and I'm female, and I am youth development worker for (name of organisation), erm, so I plan, manage and deliver, erm, youth service across rural (name of area).

Researcher BN: Lovely. And what motivated you to start in this, in this role?

SP2: Erm, I have been a youth worker for a long long time, and erm, I left a job, just before COVID started, erm, and it sort of erm, led to me changing my plans a little bit, erm, when COVID hit, erm, so I was supposed to go abroad and didn't, and then this role came up, and it was basically returning to my dream job, erm, so it was going back to voluntary sector youth work, erm, and I love, I love charitable work, erm, and I think we get a lot of freedom there, erm, and it's a chance to kind of, because it was almost brand new in some ways, it was a chance to kind of, erm, come in and really shape a service.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So is that what motivated you at the very beginning when you started youth work?

SP2: Definitely, yeah. I mean, I threw a lot of energy into it, erm, and you know, we were in a position where we were not sure if we starting to do youth clubs, if we would have to wait, and in the end you might remember that we ended up doing lots of online stuff for a little while..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: …six months actually we did online work for, so we totally changed the way we were doing things, and that was a good motivator, cause it..

Researcher BN: Okay.

SP2: ..it made you want to keep, erm, innovating, and trying new things and seeing what worked, and connecting with those young people that we were getting in contact with.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And what kind of challenges, what's the hardest thing about being a youth worker, would you say?

SP2: Erm, I think it's, physically and emotionally quite demanding.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, so, you know, you’re working long hours and late nights. Erm, I think it is, I think you’re constantly changing your approach, because one moment you're working with young people, the next you’re working with funders or stakeholders, or trustees, or families and communities, erm, and then you know, you’re liaising with colleagues, and you’re managing people and supporting volunteers. Erm, so you've got to be a lot of different things all at once while being yourself. Erm..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: And having integrity, and that's really challenging, but it, I don't think that I’d enjoy an office job, in the traditional sense.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP2: I like doing my admin, but I don't think I'd enjoy just doing nine to five. I think I’d find that dull. Erm..

Researcher BN: You like the variation?

SP2: It's really healthy, yeah. I mean there’s times you just think ‘ohh, what I wouldn't give to just go into work and do my job, and come home’. But it's not like that. And I think, actually, I'd be sad if it was.

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah. And what, what's your favourite thing on more of a positive note (laughs). What do you like the most?

SP2: Ooooh, all my work with young people, erm,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..especially our work with seniors. Erm, so we do some really nice work with our, erm, like, high school age and people. And anything with them is always incredible, erm, so. Sessions in house, in our regular youth club settings, or day trips with them, erm, or activities, it's always really good fun. That's my favourite er, age group, really, sort of…

Researcher BN: Is it?

SP2: Yeah, 13 plus, definitely. Proper youth work.

Researcher BN: Yeah, is that why? Because…

SP2: Yeah, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah, you feel like you can engage with them more?

SP2: Yeah, erm you know, you’re sort of watching them, really, become themselves, and it's quite exciting. Erm, and being there to support them is a massive privilege.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..and being trusted to have those conversations with them is amazing.

Researcher BN: So talk me through your kind of day to day, and how, like what, what, what a normal day would look like for you, I suppose, at work.

SP2: Oohh it’s really difficult to define that, cause it's so variable, erm

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: So.. my.. day would normally start around about this time, erm, so in term time, erm, we do youth clubs three nights a week, erm, so, I'll think about a, a Thursday for example at (name of town), erm, my day starts around about now, erm, I'll be, taking care of some admin, get through some emails, and then I'll go to school and do a lunchtime, erm, drop in session at the middle school at (name of town), erm, and then I'll spend the afternoon doing some more admin, erm, and that might be kind of funding bids or report writing, erm, it might be student supervisions, erm, it might be promotion, it might be communication with families, erm, or any other, any other thing that needs doing really. Erm, volunteer support and management, erm, recruitment, things like that. Erm, and then, setting up and preparing for youth clubs. Erm, and we normally do two youth clubs in a night, erm, on a Tuesday and a Thursday. So it's quite full on..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: We'll do a juniors club for 8 to 11 year olds, and then quick turn around, and then our seniors club for the older ones, erm, so they're busy nights erm, but that's where your good work happens with young people..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..erm, in those, in those moments. Erm, so, that's round about what a regular day looks like, and it's obviously just, erm, it's just me, erm, I've got a colleague who works 9 hours at (name of town).

Researcher BN: OK.

SP2: ..And delivers that session for me. Erm, so, erm, he does that and I do the rest of it. Erm, so it's quite a, quite a solitary role.

Researcher BN: Oh OK, so do you have volunteers regularly with you, or is the, a lot of the time just you?

SP2: We do so at the moment, we're dependent on volunteers, and that's not really… optimum. Erm, so, we are in a situation whereby we have one paid worker for each youth club, and the rest are all volunteers.

SP2: Erm, that's, I've always said since I started, that's not, that's not sustainable. And it isn't.

Researcher BN: Mmm.

SP2: Erm, I think it's wrong that we rely on people giving their time for free, to run a professional youth service, erm, so that's gonna change, I'm gonna employ some sessional workers, and I've just achieved funding to take on a part time youth worker as well.

Researcher BN: Oh wow.

SP2: We just need to get the applications now because we're rural, and youth work’s dying, so erm, it’s really hard to get people actually in, erm, and we’ve had to be quite pragmatic about what we do. So we had to think a lot about, you know, is it qualified workers that we want, or is it, you know, people that we think are gonna be a good fit that we can work with and train up.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, and I think it's the latter, probably, you know it's people that we think will be a good fit that we can work with, to build their skills, erm, because we know that we're not gonna get kind of, erm, experienced and professionally qualified youth workers up here.

Researcher BN: Yeah, because it’s so rural.

SP2: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So, do you see the, do you tend to see the same, both young people and the parents or guardians, you can kind of answer these questions in whichever you see more fit as to whether it's the young people or the parents and guardians. Erm, but do you see the same people regularly, or is it different faces?

SP2: We've got a strong core, erm, so we have, erm, you know, young people that attend every single session, erm, around that there's like, you know, peripheral young people who might drop in now and again. Erm, and then there's, erm, young people who are, you know, we've got a constant kind of, erm, influx of, of new faces. So now we see at each location, we’d see sort of a couple of members that are new each month.

Researcher BN: That’s good.

SP2: Yeah, it's, it's a popular service, which is why we're gonna have to have a big, a big service review in, erm, September. Erm, we've got an awful lot going on, erm, and we need to kind of stop and take stock, ‘cause at the moment, we're almost, a bit too popular in some of our sessions.

Researcher BN: Ah really? (laughs)

SP2: Yeah and you see..

Researcher BN: That's a good place to be (laughs).

SP2: It is, yeah, but you know the (name of location). Don't you like?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: It's not a big space is it.

Researcher BN: No.

SP2: And at the moment we're welcoming like, 26, 28 juniors..

Researcher BN: Wow

SP2: .. in that space, which is fine in, manageable in summer when you’ve got the outside space too, but of course as soon as winter comes, and we're not in the garden anymore..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..quite different. So, yeah, we're gonna split it down a little bit to make sure we've got enough, erm, enough to work with.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And, how do they, do they hear about it through word of mouth? Is that how you find new people coming or?

SP2: Yeah, usually their friends come, and, you know, they'll, they'll come along with their friends because they've heard about it, or, erm, or a parent might have said to another parent ‘ohh, so and so goes to youth club, you should come along’ or, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: The thing, I mean, social media and, you know, posters and local advertising are great but actually, word of mouth is the most effective.. means of communicating, erm, the work that we do, erm.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: And it’s, you know if, it's good if we're popular in getting new members, because young people are clearly saying, ‘oh we go and it's really good, you should come’.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: You know.

Researcher BN: It shows you getting positive feedback.

SP2: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Cause young people vote with their feet, and if they're not happy, they won't come.

Researcher BN: Yeah, they won’t recommended it to, to other people.

SP2: Exactly, yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And, and so, what do you tend to, when you talk to young people at, kind of, the youth drop-ins, what do you tend to talk about with them? Is, is there anything, any themes?

SP2: Erm, relationships are a massive thing, as, as in, erm, not just kind of, erm, intimate partner relationships, but also, erm, like friendships and family situations. Erm, so that's huge. Erm, mental health and wellbeing, erm, and physical health, you know, we talk a lot about kind of, erm, positive choices around diet, or, erm, you know, with, when they come in with bags full of sweets and fizzy pop, we, we look at ways of addressing that. Erm, which we have done, we've said they can't bring, they’re own now, they've, they've got to buy at tuck shop, erm.

Researcher BN: All really?

SP2: Yeah we manage. Erm, obviously it's still chocolate and crisps and sweets, but it's…

Researcher BN: (laughs) Controlled amounts.

SP2: ..a pound, yeah, it's a pounds worth, at a reasonable price, rather than, they've got a fiver and they've like, filled a bag up in the coop, you know.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: Erm, so a lot of it is focused around, kind of, erm, general wellbeing topics, erm..

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: ..you know, so things like.. talk a lot about mental health with the older ones, erm, you know, kind of self-care, erm, strategies for coping.

Researcher BN: Ah, OK.

SP2: Erm, you know, healthy and less healthy coping strategies, erm, and how to, kind of, ensure that you focus on the healthy. Umm, we talk a lot about.. erm, lifestyles, er, ambition. You know, a lot of our young people, even at year nine, have spent all summer working because they want to save, to get a car in three years’ time, to get them the heck out of where they are.

Researcher BN: (laughs)

SP2: So, that plays a big part, erm, a lot of it is, day-to-day stuff, like friendships and relationships, what's happening at home,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, you know, and it is a privilege to be able to have those conversations with young people, and that they want to have them with you, and share what's happening for them is amazing.

Researcher BN: Yeah, definately. And do you find that, is it very much led by them what you talk about, or, how do these arise?

SP2: Absolutely, yeah. If we see kind of key themes recurring, erm, you know, like, like for example the, erm, the diet and food choices and nutrition thing, if we see key themes emerging, we’ll kind of look at ways of addressing them. So, we might plan, erm, a structured session.

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP2: ..And like, nutrition information and, and health and wellbeing, erm.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: But in terms of like day-to-day conversations, they’re very much led by… if, if I've got a concern about young person or I know that they've got something going on, I might try to, unpick that a little bit with them, and sort of, discreetly, work to that point. But actually, erm, in the main, they tend to lead the way, and they’re pretty open as well. You know, they're pretty kind of, erm, happy to talk about what's going on for them.

Researcher BN: Yeah, ah that's good.

SP2: It's amazing.

Researcher BN: (laughs) And, you mentioned obviously going online over COVID, did you notice anything change about what was being talked about, the kinds of conversations you had with young people?

SP2: Yeah, erm, what I…did notice was, in terms of the content of the conversations, you know, young people were worried, and they were uncertain, erm, and parents would make a point of contacting us and saying, like, you know, this is going on for them, or like, they struggled to engage with, like, online learning this week, or, erm, they’re feeling quite down, erm, which was, in some ways a nice way to connect with parents and carers.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP2: Erm, but, but the thing that we found in terms of context and circumstance, was that, the young people that we were working with didn't have a lot of privacy.

Researcher BN: Right.

SP2: So often it was like, I’ll just sit back a little bit (moves laptop), often it was, erm, young people who, were quite young. So parents and carers would be supervising them in their use of zoom.

Researcher BN: Oh, OK.

SP2: Might be like setting it up with them, and kind of in the same room to start with, and that had quite an impact on how open young people felt they could be.

Researcher BN: Ah interesting.

SP2: So it actually curtailed some of those conversations a little bit that we could have been having.

Researcher BN: Because it was online.

SP2: Yeah, absolutely.

Researcher BN: Interesting.

SP2: Also, as you and I know, like it's, it’s flat,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Online is 2D. So if I didn't know you, I wouldn't know your personality, and I wouldn't know like, and, and vice versa. So when you’re building relationships with new people online, and they haven't seen you in the physical presence, they don't really get you, and you don't really get them in the same way,

Researcher BN: Yeah

SP2: …like it takes a lot longer. It's a different way of working with people, isn't it?

Researcher BN: Definitely. Yeah. Ah so, it was, it was a barrier to, to conversations would you say?

SP2: In some ways, yeah. Erm, and then eventually it began to flow as face to face would flow, erm,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: And then once that happened, we ended up being back on, erm, in person delivery, I think.

Researcher BN: (laughs)

SP2: It's fine, you know, but it, it taught us that we can do it if we need to.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: I’d rather not need to.

Researcher BN: But you could, if you needed to again.

SP2: If we had to, yeah absolutely.

Researcher BN: Yeah, that’s a positive.

SP2: Yeah, I mean, it was like, it was like, you know, the, the conversations, again because I was, I was new in post, and we were kind of starting again in a lot of regards, so the young people didn't know me, erm, and I know that (previous youth worker) had talked about me and in, in positive terms with them, but really we were starting again. So the conversations were a little more like, touching a little bit more kind of tentative than they would be, if, I had that face to face relationship with those young people before COVID was a thing.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So there was that as well.

SP2: Yeah, yeah, but despite, but despite that, you know, we talked, they talked a lot to us about, what was going on for them, and of course, it was quite.. everything was really immediate, wasn't it? Because all we had was like, what we'd been doing that day, and, you know, there's so little interaction with the outside world in some regards..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: …that it did bring everything down to, the individual, and the personal.

Researcher BN: OK. So, it's interesting you said that you, you have conversations about physical health, so how, what do you tend to talk about in those conversations?

SP2: So a lot of that is about kind of, I mean a big part of it for young people is body image.

Researcher BN: Ah, OK.

SP2: So, we have conversations about, kind of, you know, body image, and how, erm, how sometimes promoted body images aren’t the same as a healthy body. Erm, and we talk a lot about, kind of, how, I think a lot of people are quite, disconnected from their bodies, like their taught not to listen to them. Especially girls, and young women. Erm, so we talk a lot about kind of, you know, listen to your body when it's tired or hungry or, like, you know, how to make good choices. Obviously with our young women, erm periods and hormones are a thing.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: Erm, so we talk about menstruation and, erm, you know, we kind of support that as well, and, erm, make sure we have open conversations, I had a session last week, and a young person came and said that she was on and she wasn't expecting to be, and she hadn't packed like pads, so I had a little stash of pads that we could give her. Erm, so, just really, promoting the, erm, the, the natural nature of what our bodies do.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So…

SP2: In a, in a way that's open.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So would you say you have conversations more often about that kind of thing rather than, like physical activity and diet and, erm, behaviours like that?

SP2: Probably, about on a par really. Erm, I mean we, we promote a lot of, I think we have conversations about physical activity because we promote it a lot, because we do it a lot,

Researcher BN: Ah, OK.

SP2: in our program, we'll have a walk to the park, and we'll have a play, or we’ll play rounders or football, or we’ll do dancing. Erm, and then we'll talk about how movement feels, and how it's good for us. So it's quite, it's quite organic, erm, often, like I say, you know, sometimes if there's a theme, we'll er, we'll plan something for it. But more often it's quite an organic conversation. Like I said, we'll go to the park and then we’ll be talking about movement, and, you know, how climbing the climbing frame can be good for your body, and make you feel good inside as well. Ermm, so yeah, it's erm, I guess it's kind of a little bit of it is, is kind of particularly relevant to the age group, like periods for example, erm, or changes in how you, how you think, you know the adolescent brain and things like that. Erm, talking about risk management, and impulse control and that sort of thing.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, and, a bit of it is general, like, kind of, general well-being topics that would affect everybody, you know, diet and nutrition, and rest, and physical movement. They're all universal features really, aren't they, of, of human life.

Researcher BN: Yeah, definitely.

SP2: We’re like sunflowers, aren't we, gotta get out and see the light a little bit.

Researcher BN: Aww (laughs). And what about like the, kind of parents and guardians? Do, do you have conversations to them much, and does health and wellbeing ever come up with them?

SP2: So with our families, it tends to be.. it's more often, it's if there's a particular.. concern or issue with one young person. That we might have conversations with families about, erm, kind of,  
how the whole family is, erm, kind of what they're doing for their well-being. Ermm, not just for the support of that young person, but like for themselves as well. Erm, we'll have more general conversations, often with, erm, so our volunteers are mainly parents. Erm, of the young people that come to youth club. Erm, so I have more in depth conversations with them around, kind of, health and wellbeing

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..and quite often they’ll bring ideas. Erm, so they'll observe, like trends with their kids and their kids’ friends

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: Erm, and then they might come with, ideas around how we could explore or address that.

Researcher BN: OK. Interesting.

SP2: Erm, they're the most kind of in-depth conversations that I have with, erm, you know, with our adults in the community.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: Erm, and then occasionally, you know, I might have a conversation with, with a parent, erm, you know, regarding broader health and wellbeing issues, and it might be around, sort of, GP access, or it might be.. around kind of, diet and exercise. Erm..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: They're less, they're less frequent those conversations.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: But they do happen, erm.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP2: They do tend to be born, of, a conversation about their young person. And then it, it’ll become kind of a wider thing, you know.

Researcher BN: So yeah, it starts about the young person and then might become more about the family..

SP2: Yes..

Researcher BN: ..as a whole.

SP2: Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Researcher BN: And, is there anything that might stop you from talking about, kind of, health and wellbeing topics with young people?

SP2: Erm, the, the mood of the group.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: Or.. erm.. the setting. So is it, is it confidential enough? Do young people feel safe in having that conversation? Do I think it's appropriate to, to raise something like that in a room? Maybe you've got some older young people who want to talk about sexual health, but, we've also got some younger ones for whom, that isn't yet the right conversation to be having, erm, you know, because with younger ones, we focus more on healthy relationships. And with the older ones we do that but also add in the, the physical elements.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, and I think that you know, so from early on we’re encouraging bodily autonomy, and all of those things, but we're not necessarily talking about sexual relationships with our, with our juniors.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, in the week, we will do with our seniors. Erm, so, yeah, setting, and the group dynamic. Erm, staff team confidence. Is it a topic that we know anything about, or is it not? Are we gonna have to, erm, you know, say that we'll work on it together, because we're not, you know, we've got things to learn as well,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..are we learning from the young people, erm, you know, do we feel like we've got enough,  
awareness of what's going on, erm, to be able to, raise the subject and talk about it, and, and hear about it.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: And we sort of learn as well, you know, because most times our young people are teaching us far more than we teach them.

Researcher BN: (laughs) So in terms of anything that might help you have, those kinds of conversations, would you say it would be about knowledge, about building, building your knowledge base, or?

SP2: Yeah, I think so, yeah. I think good, good quality training. Erm, I think, what used to be great, erm, I'm going back years now, probably pre, pre-tory government so what 12 years ago, is that right? Yeah, erm, I think that, what used to work really well was having specialist services around. So in, I'm thinking about (name of city) because that’s where I did a lot of my, erm, early youth work, erm, pre and post graduating. Erm, specialist services around sexual health, erm, that were provided through connections, erm, and we had a specialist, erm, drug and alcohol service as well. Erm, so they would come in with their, expertise.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: You know, as knowledgeable professionals, and they’d come with all that information. All that advice and guidance. Erm, and there'd be a different face, so it would be someone different, delivering something specific, that they’re really good at doing, erm, and quite an engaging topic obviously,

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: ..substance use and things like that. Erm, and then that would lead us to have, it would initiate conversations in our setting, during and after that, kind of intervention, you know.

Researcher BN: Ahh OK.

SP2: So that was a catalyst for conversation around, like health and wellbeing, which we really beneficial. And we don't really have that now.

Researcher BN: Interesting. So having someone to come in and talk, started those conversations.

SP2: Yeah, absolutely. And in fact, I've arranged my, my GP's amazing, and I've, er, she's a kind of sexual health specialist. Erm, so I’ve arranged for her to come in later this year, to one of our senior sessions.

Researcher BN: Ah fab!

SP2: And, do erm, yeah. Do you a, erm, a sort of, a.. Yeah a healthy lives, kind of conversation, really.

Researcher BN: Yeah, and..

SP2: And see how it goes.

Researcher BN: Yeah, that'll be interesting. And erm, in terms, so we kind of talked about how, erm, conversations changed over COVID and going online, in terms of what you talked about around health and wellbeing, did that change throughout COVID and after COVID? Or, did you, did you notice anything?

SP2: I think the sex, drugs, and rock and roll element of what we do wasn't so much a thing, because like, no one was going out, really, were they?

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP2: (laughs) So, people weren't, people weren't having those interactions, and they weren't having erm, relationships outside the home, so they weren't really doing the whole, erm, the whole sex thing where they.

Researcher BN: Yeah (laughs).

SP2: Erm, it was quite, quite different.

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP2: Yeah. I don't know, it was, er, yeah. Different er, different times, really. So I think during COVID,  
that was the concern, like COVID was the thing, wasn't it, you know? And, that was the big health concern, the big conversation. So, discussion really focused around, in some ways, like how we keep ourselves well.

Researcher BN: Mmm.

SP2: And, I think there’s been a, maybe something of a societal, shift around the way we think about, wellbeing, and maybe people are more interested in, in preventative measures. Erm, so for example like, people were talking lots about kind of, erm, using vitamin supplements weren't they during COVID, to kind of..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..keep immunity boosted, and, erm, and that was a conversation that we were kind of having. Erm, so I think, yeah, there was a lot of, it was a very, it was a very…. we knew there was kind of emerging mental health issues, but people's focus was very much on kind of, keeping themselves physically healthy.

Researcher BN: Uhumm. OK.

SP2: So they were the kind of big discussions that we were having really during that time.

Researcher BN: Yeah, interesting. And, so, do you, do you talk about mental health often? Does that come up with the young people? Do they bring that topic up often?

SP2: Yeah, they’re hyper aware. So we've got a really interesting group, erm, in terms of, self-awareness, and, and you know, I think that combined with more of a formal curriculum focus on mental health, erm, have been really… valuable in bringing those conversations to the fore. Erm, so we do have a lot of conversations about, kind of, how people are feeling. We do erm, try and do check-ins with people. Erm, so we, you know, we do kind of baseline, like, how are you now, and, how are you later?

Researcher BN: Mm-hmm.

SP2: Erm, we encourage young people to talk to us about how they're feeling. Erm, you know we, we discuss, again, erm, healthy strategies for managing feelings, and situations, erm, and promote that really strongly in the work that we do.

Researcher BN: So is it, you mentioned a check-in, is that kind of like a, something like you've specifically received training in, or is that just like, a word you would use to describe, having that type of conversation.

SP2: Just the thing.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: So we used to do it particularly online, we used to do kind of, a, a group check-in at the start, and we'd be asking people to tell us how, erm, how they were doing, say on a, between like, a scale of one and 10 where one's awful and 10s great, erm, or we'd ask them to, erm, like, you know, if you were an ice cream, what flavour would you be right now? And then at the end kind of all like, has your flavour changed, or, like, have you got sprinkles on now, or you know, that kind of thing?

Researcher BN: Uhuhh.

SP2: Erm, so, no just an informal technique really for, erm, making those conversations comfortable and, and relatable for young people.

Researcher BN: Yeah. Oh, that's good. And do, I suppose I don't know whether this is as relevant with young people, but do kind of the social determinants of health come up much? Kind of housing, financial situations.

SP2: Erm, not directly.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, we have some interesting, political conversations around, with the older ones, around that kind of thing and like, you know how, how life chances are impacted about, you know, by where you live, and, erm, you know, the kind of we, haven't discussed postcode lottery in that sense. But, erm, they know that, for example, where they are, it's harder to get access to wellbeing services.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: They know they can't just pop into town and get everything they need, erm, you know, so we're a C card outlet for..

Researcher BN: oh, yeah.

SP2: Erm, yeah, sexual health, and contraception. And young people know that they haven't got many options, to access that kind of support. Erm, and they understand that's because where it, because of where they live. I don't know how Sociopolitically aware they are. Erm,

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: But I think they're fairly, they're fairly cognizant of the, erm, the nature of that, erm, imbalance or injustice?

Researcher BN: They are aware.

SP2: Yeah.

Researcher BN: Yeah. Wow.

SP2: The older, the older ones definitely understand that there's a, a difference between what they could access, or perceived difference between what they could access if they were more urban..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: ..And what they have, rurally. Erm, I’ve got a couple of quite, political young people who might understand the difference between, you know, erm, investment in the North and the South, for example, erm, and how that impacts on, erm, you know wellbeing services. Erm..

Researcher BN: Oh so that does come up in what you talk about sometimes?

SP2: Yeah, yeah. And I've got a, an ongoing safeguarding concern at the moment with a young person, and trying to find appropriate support for them is quite difficult.

Researcher BN: Mmm.

SP2: Erm, I’ve got colleagues who are trying to support young people who are having a really hard time and who’ve got like, nine month waiting lists for, erm, acute mental health support.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So then in terms, it’s not just being in a rural area, it's also the kind of increased demand in general?

SP2: Yeah, definitely. And I think COVID’s been a massive part of that hasn’t it.

Researcher BN: Yeah, definitely. And so, are you familiar with kind of, the term brief health intervention within your role? Have you ever like received training in anything like that before?

SP2: No, I've done a little bit of, erm, make every contact count type stuff.

Researcher BN: Oh, have you?

SP2: Which is possibly similar, isn't it?

Researcher BN: Yeah, yeah. So what, can you just describe what that training consisted of, where you received it? Was it part of this role?

SP2: It, yeah, it was. It was, erm, virtual training accessed through, erm, the NHS.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP2: Northumbria NHS have got a, a, erm, like a suite of wellbeing training, erm, that's delivered by, erm, health advisors.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: Erm, and it's things like, you know, erm, substance use, mental wellbeing, erm there’s other work that you can access around, erm, like safeguarding, early help, that kind of thing.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, and, that’s, is very valuable, erm. I struggle a bit with online training, because it's hard to, stay focused, isn't it?

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, but, that has been beneficial, erm, but yeah, just an online workshop, a brief introduction to really, it, you know, it wasn't in depth, and it wasn't, if I was doing that work for living,

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: ..it wouldn't have been enough to do that work, you know? But it was a, a useful introduction to, erm, to that kind of work, and the, and the value of, erm, the contact that we have with people, and how to maximize those conversations.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP2: In how you see fit.

Researcher BN: So was it like a live, like zoom or teams? Or was it self-paced?

SP2: It was teams.

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP2: And it was just a morning, a morning workshop, erm, with, you know, erm, various professionals, erm

Researcher BN: Uhumm

SP2: And then a, a facilitator delivering that. Erm, it was all quite, it was information heavy, because there was less, less chance to do kind of workshopping and things like that. Erm.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: We used breakout rooms a couple of times as well.

Researcher BN: OK. So was that like, did you, did you practice what you learned at all? Or was it mainly just factual learning.

SP2: It was a lot of factual learning, so there wasn't really any, erm, any.. situational practice.

Researcher BN: Ah, OK.

SP2: No role playing or anything like that.

Researcher BN: Ah really. Do you think that was because it was on teams?

SP2: Yeah, yeah, I think that made it more difficult, erm, and I think in person might have, you know, we might have been able to go off and, erm, do a little bit of role play type work. Erm, but, you know, I have been able to, use that learning, in practice, in terms of, you know, drawing out the, the useful elements of a conversation with young people, and focusing on those.

Researcher BN: OK. So do you think you, you have taken some elements from..?

SP2: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, yeah. Because we don't have a lot of time, you know, in a, in a youth club setting, we've got an hour and a quarter, or an hour and a half, and we've got, anywhere between 10 and 30 young people. So you're not really having quality conversations anyway, that, that isn't where the good work happens in those..

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: In those little settings, you know, so, you have to learn (yawns), excuse me, you have to learn how to, erm, kind of really, erm, draw out those really pertinent points, don't you?

Researcher BN: Yeah. So, what did you find the most useful from the training, would you say?

SP2: Erm.. We did a little bit about kind of, like… like… almost like keyword focusing.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP2: Just kind of like, you know like, distilling down what was being talked about into like, er, and summarising it, and feeding it back...

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: ..Erm, in a way that helped both parties to sort of see the essence of the conversation.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: And that, I think that was beneficial, because we haven't got a lot of time, and it’s like, you, you are in a setting where you've got other people around, and it's busy, erm, you know, the techniques that you can really use to let a young person know that you've heard them.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: And that it, you know, it's something that's important to you, that, that they are important to you, erm. So I think that was helpful, because we, you know, we need that ability to be able to say ‘I know it's busy, and, this is a passing conversation, but actually I've heard you, and you are important, and I do value you, and I'm here to support you’.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So was the, was the making every contact count, was it specifically adapted for young people, or was there people from all sorts of organisations?

SP2: No, it was, it was general.

Researcher BN: OK.

SP2: So, erm, it yeah, it, there were people there from, erm, a lot of kind of early help, erm, type settings, erm, family support that kind of work.

Researcher BN: Uhumm. So you felt like it was still suitable for your role?

SP2: Absolutely, yeah, yeah. There's always good takeaways.

Researcher BN: Yeah. And is there anything you kind of, would suggest for improvements of the training, that you didn't like so much, or that was missing?

SP2: Erm, for me, all that would have a made a difference would have been being face to face. And I’d say that about anything we’re doing on zoom or Teams, I’d always like to be in a physical room, with physical people, in 3D.

Researcher BN: Yeah. But nothing about, about the training itself really?

SP2: No, no, no.

Researcher BN: And did you, erm, kind of have any follow up from that, from the people you received the training from, or was that just a one time, thing?

SP2: One time thing. Erm, but, the facilitators in that, in that training suite are normally really good at being available, afterwards, you know, so you can always go back to people. Erm.

Researcher BN: Ah OK.

SP2: And you know, ask questions or, feedback as well.

Researcher BN: Yeah. So in, in, in terms of what you learned, are any of these kind of terms familiar, did they talk about active listening, or open-ended questions at all?

SP2: Yeah, yeah. Very much so, yeah.

Researcher BN: Both of those would you say?

SP2: Yes, absolutely, yeah.

Researcher BN: And what about, erm, oh yeah, I think they were, they were both of them. And, erm, what kind of training would you want to receive in the future about kind of having health and wellbeing conversations? Is that any gaps, would you say?

SP2: Erm, I think I need a knowledge refresh, on what's current, in terms of, you know, like, probably, what's available, like locally. Erm, so we've got a good local knowledge, I think legislation and trends on a wider scale is always really helpful to understand. Erm, and, you know, erm, where our young people might fit into that and our families as well, because it, you know what, what we do with our families, and our young people, is connected because what happens at home for our young people, effects how they are, when they are in a youth club setting.

Researcher BN: Mmm.

SP2: So the more we can do to kind of bring families in, and bring parents and carers in to that conversation, the better. Erm, so yeah, just like a skills refresh on specific things really, kind of, erm, it's always helpful to do something I’m new around things like sexual health or substance use. Erm, there used to be great investment and there isn't so much now, erm, in things like, erm, healthy eating workshops.

Researcher BN: Ah, OK.

SP2: So I think having, and we can emulate that a little bit, you know, we can do a bit of that with the basic knowledge that we've got and a bit of research, but actually, erm, to have somebody who is, really skilled and experienced in that field would be so valuable. Erm, we used to do things like fakeaways courses. Erm, where you'd learn how to kind of, erm, make your favourite take away at home, and make a slightly more healthy version of it.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Erm, yeah. And that was really valuable. So, yeah, yeah, erm. Things, you know, practical hints and tips, and a good sort of, erm, routine knowledge refresh would be really, really valuable.

Researcher BN: OK. So having, kind of, group sessions and workshops to kind of supplement individual conversations, would you say, that to help?

SP2: Yes.

Researcher BN: Yeah.

SP2: Yeah, definitely.

Researcher BN: And do you think, kind of, this training in making every contact count, and brief health conversations, do you think ultimately it does improve the health and well-being of the young people that you see, would you say?

SP2: Erm…(pause) yeah, in the main, yes, very much so. Erm, I think we've got to be really mindful about what we say to young people. And I think that we've got to really, you know, because every intervention does make a difference. Erm, and, I think we need to be aware of that. You know, we could be saying, anything to those young people.

Researcher BN: Uhumm.

SP2: So it's important that what we do say is, is positive and factual, and, you know, has a beneficial impact, erm, but yeah, I think those conversations can change the course of young peoples’ decision making, and, their lives, ultimately. It's quite a responsibility.

Researcher BN: Yeah, definitely. So yeah, that was everything I had to ask you. Is there anything else..

SP2: Brilliant!

Researcher BN: .. you would like to add? anything…?

SP2: I don’t think there is flower, actually, if you're happy with that.

Researcher BN: Yeah, perfect.

SP2: I don't know how much I mean I gave you, but I do, erm, if nothing else, it's nice to see your face.

Researcher BN: Yeah, lovely. Hang on I'll stop recording. Yeah, it was lovely to see you.