



# COMIC<sup>®</sup>

Child Oriented Mental Health Innovation Collaborative

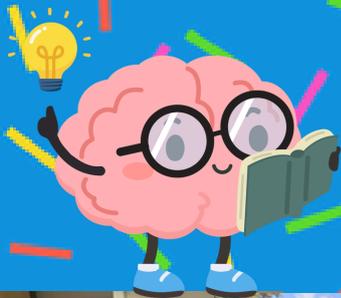
Newsletter!

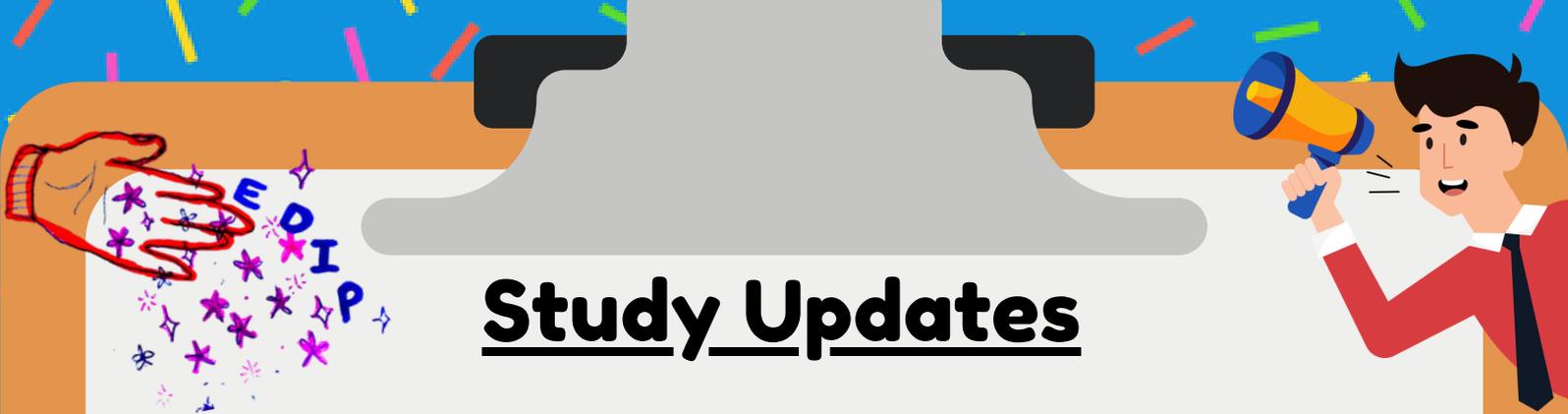
Winter 25'

Welcome the COMIC Winter newsletter!

After a short Winter break, the COMIC research team are back in full action. In this edition of our newsletter you will learn of previous studies and their updates, new studies, and exciting PPI and co-production updates!

If you're new here, welcome! We are COMIC, the Child Oriented Mental Health Innovation Collaborative, a child and young person focused research team championing co-production in all we do.





## Study Updates

The EDIP project explores what it's like for young people and their families when they are referred for inpatient treatment for an eating disorder. The research was carried out in three parts:

1. Looking at what referral forms say about why young people are sent for inpatient care,
2. Interviewing young people and their families about their experiences, and
3. Running focus groups with professionals who work in eating-disorder services.

Two of the three papers from the project have now been published (If you would like a full version please email us to request):

- **Paper 1** analysed real referral forms to understand the reasons young people are sent for inpatient treatment. It was published in *Mental Health Practice*.
- **Paper 2** shared the voices of young people and families through in-depth interviews. It was published in Issues in Mental Health Nursing.

The EDIP team would like to thank the families and professionals for their time and support in helping us create this piece of research. Without you, this work would not have been possible. We hope that now it has been published and disseminated, your experiences will make a real difference to the services supporting young people and families undergoing eating disorder treatment.

# Study Updates



We're excited to share the **latest update** from the CONIFAS2 project.

This study is exploring whether a **nature activity box** can help children with ADHD feel happier, calmer and more connected with the natural world.

In this study, **some parents/carers and children** will get a **nature activity box** to try at home, others won't. This helps us see what **difference the box makes**.



## Recruitment and Progress Update

So far, **five children** have joined the study, and we are delighted to have them taking part.

Each family has now been **randomised** to either receive the **nature activity box**, or **continue with usual care**.

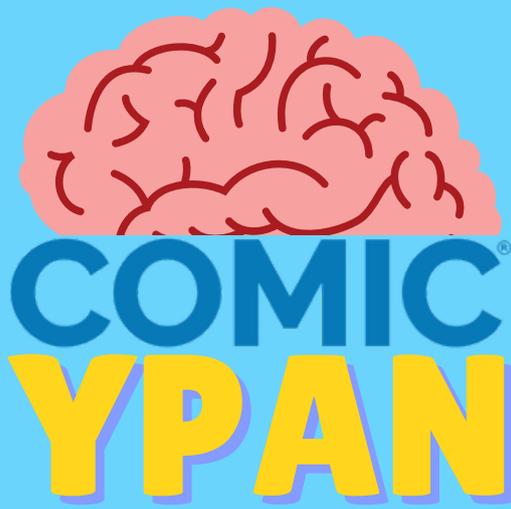
**Clinical teams** will soon begin checking in with families and **offering support calls** to help them get the most out of the **nature activity box**.

## Whats next?

Over the coming months, **we'll continue recruiting** more young people and learning about how **nature-based activities can support their ADHD and wellbeing**.

We are delighted to be working with the **KIDS charity**, who are running an ongoing **Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) group** to support the CONIFAS project.





**18**

**Independent YPAN members**

**100+**

**Young people involved**

**8**

**YPAN members**

The COMIC Young Person's Advisory Network (YPAN) has had a busy couple of months aiding the team by informing us how we could alter our studies to be more appropriate for the community.

Most notably, the YPAN held it's first 'Indies' meeting - this is a group of young people who aren't a part of a group that fit in the network model but want to be involved in our work. In February we held our first in person meeting at York Explore Library where the young people discussed:

- Opinions on research consent procedures
- How to make a plain English summary more accessible for children
- How to be involved in more COMIC work.

If you are aged 11 - 25 and would be interested in joining the YPAN please scan here to sign up!



# What have we been up to?



## RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2025



In November we held our COMIC-con conference where we showcased work from within the team, ranging from studies to research communities. We also invited other researchers to showcase their work in CYP mental health research.

From the team Megan Garside, a research fellow, showcased her PhD research: Exploring the use of social prescribing within children's weight management services. A very insightful talk leaving us all wanting to know more!

Next we heard from COMIC's resident research assistants Agnes Wood and Amelia Taylor who shared their findings from the EDIP study. A fantastic study that led to a great discussion.



Ellen Kingsley (research fellow), Dr Clare Fenton (child psychiatrist), and Stef Bricklebank (youth worker) presented on the DIVERT project, showcasing the background, methods, findings and learnings from this co-produced study investigating self-help toolkits.



Jamie Telford, the PPI lead for COMIC, followed with a talk on the Research Ready Schools (RRS) programme - an initiative that involves local schools to take part in a 6 week lesson plan that teaches pupils about research and how they can and should be involved. To show delegates what this is like everyone partook in a PPI activity known as the snowball fight!



We had snowball fights!



Shortly after Dr Hannah Armitt from Humber Teaching hospitals, and Dr Rachel Bottomley-Wise at York Trials unit shared their FINCH study - Forest Schools for children's mental health and wellbeing showcasing creative activities.

Sue Mesa, senior lecturer in occupational therapy at York St John University, gave a talk about her PhD project on autistic young peoples perspectives on school belonging. A very eye opening and thought provoking.



Later we were lucky to have Lill Cooper, a YPAN member and young researcher, who worked with Jamie to co-produce the YPAN evaluation. Lill helped Jamie share the findings of the evaluation and shared her experience of being a researcher on a study with us. The talk stirred up a great conversation in the delegates wanting to know more on this co-produced piece of work!



Prof Siobhan Hugh-Jones presented The Attune Project: from arts-based research to impact on Adverse Childhood Experiences. A fantastic example of a co-produced resource for and by young people affected by ACEs.



Closing a fantastic day, Ellen and Heather Gibson (Bereavement Coordinator at Fitmums & friends) presented their work on the Forest Project - a study that used co-production and community-led research practices to work with children with experience of bereavement and design resources that could help other bereaved children. This presentation will describe the initial phase of the project, the follow-on, and the co-produced materials which are intended to help others.



**Thank you  
for attending, we hope you all  
enjoyed the day as much as we  
did!**





The DIVERT team have co-produced a video indicating the process of creating a self-help toolkit, ideas of what to include and how they aim to help alleviate struggling with big emotions. You can find the video [here!](#)



The group created a visual representation of the different things that are involved in managing emotions. This can be used alongside the toolkit to help young people to better understand their emotions.

