ACAMH The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Mental Health Assessment for Care-Experienced Young People

Young people with care experience are more likely to have mental health difficulties, yet their needs can be overlooked or misread.

What Can Be Missed

Broad labels such as "attachment" or "trauma" may overshadow common conditions:

ADHD · Conduct problems · Neurodevelopmental conditions

Assumption	What evidence suggests
"Their difficulties don't fit standard diagnoses"	Many meet criteria for common and trauma-related conditions
"It's an attachment disorder"	Attachment disorders are less prevalent than other common mental health disorders
"Complexity rules out standard treatment"	Complexity is not a reason to set aside evidence-based care

Helping Young People Feel Heard

- Ask them directly: include their own account, not only carer reports
- Look for specific difficulties: e.g. PTSD, which general screening may miss
- Build trust: feeling misunderstood can discourage help-seeking

Careful assessment can open the way to interventions with established evidence.



Join Dr Matt Woolgar to explore how established CAMHS approaches can be applied to care-experienced children and young people.

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