



Inside the Living Lab: Creative, Collaborative Approaches to Youth Mental Health Research

EXPERIENCE A RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT GROUNDED IN INVITATION, SHARED VOICE AND CREATIVE DISCOVERY.

MAY 28TH, 2026



CREATE & TEAM

A 3-year project, funded by the UKRI Adolescence, mental health and the developing mind funding call, working closely with young people to understand the role of the arts in youth wellbeing, including its relationship to loneliness.

Principal Investigator

- Professor Paul Cooke

Co-Investigators

- Dr Sylvan Baker
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Speakers



**Prof. Nicola Shaughnessy,
Co-investigator
Project CREATE**



**Prof. Paul Cooke,
Principal Investigator
Project CREATE**



**Danelle Lee,
Project Manager & Youth
Outreach Lead
Project CREATE**

Today's Aims

1. Experience key elements of CREATE's arts-based Living Lab method.
2. Discover the RESPOND Framework, a methodology for the interpretation of artistic products

Living Labs: What are they?

- Living Labs / Regional Workshops/ Online meetings.
- **Living** = real world/lived experience/community participation.
- **Lab** = experimental, interdisciplinary approach to complex problems impacting on people and environments.
- User-centred, multi-stakeholder.
- Forum for co-creation and iterative experimentation.



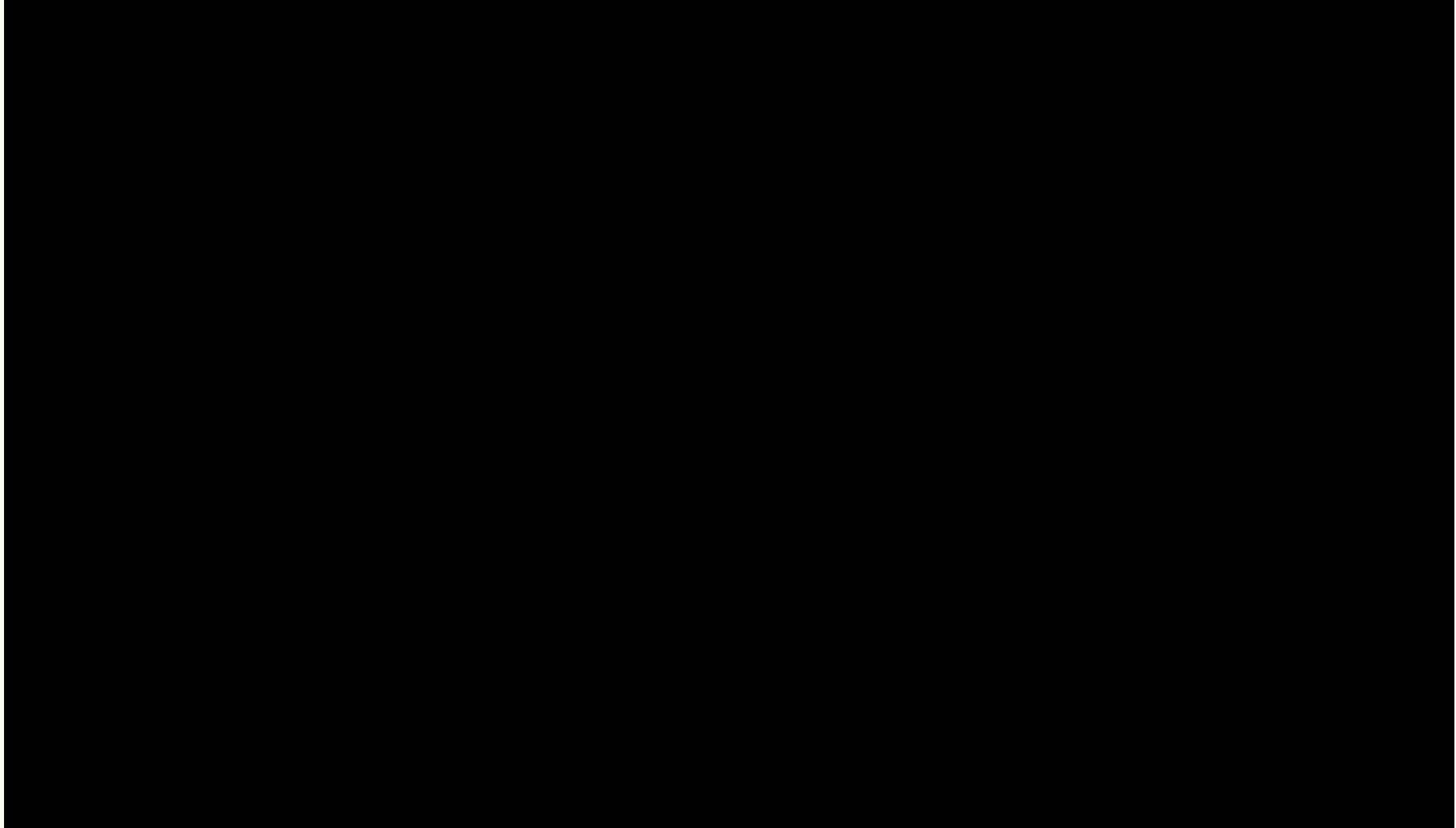
Crayons in Concert:

Living Lab 3

Levers Lab



Check out all CREATE
Living Lab films on
website
[https://create.leeds.ac.
uk/films/](https://create.leeds.ac.uk/films/)



Questions



RESPOND Framework:

What does the art tell us?

Why RESPOND Was Needed

Creative health research increasingly uses expressive arts:

drawing

photography

movement/performance

music and sound

creative writing

Yet creative outputs are rarely analysed as data: Research prioritises:

interviews

transcripts

written explanation

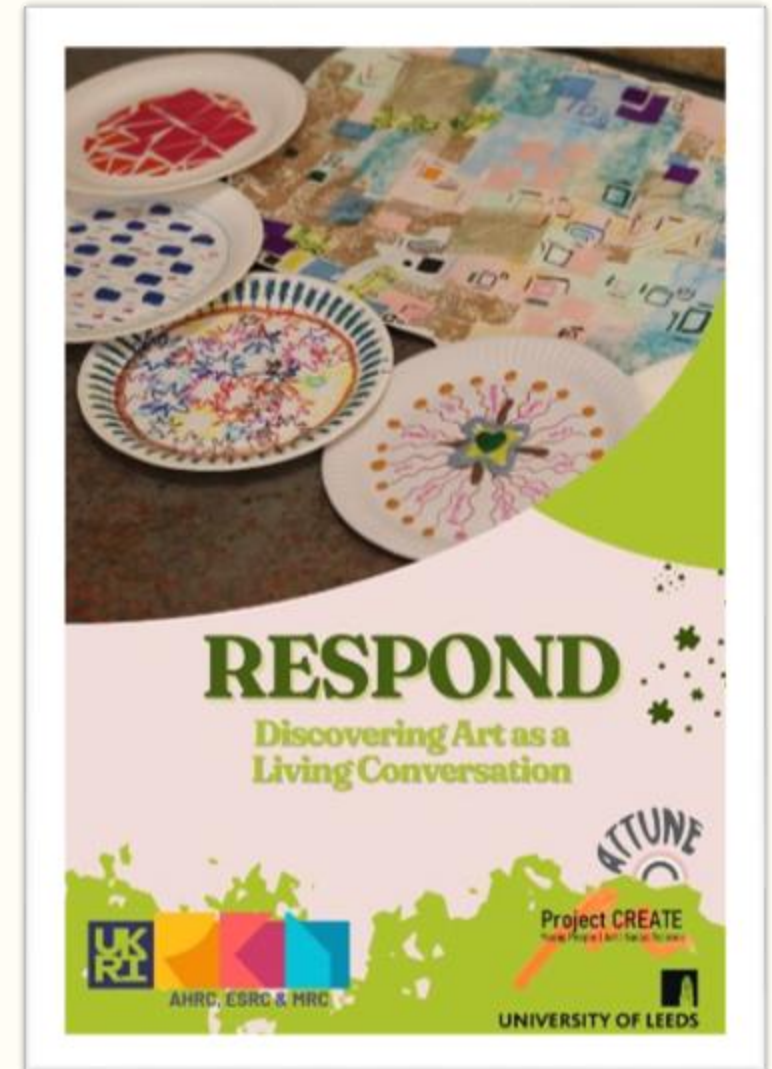
To produce **evidence based practice**

RESPOND

A flexible framework for interpreting artworks as meaningful research data.

Creative outputs can reveal emotional and lived experience that may not emerge through words alone.

Combines Richness and Rigour: **practice based evidence**



What the Living Labs Revealed



- Participants moved through interpretation in stages
- Immediate emotional reaction → sensory noticing → reflection → dialogue
- Interpretation shifted over time and through discussion
- Participants valued both individual reflection and collaborative meaning-making
- RESPOND emerged from observing these interpretive processes in practice

What the Living Labs Revealed

- **React** — Immediate response
- **Engage** — Return and reflect
- **Sensing** — Embodied and sensory reactions
- **Pattern** — Rhythm, repetition, structure
- **Observe** — Objective description
- **Novelty** — New insight or reframing
- **Dialogue** — Creative or conversational response



What the Living Labs Revealed



- Moves between feeling and analysis
- Balances subjective and objective interpretation
- Combines individual reflection with collective dialogue
- Encourages attention to artwork, context, and lived experience
- Meaning develops through time, discussion, and encounter

What are we doing today?

Using the living lab method, we want to explore your thoughts on the RESPOND framework and its:

- Purpose
- Usability
- Effectiveness



We invite you

Every activity in today's session is an invitation. Don't say or do anything that you don't feel comfortable with.

If you need a time out, do what you need to do, it's important to look after yourself.

If you have a question, please ask.

We're all in this together!



Activity - overview

1. You will be creating a creative response to ONE of fourteen key mental health research vocabulary terms.
2. You will swap your artistic creation with a partner.
3. You will then be led through the RESPOND framework, to review, connect and respond to the artwork. * You will not be critiquing the artwork or sharing a critique of the work with them.
4. This will then be followed by a group discussion to share and capture your insights about the process.



Making art on your phone

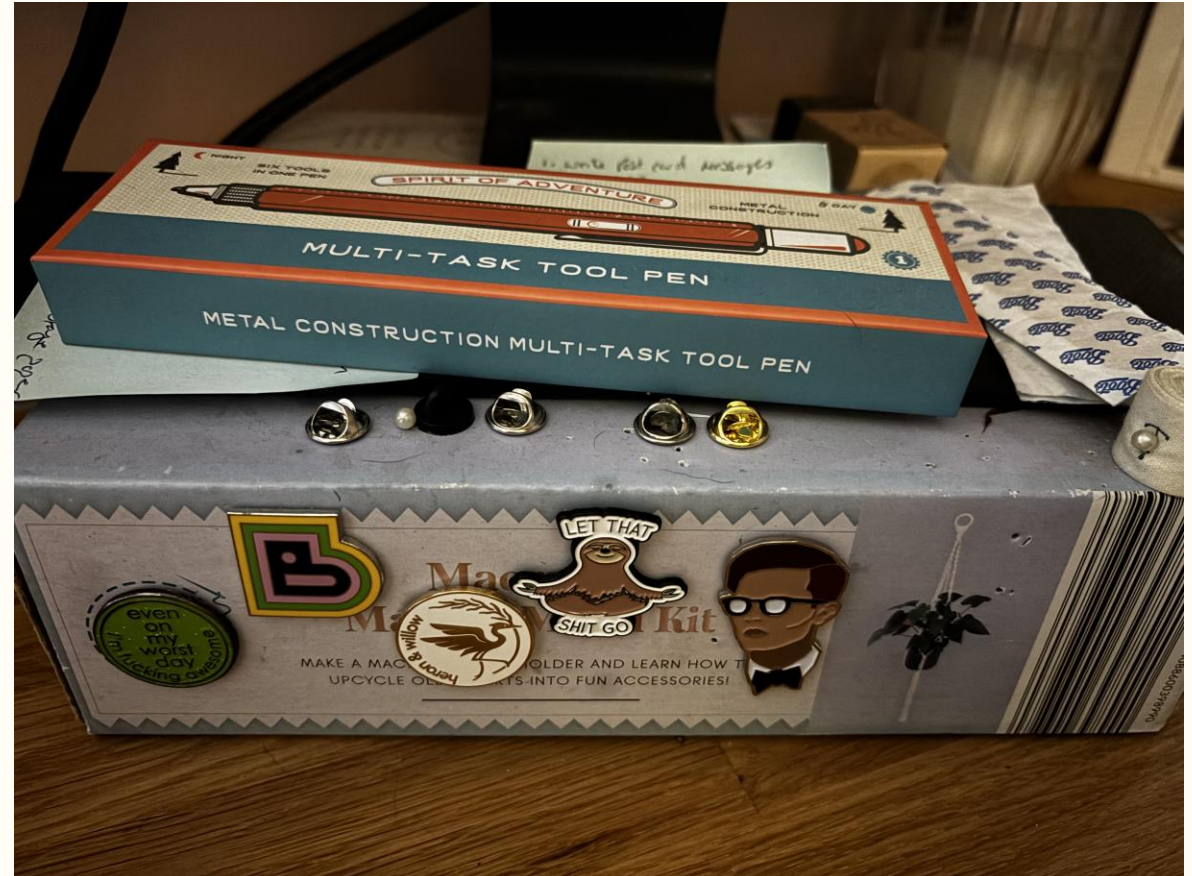
Photographs

- You can stay in this room or go outside – remember we only have a short amount of time.

Soundscape

- Your phone should have some form of voice recording app. This might be **Apple Voice memos**, **Google recorder** or **Easy Voice recorder**.
- **How** - Wherever you can make or find a sound. You can use your body, hands, clap a rhythm, or capture the sounds that are happening around you.

Example photograph response



Example soundscape response



Activity - Review

1. Independently, choose ONE of the mental health research terms to respond to.
2. Independently, you will have 10 mins to think about and capture your response as either a photo or a sound/scape.
3. Once you both have completed your pieces – Swap/share/send with a partner. You do not need to provide any context for your art, and you won't be sharing your thoughts.
4. We will go through the RESPOND framework

RESEARCH	MENTAL HEALTH	CONNECTION	EVIDENCE
WELLBEING	COPING	COMMUNITY	SAFE SPACE
AGENCY	STIGMA	EMPOWERMENT	DATA
*	LONELINESS	RESILIENCE	*

RESPOND Framework Facilitator led activity



Group discussion

Back on your tables, please can you talk about and capture your experiences of going through the RESPOND framework

1. What are the first thoughts that come to mind?
2. How did that experience feel?
3. What worked well?
4. What would have been even better if.....

Use Menti Meter to capture key thoughts as the group discussion is ongoing

Mentimeter.com – 2935 0259



Resource feedback request.



If you get the chance, we'd really appreciate your feedback on the resources.

There are QR codes in the guide and flyer.

Questions



Get in Touch



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Thank You