We have recently been discussing results from a recent science report titled ‘What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and depression: identifying and reviewing the 'active ingredients' of effective interventions’ [1]. The next part of this series that we will discuss is from the ‘Beliefs and knowledges’ series of articles, and is titled ‘sense of mattering’.

What is sense of mattering?

A sense of mattering refers to the extent by which we are recognised by others as able to make a different to the world around us.

Why is a sense of mattering important?

A sense of mattering is grounded in the formation of supportive interpersonal relationships. Caring for others, and being important and cared for by others, can potentially have important impact on mental health outcomes.

What did the research show?

The researchers looked at all of the studies that measured a sense of mattering. They found that no studies measured this directly, but that other studies had identified that young people had less intense symptoms of anxiety and depression if they had a greater sense of mattering.

What did young people think about a sense of mattering?

Young people who had lived experience of mental health problems themselves thought that finding a sense of mattering, either through peer relationships or social advocacy, was an important was of regulating their thoughts and emotions.

How could a young person could find a sense of mattering?

You could do a social media or web search for programs or support groups in your local area that you could get involved in, or talk to friends or family about how to feel supported.

Are there any other resources to help with sense of mattering?

You can check out this website which has lots of resources on volunteering: https://www.annafreud.org/resources/children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing/self-care/volunteering-taking-care-of-others/

**References**

1. Wellcome. *Report summary: What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and depression*. 2022; Available from: <https://wellcome.org/reports/what-science-has-shown-can-help-young-people-anxiety-and-depression>.