The Utilisation of Story Writing to Collect Qualitative Data About Wellbeing from Adolescents

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Background/Purpose:
Despite adolescents spending 10,000 hours in schoolyards, little research exists on how schoolyard design impacts adolescent wellbeing. The Schoolyard Greenprint aims to provide wellbeing centred design guides for schoolyards informed by student perspectives.
Prioritising adolescent psychological safety whilst acquiring qualitative data is a priority for researchers. We have developed and tested a method that delivers more accurate and precise qualitative data to inform researchers and policy makers while creating greater psychological safety for adolescents.

Approach:
The Schoolyard Greenprint project has prioritised empowering young people from embedding a Youth Co-researcher in our team, establishing a youth co-design forum and developing the Story Template to deliver richer, more contextually grounded qualitative insights. The Story Template collects sensitive data and addresses power dynamics with adults while also giving policy makers the information they need to make decisions. The template prompts participants to tell a story, based on their experience, where they explain a problem that occurred, what caused the problem to occur, a potential solution, and a general positive outcome.

Outcomes/Impact:
The Story Template was successfully used by adolescents to produce meaningful qualitative data, alongside traditional research techniques like focus groups and structured interviews. The Story Template was particularly successful amongst adolescents who struggled to engage with conventional qualitative methods. These groups include young, shy, and neuro-diverse adolescents.

Innovation and Significance:
The Story Template is a successful method of gaining qualitative data from adolescents who may otherwise struggle to participate in traditional qualitative data methods. Because of the inherent personal quality of data about adolescents' health, novel data collection methods like the Story Template should be used to get a greater amount of data.