

ASSIST Trauma Care: Guiding Young Minds Feasibility and Pilot Study

Produced by Marcus Bull, University of Hertfordshire, for a conference in April 2024

Background



This poster summarises the key information from a report of an evaluation published in 2023. The QR code takes you to the full report.

Guiding Young Minds Intervention



Aim: Support young people with trauma experience to improve behaviour, envisage a positive future, and set personal goals, aiming to reduce gang involvement, anti-social behaviour, and violence in the long term.



ASSIST Trauma Care: Provides 6-12 months of support based on individual needs, with an 'open door' policy for continued support thereafter.



Approach: Intensive mentoring with mentors who have lived experience. Trauma-informed therapeutic support including one-to-one trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy and joint family therapy, if appropriate.



Method

February 2020–April 2022



Areas of interest

- Factors influencing programme delivery
- Service users' experiences
- Youth behaviour changes
- Programme readiness for larger evaluation



People

- Seventy-four young people took part.
- For the pilot study, 18 people (including five young people, five parents, eight professionals) were interviewed.



Information analysed

- Information provided in interviews and focus groups.
- Outcome measures completed by young people and their parents/carer.

Feasibility findings



Service user & stakeholder perspectives

- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from stakeholders, parents, and children.
- Positive changes in behaviour, improved family relationships, and academic performance.
- Focus on extending outreach, more family-centric interventions, and dedicated physical spaces for GYM services.



Project delivery

- Strength: Mentors with lived experience, perceived as credible and relatable.
- COVID-19 impacted service delivery, initially reducing engagement and quality.
- ASSIST adapted with virtual services, increased outreach efforts, and maintained demand through social media.



Effectiveness of programme

Significant improvements were seen for children across measures of wellbeing and family functioning. Also, there were lower rates of offending behaviour reported.

However, not all young people completed the measures requested and fewer parents. The level of "missing data" means that these findings should be viewed with some caution.

Pilot findings

Referral and Screening Process:

- There were varying wait times, attributed to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. More boys were referred to GYM than girls but when referred, girls were more likely to enrol.

Client Retention:

- ASSIST staff did not record how many sessions each young person attended. However, they did report that 93% of young people stayed engaged with GYM for 12 months.

Evaluation of Success Criteria:

- One success criteria was met, with no evidence of bias in screening and referral processes. Two criteria were partially met, with relatively strong referral and high retention rates. However, the disappointing data completion rates meant that that success criterion was missed.

Assessment of Implementation Process:

- GYM was implemented as intended, despite changes required for COVID-19. The degree of personalisation in delivery, particularly the open-ended mentoring, may make 'dosage' comparisons difficult to assess in future research.

Interpretation

- Positive changes observed in core measures indicated improved wellbeing and family functioning, where measures were completed.
- The practitioners were seen as approachable, accessible, and trustworthy.
- Mentors were seen as crucial to develop positive relationships and provide emotional support.
- The stated mission to work from trauma to recovery was beyond the evaluation framework.
- Caution is advised due to the challenges in measure completion and potential differences in those who did not complete the measures.

Successes

I went from a very bad relationship with my son to being almost best friends again, which is lovely

He like picked himself up and went, [...] it's just a bad day, not a bad life.

Now I've realised life really ain't about money, it's more about the people around you and everything [...] and the environment you're in"

They're respecting their parents. They're taking more time with themselves and thinking about the choices that they're making.

I was just like really vulnerable to join a gang [...] it's got me distanced away from the people now, and trying to focus me in the right way.



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