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# HEALING TOGETHER EVALUATION

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Supporting Children Impacted by Domestic Abuse

Working with:



**Report Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> September 2021

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## Introduction

### Overview

Innovating Minds™ has been delivering the Healing Together™ programme since 2016 following a request from mothers that wanted their children to access help after they were no longer living with the abusive individual. As a social enterprise we have invested our surplus income into this programme, enabling children to access the programme for free.

Due to the increase in demand (an unfortunate reality), we were no longer able to meet the demand. Therefore, we transformed the programme into a facilitators programme so we could train individuals that work with children therapeutically to deliver the Healing Together programme. With this transformation, we also invested into created our own [trauma informed video animations](#) and built the [online platform](#) to ensure we could support our facilitators to deliver the evidence based programme and receive ongoing support through CPD and accessing our clinical team for consultation.

The Healing Together programme is suitable for children aged 6 to 16 years. This trauma informed programme is based on 6 sessions and each session is delivered within 60 minutes. The programme can be delivered as a group programme or on a one to one basis within different settings (i.e. schools, community services).

The Primary (6-11 years) and Secondary (11-16 years) programme are very similar in content and structure. The main difference is that the language and activities are age appropriate.

[As a team of Clinical Psychologists](#), it is really important to us that we only create and deliver evidence-based interventions therefore we delivered the Healing Together programme to children across Birmingham for 3 years.

The Healing Together programme incorporates the following evidence-based models to create a trauma informed programme:

- Attachment
- Neuroscience (including the polyvagal theory and Dan Siegal's work)
- Relational approaches

Childhood Trauma Expert, Jane Evans has also consulted in the development of the programme and resources. Every aspect of the programme has been forensically scrutinised to ensure we can provide a trauma informed programme that will support children to learn about how their brain and body can work together to feel safe.

## **Evaluation**

The Healing Together Programme was delivered to 5 children and young people and a safe parent by accredited facilitators working for Dorset Council as part of a parent and child pilot group. The following provides an overview of the demographics of those who attended, and an evaluation of the measures completed at the beginning and at the end of the programme.

## **Demographic Information**

The 5 children and young people attending the programme were all White/British, female, and aged 7-8 years old. The 5 parents attending the programme alongside their children were all White/British, female and aged between 32 and 43 years old. They were referred to the programme due to the impact of domestic abuse and anxiety.

## **Design**

To measure the impact of the Healing Together programme on children impacted by domestic abuse the Emotional Awareness Questionnaire is completed at the beginning of the programme and as part of the post programme evaluation. The questionnaire is designed to measure how children feel or think about their emotions across aspects of emotional functioning. For the Healing Together Programme, and with permission from the authors, four of the six factors of emotional functioning were used, these were differentiating emotions, not hiding emotions, bodily awareness, and verbal sharing of emotions.

To measure the impact of the Healing Together programme on adults impacted by domestic abuse the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is completed at the beginning of the programme and as part of the post programme evaluation. The questionnaire is designed to measure how adults feel and think about their emotions across aspects of emotional functioning. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief emotional and behavioural screening questionnaire. The 25 items in the SDQ comprise of 5 scales of 5 items each. The scales include emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship problems and prosocial behaviour. The SDQ can be used for various purposes, including clinical assessment, evaluation of outcomes, research, and screening.

**Quantitative Results:**

**Children's pre and post programme feedback:**

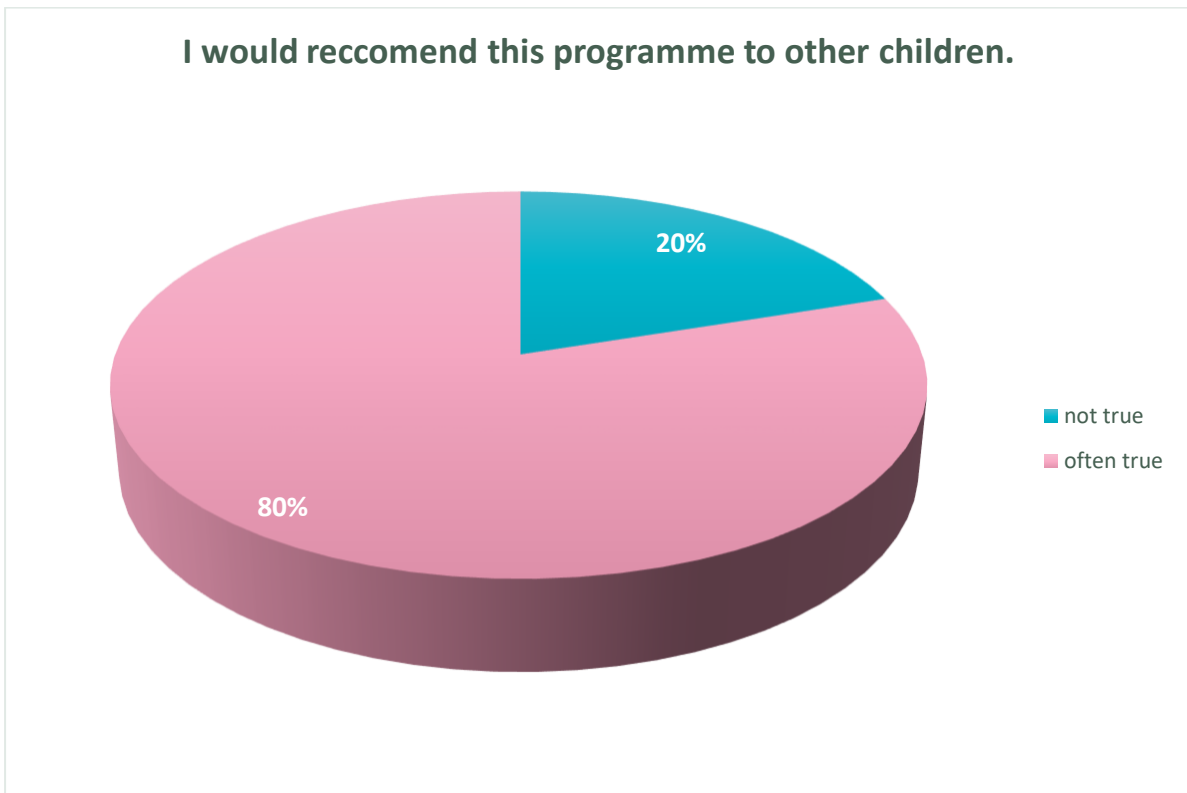
Measure & possible score	Pre-Programme Average	Post-Programme Average
Differentiating Emotions (21)	10.6	11.6
Not Hiding Emotions (15)	8.6	10.2
Bodily Awareness (15)	8.2	8.8
Verbal Sharing of Emotions (9)	5.4	6

Additionally, a post programme evaluation is completed to enable the facilitators to understand the children's evaluation of the programme and importantly determine how likely they are to use the specific techniques they have learnt over the course of the programme. Please see table below to show feedback from the those who participated on how likely they are to use the techniques they learnt during the programme:

Question	Number of Children answering - Not True	Number of Children Answering- Sometimes True	Number of Children Answering - Often true
I will use the breathing technique when my body does not feel relaxed.	0	3	2
I know how my brain works when it feels unsafe (flipping your Lid).	2	2	1
I will use the Japanese hand holding techniques when my body does not feel relaxed.	2	1	2
I will use the squeeze techniques when my body does not feel relaxed.	1	3	1



100% of the children who attended the programme indicated they enjoyed attending the sessions.



80% of the children who attended the groups indicated they would recommend the programme to other children.

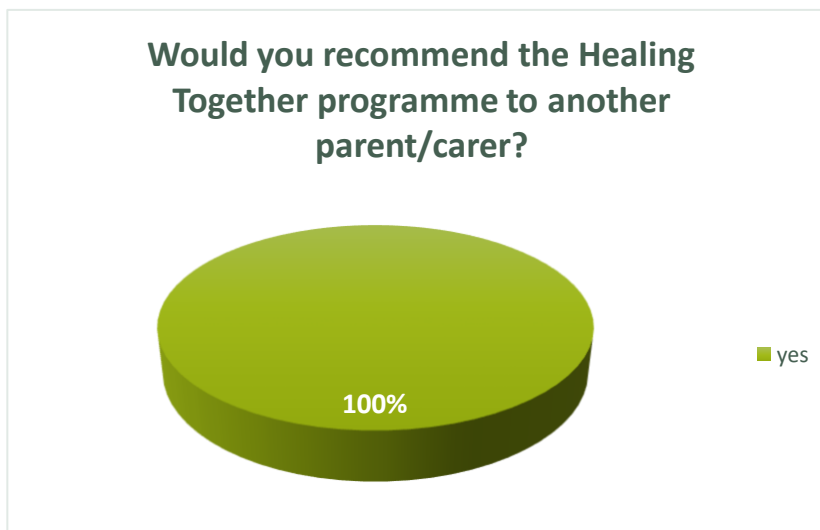
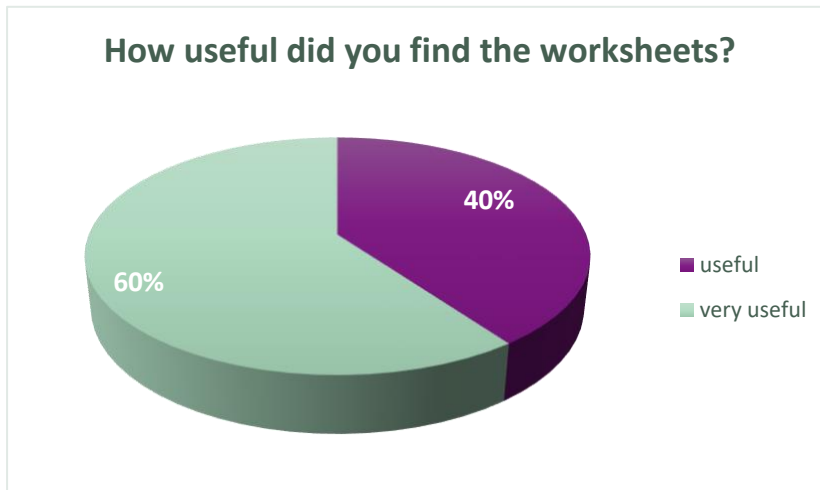
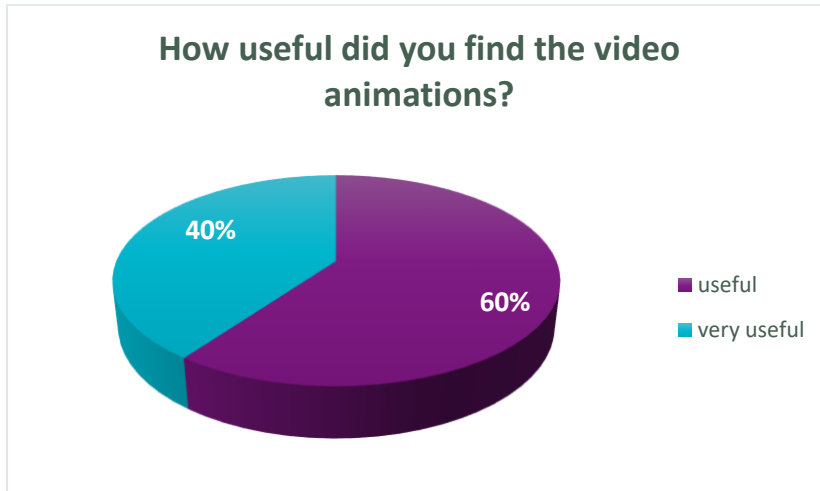
**Parents pre and post programme feedback**

SDQ Results		
Measure & possible score	Pre-Programme Average	Post-Programme Average
Emotional Problems (10)	5.4	3.4
Conduct Problems (10)	3.8	3.2
Hyperactivity (10)	8.4	6
Peer Problems (10)	4.4	3.6
Prosocial (10)	7.4	7.4
Externalising Score (conduct + hyperactivity) (20)	12.2	9.2
Internalising Score (emotional + peer problems) (20)	9.8	7
<b>Total Difficulties (40)</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16.2</b>

In addition to the SDQ questions participants were asked 4 questions pre and post programme relating specifically to how they relate to and support their child/children the results of these are displayed in the table below:

Question (score range 1-10)	Pre programme average scores	Post programme average scores
How confident do you feel about supporting your child/children to feel calmer?	7	7.6
How do you rate your understanding of using the body to calm the brain?	5.6	7.6
How easy is it for you to feel close to your child/children when they are feeling stressed?	3.8	6.8
Currently, how much enjoyment do you get from spending time with your child/children?	5.6	7.4

Post programme participants were also asked questions relating to their experience of the Healing Together programme. The results are displayed below:



### Qualitative results feedback from families post programme.

The follow information are anonymous quotes from the parents in their last session of the Healing together Programme.

#### Families Feedback on their experiences of the Healing Together Programme.

"This is a great programme for a child that suffers with anxiety. Its great to understand other techniques used to help calm your child down."

"It is a very useful programme, you have learnt some of he strategies before doing it with your child rather than your child is invaluable"

"I would say that it is an amazing and it has opened my eyes into why my daughter struggles and how I can help"

"Very good and informative. Loved that it could be completed with your child"

"It is a good course for children suffering from stress/anxiety. I would recommend to parents with children that had low level/mild stress anxiety."



#### Methodological limitations

Please note the results are based on a small data set.



### **Summary of Results**

From the results above, the overall results indicate the Healing Together Programme increases how children feel or think about their emotions across aspects of emotional functioning. The greatest change can be seen in areas of Differentiating Emotions and Not Hiding Emotions which is consistent with overall data evaluated from those facilitators who are delivering the programme across the UK.

The data collected from the post survey demonstrates that all the children and young people enjoyed attending the sessions of the Healing Together Programme and 80% of them would recommend the programme to other children.

The SDQ results demonstrates that overall, the Healing Together programme has reduced emotional distress for the 5 mothers that completed the programme. Specifically, there was a decrease pre-post intervention within the areas of 'emotional problems', 'conduct problems', 'hyperactivity' and 'peer problems'.

The mothers also self-reported that they felt more confident after completing the programme to support their child/children to feel calmer. Parents also reported that after the programme, it felt easier to feel close to their children and their enjoyment score had increased. The qualitative and quantitative data also demonstrates that the programme helped to increase the parents understanding of how the body can be used to calm the brain.

The Mothers explained that they found the worksheets and video animations useful and accessible. 100% stated that they would recommend the Healing Together programme to another parent/carer.