

Saving Lives – Suicide Prevention Innovation Fund

Evaluation of 2019/20 funded projects

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ADVICE • SUPPORT • COMMUNITY

STUDENT *Life*

Kent & Medway

Saving Lives

Innovation Fund 2019/20

**citizens
advice**

**Tunbridge Wells
& District**



**citizens
advice**

**North &
West Kent**



**MEDWAY
DIVERSITY
FORUM**

sunlight
development trust

**catching
LIVES**



2019 2020 “Saving Lives” overview

Objective

- To fund new or emerging programmes designed to prevent suicides, save lives and reduce self-harm

Key Numbers

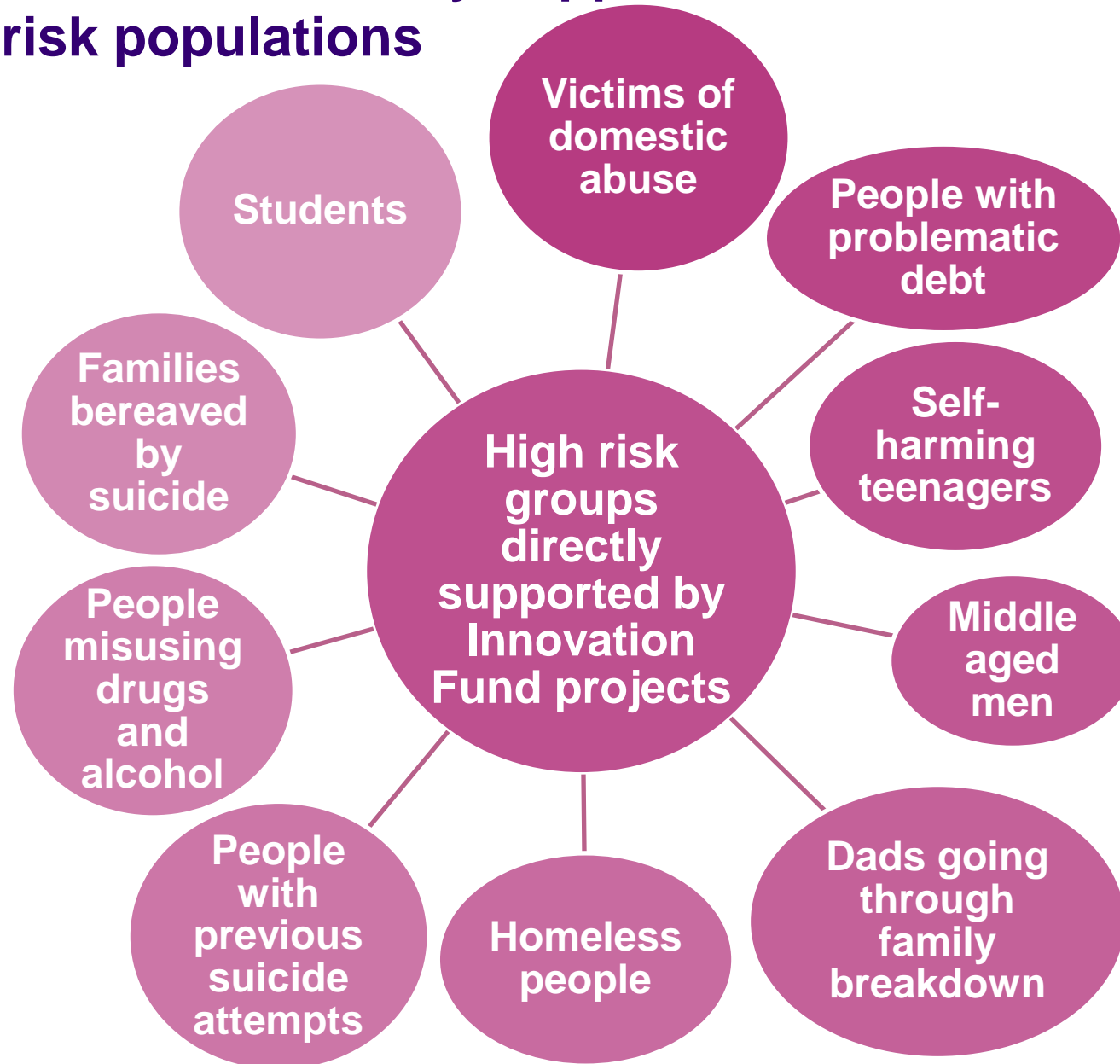
- Over £130,000 in grants awarded to small community programmes
- 9 of the most successful projects from the 2018/19 cohort were given additional funding to expand
- 10 new projects awarded funding
- 1000 vulnerable individuals supported by the projects including 760 not already known to the organisations

What's in this report?

- Details of the high risk groups supported by the “Saving Lives” fund
- Key learning which can be used by future initiatives
- Self evaluations from the diverse range of projects



The Innovation Fund directly supported over 1000 individuals from high risk populations



Key learning from project evaluations



A small amount of money can make a huge difference in the right hands

Positive activities give people a **sense of purpose and meaning**

Peer support builds a sense of community and a support network of people facing similar issues



People are often unsure of where to turn to for help which leads to a sense of desperateness, which in turn may trigger suicidal ideation.

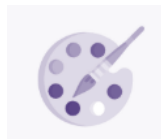


Suicide and self-harm are **not stand alone issues** and are often linked to substance misuse, problem debt, homelessness, domestic abuse.



Co-production is key and gives the service users a sense of ownership and leads to better engagement.

The arts boost confidence and offer a form of expression which feels safe to participants.



Young people want to educate themselves about mental wellbeing and gain skills to enable them to support their peers.



Working in partnership with other services not only is beneficial to people accessing those services, but the organisations too. This joined up working allows organisations to learn more about the health and wellbeing needs of the local population.



Funded Projects

Organisation	Project description	Page
Catching Lives	Photography project working with homeless community culminating in an exhibition and publication of photos.	7-8
Citizens Advice North & West Kent	3 month pilot working directly with the Tonbridge Jobcentre providing face-to-face mental health first aid combined with effective practical support	9-10
Citizens Advice Tunbridge Wells	3 month pilot money advice clinic in a community mental health café setting	11
Dads Unlimited	Mentoring dads through family breakdown and associated mental health problems (including self harm / suicidal ideation, debt, emotional / domestic abuse)	12-13
Intra Arts	An arts club for young people at risk of self-harm and suicide aged 15-24.	14-15
Living Words	The creation of a series of short films focusing the experiences of Living Warriors (people who have lived through suicidal episodes)	16-17
Medway Diversity Forum	Recruitment of BAME Mental Health Ambassadors to highlight issues surrounding mental health and stigma at local youth clubs and schools.	18-19
National Trust	Research with Canterbury Christ Church and Exeter Universities to produce a geographical case study; evaluating existing and potential suicide prevention measures	20

Funded Projects

Organisation	Project description	Page
Northfleet Early Help	A programme to reduce self-harm and increase self-esteem amongst young people who self-harm (working with Squirrels Riding Centre).	21-22
Oasis Domestic Abuse Service	Pilot psychoeducational groupwork programme to help victims of domestic abuse to understand how their brains react to the trauma they have lived through	23-24
Perpetuity Research	Research into the impacts of bereavement by suicide, people's experiences of reaching out for support, and the kinds of support needed at different times after the loss	25
Student Life	Young person led, multi-platform project that collaborates with schools & colleges and develops content for a monthly magazine, website and social media.	26-27
SoBS – Canterbury	Supporting family and friends that are bereaved by suicide with specialist peer support. This included a group developed for and led by children and young people	28
Sunlight Development Trust	Community based suicide prevention initiative targeting vulnerable middle aged men within Medway	29-30
We Are With You at Mind and Body	Supporting first year university students who have been identified as experiencing emotional wellbeing difficulties and self-harm.	31-32

Catching Lives – Enriching lives through a lens

Photography project working with homeless community culminating in an exhibition and publication of photos.



Objectives achieved

- Homeless clients supported to access arts activities, and reduce their isolation.
- Clients developed new skills and confidence.
- Volunteers and clients worked together to create a community.
- Participants developed a sense of achievement and felt valued by the community
- Clients felt comfortable enough to open up about their problems and seek support.

Impact

There was a great sense of achievement felt by the clients who took part. It helped some to feel much less isolated and even those who are very withdrawn benefitted from working together in a group. Their shared experience gave them something positive to talk about together. It was also great to involve volunteers who helped to make the project successful and allowed them to get to know some of clients better; it helped the clients feel more like they belonged to the community and that they can have a valid part to play in it.

Many of our clients suffer from depression and anxiety and, although rarely discussed, also have suicidal thoughts. To be able to encourage clients to join in in an activity and work together as a group certainly lifted their spirits. It allowed for discussions in an informal and relaxed environment allowing for a greater insight in to their needs and how we can support them as a charity. Eight of the framed photographs were sold during the exhibition and this also provided a huge boost of confidence to the whole group of clients.

Lessons learnt

The response from the clients when we went on the Falconry trip was incredible. Everyone turned up for the trip - which is unusual for our client group, and there was even a queue of clients waiting in case someone dropped out. It shows that projects where animals and the natural environment are involved can have a hugely beneficial impact on clients' wellbeing and enthusiasm. The participants still talk about the trip five months later.



Catching Lives – Enriching lives through a lens

Case study



Photography Exhibition

- 167 visitors over 5 days
- 8 framed photos sold
- 28 copies of the photo book sold
- Over £400 raised



C was not one of our regular clients but was experiencing a very difficult time emotionally and had to leave her home due to domestic abuse. She came to the centre for help with housing and very quickly engaged in our photography project. She was part of the group that came to London for the day where she said that she had an amazing time. She was also invited to the private view where she was “blown away” by how lovely everyone was to her. She couldn’t believe that people were taking an interest in her and the photographs she had taken. She has since secured a place to live and is getting on with her life with the support of The Rising Sun Domestic Abuse Charity in Canterbury.

Lachlan McInnes has been homeless on and off since the late 70’s and struggles with alcoholism. This project and a couple of others he participated in last year have played a big part in him feeling able to call Canterbury his home and to allow for Catching Lives to support him into accommodation. He finally moved into a flat after Christmas and feels settled for the first time. Although he now has less need to access our services he still very much needs continued support and the activities we run at the centre very much play an important part in his progress and stability.

Falconry trip: *“This was a memorable day, both enjoyable and knowledgeable. A beauty spot near Faversham that was hard to believe existed. Everyone had a great day especially when it was your turn to wear the gauntlet and watch one of the magnificent birds land on your arm. The Falconer (Joe) shared his expertise with everyone. This day was a complete change to my daily routine and no alcohol was involved. It would be good to do this again when all this chaos is over and perhaps encourage other clients to benefit from the experience I had” – Lachlan McInnes*



Citizens Advice: North and West Kent – Hope & Action Team (HAT)



3 month pilot working directly with the Tonbridge Jobcentre providing face-to-face mental health first aid combined with effective practical support

Objectives achieved

1. People experiencing severe emotional distress caused by debt and benefits given hope and practical steps forward
2. Vulnerable people identified and supported to access help

Impact

Whilst the timescale of the pilot is too short to determine the longer term impact on incidences of suicide and self harm amongst clients distressed by their interactions with statutory services, 86% of HAT clients report feeling less distressed/anxious immediately following their interaction with HAT and 41% of HAT clients report feeling more connected with local mental health/emotional support services. We can take this forward to anticipate that clients that are less anxious, with fewer practical problems and are more connected and supported are at lower risk of suicide or self harm.

Unintended consequences

During the planning of the pilot, we had envisaged that all our First Responder responses would be face-to-face. In fact it was necessary to adjust delivery as the project developed. We found that our responses were also needed over the telephone, when a Jobcentre Adviser was concerned about a client's responses on their online journal and the client was not present in the Jobcentre itself.



Citizens Advice: North and West Kent – Hope & Action Team (HAT)



Case study

J is a 59 year old man from Tonbridge with a history of mental health and substance misuse issues.

J has been claiming Universal Credit for some time but has not been updating his online work journal or attending online appointments with this Jobcentre Adviser. As a result of him missing several deadlines, his Universal Credit has been sanctioned – meaning that his income has been reduced. His Jobcentre Adviser contacted the Hope and Action Team via the CANWK Tonbridge Advice Centre as she was concerned about J. She had seen a new message come in from J overnight on his online journal where he was ranting about the injustice of being sanctioned and had threatened to kill himself if his money wasn't reinstated. The Jobcentre Adviser had called J and established that he was not at immediate risk of suicide but was extremely upset about his current situation and feeling very hopeless. He had agreed for the Jobcentre to contact us on his behalf. J was known to CANWK as we had supported him with housing and debt issues previously. A HAT First Responder telephoned J, and during this conversation he disclosed that he felt his life was a complete mess – he didn't have enough money to live on, his landlord was threatening to evict him following problems with his neighbours associated with his alcohol misuse and he felt that he'd had enough. The First Responder encouraged J to come to our Advice Centre the following day to meet with an CANWK Adviser who could help him. The First Responder called J the next morning to remind him to come to see us, and he did arrive later that day. Support for J is still ongoing at this time. In discussion with our Advisers he has several problems that need to be addressed including benefits, housing and debt issues. We have also identified that part of his difficulty in managing his Jobcentre online journal is that he has very limited digital skills and so have arranged for him to join a CANWK Digital Skills training group to help build his confidence and skills online. With our encouragement J has also been to see his GP to discuss his health and substance misuse issues. Whilst there is still a long way to go, J has told us that he feels pleased that he has taken these first steps and feels more positive about the future right now.



Citizens Advice: Tunbridge Wells & District - Money Advice Clinic



3 month pilot money advice clinic in a community café setting.

Objectives achieved

1. Help and support was given to vulnerable people before they reached crisis point with their debt
2. More people living with problem debt were helped to achieve a positive outcome re their financial situation and improved mental health.

Impact

In the short time that the project was up and running, Chris (project lead) saw ten people, including four people with more complex cases including debt, benefits and threatened homelessness. Staff and volunteers at the café were very positive about the service and keen to promote it to café clients. We feel that it was just starting to become recognised.

Chris was able to avert a threat of homelessness by ensuring that a café regular understood their rights.

Lessons learnt

that it takes time to establish a project such as this and to build up trust. The ethos of the project also means that a morning in which formal advice has not been given has not been wasted - that time spent chatting with regulars also builds trust and helps to spread awareness.



Dads Unlimited – 1:1 Mentoring Service



Mentoring dads through family breakdown, and associated mental health problems, as well as self harm / suicidal ideation, emotional / domestic abuse; in order to facilitate healthy and positive co-parenting relationships.

Objectives achieved

1. A reduction in the number of men contemplating suicide / self-harming.
2. Improvements in the mental health of those seeking help
3. A reduction in parental conflict.
4. Evidence generated and awareness raised about the high risk nature of this group of men

Impact

In 2019, DU prevented 91 men from taking their own life through the Mentoring Service, and Monthly Mental Health Support Group meetings; and thereby also significantly reducing the numbers of men who contemplate suicide.

Lessons learnt

The main lesson we have learnt – is that this service is highly in demand; yet the numbers of referrals has immensely outstripped our capacity. Work is underway to secure additional funding to recruit more Mentors; as the average wait for us to appoint a Mentor to a new client is 22 weeks.

On average a Mentor holds a case load of 25 cases – with each case lasting approximately 20.5 weeks.

As mentioned earlier, reluctantly we have had to introduce a waiting list which currently stands at 90 clients.

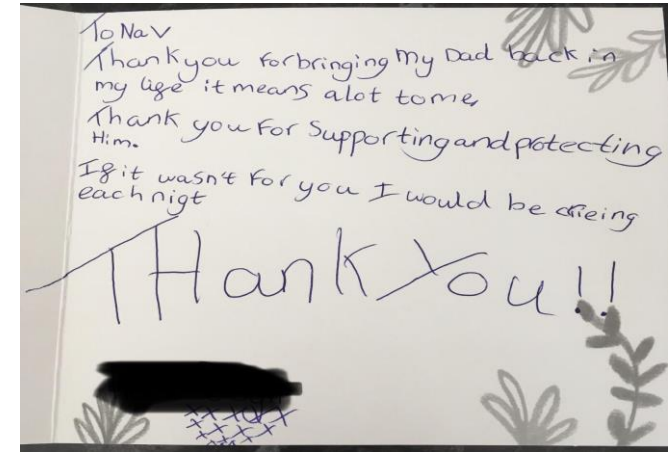
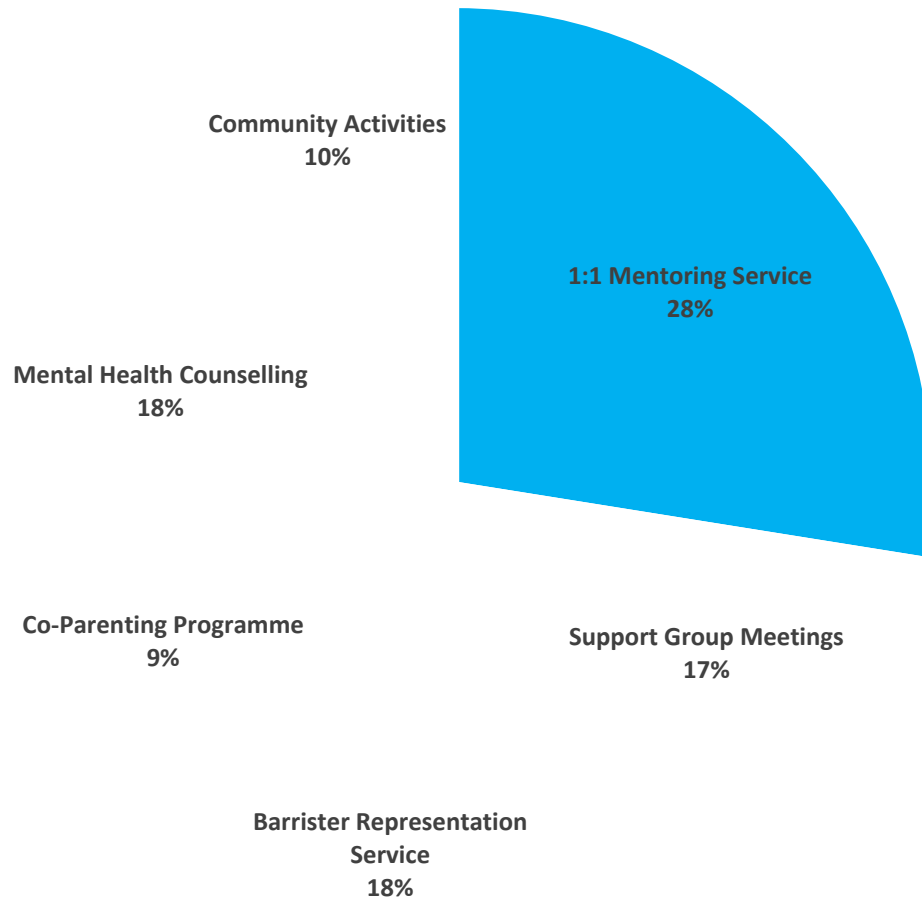
A further issue has been the increase in costs of our mental health counsellors – which again is being absorbed by us through unrestricted donations – but something we are keeping a close eye on, which may result in us (hopefully) recruiting our own dedicated Counsellor.



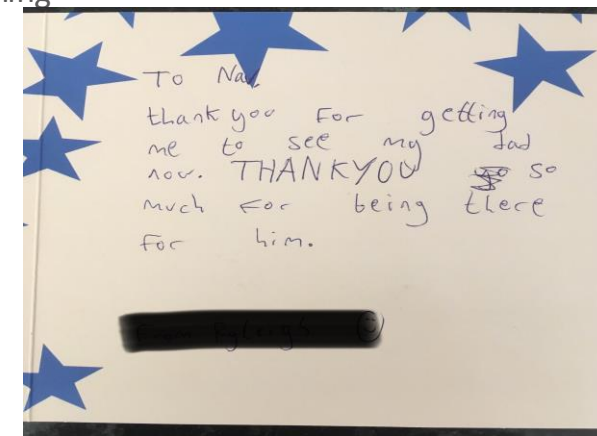
Dads Unlimited – 1:1 Mentoring Service

Case study

91 Lives Saved over last 12 months



- 1:1 Mentoring Service
- Support Group Meetings
- Barrister Representation Service
- Co-Parenting Programme
- Mental Health Counselling
- Community Activities



Intra Arts Ltd – Wave Project



An arts club for young people at risk of self-harm and suicide aged 15-24.

Objectives achieved

1. Self-esteem and resilience built amongst young people at risk of suicide and self harm
2. Thoughts of suicide and self harm reduced
3. Isolation reduced amongst the group of high risk individuals

Impact

- **Positive experiences** from Wave meet ups can help members to remember it's possible for them to feel relaxed, happy and among friends. This has been reported as being key during suicidal or self-harming moments - to stay safe.
- Members have reported Wave is sometimes the only place they have **felt safe to be themselves**.
- **Playing music** and encouraging members to control the playlist with a tablet and Spotify helps the group to bond, relax and take ownership of the space.

Lessons learnt

- Long term members are comfortable with each other, but nervous of new members - they have to be introduced in a sensitive way. This is especially true if members go to the same school or workplace.
- Members have mental health issues and may not be well enough to attend the club or can be inpatients for periods of time.
- We would like to set up a group chat for members to stay in touch, but there are issues of data protection and safeguarding. For now the members are setting up their own group chat, but there is potential for new members to feel excluded if they are not invited straight away.
- With members joining and enquiring, females outnumber males 10-1.
- Self-care for group leaders. It's easy to find issues affecting the young people weigh heavily on us. We have to check in with our own support, or this can build up.



Intra Arts Ltd – Wave Project

Case study

"I was panicked but I came through it. When I tied the lig I had a flashback to a memory with me and my best friend laughing together at art group and I couldn't do it."



"I wish I had found this group earlier! I don't really talk to people much at other times and I feel lonely all the time."

Really cheers me up coming here and is a calm, safe space to just get away from things and relax for a few hours 💙 ☺)

WAVE gives me a sense of community and something to look forward too. It also gives me a creative outlet and the ability to do things I would not be able to do outside of WAVE.

Wave is an escape from my mental illness I feel safe and happy when I am there. I enjoy art and this is such a beneficial group for me in terms of coping.

Wave is very helpful to have as a place to relax and talk to like-minded people. It can be very difficult for me to stop worries so I enjoy getting creative and putting worries aside. It's nice to go to a place where I don't feel judged.

Wave has been amazing. I've been able to meet so many lovely people. And I enjoy my time there every time. ☺



Living Words – Living Warriors

Creating a series of short films focusing on how Living Warriors has positively impacted participants' lives.



Objectives achieved

1. 7 co-created individualised films were produced.
2. Films highlight the benefit of the spoken, written and heard word;
3. They offer support to audiences who might be going through a time of mental ill health and possible suicidal ideation.

Impact

Living Warriors participants expressed a want to help others, through their words being expressed. We published the anthology and song and all participants loved the fact that you – the 'authority figures' – received their full books. They wanted to inform practice. Since the project, participants have remained connected to us – looking for ways to re-connect and to help more people. The LEGACY FILMS will mean the impact of the original project increases; we gather evidence on the longer term impact of the project; we reconnect the group to enable mutual support; we potentially save lives of audience members.

Lessons learnt

Due to covid-19, showings of the films have been delayed at local cinemas. The BBC have commissioned an edited version of the films to be hosted on their website as part of World Suicide Prevention Day in September 2020.

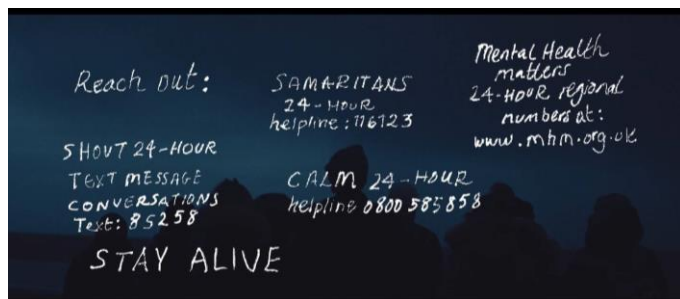


Living Words – Living Warriors

Case study



"I want my words to help people who are feeling like I did" Andrew, project participant



"For me/us to be listened to is incredible. This project has saved my life. And we deserve to be heard. So many people deserve to be heard. Take the shame away" TJ Frost, project participant



Medway Diversity Forum – Every Life Matters

Recruitment of BAME Mental Health Ambassadors to highlight issues surrounding mental health and stigma at local youth clubs and schools.



Objectives achieved

1. Awareness of mental health self harm and suicide raised amongst young BAME people
2. Stigma and discrimination reduced
3. Increased social action and volunteering amongst young BAME people at risk of self harm and suicide

Impact

- The beneficiaries are more involved in social action and volunteering and able to spread the word that the sufferers are not alone and help is available.
- Supported BAME young people with mental health conditions and suicidal thoughts through social activities.
- A positive step towards reducing stigma by raising awareness of effective mental health treatment, giving confidence to sufferers to ask for help, informing them about what community resources are available and importance of self-help
- The young people now have a dedicated space in school where they feel safe, supported and comfortable to talk about their issues freely, explore their feelings and come up with ideas/activities to maintain a healthy mind/body balance.
- Able to reach more vulnerable young people who do not feel accepted- those suffering from depression, anxiety, identity issues, peer group pressures, negative social media, LGBTQ+ groups, people with family/ relationship issues.
- Ambassadors had the confidence and motivation to join other school activities and initiatives, e.g. Anti-Bullying group and Eco-friends'

Lessons learnt

When beneficiaries can feel the benefits of any project first-hand, it gives them the impetus to come up with ideas to sustain this project. Planning is already under way to organise charity events, i.e. World Mental Health day, school Bake Off, Talent show etc to raise money for future activities.

Unintended consequences

We arranged to deliver Mental Health awareness training through IMAGO to raise awareness of mental health issues among students, highlighting the danger signs and challenging stigma and discrimination and relationship issues



Medway Diversity Forum – Every Life Matters

Case study



Belonging to a migrant community and having taken part in the previous suicide prevention campaign project, I wanted to do more about this growing problem amongst the teenagers and help to support my friends and family facing similar issues like me.

My Ambassador role has improved my communication and social skills. I am more confident to deal with difficult situations, talk about sensitive topics and meet new people.

I want to thank Rupa Sen from MDF and Ms Oravcova from Victory Academy school for giving me this opportunity to make a positive difference in other people's lives and opening up other volunteering opportunities for me.

I joined this project when some of my friends showed me the poster and banner pens they designed in the previous project. I wanted to have my voice heard and share my experiences with others in similar situations.

I can now express my ideas freely because I feel secure and comfortable in our "safe" room. I am good at Art and this helps me to encourage my peers to do creative activities together during lunch time. This project has helped me with team working, to express myself creatively and to understand that you have to take actions yourself to improve mental well-being.

I no longer hesitate to join new groups in the school.

Now I feel motivated to do things throughout the year to continue this initiative so that new students every year can benefit even after I have left the school.



National Trust

In association with Canterbury Christ Church and Exeter Universities to produce an anonymous case study; considering the local situation, the measures we have already put in place, and the impact they have had.



Objectives achieved

1. Research has evaluated current and potential suicide prevention measures in one particular geographical location
2. Recommendations produced for local site
3. National awareness has been raised amongst including learning which could be useful reference for other coastal sites

Impact

It has focused the minds of our property team to look again at how we respond to suicides at our site and the urgent need for more research and support to respond to this topic, with guidance from our National team. Due to Covid-19 research is not complete, but the first draft suggests that we will meet all of these objectives and are well on our way to doing this

Lessons learnt

We have discovered flaws in our national property reporting system – so it is highly likely that we are under-reporting the issues we experience.

Unintended consequences

June 2020 update – We are now involved with a larger research project with a site in East Sussex, and Canterbury Christ Church University, which has secured funding to continue the research



Northfleet Early Help – Horses for Health

A programme to reduce self-harm and increase self-esteem amongst young people at risk of self-harm (working with Squirrels Riding Centre).



Objectives achieved

1. A reduction in self-harm and suicidal thoughts amongst a high risk group of young people
2. Increased self-esteem, self-confidence and self-efficacy
3. Improved emotional wellbeing

Impact

- All young people on the programmes have achieved stable skills / practical horse riding skills Level 1 and some level 2 and gained basic First aid training from British Red cross
- All young people have the 1-2-1 support offer and 5 have been signposted to other services re support alongside this project to ensure they are able to access more intensive appropriate support for their needs.
- Reduced Social isolation
- Gained greater social skills/ communication skills increase in self-esteem / resilience and confidence.
- Continued improves networking with families/ agencies and schools

Lessons learnt

Stronger links with schools need to be built to help build team capacity to run sessions in case of sickness/injury.

Unintended consequences

One young person exploring the possibility re continuing in this work and gaining an apprenticeship
 Two local Schools are keen and have requested this programme being run for / with them solely and would like to explore options re this in the future
 requests from different areas within the county to run this programme
 Exploring different ways to engage and continue to work with the group (exploring a virtual group setting with the stables) in light of Covid-19



Northfleet Early Help – Horses for Health

Case study



P is aged 15 diagnosed Autism, ASD and has suicidal ideation. Dad had recently given up his job to support P after a suicide attempt. Where he had recently left home without phone and was found by a bridge planning to jump by the Police and Dad P struggles with meeting new people and goes Mute and bites his hand when anxious.

On the first session Dad informed me that he has not been able to access and engage with groups and he was fairly anxious able leaving him with the group. This session was a struggle for P and he remained mute throughout most of the session and bit his hand.

Over the weeks he has gained confidence and trust to the staff and his peers and has grown in self worth and self-esteem. He has engaged every week and is volunteering one day a week at the stables. He is also looking and exploring the options re the offers for the Apprenticeship. he was also the winner of the best cream moustache with cream and hot chocolate!

In his own words

Through this programme I have made friends / grown in confidence and communication skills and learnt to support others and laugh. I have learnt stable skills and riding and is planning to continue to volunteer and gain a job in stables



Oasis Domestic Abuse Service – Understanding Trauma



Pilot psychoeducational groupwork programme that will help people understand how our brains react to trauma.

Objectives achieved

- 1) A psychoeducational groupwork programme has been developed to help victims of DA understand their trauma responses
- 2) Increased knowledge of how they brain works
- 3) Increased awareness of practical self-care measures

Impact

We asked group participants about their ACAE & PACES before we started the groups. We found that the clients did experience a broad range of positive life experiences although there were lower scores around trusted adults, physical activity and people paying attention to schoolwork. It is notable that for two people there was not someone at home who took an interest in them in a positive way. The group leader believes that clients were left at a point where they had a much greater understanding of trauma and our brains responses. They left with more compassion for themselves and have come away with some coping strategies that we'll build on when we restart.

Lessons learnt

It was interesting to discover that parents found this useful for explaining the trauma reactions of their children. An accompanying pack, activity or group for children might be worth looking into. Some parents took resources home to their children – it's a real benefit that this parent was able to start conversations about trauma within the family.

We did underestimate the time it would take to engage people in a new group which resulted in a later than anticipated start time. A longer lead in would be beneficial.



Oasis Domestic Abuse Service – Understanding Trauma

Case study



A, aged 40, attended the group having recently been retraumatised by a situation with her abusive ex-partner that had significantly impacted herself and her 3 children. Through attending the sessions A learn about the Flight, Fight, Freeze response and recognised how herself, and each of her children had been impacted by the past and the recent situation with her ex-partner, the father of her children. The resources, tools and coping strategies A was able to take from the group enabled her to feel better equipped to understand and support her children who had been significantly impacted by the recent and past traumas. Sadly all 3 children had recently been referred to the Early Intervention & Prevention Team at Oasis for mentoring support but due to capacity within the team and the high levels of demand upon the service their referrals were declined so A's attendance at the group was beneficial for not only for herself but also essential for her to be able to offer the necessary support to her children.

S is a 52-year-old nurse who experience Domestic Abuse 3 years ago which left her experiencing significant difficulties leading to a diagnosis of PTSD. S has completed a series of psychoeducational programmes and received some counselling support but stated the Trauma programme has 'been tremendous and unlocked why subconsciously things are happening'. S felt her attendance over the last couple of weeks had helped more than anything else'. As a nurse S also stated she felt 'nurses should be trained in this brain stuff' expanding that many patients they are working with have experienced traumas and being able to explain how our brains respond to trauma is helpful in working with patients. S felt she was more able to regulate her emotions having attended the course



Perpetuity Research – Understanding the needs of people bereaved by suicide



Research looking at the impacts of bereavement by suicide, people's experiences of reaching out for support, and the kinds of support needed at different times after the bereavement.

Overview

Perpetuity Research were funded to understand the needs of people bereaved by suicide in Kent and Medway. The report set out 25 recommendations from the research based on the literature review, interviews with local people bereaved by suicide, practitioner survey findings and practitioner interviews. The recommendations included:

- Consider providing guidance to organisations on the needs of people in the aftermath of a suicide eg how best to support people in the workplace
- Work with local media should be extended to include practices regarding bereaved families and their needs.
- Explore how support can be proactively provided at appropriate times, and how best to deliver this information Eg face to face, telephone check ins, auto messaging
- Consider the importance of family and group work, including work with groups of young people whose peer has died.
- Explore how to provide support to young people and ways to access this support should be promoted directly to young people.
- Consider if a full needs assessment is required to identify what is working well and what the gaps exist.

This report will be used when shaping future bereavement support services as part of the funding received from NHS England

Understanding the experiences and needs of people bereaved by suicide in Kent

Report prepared for Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Innovation Fund - based in Kent County Council's Public Health Team

Josephine Ramm

April 2020



Student Life – Student Life Kent

Young person led, multi-platform project that collaborates with schools, colleges and universities and invites young people to write varied content for a monthly, cross-county print magazine, website and social media.

STUDENT *life*

Objectives achieved

- Schools engaged across Kent and Medway, collaborating with young people to produce content for the Student life publication.
- Increasing the number of pages specific to mental health/self-harm awareness/suicide awareness within the magazine.
- Increased number of young people volunteering as Mental Health Ambassadors and graduating Mental Health First Aid training and Suicide Awareness training.
- Increased number of signposting referrals to setting lead.
- Increased number of new and revised mental health policies in settings.

Impact

The project impact has been significant, with over 1,500 young people having attended our workshops and seen our workshop film on mental health/suicide awareness & prevention. Kent students are now actively involved in our governance structure. 13 new Mental Health First Aiders/Ambassadors have graduated training, with a further 120 awaiting training.

Lessons learnt

Dedicate additional team members to the county roll out. Allow additional time for settings to free up diaries for the required 1-hour assembly/workshop timeslots (lead times were longer than anticipated).

Unintended consequences

We had earmarked 6 education settings to join the pilot, but such was the extent of our welcome in the county, that 12 settings desired to collaborate. A further 4 settings are on a waiting list, prior to any communications to widen our reach. Student Life ambassadors have started working with the APPG on Self-harm in Children and Young People



Student Life – Student Life Kent

Case study

STUDENT *life*

Student 'CD' from Hundred of Hoo Academy attended a Student Life assembly to his year group (Yr10) on 11 December 2019. CD signed up to collaborate with Student Life and in particular, chose LGBT awareness and the reduction of stigma as one of his preferred topics. CD wrote his first LGBT article for Student Life magazine in January 2020 and this was subsequently published in print and online in February 2020. The article focussed on CD coming out as gay in 2016 and urged his peers to be "authentic" with themselves and their friends & family. 2500 hard copies of the magazine that contained CD's article were distributed to 52 education settings across 3 counties in February 2020 and 1520 online subscribers received the digital version of the article. 1000's more website visitors now have access to CD's digital article. CD said "As soon as I listened to Louise talking in the assembly I wanted to get involved and tell my story. Knowing that my writing would be seen by so many people and not just in my school was a great feeling. I hope people like my story and it helps them and I will be writing more in the future".



Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide – SoBS Canterbury

Supporting family and friends that are left behind with specialist peer support



Objectives achieved

- Support group developed for young people aged 16-25 at the Canterbury University
- SOBS group developed in Canterbury
- Main objective achieved was for anyone affected by suicide to not feel alone.

Impact

A positive impact as in our community we have raised awareness around what support is available.

Lessons learnt

We need more support for people under the age of 16 who have been affected by suicide.

Jack Feroy and Lydia Waton have played a major part in getting the University support started, both of them have lost a close friend to suicide and felt they did not want to go to a SOBS group as felt only older people go to these meetings.

The value of talking to other people of the same age has made them both feel a bit normal again and the emotions, guilt, anger, sadness. Is all part of life after suicide, they have formed a close bond and although at the moment we have had 6 people attend I think once this horrible time is over the group will get larger, they keep in touch with the others and are looking to do some fund raising, these two people are amazing, I respect the effort they put in to try and help others they are both so young its remarkable. In the group it was heart-warming for me to facilitate the meeting as apart from a few tears we could all laugh and share funny stories about the loved one they lost and again for them not to feel guilty about being happy. It has been very moving that a lot of young people have felt they had nowhere to go and talk to others. I am very proud of how far they have come in there journey of grief and particularly how they are turning a negative situation into a positive one.



Sunlight Development Trust – Talk Club

Community based suicide prevention initiative targeting men within Medway.



Objectives achieved

- Delivered a community based suicide prevention initiative targeting men in Medway, normalising male mental health issues, and reducing stigma
- Identified a variety of high quality resources relating to male mental health and wellbeing to be made available to Talk Club participants
- Compiled and distributed information about local organisations, sources of support and self-care strategies for distribution to Talk Club participants and more widely to community members using the Sunlight Centre.

Impact

- Screening of the film 'Steve' followed by a Q&A with the director, Ben Akers and the subsequent delivery of a monthly 'Talk Club' has raised the awareness of male mental health and male suicide, and encouraged more local men to talk about how they are feeling.
- Improved self-evaluation scores on 'How Am I feeling?' have been registered at each Talk Club event.
- Community members are more aware of the work of the charity and local organisations (such as Time to Change and The Samaritans) in relation to mental health and wellbeing, and thus how and from where they can access information and support
- The charity has accessed up to date resources (Men's Health Forum) and compiled information for men which has been made available to community members beyond the Talk Club events, such as groups using the centre and beneficiaries of other services the Trust delivers

Lessons learnt

The need for more effective and proactive marketing (internet, website and word of mouth)

The mutual benefits of multi-partner involvement in promoting the project (e.g. Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Medway Time to Change)

Unintended consequences

Raised awareness amongst Trustees of the differing skills of Trust Board members (mindfulness; mental health; marketing, community engagement, and so on)



Sunlight Development Trust – Talk Club

Case study



The launch event provided the focus and opportunity for an emerging local artist with lived experience of mental health issues to present her immersive art installation, 'The Cube'. Feedback from Ben Akers and others at the event has given her the confidence to commit to installing and presenting 'The Cube' at events and venues, as part of the Medway Time to Change Hub's activities during 2020.

thank you for inviting me to this event. I found it very moving and emotional - if only people could 'open up' and talk more!!



"I have had an awesome week and feel honoured that I was asked to take my immersive cube installation along to the Sunlight Development Trust for the screening of "Steve", a powerful heart breaking documentary to save men from suicide.



We Are with You – Mind & Body for Higher Education

Supporting first year university students who have been identified as experiencing emotional wellbeing difficulties and therefore vulnerable to self-harm.

**we are
withyou**
at Mind and Body

Objectives achieved

- Increased understanding of emotional and mental health
- Improved skills to identify when and how to ask for help
- Increased emotional resilience
- Individual coping strategies developed

Impact

From looking at the outcome measures and considering the qualitative feedback from participants it is clear that this was a worthwhile project and benefitted those involved. The improvements reported by participants that were directly linked to self harming behaviours identified a need for a self harm specific intervention within university settings.

Lessons learnt

As with all pilot studies there is learning to be taken forward. It takes time to become an established service in an environment. During the process of the programme we did find it difficult to generate as many referrals into the programme as we had planned, we have taken learning from this and identified ways in which we could reduce this barrier moving forward. From the feedback from participants and practitioners the content was age and need appropriate but we could improve on the suggested sources of support, to achieve this we could; - complete further research into age appropriate services available to adults



We Are with You – Mind & Body for Higher Education

Case study

**we are
withyou**
at Mind and Body

Feedback from participants

“It was absolutely amazing and has helped me so much. I am much more comfortable with my mental illness knowing others experience similar things. With the knowledge and techniques I have learnt, I feel able to cope with many situations I would have previously struggled with.”

“Felt listened to and taken care of. In 1:1 chats after sessions I left feeling much better and entirely validated and then did not feel the need to self harm that evening :)”

“I've made changes in the sense that I'm more aware of when I need to be more positive, I love the workbook, it's like a mental exercise, I love thinking about things' - 'I just enjoy it' - 'The assertive exercise helped me realise when I'm being assertive and when I'm not'”

“It's been conforming, a nice routine, helpful and just helped me realise things I hadn't realise were bad and negative. The workbook makes you think for yourself which makes you more sure of yourself”



Contact details

Organisation	Website/Social	Email
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Oasis Domestic Abuse Service	http://www.oasisdaservice.org/	
Perpetuity Research	Website https://perpetuityresearch.com/ Twitter: @PerpResearch	j.ramm@perpetuityresearch.com
Student Life	www.student-life.co @studentlifekent	info@student-life.co
SoBS – Canterbury	https://uksobs.org/ https://twitter.com/SOBSCharity	jennywoledge@sky.com
Sunlight Development Trust	https://www.sunlighttrust.org.uk/	chair@sunlighttrust.org.uk
We Are With You at Mind and Body	www.wearewithyou.org.uk	bryony.wickes@wearewithyou.org.uk