

EWF Evaluation Report – Children & Families Emotional Wellbeing Fund

Organisation: *Young Bristol*

Delivery: *Ashton Vale Club for Young People*

Throughout April – July 2017 we ran 8 creative arts & wellbeing sessions with 22 young people at Ashton Vale Club for Young People.

Our main aims were:

- To inspire positive mental health
- Provide a platform to discuss mental health & wellbeing
- Reduce stress & engage young people in relaxing practical art workshops

We achieved these aims by:

- Running a free drop-in/open access fortnightly session to work with as many young people as possible.
- Using the 2 hour sessions to facilitate group discussions as well as practical arts skills.
- Working with local mental health support charity 'Off The Record' to inform & signpost the young people involved.
- Displaying posters & resources from Off The Record around the youth club.
- Discussing what mental health is what good mental health means & how to build resilience and support those with bad mental health. Making spider diagrams to record answers.
- Taking part in a mental health 'myth buster' quiz at the club.
- Using gratitude exercises to reflect on positive things in the young person's life & making art work to display.
- Using resources from the Mind charity website to discuss mental health vs. mental illness. This helped us to look at appropriate terms & language as well as the idea that mental health is something we all have. The young people had a chance to say any words (positive or negative) about mental health without fear of 'getting it wrong'.
- Creating other art work such as woven mandalas, photographs, Mindfulness colouring & cyanotype prints using sunlight.
- Making a mini campaign to promote positive mental health by creating 'self help' badges to be shared with friends & family.
- Discussing identity and what the young person shows outwardly and if it is different how they feel on the inside. Then creating masks to reflect this.

Other positive outcomes & achievements:

As well as the actions above, the project also involved Young Bristol staff member, Faye Joines, attending free mental health training for creative facilitators. This enabled Faye to facilitate the discussions with the young people in a more informed way.

Off The Record have a good relationship with Young Bristol and are keen to visit our Community Clubs to talk about the services they offer as well as discussing Young People's Mental Health. This is likely to happen as we move into Autumn/Winter due to busy summer schedules for both charities.

Several of the young people involved are currently working with professionals to support their mental health whether through school counsellors or external mentors & social workers. They were happy to discuss their personal experiences during the group discussions and felt empowered to have a safe environment in which to do it.

A couple of the young people who showed high levels of engagement (repeated attendance & taking part) are currently struggling to attend school. By taking part in the wellbeing sessions they showed commitment & ability to stay on task. They also used the time to discuss with the youth workers how they were managing their emotional wellbeing and the problems they were having. The youth workers were able to offer appropriate advice & guidance.

The project was put on display at this year's Bristol Harbour Festival in the Young Bristol Tea Dance Tent which attracted 500+ people inside the tent over the weekend. The exhibition included photographs of the participants doing the activities, some of their art work, responses from the discussions about mental health & a brief overview of the project. Many members of the public took time to check out the display & several chatted with Faye about the project with all feedback being very positive. The exhibit was then displayed at the youth club during the summer holiday programme too.

Quotes:

"Bad Mental Health doesn't mean you are crazy but that you're not very well." **T club member**

"You should always talk to someone if you are feeling bad or if you are sad just like if you had hurt your ankle or broke an arm." **B club member**

"I saw something on Newsround about that (mental health) and I think it's not fair to call people mad if they need looking after" **J, club member.**

"I'm going to give my picture to mum because she has to see a doctor for her mental health and she needs to know how to help make herself feel better" **L, Club member**

“It’s great to see this kind of project at a youth club because it gives an open, safe environment for the young people to talk about their mental health whether good or not so good.” **Visitor, Bristol Harbour Festival 2017.**