

Mum's Talk Counselling Social Impact Report



Women's Counselling
and Therapy Service



Introduction

Women's Counselling and Therapy Service Leeds (WCTS) was formed in 1982 in response to health and social inequalities. It provides a specialised safe environment for women with long standing moderate or severe mental health problems to work through difficulties towards recovery. WCTS provides an accessible service to vulnerable and marginalised women: many of whom struggle to access or engage with other services and achieve recovery.

The Mums Talk Counselling Service started in September 2012. It is funded by the Tudor Trust to reach out to mothers who would otherwise be unlikely to access counselling. The service works in partnership with local agencies including Behind Closed Doors, Home Start and a schools cluster partnership in Bramley a deprived area of Leeds. Women are able to seen locally or at the WCTS's city centre premises.

The service aims to support women towards improved mental health and well-being and reduced isolation; towards increased self-confidence and self-esteem to better manage and make changes to their lives life skills and towards improved parent child interaction.

The service recognises that improved parent child interaction is likely to lead to improved and increased thinking, emotional and practical resourcefulness in the mother's children.

This social impact report aims to help stakeholders understand and quantify the social, environmental and economic value the service is creating.

Tessa Denham, Chief Executive



Executive summary

This report includes the findings of a social impact study which used SROI principles to evaluate a range of outcomes for the Mum's Talk service.

The main aims of this report are to clearly identify the outcomes and impacts of the service on the major stakeholders to demonstrate the value of the service to a range of partners and commissioners. It also provides a context for the development of future work in identifying and measuring impacts and outcomes.

The report is the result of several phases including desk research into background reports and information, case reviews, and discussions with managers, and interviews with clients and referring organisations including face-to-face and telephone interviews

This research were then organised into a 'theory of change' and financial proxies using national and international research were ascribed to each element of 'difference' as well as the financial investment in the Mum's Talk service. Using existing SROI case studies and a range of research the "differences" were evaluated and produced a rate of return of £7.22 for every £1 invested into the service. However this figure will increase dramatically when the benefits to the children are evaluated during Year 3 of this service.

The service has been monitored using a range of measurements and testing to make sure that the results are statistically valid. Evaluation shows a significant reduction in psychological distress from Moderate on assessment to Healthy on exit from the service, a 32% increase in authenticity, and a 19% increase in the parent perception of parent child interaction for all the clients completing the counselling.

During the face to face interviews there was a clear and sustainable impact on self-confidence – one of the clients had made a presentation to 150 professionals recently and said "I could have danced round the room – I felt right big-headed".

In valuing the impact on the clients, and researching other similar services it has been decided that it is equivalent to having a close personal friend - "Putting a Price Tag on Friends, Relatives and Neighbours" www.powdthavee.co.uk/resources/valuing_social_relationships_15.04.pdf

This research valued the value of a close personal friend as £80,000 per year. However this value has been disputed and other SROI reports e.g. "Network for Change: Inspiring Mental Recovery", Real Improvement (2013) use a figure of £25,000 per year and this lower figure is used in this report.

There has also been a significant impact on the number of women who have entered employment following or during the service with nine women moving into employment, and a further four entering training and / or education. As one of the clients said "I realised that the only way my children were going to get more was if I got more".

The economic benefits of returning to work have been valued at £4,548 per client (financial benefits of working rather than receiving benefits) and the well-being value to the individual of working is taken at £12,900 per year.

Stakeholders

Clients

Over the two years 23 mothers have engaged with the service with some of the clients having weekly counselling for two years. The majority of counselling sessions are face-to-face but telephone sessions have been provided when necessary and support is provided between sessions when required. Consistency has been provided by the same therapist throughout the service and one of the frequently repeated comments when describing newly learnt coping strategies is that women think to themselves "what would Stella say?"

Children

The mothers (who are nearly all lone parents) engaged in the programme have 45 children under 16 years of age and 11 children over the age of 16. Two further children who have been taken into care and two children who are not yet born (client pregnant). Many of the children have behavioural and emotional problems and some attend specialist school provision.

The evaluation scores demonstrate that clients feel that they have better relationships with their children, and during Year 3 of this service more work will be carried out on the impact of the service on the children.

For one of the clients who had previously had two children taken into care the counselling had provided her with the tools to parent her infant child effectively. During the interview she related how she had felt at the birth of her third child – “please take the baby now if you are going to – I can’t go through all the heartache again” and her increased confidence in parenting and coping skills as her child grows older.

Whilst there are clearly benefits to the children as their mums become more confident more research will need to be carried out with partners and the social impact has focused on the financial cost of taking a child into care and the contribution made by Mum’s Talk along with the reduction in interventions by Children’s Services.

Extended Families

For some of the clients a goal has been to distance themselves from dysfunctional family networks and to build alternative more positive support networks with friends, neighbours and colleagues. This clearly has an impact on extended family members but this is outside the scope of this report.

“I have learnt how to keep my Mum at arm’s length

“I am now in my own home and I wouldn’t have had the confidence before to move away from my family despite them taking my money”

In other situations counselling has resulted in fractured relationships being healed with positive results, or stronger relationships being built with individual family members.

For the purposes of this social impact report no values have been ascribed to this element as the value of building new networks is already encompassed in the values ascribed to the counselling service.

Partnership Organisations

Interviews were held with three of the partnership organisations for the Mum’s Talk service - Behind Closed Doors, Home-Start Leeds, and the Bramley Cluster Partnership (Leeds City Council). All the partners refer women to the service and were very positive about the outcomes achieved for the clients, the close working relationships that have been developed with the service, and the positive impacts that have been achieved in relationship to more positive parenting.

“Incidentally, have just been told by a Social Worker how amazing Stella is. They have been hugely complimentary about the nature of the provision and the positive effect on the women participating.” Julia Pope, Bramley Cluster Manager.

Reduction in demand on services

The majority of Mum’s Talk clients have had significant experience of Social Services and the criminal justice system and Mum’s Talk also acts as a sign-posting service for clients and facilitates their access to a range of services, and provides them with the confidence to play a fuller part in discussions with agencies about their children’s lives. There is evidence that there has been a significant reduction in demand on Children’s Services with the majority of clients (13) including preventing escalation, stabilising interventions and reduced interventions.

The reduced demand in Social Services has been valued at an average rate of £1,404 per client – it should be noted that this is a conservative estimate.

Investment in Mum’s Talk

This service is fully funded by The Tudor Trust and the total funding to date is £52,433 over the two years.

Unintended outcomes and/or displacement

As several of the women became more confident they also challenged both schools and family workers about their proposed courses of action and interventions. This has resulted in professional staff altering their plans.

Deadweight

National evidence and research demonstrates that there is an inter-generational element in domestic abuse, neglect, and mental illness and without effective interventions where clients develop the skills and confidence to become more resilient this pattern would continue. The perception from the clients is that without Mum’s Talk they would not have had the confidence to change both their lives and the lives of their children.

Displacement

It is probable that some of the extended families “lose out” as a result of this service (see section above).

Attribution

Mum’s Talk works closely with its partner organisations and some of the outcomes are shared with partners and this has been reflected in the calculations of value.

Drop off

WCTS were awarded the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy ‘Outstanding Research Award’ in 2011 for their report in 2010 which demonstrated that 60% of improvements were sustained four years later. This report concentrates on the social impacts generated through the two year time period of the report.

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Stakeholders	Outcomes	Numbers	Value per person	Attribution to other partner organisations	Net value 2012-14
Clients	Increased confidence, improved mental health increased resilience	20	25,000	0	50,000
	Economic benefits of returning to employment	9	5,228	25	35,289
	Well-being value of being in employment	9	12,900	25	87,075
Dependent children	Improved parent child relationships*	45	*		
Children's Services	Reduction in children taken into care and avoidance of adoption proceedings	1	38,000	50	19,000
Social Services	Reduction in demand on Social Workers	13	4,740	50	30,810
Central Government	Reduction in benefit claimants	9	8,021	25	54,141

*This is the subject of further research during Year 3

Total value for current year **£726,315**

Total investment **£52,433**

SROI Ratio (total value divided by investment) **£7.22**



This report was produced by Cathy Boyd, SPC Ltd (2015)

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