

CHANCE 2 CHANGE – THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION – SOCIAL IMPACT

Concern For Mental Health

Project Evaluation – Dated: March 2018

The Chance 2 Change programme

Chance 2 Change is an 8 session group based programme, using the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to reduce negativity and marginalisation in our communities. Each group works intensively with up to 10 clients and seeks to nurture good where otherwise negative behaviour can become prevalent. Chance 2 Change focuses on managing and reversing negative/addictive behaviours. The group is taken through a structured therapeutic process and each session is specifically designed to get the clients to think differently about their behaviour, core beliefs and build emotional intelligence.

The rationale to Chance 2 Change follows a three practice approach which is:

1. Group psychotherapy
2. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)
3. Trauma Recovery Therapy

By incorporating the essential elements of these approaches we are able to offer an effective and intelligent intervention that allows Chance 2 Change to deliver the aims, objectives and outcomes that are essential to bringing about a reduction in negative behaviours. Chance 2 Change is a highly adaptable, innovative programme that breaks down the current barriers which prevent marginalised and socially isolation groups from accessing mainstream services and provides an opportunity to create significant, long term change.

Chance 2 Change & Young Offenders

The central premise of the rationale behind Chance 2 Change is that behaviours are learnt and they are learnt from the environment we are brought up in, for example, if we learn that we are not cared for by those responsible for nurturing, it is impossible to know how to care for ourselves or others therefore there is no ability to perceive others perspective. Further traumatic childhood issues can create co-dependence and the primary feature of co-dependence is abandonment of self, which means adapting ourselves to fit in with others. Chance 2 Change encourages participants to first identify, secondly acknowledge, thirdly understand, fourthly respect and finally bring about steps to change.

Young offenders are a group that experience complex and deep seated emotional needs and these must be treated for change to be successful. They are a group that has experienced rejection, abandonment and trauma on numerous levels and these events can leave them with negative thought processes that lead to negative behaviour patterns. It is no coincidence that around two thirds of young people in custody have experienced the care system. They struggle to cope, can find it very hard to form positive, appropriate relationships and have difficulty with self-esteem leading to criminal behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse and long-term unemployment.

CHANCE 2 CHANGE – THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION – SOCIAL IMPACT

Chance 2 Change allows these often damaged and vulnerable young people to increase their emotional intelligence and emotional resilience. As an organisation we believe that emotional intelligence is as vital to success as academic ability, if the Chance 2 Change programme is applied to an academically and aspirations lacking client group it can significantly increase the chances of living a productive life as has been proven with our offending cohorts of clients.

The Chance 2 Change programme works intensively to help heal these young people so they can change the patterns of their young lives and move forward to achieve for themselves. Each session of the Chance 2 Change programme covers a different area of emotional development and works towards understanding who we are and building emotional intelligence. Participants also receive intensive support to access employment, education or training and most importantly to sustain it, upon completion of the programme. This robust package helps young people to set realistic life plans and then helps to achieve this, by supporting with everything from cv writing, relationships, debt management and preparing for interviews. The benefits are for society and not just the young people themselves.

Results – What we have delivered & achieved with your funding:

During the period of funding a total of 38 young offenders were referred to commence the programme and 32 completed it. We have worked with more females (21) than males. Two programmes were delivered within a secure prison setting (HMP Bronzefield) and 2 in a community setting. The following deliverables have been achieved:

- We mapped out a network of partners, referral routes and key stakeholders. This allowed us to build robust relationships which streamlines our delivery process and encourages strong information sharing to ensure the best outcomes for young people.
- We attended a number of events hosted by a partner organisation and presented our work. We also sought feedback from young people about how they felt we could address their needs and what was important to them. Some of our previous beneficiaries, who were also in the care system, joined us and shared their stories.
- We have continued to build our network of employers and agencies who can support our work and are pleased with the development of this element of the project, especially our links with the Ready For Work programme.

We have achieved the following outcomes:

- 32 young offenders have completed the therapy programme allowing them to increase their self-confidence, self-esteem and emotional resilience
- 32 young people have completed a life plan which detailed their goals, strengths and skills making particular reference to employment
- 32 young people have demonstrated increased self-awareness, motivation to succeed and awareness of the support available to them
- 32 young people have been supported to access our employment readiness programme and completed a series of workshops allowing them to become better equipped to enter employment
- 30 young people achieved the opportunity to experience the work place and complete placements

CHANCE 2 CHANGE – THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION – SOCIAL IMPACT

- 24 young people have achieved sustained employment/training from these opportunities to date

We are also working with one organisation to look at the possibility of making a short film about the progress and achievements of some of our young people to share to a wider network as well as for our own website. This was the idea of one of our beneficiaries who had been involved in something similar with another group. A group of 7 young people are currently helping to organise this. Some of our key relationships are with schools and we are exploring ways in which we can become more embedded. This includes training of staff in our therapeutic group work to give greater understanding and discussing how a computer based version of Chance 2 Change might work to reach more young people and help to work therapeutically with those who are harder to engage and who traditionally lack aspirations and career motivation.

Unexpected outcomes:

It has been saddening to report an increase in the number of girls participating in our projects who have been victims of sexual exploitation and those who are living in care of the local authority. We have also worked with a handful of girls who are at risk of forced marriage and this was a new area for us. I think it has always been clear that there is a high demand for therapeutic working with young people and the benefits this can bring. This has been particularly evident when working with young females who face so many complex pressures as well as their own often difficult emotional development. The need for a more therapeutic approach to working can only be met by adapting and integrating therapy models as standard practice rather than at point of crisis when the emotional damage is already done. This of course requires upskilling of staff, financial input and a desire to implement wider ranging change.

We would like to look at ways of continuing our work with these groups of young people and also how we might be able to increase our capacity to support and engage volunteers. Peer to peer support is always amongst the most influential.

Feedback from beneficiaries:

“Chance 2 Change has helped me to change the way I behave. I used to get into a lot of trouble and I lost a lot of confidence. The programme helped me as now I have more friends, I am more confident and feel better about myself and future.”

“I felt like I could express myself more because people were listening and I got to listen to others that have similar backgrounds to me. I also got to learn new things that I never knew before and learnt how to calm down.”

“I definitely gained a lot, especially handling certain situations differently and I understand that I have to read people and react in the correct way. Every session has taught me something different every time. “

“My behaviour changed during the sessions, as when I had a problem at home, instead of reverting to my normal behaviour, I used some of the strategies that we learnt on the group to help us deal with situations and it worked. I will always be referring to the work done on this course. It was brilliant.”

“I have a better understanding of things now. I feel I can relate to this – if I am having a bad day, I can look back at this group and know I can be better. I feel that talking about things can help, especially core beliefs.”

CHANCE 2 CHANGE – THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION – SOCIAL IMPACT

“I enjoyed the group discussions and appreciated the relaxed way in how it was delivered, making me feel comfortable on a lot of levels. I also started to put in more thought into my actions and stopped myself from getting into trouble outside of group.”

“The whole programme has helped me to believe in myself and has helped me to feel positive as I know now that I can change certain aspects of my life.”

“The sessions and also the entire programme were run very efficiently and professionally. I will most certainly recommend the Chance 2 Change programme because I would like to make people aware that there is a lot of support within this programme. I found it very beneficial.”

Acknowledgement & thanks:

As a small organisation delivering work to some of the hardest to reach young people every penny we receive is vital to continuing our services. We are sincerely grateful for the support Concern For Mental Health have given us and would like to express thanks from everyone in the team including the young people who we supported with this grant. Thank you.

