

## PUPIL PREMIUM PROJECT IN VSK NORTH KENT

The VSK NORTH KENT team has been encouraging schools in the locality to take part in the Striving to Thriving programme which is delivered by Wellbeing People and is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Positive Psychology tools and techniques. It is targeted on adolescent cohorts where there are common themes/patterns of :

- Social isolation
- Low self esteem
- Poor emotional resilience
- Mild to moderate depression
- Communication difficulties
- Limiting self confidence
- Sleep disturbance
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Domestic violence



### Aims and objectives

Challenge unhelpful thought patterns

Relaxation methods

Build resilience

Self nurture

Recognising and building on strengths

5 ways to wellbeing

Mind-sets

Savouring and gratitude

Research has shown that there is increasing evidence that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has a direct impact on adulthood. There is a correlation between increasing ACEs and adverse behavioural, health and social outcomes. Evidence also suggests poor academic achievements and severely hampered aspirations.

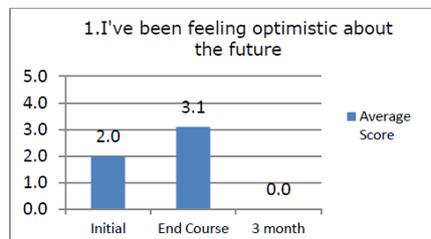
The course is available for same gender groups of 10-12 in Secondary Schools over ten weeks. Each programme is designed with the context of the student's lives in mind so that they feel empowered to identify their strengths and challenge negative thoughts, thus making positive changes, however small, to their respective lives. A consistent member of school staff is involved with the programme so that students have a key person to identify with and who will remain available to them once the course has ended.

The programme is assessed using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMBS) which is used for pre, post and 3 month post course evaluation.

The programme was piloted at The Leigh Academy in Dartford with a group of year 9 & 10 girls. Their life experiences included a variety of social and emotional factors that presented challenges. These came in the form of low self esteem, isolation, self harm, high anxiety and a difficulty in maintaining positive relationships.

- The average score on the WEMBS for young people of this age group is 51.....this group's average score was 36
- A significant increase was recorded at the end of the course. They scored 46.
- An increase of 8 points is said to demonstrate that mental wellbeing meaningfully improved over the course of the project. Their increase was 10 points.

Examples of the areas most improved:



#### What the students said about the programme:

- *These meetings have made me a more understanding person of me*
- *I have learnt to think if people are worth my time*
- *Negative people will make me a negative person*
- *Violence is not the answer*
- *This group helps us to calm down and handle things outside the group....how to let the small things blow over*
- *A positive attitude will get me further in life*
- *This course has made me want to study psychology*

**What staff said about the programme:**

- *Noticeable bonding and support of each other/ more inclusive*
- *Sharing of experiences in a safe environment*
- *Positive approaches to difficult situations*
- *Adopting strategies and avoiding confrontation*
- *Thinking differently and being aware of others*
- *Improved engagement in lessons*
- *Fewer behaviour points for a number of students*
- *Improved self esteem and confidence*

The 3 month evaluation is due in June 2015 but based on results so far The Leigh Academy plan to use the programme again with a different group of students and look forward to further success.

Since the pilot, three more Secondary Schools in North Kent have signed up to the programme using PP+ to support their CiC within their schools and we look forwards to seeing the outcomes/impact.

**Future plans:**

With one school already signed up and another pending; our aim is for more Secondary Schools to adopt the programme to support year 6 CIC transitioning into that school so as to:

- establish deeper networks with other year 6s in that group of 10-12
- develop resilience using the positive psychology approach
- Support good mental health.

