

Growing2gether
Scottish Youth Mentoring Children
nurturing potential and trust in community

Growing2gether Impact Report February 2018 and July 2018

Introduction

Growing2gether is a new experiential learning programme for schools in Scotland that supports disengaged young people to develop confidence and self-belief by mentoring small children, nurturing their potential and developing trust in their community. Growing2gether addresses many of the challenges experienced by young people through transformative psychology in order to support the young people to become successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors, whilst earning a nationally recognised qualification by mentoring a small child. Young people become mentors to small children, supporting their development, which provides the young people with work experience, a responsible job to do and a respected role in their community. With Growing2gether, young people have an opportunity to build self-confidence and self-belief and to re-engage with their education in a positive way. There is increasing evidence that positive psychology interventions enhance well-being and this is being recognised by The Scottish Government, which has created many initiatives to address the significant challenges that children and young people in Scotland are facing today: Closing the Attainment Gap, Getting it Right for Every Child, the Curriculum for Excellence, and Developing Scotland's Young Work Force. Growing2gether aims to address these issues by working with disengaged young people and small children who are in need of additional support.



Growing2gether and positive psychology

Growing2gether is underpinned by transpersonal psychology, which provides a holistic psychological approach focusing on enabling individuals to access more of their potential; on developing self-awareness and personal responsibility and on recognizing the importance of *meaning* as requirements for well-being and positive engagement with society. Combined, we find a congruent pedagogy with transpersonal psychology and positive psychology, a branch of mainstream psychology which was founded 1998 by Seligman (Seligman 1998). Positive psychology has added scientific rigour and has become more established over the past decade. It is concerned with understanding values, strengths, virtues, talents, well-being, and optimal functioning (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005). Research suggests that attention to people's strengths and values are linked to improved self-regulation (Sheldon, Kashdan, & Steger, 2011), and positive outcomes such as positive social behaviours (Woldgabreal et al 2014). Growing2gether focus on

bringing out the unique potential of young people, rather than seeing them as a 'problem', empowering them with life skills, work experience and a deeper understanding of who they are.

Growing2gether and Mental Health

Depression and Anxiety

Unfortunately more children and adolescents are experiencing the debilitating effects of poor mental health, particularly with anxiety and depression particularly those who experience life events at such an early age (Heubner et al, 2018). Due to the fact that anxiety and depression are easily concealed, teachers and parents are often unable to detect the adolescents as having emotional/behavioural problems until the symptoms cause significant interference in academic and social functioning (Muris & Meesters, 2002). There has been an abundance of research exploring the efficacy of interventions aimed at protecting young people's emotional well-being, which has implications for not only health but engagement, as disengagement leads to poor outcomes in school (Merrill et al., 2016).

A recent study (Humphrey, 2016), found evidence to suggest that interventions that promote emotional well-being amongst targeted groups of individuals can have an impact on the way young people perceive problems. Findings suggest that Negative Problem Orientation (NPO; the extent to which people do not believe they can effectively cope with problems) can be reduced through an 18-week intervention that teaches social-emotional learning through an experiential learning model. This reinforces the impact of socio-emotional learning and experiential learning has on minimising NPO and subsequently to enhance mental well-being. This has long-term implications as interventions such as these, have been shown to have the largest impact on student's academic, behavioural, social-emotional and motivational outcomes (Korpershoek et al., 2016) and produce benefits to pupils' health and well-being (Banerjee et al., 2013).

Positive Affect



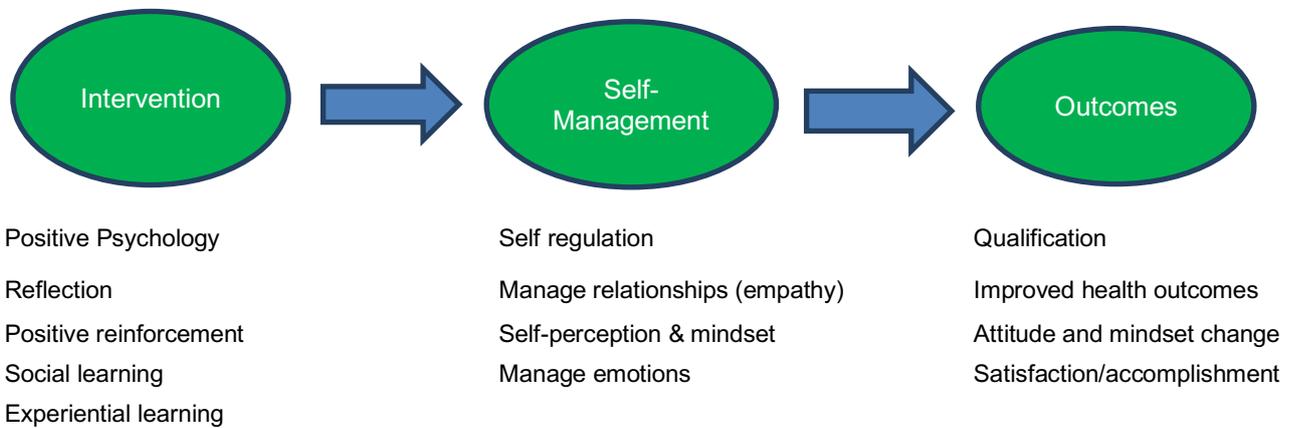
Positive Affect (PA) describes feelings that reflect a level of pleasurable engagement with the environment, such as excitement, happiness, enthusiasm, and contentment. Positive affect reduces the health harming effects of psychological stress (Oakley et al 2017). Higher PA has been associated with better health practices such as improved sleep quality more exercise, as with lower levels of the stress hormones (Oakley et al, 2017). Growing2gether teaches young people how to manage their emotions and self-regulate, which contributes to feelings of Positive affect, such as satisfaction, happiness and well-being as young people are more equipped in dealing with stresses and managing relationships through developing a positive sense of self. To become emotionally and socially skilled as well as mentally healthy, young people need positive reinforcement and support. Facilitators are trained to support the young people in a positive and reflexive way so that these individuals become better at self-management and self-awareness which lead to better mental health. This extends to physical health, as young

people are encouraged to take their health seriously and discouraged from taking unhealthy risks, such as taking drugs, having unprotected sex and drinking alcohol. Furthermore, young people are encouraged to become open and self-aware so that they are able to ask for help from professionals if they (or others) recognise they may have a problem, hence seeking treatment before it becomes more difficult to manage.

Growing2gether and growth of mindset

Some researchers suggest that individuals who believe intelligence is malleable (a growth mindset) are better able to bounce back from failures than those who believe intelligence is fixed, (Dweck, 1986). With regards to the latter, these people tend to feel helpless after encountering failures and this can have profound effect on learning achievement, skill acquisition, personal relationships, professional success, and many other dimensions of life (Dweck, 1986). Not only does mindset have implications for educational outcomes but recent research suggests that stressful life events depression, substance use, and motivations for non-suicidal self-injury were weaker among those with more of a growth mindset relative to those with more of a fixed mindset (Schroder et al, 2017). These findings suggest that anxiety mindsets function in a similar way for mental health resilience as how mindsets of intelligence function for academic outcomes (Schroder et al, 2017). Throughout the learning times, Growing2gether refer back to growth of mindset and encourage young people to perceive this as being malleable, hence realising their own potential to achieve goals. See **Figure 1** for summary.

Figure 1: Summary of Growing2gether



Method

Participants

Young people were selected for the programme on the basis of one or more of the following criteria indicated in Table 1.

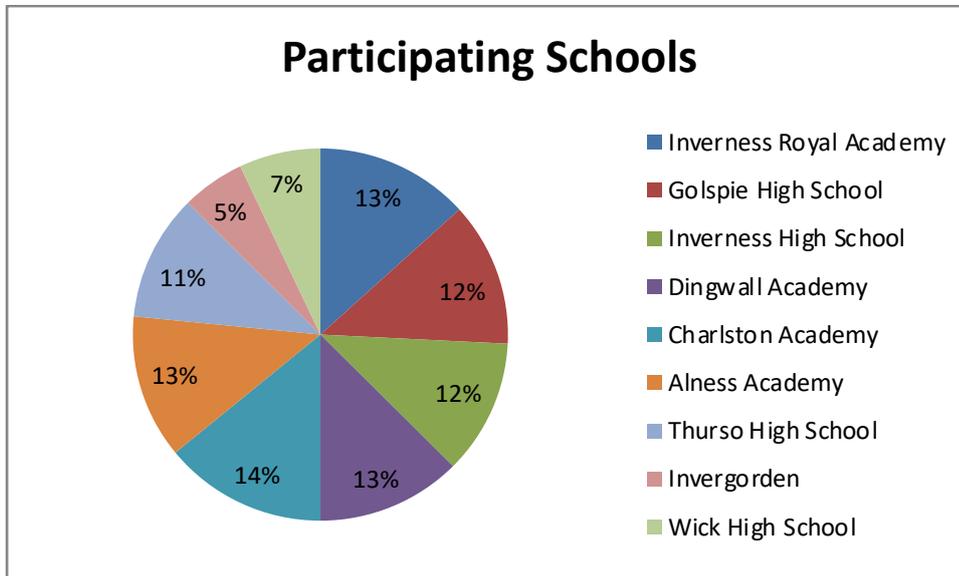
Table 1: Eligibility guide

To be eligible for the programme, the young person may...	
be eligible for Free School Meals	have difficulty interacting with peers
be involved with Guidance	appear unhappy and disengaged
come from a troubled family/have poor family support	appear to have low confidence
be in care/ LAC	have poor attendance or a truanting record
be bullied or is a bully	be known to engage in risky behaviour
be withdrawn or socially isolated	appear to feel disinterested about their future
have received counselling or psychological intervention	have behavioural problems (including anger and acting out behaviour)

This report comprises of two cohorts of young people participating on Growing2gether. The programme consisted predominantly of Females (83%) with an age range of 12-17 years old (Mean

= 14.4, SD = .85). 92% described themselves as White Scottish, 1% Mixed, 1% Polish and 6% did not answer. **Figure 2** displays participating schools.

Figure 2



Intervention

The programmes run for 17-18 weeks and each session is divided into 1.5 hours of mentoring, whereby the young person mentors their assigned toddler, and 1.5 hours of learning time, where young people work towards gaining a Level 3 SCQF Qualification in "Personal Development: Self in Community" unit.

Procedure

Participants were provided with a battery of measures before and after the programme.

Measures

Teacher's Risk Selection tool

Teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire prior to the programme's commencement in order to obtain basic information to assess eligibility.

Teacher's pre and post questionnaire

Teachers were asked to complete a questionnaire on the student's behaviours and attitudes prior to the programme's commencement and at the end of the programme. Pre and post test scores were then analysed to measure impact.

The Positive Affect Schedule (PAS) component of PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) is one of the most robust and widely used scales to measure mood and subjective well-being. The scale is comprised of 10 items, with 10 items measuring positive affect (e.g., excited, inspired). Each item is rated on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 = Very Slightly or Not at all to 5 = Extremely,

to measure the extent to which the affect has been experienced. High scores are indicative of high positive affect and therefore greater subjective well-being.

Depression and Anxiety - The Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS) is a 47-item self-report measure consists of questions relating to emotional well-being such as "I feel worried when someone is angry with me" and "I feel sad or empty". Each question is scored on a 4-point scale (0=never, 1=sometimes, 2=often and 3=always). This measure is intended to assess children's symptoms corresponding to selected *DSM-IV* anxiety and major depressive disorders and is considered to be a suitable instrument suitable to assess anxiety levels across adolescence (Mathyssek et al, 2013). Global scores were calculated before and after the programme. High scores correlate to better mental health.

Programme's impact on growth of mindset is evaluated using three questions measured before and after the programme. Examples of these questions include, "intelligence is something people are born with and cannot be changed". Each question is scored on a 5-point scale (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Unsure, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree). Responses are evaluated before and after the programme in order to measure impact. Low scores indicates a belief that intelligence is less malleable.

Programme's impact on empathy and managing emotions is evaluated using four (two each) questions like, "I find it easy to put myself in somebody else's shoes" and "I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I am in". Each question is scored on a 0-10 scale where 0 indicates that it is not easy at all and 10 indicate it is easy. Questions are added to create a global score for empathy and a global score for managing emotions. Responses are evaluated before and after the programme in order to measure impact.

Programme's impact on health This section asks young people to rate on a scale of 1-5 the extent to which the programme has helped them view their mental and physical well-being for example encouraging them to think about the consequences of their actions and encouraging them to look after their health. Each question is scored on a 5-point scale (1=Not at all, 2=Not much, 3=Unsure, 4=A little, 5= A lot). These questions are measured at the end of the programme only.

Programme's impact on attitude. This section consists of questions relating to the young people's attitudes regarding school, confidence, openness to feelings and community. Each question is scored on a 5-point scale (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Unsure, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree). These questions are measured at the end of the programme only.

Satisfaction and feedback. This section asks for feedback on young people's experiences on the programme. (E.g. enjoyment, relationships, community, engagement with school, confidence in abilities). This section also allows for young people's comments. Each question is scored on a 5-point scale (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Unsure, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree).

Parent questionnaire

During the graduation ceremony, parents were asked to complete a short questionnaire about their child.

Analysis

Standard descriptive analyses were performed to report the respondents' ratings on feedback questions. T-tests and Bivariate correlations were conducted to detect any differences in respondents' answers. Significance levels for all tests were 2-tailed

Findings

In total, 124 out of 148 young people completed the programme (84% retention) young people completed the programme (63 from cohort 2 and 61 from cohort 3) and 88 received an SCQF Qualification, Level 3 Unit, in "Self in Community" (48 from cohort 2 and 40 from cohort 3; a 71% Completion rate)

Teacher's questionnaires

The statistics below are based on teacher's answers to the questionnaire relating to the participant's profile. Only "Yes" and "No" answers were used in analysis and "Think so" and "Don't Know" answers were removed from analysis.

Risk profile of young people.....

- 39% (n= 66) were eligible for Free School Meals
- 88% (n=98) were involved with Guidance
- 54% (n=85) came from a troubled family/has poor family support
- 8% (n=87) were in care/ LAC
- 58% (n=87) had been/was bullied or is a bully
- 64% (n=95) shown to be withdrawn or socially isolated
- 30% (n=84) have received counselling or psychological intervention
- 68% (n= 87) had difficulty with peers
- 87% (n=86) appeared to have low confidence
- 35% (n=86) had behavioural problems (including anger and acting out behaviour)
- 49% (n= 94) had poor attendance or a truanting record
- 30% (n= 77) appeared disinterested about their future
- 37% (n=73) were known to engage in risky behaviour, frequent uses of drugs/alcohol

Teacher's Questionnaire....

T tests were applied in order to detect significant differences in the answers teachers provided before and after the programme. Significance levels for all tests were 2-tailed. Significance levels are used to refer to a pre-chosen probability and the term "P value" is used to indicate a probability that you calculate after a given study. Conventionally the 5% (less than 1 in 20 chance of being wrong) levels have been used.

Table 2 displays percentages which have been converted from mean values at Time 1 and Time 2, percentage change and significance value (n =37). **Table 3** displays the percentage agreement for statements relating to the programme (n =76).

Table 2: Percentage scores before and after the programme

Question	Time 1	Time 2	%age	Significance
Overall, the student is....	Before Programme	After programme	Change	
engaged and interested in learning	13.4	15.7	17%	P < 0.05
achieving grades they are capable of	13.3	15.1	14%	P < 0.05
making the effort to reach their potential	13.2	15.4	17%	P < 0.05
likely to achieve the grades they need to progress to further education	13	16	23%	P < 0.05

Results show a significant positive impact on engagement and interest in learning, achieving grades they are capable of, making the effort to reach their potential and achieving the grades they need to further their education.

Table 3: Teacher's questionnaire

<i>Since completing the programme.....</i>	N	% agreement
the student appears to be more confident	76	94%
the student appears to be happier	76	76%
the experience has helped them emotionally	76	85%

Teacher's comments.....

At the end of the questionnaire, teachers were asked to make comments regarding the young person's behaviour. Below is a selection of comments....

"Previously X had episodes of panic attacks. Since participating on Growing2gether, this has stopped. He used to be very quiet and not interested with others but this has also improved. I have seen him smiling where before he seemed sad and withdrawn all the time. He has asked to do volunteering in his own time. This has been the transformation for him. I think the programme has been excellent for X."

"X felt that she benefited hugely from the experience and would like to engage in a nursery work placement following Growing2gether."

"X is much more confident and happier in school. I have noticed a huge difference in her attitude towards school."

"X is more confident in coming to talk about her feelings. She is attending more classes and opting out less."

Participant questionnaires

Impact on Health outcomes (mental and physical)

Depression and Anxiety and Positive Affect

The results show that there was a significant improvement in Positive Affect and Mental Health, as measured by The Revised Children's Anxiety and Depression Scale (RCADS). Mental Health scores, measured by RCADS and Positive Affect were significantly improved suggesting that Growing2gether has a positive impact on young people's mental health. Enhancing mental health is extremely valuable as it correlates with academic, behavioural, social-emotional and motivational outcomes. There is growing evidence that affect is related to physical health. More specifically, Positive Affect is protective of cardiovascular diseases, depression and type two diabetes, though this is mediated by lifestyle choices used to cope with negative affect, such as smoking, taking drugs and drinking.

Statistical analysis was applied revealing a **significant improvement** in Positive Affect ($t = -3.10$ (80), $p = <0.05$), and RCADS ($t = 5.12$ (72), $p = <0.01$). As mentioned previously, the RCADS has a significance level of .001. In other words 99.9% chance that there is no difference, hence indicating there is almost certainly a true difference in Time 1 and Time 2 scores and therefore indicating that the programme increases mental wellness as measured by a robust and clinical tool.

Table 4: Mental Health Outcomes				
Scale	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Percentage Change
Positive Affect Time 1	29.0	81	7.23	11% (sig)
Positive Affect Time 2	32.1	81	7.27	
RCADS Score Time 1	75.9	73	33.5	21% (sig)
RCADS Score Time 2	59.8	73	36.8	

With regards to protecting their health, most young people felt that the programme influenced them to make better decisions in relation to their lifestyle and become more conscious of the consequences to their actions. ($n = 87$).

- **95%** agreed that the programme encouraged them to look after their health.
- **82%** agreed that the programme made them aware of themselves and the consequences of their actions.
- **55%** agreed that the programme encouraged them to consider the consequences of having unprotected sex.
- **60%** agreed that the programme influenced them to make good decisions about their lifestyle (i.e. not drinking or taking drugs).

Impact on attitude and mindset

Statistical analysis revealed differences between T1 and T2 scores in relation to growth of mindset though none were significant. **Table 5** displays Mean at T1 and T2 as well as percentage change and significance ($n = 80$). Table 6 displays Mean values calculated from a scale of 1-5 (1 = Strongly Agree and 5 = Strongly Disagree). Low scores indicate a belief that intelligence is less malleable. There was a 5% improvement in Growth of Mindset for one item, however for the other two items this was not the case.

Table 5: Growth of Mindset

Question	Time 1	Time 2	%age	Significance
	Before Programme	After programme	Change	
Intelligence can't be changed	4.3	3.8	-11%	Not significant
If you are a certain kind of person, you can't change	3.9	3.4	-13%	Not significant
You are born with the ability to be good at something, you can't learn skills	4.3	4.5	5%	Not significant

With regards to attitude, most young people felt that the programme was influential in relation to being confident in their abilities, giving them focus in life and recognising how education can provide them with more options (n = 80 - 88).

- **76%** agreed that education provides them with more opportunities in the future
- **75%** realised the importance of education in life
- **71%** agreed that Growing2gether has made them feel more confident in their abilities.
- **60%** agreed that Growing2gether has given them more focus in life.
- **55%** agreed that Growing2gether has helped them to become more engaged with school.

Satisfaction and feedback

Many young people made positive comments regarding the programme. Below is a selection of those comments.

- *"Overall I feel as if I have grown as a person and I have gotten more confident...Thinking back over the last 14 weeks feels incredible"*
- *"Growing2gether has given me a lot of things not just mentally but physically as well, like how to handle a situation"*
- *"I am tired, definitely, but a good kind of tired where I am happy and satisfied with what I've achieved. These are memories I will never forget"*
- *"At the end I was happy and proud that I got the chance to take part in the programme. I've met some very nice and caring peopleit made me think about working with kids in the future."*
- *"As the weeks went on my confidence kept on growing and I realised that being in the nursery would be the highlight of my week, every week"*
- *"It helps socially and with education if you're not attending school. A good experience if you are struggling in the system"*

How can we make Growing2gether better?

- *"If a group member has bad feelings then don't make them go to the nursery full time because they won't be happy all the time."*
- *"I don't know, maybe have more time at primary (with the nursery children)"*
- *"Make it longer"*
- *"The chance to continue volunteering in the nursery after finishing. Maybe a chance to meet the children around 5 years later."*

Young people were asked to indicate the extent to how much they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding the programme (n = 88).

- **90%** found the subjects that were covered informative
- **93%** enjoyed building a relationship with their toddler
- **93%** enjoyed working with others
- **95%** would recommend the programme to other young people

Parent questionnaire

Below are the responses to the parent questionnaire. The sample is small, however the comments are encouraging.

Table 6 Parent questionnaire		
	N	% Agreement
my child appears happier and more fulfilled	25	76%
the experience has provided my child with a sense of clarity with regards to their future	25	88%
my child seems more engaged with school (wanting to try harder)	25	68%
my child appears more open and communicative	25	64%
my child has become more responsible	25	84%
my child appears more confident in their own ability	25	80%
I would recommend other parents to encourage their children to participate	25	88%

Please see below comments from parents.

- *"It has made me feel proud seeing her confidence grow."*
- *"The programme has given her an idea of future work ideas"*
- *I am very proud of him and what he has done. It has helped him make the first step in his future"*
- *"J has more patience for his younger brothers and helps me with the responsibilities when I need it"*
- *"This has made him aware of opportunities in the true working world"*
- *"My daughter enjoyed this programme very much and I was pleased to see her look forward to the sessions"*

Quotes from Head Teachers:

- *"It's a win-win situation for the children and the teens"*
- *"Growing2gether provides an incredibly valuable learning opportunity in our school. We have witnessed pupils at risk of disengaging; develop a real sense of value and worth as a result of the programme. The quality of the provision and the evaluative approach taken by Growing2gether is excellent"*
- *"The opportunity for many of our pupils to develop a close relationship with a younger child is really quite an eye-opener. They learn what it is to be respected and, from that, follows the importance of resilience and reliability. The benefits for our pupils are huge – not just in terms of the importance placed on their work in the classroom but in the development of essential skills, including attendance and punctuality, that they will need for their future life and work whatever path they end up taking"*

Quotes from nursery staff:

- *"The young people are more engaged and show more initiative than some of the students we get on placement"*
- *"I have learnt so much. These are not teenagers I would normally have chosen to engage with, and they have been absolutely fantastic"*
- *"A positive development regarding speech in their quieter children who were not so keen to speak and our children grew in confidence with the young people".*
- *"The programme was beneficial for all".*
- *Most of the young people threw themselves into the nursery environment and showed great interaction with the children".*

Quotes from Teachers:

- *“There are signs that she is moving in a more positive direction....”*
- *“ She seems more confident within herself. She is able to communicate better with peers and staff”*
- *“She is more confident in coming to talk about her feelings. Is attending more classes and opting out less”*
- *“ X has made so much progress. She has grown in confidence and is more switched on to her learning”*
- *“ This experience has helped him unlock his strengths and realise that he has a lot of talents-especially with children.”*

Facilitator Report: Case History

Sarah has been a Looked After Child for the last 18 months. Originally from south of the border, the family moved several times before settling. Sarah has had trouble engaging with school and with her peers since primary school. She has talked in quite a matter of fact manner about being thrown out of primary school many times for ‘losing the plot’. When upset, her behaviour can become confrontational and she is now a physically strong teenager. She has literacy difficulties and receives in school support for these and social and emotional difficulties. Sarah has a reduced mainstream timetable and spends part of each week in the Support for Learning Base. Much of her frustration in life is associated with lack of family contact. She spoke of being promised contact with mum and then it wouldn’t happen. At the end of the programme a careful assessment was made of incidences of aggression towards fellow pupils and staff before it was decided to accept her. Sarah was due to have a visit with mum. It is not known whether this took place.

At the start in early February Sarah walked into the room but sat a little apart from the circle. This was as close as she was able to be and remain comfortable, so we noted this and accommodated her occasional need to take a few minutes outside. There was a reticence to participate in our discussions and although she sat quietly there were times when it wasn’t clear that she was actually listening. Gradually she listened more actively and if asked to contribute, would offer a short response.

In the nursery Sarah was a star. After the initial session, when asked by a facilitator if she had liked it, she replied “no, I loved it!” This key phrase seems to link her decision to keep coming and her increasing confidence and ability to express herself in the group. As someone who can experience difficulties in social situations, Sarah has interacted consistently well and comfortably with the nursery staff where she is referred to as “A very polite, well-mannered young person”. They have recognised her appeal to the children, her unwavering commitment to the project, her boundless energy and developing interest in the role of an early years childcare worker. On being spotted by the youngsters as we approached the nursery they would set up a chant of her name. This produced a smile which remained on Sarah’s face for the duration.

En route to nursery quite early in the programme, she was asked by a visiting worker to the school who obviously knew her, why she was out of class. She pointed proudly to her Growing2gether badge and announced, “I am learning to be a mentor to nursery children”.

Interestingly, she commented in her review of the programme that “This group was better than I thought it would be....started I had mixed emotions. I got to know the kids and this made me more happy to be with them. I was happy in nursery because the kids were happy to see me and so were the staff.”

She spoke about the pleasure of being trusted and this meant a lot to her. One of her challenges was being able to stay happy and nursery was a place which facilitated this easily. Sarah also became increasingly comfortable sharing details about her personal life to us as we made our way to nursery.

One of the skills Sarah has demonstrated is the ability to intercede in arguments between children; she has modelled ways to come to an agreement between warring parties and shown vast amounts of patience in this area. It is important to her that the children learn this skill early and benefit from being able to form good relationships with their peers. She loved nothing more than running around for long periods of time being chased by the children, being included in their imaginative games and helping to push them on bikes. She set herself very high standards of commitment to the youngsters and she maintained them. On occasions she had to be gently reminded to calm down a little as her enthusiasm carried her away. When it came to the end of the session, the group would read stories or make some music. The same energy was put into these areas which were outside her comfort zone. It was not unusual for Sarah to be found reading the same story over and over because she had been asked to and she wanted to do her best for the children. She knew that part of the role of a mentor was to help with reading skills even if she hated reading.

When it came to written work, Sarah tended to work hastily but carefully and answer with minimal responses. She has received our support in the form of supplying spellings / encouragement to write a little more detail. But that is all. Not once has she refused to complete a worksheet/ ask to be excused from completing it. As time has gone on she has tackled the worksheets' demands with more care and on many occasions with some enthusiasm. School and 'Me and Dreaming into the Future' are two learning time sessions where Sarah was an animated participant in discussions and she wanted her sheets to reflect this. During a chat about college next year and its written element, Sarah informed me "At school I don't do my own writing" with no hint of negativity or surprise that in Growing2gether she copes on her own.

Sarah has grown into a confident communicator within the group, buoyed by the positive feedback she has received in nursery, she seems to realise that her observations are worthy of being heard and she speaks more audibly and clearly nowadays too. On the first of our portfolio days she was another group member was experiencing some difficulty in understanding some of the words and phrases used in the end of programme questionnaire. I offered explanations which were instantly improved on by Sarah. Several times she interjected with helpful and easily understood descriptions and the other young person 'got it' when she heard this version. I thanked her for her effortless paraphrasing of concepts such as "hostility" and mentioned that this indicated a strong ability to communicate as well as the possession of a broad vocabulary. She appeared pleased.

At the completion stage of the SCQF portfolio, a very few sheets which required a substantial response were done with the aid of a scribe and acknowledged appropriately Sarah applied herself diligently to the task of adding to sheets. In conversation about the quantity she declared herself to be surprised at the amount of work she had produced. Sarah was happy for her head teacher to be shown her folder. She then received some well- deserved praise.

For the school's award celebration, she invited the head teacher and arrived looking very smart, dressed in full school uniform for the first time. She had faced a challenge of a social nature at the break prior to the event and so did very well to attend in a calm state. When all the young people were invited to stand at the front and receive their certificates, she did join but it was too much, and she had to sit back down next to her friend.

This has been a very positive experience for Sarah. She has been made aware of strengths and skills she had been unaware of having. Her self-confidence has increased and she knows the associated advantages. She has secured a place at a local college on the Early Years Childcare course one day per week. Competition for these places is fierce and she is pleased to have got through the interview process where she made use of her Growing2gether experience. This summer she has volunteered to help at a summer play scheme run at the participating nursery.

Lead facilitator

Discussion, Limitations and Conclusions

Mental Health scores, measured by RCADS (which measures depression and anxiety) and Positive Affect were significantly improved suggesting that Growing2gether has a positive impact on young people's mental health, hence reducing anxiety and depression and enhancing positive affect. Depression in teenagers can be a particularly risky times as they may not be as open to seek advice or recognise the signs, rather they will participate in high risk activities, get involved with drugs or get into trouble in school. They also frequently have co-morbid anxiety, eating disorders, or substance abuse so it is very important to provide some intervention to help young people deal with their emotions, seek help or be able to learn strategies to help. Though in severe cases, this intervention would not be enough and is not designed to treat severe depression, however perhaps, as indicated by the results, in mild cases it can be beneficial. Enhancing mental health is extremely valuable as it correlates with academic, behavioural, social-emotional and motivational outcomes. In addition, the programme enhances Positive Affect. Higher PA has been associated with better health practices such as improved sleep quality more exercise, as with lower levels of the stress hormones (Oakley et al, 2017).

The parent and teacher questionnaires added value to the research, adding another angle in which to evaluate the impact and hence strengthening the research. Time 1 and Time 2 questionnaires for teachers to complete before and after the programme revealed significant differences in relation to engagement and performance in school which is most encouraging. With regards to attitude, most young people felt that the programme was influential in relation to being confident in their abilities and giving them focus in life well as agreeing that the programme taught them the importance of education.

We did not see any significant improvement in Growth of Mindset, a construct linked to academic resilience, however on reflection; perhaps the questions may not be reliable as there are only three questions which were designed for the programme specifically. A standardised questionnaire that is more reliable and robust will be considered for subsequent reports. Furthermore, scores at baseline indicated that most people had mindset, so there was little room for improvement. Typically in these kinds of programmes, the changes that we find in the analysis are often smaller due to problems with disclosure and acquiescence. Young people may be reluctant to provide honest answers at the beginning of the programme, when they don't know the facilitators. Throughout the programme, the young people often become more open and honest with their answers, hence resulting in little change in pre and post scores. Initially, young people may not want to be perceived in a negative way (even though facilitators are highly trained and non judgemental), consequently choosing a more positive response to the question, so that they are seen to be choosing the "correct" answer (demand characteristics).

In future, changes could be made in order to reduce confounding variables and bias. We have to acknowledge that there are often extraneous variables which may affect the outcome that should be explored further. We intend to:

- make the questionnaires anonymous which may reduce the issue of acquiescence and disclosure. The facilitators already inform the young people that there no right or wrong answers and encourage them to be honest; however this may not be enough.

- run two focus groups (in Inverness and North Highland) with young people which could be useful in ascertaining the extent to which this issue may bias results and will also give us additional feedback on mindset work.
- we will take the opportunity of the focus groups to do a wider consultation with the young people on the Growing2gether programme, how we could improve the programme as well as eliciting feedback on the 'learning time' subjects addressed.

Overall, the results show that the programme has potential to enhance young people's Mental Health, Positive Affect, attitudes towards health and education. It is clear from the feedback percentages and comments made by the young people, that the programme was well received. Also the very high retention rate is commendable, especially with such a hard to reach and transient group. The case study and comments illustrate how people's experiences can't always be captured quantitatively and that the programme can offer so much support and opportunity to young people who are experiencing great challenges and difficulties at home.

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