
PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



THE INNER STRENGTH YASS (YOU ARE SPECIAL AND SAFE) PROGRAMME INTERVENTION

The Earlier the better



INNER STRENGTH CONSULTING
Vestry Hall. 338 London Road, Mitcham, London, CR4 3UD

innerstrengthconsulting

Contents

Executive Summary and Key Recommendations	3
Introduction	6
Quotes from Participants	8
Impact and Evaluation	10
Appendix 1: CASE STUDY 1: JASON: PLAYING GAMES	15
Appendix 2: CASE STUDY 2: TONI: PREDATOR ON SKYPE	16
Appendix 3: CASE STUDY 3: DEBBIE: ASSERTIVE APPROACH	17
Appendix 4: CASE STUDY 4: ART THERAPY	18

Executive Summary and Key Recommendations

Executive Summary

Early intervention to reduce the risks of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was identified as a need in the participating school. The YASS programme was delivered in response to this need and was welcomed by participating schools. The YASS programme was highly rated by staff and participant and covered 5 key areas relating to CSE prevention. The sessions were interactive with activities such as quizzes, role play, music, video and lots of discussion. After the trainer delivered the programme steps were taken to include even more information for students. The programme was supported with additional resources such as, book marker strip incorporating messages on self-esteem; key-rings with information on e-safety to ensure that young people remained aware of their safety.

The YASS programme facilitator and staff in participating schools worked to create a safe, non-judgemental space in which children could explore themes related to safety and resilience. Each group differed in terms of their understanding and learning needs; as such it became necessary to adapt sessions for participants with special needs and learning difficulties. The programme was also responsive to the felt needs of participants, for example, one session was changed entirely because the group wanted support around their transition into secondary school. Making the sessions fun was also important as part of the learning process.

Key Outcomes

- 100% of the Teaching Assistant observing gave the YASS programme an excellent marking
- 100% of the Students agreed that the YASS programme was important and relevant
- 100% of the Parents feedback that this course was needed and important.
- 100% of students said they would now know where to go for help to keep safe
- ISC exceeded their expected marking of children reached from 32 to 35 students.
- The age-range of students included children and young people from 10 year of age to 16 years old.
- The largest ethnic group of participants were Black /African followed by White British.

In evaluating the programme, each student was asked questions relating to whether they had increased in knowledge as a result of the sessions. All had demonstrated an increase in knowledge about healthy relationships, E- safety and Self Esteem.

Although participants reported an increase in knowledge and awareness it was clear that more work needed to be done to embed this learning. This includes the need for a consistent non-judgemental approach which provided a safe space for children to open up about their fears and concerns.

Students were provided with a Learner's Manual to take home; this included activities, discussion guides as well as additional information to support their learning.

In addition to the group work sessions 1-2-1, individual support was provided for pupils who needed further, more individualised support.

The feedback has been excellent from staff, parents and the children participating in the programme. Parents stated strongly there was a need for this intervention as early as year 5. This view was also confirmed by CG requesting that the YASS course to be delivered to another group at the cost of the school. This programme is in high demand by the schools who participated; participating schools have reported that they have clearly seen the impact and this has been reflected in the progress of students who have been involved with the programme. Due to restrictions in funding, one school is on a waiting list for the programme to be delivered as and when funding becomes available. In addition, a Merton Refuge has requested that the programme is delivered to 5 children from the age of 5 (3 boys and 2 girls).

Areas for Improvement

The trainer has already made plans to incorporate some more e-safety information with guidelines to support both teacher and student when the programme ends. There is also a need to include 1-2-1 sessions with the children after the programme as a type of review if required and it is recommended that this is provided at least two weeks after the programme has ended. Due to the timescales for delivery of this report we were only able to conduct a review in one school to measure the sustainability of the programme and to check if participants had retained the learning from each session; it was a pleasing to confirm that information had been retained.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: to consider funding more YASS events to support schools, parents and students. The triage approach is the right way to go as working together to identify appropriate participants would be effective in the long run.

Recommendation 2: to incorporate regular CSE awareness days in school to provide a platform for discussion with parents and teachers to reach a common understanding and increase awareness regarding some of the ongoing and forever changing issues relating to e-safety self-esteem and dealing with difficult situations. Another option would be to provide a yearly safeguarding conference for parents in Merton to address some of the safeguarding concerns working in junction with safeguarding leads in Merton.

Health and Wellbeing should be an on-going collective approach and not a quick fix approach. YASS highlighted that children and young people are at risk of sexual harassment by peers and older children. Resilience building and creating awareness about staying safe and managing these kinds of situations will provide much needed support to children and young people. Research by Popkin, Bogle¹ et al (2015) has shown that children from deprived background tend to live in coercive sexual environments (this research from inner cities in the USA has been confirmed, to some extent, by the work being done by YASS. There is also a need to equip the parents to know how to handle it when it arises without judgement.

¹ Susan J. Popkin, Mary Bogle, Janine M. Zweig, Priya D. Saxena, Lina Breslav, Molly Michie Let Girls Be Girls, (October 2015) *How Coercive Sexual Environments Affect Girls Who Live in Disadvantaged Communities and What We Can Do about It*, NEIGHBORHOODS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, Urban Institute

Recommendation 3: sex and relationship education should be provided to vulnerable pupils as part of the schools on-going offer of pastoral care to vulnerable pupils and their families. One off interventions is helpful in creating awareness; however, in order for vulnerable children to continue to be safeguarded it is important to consider longer-term and more sustainable interventions. There are two options:

Option 1 is to consider delivering a 'train the trainer' version of YASS for staff within schools; these members of staff would be trained to deliver the programme on an on-going basis within schools. A representative within the school would also act as the lead for this type of work. The benefit of this option would be that schools would have additional capacity to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils 'in-house'; also clusters of schools could be trained together this would produce economies of scale (shared cost) and result in improved capacity across the cluster.

Option 2: is to consider commission an external provider to deliver YASS across schools. The merit of this is that as an external provider there is an element of independence which could allow for a greater focus on each child's needs. As although the parents and students liked the idea of having a rep within the school they did not seem convinced that the individual YASS rep would be able to deal with this effectively and took the view that an external provider would gain better results for the student. I see the benefits of both options.

Promoting the health and well-being should be an on-going collective approach, based on long term investments as opposed to one off 'a quick fix' initiative. The YASS highlighted the fact that children and young people are daily facing sexual advances/pressures from a variety of sources and knowing how to effectively support young people to manage is a key part of ensuring young people's safety and well-being; this includes equipping parents to know how to handle it when it arises without judgement.

Introduction

On 15 October 2015 The London Borough of Merton (LBM) commissioned Inner Strength Consulting to deliver the YASS Programme which aims to prevent sexual exploitation as part of a targeted Merton Healthy Schools programme.

The Council entered into a contract with ISC on 15 October 2015, for a period of 5 months (specifically, to deliver the YASS Programme in schools). It is expected that the programme would be completed by 20 April 2016

1. SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES

1. a. ISC delivered a 5 session programme in 3 mainstream primary schools (year 6); these schools are as follows;

- St Peter & St Paul's Catholic School - (12 students reached) (requesting another group)
- Cricket Green School (A SEN school) (15 students reached)
- Bond School (8 students reached)
- Target students to reach was 32
- Total students reached 35

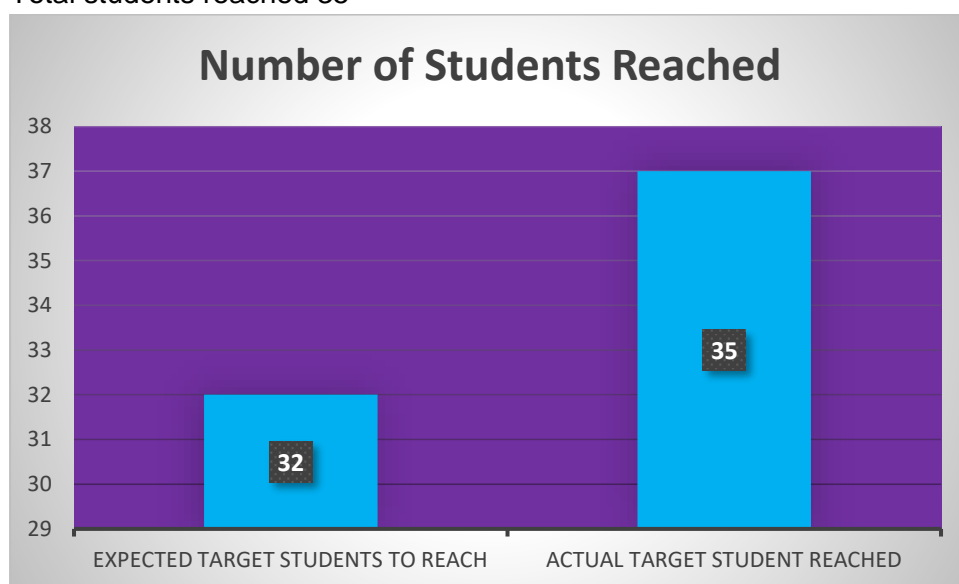


CHART 1: Number of Pupils Engage in the Programme

1. b. The YASS Programme Covered the following topics/issues;

- Healthy relationships
 - Boundaries
 - Staying safe online
 - Staying safe at school & at home (transition)
 - Self-respect, esteem and confidence
 - Bullying/Handling difficult situations
- 8 young people in each session (total 32 people to benefit)

1.c The YASS Programme worked with the Healthy Schools Coordinator and with the school leads stated above;

- ISC provided regular reports to the Healthy Schools Coordinator and each school on activities and how each child has progressed during the programme. Some of the reports highlighted vulnerable students; students at risk which required immediate investigation, some who raised a CSE issues which had to be referred to by the police. All schools acted well to the advice given by ISC and maintained a positive relationship throughout. Some of these issues are highlighted in the case studies.

1. d There was full engagement with the school and its partners.

- ISC held extensive meetings with all participating Head teachers and their designated safeguarding and family support leads. These meetings included discussions on how best to support the needs of the school, and responding to any queries or concerns they raised during the process. Each school took the advice from ISC on when it was necessary to bring both boys and girls together to deliver an even more effective session.

ISC provided clear criteria for identifying children to participate in the programme.

These criteria linked with the risk factors for CSE and is detailed as follows:

- a) Children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
- b) Children with poor school attendance
- c) Children identified as having low self esteem
- d) A child who has witnessed Domestic Abuse
- e) A child who has experienced difficulty with dealing with cyber bullying
- f) Any other factors relevant to those at risk of CSE
- g) Children whom the school consider would benefit from the programme

Draft letters were provided to the school to support their interaction with parents.

ISC is committed to working with the schools to help them develop a ‘whole school approach’. ISN worked with each school to provide an awareness-raising opportunity to support a ‘whole school approach’. For example, one school arranged for the trainer to address the whole school on the issues addressed in the programme. ISN worked with another school to conduct a presentation event to present certificates to those children who completed the programme. All of these interventions were very successful. See photo section.

Safeguarding; “The YASS Programme is a huge benefit to the school. Maureen provides expertise and knowledge in specific areas that staff might not have experience of. The issues covered by the YASS Programme are appropriate for our SEN learners and deal with contemporary issues effecting young women today” Deputy Head

All of the participating schools stated that they would happily recommend YASS to others. Two of the three schools have requested for the programme to be delivered to other cohorts of pupils as soon as possible. One school has funded another YASS for 10 students; the outcomes of this work detailed in this report.

ISC has worked in accordance with each school's child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with the relevant policies and protocols of Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB). During the programme there were 6 incidences where children made disclosures. These were promptly shared with the designated safeguarding lead and appropriate action was taken to safeguard these children. (please see case studies).

ISC has always maintained excellent relationships with school staff at every school and the YASS programme is no exception.

ISC worked effectively within a multi-agency safeguarding framework. During the programme issues arose relating to a child who had explained that he was mourning the loss of a member of his family and ISC, in consultation with the school and the pupil's family made a referral to an appropriate agency to support this boy. ISC continued to support this child and discussed safety strategies with school.

ISC has worked to ensure that the YASS programme has been delivered in accordance with the MSCB's CSE Protocol and its CSE Strategy; ISN is part of the VAWG practitioners group and has worked in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded from CSE. In addition, ISC has adhered to statutory guidance, other good practice guidance including the DfES's, *Tackling CSE Action Plan* and the Metropolitan Police's Pan-London CSE Operating Protocol and best practice with regards to CSE prevention.

ISC worked hard to ensure the participation of the children and young people involved in the programme. This included seeking the views of young people and ensuring the voice and views of the children/young people were clearly heard in the delivery and evaluation of the programme. One highlight A film crew came to interview the children about the programme and this is currently still being edited and will be made available to ISN. We have included some quotes from participants and picture of some of their work

Quotes from Participants (identities have been withheld)

- *"YASS helped me remember that we are all important, we should have confidence in yourself and that I am special in everyway"*
- *"The biggest thing I have learnt is how to keep safe and how you know that you are being abused on computer and in the playground. I now know how to overcome this."*
- *"I can use my own voice, which is very good, I have learnt what I should not do and I have drawn pictures of what we should not do or do".*
- *I enjoyed YASS because it taught me how to keep special and safe and I learnt so much about protecting myself e.g. on internet"*
- *I think YASS is important because kids these days are not very confident and they should be"*

ISC worked according to each school's needs and priorities and sought to use innovative methods to deliver the programme in accordance with the needs and concerns of each school and more importantly each child.

The maximum age group of participants was 17 years old and the youngest was 10 years old. In discussions with parents and teachers as part of the evaluation of the programme most parents and some teachers expressed the view that the YASS programme should be part of an early intervention CSE strategy and that this was needed for pupils in year 5 as CSE concerns were being flagged with pupils in this age group. (see chart 2).

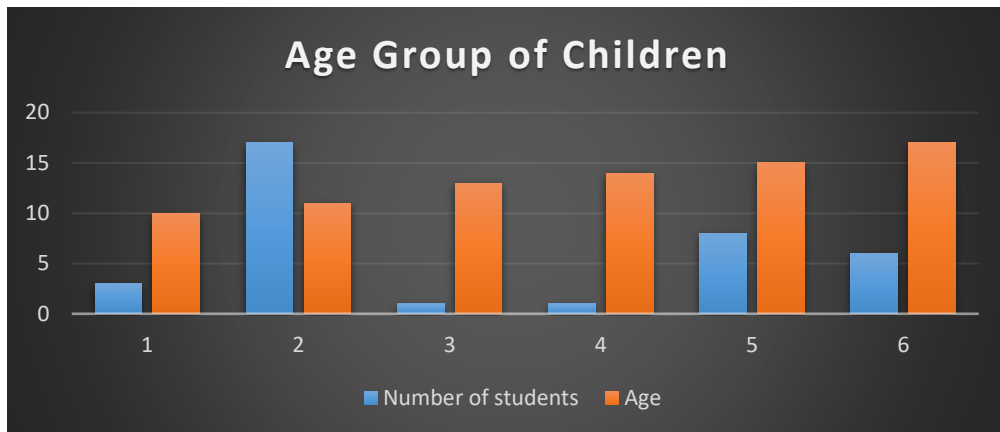


CHART 2: Ages of Children Engaged in the Programme

Although the various ethnic groups appeared varied, there were some schools who had a high pupil population of a particular ethnicity as high risk i.e. BAME or White British. Please see Chart 3

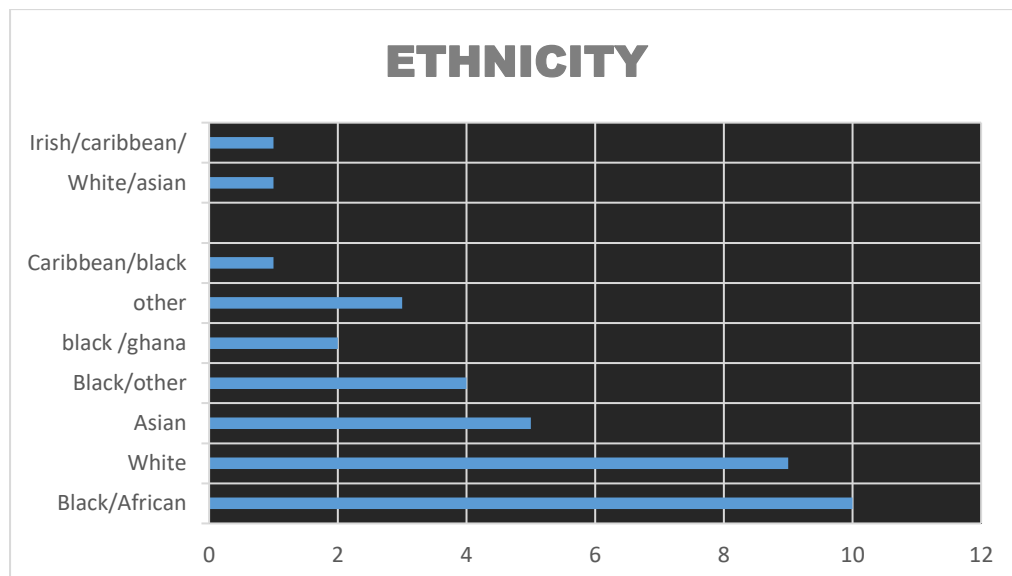


CHART 3: Ethnicity of Pupils

Breakdown of the Delivery of the Programme by School

There were 4 girls and 4 boys registered to take part at bond primary school; 5 girls at Cricket Green School and 6 girls and 6 boys at St Peter's & St Pauls Catholic School; plus, another 10 students at Cricket Green funded by the school. Overall total 35 students reached.

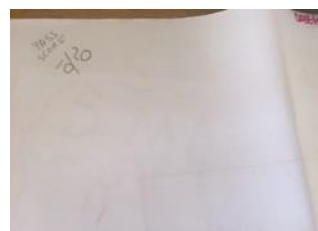
The age range for the group was between age 10 and 16 years old. The sessions varied according to each school i.e.

Bond school – 1-hour session – with all boys and girls in one class (Thursdays at 2PM – 3PM)

Cricket school – 45 minutes with 3 in one class and 45 minutes with 2 in another (Originally we had all 5 girls in one class but due to personality clashes we changed the system to ensure all children got the benefits of the course to support them. Wednesdays – 11-12:30 and later changed to Wednesdays at 1:45-2 and again at 2 – 2:45.

During the interaction of each child ISC conducted an introductory session, consisting of games, questions and prizes. On the same day a baseline assessment form was provided for each child to complete which enabled the trainer to gauge what the needs of each child were. A booklet was provided for each child too which was used throughout the programme to enable them to express their concerns and or ask questions privately and answer questions privately. These booklets were handed into me after each session. One student scored 20 out of 10 on her sheet as see below.

See pictures below



A key outcome of the programme was that the end of the programme each participant had made a significant improvement in their knowledge and awareness of the issues addressed.

Impact and Evaluation

The project was monitored and evaluated using baseline questionnaires, video feedback, verbal feedback and questionnaire to school leads and parents.

A baseline questionnaire was taken at the beginning of the programme on the 5 core topics and scored and the same questionnaire was taken again at the end of the programme to measure the learning that has taken place.

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE YASS PROGRAMME

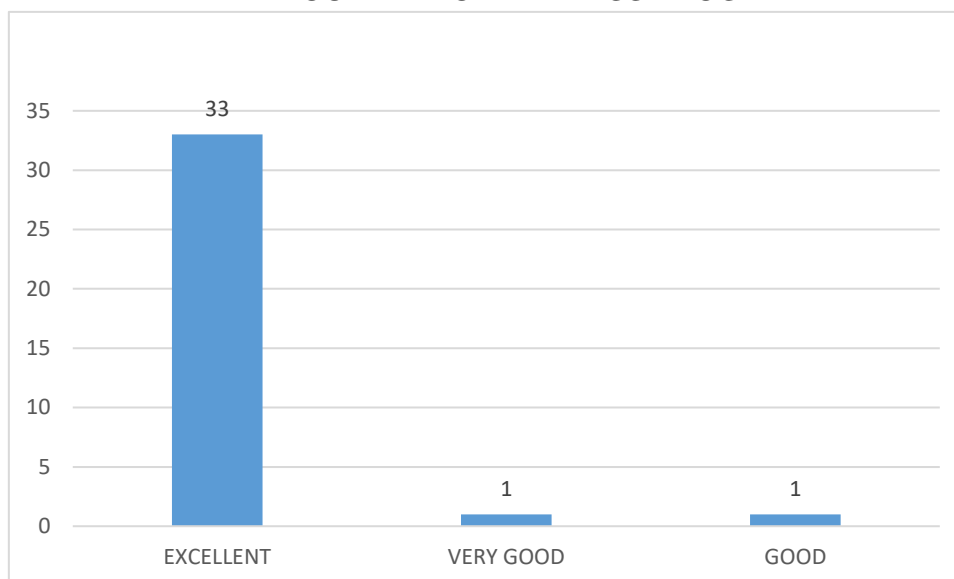


CHART 4 What Do You Think of the Programme

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT? Comments from Participants

- *"I feel good after the programme because this explained to us how to react to negative people on the internet and in our social life" (11-year-old)*
- *"It's good to know that I am not the only one who has experienced bad relationships and it was good to talk about what a good relationship is like" (17-year-old)*
- *"I have learnt to respect myself"*
- *"I have learnt that I should never compare you myself with other people"*
- *"I have learnt that I am special and I am safe and that I have to be safe whilst on the computer"*
- *"I have learnt the TATA method which means tell a trusted adult and about internet safety and about personal space (boundaries)"*
- *"I have learnt it is not bad to think that I am good looking and that I can be the real me."*
- *"I have learnt that I have a voice and we should use it"*
- *I have learnt that you can be yourself. - How to be BOLD, e- safety and that if you think you know someone on the internet you really don't know them.*
- *"Don't trust people online who you may know and don't show any pictures of yourself on line."*

WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

- *"It has really helped me with my relationships. My boyfriend had to go."*
- *"I have decided to delete my Facebook after the programme. I am not ready for this yet" age 11*
- *"I have learnt that I should never compare myself with other people*
- *"I am now relaxed on what I should do when I am on line.*
- *I feel happy and confident and I know what to do now" G*
- *"I have learnt to love yourself"*

TEACHING ASSISTANT OBSERVATION EVALUATION

- “E-safety was very helpful for our school. There was lots of work on self-esteem. How to express emotions, who to talk to , who to trust, where to go for help(support networks such as friends and family etc.)
- All TAs rated the sessions as excellent.
- “The children have the confidence to say whatever it is in their heads.
- “I have learnt that some children are not as confident as they seem
- “YASS is very engaging and the trainer quickly gained the children’s attention and trust”

TRAINER MARKING FOR ALL SCHOOLS: EXCELLENT

- **ALL SCHOOLS WANTED YASS TO CONTINUE IN THEIR SCHOOL**

TRAINER EVALUATION

- I like how she has helped us to deal with our problems - I thought she was excellent in teaching us how to love ourselves
- She was very kind and funny. She has taught me how to stay safe outside and inside school
- I think that she was a bit mad- in a good way and she wasn’t strict like other teachers. She is fun and always has ways to help with thing in our life.
- Every Friday I and excited because of Maureen’s lessons.
- I thought she taught us everything we should know about keeping safe on line and she makes me laugh
- Maureen is funny and is my friend and always finds time to talk to you
- Maureen is really nice and puts everyone at ease
- She had taught not to hide and to be myself
- She is a good example to the community
- I think she is wonderful and she is teaching us things we need for the future.
- She is a brilliant person. She makes us laugh and makes me very happy. I liked the way we had the boys and girls together for the last 2
- She is very good teacher and funny
- Helpful
- really good fun
- crazy
- she was good and funny
- real honest and easy to talk with

- funny mad great caring
- amazing
- amazing
- amazing
- fab-
- cool and fantastic
- helpful and cheerful
- cool and funny
- fantastic

Conclusion

It has been a pleasure delivering this much needed programme and I look forward to this work continuing in the future.

CONTIBUTORS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Head teacher of Bond Primary School; Despo Stevens

Head teacher of Cricket Green School; Celia Dawson

Deputy Head of Cricket Green School; Paul Lansley key stage 4/5

Head teacher of St Peter's & St Paul; Mr David Hennessey

Assistant Head & Safeguarding Lead of St Peter's & St Paul; Gillian Boyd

Parent Support Advisor of St Peter's & St Paul; Seraphine Mitchell

Hayley Humphries; Healthy Schools Coordinator, Mitcham Town Cluster, Jeremiah Project

Barnardo's

Think you know

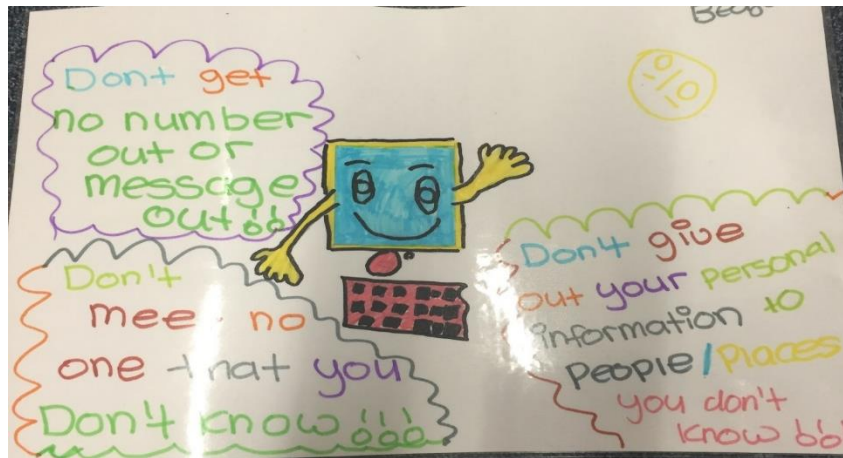
Childnet

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Most of the pictures drawn are by the YASS participants

Appendix 1: CASE STUDY 1: JASON: PLAYING GAMES

Jason was identified as one of the boys at risk of CSE and attended the YASS programme. He is smart, but was wary of being referred to YASS and wanted to understand why he had been chosen for the group. He soon settled and understood the importance of sharing and supporting others and was fully engaged in the process. Jason was a natural leader and was highlighted for doing great work in YASS sessions. He was comfortable enough to share his story to the group. Jason shared that whilst he was playing on his PlayStation a man who he did not know approached him online and was behaving in an indecent way towards him. Jason told his dad straight away and blocked the individual from his game. The trainer praised him for sharing his story and his voice really helped the group understand the need to be careful and to tell a trusted adult if they were worried.



"I feel good after the programme because this explained to us how to react to negative people on the internet and in our social life"

Appendix 2: CASE STUDY 2: TONI: PREDATOR ON SKYPE

During the session on e-safety one of the participants, named Toni (not her real name) disclosed that she had been contacted by a man on skype who attempted to sexually exploit her. As part of the debrief of this disclosure, another pupil disclosed that she also approached via Skype a predator using the same username. The safeguarding procedure was activated and a police report was filed. The YASS programme created a safe space for young people to discuss e-safety and facilitated support in keeping them safe and allowing the police to pursue the predator.



Appendix 3: CASE STUDY 3: DEBBIE: ASSERTIVE APPROACH

Debbie, a pupil who had a history of presenting as fearful and anxious was referred to the programme. During every session she would either withdraw into the corner of the class or sit under the table. When attending the sessions and during the first session wanted to stay under the table whilst listening to YASS session. The programme facilitator said to Debbie that this would be ok as long as she was not disturbing the class. The programme facilitator proceeded to speak about healthy relationships and Debbie started to answer questions. The second week we dealt with boundaries and being assertive and Debbie listened but continued to sit in the corner away from the other girls. During the third week and during a session on keeping safe and having a voice, Debbie asked if she could share her story to the group about how she dealt with an incident.

The case demonstrated that it is important to be flexible in your approach and tailor your responses to the individual needs of pupils. It also demonstrates that pupils engage differently and that even when a child does not appear to be engaged, it does not mean they are not listening to what is being said and gaining the benefits of the programme.



Appendix 4: CASE STUDY 4: ART THERAPY

Tommy was aged 11 whilst attending YASS. Tommy was also identified as have Special Educational Needs. The programme facilitator observed that when he was with other boys he was not allowed to speak as much as he would like. The programme facilitator reminded Tommy that he had a voice and had the right to speak and express his thoughts. The TA later revealed that she had not heard him speak much and he was excited to attend these sessions. During the e-safety session there was a lot of activity which included acting, music, discussion etc., Tommy stated that he wanted to draw to express how he felt. At the end of the session the programme facilitator was impressed at the quality of work Tommy had produced and he was praised for his contribution to the group. This art work was displayed in parent sessions and will be used to celebrate the work of YASS. The programme facilitator selected Tommy to speak out about what he had learnt about YASS and he articulated very clearly what the programme was about and what he learned about child sexual exploitation.

