Young Care-Leavers, Abuse & Neglect: Evaluation of a Life-Skills Programme for building Resilience

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Young Care-Leavers

- Growing body of research focussing on children and young people in state care.

Yet two areas remain under-developed;

1) Research that draws attention to the <u>lived experiences</u> of young people,

2) The development of conceptual frameworks that centralises their perspectives to support the <u>development of practice</u> (Eronen, 2011; Mayock et al, 2011; Winter, 2014).

Abuse & Neglect

- 62% of looked-after-children in England were taken into care due to abuse or neglect.

- Care-leavers still live with the effects of abuse (Barnardo's, 2014; Stein, 2008); yet adverse experiences and consequences of abuse and neglect are largely over-looked (Action for Children, 2014).

- Yet –most interventions for this age group (16-25 years old) take a functional approach (employment, education, housing);*MH and wellbeing ignored*

Life Skills Project

- Part of nine national pilots, which are funded by the Department for Education (UK) as part of the New Belongings scheme (Lindsay, 2014).

- Through individualised support sessions, framed within a strength-based approach.

- *Initial quantitative research (N=40): 69.3% were managing their mental health and wellbeing needs.*

Current Study

- This study addresses the concept of position and positioning of young care-leavers within the life skills programme, with a specific focus on prepositioning & repositioning narratives in relation to *mental health and wellbeing.*

- *Generally, positioning theory is concerned with revealing the explicit and implicit patterns of reasoning that are linked to how people construct themselves and their own position within this (Harre et al, 2009).*

Prepositioning	Repositioning
I get really stressed – I just break down and cry.	I have become a more resilient person; picking myself up again.
Fear of new people and new situations.	Learning to communicate and feel confident.
Loneliness and isolation.	Being able to speak to people and socialise.
Low self-esteem.	Learning independent skills and confidence.
Being nervous and anxious.	Stress-relief and coping.
Behavioural issues (being difficult, aggressive)	Being able to trust and talk to people; assertiveness
Panic attacks	Being able to express myself and my fears

Mental Health??!!

- A controversial concept!

- Little coordination in multi-agency teams around this: CAMHS – social work – charities – PCC.

- Misunderstandings: Medical Interpretation versus Social Constructionism

Conclusions

- Improvement in skills and confidence.

- Resilience.

- Mental Health as separate.

- More insight is needed into pathways to resilience and personal models of resilience, and what role this can play in MH and wellbeing.