

Population

- Children & young people **aged 5 to 16 years** affected by domestic abuse.
- **Males & females**
- Includes children with **protected characteristics** (i.e. hearing difficulties, disabilities, English as an additional language)



Population Need

- **20% of children in the UK are exposed to domestic abuse**¹, in 2023 it was estimated that **827,000 children** experienced domestic abuse in Engl& Wales that year.²
- CYP living with domestic abuse are at **increased risk of experiencing emotional, physical & sexual abuse**, of developing emotional & behavioural problems & of increased exposure to the presence of other adversities in their lives.³
- Exposure to domestic abuse at a young-age is a **risk-factor for multiple mental health disorders**, such as depression, anxiety, & complex PTSD.^{4,5,6}
- The evidence points to **the need for early intervention**.^{7,8}
- There is a **chronic lack of community-based services for CYP** to access early help.⁹
- Need for **trauma-informed interventions**.¹⁰
- Frontline local authority practitioners recognise a need for practical, trauma-informed training on **supporting CYP affected by DA** & understanding the impact on child victims.¹¹
- Government priority for CYP to **access early interventions to break the cycle** of intergenerational abuse.¹²



Pre-Conditions

- **Support from senior leaders** to deliver the Healing Together programme
- **Staff time to attend the training & deliver the programme**
- **CYP consenting to engage** in the programme

Inputs

- Innovating Minds commissioned to train frontline practitioners that are working within education, health & social care to become **accredited Healing Together practitioners**.
- Nominated practitioners attend two days of **live-online core trauma-informed training** with a childhood trauma expert¹³ & then complete **6 self-directed learning modules** (5 hours) to deepen their knowledge & understanding of domestic abuse & its impact¹⁴.
- Following training completion, practitioners receive access to the programme delivery resources (manuals, worksheets, video animations) to **deliver the Healing Together programme** via an online portal.
- **CYP complete the Emotional Awareness Questionnaire (EAQ)**¹⁵ pre & post intervention & write a Dear Buddy Letter in their final session.
- Practitioners have access to **on-demand CPD, 1:1 & group coaching** to support with the implementation¹⁶.
- Practitioners **renew their accreditation on an annual basis** by demonstrating delivery of the programme at least twice, confirmation of attendance & engagement in relevant CPD & supervision.



Activities

- **6 x 50 min 1:1 or group sessions** delivered weekly by accredited Healing Together practitioners within community settings.
- Sessions focus on **supporting CYP** to understanding how their body & brain are working together, what happens when they feel safe/unsafe & how they can use discreet body-based **strategies to feel safe**.
- **Session Breakdown:** Session 1: Welcome & calm breathing; Session 2: My Brain; Session 3: My Senses Keeping Me Safe; Session 4: My Feelings; Session 5: Calming my Body & Brain; Session 6: Feeling Safe.
- Explicit focus on **co-regulation**.
- **Approach**
- Sessions & materials piloted & co-designed with CYP¹⁷.
- Model focused on 'being with' rather than 'doing-to'.
- Sessions designed & delivered from a domestic-abuse informed lens^{18,19}.
- Incorporates neuroscience^{20,21,22}, relational²³ & body-based approaches²⁴.
- Sessions designed & delivered from a trauma-informed & trauma-responsive lens²⁵.
- Minimise the risk of re-traumatisation²⁶ - CYP are not asked to talk about their experiences of DA.
- CYP that has contact with the adult that harms can access the programme.
- Grounded in inclusive, intersectional & neuro-inclusive practice.
- Interactive sessions accompanied by video animations, worksheet & activities to facilitate discussions & development of key skills.
- Opt-in model gives children the opportunity to opt-out of engaging in anything that feels uncomfortable.
- Flexible to adapt & meet the needs of the CYP.
- Parents/carers are included to support the learning translate into the home environment if children wish to²⁷.
- Careful risk & safeguarding management to keep CYP safe.

Mechanisms

Activity processes that make change more likely

Children & young people

- Enjoy attending the sessions²⁸.
- Feel safe & connected with the practitioner (i.e. find them kind, approachable, supportive)²⁹.
- Feel supported during the session³⁰.
- Feel they have the option to attend/not attend^{31,32}.
- Feel listened to, respected & empowered³³.
- Able to utilise the strategies, notice & feel the benefits³⁴.

Healing Together practitioners

- Have the knowledge & understanding of the impact of DA on CYP³⁵.
- Have the confidence to support CYP affected by DA using a trauma-informed approach³⁶.
- Have confidence in delivering the programme & understanding its approach^{37,38}.
- Deliver the programme using trauma-informed principals³⁹.
- Feel ground, safe & calm to be with & around⁴⁰.
- Have hope & feel they can make a difference⁴¹.
- Not ask children to re-live their traumatic experiences⁴².
- Awareness of the physical environment & adapting it to meet the CYP's needs⁴³.



Short term outcomes & impact

For children & young people

- Increase in knowledge about how their body & brain are responding when they feel safe/unsafe.
 - Increased ability to differentiate between emotions⁴⁴.
 - Increased ability to share & verbalise emotions⁴⁵.
 - Use body-based coping strategies such as breathing techniques to regulate.
 - Feel calmer, connected & a sense of belonging.
 - Improvement in school attendance & academic engagement.
 - Experience a positive help-seeking experience.
 - Relief from emotional distress.
- ### For Parent/carers
- Reduction in child-parent conflict/violence⁴⁶.
 - Reduction in sibling conflict.
 - Feel closer to their children.
 - Have a shared language to understand & support their children.
 - Increase in knowledge how their body & body & brain are responding when they feel safe/unsafe.
 - An understating how their child's body & brain is responding when they feel safe/unsafe.
 - Access to body-based calming tools to support their child when they are feeling dysregulated.
 - Positive help-seeking experience.

Healing Together practitioners

- Increase in knowledge on domestic abuse & its impact on CYP.
- Ability to embed trauma-informed principals whilst delivering the Healing Together.
- Increased ability to differentiate between emotions, share emotions & use body-based strategies.
- Increase in job satisfaction.

Longer term outcomes & Impact

Medium term

Children & young people

- Increase in ability to self-regulate emotions.
- Better educational engagement and attainment.
- Reduction in school exclusion.
- Increase in seeking help & engaging in further help.

Parents/carers

- Increase in seeking help & engaging in further help.
- Knowledge & strategies to support their dysregulated child
- Parenting approach that is focused on supporting the child to feel safe, seen, soothed and secured.

Healing Together Practitioners

- Feeling connected with the service & team.
- Ability to embed trauma-informed principles & [Healing Together methods](#) within daily practice.

Longer term

Children & young people

- Children & young people
- Reduce the risk of CYP becoming victims or perpetrators of DA in their adult life.
- Reduction in children diagnosed and treated for mental health disorders.
- Reduction in children diagnosed and treated for neurodiverse needs.
- Reduce the risk of CYP engaging in youth violence & gangs^{47,48}.
- Reduce the risk of CYP becoming victims of exploitation.
- Reduce the risk of intergenerational trauma.
- Reduction in children entering care.
- Reduce the risk of children experiencing mental and physical health difficulties in their adult life.
- Reduction in suicide.

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