



RECENTRE

THRIVING AFTER TRAUMA



WELL BEING
IN MIND

2022 EVALUATION REPORT

Programme Pilot

www.wellbeinginmind.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Well Being in Mind Limited wishes to thank Recentre's staff and the participants of Recentre Pilot Programme for their helpfulness in the production of this evaluation report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT WE WERE ASKED TO DO

In July 2022, Recentre appointed independent researchers, Well Being in Mind (WBM) (www.wellbeinginmind.com), to conduct an evaluation of their trauma support programme.

On the programme:

- All of the participants had experienced complex trauma¹.
- All were female and currently lived in Northern Ireland.
- The ages ranged from 36 to 46.
- The average age was just over 40 (40.2).

Why participants came on the Programme.

(Further detail in Section 4.5)

- Before the programme, participants had tried various approaches to try resolve the trauma for themselves. Some had sought help from mental health services, others had sought support at their workplace, others still had tried their own coping strategies. None of these approaches were working. On top of this, Covid happened and the result, for some of the participants, was greater isolation and pain.
- The main reason for deciding to take part in the programme was a realisation that the trauma was still very much affecting their quality of life on many levels. There was a strong desire too, to once and for all, fully resolve the trauma, and the effects of the trauma.
- There was also, in many cases, a desire to achieve this resolution without medication (which was felt to simply cover up symptoms rather than deal with the underlying cause).
- There was a sense that appropriate options were few and very difficult to access.
- A number of aspects attracted participants, including:
 - the unique and holistic approach;
 - the carefully thought out programme;
 - the intensive nature of it with the potential for resolution of the trauma;
 - the opportunity to meet with, and share with, others with similar experiences;

¹ Child Sexual Abuse, Child Mental and Physical Abuse, "System" Children being taken away / Stolen from parents, Death of a baby, Domestic violence including being locked away, Prior Suicide, Medical, Abandonment, Suicide in family, Drug and Alcohol abuse at young age.

- the fact that the Founder had lived experienced of childhood trauma and had recovered, and at least part of that recovery was a programme like this; and,
- the way the programme was described; it intrigued and appealed.

Specifically, Recentre wished to:

- *Establish the impact and effectiveness of its programme on participants seeking recovery from trauma and its effects;*
- *Assess the extent to which participants, who completed the programme, had, by self-report, acquired the capacities they needed to recover, and stay recovered, from their trauma; and,*
- *Elucidate, where possible, the critical success factors; and,*
- *Identify how the programme might be improved going forward.*

WHAT WE DID

WBM’s methodology comprised 5 Stages as follows:

Stage	Timeline
1: Project Initiation	26 Jul 2022
2: Evaluated Existing Data Sets	26 Jul – 4 Aug 2022
3: Signed off Research Instruments and Recruitment Processes	By 4th Aug 2022
3: Conducted Telephone Interviews with Programme Participants	W/c 8 -15 Aug 2022
4: Conducted Group Interview with Key Recentre Staff	25 Aug 2022
5: Report	2 Sep 2022

WHAT WE FOUND & WHAT IT MEANS

The key findings were as follows:

Overall Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that the programme is providing substantial and lasting benefit to the participants. The rapid growth and positive change achieved by participants is making a material difference to their mental and physical health and recovery from trauma.

We summarise the evidence for this conclusion under each of the research aspects below. The details of the supporting evidence for each of these findings is available in the report section shown in brackets below.

Establish the impact and effectiveness of its programme on participants seeking recovery from trauma and its effects

POSITIVE SHIFTS IN PARTICIPIANTS' HEALTH & WELL BEING (CORE-OM²)

(Section 4.2)

- The analysis of the CORE-OM data (pre and post) demonstrates that the programme has been highly effective for the vast majority (5 out of 6) participants.**
 - The vast majority (5 out of 6) reported large reductions in their stress levels;
 - Half of the participants (3) scored well within the 'healthy range' (i.e. scores of less than 20). Of these:
 - 1 had previously experienced 'moderate to severe' level of stress;
 - 1 had previously experienced 'mild' level of stress; and,
 - 1 had previously experienced 'low' level of stress.
 - Two participants, who did not attain the 'healthy' score at the end of the programme, nonetheless succeeded in dramatically reducing their experience of stress. Each of these participants halved their scores from their original stress levels. One shifted from 'moderate to severe' to 'mild' while the other progressed from 'mild' to 'low'.

² Source: https://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_System_Outcome_Measure.html

FEEDBACK FROM THE PROCESS GROUPS SURVEY

(Section 4.3)

- All participants found the process groups helpful and believed the new learning would benefit them.
- Collectively, the process groups helped them to: feel safe, supported, understood, guided, heard, experience a sense of belonging, feel connected to others / less isolated, break past cycles of behaviour and grow beyond their past experiences.
- What they had learned gave them greater self-confidence, more self-compassion and improved their listening skills.

FEEDBACK FROM THE RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

(Section 4.4)

- All participants who responded to the survey (n=4) were satisfied with all aspects of the residential with:
 - All 4 reported being 'very satisfied' with the group activities.
- Whilst different participants had each enjoyed individual activities there was collective gratitude for the care, attention that Recentre's team had put into its design & delivery and the sincerity of the team that infused the way in which the work was undertaken.

FEEDBACK FROM THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS

(Section 4.5)

- The participants were unanimous. YES, the programme had helped them. "100%", "Absolutely" and "Phenomenal" were some of the descriptions of the impact on them.
- The vast majority of the participants (4 out of 5) rated it as "Excellent". One rated it as "Good".
- All of the participants indicated that they would be very happy ("Definitely", "Absolutely", "100!") to recommend the programme and indeed some had already done so.
- The participants interviewed detailed an extensive range of significant emotional and physical aspects that prior to the programme they had previously struggled

with for a long time. The programme empowered them to overcome these challenges.

Collectively, participants stated that the programme had helped them as follows:

- **EMOTIONALLY:** Reduced isolation, anxiety, sadness, anger and shame. Able to trust others. Destructive habits had fallen away. Helped them feel optimistic about the future again.
- **PHYSICALLY:** Their bodies felt more relaxed, felt they had more energy, developed a better sense of self. Overall, felt better able to cope. For some, no longer on any medication.

Assess the extent to which participants, who completed the programme, had, by self-report, acquired the capacities they needed to recover, and stay recovered, from their trauma;

FEEDBACK FROM THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS (Section 4.5)

It is abundantly clear from every participant that they have made substantial and positive shifts in their self-concept, physical health and emotional wellbeing as a direct result of participating in the programme. The programme promoted confidence, safety, healthy boundaries, feeling of joy, self-compassion and positive self-concept.

Crucially, participants reported having developed the inner knowledge and capacity to maintain, this improved state of physical and emotional wellbeing.

The main ways the programme helped participants was by:

- **CONFIDENCE:** Improving confidence;
- **SAFETY:** Providing a safe place in which to develop a sense of safety / enabling and supporting them to be vulnerable and to trust others;
- **TOOLS & EMPOWERMENT:** Providing relevant knowledge, insights, tools, and techniques for coping and ongoing personal development and empowering them so that they were able to receive / accept the support available;
- **COMMUNITY:** Creating a strong sense of mutual support / community.

- It was clear that the participants deeply appreciated the impact of the programme on them. One participant described it as “priceless”. Another said, “What I got from it, no money could buy”.

Elucidate, where possible, the critical success factors

FEEDBACK FROM THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS

(Section 4.5)

- The critical success factors participants identified were:
- being heard, understood, and validated in a safe space;
 - guided by the experienced and knowledgeable trauma therapists;
 - receiving intensive therapy and intensive support;
 - mutual support from fellow participants;
 - the fact that the programme was ‘outside’ the traditional medical system and they and their trauma were thereby treated differently, and, crucially, not ‘medicalised’;
 - having a wide variety of tools to cope much better in future.
- Whilst the vast majority of the participants (4 out of 5) indicated that they had received the majority of the benefit from the residential. All acknowledged that the process groups and various exercises and contacts before the residential had been a vital precursor / preparation for it.
- Having the process groups online was also much more convenient for some participants and made it much easier for them to ‘stick’ with the programme.

Identify how the programme might be improved going forward

Going forward, Recentre may wish to consider:

- *More support and allaying concerns for participants who are apprehensive about using technology and participating in these virtual process groups as part of the programme.*
- *More one to one sessions for participants who wish to avail of them.*
- *Specific trauma activities on different days and each earlier in the day to help participants participate in and integrate the respective insights more easily and fully;*
- *Participants meeting in person before going to online;*
- *Offering annual top-up residential;*
- *More physical activities;*
- *More personal / spiritual time;*
- *Key material in a more readily accessible format (e.g. video or animation) rather than PowerPoint;*
- *How, within the programme and / or afterwards, the programme might provide even further support and ongoing connection for participants who could benefit from it*
- *Offering future participants a payment plan;*
- *Explaining that it is life changing;*
- *Including [anonymised] testimonials from past participants in the messaging about the programme;*
- *The maximum possible number of participants per programme that the organisation can accommodate whilst continuing to ensure that the high levels of benefit are still achieved for participants; and,*
- *Including key findings from this evaluation in the development of its messaging for its awareness raising / communication strategy.*

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B – Discussion Schedule: Participants’ Semi-Structured Telephone Interview

C – Discussion Schedule: Key Recentre Staff Semi- Structured Group Interview

D – Outline of Programme Elements

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Establishment

Recentre is a private limited company based in Northern Ireland. The company was established in Oct 2021. The company is moving to a Community Interest Company in Q4 of 2022.

Recentre's remit is to support individuals to heal from trauma and live in a space where they can thrive.

It does this by:

- offering trauma-informed workshops, support and residentials for individuals in group settings; and,
- delivering workshops and speaking engagements to enable organisations to be better informed about how to support people with trauma in the workplace.

Holly Perreault is the Founder & CEO as well as a certified Trauma Recovery Coach, and public speaker. She herself had experienced childhood trauma and is grateful for the recovery she attained after 40 days in a USA-based programme that combined intensive residential and outpatient recovery approaches. This experience of recovery gave Holly a deep desire to support other adults to achieve the same.

In 2018, Holly left her career in the tech industry (Microsoft) in Seattle, Washington and moved to Northern Ireland. It was evident then that the type of recovery opportunity that had been available to her in the United States was not available in Northern Ireland. Thus began the idea of establishing Recentre.

Holly returned to University (Ulster) in 2018 to reskill with a degree in therapeutic communications and counselling. In early 2022 she also attained her certification in Trauma Recovery. Her message is that breaking the silence is the key to breaking intergenerational cycles of abuse and trauma. Holly has shared publicly several personal examples of her trauma including how she was able to speak up, choose forgiveness and finally, heal the wounds through a variety of recovery opportunities.

Whilst Recentre is currently part funded through corporate work, the pilot programme (hereafter referred to as 'the programme') was funded from Holly's personal funds. In the future, the programme as a whole will be funded privately by the individuals, scholarships from Recentre fund raising, corporate scholarships, insurance, and other programmes.

1.2 Staffing and Governance Structure

Recentre's personnel currently comprise:

- Four core staff
- Two core therapists; and,
- A three-person multi-disciplinary Advisory Board.

Further details of each of these are set out below.

Core Staff

Holly Perreault, CTRC, BSc (Hons) : CEO and founder of Recentre Limited & Certified Trauma Recovery Coach

- Recovery from childhood trauma as a result of participation in a 40-day USA-based programme that combined intensive residential and outpatient recovery approaches.
- Understands, first-hand, the value of the format and approach of ‘healing in community’.
- 25 years’ experience in management and leadership roles across a range of industries;
- Examples of her public speaking engagements include:
 - TEDx Talk (Stormont Studio) in 2021 - [Healing is Possible After Sexual Abuse](#)
 - Action Trauma Summit in June 2021 - [Breaking the Cycles of Sexual Abuse and Trauma - YouTube.](#)
 - Nexus and Victim Support Conference in Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week 2021 - [Surviving Childhood Abuse.](#)

Jane Braiden, BSc (Hons): Operations & Holistic Director

- Trauma Informed Yoga Teacher;
- Career Coach;
- 20 years’ experience in management and leadership roles across a range of industries;
- Executive Coach and a member of the Association of Coaching;
- Currently studying an MSc in Applied Positive Psychology & Coaching Psychology;
- Supports the CEO in building the Recentre team and partnerships and leads holistic programming;
- Lived experience of navigating anxiety and depression, two common symptoms of trauma; and,
- Facilitates workshops about trauma-informed practice, stress management, energy management, wellbeing, managing self-doubt, emotional intelligence, and resilience.

Niamh Callaghan, BSc (Hons): Communications & Logistics Coordinator

- BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Communication and Counselling Studies
- MSc in Applied Developmental Psychology at Queens University Belfast.;
- Responsible for communicating Recentre’s core ethos across multiple platforms and public campaigns.
- Creates compelling and innovative content for Recentre that both informs and supports clients.
- As of September 2022, Niamh has accepted a place on a PhD in Psychoanalysis and Culture at Ulster University
- Lived experience of childhood trauma; and,

- After studying art at foundation level prior to her degree, Niamh realised, after her own personal counselling sessions following trauma in her childhood, that she wanted to explore a future that enabled her to help support others in a therapeutic setting.

Caitlin Arthurs, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator

- Studying towards a BSc in Business and Information Technology at Queen's University Belfast;
- Responsible for developing a programme of work and content while also reporting on the impact and progress of this;
- Creating engaging, while also informative, content for all of Recentre's platforms to show our core values;
- Reaching out to potential clients and participants to offer advice and help to gauge what service best suits them.

Core Therapists

(The core therapists are only active during Recentre's trauma support programme workshops (i.e. not Recentre's organisational trauma education).

Michelle McMaster, MREs, BSc (Hons), MBASW, CCTP

Founder of Kintsugi Healing

Trauma Recovery Consultant

Group Facilitator

Annmarie McCarthy, MIHAIP, MICP, MIACP, MEASE

Integrative Psychotherapist and SEP Practitioner

Group Facilitator

Advisory Board

Peter Lockhart

Counselling Supervision

Leadership & Management

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Trauma Studies

Therapeutic Counselling

Dr Trisha Forbes

Chairperson of the Board for the NI Mental Health Arts Festival

Person-centred Counselling

Research Fellow in the School of Social Sciences

Education, and Social Work in Queens University Belfast

Dr Gareth Patterson

GP - NHS & Private Practice

GP Specialty Training

Member of the Royal College of General Practitioners

1.3 Target Client Group

Recentre's trauma support programme, like the programme, currently supports women aged 18 and over. Male participants (over 18) are eligible to attend. However, so far, none have come forward. Recentre wishes to offer co-ed groups in the future³.

Perceptions of trauma can vary. Recentre supports individuals to heal from experiences that cause intense physical and psychological stress responses. These stress responses can be a result of a single event, multiple events, or circumstances within an individual's immediate environment. Such a response can arise from experiences including, though not limited to: Workplace trauma, abuse/ assault, loss, domestic/ sexual violence, childhood trauma, vicarious trauma, conflict, living through a natural disaster, emotional abuse, neglect, or financial or family breakdown and world events such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.4 Recentre's Services

Recentre currently offers:

- Bespoke training programmes and trauma education;
- Consulting on Mental Health Culture and Safety in the workplace; and,
- Trauma support programme.

Each of these is described below.

³ NOTE: Future programmes are necessarily tailored to the needs of the participants at the time. Recentre is working on new campaigns for end of the year to attract male participants.

Bespoke training programmes/ Trauma education

Developed and delivered for organisations and corporate clients, Recentre offers education about, and solutions to, the impact of trauma in the workplace. The format and content of this is adapted to fit the requirements of its clients.

This work is designed and delivered by Holly Perreault, Jane Braiden & Niamh Callaghan.

Trauma Support programme

Recentre's trauma support programme (which the sole focus of this evaluation report) consists of three main aspects:

- Virtual Process Group Therapy;
- Group Intensive Workshops; and a,
- Residential.

Each of these different aspects is described below.

Virtual Process Group Therapy

This comprised of a group discussions whereby participants met online with trained group facilitators and professionals. Each session lasted for 2 hours. The intention was to create a space that would enable participants to be and feel supported throughout their trauma healing journey. In this safe setting, participants were offered 30 minutes of education on a variety of topics relating to healing from trauma, encouragement, different perspectives, peer support and the opportunity to further develop self-awareness.

Michelle McMaster facilitated these sessions along with suitably qualified and experienced associates⁴ to support those online as needed.

Group Intensive Workshop

Recentre's educational workshop (further details in Appendix D) shared knowledge about trauma, stress responses, coping mechanisms, and provided participants with different approaches and strategies to help them in their journey of recovery. Participants were also encouraged and supported to develop strategies for self-care.

This session was co-facilitated by:

Holly Perreault, Jane Braiden, Niamh Callaghan, Michelle McMaster & Annmarie McCarthy

⁴ Soibhan Quigley & Diane Hickey

Group Residential

The 5-day residential (further details in Appendix D), gave participants the opportunity to immerse in, and explore, a range of therapies/techniques to discover what resonates with them; what is most impactful for them. By introducing new interventions, participants had the means to find what was right for them based on their particular needs.

The residential was co-facilitated by:

Holly Perreault, Jane Braiden, Niamh Callaghan, Michelle McMaster & Annmarie McCarthy

1.5 Vision for the Future

Recentre's vision for the future includes its programme becoming a key focus in the field of trauma support in both Northern Ireland and beyond.

Recentre wants its services to be recognised as an appropriate method of support for psychological distress and accessible.

It wants to improve mental health and well-being and so decrease the need for prescription medication and self-medication.

It seeks to improve relationships, decrease intergenerational trauma and, in turn, change the trauma landscape and narrative.

2. WHAT WE SET OUT TO EVALUATE?

2.1 Aims and Objectives of this Evaluation

There is nowhere in Ireland that currently offers a trauma support programme like that provided by Recentre. No programme on this island currently combines multiple interventions in a group with a residential in the particular way that Recentre's programme does.

Whilst programmes similar to this are currently available in the United States e.g. The Meadows[®] whose senior fellows include Peter Levine, Patrick Carnes, Pia Melody, and Bessel van der Kolk, and their efficacy had been repeatedly well demonstrated.^{5 6}, Recentre sought, through this evaluation, to establish the effectiveness of its programme (based on similar principles and practices) for people affected by trauma in Ireland.

Specifically, Recentre wanted to:

- *Establish the impact and effectiveness of its programme on participants seeking recovery from trauma and its effects;*
- *Assess the extent to which participants, who completed the programme, had, by self-report, acquired the capacities they needed to recover, and stay recovered, from their trauma; and,*
- *Elucidate where possible, critical success factors; and,*
- *Identify how the programme might be improved going forward.*

⁵ Examples of evidence of efficacy An investigation of trauma-centered inpatient treatment for adult survivors of abuse : David C Wright, Wendi L Woo, Robert T Muller, Cheryl B Fernandes, Erin R Kraftcheck <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12686324/> and

⁶ Inpatient treatment for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse: a preliminary outcome study [Ellen K K Jepsen , Tron Svagaard, Mona I Thelle, Leigh McCullough, Egil W Martinsen](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19585339/) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19585339/>

3. WHAT WE DID

The table below summarises the key stages of this evaluation.

<p>Stage 1: Project Initiation (26 Jul 2022)</p> <p>WBM met with Recentre’s Founder and Communications and Logistics Coordinator and agreed: Terms of reference, nature, and scale of data already available for examination (quantitative and qualitative), profile of participants to be interviewed, specific staff to be interviewed and broad approach to be taken to each, broad themes to be examined in the participants’ interviews and staff group interview, final evaluation report format plus key logistics and timings for the evaluation overall.</p>
<p>Stage 2: Evaluated Existing Data Sets (26 Jul – 4 Aug 2022)</p> <p>WBM evaluated the data that Recentre has already gathered from participants in relation to impact and effectiveness, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative: CORE-OM⁷ data (pre and post programme); • Qualitative: Feedback from participants following participation in the online group therapy sessions and residential.
<p>Stage 3: Signed off Research Instruments and Recruitment Processes (By 4th Aug 2022)</p> <p>Recentre signed off:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent forms and information sheets for participants to be interviewed (Appendix A); • Discussion schedule re telephone interviews with programme participants (Appendix B); and, • Discussion schedule re the group interview with key staff (Appendix C). <p>Recentre administered the evaluation information sheets & interview consent forms in relation to the telephone interviews with participants. In response, WBM was provided with a list of first names of participants, dates, and times agreeable to contact them and the participants’ respective mobile telephone numbers.</p>
<p>Stage 3: Conducted Telephone Interviews with Programme Participants (W/c 8-15 Aug 2022)</p> <p>WBM conducted telephone interviews with 5 programme participants⁸.</p>
<p>Stage 4: Conducted Group Interview with Key Recentre Staff (25 Aug 2022)</p> <p>WBM conducted a face-to-face group interview with the Founder & Managing Director of Recentre and the Communications Manager.</p>
<p>Stage 5: Report (2 Sep 2022)</p> <p>WBM compiled draft final report of key findings, conclusions and recommendations from the evaluation to Recentre on 30 Aug 2022. Final report was prepared (2 Sep 2022) after final revisions and necessary refinements had been made following feedback from Recentre key staff.</p>

⁷ For further details on the scope and analysis of the CORE-OM tool kit, see here https://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_System_Outcome_Measure.html

⁸ Only one of the programme participants was unable to take part in the interviews for personal reasons. The remaining five participants were all interviewed.

4. WHAT WE FOUND

4.1 OVERVIEW

The sections below set out the findings from our analysis of the evidence of the impact and effectiveness of the programme based on:

- (a) Participants' feedback (Sections 4.2 – 4.5 below) in relation to:
 - Shifts in their health and wellbeing according to the CORE-OM instrument;
 - The process groups / online group therapy.
 - The residential; and,
 - Their overall experience as described during their respective telephone interviews.

- (b) The views of Recentre's Founder/Managing Director and Communications and Logistics Co-Ordinator (Section 4.6 below).

4.2 POSITIVE SHIFTS IN PARTICIPIANTS' HEALTH & WELL BEING (CORE-OM)

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The analysis of the CORE-OM data (pre and post) demonstrates that the programme has been highly effective for the vast majority (5 out of 6) participants.

GOING FORWARD

Based on the experience of one participant, Recentre may wish to explore how, within the programme and / or afterwards, the programme might provide further support and ongoing connection for participants who could benefit from it.

“CORE-OM is a client self-report questionnaire designed to be administered before and after therapy. The client is asked to respond to 34 questions about how they have been feeling over the last week, using a 5-point scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'most or all of the time'. The 34 items of the measure cover four dimensions:

- *Subjective well-being;*
- *Problems/symptoms;*
- *Life functioning; and,*
- *Risk/harm.*

The responses are designed to be averaged by the practitioner to produce a mean score to indicate the level of current psychological global distress (from 'healthy' to 'severe'). The questionnaire is repeated after the last session of treatment; comparison of the pre-and post-therapy scores offers a measure of 'outcome' (i.e. whether or not the client's level of distress has changed, and by how much).

The CORE Outcome Measure (CORE-OM) was conceived as a non-proprietary measure of psychological distress. Crucially, it was informed by feedback from practitioners as to what they considered to be important to include. Since its development the CORE-OM has been validated with samples from the general population, NHS primary and secondary care, and in older adults.”⁹

⁹ Source: https://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Core_System_Outcome_Measure.html

The CORE-OM instrument was completed by all participants (before the residential) in December 2021. Two of the process group sessions had already taken place at this stage.

Six months later, in June 2022, each participant completed a 'post' version of the CORE-OM questionnaire at the end of the last group therapy and the end of the programme.

The graph overleaf¹⁰ shows that:

- Before the programme, all 6 participants were experiencing levels of stress above 'healthy' (i.e. Score of 21 or more). Of these:
 - 2 were experiencing a 'low' level (between 21 and 33);
 - 2 were experiencing a 'mild' level (score between 34 and 50); and,
 - 2 were experiencing a 'moderate to severe' level (score between 68 and 84).

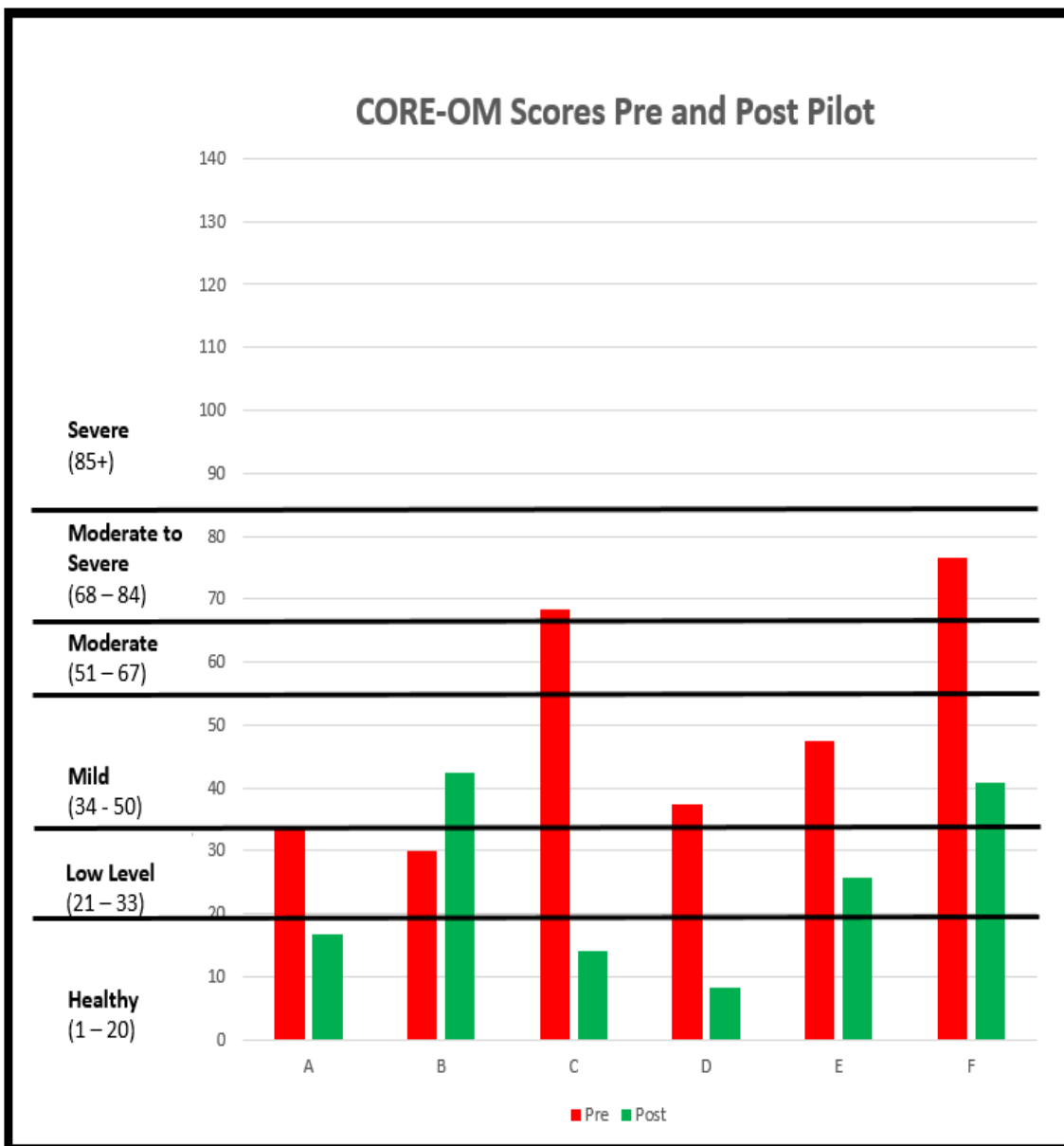
- After the programme:
 - The vast majority (5 out of 6) reported large reductions in their stress levels;

 - Half of the participants (3) scored well within the 'healthy range' (i.e. scores of less than 20). Of these:
 - 1 had previously experienced 'moderate to severe' level of stress;
 - 1 had previously experienced 'mild' level of stress; and,
 - 1 had previously experienced 'low' level of stress.

 - Two participants, who did not attain the 'healthy' score at the end of the programme, nonetheless succeeded in dramatically reducing their experience of stress. Each of these participants halved their scores from their original stress levels. One shifted from 'moderate to severe' to 'mild' while the other progressed from 'mild' to 'low'.

 - The stress score of only one participant (who started at a 'low' level) increased to 'mild'. Further investigation into this participant's CORE-OM responses (pre and post) revealed that the increased scores (i.e. greater stress) were attributed to a combination of feeling the following more often than before: overwhelm, lack of energy, isolation / needing support as well as physical aches and pains.

¹⁰ WBM has forwarded the full data set of anonymised CORE-OM results sent to Recentre (Aug 2022)



4.3 FEEDBACK FROM THE PROCESS GROUPS SURVEY

In February 2022, approximately half-way through the delivery of the programme, Recentre used an online survey to gather the views of all 6 participants on the impact and effectiveness of the work so far. By that point, 6 online process groups and the one-day intensive workshop had been completed. Our analysis of the feedback from all 6 participants is set out below.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- All participants found the process groups helpful and believed the new learning would benefit them.
- Collectively, the process groups helped them to: feel safe, supported, understood, guided, heard, experience a sense of belonging, feel connected to others / less isolated, break past cycles of behaviour and grow beyond their past experiences.
- What they had learned gave them greater self-confidence, more self-compassion and improved their listening skills.
- In terms of what was not helpful, two of the participants indicated that they were (at least initially) 'not good' with technology. Another did not enjoy reading material off PowerPoint slides / found this 'slow'. Another found it challenging (at least initially) to be in a virtual group rather than face to face; felt they were missing the normal cues / body language available in an in-person meeting.

GOING FORWARD

Recentre may wish to explore:

- *How to convey key material in a more readily accessible format (e.g. video or animation) rather than PowerPoint.*
- *How to better support and allay concerns for participants who are apprehensive about using technology and participating in these virtual process groups as part of the programme.*

Feedback from the Process Group Survey (n=6)

Q1 What was helpful about the virtual process groups?

The amazing support and guidance from the therapist is something else. Feeling heard and supported by everyone is a great feeling of belonging.

It was a great way to introduce ourselves but feel safe in the comfort of our own homes.

Being part of a community where we could start to build connections and discuss intentions to breaking cycles of behaviour due to past experiences.

We could meet despite being in different locations and despite covid restrictions making meeting face to face challenging.

It was a good way of getting to know everyone but in the comfort and safety of my own home.

I love the education pieces coupled with hearing and sharing each other stories. It makes you feel less alone. I also love how we are gently encouraged to participate taking us outside those comfort zones. I feel I have grown so much in a short space of time.

Q2 How do you think the new learning will benefit you?

To be less afraid to tell my story, and know I don't have to suffer in silence. Have more confidence. Live a much more fulfilling life because I will be less affected by trauma.

I hope to be a better friend by listening and understanding.

It will help me in the future to know what to look out for

I hope I can put the learning into practice. Slow myself down and not treat myself so harshly, going forward.

I will be kinder to myself and others and listen more.

I feel it's given me create more confidence and ability to be kind to myself and challenging that critical voice not just accepting it.

Q3 What was least helpful about the virtual process groups?

I can't say there was anything least helpful. Time is plentiful to express oneself and I never felt stuck when trying to communicate my trauma/feelings or emotions. The therapist and others were very patient, understanding and give amazing support during and after sessions if needed.

I am not great with technology but I am getting better.

Some of the education parts were a bit slow, just reading off Power Point slides

Not seeing people in the one room makes it difficult to pick up on emotions, non-verbal cues and in my opinion this made it challenging for us as a group to become comfortable to share experiences and build trust in the beginning.

I am not great with technology so sometimes I stressed a bit about that.

I think at the beginning it felt quite slow and I had a period I was unsure if it was for me. Once we moved to sharing and participating this changed.

4.4 FEEDBACK FROM THE RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

In April 2022, on the last day of the residential, and when the programme had only 4 process groups to go, Recentre conducted an (online) survey seeking participants to seek views on their experience of the residential specifically. Our analysis of the participants' feedback is set out below¹¹.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- All participants who responded to the survey (n=4) were satisfied with all aspects of the residential with:**
 - All 4 reported being 'very satisfied' with the group activities, location, and catering;
 - 3 out of 4 were 'very satisfied' with the 'duration' and the 'snacks'; 1 out of 4 was 'satisfied' with these.
- Whilst different participants had each enjoyed individual activities there was collective gratitude for the care, attention that Recentre's team had put into its design & delivery and the sincerity of the team that infused the way in which the work was undertaken.**

GOING FORWARD

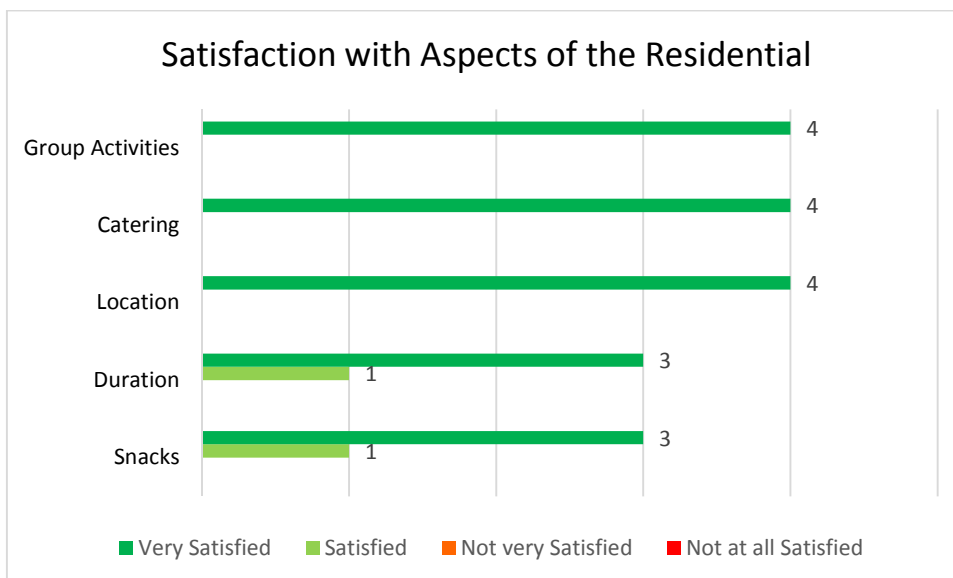
Recentre may wish to explore:

- *Having specific trauma activities on different days and each earlier in the day to help participants participate in and integrate the respective insights more easily and fully;*
- *Assessing in advance and making time available in the schedule for participants pastoral/spiritual needs / practices; and,*
- *Offering more one to one sessions for participants who wish to avail of them.*

¹¹ Full data set returned to Recentre, August 2022

Participants' Feedback

Q1 Satisfaction with Different Aspects of the Residential



Q2 What did you like best about the residential?

- Everything was so well organised and very well thought of. My favourite activity was yoga.
- I loved the attention and care that was put in everything was thought of. I loved how well thought out the activities were and balance of the same. I loved all the support team, how genuine they were and how much they gave of themselves. The team out did themselves.
- How everything was so thought out with choice where possible, compassion, and care.

Q3 What would you change about the residential?

- I'm not sure there was anything I would change.
- More therapy or sharing sessions.
- [Two trauma tools] not on the same day as it felt too much and too close to bed.
- The [trauma tools] activities to be on a day each to truly honour the work undertaken, review feedback and sit with self reflection.

Q4 Do you have any additional suggestions?

- Holistic/optional spiritual time each evening on a Sunday. I'm not particularly religious but I need to connect spiritually to my divine and so I had an altar in my room but it would have been good to see aspects of choice with this.

4.5 FEEDBACK FROM THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS

4.5.1 Overview

In August 2022, (approximately two months after all participants had completed the programme), WBM conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with each of the 5 participants who were available to be interviewed.

- All of the programme participants had experienced complex trauma¹².
- All were female and currently lived in Northern Ireland.
- The participants' ages ranged from 36 to 46.
- The average age was just over 40 (40.2).
- At the time of this evaluation, five of the 6 participants were available for interview.

4.5.2 Why I came on the Programme

How did you find out about the programme?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- All of the participants had become aware of the programme through word of mouth / through a connection with someone who already knew about the project.

GOING FORWARD

As Recentre goes forward, it would be important to determine the maximum possible number of participants per programme that the organisation can accommodate whilst continuing to ensure that the high levels of benefit are still achieved for participants.

Participants' Feedback

- I had met [the Founder] through Nexus when she had done a talk, and I reached out to her. A couple of months down the line, she had said she was doing this programme and asked did I want to be a part of it.
- My counsellor, who has become my friend, said to me that this was happening, and it might be something I'd like to go for. I was like, "Yeah. Sign me up!"
- A friend shared it on social media. I replied to the information on that and spoke directly then to [the Founder]. The first contact with [the Founder] was through email.
- Via another lady who had already been in touch with [the Founder]. I always say the Universe works in mysterious ways!, so it just so happened that the other lady had been in touch with [the Founder] and she had mentioned to me about the programme. She's a survivor of trauma as well. It was just by luck that I had met this other girl.
- It was through a friend who knew [the Communications and Logistics Co-Ordinator]..., who then put me in touch with [the Founder], so it was kind of word of mouth.

¹² Child Sexual Abuse, Child Mental and Physical Abuse, "System" Children being taken away / Stolen from parents, Death of a baby, Domestic violence including being locked away, Prior Suicide, Medical, Abandonment, Suicide in family, Drug and Alcohol abuse at young age.

What was your main reason for deciding to take part in the programme? How did you think it would help you?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Before the programme, participants had tried various approaches to try resolve the trauma for themselves. Some had sought help from mental health services, others had sought support at their workplace, others still tried their own coping strategies. None of these approaches was working. On top of this, Covid happened and the result, for some of the participants, was greater isolation and pain.
- The main reason for deciding to take part in the programme was a realisation that the trauma was still very much affecting their quality of life on many levels. There was a strong desire too, to once and for all, fully resolve the trauma, and the effects of the trauma.
- There was also, in many cases, a desire to achieve this resolution without medication (which was felt to simply cover up symptoms rather than deal with the underlying cause).

GOING FORWARD

Recentre may wish to include specific points like the above in the development of its messaging for its awareness raising / communication strategy.

Participants' Feedback

- At the time, I was really struggling because Covid had happened. Usually, I'm someone that has my stuff together and manages really well. Then Covid happened, and suddenly all my coping mechanisms – like keeping myself busy, keeping control – were all just gone. So, I think I just wanted some kind of help because I'd reached out to Mental Health Support; I actually still haven't heard a thing, which is ridiculous! [This] programme really came at the right time. I just wanted to deal with my past because it had come up again. I just wanted to feel *better*, without medication. When I rang the GP, it was, "Take this medication". I have dissociative amnesia and my whole thing has been avoiding for years, so I wanted to deal with the thing head on and not with medication which would just gloss over it!
- I just knew that it was about past trauma – childhood trauma – and I was hoping that I could finally put to bed a lot of the demons from my childhood.
- I was working in a trauma-informed practice, but I wasn't getting support in work, and it was activating a lot of stuff personally for me, so I was looking for something that was a bit different to previous work that I'd looked for before for support.

- I had been through the mental health system [for a number of years] and, at the start, the waiting lists were so long for any kind of therapy. I think it was by the time I had met Holly [the Founder], it was 2021... I was still very much debilitated (I was basically *existing*), I thought, “I can't keep going on like this. I need help”. I was crying out for help. It was getting to the stage where I had suicidal attempts, ...[Then], Covid hit...so there was no face-to-face. Even whenever the lockdowns were being eased and lifted,...I knew that I needed to ask for *more* help [and] I wasn't getting it, and it was leaving me in a [a very debilitating] cycle.
- I was going through quite a difficult period, and I was just open and willing to try anything really, and it sounded like something interesting, a little bit different, and something that I thought would definitely help me.

What other options were open to you for support at that time?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- There was a sense that appropriate options were few and very difficult to access.
- Among the options that were (theoretically) available were anti-depression / anti-anxiety medication. However, some participants felt this would not resolve the issue per se and one was told that a treatment plan could not be put in place without a prescription for medication.
- Mental Health Support is (theoretically available, but participants reported long waiting times to be seen (months and years).
- Counselling was another option that at least one participant had tried.

Participants' Feedback

- Mental Health Support – 2 years ago. The GP on the phone had said all they could do was give me medication. I am anti-medication! He basically said that if I refused to take medication then they couldn't put a treatment plan in place for me. I still haven't heard anything. He told me he would put me on a waiting list for the Mental Health Team. I think I got a letter saying I was on a waiting list, but nothing since.
- At that time, I wasn't actively in counselling sessions.
- At that point, I was on antidepressants and anxiety medication directly related to work, and I was waiting for face-to-face placement through the GP referral. I was waiting at that stage for maybe 3 months, and this popped up.
- I don't feel there was a lot here in Northern Ireland in regards [to] therapy.

How come you decided to choose this programme (i.e. and not perhaps some other option)?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- A number of aspects attracted participants, including:
 - the unique and holistic approach;
 - the carefully thought out programme;
 - the intensive nature of it with the potential for resolution of the trauma;
 - the opportunity to meet with, and share with, others with similar experiences;
 - the fact that the Founder had lived experienced of childhood trauma and had recovered, and at least part of that recovery was a programme like this; and,
 - the way the programme was described; it intrigued and appealed.

Participants' Feedback

- Talking to Holly, I knew how passionate she was about helping other people, and, for me, there's nothing like this in Northern Ireland in terms of really going into depth and actually dealing with the trauma and getting to experience different techniques and mediums rather than just take medication or do a bit of CBT. It was the whole approach. I really liked the idea of being able to sit with others as well because, often in this country, if you *do* get help! it's one-to-one support. It was all of that. I just loved the whole programme because she'd given me a sample of all the things they were going to include, and I have never heard of anything like that.
- I don't think I was in a *very* bad place at that time, but I was just carrying on with life. Things hadn't got so bad that I felt the need to go back to counselling at that point, but I know that the underlying issues do raise their head every now and again, so I wanted to work through some of that. I was just really interested in the project because it excited me in a way and it intrigued me. Whenever I met Holly face-to-face, she told me a bit about herself and some of the horrors that she had been through, and I could really relate. It was heart-warming to see that someone else had been through it and was making a positive impact on other people.
- This was much more appealing because it was exactly what I was looking for – trauma. It seemed to offer a whole holistic approach. I wasn't happy about being on medication. To me, that was a real last resort. I do understand medication has its place, but for me it was a real last resort, and I felt very desperate. So, when I saw this, I was very anxious / very nervous about applying. I wasn't too sure exactly what it was going to be, but there was an appeal in how it was worded. I can't remember how it was worded, but there was an appeal in it. It felt much more in line with what I was looking for compared to face-to-face counselling which I never ever got! It was just *something* while I was waiting for this counselling...because I felt the real urgency of needing *some* form of support.

- The course or the group just seemed like something more intensive and that I wouldn't find anywhere else. I didn't really find anything like that anywhere else.

4.5.3 How the Programme has helped me

Has the programme helped you?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The participants were unanimous. YES, the programme had helped them. "100%", "Absolutely" and "Phenomenal" were some of the descriptions of the impact on them.
- Indeed, it had helped them in multiple ways. (See later for details of positive shifts in emotional and physical health and wellbeing).
- The critical success factors participants identified were:
 - being heard, understood, and validated in a safe space;
 - guided by the experienced and knowledgeable trauma therapists;
 - receiving intensive therapy and intensive support;
 - mutual support from fellow participants;
 - the fact that the programme was 'outside' the traditional medical system and they and their trauma were thereby treated differently, and, crucially, not 'medicalised';
 - having a wide variety of tools to cope much better in future.

GOING FORWARD

As before, Recentre may wish to include specific points like the above in the development of its messaging for its awareness raising / communication strategy.

Participants' Feedback

- Absolutely.
- Definitely.
- 100%.
- The programme helped me so much. I still have really tough days, but the network of girls there that are even still there for support... you had people validating what you had been through. You were being heard. You were being guided. You were being supported.... Since I have left the residential, I've had so many tools.
- It's been phenomenal to my life. It really has. The change even from being this person who was disassociated.

Overall, how would you rate the impact of the programme on you?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The vast majority of the participants (4 out of 5) rated it as “Excellent”. One rated it as “Good”.
- All participants reported a range of important positive changes (emotionally, mentally and inter-personally) that had taken place for them:
 - Can now feel, rather than feeling numb (from dissociation);
 - Destructive habits fallen away;
 - Have a new sense of self; Realise that the trauma does not define them;
 - Feel more confident; more valued; more content;
 - Feel more able to connect with and trust others;
 - Now have better coping mechanisms; and,
 - No longer on any medication.

GOING FORWARD

Again, as before, Recentre may wish to include specific points like the above in the development of its messaging for its awareness raising / communication strategy.

Participants’ Feedback

- The difference that I feel in myself. Not only how much better I feel in myself, but others have noticed it as well. I'm more confident in myself. Over the programme, I found my voice. I just feel better in myself. I would have binged eaten. I haven't binged eaten from when I finished the programme. I kind of felt numb before, like I was just floating along in life. I feel like I'm able to feel more / engage more with people.
- I just feel more content in *myself*, and valued. My trauma doesn't define who I am. I'm not as weird as I thought I was.
- I have better coping mechanisms in place now. I'm no longer on any medication. I'm definitely in a completely different place in my life from where I was whenever I first saw the ad and applied. Some of the tools have been new, and some of them have reminded me that I've got skills in my toolkit and just reminded me how to use them... It's really upskilled me and reminded me that I can cope with difficult situations and I'm not in the same situation that I was in.
- I would have to say ‘excellent’ from how far I've come. I've been online with the therapists and the other girls for 9 or 10 months. There's no doubt it's been excellent. I've had that support.

- It helped me a lot when I needed it. It was something worthwhile that I have no regrets doing. It made me look at a lot of different things that I probably wouldn't have other than being in the group. Definitely had benefits.

It is not uncommon for people who have experienced trauma to experience a range of emotional and physical effects afterwards. Can you please tell me if being on the programme helped you with any of these? And if so, how specifically did the programme help you with these?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The participants interviewed detailed an extensive range of significant emotional and physical aspects that prior to the programme they had struggled with for a long time. The programme empowered them to overcome these challenges. They reported feeling better, crucially, through having developed the inner knowledge and capacity to maintain, this improved state of physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Collectively, participants stated that the programme had helped them as follows:
 - **EMOTIONALLY:** Reduced isolation, anxiety, sadness, anger, and shame. Helped them feel optimistic about the future again.
 - **PHYSICALLY:** Their bodies felt more relaxed, felt they had more energy, developed a better sense of self. Overall, felt better able to cope.

Participants' Feedback

EMOTIONAL

Isolation: *Less isolation / feel supported*

- Absolutely.
- Yes. Definitely. I got so emotional at the end. For the last 2 or 3 sessions that we had over Zoom, I was an emotional wreck because I knew I was going to miss that scheduled support. We were meeting every 2 weeks on a Zoom call and I was so sad that it was going to be coming to an end. I find it hard to stick with regular self-care elements in my life. With counselling, I'll only do it for a certain amount of time. If it's Reiki or a massage or something, it'll be kind of sporadic. I try and keep up with those more regularly now, so I think just having that regular place to vent I think really helped.
- 100% helped. [There was] the support of 5 other women and the support team that I know is there, that I didn't have before. I didn't *trust* before, so it's definitely helped in terms of building trust. [The programme helped with] shared experience. [Trust and shared experience are] 2 things that I wouldn't have been open to exploring before this, and I've done a lot of different kinds of programmes and a lot of different avenues for support, so that's something that, so far, has lasted, and I'm very grateful for it, and that's directly because of the programme.
- It really [helped] and even put a sense of how overwhelmed ... That obviously showed in me *in* the programme, but when I have the support and the help to know how to navigate through that and find a sense of safety, I can actually regulate myself so much more now.
- Meeting other people and building relationships with them, and seeing similarities that we had. It definitely made me feel less alone.

Anxiety: *Less anxious / worried* *Less intrusive memories* *Less panic / fear*

- Yes. Absolutely. I've actually noticed I've been dissociating less – actually being able to feel things more without going in to that dissociation.
- My anxiety was much less.
- [The programme helped with] all of that. I was immobilised by anxiety. I was having panic attacks. I was having anxiety attacks in my work and outside of work in home life (For example, going to a hairdresser, I couldn't get out of the car, so [my anxiety] was absolutely crippling) and was brought on all of a sudden. So this was a new experience I hadn't ever had up until last year. As well as the anxiety, I was on medication. I'm no longer on [medication]. The anxiety hasn't lifted completely, but I'm nowhere near the same level that I was before the course. [Regarding intrusive memories], throughout the programme there was definitely a recall of a lot of that, and that worried me about coming on the programme, but I found that I was so well-supported [and] there was so much cushion around me that I was able to feel those feelings and express them and have a forum to talk about them and unpack it a bit where I wouldn't have had that before. The support was with the members but also we were given one-to-one support as well. It was very unique in that I could rely on the group when I needed to, but I could also talk things out in more depth and how that was relating to now in my day-to-day life and why I felt they were popping up. That was something that was very unique and very helpful, that there was a professional – a trusting person – that had obviously the credentials behind them, but [also] a real down to earth approach that I could just say whatever was coming up, and it wasn't judged. What I was feeling was validated.
- I came out of the residential and [a relative] had just passed away the day I came home, so I was thrown in to quite an overwhelming state, but, whenever I look at that, I managed that weekend much different from what I would have *ever* done before. And I have anxieties, but I wouldn't say that they would hijack me just as much.[Before the programme], I would have been hijacked. I would have been in a state of overwhelm or distress or total shutdown... Even crying was never a thing until I was in the residential. Now I know “Just allow yourself to cry”. I know that sounds simple, but it's even the simplest wee [things] that you were holding in, I can now let go.
- I think it did [help]. At the time, the more people I shared with, the less heavy it felt. Just sharing my story took the big scariness away from it – the more people I told and the support I got.

Sadness *Less sadness, depression, despair, hopelessness, thoughts of self harm / suicide*

- Yes.
- Definitely the programme helped with that. [Sadness is] definitely less frequent.
- [The programme helped] with all of that. All of that [the feelings listed above] was there. There was never immediacy where I was ever going to act, but there was definitely suicide ideation. There was sadness. There was autopilot some days, where I was just getting up and functioning and doing the very basics. Before the programme, I wasn't able to do basic needs. I wasn't able to sleep, eat, shower, wash. Very basic needs weren't being met. The programme helped me pull out of that real darkness that I was in.
- I'm learning to sit beside it. That's a long way from where I have been. It would have been numbing, sitting in my living room not realising where the whole day went: "It's school time. Time to pick the wee man up". The programme has definitely given me progress. Being on the groups, I was once like a mouse, and I knew even by the end of it that I had found my voice. I was speaking my truth. I was able to share. Even way before the residential had come up, I was sharing things which I would never have in a month of Sundays. Sitting with a GP or in the psychiatric ward for 7 weeks, I just felt like a zombie, whereas I felt that I *belonged*. I felt a sense of belonging and that I was being understood so I could therefore say how I felt and use my voice. It was slow progress. I wouldn't have taken this call this time last year! There's no way I could have talked to somebody about how I was feeling. It's been a big major change for me and for my wee boy – working with him, and dealing with stress and anxiety and fear. I'm not hijacked.
- I didn't really have feelings like that, but sharing with other people made it less traumatic or less big in my head. Being in the group has helped.

Anger: *Less irritable Less feeling angry/violent towards others*

- That has gone way down.
- All my emotions seemed in better check through the whole course.
- I don't know if I had so much anger, but definitely I felt like a safe space within the group. When feelings like that did come up, I felt comfortable to express them.

Shame: *Less shame and self-blaming*

- Yes. Absolutely.
- We did one education piece one night on 'Shame'. The first time, I had such a *physical* reaction. I just felt sick. It really gave me the shakes. I felt very emotional, and I was crying. I think my level of shame has reduced.
- Definitely – [the programme] helped a lot with both. That's back to the coping and even just feeling validated and realising that I'm not living in that trauma now, that it's different situations and that I can break past that. There was a lot of skills and tools to work on not to fall into those cycles.
- I would have had feelings like that, and it helped with that. It was just sharing and the feedback I got from others; it made me feel less like it was my fault.

Feeling positive: *Able to feel warmth for others/ Feel more optimistic*

- Yes. Being able just to *feel* more and engage in relationships. And *trusting* people. That's a huge thing – closing yourself off – because it's safer that way, so I find I'm actually going out and *making* friends! And allowing myself to open up a bit more. I'm thinking, "OK. Trust doesn't mean that you're going to get hurt".
- I'm more understanding of other people and their situations. If someone's acting out a certain way, I'm trying to think, "Right. Well, there's maybe just so much more going on under the surface."
- Last year, before the programme, I wasn't able to be care properly. A caring role comes naturally to me. ...Being caring and compassionate is part of my nature, [but] I was not able to do those things [listed opposite] at all. That changed for me more than half way through the programme; I started realising that there was change happening. It definitely helped 100% with all of that.
- I kind of found myself again, and it was making those friendships with the other girls on the programme. That reminded me of who I am deep down, and that what happened wasn't going to have a lasting effect on me, and I was still the same person and am now able to have fun and build friendships.

PHYSICAL

Body more relaxed: *Less aches / Fewer panic attacks Chest not feeling tight or so tight / More relaxed / able to sleep better*

- What I've noticed is more a physical thing. I wouldn't have really felt a lot of pain or anything. I'd have had my bath boiling hot, and my partner used to go, "Oh my goodness. That would lift the skin off you". I have noticed I can't take my bath as warm because I'm *feeling* it more... I find that I'm starting to feel things – physical sensations – a bit more, whereas, before, I wouldn't have. I would describe it as being like a new born baby kind of feeling for the first time.
- I think it helped. I suffer from Fibromyalgia, I think as a result of past trauma, but I think I have felt much better since.
- For me, sleep's quite a tricky one. Sleep goes up and down quite a bit. At that point in time, I wasn't sleeping. I am sleeping now. If I'm not, I'm able to catch it earlier and notice when I'm not sleeping what else is going on. So it's helped for improving my sleep and it's made me aware that when my sleep dips again that there's always things around that I need to take notice of. For me, physically, it was more in my gut and my stomach. That's where I tend to hold a lot of it, and [also] tension in the back and shoulders. A lot of it [the programme] has taught me about self care, so what I've been doing is either reflexology or a massage. I fit something in somewhere in the month, so I'm keeping on top of the physical stuff that's happening. There would have been headaches and, because I was on the medication, I would have been sleeping at work, so that was causing difficulties in work. HR [Human Resources] was getting involved. Physically, staying awake at work because of the medication, and sheer exhaustion probably emotionally as well, all that was there *pre-programme*. Afterwards, the improvement wasn't just sleep and physical in my *body*. It was being aware of not dipping back again in to that cycle. I'm familiar now with what I'm feeling and [able to] look at what else is going on around me. I can see the beginnings of a pattern or cycle much earlier [now] and then I'm able to intercept it.
- I would have had a lot of somatic pain associated with trauma. When I came away from the residential, I had much less somatic pain in my legs. I don't know where it went, but it was just learning that I could *work through* this. A couple of the therapists on board did work with me, so, even physically, I'm not finding so many symptoms debilitating. I rang my GP yesterday. I [said] "Look. I'm in pain) and it's really .." .. I'm thinking whenever I wake from night terrors it has to be something else. I'm just offered [sleeping pills or pain killers] and I have really no need for that now. It was definitely all somatic. I still have the somatic, but I'm more aware of that whenever I'm triggered.
- Maybe when I first started, I was probably thinking, "Oh. How will I do this?" or I wasn't sleeping well, but I definitely started to feel more myself again, and less of that panic, and [am now] sleeping better.

Better energy levels: *Have more energy*

- Yes. I've gone back to the gym. I used to go to the gym 5 times a week. For four years, I haven't made the gym. I just didn't have the energy because I felt low and couldn't be bothered. [Now] I've been in the gym, gone out walking, just feeling happier within myself – just a real calmness. I'm now switching things around and trying to stay positive!
- It's kind of like a rollercoaster. Some weeks, you were touching on stuff that was very raw, so that could have maybe a negative impact [on energy levels] on how I would feel for a few days, but on the whole, everything has been much better.
- Definitely. That would have been from the residential onwards. About April, that's when I started noticing the energy level side. It's only recently that it's starting to dip again. There's been conversations in my house this week about, "What does that look like? What makes the change? What's happened?", and so it's even just realising there are cycles and things around that I need to maybe just change some things, and "What was working around that period that was working *really* well?", and "What have I let go of and changed that I need to look at it and put in place again?". Through the programme, we were given so many physical tools. We were given a bit of education around the science part of it – the psychological part of it – so even just having those notes [is helpful]. I have them sitting at a really handy place that I can go...And even just reviewing my notes guides me back to, "Right. I remember that session. I remember talking about that", ... So we were given really good things that I still use / that I still pull out our sheets and our different things that we've been working off from the education pieces. They're helpful...useful.
- My sleep wouldn't be great, so there's probably still a lot of work in regard to night terrors. They [the night terrors] have lessened, and I'm not so paralysed with them whenever I awaken. I know that I'm taking more time to look around me and know that I'm safe. It's just been a learning process for me to know that this is what I needed to do and being supported.
- It was probably feeding off the other people in the group – the other girls. The friendships and excitement and laughing [all] [helped].

Better sense of self: *Feeling ok about myself Being happy with my achievements*

- [Feeling] more accepted.
- I lost who I was last year in [my job] role, so I have since changed jobs... got... promoted, so I really think I've found myself again. I'm a lot happier and content. Whenever I'm happy, the *house* is happy! It runs much better whenever I'm at myself, so it has had a massive knock-on effect in my life in a very short period of time. This time last year, I wasn't functioning, I wasn't eating. I wasn't doing anything during the summer last year. From November right the way through to April, there was a massive change. It's only now that I'm starting to go, "Right. I need to look again [at notes from the programme]". I'm starting to feel a few things that I'm putting in place. "What am I taking on? It's too much. What can I do to set myself up getting in to this new role?", but [I'm] feeling like *myself*. I definitely feel that the programme and the support has been a massive impact / a massive factor in finding myself again and having the sense of self and building that self-worth and self-esteem.
- I started to study in September 2021, and for me to stick at the studying and progress there, the programme has even allowed me that chance because I've been supported with my own stuff and trauma / my experiences. I had stuff locked in a box and I thought that I would never ever be able to get where I have. I've finished my first year and that's been from the support of the group with dealing with my own stuff, so I've been able to have that bit more room to do things for me to do what I want to do.
- Yes.
- It reminded me of all those qualities I had. We did a lot of feedback, and the other girls I was with were so good in seeing the good qualities in me and reminding me of those. I really appreciated that.

Feel better able to cope *Able to cope more. Not overwhelmed. Able to do what I need to do. More able to talk to people.*

- Yes. I think [the programme helped].
- I would probably be more so interacting with people and willing to try new things a bit more. Not being as afraid to put myself out there.
- I probably just started feeling more stable in general, and more back to my old self, and it helped to ground me. The things I was carrying didn't seem as heavy or as big and scary.

4.5.4 Most Important Achievements

**What would you say are the top three ways the programme has helped you most?
And why were these aspects so important for you?**

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The main ways the programme helped participants was by:
- **CONFIDENCE: Improving confidence;**
 - **SAFETY: Providing a safe place in which to develop a sense of safety / enabling and supporting them to be vulnerable and to trust others;**
 - **TOOLS & EMPOWERMENT: Providing relevant knowledge, insights, tools and techniques for coping and ongoing personal development and empowering them so that they were able to receive / accept the support available;**
 - **COMMUNITY: Creating a strong sense of mutual support / community.**

Participants' Feedback

CONFIDENCE

- It helped my confidence a lot. [My confidence] had taken such a knock, and I'd really lost a sense of myself. I didn't feel like myself, and it put those wee pieces back together. Even just making friendships with the other girls, it was really important. It reminded me of who I was – who I *always* was.
- I would have what you would call "Imposter Syndrome", and that has affected every area of my life... [Now] I'm able to feel more confident and stand up and go, "No. I *am* good enough.". Sometimes it does creep back up, but the difference that this has made has been amazing, and I've been able to engage with others – trust people, build relationships – because I was very isolated, was very much on my own, and you don't notice until you start engaging with people what a difference that makes, being able to go out and trust people and make friends.
- I was a naturally confident person, but what I found through the programme was that a lot of that was a mask for how *not* confident I was... Throughout my life at different periods, I've lost who I was at different times. It's not just last year. This has been going on a lifetime, but last year was the real turning point with this programme because something had finally changed; the information was always there [but] I just wasn't able to connect it and actually make it fit and stay. Being confident was always important

because that's *me*. That's who I am. That's my identity. Normally, I can be very introvert and know when to be a hermit and close down and charge up, but, as part of my personality and the work I do, I'm naturally confident, and I lost a lot of that. I lost a lot of confidence in myself last year, so having that back has been really important.

SAFETY

- It has helped me process what I've been through. At the time when I joined, the whole trauma was consuming my life, and this was a good outlet to process it in a safe space and work on it and deal with it. I felt a little bit desperate because I did feel so lost and didn't really know how to do that by myself.
- Being able to sit with others... Before, I couldn't really admit what happened to me was awful, or it was always very surface-level: "This happened", but no real feelings towards it. But I've been able to sit and go, "Oh my goodness. What's happened to me is awful", and actually be kinder to myself and think, "Jeez! I've been through all that and I'm still standing here."
- It's helped me to trust other people. [Trust] is not something that I've ever really had. It's not something that I ever really looked for. It was only through the programme that I noticed. For all those different things that I've done – counselling and CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) training and different things – that's never actually come up for me, so it was a realisation through the programme that that was something I didn't even realise. I'm with my husband 21-22 years, and, even there, there was layers where I still found it very difficult. Being with somebody for 20 years and still feeling that I didn't fully trust them was a revelation because I thought, "We're together a lifetime. Of *course* I trust him", and I do, but there was obviously things there that I probably was aware of but just never had anybody to talk it out and feel that it was OK to talk about that. In terms of trusting other people and opening up, I would have shared enough of my story that it was polished and I could tell you a *version* of it, but to really share the parts that I really needed to share, I never [before the programme] had the support where I could do that. And that's happened over the course of this programme, so that was huge. That was stuff that I didn't even know that I *wanted* to work on that was there.
- Learning that I can be safe. Not being afraid to ask for help and to say what I want. There was safety there, and I learned to be safe – to feel more safety within myself. I was afraid. I was coming out in to the big bad world after 6 days of being somewhere secure, but I was able to navigate around that and know that I had enough safety within myself to be brave and face the outside world.
- With my partner, I was very, very closed off because I was like, "I can do this on my own. I don't need anybody. He doesn't need to know anything about me.", and I'm actually learning to talk about my feelings, and that has made a big difference – learning to be vulnerable. I'm learning that it's OK to be vulnerable.

TOOLS & EMPOWERMENT

- The education pieces were very good. Some of the things seem so obvious once you're *taught* them or have read about them. We talked about shame and the inner child and different things, and then we're encouraged to be kinder to our younger selves and more forgiving. I enjoyed every element of it. Some things felt uncomfortable, but I knew it was all for the greater good. When we were on our residential, some of the girls got very resistant to doing some of the tasks, but I just hunkered down and got on with it. Some of the stories were horrific, and I understand entirely why the girls were upset about having to relive those things, but I do understand that talking about these things and getting them out in the open – and especially in a safe environment where you were listened to and supported – was so beneficial.
- The care and support. I was so well-validated by these trauma therapists.
- There was so much *for us*. There was yoga, and it was trauma-informed.

COMMUNITY

- Feeling supported and listened to by everyone in the group. That was very helpful.
- Having my own opportunity to say *my* story and be listened to.
- It has made me feel less alone. I have felt a real sense of community or friendship. I felt like I was the only person in the world going through things like that, but it made me realise that I really *wasn't*. That was really important.

4.5.5 Where I am now compared to before the Programme

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- It is abundantly clear from every participant that they have made substantial and positive shifts in their self-concept, physical health and emotional well being as a direct result of participating in the programme.
- The main ways the programme enabled participants to:
 - **CONFIDENCE:** Develop confidence in themselves
 - **SAFETY:** Feel safe within themselves, become willing to be vulnerable and ask for and receive help others. Trust others to help them.
 - **BOUNDARIES:** Set healthier boundaries for themselves and actively self-care.
 - **JOY:** Experience joy and fun again.
 - **SELF COMPASSION:** Practice self-compassion.
 - **SELF-CONCEPT:** Find themselves again and become grounded.

Where I am now compared to before the Programme

Participants' Feedback

Before the programme I was...

And now...

It would have been difficult to sit with other people.

Now I can sit with other people.

I would have had a different view about myself before this.

Now I have the confidence to be myself and realise I'm good enough.

I was isolated before and found it difficult to be vulnerable.

Now I can engage and allow myself to be vulnerable.

I would have worked myself in to the ground. My addiction was work. I would really not stop, to the point where you had no space at all!

After the programme, I have reduced myself down to 3 days work a week. I've given myself more space. I'm learning I don't need to keep busy to the point where I've no space to do anything and I'm working myself in to the ground to exhaustion.

I couldn't say "No".

Now I can say "No".

Before the programme I was...

I felt anxious, inward.

I never asked for help.

I was caught in a cycle of despair... would have gone in to survival mode... gone from survival to autopilot to despair. That was the cycle.

I wasn't feeling joy. I wasn't letting myself feel joy. I definitely didn't have fun. I was *afraid* of having fun.

Most of my days, I was existing/surviving, wondering, "Am I in the real world? Stop the world and let me off". That's how I thought. "It's total chaos. It's chaotic". I just felt that I was doomed. I thought, "I'm doomed to feel like this".

I was very lost and scared and kind of 'off-balance'.

And now...

Now I'm more open, more understanding. I think I'm a calmer person. More well-rounded.

I've experienced what it's like to have trust and to ask others for help, and for it to be OK.

[Now I can] trust that others can help me – not that they'll let me down.

I discovered that I can have fun and feel safe. I can experience joy. These are things that I'm doing now that I never would have done.

Now, I can say I've worked hard. Even in the programme, there's been so much reinforced and support and guidance that you do start to believe in yourself and you know that the way that you survived was to keep you safe. Nobody had ever told me this before, so I thought I was just being lazy and a failure and couldn't move forward, stuck. Then I had the programme. It was a gift to find out who I was, and I am starting to believe in myself a wee bit more. I know that I've done a year's work and I'm giving myself credit, self-compassion for it, which [before] would have been like, "What's *that*?"!

The programme has helped me work on things, find myself again, and it helped ground me.

Do you believe that you will be able to maintain these changes yourself from here?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- ALL of the participants were confident that they were now able to maintain the positive gains they have achieved on the programme from here:
 - Participants felt so good they were motivated to keep practising the new things they had learned;
 - They were assured that they have the ongoing support of the therapists and fellow participants should they need it; and,
 - They had the knowledge and confidence to keep using the new tools and insights they had acquired.

Participants' Feedback

- Absolutely. It's about when you see the results, saying, "I want to keep this going". The trauma is like a rollercoaster. There's ups and downs, but I don't see a whole lot changing. I might get good and bad days, but I think I could definitely maintain it. I felt the change. I have never felt like this before. There has been long term changes. And I've got the support group and the staff from Recentre that I know I can reach out to at any time. It *has* to work. I'm not going back to the way I was feeling!
- Since the programme has finished, since we had come out of the residential, I knew that I was taking away something that I never had before, and that was finding *me*. That's a big big thing because I want to keep giving to me because I've learned that that can be done. I'm always scared to take the next step or whatever, but I *am* and I have been doing it. Yes – I have days where I think, "Oh, goodness. It's hard to get out of bed", but I'm more motivated now, and I offer myself that bit more, and ask myself, "What do I actually need here?". I would be *hopeful* that I could maintain what I've taken away from the programme, and, again, a big part of that is finding me, so that's been a major light switch moment for me. It's been everything. I have found that I am this being who... or it's a sense of being in a big world that has thrown a lot of crap at me.
- All the work I did through the group, I have the voice and the words of all the people on it – the support and the love and encouragement. That's in my head, so that's always a good reminder / a good help.
- There's still channels open for me. The counsellor that I've had appointed to me, we have each other's details. I'll maybe touch in once or twice a year and maintain. I think I've learned a lot.

- You do what you know until you know better. Now I know better. There are people around me that I can ask now. The people that are in my life before the programme, I can ask, and they have noticed changes. Having the toolkit to go to and look at, or email and reach out to somebody, or go on to a chat and ask questions instead of sitting and bringing up 'what if' scenarios and dwelling and overthinking. There are definitely things that are in place now that'll help me to maintain it that I wouldn't have had before the programme.

Do you feel you need further support?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- As further evidence of the lasting efficacy of the programme 4 out of 5 of the participants said that they felt no need of any kind of support at the moment (i.e. 2 months after exiting the programme).
- One had a private therapist before going on the programme and now feels the need to see this therapist a lot less.
- Overall, participants reported being in 'a good place', feeling empowered and were happy to know that support would be there if they needed it in future.

Participants' Feedback

- At the moment, I feel I'm in a pretty good place. I feel like I've got all the supports around me; it's that social supportive network. But I know that if I ever did need support, I still have my therapist that I had as part of the programme and I know that's there if I need it, or any of the staff or the other participants are there.
- At the moment, things are OK, but I know there will be future dips because there always is. It's not a set pattern of when I dip, but I know in my life that a couple of little things will go wrong and then it all snowballs and then you end up *very* down again. I was worried about the programme ending because it was like a big comfort blanket. I'm glad that there is ongoing support there if I need it. That is very important to me.
- What I've got from this [programme] has been literally life-changing and I feel confident that I can maintain it or go to a source if I'm not maintaining it. I feel confident enough that I could look for help if I'm not maintaining it, but I don't feel like I *need* further support. While it was lovely to have the contacts, I definitely got what I needed from it and I don't need anything further.
- I would have had a private therapist before the programme, and I would have been seeing her quite a bit, but ever since the programme my therapy has lessened a lot. I'm at the stage now where I know if I need support I can reach out and it's not that whole everyday

feeling of, “Oh, I don't know how I'm going to get through. I don't know this, that, the other.” There's been massive steps forward there for me.

- I'm feeling OK. I'm feeling more myself these days, but I'm probably someone who thinks we *always* should be doing work on ourselves, or I would always do more therapy or have more support. Overall, I'm feeling OK at the moment. I'm not as desperate as I felt when I joined.

4.5.6 How could the Programme be even better?

In your opinion, how could the programme (the groups and / or residential) be even better for future participants?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- As indicated earlier, participants were delighted with the content, delivery and impact of the programme overall.

GOING FORWARD...

To make future programmes even better, participants suggested that Recentre consider:

- More one to one sessions;*
- Participants meeting in person before going to online;*
- Offering annual top-up residential;*
- More physical activities; and,*
- Personal / Spiritual Time.*

Participants' Feedback

- **More one to ones:**
 - Maybe more one-to-one sessions – maybe 1 or 2 more. [i.e.] Instead of 2, maybe having 4. I found them really invaluable.
 - More one-on-one therapy with trained counsellors or psychologists. More intensive therapy sessions.
- **Participants meeting in person before going to online:** That was the only thing, but they [programme team] said they're going to change that [post-Covid]. It felt a bit awkward initially, but that's part of trauma too, because you're learning to trust and dip your toes in the water and feel more confident – knowing that, when it ends, that's not just going to be *it*.

- **Offering annual top-up residential:** [For example], once a year if people wanted to, looking at different things... just to know that's there and there is a top-up if you need it... Giving you that opportunity... and recognising healing just doesn't stop; it is a continuous journey.
- **More physical activities:** Maybe a few other physical activities might be nice – like teambuilding / fun things – before it gets in to the real hard core [emotionally demanding] exercises like [trauma support tools].
- **Personal / Spiritual Time:** I don't feel there was an opportunity or a time slotted in, if you wanted some time to reflect or time to pray or time to do *whatever*. I felt there was an opportunity to have something optional that, if somebody wanted to go and spend quiet time or meditate or pray or whatever, it was [there] for them. I did it [prayer / meditation] at night in my room. I had a wee place set up. I felt that was one element for *my* healing that was missed. ... I did that *every* night because that was part of *my* journey. I'm not saying it's there for everybody, but just to have something in there [might be helpful].

4.5.7 Perceived value of the Programme

Given the impact on you, what do you believe this programme is actually “worth” i.e. in monetary value? i.e. If you had not received a free place, how much money would you have been willing to spend to attain that impact?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- It was clear that the participants deeply appreciated the impact of the programme on them. One participant described it as “priceless”. Another said, “What I got from it, no money could buy”.
- The majority of the participants (3 out of 5) rated the programme as being worth somewhere between £2,001 and £3,000.
- The remaining two participants rated the programme as being worth between £1,001 and £2,000.

GOING FORWARD

Recentre may wish to consider a number of suggestions put forward by participants including:

- *offering future participants a payment plan;*
- *explain that it is life changing;*
- *including testimonials from past participants in the messaging;*

Participants’ Feedback

- **Less than £100** – No responses.
- **Between £101 - £1,000** – No responses.
- **Between £1001 - £2,000** – Two responses.
 - There is so much put in to it, and the value for that in what you're getting is an investment on *yourself*. The difficulty is that, when you enter it, you don't *know* the value you're going to get for it! I'm thinking about affordability. It probably would be £3000 plus in reality. It probably *was* that, but you don't know that when you go in.
 - To entice people in, it's really important to explain as best you can that it is life-changing and the value is invaluable. It really does have such a positive impact. [Perhaps include anonymous testimonials?. I didn't know what I was getting in to, and, at the beginning, I would not have paid [that much]. I wouldn't have had it anyway, but, even if I *could* afford it, I would have had to do payment plans or something, and, even then, I would have been wary. But coming out the other side of it [now] and knowing that it was so worth it, I would find a way – like a payment plan or something – to invest in it because it *is* worth it. The difficulty is how to explain that at the beginning when you don't actually know what it is and what sets this aside

from everything else. It is *completely* different from anything else that's out there at the minute. [Perceived it to be worth closer to £2,000 than £1,000).

- **Between £2001 - £3,000** – Two responses.
 - It's priceless. I would pay the earth because you pay for therapy and all these other things to try and make yourself feel better, but, what I've got from that, no money can [buy], so probably the top end of it. Probably £3000.
 - I think it's definitely worth £3000, but I don't know that I would have been able to commit to paying that out without the knowledge that it's helped so much. [Suggested a testimonial would have helped convince them of the programme's efficacy].
 - I just have no words for [the] healing and recovery [I experienced]. [Think about it] you're paying £60+ a session on private therapy, and you have that [therapy at the residential] available to you 24 hours of the day. I would say it probably would be nothing short of £2000-£3000. ...Financially, if you're wanting to get well, I know it's a lot of money, but the evidence is there. It works... I had times in the residential where I was so distressed, but did I need *detained*? – No, because I had the right support. To be getting that help,... I would put the money in to it.
- **More than £3,000** – No responses.

And finally, the programme was made up of two main elements:

- 16 weekly on-line group therapy sessions; and
- 6 nights residential with food and board paid, multiple workshops each day and daily access to two therapists.

Looking back, which element would you say you got the most out of - the Group therapy or the residential? And can you tell me, if possible, what “proportion” of benefit you got out of each element approximately? e.g. Was one element significantly more beneficial for you than another? Or was the benefit around 50:50 for each element?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Whilst the vast majority of the participants (4 out of 5) indicated that they had received the majority of the benefit from the residential. All acknowledged that the process groups and various exercises and contacts before the residential had been a vital precursor / preparation for it.
- Having the process groups online was also much more convenient for some participants and made it much easier for them to ‘stick’ with the programme.

Participants’ Feedback

Participant	1	2	3	4	5
	Proportion of personal benefit (%)				
I got the most out of...					
Group therapy	20	30	40	50	30
Residential	80	70	60	50	70

- The process groups were great, and they worked up *towards* the residential, so, without them, you probably wouldn't have got the same from the residential, but definitely [I got the most out of] the residential.
- There's nothing like being in a room together. There's only so much a computer can do, but we did build the trust over the group sessions, but it's not the same as seeing people in real life. We were all quite huggy people as well!, so it's just so much nicer working through stuff and then being able to get that *physical* hug at the end of it. There was a value in it being done on Zoom because some of the girls were from one end of the country and some of us were on the other, so it was good that way. I would worry that more people would drop out if it was all in a physical sense. I think it's one of those things that I maybe would have talked myself out of, if it was the thought of having to get a train up to Belfast every week or every fortnight for it. There is that extra effort, and then if you're upset after one of those sessions having to go out and face the world straight away, it could be difficult I would imagine. Everybody was in the comfort of their own home. They could have a cup of tea with them. Especially at the start, when we didn't know each other / we weren't sure of each other, we didn't really share our stories for a while at the beginning. We're all so vulnerable in the early stages.

- The residential made such an impact...nothing can take away from being in a room with people and feeling the feelings and sitting in company...The weekly support / the weekly connection on the Zoom was brilliant, but, if that had been in person, that would have grown much quicker. We would have been in a different place if we were meeting in person, although we wouldn't have been [able to do that easily because] we were we were spread all over the place [across NI], so that probably would have been different. In between the fortnightly connection, we had a one-to-one session, so I would do the work every week on *something*. That was really useful [too].
- The residential gave me so many tools, and online gave me so much. Online, I would have to have trusted and felt safe to be able to do the residential, so the online gave me all of that. And then, when I went to the residential, to be able to stay there and to be able to do the work, so I would have to put it down 50:50. There was so much learning in both. The online was fabulous.
- The group sessions were good to build the relationships before we did go away. [But the bulk of the benefit was coming from the residential].

And finally, would you recommend the programme to someone in your situation?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- All of the participants indicated that they would be very happy (“Definitely”, “Absolutely”, “100!”) to recommend the programme and indeed some had already done so.

Participants’ Feedback

- Already have, multiple times, because I know it works.
- 100%. Yes – because you are held in such a safe space, and the knowledge of the facilitators is second to none. They all bring something different to the table and they are just there to help you.
- I *have*, and I definitely would!
- Absolutely. I would have no doubt.
- There's nothing else out there that I know of. You could go to therapy every week, but it felt more beneficial to me and more intensive – in a good way – and it was just the sense of belonging and community with the other girls on the group.

4.6 INSIGHTS FROM THE RECENTRE PROJECT TEAM

4.6.1 How participants benefited

From what you observed, what were the most important shifts in the health and wellbeing of the participants overall. Summarise the nature, scale and significance of these.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The project team perceived that the most important shifts in the participants were two fold:
 - being able to trust again; and,
 - tangible sense of freedom from the previous effects of their trauma.

Project Team Feedback

- “They [the participants] started to build trust... first it was trust in [the Founder, who had lived experience of childhood trauma]” and then there was the trust within themselves and between one another... “[there was an] instant rapport following their stories [of their respective experiences]. This movement towards trust was highly significant because “some [participants] had never trusted anyone”.
- “They became free in their own bodies... something in their core changed... that feeling of tightness [left]... it was like the [previous] binding ropes broke and fell away... “[we watched] that ‘rope’ get more and more ‘tattered’” as “the real vulnerability came out” in the safe space created by the programme.

What evidence do you have, if any, that suggests that such benefits will be maintained or ideally developed still further by the participants?

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The participants have developed a new and strongly positive sense of self.
- They have found their voice and the courage to speak out.
- The old ‘story’ has been replaced with a new story focused on growth.

Project Team Feedback

- “They [the participants] have found their voice... they have something [new] to talk about... so much growth... their ‘story’ is now about growth... The previous stories [were about suffering]... They have a new sense of self, new identity... very empowering... and

they are excited about it... [Two] are willing to speak out publicly [which was unthinkable before now]...Their own success [and what they have already integrated as a result of being on the programme] will keep them on track.”

4.6.2 What worked well

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The careful preparation by the team and the safe space created by the programme.
- The willingness of participants to do the work within that space.
- The powerful positive dynamic created by the group.

Project Team Feedback

- “We [the team] created a very safe space to do the work [and]...they [the participants] were willing to do the work... the group setting was very powerful... truly transformational... people [the participants] shared... they trusted”.
- “The...one day event... really set them [the participants] up for the residential”.
- “You could see them processing [their past experiences]... it was very visual...[this was especially noteworthy since] most [participants] had not been comfortable in a group before...”

4.6.3 Options for Further Development

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The team intend to start with a one day intensive planned and paced so that key material /exercises are punctuated with space/time for reflection and integration.

In your opinion, might participants benefit still further if the project were to be modified in any way going forward?

Project Team Feedback

- Going forward, we intend to, “Start with the one day intensive, in person...”. This is perceived as more beneficial to the participants to meet face to face, build trust. Also, the team proposes to change “what they focus on that day... allow more time to process [the material / exercises] ... and more time on their own [for reflection / integration].... [This means] it can [actually] be done more ‘easily’... it’s positive... more ‘rest’ [spaces built in] for staff and participants”.

4.6.4 Future Challenges and Proposed Remedies

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The three main challenges going forward are perceived to be getting participants, getting male participants and getting funding. However, the project already has detailed plans in place to fully address each of these.

In your opinion, what are the top three challenges that the project faces going forward? What are Recentre’s proposed plans (short, medium and longer term) for addressing these challenges?

Project Team Feedback

- Getting participants and male participants – Recentre attracted the participants in the pilot without any formal marketing, simply word of mouth. Recentre is therefore confident that it will attract much higher numbers as a result of professional connections it has already developed in combination with the “strong marketing campaign” that has been created. This will be launched following a formal press release and professional awareness raising session that is scheduled for October 2022.
- Funding through referrals from health service professionals - The next phase will be to extract relevant information from this evaluation and to create a flyer / summary that will form part of an overall formal raising awareness campaign for GPs, Health Trusts and Health Boards. Recentre is actively seeking to understand precisely what is most helpful in assisting GPs to appreciate the benefits of the programme and to refer participants to it. As part of this, and as part of its plans for wider awareness raising going forward, Recentre has decided to appoint a Marketing Professional. The plans for this appointment are well advanced and a formal appointment is imminent.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Telephone Interview Consent Form and Information Sheet for Participants

Project Evaluation (August 2022) Informed Consent Form

PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet about what will be involved in a telephone interview with Well Being in Mind Limited (WBM) regarding the above project.
- I understand that participating is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. This will not impact on my rights.
- I understand that WBM will hold all information collected as strictly confidential.
- I understand that my responses during the interview will NOT be attributed to me.
- I agree to the telephone interview being voice recorded and written notes taken by WBM exclusively for the purpose of preparing the evaluation report for Recentre and that the recording and all associated notes will be permanently and securely deleted when the evaluation report has been signed off by Recentre.

.....
Name of participant

.....
Signature

.....
Date

INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Recentre Project Participant,

Well Being in Mind Limited (WBM) is a local (NI) independent, company that has been commissioned by Recentre to undertake an evaluation of its pilot project. As a participant in that pilot project, your views will be very helpful in evaluating and measuring the impact of the pilot project.

How can you help?

- ✓ We would like to invite you to take part in a semi structured telephone interview with the Researcher from WBM.
- ✓ The Researcher will lead the discussion and ask questions to encourage you to share your experience of the pilot project; i.e. the difference it made to you; how it affected / impacted you.
- ✓ The Researcher will NOT know, and DOES NOT NEED to know your personal history and you will not be asked questions about this.
- ✓ The Researcher who will conduct the interview with you is called, Eileen Beamish. Eileen is the Director of WBM.
- ✓ The interview will last a maximum of 30 mins and be audio recorded.
- ✓ For completeness and accuracy of reporting, the Researcher will also take written notes.
- ✓ These audio recordings and notes are only used to generate the evaluation report for Recentre and NO responses will be personally attributed to you.
- ✓ Taking part in this depth interview is voluntary and you do not have to participate if you don't want to.

What types of questions will be asked during the depth interview?

During the interview the types of questions you will be asked are:

- ✓ What motivated you to become involved in the project.
- ✓ Your perception of how the project has impacted you e.g. physically, mentally, emotionally, overall well being etc:
- ✓ The most helpful aspects for you;
- ✓ The most important things you have learned from it.
- ✓ Your suggestions on how it might be improved still further.

If you are happy to participate in this interview, please sign the attached **Participant Consent Form** and pass it back to Recentre:

Details of when the interview will take place:

Date:

Time:

If you need any additional information, please contact:

Niamh Callaghan

Communications Manager

Recentre

Niamhc@recentre.uk

M: 07927 803017

Appendix B

Discussion Schedule: Participants' Semi-Structured Telephone Interview

CASE STUDY INTERVIEW (Mode: Telephone Duration 30 mins)

Preamble

- Introduce Researcher and WBM.
- Go through Participant Information Sheet details verbally.
- Explain that we will take our time, go gently and the interviewee can stop the interview at any time if they wish, simply let the Researcher know.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE				
May I please ask what age you are?				
What country do you live in?				
WHY I CAME ON THE PROGRAMME				
How did you find out about the programme?				
What was your main reason for deciding to take part in the programme? How did you think it would help you?				
What other options were open to you for support at that time?				
How come you decided to choose this programme (i.e. and not perhaps some other option)?				
HOW THE PROGRAMME HAS HELPED ME				
Has the programme helped you?				
	Choice			
Yes				
No				
Overall, how would you rate the impact of the programme on you? (Choose ONE)				
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	
Whatever your rating, please say why.				
If the programme has helped you (i.e. any response other than "Poor" above), how specifically has the programme helped you? (Unprompted)				

(Follow through below on aspects raised by participant and check if any other benefits were attained)

Note nature, scale and significance of the changes physically, emotionally and in sense of self.

If not mentioned, prompt the interviewee with the following possibilities...

It is not uncommon for people who have experienced trauma to experience a range of emotional and physical effects afterwards. Can you please tell me if being on the programme helped you with any of these? And if so, how specifically did the programme help you with these?

EMOTIONAL	How the programme helped me with this
Isolation Less isolation / feel supported	
Anxiety Less anxious / worried/ Less intrusive memories Less panic / fear	
Sadness Less sadness / depression Less despair / hopelessness Less thoughts of self harm / suicide	
Anger Less irritable Less feeling angry/violent towards others	
Shame Less shame and self-blaming	
Feeling positive Able to feel warmth for others Feel more optimistic	

PHYSICAL	How the programme helped me with this
Body more relaxed <i>Less aches</i> <i>Fewer panic attacks</i> <i>Chest not feeling tight or so tight</i> <i>More relaxed / able to sleep better</i>	
Better energy levels <i>Have more energy</i>	
Better sense of self <i>Feeling ok about myself</i> <i>Being happy with my achievements</i>	
Feel better able to cope <i>Able to cope more</i> <i>Not overwhelmed</i> <i>Able to do what I need to do</i> <i>More able to talk to people</i>	

MOST IMPORTANT ACHIEVEMENTS

What would you say are the top three ways the programme has helped you most? And why where these aspects so important for you?

Aspect	Why important to participant
1	
2	
3	

WHERE I AM NOW COMPARED TO BEFORE THE PROGRAMME

In your own words, how would you describe how you were before the programme and how would you describe yourself now?

Before the programme I was...	Now I am...

Do you believe that you will be able to maintain these changes yourself from here?

Yes		If yes, what is giving you that confidence?
No		

Do you feel you need further support?

Yes		If Yes, what kind of support do you believe would help you best?
No		

HOW COULD THE PROGRAMME BE EVEN BETTER

In your opinion, how could the programme (the groups and / or residential) be even better for future participants?

PERCEIVED VALUE OF THE PROGRAMME

Given the impact on you, what do you believe this programme is actually “worth” i.e. in monetary value? i.e. If you had not received a free place, how much money would you have been willing to spend to attain that impact? (Choose ONE)

Range	Choice	Please specify amount if possible
Less than £100		
Between £101 - £1,000		
Between £1001 - £2,000		
Between £2,001 - £3,000		
More than £3,000, please specify		

And finally, the programme was made up of two main elements:

- 7 weekly on-line group therapy sessions; and
- 6 night residential with food and board paid, multiple workshops each day and daily access to two therapists.

Looking back, which element would you say you got the most out of - the Group therapy or the residential? And can you tell me, if possible, what “proportion” of benefit you got out of each element approximately? e.g. Was one element significantly more beneficial for you than another? Or was the benefit around 50:50 for each element?

I got the most out of	Choice	Proportion of personal benefit (%)
Group therapy		
Residential		
Both about the same		

And finally, would you recommend the programme to someone in your situation? Whatever your rating, please say why.

	Choice	Reason for “Yes” or “No”
Yes		
No		

For completion by Well Being in Mind Limited

Before we part, I appreciate that I have asked you a lot of questions about your experience of the programme and I would just like to ask you how you are feeling right now. Are you feeling ok? Record participant’s response

If Ok, make sure they are aware that they can contact the programme in future if needs be and record same below.

If not ok, contact Recentre team immediately and record below that this has been done.

Date action taken:
Time action taken:
Action taken:

Thank participant and close

Appendix C

Discussion Schedule: Key Recentre Staff Semi- Structured Group Interview

GROUP INTERVIEW WITH KEY RECENTRE STAFF

HOW PARTICIPANTS BENEFITED

From what you observed, what were the most important shifts in the health and wellbeing of the participants overall.

Summarise the nature, scale and significance of these.

What evidence do you have, if any, that suggests that such benefits will be maintained or ideally developed still further by the participants?

WHAT WORKED WELL

In your opinion, what particular aspects of the project worked best and why?

OPTIONS FOR FURTHER BENEFIT

In your opinion, might participants benefit still further if the project were to be modified in any way going forward? Yes / No.

If so, what specific changes would the project propose?

(e.g. type of participant that is referred to the project;

changes in project content?

changes in approach?

changes to types of participants who are referred / engage?

More investment in one activity over another?)

Why are such changes important for participants?

What are the implications for the project if such changes were to be made? (e.g. different skill/ experience? further funding? different locations? different activities

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED REMEDIES

In your opinion, what are the top three challenges that the project faces going forward?

What are Recentre's proposed plans (short, medium and longer term) for addressing these challenges

Appendix D

Outline of Programme Elements

SAMPLE 1 DAY INTENSIVE

10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

TO INCLUDE:

Morning group, check-in, education/activity, lunch, evening group, yoga, therapeutic art.

Please note the aim of this event is prepare the participant for the work they can expect to do at the residential.

SAMPLE 1 DAY RESIDENTIAL

8:00 AM – 8:00 PM

TO INCLUDE:

Breakfast, morning group, education/activity, personal time, Individual Work utilising evidence-based Trauma Support Tools, debriefing, rest, yoga, therapeutic art, post traumatic growth experience, dinner, community time.

Please note these activities are interchangeable on any given day of the residential and schedule is determined closer to the date.

DISCLAIMER

This report has been prepared for and only for Recentre in accordance with the terms of reference specified to Well Being in Mind Limited (WBM) in July 2022 and for no other purpose.

The opinions expressed by those consulted as part of this research are strictly those of the person who gave them and not WBM.

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