



Evaluation of Bravehearts' Therapeutic Services

Client outcomes

Preliminary Report



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Executive Summary

Background

Child sexual assault and exploitation is associated with a range of often detrimental and interrelated outcomes. Bravehearts' multidisciplinary counselling service has been providing specialist therapeutic support to victims/survivors of child sexual assault and exploitation, children and young people at risk of sexual harm, and non-offending family members, for over two decades.

While Bravehearts has conducted informal, small-scale reviews of its therapeutic service as part of its commitment to best practice, an in-depth evaluation of the impact of the service has not been conducted.

The aim of this current evaluation is specifically to:

1. Understand levels of client symptomology and functioning at commencement of counselling for two distinct client groups (child/adolescent clients, and adult clients).
2. Examine changes in client symptomology and functioning from commencement to completion of counselling for these client groups.
3. Understand perceptions of Bravehearts' therapeutic services and related outcomes for child/adolescent and adult clients.

This Preliminary Report provides the evaluation outcomes to date. A final report will be completed once the data collection period has been completed in July 2021.

Methodology

Data has been collated for clients who have engaged with Bravehearts therapeutic service since February 2016 (adult clients (18 years and above) n=496; child clients (3-17 years) n=635).

Several data sources have been utilised:

- Demographic and intake data recorded at initial contact
- Intake assessment undertaken at initial session with therapist
- Engagement and disengagement data recorded by therapist
- Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) and Child Outcome Rating Scale (CORS), administered to clients at commencement and completion of counselling

- Clinical assessment measures, also administered at commencement and completion of counselling, including:
 - Post Traumatic Symptom Disorder Checklist (PCL-5) - adult clients
 - Trauma Symptom Checklist for Young Children
 - Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children
- Feedback survey

Results

Client Baseline Wellbeing

Most adult clients fell below the clinical cut-off on the ORS scale upon commencement of counselling, indicating generally low levels of wellbeing. Scores on the PCL-5 showed a significant level of trauma symptomology, with 70% of adult clients completing this scale scoring above the clinical cut-off.

Most child clients fell below the clinical cut-off relevant to their age group on the ORS or CORS at commencement of counselling, again indicating generally low levels of wellbeing. Scores on the TSCYC and the TSCC also showed considerable levels of trauma symptomology among child clients. Approximately 30-50% of clients aged 3-12 years and 10-30% of clients aged 8-17 years scored clinically significant levels of symptomology across the six domains of the TSCYC and TSCC respectively.

Client Outcomes

Overall, the majority of adult and child clients either showed positive outcomes on the ORS/CORS, indicating improvement in wellbeing over the course of counselling, or showed no change in their ORS/CORS scores, but had already shown higher levels of wellbeing at their baseline assessment.

Although only a small number of adult clients completed the PCL-5 at both commencement and completion of counselling, 70% showed a clinically significant improvement in their scores on the PCL-5 at completion of counselling.

Similarly, low numbers of child clients completed the TSCYC and TSCC at both commencement and completion of counselling. Approximately 30-60% of children aged 3-12 years maintained normal scores from initial to final sessions within each trauma domain of the TSCYC; a further 25-35% showed a clinically significant improvement across time on each trauma domain. While a large majority of young people aged 8-17 years obtained normal scores on the TSCC at both their initial and

final sessions, approximately 20% showed clinically significant improvements in the domains of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress at completion of counselling.

Feedback Survey

Of those who have completed the feedback survey to date, the majority of adult clients and parents and guardian of child clients reported positive outcomes from counselling. The large majority of parents/guardians also reported that they had seen either a slight or large positive change in their child's behaviour, general outlook, overall wellbeing, close relationships, and wider social relationships as a result of their engagement in counselling.