

Evaluating the Nurturing Programme with young people & parents

Family Links

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Nurturing Programme is a well-established Programme offering ten week courses for parents and children. The Programme seeks to promote emotional health in adults and children by developing emotional literacy. The development of emotional literacy in young people is seen as dependent on the kind of relationships they have, particularly with the adults caring for them.

The Programme was traditionally designed for use a) with younger children and b) with parents and young people separately. The iteration of the course we are discussing in this report is a ten week course that young people and their parents attend together. They work in parallel for the first hour of each weekly session and are brought together for a joint session for the second hour.

In January 2009 Ipsos MORI produced an evaluative commentary of the Oxford pilot of the Nurturing Programme delivered to parents and young people. On the basis of this evaluation, as well as ongoing delivery of the Programme to this audience, Family Links have reviewed their work with teenagers. Following this process of review, Family Links delivered the Nurturing Programme to parents and young people aged 11-15 in three different locations in the UK. Courses were delivered between October 2009 and February 2010.

This report summarises opinions and feelings of the parents, young people and facilitators who were involved in the revised course about how successful they felt it was.

1.2 Aims and objectives

This report aims to act as 'follow up' to the initial Ipsos MORI evaluation, this time drawing conclusions about the subsequent changes made to the Programme. Family Links wanted answers to five key questions in order to take the Programme forward. With that in mind the structure of this report is based around those questions:

- What age group is the Programme most suitable for?
- What tier of need is the Programme most suitable for?
- What prior experience of the Nurturing Programme do parent group leaders (PGLs) need?

- What prior experience of the client group (both in terms of tier of need and of age) do PGLs need?
- Is there any further content that needs to be adapted to better meet needs?

1.3 Methodology

Parent Group Leaders (PGLs), parents and the young people involved in the three courses were asked to fill out registration forms and End of Programme forms which were developed in conjunction with Ipsos MORI (see appendices). This report is based on responses from those forms.

The registration forms simply asked for background information from the parents and young people - details such as their age, gender, address and whether they are in education, training or work. For the PGLs these included questions about prior experience of delivering the Nurturing Programme, other parenting Programmes and previous work with young people. These forms provide background information and are useful for setting the context of this report.

The End of Programme forms asked parents and young people questions such as which techniques they found most useful, whether the Programme had improved their family life as well as asking if they would suggest any changes to the Programme. Meanwhile PGLs were asked questions about who the Programme is most suitable and what prior experience those delivering the course should have before undertaking facilitation.

Unfortunately responses from parents and young people were not always as detailed as hoped. However, we feel this report has managed to address the five key areas of interest and we have been able to make some recommendations on the basis of responses. Below is a summary of the forms received back from PGLs, parents and young people. The Forms were labelled N, R or E to signify which of the three groups they came from, the numbers in the below chart are also divided in this way.

	PGLs (N, R, E)	Parents (N, R, E)	YP (N, R, E)	TOTAL
Registration form	11 (4, 3, 4)	13 (4, 5, 4)	16 (4, 5, 7)	40
End of Programme form	9 (2, 3, 4)	13 (4, 6, 3)	10 (4, 2, 4)	32
Total	20	26	26	72

2. What age group is the Programme most suitable for?

The age of the young people who took part in the Programme across the three groups varied from 11 years old to 15 years old. However, the ages of the young people within each of the three groups tended to be fairly homogenous. There was only one group in which the ages of some of the young people varied substantially. In this group, while the majority of the young people were 15, it also consisted of one 12 year old and one 13 year old participant.

2.1 Homogeneity is key

Feedback strongly suggests that **homogenous groups were most successful** and that this matters much more than the precise age the groups is targeted at i.e. the course can work just as well for 11 year olds as for 15 year olds, provided they are not attending the same course. Homogeneity allows Parent Group Leaders to tailor course content to a specific age group as opposed to trying to accommodate a variety of ages at once.

In some cases where the age range was particularly large and with a sufficient number of young people allowed, PGLs felt that it would be advantageous to split the young people into a younger group and an older group. One group in particular lost an older member of their young persons group who they felt was not so open to taking part in the activities which may have been because of the language and delivery style being directed towards the younger participants.

*The older boy we had on the course
didn't come for the last few weeks*

PGL

Had they split the group so that he was working with young people closer to his own age and therefore carrying out more age appropriate activities, they may not have lost this participant. Furthermore, had they known the wide variety in ages before beginning the Programme PGLs may have been able to anticipate setbacks and factored this into their planning.

2.1 The Programme is suitable for a range of ages

Parent Group Leaders (PGLs) were in agreement that the Programme is equally suitable to the needs of young people across all of the ages in these three groups (11-15). They felt that many of the issues covered in the course content, such as drugs and relationships, were

issues that were likely to be encountered by young people across this age range and therefore the information and guidance provided by the course would be useful to them all.

Young people within this age range were thought to be at a stage in their lives where they are receptive to the type of group support that the Programme offers. Unlike older teens, PGLs felt that young people aged 11-15 are still at the formative stage during which they are most able to positively change their behaviour if given the right support. Conversely they felt that older teenagers, due to their increased independence, would be less willing to attend and participate in a group which involved their parents.

*They are at an age that they can change
if given the right support*

PGL

Although the Programme was felt to be *most* suitable for 11-15 year olds, there were some PGLs who felt that the Programme could potentially work for a wider age range of young people (both younger and older). However, it was felt that recruiting young people from a wider range of ages could pose difficulties if older teenagers were unwilling to work with more immature young people during activities. The success of widening age ranges would hinge on groups being kept homogenous in terms of ages and the activities and language used on each course being adapted to suit the differing maturity levels of the younger and older participants by ensuring they are neither too advanced nor too childish.

2.2 Content and delivery must be adapted for specific age groups

Ensuring the content is age appropriate was very important to PGLs. Although they said the content was broadly appropriate for the 11-15 age group, they did comment that some of the language and activities used in the young peoples' sessions were too 'juvenile' for older participants. This feeling was particularly strong in the group with the widest age range of young people (and therefore more difficult for the PGL to tailor the course) and led to reluctance to participate among the older teenagers. Parents shared this view, having received feedback from their children that they had found some of the activities too childish.

*Some activities felt a little childish,
although the message was always
sound*

Parent

Interestingly, PGLs felt that some course content would be difficult to understand and somewhat irrelevant for younger participants who may struggle to remain attentive and reflective throughout sessions.

Some 11 year olds, we felt, would struggle with understanding the content of the course. Some very mature 15 year olds may not work with some immature 11 year olds

PGL

The above mirrors results from the evaluative commentary of the Oxford pilot. Facilitators in the Oxford pilot felt that the Programme would work best with young people aged 14 plus. They had to cater for a younger age range than anticipated during the pilot and felt that some of the content was unusable for younger participants (e.g. sexual health week) and some of the concepts of the Programme were difficult to get younger children to engage with. These points all highlight the importance of keeping age groups homogenous when delivering the Programme. Most of the setbacks highlighted by PGLs here and in the Oxford pilot could have been successfully addressed if young people were of the same age and thereby course content tailored appropriately.

Importance of knowing age groups prior to that start of the Programme

PGLs felt it would have been helpful to have known the ages of the young people prior to the start of the course as this would allow them enough time to adapt the activities and content of the Programme to suit the level of need of the participants. Again this point came across strongly during the Oxford pilot where PGLs felt that if facilitators known the ages of participants before the start of the Programme they could have tailored activities much more successfully.

2.3 Feedback from young people

Feedback from the young people supports the finding from PGLs that the course is suitable across the age range as both younger and older participants had equally positive opinions of the course. Young people of all ages articulated that they felt comfortable in the group and found the course useful in helping them to cope with family life. In particular the respectful atmosphere created helped them in feeling comfortable enough to participate.

The group was a good help in trying to improve family life

Young Person, aged 11

I felt respected and comfortable, a lot of trust within the group

Young Person, aged 13

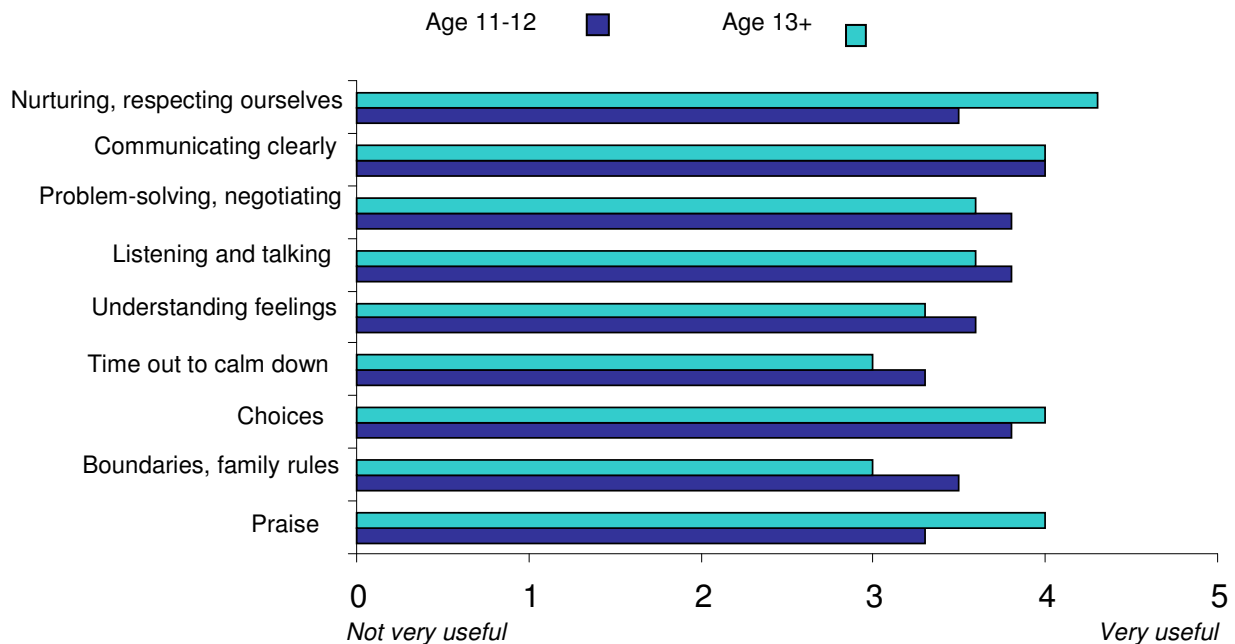
Good atmosphere, techniques explained well

Young Person, aged 15

A variety of techniques

The young people rated each technique learnt on the course to reflect how useful they found it in coping with family life. The overall usefulness rating across all elements of the course was the same for younger (11-12 year olds) as for older (13+ year olds) participants (3.6 out of 5). While the following chart should be seen as indicative only, due to its small base sizes, it is interesting to note that there were slight differences between how useful younger and older participants found each of the individual techniques learned on the course. (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Q: *How useful have you found the following to cope with family life?*



Compared to younger participants, older teenagers found *praise* and *nurturing and respecting themselves* particularly useful when dealing with family life. In contrast, compared to older teenagers, younger participants found *time to calm down* and *boundaries and family rules* particularly useful. These differences may reflect a slight split in the type of approach that younger and older participants found most helpful when managing their relationships with other family members. Younger participants seemed to find externally set measures useful, whilst older teenagers tended to look inwards to their own emotions and experiences for guidance. However despite these slight differences, the vast majority of young people found all the techniques helpful, with very few individuals giving any technique a rating below three.

Summary

The majority of PGLs think that the age range for the course was about right and that the content was suitable for young people between the ages of 11 and 15 years old. However, there was a strong sense that the Programme works best where age-ranges in the group can be kept homogeneous as far as possible so that PGLs can pitch material at the correct level for all in a group. If PGLs could be given more information on who would be taking part in the Programme prior to the start, it would be much easier to tailor content and delivery more appropriately.

Some PGLs think that with alterations the course would be suitable for a wider age-range of 9-16 year olds, bearing in mind that age range within groups should be kept minimal. Young people of all ages found the course helpful although findings indicate that younger people find externally set measures useful and older participants valued those that encouraged them to reflect.

3. Which tier of need is the Programme most suitable for?

The tiered model of need works on the basis that most children's needs are met in the community via universal services delivered to all children and young people. Where there are no identified additional needs children would be using the services provided in schools, children's centres and health centres (tier 1). A smaller group will require additional services, usually provided by more intensive support within these same universal settings (tier 2). An even smaller group with complex needs will require specialist services such as those provided by social care, pupil referral units or child and adolescent mental health services (tier 3). Finally a very small number of the most vulnerable children will require highly specialist services such as those provided in residential settings or in-patient mental health units (tier 4).

3.1 Programme felt to be most suitable for tiers 1 and 2

The majority of PGLs agreed that the Programme was **most suitable for young people at tier one or tier two of need**. They felt that those young people at tier one benefitted from the Programme as it taught them valuable skills which helped to *prevent* future relationship problems. Those at tier two on the other hand were able to learn new ways to deal with their problems and the Programme offered an opportunity to identify if the involvement of other agencies would be beneficial.

Tier 1 for prevention and tier 2 for helping prevent things from getting worse and to identify if other agencies need to be involved

PGL

Young people at tier three however were felt by some to be too vulnerable and their needs to be too complex for the course to be effective unless they had other services already in place supporting them.

Those at tier 3 may have issues that are complex and serious – little time to address these within the sessions

PGL

Making the course suitable for Tier three

Although many PGLs fed back that they thought the Programme was unsuitable for those young people with tier three needs. Although some thought it could be tailored to be more appropriate. These PGLs tended to have prior experience of the Nurturing Programme and thought that it could also be suitable for young people at tier three providing the young person had additional services in place to assist them with more severe concerns.

*Tier 1 and 2, possibly tier 3 if other
services in place*

PGL

PGLs also felt that the course could be a could starting block for tier three individuals. The PGLs formed a multiagency team with professional experience in many different roles including that of a learning mentor, school nurse and CAMHS therapist. This breadth of experience gave PGLs a good awareness of the full spectrum of services which are available to help parents and young people in need, such as those at tier three. PGLs felt that although the Programme alone was not sufficient to be the only source of support for those with higher tiers of need, encouraging these young people to attend the Programme would provide an excellent way of initially engaging with parents and young people who fall into this hard-to-reach category. Once they attend, PGLs could then use their knowledge and experience to advise parents and young people where and how to seek further assistance from other relevant service agencies.

*[I would include] Tier 3 service level in
the hope that you could engage parents
and then sign post them onto a group*

PGL

3.2 Importance of assessing needs prior to the start of the course

As with age range, PGLs also highlighted the importance of assessing the different needs of participants prior to the start of the Programme. This would enable the course material to be correctly targeted to the needs of the participants and would also ensure that a balance of different tiers of need was maintained within each group. Furthermore, although it was felt that participants in tiers one and two could mix successfully, PGLs felt including participants in tier three could be disruptive for others.

The importance of assessing differing needs before the start of the Programme wasn't explicitly stated in the Oxford pilot evaluative commentary, however there were comments about often having to adapt Programme materials on a weekly basis to accommodate disruptive behaviour. This was linked to the unexpected younger age group of participants. Had the behaviour been assessed beforehand, the facilitators could have anticipated and begun dealing with subsequent challenges.

Summary

The majority of PGLs felt that the course was most suitable for people in tiers one and two. Most felt that children with tier three needs may have issues that are too complex and serious to be addressed within the limited time available in the sessions. However, some more experienced PGLs felt that the course would be suitable for children with tier three needs, providing they had other services in place to help them with any more severe concerns.

As with planning for particular age groups, PGLs felt that it would be helpful to assess client's needs prior to the start of the Programme so they could tailor content and delivery

4. What prior experience of the Nurturing Programme do Parent Group Leaders need?

The prior experience of running the Nurturing Programme varied widely amongst PGLs. Whilst some PGLs had delivered up to five Nurturing Programmes, other PGLs had no prior experience at all.

Those PGLs with prior experience of delivering the Nurturing Programme to adults believed it was valuable in preparing them to deliver the Programme with teenagers and parents. However, they conceded that the issues that arise when delivering to teenagers tend to be more challenging.

4.1 The importance of confidence

PGLs emphasised the importance that the parents and young people have confidence in them as individuals. For this reason, delivering the course to teenagers was not seen as an ideal first Programme for a PGL to run. Tackling difficult issues confidently and authoritatively is seen as imperative and less experienced PGLs found it difficult. For this reason experienced PGLs thought that leaders should ideally have run at least three Nurturing Programmes before starting to deliver the course to teenagers.

The more you deliver, the more confident you become and are more prepared for the more “difficult” issues that might arise. You can also be more flexible and relaxed

PGL

Experience of running Programmes previously is essential as parents and young people need to feel secure and confident in the Programme and facilitators

PGL

The importance of using experienced facilitators was highlighted by those who delivered the Oxford pilot. They felt that facilitators should have at least some previous experience of facilitation as well as a familiarity with the Nurturing Programme. They felt this would make delivering the course more successful and enjoyable for all involved. Those facilitators who did not have prior experience of delivering the Nurturing Programme or previous experience of facilitating a similar course during the Oxford pilot were reticent to advise potential future facilitators to get involved.

Some mixed views about benefits of experience of the Nurturing Programme

With regard to the most recent Programme, those PGLs who had no prior experience of running the Nurturing Programme had mixed opinions on whether or not they would have benefited from previous experience. Some say they would have welcomed a chance to deliver the Nurturing Programme before as they felt they would have benefited from gaining a more thorough understanding of the core messages and values of the Programme. However, a number of PGLs had already gained extensive experience working with parents and young people in other capacities and felt that this experience was sufficient to provide them with the necessary skills to deliver the Programme effectively providing that they were working alongside a more experienced PGL.

[Facilitators need] experience delivering a group, experience in engaging hard to reach young people

PGL

Day to day working with families enables PGLs to deliver effectively

PGL

4.2 Benefits of a multi-agency team

Experienced PGLs commented on the value of having a multi-agency team, including people with experience gleaned from other roles. As well as enabling signposting to other relevant agencies as discussed in chapter two, having a variety of skill sets and levels of experience within the team made the guidance that the Programme was able to offer participants more comprehensive and relevant.

Having a multi-agency team has made the Programme delivery effective and there was lots of experience at all levels

PGL

Having a multi-agency group of four facilitators with a varied range of skills and experiences proved to be valuable in order to deliver this Programme

PGL

Summary

Most PGLs felt that it was important to have experience of delivering at least one Nurturing Programme so they are familiar with the core principles.

Experience of the Nurturing Programme was also seen as important as it helps prepare facilitators to be confident when dealing with “difficult issues”. This is essential to ensuring that parents and young people have confidence in the Programme and facilitators.

Some PGLs with extensive prior experience in other capacities felt that experience of the Nurturing Programme was not so important, providing they had experience of general facilitation and were delivering alongside a more experienced PGL.

5. What prior experience of the client group do PGLs need?

As previously highlighted, many of the PGLs had extensive and varied experience of working with both young people and parents in capacities other than delivering the Nurturing Programme. The majority of PGLs had experience working with parents and young people on a 1:1 basis as well as in groups, in both educational and social settings. This included, for example, experience working as a learning mentor or running a community group. However, the experiences of those PGLs who had previously delivered the Nurturing Programme tended to be more extensive and relevant rather than PGLs who simply had experience of working with young people.

In general PGLs previous experience seems to have been considered when matching them to either the young person's or parent's group, taking the PGLs existing skills and knowledge with regard to working with young people or parents into account. Parents and PGLs felt that this matching of skills was essential to the successful running of the Programme.

5.1 Skills required to successfully deliver the Parent Group

Many of the PGLs who delivered the parents group had experience of running the Nurturing Programme and tended to feel that having prior experience of working with parents, whether through the Nurturing Programme or in other capacities, was important. Previous experience of working with parents gave PGLs a good understanding of the type of strategies they find most engaging and easy to incorporate into their lives. This is encouraging because during the Oxford pilot, parents highlighted that they would have liked some more specific techniques to apply at home.

Prior experience of working with parents was also felt to be useful in providing PGLs with an understanding of other services that exist and are available to parents who need support.

Empathy

Both Parents and PGLs felt **that the most important skill for PGLs when delivering the Programme to parents was the ability to be empathetic** about the challenges parents face without being critical. Parents emphasised the importance of being able to ask PGLs for credible, constructive advice without feeling patronised or vulnerable. It was felt that these important skills could only be gained over extended periods of experience, and some believe only by having first hand experience of parenting one's own children. It was also felt that in

order for PGLs to seem credible and authoritative when working with parents it was helpful for them to be of a similar age to, or older than, the majority of parents taking part.

[One PGL] was first-class but I will admit that I struggled with her co-instructor who was young and had no children. She was lovely but quite nervous and perhaps would have been better working with the children

Parent

In order to have credibility to work with parents of teenagers you need experience and age?

PGL

5.2 Skills required to successfully deliver the Young People's Group

Behaviour management

PGLs delivering the Young Peoples Group tended to have little or no previous experience delivering the Nurturing Programme. PGLs felt that the young people's behaviour was sometimes challenging and that having knowledge of behaviour management was an important asset for running the group. This was felt to be particularly important if delivering the Programme to young people with a high tier of need. The involvement of school teaching staff in the Programme was found by one group to be a successful way of giving the Programme authority and help to manage behaviour.

As previously mentioned facilitators in the Oxford pilot also experienced difficulties with the young people's behaviour. In this instance problems around young boys and play fighting meant additional efforts had to be made by facilitators in order to keep a calm enough environment for the young people to learn. It's possible that a teacher's input in this scenario may have worked well, although not all young people attended the school the course was being held at so this may not have been possible.

I think it is important to be experienced in working with young people as they can be tricky sometimes

PGL

I thought the involvement of the school staff demonstrated a real commitment on their part and also gave some authority to the cause for the children

Parent

Importance of being familiar with young people's issues

PGLs felt that it was important to be aware of the “issues of the day” and to have a thorough understanding of the pressures that the young people are facing such as drug use and teenage sexuality for example. This enables them to be prepared for questions that the young people may have, and to target the content of the Programme correctly to the age and needs of the group. Initially, young people were often less willing than parents to open up and confide in the PGLs which could be put down to confidence. Therefore, it was important that PGLs had the skills required to build rapport and trust so that the YP felt able to confide in the PGLs.

PGLs need to be able to relate to teens and the ability to gain their trust. The young people need to be able to feel comfortable with the PGLs

PGL

If you have no experience it would be very challenging not to know the issues of the day and what pressures the young people are facing

PGL

Summary

The PGLs felt that the experience required for delivering the Young People's Group differed from that required to deliver the Parent's Group. When running the Parent's Group, PGLs felt that it was important but not essential to have prior experience working with parents. Furthermore, although the skills that were valued by parents - empathy and the ability to offer credible and constructive advice - can be gained through extensive experience working with parents, they are felt to be more credible when gained through first hand experience of parenting one's own children.

PGLs felt that to deliver the young people's group it was useful to have experience of working with young people. The young people's behaviour was sometimes challenging and it was important that PGLs knew how to build rapport and trust in order to deliver the Programme effectively.

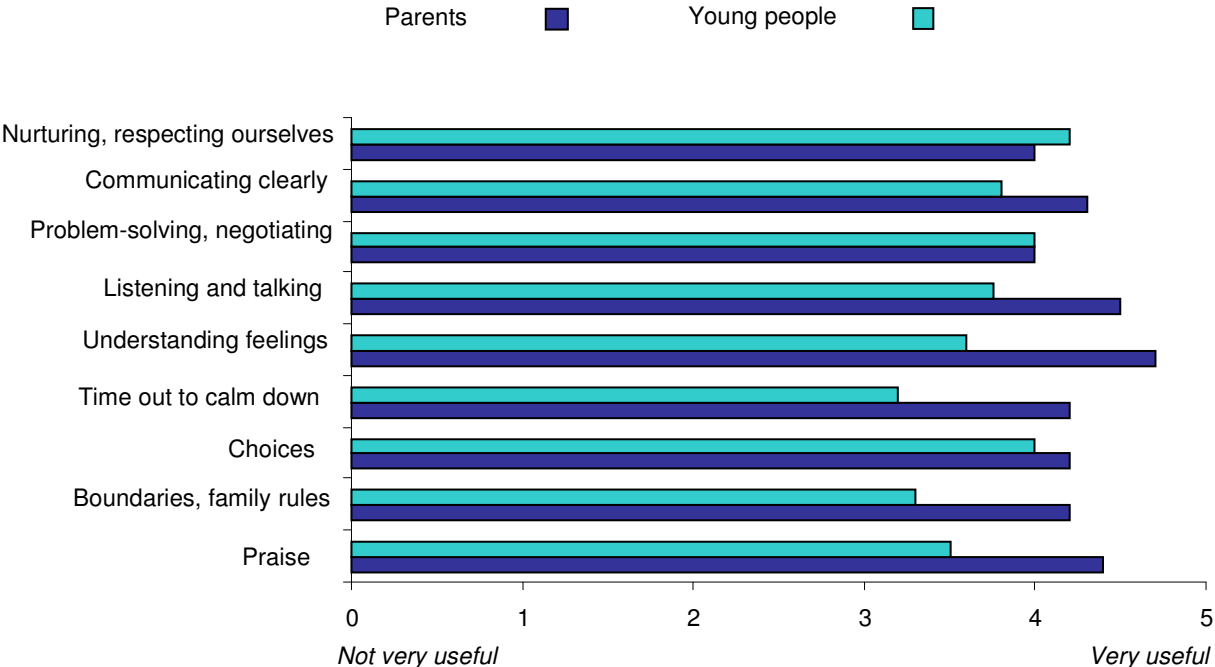
6. Is there any further content that needs to be adapted to better meet needs?

Overall, PGLs felt that the content of the course was suitable for the target group. However, they felt that it would benefit from some alterations with regard to the activities and language used, time constraints and planning time.

6.1 Feedback from parents and young people

Both parents and young people were positive about the course content and said they found it useful in coping with family life. As the following chart shows all aspects of the course were rated highly by both young people and parents, with a mean score of around 3.5 and 4 out of 5 respectively. However, parents were generally more positive about each aspect of the course than young people (data should be treated as indicative only due to small base-sizes).

Figure 2 Q: *How useful have you found the following to cope with family life?*



It is interesting to note that often the strategies that parents found the most useful were the strategies that the young people found the least useful and vice versa. For example,

understanding feelings was the strategy which parents rated as most useful, whereas for young people it falls in the bottom three. Similarly, *nurturing and respecting ourselves*, the most useful strategy for young people, was rated the least useful strategy by parents. These differences highlight the diverse challenges that parents and young people experience in their relationships.

When participants were asked on the 'End of Programme feedback form' whether attending the Programme had changed family life, both parents and young people's responses were very positive.

Everyone in my family is getting on better and understanding how it is for others

Young person aged 13

It helps you think before you act and the reasons why young people behave the way they do

Parent

As with the Oxford pilot, some parents noted the value of both parents and young people being taught the same techniques since both parties knew when they were trying to implement them at home. This created a good understanding between parents and children and gave them a 'common language' which they both understood as expressed in the verbatim comment below.

Common language with my son – gave us both a point of reference

Parent

6.2 Activities and language

Both parents and PGLs were positive about how well the young people had responded to the course and how much they had taken onboard. However, as discussed earlier in the report, at times they felt that the young people either became, or were at risk of becoming disengaged from the activities on the Programme as they were not targeted correctly to their needs.

Although *the content* was felt to be correctly targeted, the activities and language used were perceived as being too young at times for the older teens and were at risk of being seen as

patronising. PGLs felt that the activities could easily be adapted in advance if they had detailed information about clients, to better target the participants and overcome this problem. As mentioned in chapter two, it was suggested that in larger groups, where there is a bigger age-range among the young people, it would be beneficial to split the group in two, ensuring that the ages of the young people in each group were more homogenous. PGLs thought that both these suggestions would be easier to execute if they had knowledge of the participants' ages and needs prior to the onset of the course. This point forms a recurring theme of the feedback with regard to the three most recent Programmes and the Oxford pilot.

I felt the Programme content went a long way towards being suitable but would benefit from some alterations. Our parents felt at times that the content was aimed at younger children and could do with tweaking to be aimed at teens

PGL

Important that participants don't feel patronised so care is needed with some of the language and activities

PGL

6.3 Time constraints

A more widespread concern reported by PGLs from all groups was that some of the areas of content were too large to cover sufficiently in the time available for each session. PGLs report that they were forced to remove valuable content from each session due to time restrictions. This was particularly true where the topic was complex and sensitive, such as mental health and drugs. Inevitably, these complex areas are of more relevance to older teens, so it was this group who were felt to be the most disadvantaged by the time restrictions. This could partly be overcome by splitting the young people into groups of more similar ages, as this would enable PGLs to focus on delivering only the content which is most relevant and appropriate for this age group.

*It is virtually impossible to do everything
in the time allowed for each session we
had to miss quite a lot out*

PGL

*Where problems are more complex little
space on the Programme to explore this*

PGL

One group also reported a discrepancy between the amount of time needed to cover the course content with the young people and parents. Parents often needed more time for reflection and discussion than the young people. This resulted in the parents' session over-running into the time allocated for the last section, during which parents and young people were brought together. It was suggested that the parents could start earlier, with the young people joining after around 30 minutes. However, due to the young peoples dependence on parents for transport, this idea may prove impractical to implement.

6.4 Planning sessions

Although four PGLs are preferred in the delivery of the Programme, PGLs from one group reported that having four per course was not practical and caused a number of problems. They felt that it made it very difficult to organise a time when all were available to plan the sessions. This resulted in two of the PGLs doing all of the preparation and most of the delivery in the sessions themselves. Instead, it would be beneficial for the PGLs to schedule regular time slots for session planning in advance. As a consequence, on occasions when only two of the PGLs were available to deliver the sessions, they experienced very few difficulties.

*I feel four facilitators is not practical (as
we had problems meeting up and
planning and in delivery). Would prefer
two facilitators and smaller numbers*

PGL

Meeting up in order to plan sessions was also problematic for facilitators who delivered the Oxford pilot. A number of them worked full time which meant it was challenging to meet up around their busy schedules. While they met for an hour at the end of each session they felt

this was not sufficient time for planning and they were often too tired to be productive. Findings from both the Oxford pilot and these three groups, point towards the importance of incorporating sufficient planning time for the successful delivery of the Programme. Perhaps this could be implemented by reducing the number of facilitators or making planning time a compulsory part of facilitation.

Summary

The three main areas of the Programme PGLs highlighted as in need of addressing were activities and language, time constraints and planning sessions.

- Designing activities and use of language build on the finding that has been highlighted throughout this report with regard to having information about the client group (such as age and tier of need) early enough. This will enable PGLs to tailor courses to specific age groups and tiers of need prior to the start of the course.
- Time constraints are more of an issue for the most complex parts of the Programme (such as mental health, drugs and sex). Some believe this could be partly addressed by ensuring homogenous age groups so that the most relevant points to a particular age group can be covered in more detail.
- Having sufficient time to plan sessions can be problematic particularly when there are many facilitators. This is not easy to overcome - Family Links could look at reducing the number of facilitators but there are some concerns about this. However these concerns could be addressed by making weekly planning time compulsory.

Conclusions and implications

Once again the Nurturing Programme seems to be a huge success. All of the parents, young people and PGLs indicated that the course had been beneficial and enjoyable. This report has highlighted a number of key areas to be considered before the widespread roll out of the Nurturing Programme and suggests that some fine tuning could help to make the course even more beneficial for those involved. In summary:

- The Programme has the potential to work across a wide spectrum of ages. The important issue is that the ages range within each group is kept relatively narrow. By keeping the groups homogenous, PGLs have much more freedom to adapt the course appropriately and tailor activities to the specific ages. With this tailoring, it is felt that the course could be made suitable for an even wider age range.
- PGLs felt that the Programme is most suitable for tier 1 and tier 2 young people. Unless PGLs have vast experience, tier 3 young people are felt to have needs too challenging to handle within the context of the Nurturing Programme. However, experienced PGLs recognised the role that they could play in helping these individuals, even if just by signposting to more appropriate services.
- PGLs having confidence is seen vital, whether that comes from prior experience of the Nurturing Programme or experience with parents and young people.
- PGLs need to be able to empathise with parents and young people and understand their perspective. They need to be approachable and able to adapt to the needs of different people. Parents in particular do not want to be judged or patronised by PGLs and young people want to feel they can relate to the PGL as well as respect them.
- The course covers a great deal and sometime time constraints mean that not everything can be covered. It was felt that if Programme was adapted for different age groups then elements less relevant to some age groups could be scaled down to allow more time for more relevant areas.

We feel that by thinking about the findings from this report and refining the Nurturing Programme appropriately, Family Links will be one step closer to finalising a truly fantastic course which will enrich the lives of all involved – parents, young people and PGLs.