

The “Hightown Friends Project” is Southampton’s first locally developed domestic violence and abuse education and prevention pilot project.

Aims...

- To raise young people’s awareness of a range of relationship issues with a particular focus on domestic violence and abuse.
- To go some way to prevent the potential use of abusive behaviours in future relationships.
- To raise awareness of relevant local and national support services available to young people in relation to such issues.
- To measure the success of the work in preventing abusive relationships in the future.

The Project...

- Classroom based sessions with year six pupils at Hightown Primary School.
- A training workshop for staff.
- Back up support available over four weeks for any young people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Two evaluation sessions (pre and post intervention) using an ‘Electronic Voting System’ (EVS).

The Classroom sessions...

The sessions involved a high level of participation by the young people, with exercises facilitated by the workers and school staff.

Incentive items, which gave reminders of help lines and back up support services were given out at the end of each session.

1. Introduction

- Overview of project
- Set ‘classroom agreement’ for project
- Exercise to identify ‘one wish..’ and ‘what makes you happy...’

2. Friendship

- What is a friend?
- Who do you trust?
- ‘Trust continuum’ using scenarios.

3. Family relationships

- What is a family?
- Who do you feel safest with?
- ‘Family argument’ case study.

4. Domestic Violence

- What is it?
- How to keep safe
- Scenarios – what to do.

5. Anger

- What makes you angry?
- ‘Body map’ - to identify areas of the body where anger is felt
- Safe ways to express anger.

6. Endings

- What was enjoyed most / least about the sessions
- ‘Pat on the back’ exercise – identifying positive things about each other.

The outcomes...

An evaluation of the project was undertaken by asking the children a set of questions before and after the sessions. Overall the findings indicated a positive change in the children's awareness of the issues covered, for example in Chart 1 we can see that the children's perception of whether it was OK for adults to hit each other changed significantly.

Is it OK for adults to hit each other?

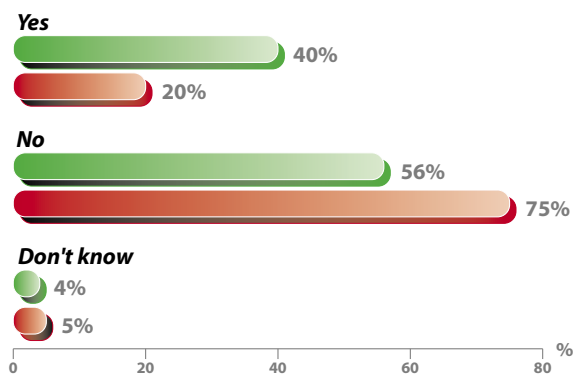


Chart 1

KEY Before project After project

Do you think it's a good idea to talk to someone when you're upset?

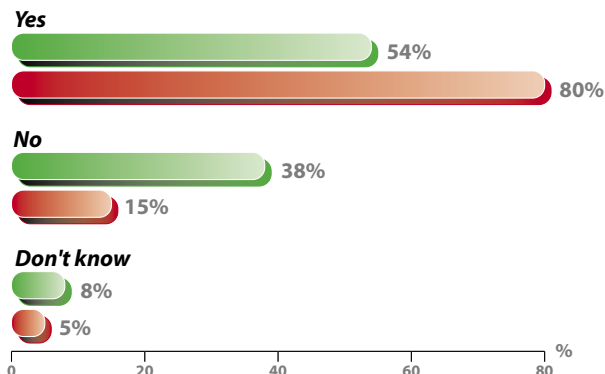


Chart 2

There was also a notable increase in the children's understanding of what steps they could take if they were affected by the issues covered as shown, for example, in Chart 2.

A full evaluation was given to the project team to help them plan for future sessions. In addition to highlighting a positive outcome to the sessions it also suggested areas where future sessions could be made even better.

Following the project, the use of the EVS showed there was a positive change in the young people's awareness of the issues covered.

- The number of young people that answered 'yes' to the question "Is it OK for adults to hit each other?" reduced by half.
- The number of young young people that answered 'Yes' to the question "Do you think it's a good idea to talk to someone when you're upset?" increased by 26%.

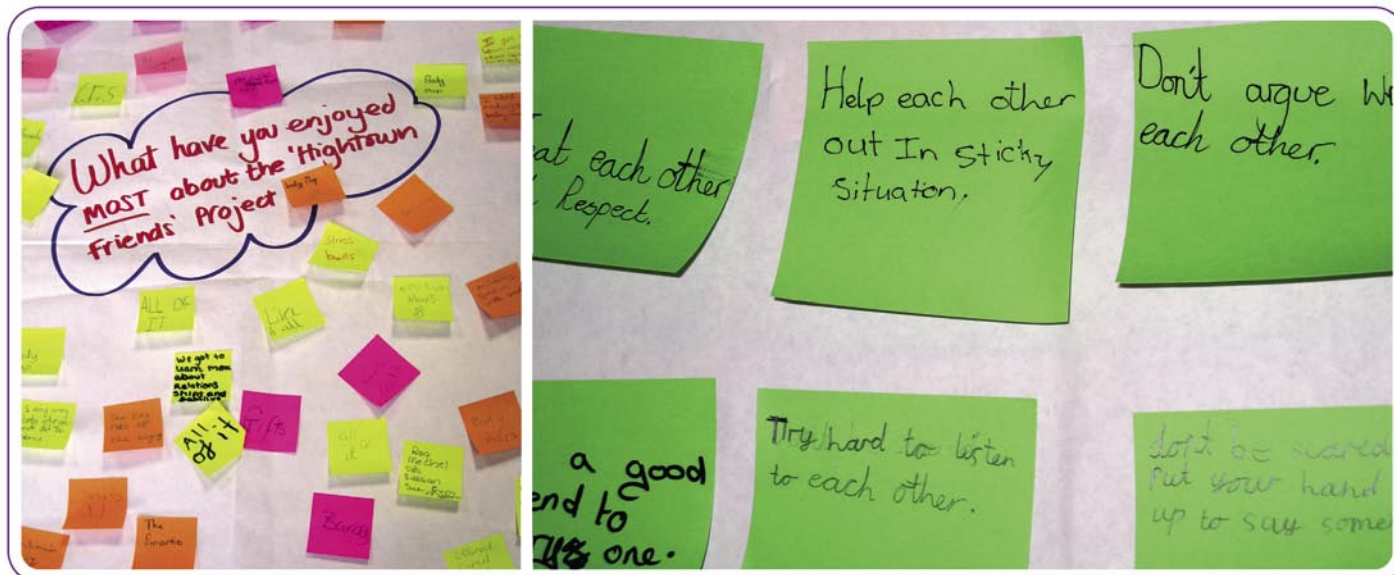
The Team....

The project was developed and delivered by Southampton Domestic Violence Forum (SDVF), members of the project team were:

- The STAR Project - developed and delivered sessions, and also provided a co-ordination role throughout the development and delivery of the project, and the evaluation.
- NSPCC Southampton – helped develop and deliver sessions.
- Southampton Women's Aid – helped develop and deliver sessions, also provided training for staff before the project and back up support sessions following the project.
- Southampton City Council Inclusion Team - helped co-ordinate / develop project and pull together evaluation.
- An independent evaluator - who carried out and analysed EVS sessions.

What worked....

Feedback from Young People...



"Smarties game"

"Body map"

"All of it!"

Feedback from Staff at the school...

"Very professional"

"Quickly built good relationship with the children"

"Practical aspects of teaching and learning appealed to our children"

"Learning was made "fun"

"A very worthwhile project to be involved in"

Feedback from Project Team...

"A multi agency approach to the development and delivery of the project"

"Having one 'co-ordinating' person attending all sessions"

"Having two facilitators"

"Having teacher / assistant there"

"Planning delivery of sessions with co-facilitator"

"The sessions that focussed on domestic violence and abuse seemed to grasp the attention of the young people"

"Very positive experience working with the young people at Hightown - their enthusiasm, vigour and excitement made the project a success"

"Good to have a partnership approach – with people delivering sessions from differing services"

Lessons learned....

Feedback from Young People...

"Didn't like some of the 'incentives' (badges / stress balls)"

"Didn't like it when the project ended!"

Feedback from Staff...

"Domestic violence issues highlighted more as they are very prominent for some of our young people."

Feedback from Project Team...

We need to ensure:

In-school back up support is provided alongside the project.

More involvement of other school support services (e.g. School Nurses etc)

There is training for all teaching and non teaching staff on domestic violence issues and how to respond

We reinforce this is an SDVF, multi agency project

We demystify services that provide support

Improved planning of sessions before they are delivered

All exercises are inclusive of all types of 'family'

Directions for exercises are clear

We develop a 'menu' of ideas / exercises that can be used and adapted to suit group.



The future...

We will roll this project out to other schools in Southampton. We will do this only where appropriate support is identified to 'back up' the work, and we will:

- Provide in-depth, 'tailor made' training for teaching and non-teaching staff in schools where this project may be delivered in future, include more of a focus on how to respond to domestic violence issues that may arise as a result of the project
- Link in with other support services that are provided in the school
- Make clear reference to domestic violence issues throughout the sessions where appropriate
- Develop exercises to include more detailed information on what services are provided locally and nationally for young people experiencing domestic violence and abuse
- Develop a 'toolkit' of exercises that can be delivered for each session
- Reinforce this is a multi agency project.

Acknowledgments...

SDVF would particularly like to thank:

- The excellent Yr6 students of Hightown Primary School
- Ms Cook and Ms Wild, and also, Ms Phillips from Hightown.
- The project team for giving their time to develop, deliver and evaluate this project
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