

Evaluation of the Trauma Recovery Model for 1625 Independent People

Short Report

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Background and methodology

- The Trauma Recovery Model (TRM) draws together knowledge of attachment, trauma, criminology and neurology in order to formulate interventions for children and young people with complex needs. These interventions place emphasis not only on behaviour and its drivers but the contexts in which it takes place. In establishing a series of layers of intervention that are structured in a sequential way the TRM provides a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness to young people's developmental and mental health need.
- The TRM formed an integral component of the Future 4 Me (F4M) project. F4M is an innovative project run by 1625 Independent people (1625IP) that provides specialist support to young people leaving care, leaving custody or young people who are at risk of entering custody. The project is delivered by a dedicated team with extensive expertise in resettlement, mental health, learning and work and participation.
- A mixed methods approach was deployed involving the use of quantitative and qualitative methods were deployed in order to elicit data concerning the efficacy of the TRM model in helping practitioners to support care leavers and improve practice, knowledge, confidence and understanding of a trauma-informed approach.

Key findings

- The tools used were described as useful and accessible that helped practitioners to develop empathetic attitudes towards young people and a greater understanding of their lives. Sequencing was identified as a principal benefit in helping professionals to stand back and assess all the relevant information and options available. This confirmed the model's ability to initiate a developmental approach with young people and indicated the presence of a structured and considered approach. The opportunity to identify, explore and interpret life events through a trauma lens offered an important insight that develop of client-centred interventions.
- Engaging and maintaining young people within the programme could be very challenging and not all staff felt confident in some aspects of the model. This underlines the importance of providing ongoing training and support for practitioners to ensure that they feel sufficiently secure in their knowledge and confidence to apply the model.
- Participants described the opportunity to engage with theory helped them to focus upon the practitioner-young person relationship and adopt a more mindful approach to practice and to their understanding of their work with the young person.
- Challenges to the implementation of the TRM included finding time to bring psychologist and professionals together for meetings, and managing the complexities of multi-agency working.
- Flexibility and creativity were critical elements of the success of F4M. This applied to the way casework was approached, the way F4M worked with its partners, and the relationship with the evaluation team to ensure the methods reflected the complexities of delivery.

Summary of findings

Description & information	Example quotations
<p>The TRM provided a useful and effective tool for bringing agencies and young people together to identify and address needs. Organisational culture, practices and the complexity of young peoples' lives were likely to have affected the extent to which these benefits were realised.</p>	
<p>The TRM supported multi-agency working and offered a well-rounded view of the young person with whom participants were working. This helped reduce a sense of practitioner isolation. The tools were described as useful and accessible.</p>	<p><i>'forces professionals to see the bigger picture ... to stop and check Is this the right intervention ... is this the right time?' For some it was an opportunity to; 'help professionals to understand why they (young people) decide to act in a certain way'.</i></p>
<p>The use of a trauma lens to explore the lives of the young people that they were working with offered an important basis for the development of client-centred interventions. Understanding trauma and awareness of trauma in early life were highlighted as important elements of the model, enabling the professionals to start to understand the impact of trauma and adverse events on behaviour and health. The focus on sequencing was beneficial and helped work out how to address the different events in young people's lives. Participants also described the opportunity to engage with theory helped them to focus upon the relationship and 'do some cognitive work'.</p>	<p><i>'co-ordination can be really difficult and unintentionally one's own work might undermine the work of others ... there is no blame here, but occasionally we might get results by accident rather than by intention'.</i></p>
<p>One participant highlighted the development of a more mindful approach to practice and to their understanding of their work with the young person. Working with different professionals and understanding their role was beneficial and the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from Statutory and Charitable organisations highlighted different roles and approaches and fostered a sense of genuine inter-agency collaboration.</p>	<p><i>'helps professionals to understand why they [young people] decide to act in a certain way'. For others it was an opportunity to; 'look back, look at the present and look to the futures ... to think about intervention support ...'.</i></p>
<p>Survey respondents were not wholly convinced that the TRM helped provide the care young people needed which could have been related to a lack of practitioner confidence to advise young people on difficult subjects and the challenge of improving young peoples' life skills. This would appear to underline the importance of providing ongoing training and support for practitioners to ensure that they feel sufficiently secure in their knowledge and confidence to apply the model.</p>	<p><i>'... it helps ... to understand how to address the intergenerational effects of trauma and how we can explain to families about trauma'.</i></p>

Recommendations

- Recommendation 1: Emphasis the long-term development of TRM-informed skills and knowledge in order to build and maintain an understanding of the model's uses and limitations;
- Recommendation 2: Understand people's needs and preferences to ensure that the education and training of the TRM is pitched at the right level and in the right way;
- Recommendation 3: Seek opportunities to promote the wider and fuller adoption of the TRM within the broader PIE approach with respect to the benefits for staff and young people;
- Recommendation 4: Adopt a co-production approach in pre-intervention planning in order to ensure research methodologies are compatible with the complexity of interventions;
- Recommendation 5: Explore opportunities to co-design research instruments with those at which they are targeted to ensure appropriateness and to minimise the negative impacts of engagement in research activities i.e. completing surveys;
- Recommendation 6: Adopt longitudinal evaluation approaches that provide scope to establish evidence concerning the long-term impact of TRM-informed work for practitioners and young people.
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For further details concerning the methodology and findings, please refer to the full F4M evaluation report.