



Supporting Families Displaced Through Conflict

A Case Study



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Project overview

We were delighted to receive funding to support families who had been displaced through conflict.

Funding was used to offer a 7-week intervention, to 3 families (7 children and their parents). To ensure this work ran successfully, we developed a new approach to delivering our therapeutic parenting programme. We adopted recommended guideline methodologies from the UN whilst developing this project, and were able to engage with Asylum Welcome to help us to broach the cultural and language barriers that we encountered.

This project aimed to include psycho-education sessions for groups of parents within the large refugee population who are housed in our locality and to include (in the young people's therapy sessions), psychoeducation about conflict and displacement.

The outcomes of this project allowed us to find out what this specific type of group would find helpful by running this as a pilot scheme. The project itself required several adaptations to our existing processes, including provision of our parent information in English, Dari and Pashto, plus the adaptation and translation of our 'Head, Heart Hands' infocards.

A huge heartwarming thank you to the Didcot Powerhouse Fund for supporting this highly impactful intervention and to Asylum Welcome whose input was invaluable. It was an honour to facilitate such a powerful piece of work, and we would be thrilled to support families displaced through conflict further in the future.

Intervention Outline

Introductions

Prior to beginning the group interventions, the young children met with the art therapist, who explained the process of group art therapy. She reported that the discussion was lively, with the young people eager to start 'right now!'

Intervention structure

2 Art Therapy groups were run across 7 weeks.

Parent meetings made clear that the support needed to widen, and therefore, 3 psycho-education sessions were provided for the parents of the young people, at the start, middle and end of the intervention.

Therapeutic Aims

Therapy Groups: Parents reported that their biggest concern for their children was 'The memories' (of conflict). The main aim of the intervention was therefore, to offer the young people a safe space to process and explore their experiences creatively, in a child friendly language - play.

Parent sessions: Sessions were to provide psycho-education on what to expect in parents themselves and in their children in Conflict and Displacement and how to respond positively, (self-care and care of children). Based on UN short intervention programme 'Caring for Children in Conflict & Displacement'. Added to this was focus on importance of Play for Attachment, using ideas from Clear Sky's attachment play interventions, 'Parent-Child Attachment Play,' and 'Heart to Heart.'

Children's Sessions

Therapeutic Themes

The intervention was short and this gave it a clear and direct focus. The young people were able to explore therapeutic themes collaboratively, through creative outlets and spoken word.

Common themes explored:

- Processing difference and anxieties around displacement
- Memories about the traumatic events of the conflict and escape
- The difference between attending school in Afghanistan and in the UK
- Remembering Afghan celebrations

Psycho-education was woven into sessions, to help the young people to develop coping strategies and to see the strengths they have.

Reflections

The therapist shared what an honour it was to work with such a delightful group of young people as they processed some highly traumatic experiences, whilst being able to listen, reflect and offer support.

Considering this was a relatively short intervention of 7-weeks, the children were ready to do the work and were open to exploring their experiences. This meant that the intervention was impactful and meaningful.

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Parents reported that their biggest concern for their children was ‘The memories’ (of conflict).

Parent Sessions

Overview

An interpreter attended all 3 sessions and supported with translation and communication. Mothers and fathers from all families were invited to attend sessions. At 2/3 sessions, all families were represented. 1 family missed representation at 1 session.

Parents engaged in sessions and asked questions. Parents often stayed on at the end of sessions to talk further about their children and how best to respond to and support their needs.

Session Content

Topics covered during sessions included:

- how parents might experience change in mood etc themselves
- self-care
- normalising of resilience of families in meeting challenges
- changes they might observe in children
- the importance of play (parents were given a shoe box of creative materials and encouraged to engage in play with their children)
- how to respond to changes in your children (strategies to support)
- attachment play (parents were given a set of dominoes each to play with their children)

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Project Reflections

What worked well

The interpreters from Asylum Welcome were vital to the success of this intervention. The interpreters that attended sessions had all sorts of knowledge and connections.

The children were ready to do the work and therefore 7 sessions provided them with some time to explore their experiences (though we imagine there was a lot left unexplored).

Parents were engaged in the work and eager to learn more about how they can support their children through this time, and how they can support themselves

Future Considerations

Allocating 4 hours to parents would allow us to cover all content provided in the UN model. Our funding only allowed us to support parents across 3 hours, and due to their positive engagement, enough funding for an additional hour would be beneficial.

The interpreters from Asylum Welcome volunteered their time and where therefore not guaranteed. Funding to ensure an interpreter is present will be of benefit.

To enable a better experience for parents, assessment tools and all resources should be translated.

The therapy intervention length was sufficient for the two groups being supported. 7-8 sessions feels appropriate.

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It's good and we have learned many things from these sessions

Parent/Carer Feedback

Many differences-
patience,
behaviour

They are
sleeping
better

Helpful with
others and
Patient

Have you noticed
any differences
in your child
since doing art
therapy?

They have improved
compared to a few
months ago. They are
respecting more
compared to previous



Parent Feedback

It was really helpful for us as parents'

It's good and we have learned many things from these sessions

Learning that children can be closer to us

What did you find helpful in the parents' sessions?

Learning 'Don't be harsh!' Ask why and speak good with your child



Parent Feedback

More sessions
for parents'

We just need to
help them
(parents) to
learn English

More sessions
for other
children too

How can we
support you as
parents?

Teach (us) not
to be shy and to
work hard'



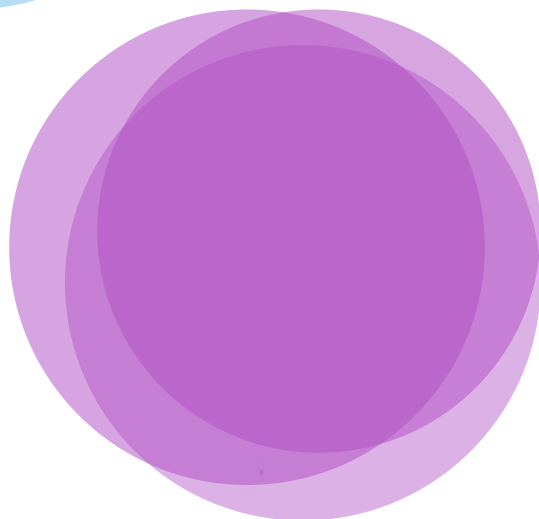
Parent Feedback

Work as
a group

Education on
relating to
children

I learned things I
didn't have a
chance to
before

How can we
support
your wider
community?



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If you have any questions about our work, contact us on info@clear-sky.org.uk

Thanks
for reading.
Please do stay
in touch!

