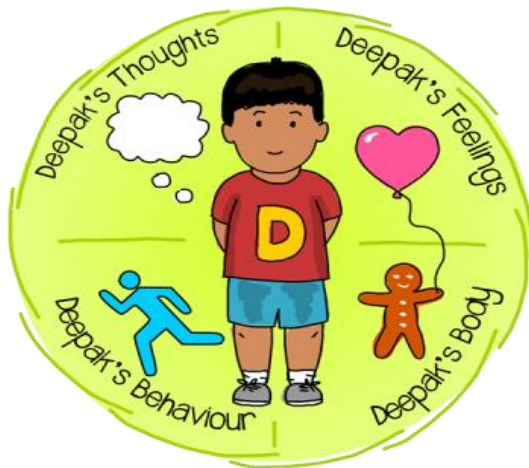


We Eat Elephants & Living Life to the Full

A Storyboard

What was the issue?

In line with the national context, there has long been an increased awareness of the need to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health in Milton Keynes schools. In response to this need, the Educational Psychology Service explored options for structured programmes that could contribute towards schools' overall offer in this area.



The most suitable programme was considered to be Living Life to the Full developed by Dr Chris Williams. The programme is a resilience and life skills programme based on established cognitive behaviour therapy principles. An example of how it has been used in one secondary school can be viewed here: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdef0EkgPhE>). There are separate programmes for primary and secondary schools- We Eat Elephants and Living Life to the Full Young People respectively. The original Living Life to the Full programme for adults is widely used in the UK, Europe and North America. It is also one of the courses most recommended by the NHS.

The offer to schools...

The Educational Psychology Service received accredited training in order to then train schools to deliver the programmes. Eight educational psychologists, a trainee educational psychologist and two psychology assistants took part in two days of training. Intervention packages (including training, materials, and licence for a year) were subsequently available to commission by Milton Keynes schools. The cost was equivalent to one day of Educational Psychology commissioned time (£540).

The programme has been promoted as a whole school intervention for primary schools and a targeted intervention for individuals or groups in secondary schools.

What have we done?

- Since training to school began in January 2018, seven secondary and five primary schools have been trained in the programme. This equates to approximately 55 staff members in secondary schools and around 180 members of staff in primary schools.
- A range of staff have participated in training across the different schools, including teachers, teaching assistants, pastoral support staff, SENCOs, and Heads of Year. The Educational Psychology Service sourced and developed pre-post evaluation measures for schools to measure the impact of the programme on the children and young people participating. This includes pre-post teacher ratings of participating pupils against the following three aspects of social-emotional functioning: tends to worry, deals with difficulties well; and has positive relationships. Pre and post intervention ratings of wellbeing are also collected from secondary students themselves using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS). These were provided to schools as part of the training and were returned on a voluntary basis to the EPS. The data provided by schools was collated and analysed for each school.

- The educational psychologists leading the project held teleconferences with Dr Chris Williams to share progress of the project in Milton Keynes, feedback and share information.
- Separate primary and secondary school network groups were set up to support the ongoing use of the programme. These allowed school staff to share progress and ideas, as well as feedback developments.
- Secondary schools activated their licenses at different times. To date, three secondary schools have renewed their licences via the EPS for the academic year 19-20.
- The Educational Psychology Service has linked in with other mental health initiatives across Milton Keynes. The service led a workshop at the Mental Health Conference for School Leaders and Governors. The three educational psychologists leading the project are also contributing to the Mental Health Services and Schools Link Programme run by the Anna Freud Centre. An educational psychologist has attended one of the Mental Health Lead meetings.



What difference has this made?

- Overall, evaluations from the training completed were very positive. 97% of attendees on the secondary training and 78% of attendees of the primary training 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the course was presented well. 33/39 the participants who completed secondary evaluations felt that they had a good understanding of the course content and how to deliver it by the end of the sessions. The following are some examples additional comments made across all the training:
 - *'Very relative to my role- can see how this can be used across each year group'*
 - *'Easy resources and they look appealing for the young people'.*
 - *'Session and resources well-presented so I go away knowing exactly what to do.'*
 - *'A very helpful tool to use with children and in life generally'.*
- The pre-post data collected has shown positive results of the programme in secondary schools:
 - Across the academic year 2018/19 four secondary schools collected and provided the EPS with pre- post-intervention measurement data. Measures were completed by teachers and students before and after participation in the LLTTF programme.
 - Teacher ratings consistently revealed that students were observed to be worrying less, showing improved ability to deal with difficulties and relationships.
 - Students' completion of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (pre and post) revealed that a majority reported higher levels of mental well-being following the completion of the programme.
- No primary schools have shared pre-post data with the EPS. However, primary staff commented that they liked the simple CBT style framework which is promoted. They can see how this could be used in a range of everyday situations. They felt it gives them a useful tool to help facilitate the children's own regulation of thoughts, feelings and behaviour. A SENCo in a primary setting has verbally reported initial benefits of children responding well to the programme.
- Feedback has suggested that the materials have been useful to dip in and out of to support a range of different needs in secondary schools. For example, one school has used some materials to contribute towards a self-harm group they are running.

- Due to the feedback provided by educational psychologists during the teleconferences with Dr Williams, adaptations have been made to the programme. In addition to this, Milton Keynes secondary schools were given access to an additional programme- My Big Life. This programme was been designed as a bridge between the primary and secondary programmes. This is considered suitable for younger students or young people with additional needs. Following another piece of feedback, the service now hold a centralised licence which allows young people who are out of school to have access to the programme.
- The secondary network meetings were well received across the academic year 2018-19.