

An investigation to ascertain whether a new understanding of the Mind, (that we refer to as 'Inside-Out' coaching) helps contribute to increased resilience within our school community.

Summary

The purpose of this research study has been to determine whether exposure to the 'Inside-Out' coaching understanding helps contribute to increased resilience and well-being within our school community.

To drive this research study, I had looked to understand more fully the question of whether resilience is a learned behaviour, or whether it is indeed already innate within us all - the 'ordinary magic' that Masten (2015:7) so eloquently voiced. The subsequent data did suggest that the 'Inside-Out' understanding was able, for most students, to engage an ability to manage not only areas of difficulty but also their normal everyday challenges.

In the majority of cases, data evidence showed new or increased levels of autonomy, competency, hope and meaning-making within their lives. Our experience in school manifested in reduced levels of stress and anxiety that appeared to lead to greater life enjoyment and an improved sense of well-being. However, as specified by the EBPU, (Evidence Based Practice Unit) (2018), neither qualitative nor quantitative data is able to prove outcomes unequivocally.

We began to see improved capability in not only managing their situations better, for example within family relationships, but also via them *all* navigating their summer GCSE's without issues. The most striking change was a sense of there being less anxiety and stress in their daily lives. Moreover, for the year group as a whole to be as settled as they were, it was not a wild supposition that they were sharing this amongst their friendship groups.

The group questionnaires showed an overall steady improvement in most areas for all but one student, who attended just 4 out of the 8 sessions available - it is feasible that inconsistent attendance might have had an impact in this instance, but this would warrant further investigation.

For us all, understanding comes when an individual can see relevance within their own life experience, and this highlights an important point worth noting that was closely adhered to in our practice and is of ethical importance. McNiff (2013:11) states explicitly that no one has a right to change another, it must be that, '... I change me' not 'I change you': *sustainable change happens from within* (my italics). Facilitating this understanding showed many times over that the creative force for change often came when we as practitioners, (and more importantly as fellow human beings), had seen something new, a truth within our own life experiences that others then related to from their own personal perspective.

There is a sense of choice and of hope in much of the data. I would suggest that this process of a deeper internal shift touches on the transcendent nature of the human experience and the fallibility of attempting to measure what is in essence unmeasurable - the difference between what Banks (1998) describes as the form to the formless. Students, once they understood the role that their thinking was playing in making their reality, showed a disposition towards accessing new thinking - an inner wisdom or common sense that allowed them to alleviate and manage their situations much better. For many students this manifested in a lighter feeling and had the added impact of de-escalating issues at the early stages. This proffers huge potential to lighten the load on heavily oversubscribed agencies – as Pransky (2001) points out, prevention becomes possible.

This experience ran as a constant thread throughout this research, exemplified in an interview with a student self-injuring. Her growing capacity to question what she had perceived of as 'truths' in her life started to crack her perceived 'reality' and open up new thinking - the 'self-righting ability' that Benard (2004) and other researchers in the field make reference to. Being able to touch this inner space is nowhere more poignantly observed than through the writings of Victor Frankl (2004:76). In the suffering of the concentration camps those who coped did so because they could see that 'It is this spiritual freedom – which cannot be taken away- that makes life meaningful and purposeful'.