

Understanding violent behaviours at MAC November 2019

Overview

For 10 years, MAC has been working with young people across South Wales who were exhibiting some of the most extreme violent behaviours. Since 2009 the team have delivered the diversion Out of Court Disposal cases for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Youth Offending Service. Last year the team worked with 6,000 children and young people and delivered violence training to 140 YOS and education specialists. MAC's philosophy is to be continually skilled to deliver a whole system approach to presenting violent behaviours and have therefore developed a three-tier model to seek to engage children at several stages of their violent behaviours. Within the three tiers we have developed specific cognitive programmes to look to change thoughts, feelings and behaviours of children and young people. Since its start MAC has been nominated for or won 54 awards for its innovative work with children and young people.

Three-Tiered Approach Violence Strategy

MAC has developed a three-year, three-tier, strategy for tackling serious violence. Our strategy includes the full suite of violence projects MAC offers. Through the three-tiered approach MAC aims to support all CYP who are for example involved in the criminal justice system, NEET, in alternative provisions, or CYP who are exhibiting thoughts about carrying a weapon and/or displaying negative behaviours. MAC offers either 1-1 or group sessions to support these CYP in making positive changes to their attitudes and behaviours.

Cerridwen

MAC has been running the Understanding Violent Behaviour programme since 2016. Underpinning this programme is the MAC developed Cerridwen, which is a 6-week course for 10-25 year olds engaging in patterns of violent or aggressive behaviours. The aim is to improve emotional resilience and literacy, supporting

children and young people to develop necessary coping mechanisms, strategies and self-awareness to reduce violent behaviours.

Cerridwen has been delivered to over 200 children and young people to date. MAC has rolled out Cerridwen training to 140 youth practitioners across Wales.

The Cerridwen programme is being externally evaluated to develop an evidence base for efficacy and quality of the intervention. The evaluation is being carried out by the Violence & Aggression Unit at Coventry University in partnership with Swansea University.

Preliminary findings from Dr Gemma Morgan (Swansea University):

The Cerridwen, Understanding Violent Behaviours Programme, is a well designed programme underpinned by cognitive-behaviour approaches. Preliminary findings from an on-going evaluation revealed several aspects of good practice, which enhances the integrity of the programme. In summary, the programme provides young people with the opportunity to discuss and address their violent behaviour in a safe and supportive environment. The young people are treated with respect and viewed as 'children first, offenders second'. The programme facilitator displays very good relationships skills and is able to engage the young people in a meaningful way. Importantly, the programme is solution focused and provides young people with opportunities to develop skills and strategies to avoid future offending.

A full evaluation will be completed by December 2019.

Parallel Lives

Parallel Lives is a low-level child against parent violent behaviours in the home programme that is endorsed by the Welsh Government effective practice matrix. This award-winning programme works separately with parents and children to look at the cognitive reasoning behind negative behaviours in the home that are leading children to be violent against their parents or significant others and to improve communications and empathy within the home.

Braver Choices

Braver Choices is our knife crime awareness programme, which works in schools and out of school provision looking at changing the narratives of why children are carrying knives. Braver Choices was funded through the Home Office Anti knife crime fund through October 2018 - March 2019. During this time MAC delivered workshops to approx. 4,500 CYP in schools and alternative provisions. Workshops were delivered in 4 counties across South East Wales, achieving 100% positive feedback from schools who expressed high levels of

interest in wanting MAC to deliver more sessions should funding be extended .
In addition, MAC provided bespoke case management for high risk CYP,
referred through partner agencies, who presented with attitudes of carrying
knives or weapons. Braver Choices was successful in being only 1 of 2
organisations in Wales to receive further Home Office funding in 2019/20
(October 2019 - March 2020).

