



REFLECTIVE EVALUATION EXERCISE REPORT: Teachers Training and Development Needs

The following lays out briefly the results from the data collected at the Emotional Well-being conference held 24th November 2003. The report will then look at some recommendations about the way forward with this. This input will form part of an ongoing dialogue with the Emotional Well-being Theme Group about what their training and development needs are in terms of supporting these issues raised by teachers.

RESULTS:

The results will be presented in the following way:

- themes will be explored as they emerged for each question explored
- themes from across these questions will then be highlighted

QUESTION 1: What personal resources do you need in order to promote the emotional well-being of the young people you teach?

Time:

The most common theme was one of time. Most people who respond to the questionnaire felt that there was a need for more time. The need for this extra time was to:

1. enable teachers to spend more time observing, assessing and listening to children
2. allow for planning and preparation of work
3. allow for reflection on experiences and issues to do with the class, and being able to share these experiences with colleagues
4. understand the needs of children, parents and colleagues

Support:

The next most common theme was that of a need for support. This support could be categorised into 4 areas:

1. ongoing team support
2. team debriefing sessions
3. more classroom support- offer moral support and help with work
4. support in teaching parents the need for more social interaction with children

Developing own personal well-being:

The next theme related to people's need for the promotion of their own mental health. Here people felt the need for feeling positive about themselves and for self-awareness.

Social Network:

Respondents also felt a need for people they could go to with issues they were facing. Linked to this was the need for the development of partnerships with external organisations that could provide support to the schools and teachers.

Funding/Resources:

Respondents felt there was a need for resources and funding in 2 areas:

1. To promote emotional well-being in schools
2. Increase funding opportunities to assist children/families who need help outside of school

Less curriculum restraints:

Respondents felt that there needed to be a decrease in demands from the academic curriculum and more opportunities for a curriculum around well-being.

Training Needs:

Finally the respondents mentioned the following areas as areas for training:

1. Counselling skills
2. Life skills training
3. Emotional competence training
4. Awareness of young peoples' mental health needs- This would allow teachers to develop more patience, empathy and perseverance

QUESTION 2: In terms of maintaining those personal resources or rediscovering them what do you think you will need in terms of training, development and support to be able to develop your pupils to their full potential in terms of their emotional well-being?

The respondents offered a variety of themes here:

Training:

1. Emotional literacy training
2. Counselling training
3. Behaviour management training
4. Understanding of mental health problems in children (ADHD, Aspergers, Dyspraxia)

Support for own emotional well-being:

1. Staff support
2. Time for reflection and evaluation of self and children
3. Clinical supervision- similar process to NHS staff. This would assess if teachers were doing a good job
4. Developing and understanding their own emotional needs

Support from external sources:

- Involve parents and community
- Everyone in the school should have been involved in this exercise (dinner ladies, all staff and TA's)

- Family Liaison Officers in schools
- Involvement from outside organisations (e.g. Connexions to act as mentors and provide information on the mental health of children)

A consistent theme throughout this was the need for time in order to develop.

QUESTION 3: In what way would you like this to be made available to you as teachers?

- Team-building and away days
- Funding for training and resources (training on well-being and more courses similar to this one)
- More time available to teachers
- Having supervisors would enable teachers to discuss particular issues
- Support for teachers through healthy schools projects and specialist services
- Support for families
- Community meetings- share ideas with families
- Less paperwork
- Outside speakers/presentations for all school community
- Networking/partnerships
- Inset days

Summary:

The most consistent theme in terms of needs across the three questions was the issue of time. Teachers need more time for their personal development. What was also significant was that teachers were requesting development and support through reflective and group processes as well as training. What is interesting is that these themes are all very related to the promotion of the mental health of teachers. It is vital that teachers work – life balance is enhanced as is a focus on the emotional well-being of teachers. This theme was very much reflected on the day of the conference with many teachers not being able to make the day and thus half of the conference group was made up of those who support schools.

Recommendations:

1. The Emotional Well-being Theme Group could play an influencing or advocacy role in several ways:
 - a. With school managers around giving teachers time for reflection, group support, consultation and discussion groups.
 - b. With LEAs around the targets they set for schools and the emphasis on academic achievement over a holistic view of the development of young people.
 - c. With funders with regards to how money is spent in terms of mental health / emotional well-being
2. To pull together or facilitate a process of co-ordination of those groups providing support for schools around issues of mental health and emotional well-being.
3. To ensure that the mental health promotion of teachers is linked to the mental health promotion of the young people they are working with.
4. To look at the issue of group reflection, consultation and discussion groups as ways of supporting teachers in their personal and professional development.
5. To ensure that teachers are aware of the support mechanisms that are available to them from outside organisations.