



Families Learning
about *Self Harm*

Programme Overview Report

2025

www.theministryofparenting.com
administration@theministryofparenting.com



Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Why the need for FLASH	Page 3
Target group	Page 3
Parent group programme	Page 3
The programme objectives	Page 5
Therapeutic content	Page 5
What the programme does not do	Page 7
The group programme topic themes	Page 7
FLASH workshop model	Page 7
TEEN FLASH	Page 8
FLASH ASD protocols	Page 8
Evaluation	Page 9
The training model	Page 10
Train the trainer	Page 12
SHARPS training	Page 12
Appendix 1; A snapshot of parent's feedback	Page 14
Appendix 2; Summary of evaluation data on 40 parents who completed the FLASH programme –2021-2022.	Page 17
Appendix 3; Evaluation data of the outcomes of study of 11 FLASH groups	Page 18
Appendix 4 - A report on the outcome data of the FLASH 4-day workshop mode.	Page 22
Appendix 5 - TEEN FLASH Overall Workshop Evaluation Report (2 groups)	Page 32



Introduction

FLASH stands for '*Families Learning About Self-harm*'. This programme was designed to address young people's mental health issues by supporting young people who self-harm, through offering a formal parent-based intervention in the format of a parenting programme to their parents/carers. This is to enable the parent/carer to integrate the role of a parent with how to manage and support young people who exhibit self-harming behaviours.

Why the need for FLASH?

In the UK, it is believed that one in 10 young people self-harm. The fear of self-harm/suicidal behaviour generates anxious responses from family and professionals and therefore families often withdraw and feel very isolated. These parents are largely left unsupported by professionals, and they often cannot tell their family and friends because of a lack of understanding of self-harm; it is still a taboo subject for many. Whilst self-harm is ultimately damaging and may be dangerous, for many people it provides a method of coping with life. It is important to remember the level of distress that has led to someone self-harming. This is particularly important for friends, parents, teachers, or youth-workers who may become aware of the issue and wish to raise it with the individual to remember. Taking away a person's means of self-harm can increase the emotional distress and make the situation worse; therefore, the aim of the programme is to educate the family members.

NICE guideline Self-harm: assessment, management and preventing recurrence (NG2252022) recommendations "Provide information and support for the family members or carers (as appropriate) of the person who has self-harmed"

Target group

Parents, carers, and close family members with a young person aged 11- 18 years can be referred to the group programme when the young person's self-harming behaviours are impacting on the family as a whole.

Reference to "Parent" We are aware parents come in all shapes and sizes. They can be lone parents, in blended families, in same sex relationship, be grandparent, aunts, uncles, foster carers, adopted parents, in traditional roles, from different cultures. The list goes on. For the purpose of this document, when we refer to "parent" we are referring to all in the role as "parent" as described above.

Parent Group Programme

The FLASH Parent Training Programme is a 10-week programme for parents and carers of young people 11 to 18 years of age where there are particular difficulties in relation to their young person self-harming behaviours. Parents are referred to a FLASH group when the teenager's self-harming

behaviours are impacting on the family as a whole. Approximately 8-16 parents are invited to each group and each session usually lasts approximately two hours.

The FLASH Parenting Programme includes the following ten sessions

Session 1	Introductory session- What are the actions of self-harm and risk-taking behaviours
Session 2	Teen Development
Session 3	Self-harm, reality, and fears
Session 4	Listening skills
Session 5	Raising self esteem
Session 6	Walking on eggshells (parenting styles)
Session 7	Consequences (limit setting)
Session 8	Managing the difficult times
Session 9	The others (self-harm effect on family members)
Session 10	Putting it all together and ending

The delivery of this information however should be tailored to each individual client group.

The programme is run by two group facilitators, whose purpose is to implement the group, by building up a reciprocal relationship, equally using their own knowledge and the group's strengths and perspectives. The group facilitators are expected to have knowledge of self-harm, experience working with young people and their families, have both excellent interpersonal skills and a background in social learning theory. The most important suggestion to the group facilitators, made by the group developers, is to make each group their 'own', by delivering clinically relevant information to each parent within a therapeutic group context.

The main aim of The FLASH Parenting Group is not to focus on the young person's behaviour, but to reduce the levels of stress within the family to a manageable level. It is the group's belief that each young person and adolescent is unique, and it is the aim of the group facilitator to make each parent and carer aware of this uniqueness, as well as to understand and appreciate it.

This programme was developed because at the time, there was no identified service which offered parents of young people who self-harm an opportunity to explore, share and problem solve the complex issues that face them when their young person is hurting or trying to kill themselves. Parents value the support and propose the need for advice, information, and counselling plus a chance to meet with other parents.

This form of intervention is important as young people often report that they do not feel listened to, whilst a common time for a young person instigating a self-harming act is after a conflict with a parent. The group aims to support young people by encouraging parents and carers to improve their listening and coping strategies, thus supporting the young person, and reducing the self-harm events.

This programme was originally devised, and first piloted in 2008, by Jeannie Gordon and Sarah Brazier. Both have trained as psychiatric nurses and have residential and community experience of working with young people and their families. John Rivers MA was involved in the 2012 revised edition of the programme. In 2017 Debbi Barnes (Social Worker) contributed to the 2017 revised edition of the programme.

The Programme objectives

The FLASH programme is designed for parents of self-harming children and adolescents. The aim of the programme is not to focus solely on the child's behaviour, but for the stress of the family to be reduced to a manageable level.

The FLASH programme aims to support parents to:

- Obtain a greater understanding about the development process of their young person
- To have a wider knowledge of self-harm in young people and the opportunity to relate this to their own family.
- To provide practical strategies for parents to use with their young person
- To have a greater awareness of listening, praise, and encouragement skills
- To have realistic expectations of them as a parent/carer

Therapeutic content

The content of this curriculum is based on the experiences of the clinical and research efforts by numerous therapists and colleagues in Essex, the United Kingdom and worldwide. The main sources being:

- The STOP (Supporting Together Offenders' Parents) programme. Authors Jeannie Gordon and Mike Kellett, 2001, 2005, 2010
- The "Living with Teenagers" Course for Parents. This course was originally devised by Sonia Hilton and revised for publication in 1996 with Angela Taylor. Both are Educational Psychologists working for Surrey Educational Psychology Service.
- Adolescent Transition Programme. A focus for parents which is a skill in change curriculum for parents of young adolescents by Kate Kavanagh, PhD, and Thomas J Dishion, PhD, from the Oregon Social Learning Centre, USA.
- What Can A Parent Of Teenagers Do? by Michael and Terri Quinn, The Family Caring Trust, County Down, Ireland.
- Working with people who self-injure. Training Pack. Lois Arnold. Bristol Crisis Service for Women. (ISBN 0 9531348 06) Contact details; PO Box 654 Bristol BS99 1XH

The FLASH programme is eclectic in its approach and is underpinned by a range of theoretical teachings.

- 1) The Social Learning Theory underpins everything in FLASH. Role-modelling is key to what we ask facilitators to do, and every session has this essential factor i.e. if we praise the parents they will in turn praise their children, if we reward them, they will then reward their children. Social

learning theory is derived from the work of Albert Bandura that proposes that social learning occurred through four main stages of imitation: close contact, imitation of superiors, understanding of concepts, role-model behaviour.

2) The FLASH programme is also underpinned by Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) as a thread in its theoretical basis (it is what we think that effects how we feel which effects how we behave). By helping parents change their thinking (e.g. Through the FLASH content: Road to Independence, Types of Parents) we are changing their behaviours.

3) The FLASH programme has considerations also from the behaviourist school of thought i.e. Pavlov in that we are proposing rewards via praise in order to increase the behaviours we want to see more of.

4) Solution Focussed Therapy (Kim Berg & Steve De Shazer ,1978), Structural Family Therapy (Minuchin,1974)and Systemic Family Therapy (Gregory Bateson, Milan Team) i.e. in the FLASH feedback and discussion sections we are asking parents to identify what worked before and see that they already have the solutions to what they are facing and this fits with the solution focussed school. Minuchin spoke a lot about the importance of the structural hierarchy in the home, and we are reinforcing this by putting the parents in charge. The Milan team looked at the family as a system and how by making changes in one part of the system you in turn instigate change in the whole system. Teenage challenging behaviours are systemic issues and will not be effectively dealt with by focussing on just the presenting problem. In FLASH we are seeking to bring about a first order change by changing the way the parents think and act which will have a systemic knock-on effect to the whole system.

5) The philosophy of the FLASH Programme was influenced by Carolyn Webster-Stratton's principles and The Incredible Years Series. The content of this curriculum is based on the experiences of the clinical and research efforts by numerous therapists and colleagues in Essex, the United Kingdom and Worldwide. The philosophy advocates a collaborative approach to training, and this relationship is the underlying structure for the training/teaching intervention. The model's foundational base is on interacting with attendees (parents). This requires the facilitator (trainer) to be open in their communication pattern and accepting differences. By building a relationship not based on authority but on a rapport with each person, the facilitator is able to build an environment of trust; thus, making the attendee (parent) feel safe and able to experiment with the strategies offered. Emphasis is placed on what the parent is doing well and empowering the parent to then take the next step in improving what they feel they are not doing as well on.

6) To cultivate this within a learning model for the FLASH programme the authors promote the notion of constructive learning. The constructivist approach developed by Shuell (1992) is a framework to teaching and learning based on the premise that cognition (learning) is the result of "mental construction." In other words, attendees (parents) learn by fitting new information together with what they already know. Constructivists believe that learning is affected by the context in which an idea is taught as well as by attendee's beliefs and attitudes. Bostock (1999) describes the ideology of this model as "This learning requires psychological processes which link theory and practice". This model coincides with the internalization of the learning principle which attendees are encouraged to adopt in parent groups settings. This is supported by Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) who note that to obtain the most effective learning; you have to be in the milieu of the learning object.

7) In the process of the implementation of FLASH, the theory base of Kolb (1984) in learning styles is reflected in the range of activities and homework tasks i.e. in the listening skills session, parents are put in pairs and given an exercise of listening to your partner, this is an example of experiential Learning. There is also an understanding of Group Development which is based on the work of Tuckman (1965).

The course programme aims, and content does not focus specifically on a set behaviour but rather on the relationships and behaviours within the home and family. This is implemented by supporting the parent to have greater empathy with their young person. The content sessions i.e. making the change listening skills, praise and raising self-esteem aid this in the earlier stages of the programme.

The middle content sessions (walking on eggshells, logical consequences) support the parent to make effect limits (again with empathy and awareness). The later sessions (managing the difficult times, the others) provide practical information so the parent can make limits/ choices and networks based on their personal value system and within sound and safe limits. The "group process" and the "environment" in which the parents learn are relevant to the effectiveness of the change in the parents learning. Maslow (1965, 1998) developed a hierarchy of human needs in which he argued that humans need to have a sense of belonging before learning to understand. To belong we need to feel part of a community (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, cited in Rovai 2002, pg. 3). The definition of community; "Feeling that members have a belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group and shared faith that member needs will be met through their commitment to being together".

The FLASH authors have been influenced by the work of Rovai (2002), who describes the essential element of community as being mutual interdependence among members, sense of belonging, connectedness and overlapping histories among members. Therefore, the group facilitators scaffolds knowledge and understanding to encourage the parents learning i.e. provide guidelines (ground rules) at the start of the group, awareness of group dynamics and emotional wellbeing etc. During the feedback sessions the parents have time to share, question and debate with each other their experiences, views and understanding of the FLASH content and can reflect on how the theory learnt can be transferred into practice.

What the Programme does not do

It does not promise parents that the programme will stop young people from self-harming but will help them to manage the situation better through increased understanding and empathy.

FLASH Workshop Model

In 2014 the FLASH group programme was piloted by Jeannie Gordon and Sarah Brazier as a series of full day workshops to parents, carers, and close family members. This was in response to parental request for quicker and more 'work- friendly' access to the FLASH programme. Feedback from parents and professionals was most positive and attendance/completion was over 90%. Delivered on Saturdays in community venues (avoids interruption to work) the workshops are in a series of 4 (so each person must attend the 4-day workshops). Also, the child age was extended to the age range of the young person, to 18 years; this is following recent research which indicates self-harm has increased in college students. The workshop protocols are available on request to professional's post training.

TEEN FLASH

In 2018 we developed and piloted the TEEN FLASH programme. The programme project was funded by an iBCF Transformation grant. TEEN FLASH works with young people (aged between 11-16) who are coping with their daily lives by engaging in self-harming behaviours and their parents/or carers. Young people and parents/carers attend separate workshop groups which have linked themes. The young person's workshops are called TEEN FLASH and the parents' attend the FLASH workshops.

Our hope would be for parents/carers to attend FLASH and for the young person to attend TEEN FLASH, but if this is not possible one may attend 'their' appropriate group without the other person attending. The non-attender may attend the next group after their adult/young person has completed their series of workshops if they wish.

Before starting the workshops, the young people are offered an Introduction Session, which allows the young people to decide whether the course is for them. Myths and facts of self-harm, what the group offers and what is expected if they attend. The young peoples workshop content topics are:

- Workshop 1: Understanding the teenage brain – key teen brain facts – why do we do stuff? Exploring risk taking behaviour & what the risks of self-harm are.
- Workshop 2: Thinking about self-confidence and self-esteem. Who are our role models – who do we compare ourselves to?
- Workshop 3: How do we communicate; listening and styles of communication
- Coping strategies and other ways of thinking.

In 2020, we were awarded 3 years lottery funding to support the further development of TEEN FLASH including the TEEN FLASH manual, website and training programme.

The TEEN FLASH manual has been written and in 2025 it was rolled out alongside a professional training programme.

FLASH ASD Protocols

In January 2020 we developed and piloted the FLASH ASD protocols. FLASH ASD version is based on the FLASH Families Learning About Self-Harm programme. The content has been adapted to consider the issues facing parents of a young person aged 11-19 years old with mild/moderate Autism and who are exhibiting self-harming behaviour.

The design is based upon the FLASH workshop model; adaptations have also been made for the for the 10-week group programme.

The course aims to create better communication and personal relationships between parent/carers and young people. FLASH ASD version allows parents the opportunity to discuss the problem with people who understand and learn how to manage the concerns within their home.

The content includes

- Exploring what self-harm is, what the risks are and what the function of self-harm is in relation to ASD and additional educational needs
- Listening and self-esteem enabling skills
- Managing self-harm within the family environment

- How self-harm impacts on parenting and ways to manage it under stressful circumstances
- Coping strategies for parents and carers

The ASD protocols are available by request and on our website.

Evaluation

FLASH has NOT undertaken a control study, but each group programme is evaluated.

Evaluation of the groups included short questionnaires at the end of each session and a longer evaluation questionnaire at the end of the group. Evaluation suggested that parents felt they benefitted from attending the group.

The results have shown that The FLASH Parent Training Programmes in Essex are a great success. The programmes have led to huge changes in the parent's family life, their relationship with their child/children and their views and their child's views of adolescent wellbeing. This provides new and additional evidence to support the existing data on parenting programmes, showing that they are a successful intervention tool. The results support the fact that behaviour is something that can be changed (new behaviours can be learnt) and that parenting groups are able to fully engage with families to work on children's behaviours.

Changes in the child's/adolescents self-harming behaviours are harder to predict as the programme does not directly aim to reduce the self-harming behaviours. However, it is clear from the results that the programme does improve parent child relationships, thus supporting both during this difficult time, which has been shown to increase parental acceptance and empathy which in turn had a direct link to the reduction of the child's self-harming behaviours. The success of The FLASH Parent Training Programme is thought to be due to it being highly effective and acceptable to children's carers and due to best results being achieved when services are provided in local community settings (which The FLASH Parent Training Programme is).

The self-completion questionnaires produced some very positive feedback showing that parents enjoyed the groups in terms of what they learnt (understanding more about their child's behaviours), what they liked about the group, how they felt (more in control, able to communicate successfully, spending more quality time with their child/children), what they had most benefited from and comments about the groups facilitators. The most common feedback was that after the group parents did not feel alone anymore as they had met other people going through what they are going through. The self-completion questionnaires also provided constructive criticism; however, this can be used for future reference to continue to improve the programme.

In conclusion The FLASH Parent Training Programmes have been successful at improving family life, relationships, and wellbeing. It is clear from the above analysis that The FLASH Parent Training Programmes that have run in Essex from 2003 have been a success, both for the parents, children, and wider community.

- See Appendix 1 for some of the parent's comments
- See Appendix 2 for the outcome data of 11 FLASH groups
- See Appendix 3 - A report on the outcome data of the FLASH 4-day workshop mode.
- See Appendix 4 – TEEN FLASH report on 2 workshop groups

The Training Model

The FLASH parents programme and workshops teaches the parent and carer to integrate the role of being a parent with how to manage and support young children and adolescents exhibiting self-harming behaviours. It supports and gives advice to parents and carers to improve the relationship with their young person in the short and long term, by offering general support, information about why young people self-harm, practical ways to help young people, help to improve their listening, praise and encouragement skills, and a chance for parents to ensure that their own expectations are realistic and not too high.

An important part of the FLASH programme model is the training programme for professionals, thus offering providers to deliver the model themselves with personal supervision of trained practitioners to ensure good practice and assess risk management.

Certification training levels and requirements for FLASH training programme

	Level one: Facilitator	Level 2: Certificated Facilitator	level 3: Trainer	level 4: Strategic trainer
Benefit	Post training authorized to deliver programme to parents/carers.	Approved programme fidelity standard.	Authorized to implement programme training in their own service. Authorized to approve Level 2 facilitators. Authorized to provide supervision to level 1 & 2 facilitators.	Authorized to train nationally & support the training of level 3 trainer.
background requirement	Background in working with young adolescents and their families. Good interpersonal skills & an understanding of social learning theory	Recommended group skills training or equivalent	Clinical qualification (degree level). Experienced in teaching in adult learning i.e., PETALS or clinical post. Excellent interpersonal skills & experience in delivery of groups and /or training courses. Service agreement for the implementation of training programme	To hold a strategic lead position within own service
Requirements	Attendance at an approved training course. Certification given on completion of the training. Recommended to have at	To deliver as lead facilitator 1 complete programme. Receive 4-6 individual supervision sessions from programme trainer.	To deliver as lead facilitator 4 complete programmes. On-going supervision at least monthly with programme authors or level 4 trainer. Video review of delivery and/or interview with programme authors	Co training alongside one of the programme authors. Regular communication with the programme authors reviewing materials, training

	least monthly own service clinical supervision	Application form with paper evidence	Application form & MoP's trainers contract agreement. To observe the training programme To co-lead a training with programme authors or level 3/4 trainer. Lead own service training with paper evidence. FLASH, always have 2 authorized trainers Once a level 3 trainer, ongoing communication with programme authors or level 4 trainer.	protocols & training evaluations
Cost	Programme training place cost	Supervision: Fee arrangement for this is to be arranged by the trainer providing the training.	The trainer in training / their service is responsible for any expenses accrued in their time, travel, accommodation, meals any other expenses required for the person to access and implement the programme training. When leading own training: each professional they train to have the programme delivery manual/workbook, this to be purchased from MoP.	Each professional they train to have the programme delivery manual/workbook, purchased from MoP.

FLASH training (level1)

FLASH is a 3-day training face to face training. The training aims to give professionals, in detail, the values, key principles and delivery content of the programme. This will enable the professionals to:

- Have a wider knowledge, awareness and understanding of self-harm behaviours in young people.
- Understand the basic approaches to implementing a FLASH parenting group programme.
- Provide practical strategies for parents.

FLASH training is always delivered by two FLASH trainers, and fifteen trainees are the max for a FLASH training.

The training facilitators present the FLASH facilitator training programme in a similar way as they would present the actual FLASH programme to parents. Attendees are taken through the entire programme in chronological order, to provide a basic level of knowledge and skill that they can reflect upon when facilitating their own group. This allows the delegates to experience the

programme from the same perspective as the parents as well as enabling them to go on and facilitate it. This also includes possible difficulties, experiential scenarios, and the opportunity for open discussion around the minutiae of running a FLASH programme in practical terms.

The FLASH programme manual is given out to each trainee as part of the training. The benefit of providing the programme manual within the training is that there is NO additional programme manual costs post training.

The group facilitators aim is to deliver the clinical information around self-harm but within a nurturing and therapeutic environment. All professionals interested in attending a FLASH training (with the aim to facilitate a group) should have a background in working with young adolescents and their families. They also need to have had working experience with self-harm. They need to have excellent interpersonal skills and an understanding of social learning theory.

Post the 3-day FLASH training, professionals will not be authorized to train other professionals in the FLASH content. Only FLASH level 3 trainers are permitted to undertake the FLASH train the trainer pathway with The Ministry of Parenting.

Train the trainer model

The core advantage of the train-the-Trainer model is its effectiveness to teach new skills and knowledge to a wide range of people within an organisation by involving internal resources to scale training delivery. Also, becoming an internal trainer and picking up new competencies is a great professional development opportunity for the people involved. Before consideration for trainer, the person/s nominated will have to be at FLASH level 2. Please see Training level requirements on Page 10/11.

Putting the right people into the course is especially vital for success in a train-the-trainer programme.

To deliver a FLASH training: 2 trainers are required.

SHARPS training

Following requests from services who had staff who are working with young people and their families but would not be in the position to implement a FLASH group we developed the SHARPS training.

SHARPS (Supporting Holistic Approaches - Risk, Parents & Self-Harm). SHARPS is a 3-day training. SHARPS training aims to 'skill up' professionals working with young people (aged 11-17 years) who self-harm, and their families. Self-harm is a difficult subject whatever the trainee's professional role. SHARPS will provide trainees with an awareness of the key principles of self-harm and how to manage the needs of the family and the trainee's agency. The content of the SHARPS training is based on the work and evidence of the FLASH (Families Learning About Self-Harm) parenting programme. SHARPS is not a parent group programme; this training is bespoke according to the professionals' needs. Our aim is to open the trainees thinking about self-harm and provide strategies they could utilise in their one-to-one work. Outcomes for professionals attending the SHARPS training are:

- Gaining a wider knowledge, awareness and understanding of self-harming behaviours in young people.
- Understanding the basic approaches for professionals communicating with families where the young person is self-harming

- Providing practical strategies in managing the emotional demand of working with young people who are harming themselves.
- Feeling more competent/confident when working with young people who self-harm.

FLASH can be offered as a one-day training to professionals after they have completed the SHARPS training.

Appendix 1; A snapshot of parent's feedback

Most useful about the FLASH programme

- useful in providing strategies e.g. 'I' statements, praise
- importance of modelling and discussions on emotions
- confirmation that communication needs to improve
- learning about how the YP may be feeling
- learning how it is to be a parent of a YP who self-harms
- Support from the team and the information given.
- Meeting the other parents, who truly understand and sharing common concerns.
- Strategies and realisation, I am not isolated with this problem

Least useful

- there was not quite enough time to share experiences in more depth
- I found some of the role plays uncomfortable but not necessarily of no use

Other topics

- would have found it useful to explore eating habits/eating disorders as a subject topic
- more on what other services available and stages of referrals re social care and CAMHS
- everything was covered
- To touch on the different levels of professional interventions.
- More time to look at negative emotions i.e. guilt, shame, in more depth

How has changed as parent

- feel more confident as a parent
- given me ability to think before I speak
- feel, as a parent, more able to cope with the future
- more aware from YP perspective and I hope to be more sympathetic and understanding of negative behaviours (attention-seeking may be attention-needing)
- taught me to stop and think before reacting, conversation and communication skills with my child
- Helpful in being more careful of the way you word things.
- feel calmer and are less self-blaming

- more confidence – don't feel as helpless as I did before the course

Difference to YP behaviour

- more talkative
- made a difference to her behaviour as she is less reactive and not self-harmed in the last six weeks and she talks more and is more able to explain how she feels
- I think that my YP has taken an interest in my learning, she was asking after most sessions and I think because I am taking an interest in her by attending this course she feels able to engage with me more.
- Unsure... .too early to say ... need more time to put in the strategies

Difference to relationship

- talks to me more
- I don't feel quite as on edge all the time as I did at the start of the course
- I feel less angry towards the YP for all the upset and hurt she is causing to others and herself
- we are more able to sit and talk through feelings
- possibly – able to defuse tension

Best moment

- work on importance of modelling
- laughter – proves in darkness there is light
- the brain sections

Other comments about group leaders/programme

- Facilitators were excellent – perfect balance of supporting yet challenging me to reconsider some of my attitudes /reactions.
- Really good balance of serious and emotional work with humour and activities to lift the mood
- appreciated consistency of the group, same people meant we could be open very quickly
- good size of group – enough to share experiences but few enough to give everyone time to speak
- felt comfortable in what is a very uncomfortable situation

- I feel honoured to have been a part of this group and admire everyone who has participated and shared their stories
- This group course should be made available to many more parents who have found themselves in our situation. Totally changed my perspective on parenting and made me understand that I am not a bad parent.
- thank you so much I feel without this course I would have lost my daughter
- I would like to thank you all so very much for having me as part of the group. It has been really informative and has helped a great deal. I have met some lovely people and am actually going to miss you all.
- The facilitators were fantastic, very supportive and not afraid of saying things we didn't want to hear. The delivery was fab, well-paced and the people wanted to genuinely help.
- I was very impressed with the course and the facilitators. During the course I felt I came to know myself a bit better or understand my emotions as well as my child's

Comments other

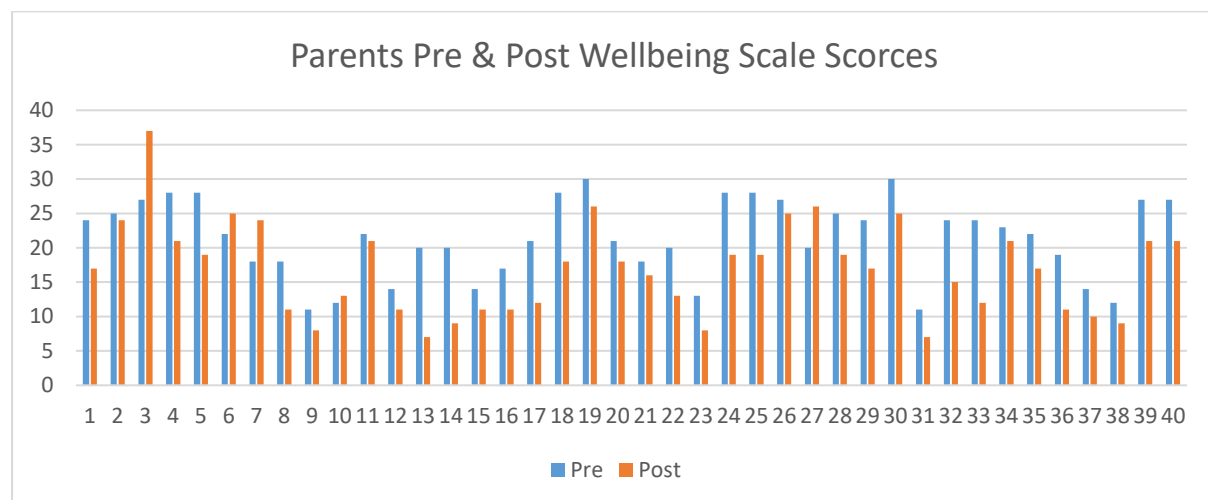
- I would recommend the course to other parents
- Out of something horrible I have come to meet some lovely people. I cannot thank you guys enough
- Thank you

Appendix 2: Summary of evaluation data on 40 parents who completed the FLASH programme – 2021-2022

We also conducted pre- and post-adolescent wellbeing scales as part of our outcome measures. The adolescent wellbeing scale was devised by Birmaher to highlight possible depression in adolescents. The score has 18 questions relating to the adolescent's life and how they felt. The scale was offered to the parents to complete on the young person they were concerned about. A score of 13 or more indicates likelihood of depression.

Scores on the 40 parents who completed the workshops in full. See Table A.

Table A



Pre-Scores

38 of the parents scored their YP in the “likelihood of depression” (13 plus) range. Scores ranging from 11 to 30.

Average prescore was 21.4.

Post scores

- 36 Parents scored a reduction
- 13 scored their YP out of the “likelihood of depression” (13 plus) range
- 4 Parents increased their scores

The parents who scored their YP as the same or increased were all male (3 fathers and 1 stepfather).

- 25 YP scores remained in the “likelihood of depression” (13 plus) range.
- Average post score was 16.85.
- 90% of the parents scored an indication of improvement in their YP wellbeing.

The evaluation from the parents satisfaction questionnaire at the end of the workshops produced some very positive feedback showing that parents enjoyed the group in terms of what they learnt (understanding more about self-harming behaviours), what they liked about the group, how they felt (more confident, able to communicate better, spending more quality time with their young person), what they had most benefited from and comments about the group's facilitators.

Appendix 3; Evaluation data of the outcomes of study of 11 FLASH groups

Participants; Below figure 1 gives a snapshot of The FLASH Groups population.

Figure 1

No. of Groups	11	Rented council house	9	Not in paid employment	6
No. of parents that completed the pre and post evaluations	52	Private rented house	5	Employed outside the home part time	16
No. of male parents	17	Owner occupier (no mortgaged)	8	Self-employed part time	2
No. of female parents	35	Owner occupier (mortgaged)	28	Retired	1
Married	31	Temporary accommodation	1	No. of children	110
Divorced	8	White	51	No. of male children	46
Single	3	Employed outside the home full time	17	No. of female children	63
Living with partner	9	Self-employed full time	4		
Separated	1	Full time family carer	8		

Design

All information was collected by self-completion questionnaires. Parents provided information about themselves and family life, to illustrate the similarities and differences in the backgrounds of the families within the group, they also provided information that was designed to assess whether the group had an impact on parent's views of themselves and their child/children, their relationship with their child/children and self-harming behaviours. Self-evaluation questionnaires were administered pre and post the group and included measures of Adolescent Wellbeing.

The family life and relationship questionnaire were a pre and post pictorial questionnaire asking the following two questions, where parents could give any of the following responses. Question one; my family life is? happy, relaxed, soap opera, getting there, great fun, uphill struggle, unhappy, harmonious, confusing, time- bomb, frustrating and rewarding. Question two; which describes how you feel about your relationship with your child(ren)? Happy, juggling act, under attack, hanging on, challenged, angry, and can't say.

The Adolescent Wellbeing Scale was devised by Birleson and is a tool used to measure depression in older children and adolescents. The Scale has 18 questions, each relating to different aspects of an adolescent's life, and how they feel about these. Scale A is for the parents to complete, and Scale B is for the young person to complete, they are both asked to indicate whether the statement applies to them most of the time, sometimes or never.

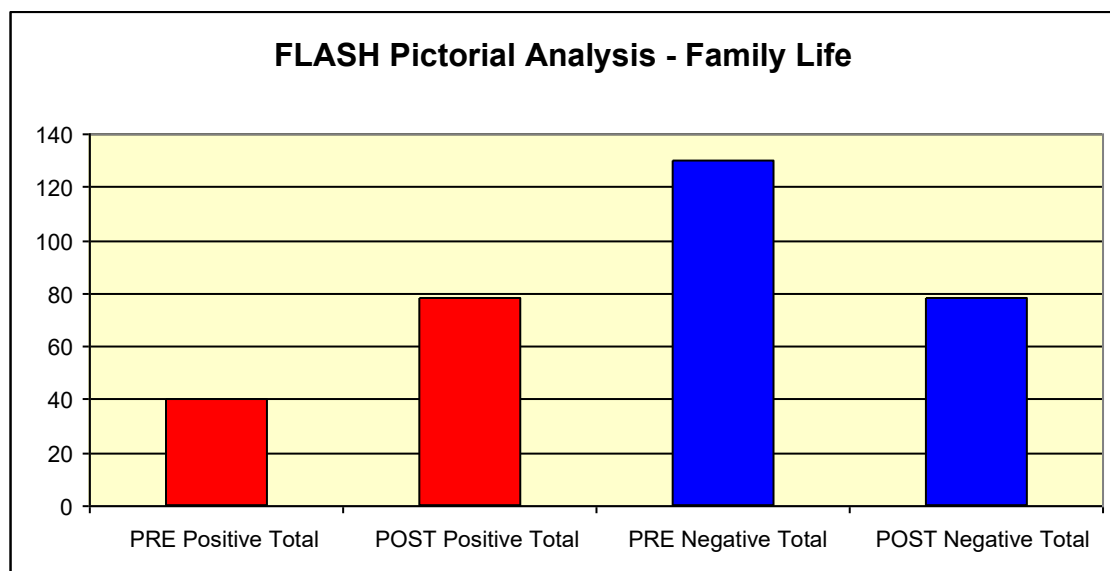
Analysis/procedure

All parents attending the group filled in the self-completion questionnaire pre and post the group. All participants were kept anonymous by being coded with an I.D. number held locally. The data collected was entered into Microsoft Excel and analysed in the statistical package SPSS (15). A paired samples t-test was conducted to assess whether the means of two items were statistically different from each other. This analysis is appropriate when you want to compare the means of two groups or conditions (pre & post).

Results

Results are split into two sections, first the results from the family life and relationship pictorial analysis and secondly, the results from the scientific questionnaire (The Adolescent Wellbeing Scales A & B). Figure 2

Measure	Pre-Treatment	Post Treatment	Significance
Family life total (positive elements)	40	78	.007
Family life total (negative elements)	130	78	.000
Relationship total (positive elements)	16	25	.021
Relationship total (negative elements)	113	84	.002



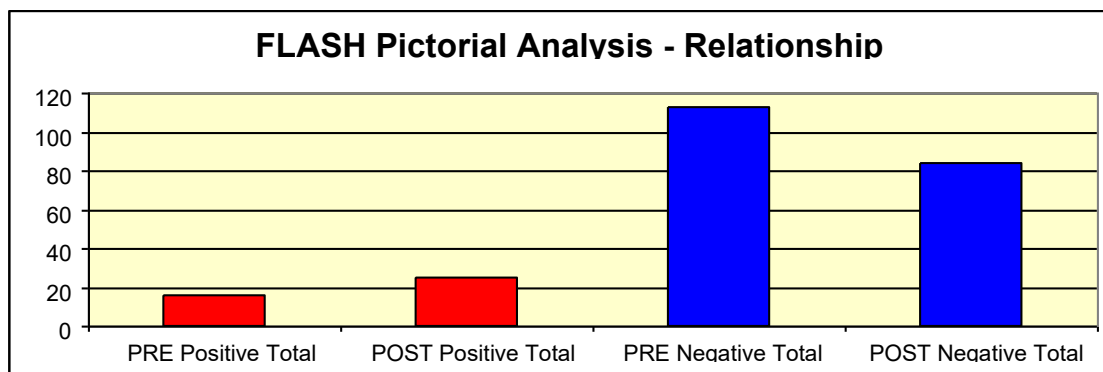
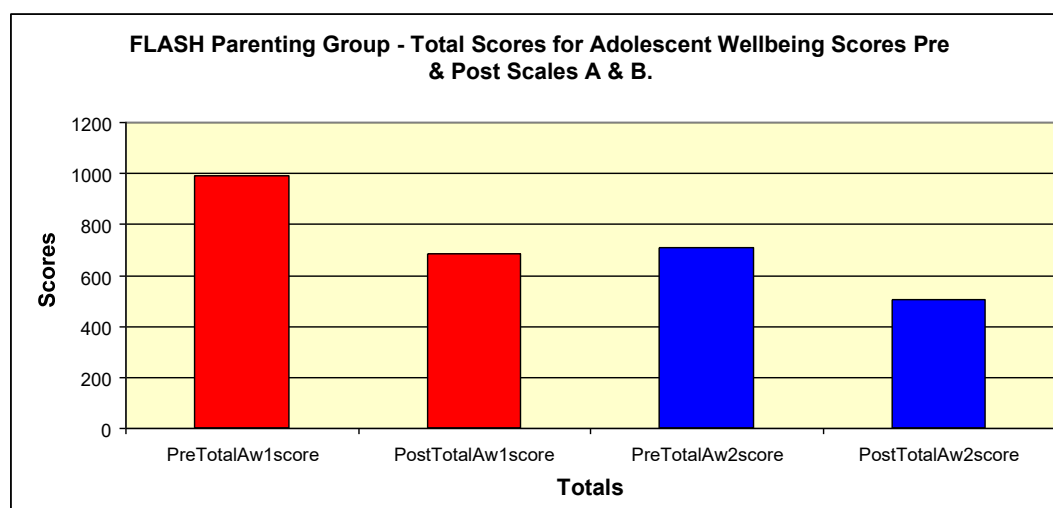


Figure 3

Measure	Pre Treatment	Post Treatment	Significance
Adolescent Wellbeing Total Scale A	990	683	.000
Adolescent Wellbeing Total Scale B	708	504	.004



Results from the pictorial analysis show that the positive elements for both the family life and relationship questions increased post the group, as well as the negative elements for family life and relationship decreasing post the group. Results for the Adolescent Wellbeing Scale A & B totals showed that there was a decrease post the group. A paired samples t-tests were conducted to evaluate the impact of The FLASH Parenting Programme on family life, relationships and Adolescent Wellbeing. A statistically significant decrease in mean score for all measures from pre to post was found (figure 2 & 3 bold font).

Discussion

The pictorial analysis, both for family life and relationship, showed an increase for positive elements and a decrease for negative elements. This shows that in the areas that should increase, (e.g. happy, rewarding, great fun), did increase post the group, and the areas that should decrease, (e.g. unhappy, uphill struggle, time bomb), did decrease post the group. This shows that The FLASH Parent Training Programme was successful at improving parent's family life and the relationship with their child. The Adolescent Wellbeing Scale A showed a 307 point drop off. This indicates that the parent's perception or actual, wellbeing of the child improved after taking part in the group. The Adolescent Wellbeing Scale B showed a 204 point drop off. This indicates that the child view of their

own wellbeing improved after their parents had taken part in the group. The results were analysed statistically using a paired samples t-test. A statistically significant decrease in mean score was found for the Family life (positive and negative elements), Relationship (positive and negative elements), and the Adolescent Wellbeing Scales A & B, which shows that the change in these areas were not due to chance, the change was due to the intervention of The FLASH Parent Training Programme.

The results have shown that The FLASH Parent Training Programmes in Essex have been a great success. The programmes have led to huge changes in the parent's family life, their relationship with their child/children and their views and their child's views of adolescent wellbeing. This provides new and additional evidence to support the existing data on parenting programmes, showing that they are a successful intervention tool. The results support the fact that behaviour is something that can be changed (new behaviours can be learnt) and that parenting groups are able to fully engage with families to work on children's behaviours.

Changes in the child's/adolescents self-harming behaviours are harder to predict as the programme does not directly aim to reduce the self-harming behaviours. However, it is clear from the results that the programme did improve parent child relationships, thus supporting both during this difficult time, which has been shown to increase parental acceptance and empathy which in turn had a direct link to the reduction of the child's self-harming behaviours. The success of The FLASH Parent Training Programme is thought to be due to it being highly effective and acceptable to children's carers and due to best results being achieved when services are provided in local community settings (which The FLASH Parent Training Programme is).

The self-completion questionnaires produced some very positive feedback showing that parents enjoyed the groups in terms of what they learnt (understanding more about their child's behaviours), what they liked about the group, how they felt (more in control, able to communicate successfully, spending more quality time with their child/children), what they had most benefited from and comments about the groups facilitators. The most common feedback was that after the group parents did not feel alone anymore as they had met other people going through what they are going through. The self-completion questionnaires also provided constructive criticism; however, this can be used for future reference to improve the programme.

Appendix 4 - A report on the outcome data of the FLASH 4-day workshop mode.

Introduction

In 2014 the FLASH group programme was piloted by Jeannie Gordon and Sarah Brazier as a series of full day workshops to parents, carers, and close family members. This was in response to parental request for quicker and more 'work- friendly' access to the FLASH programme and to cater for parents who were unable to engage in the programme over a 10-week course due to childcare or concern about leaving their young person in the evenings. Also, the child age was extended to the age range of the young person, from 16 to 18 years; this is following recent research which indicates self-harm has increased in college students.

The FLASH Parent Training Workshop Series is a re-arrangement of the standard FLASH ten-week programme setup, to deliver the programme in a sequence of four, full day, workshops. Delivered on Saturdays over eight weeks, and the parents attend fortnightly. Parents were told they needed to be able to attend all four workshops. Approximately 8-16 parents were invited to the workshops and each workshop usually lasted around five hours.

The FLASH Parenting Programme workshop series includes the standard FLASH programme content divided over four workshops

- Workshop One: An overview of the programme, what is self-harm, 'what is the difference between suicide and self-harm exploring what is Self-harm, reasons, risks etc.
- Workshop Two: listening skills, praise and building self-esteem
- Workshop Three: walking on eggshells, consequences
- Workshop Four: yourself as a parent, looking after the family, putting it all together, evaluation and ending

The delivery style of the workshop series is more 'teaching' than the standard FLASH 10-week group programme; this is due to the faster pace of the content topics and the reduced time for feeding back on the sessional themes. However, the importance of the therapeutic relationship between facilitators and parent/s and the formation of the group process remain, therefore the delivery of the content information is tailored to each workshop series client group.

Workshop lunches and refreshments

As in the standard FLASH programme high quality refreshments create a culture attentive environment within which everyone feels welcomed and valued. Conversations over a refreshment break provide opportunities for the parents to bond, plan, connect, and learn from one another. In the FLASH workshops we provided the parents with lunch as this model's family communication by providing meals which parents share together.

In-between workshop phone calls

As the workshops are fortnightly apart, we ensured that every parent was contacted in-between the workshops to provide the parents with some individual consultation.

Demographics

Date below is on 45 parents who attended the FLASH workshop set.

No. of parents attended the workshops	45	Owner occupier (mortgaged)	37
No. of Volunteers attended the workshops	9	Employed outside the home full time	23
No. of male parents	12	Student	1
No. of female parents	33	Employed outside the home part time	8
Married	28	Self-employed	4
Average age of parent leaving education	18	Children in full time care of parent	43
Foster carers	4	No. of young people	40
Grandparent	2	No. of male young people	7
No. of parents that completed the pre and post wellbeing scale evaluations in full	36	No. of female young people	33
White British	42	No. of siblings	53

Referrals on hold.

We have a number of parents who have not wanted to attend the FLASH workshops due to their young person's self-harm reducing or stopping and the parents want to emotionally move on from thinking about their young person self-harming. However, they are also worried that the self-harming behaviour may return so we 'hold' the referral. This means we keep in contact with the parent and offer them the workshops termly. Parents have said this has been really helpful as they feel they have a safety net for "just in case".

Outcome measures

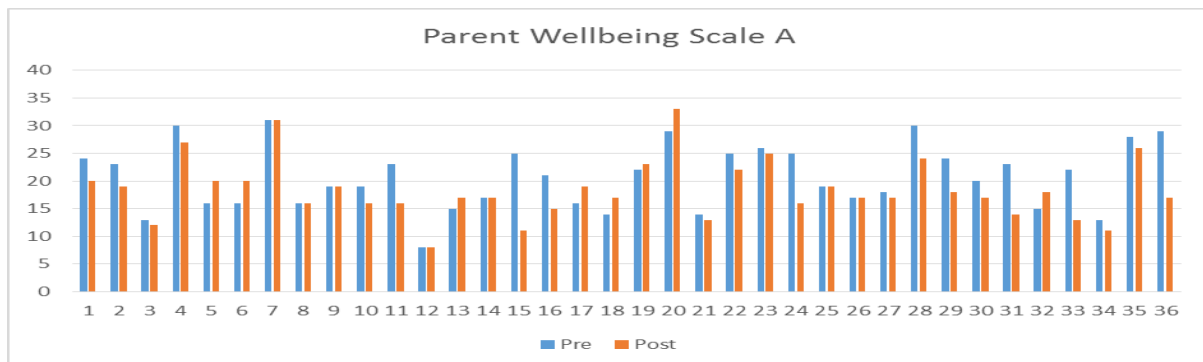
Evaluation of the groups included short questionnaires at the end of each session and a parent's experience evaluation questionnaire at the end of the group.

For each workshop set we also conducted pre and post adolescent wellbeing scales as part of our outcome measures. The adolescent wellbeing scale was devised by Birleson to highlight possible depression in adolescents. The score has 18 questions relating to the adolescent's life and how they felt. The scale was offered to the parents to complete and also to the young person they were concerned about. Not all the parents were comfortable at the start in asking their young person to complete the scale. A score of 13 or more indicates likelihood of depression.

To date we have data on 36 parents who completed the pre and post adolescent wellbeing scales in full. See Table A. The results show:

- 21 scores reduced
- 8 increased
- 7 remained the same

Table A



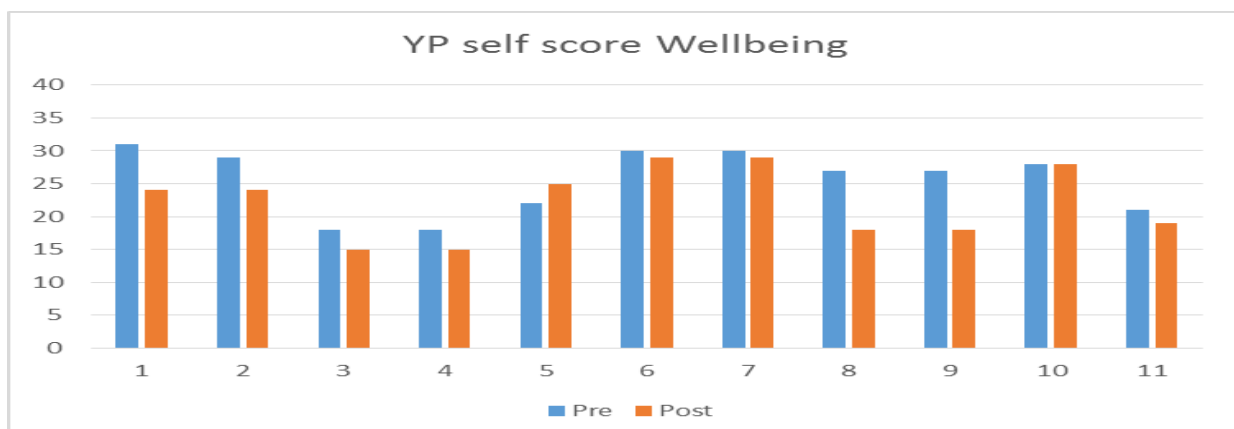
The Adolescent Wellbeing results indicates that 58% of the parents felt the wellbeing of their young person improved after taking part in the workshops. In exploring the reasoning for the 22% of the parents who felt the wellbeing of their young person had decreased after taking part in the group, we conclude this is to do with

- 1) the parents increased awareness to their young person's state of wellbeing
- 2) the parents increased awareness to the risk factors
- 3) The parent's recognition that their young person may have a long-term mental health illness

Data below is on 11 young people who completed the pre and post adolescent wellbeing scales (Note: we do not see the young person in the workshops) See Table B. The results show:

- 9 reduced scores
- 1 increased
- 1 remained the same

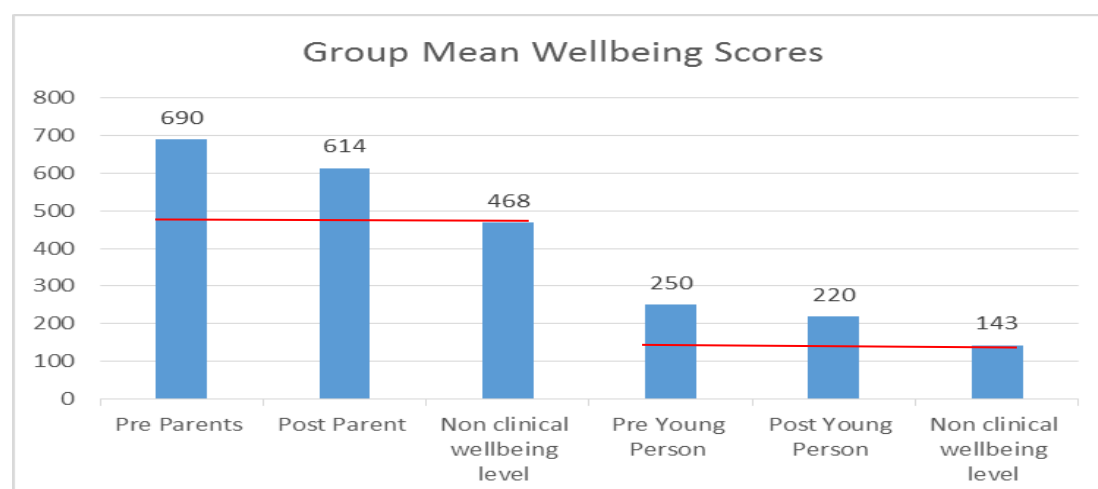
Table B



The Adolescent Wellbeing results suggests that 82% of the young people personal view of their own wellbeing improved after their parents had taken part in the group. This sample however is very small and as the mean score for the Wellbeing scale measures (Table C) show; all the parents and young people self-scores remained high and above a level of "normal wellbeing". This would indicate the likelihood of all the parents' young people having a depressive condition. It was therefore important that we encouraged the parents post the workshop completion to continue to have on-going discussions with their young person about how they are feeling and that the parents

continue to be aware and mindful of their mood and energy levels. We also advocated that the parents continue to support their young person's counselling/ treatment plan.

Table C



Summary of the outcome measures and user feedback

A decrease in mean score for the Wellbeing scale measures from pre to post was found and this alongside the parents and young people experience feedback (see appendix A & B) would indicate that parents benefitted from attending the workshop.

Feedback from parents and volunteers experience questionnaires produced some very positive feedback showing that parents enjoyed the groups in terms of what they learnt, what they liked about the group, what changes they had noticed from attending the workshops and comments about the workshop facilitators.

Feedback from the young people was also very powerful especially considering we had no contact with the young person and all the feedback and wellbeing scores were conducted in paper format in sealed envelopes. The comment that says in mind for me and makes the giving up my Saturdays most worthwhile was this comment from a young person *"Your child will thank you so much for doing it (the workshop), it may become the difference between losing your child and changing their life for the better"*

The results mirror the results we have obtained from the FLASH 10-week group programme which shown that The FLASH programme were implemented weekly or as a workshop model is a success. The workshops have led to positive changes in the parent's family life, their relationship with their young person and on their views of their young person's wellbeing. This provides additional evidence to support the existing data on parenting programmes, showing that they are a successful intervention tool. The results support the fact that behaviour is something that can be changed (new behaviours can be learnt) and that parenting groups are able to fully engage with families to work on young people's emotions and behaviours.

Changes in the young person's self-harming behaviours are harder to predict as the programme does not directly aim to reduce the self-harming behaviours. However, it is clear from the results that the workshop programme did improve parent and young person's relationships, thus supporting both

during this difficult time, which has been shown to increase parental acceptance and empathy which in turn we believe had a direct link to the reduction of the young person's self-harming behaviours.

As in the 10 weeks programme the most common verbal feedback was that after the workshop's parents did not feel alone anymore as they had met other people going through what they are going through.

Barriers and benefits of the workshop model

The main barriers to the workshops were staff availability to work on the set Saturdays over a longer period of time and for some single parent's childcare was a problem. However, these are the same barriers for staff working in the evenings and all the parents who could not attend a Saturday due to childcare said an evening group would also be an issue. This would suggest that alongside the 10-week group and workshop delivery models there is a need for the FLASH programme to be delivered on an individual family model.

The main benefits of the workshop model are.

- 1) High attendance levels. The attendance/completion was of the workshops was 80 %. This was due to the parents feeling more relaxed about leaving their young person in the day than in the evenings. Parents finding childcare easier on a Saturday than on a school night and it was more assessable to working parents.
- 2) Group bonding: The day format with a shared sit-down lunch provided a safe nurturing environment which I feel enabled the parents to bond quickly and feel able to participate in the workshop exercises and activities.

Appendix A

Parent's Experience Report

We asked the parents a range of questions on how they experienced the workshops. Below is a summary of the most common answers.

Question 1: Reason why you wanted to attend the FLASH workshop

- My daughter was self-harming and suffering from anxiety and depression, I felt very helpless and didn't know how to help and support her
- To help understand and stop my child self-harming and preventing visits to A+E!
- To develop an understanding of self-harm and learn strategies which can assist and support my family
- To better understand issues around self-harm and to assist my teenager in more positive approach
- My daughter self-harming by cutting I wanted to attend to be able to understand it more and to gain strategies to deal with it
- To get all information to help young adults about self-harming

Question 2: What was the experience of coming to the workshop like?

- Very positive, I didn't know what to expect and it has been a good thing to feel part of a small group and learning how to cope with our shared experience
- Great!! Very informative and supportive

- Very positive
- Positive experience, friendly, warm, confidential
- Very interesting, all materials used was very interesting

Question 3: What did you get out of the workshop?

- A huge amount- listening skills, learning to understand the teenage brain, talking to our daughter more and sharing our experience with others
- A deeper understanding of the teenage 'mind-set', coping strategies
- Support needed to develop strategies and mind-set to cope with difficult behaviour
- It's not just me going through this there are other families we can support each other
- To be able to use information regarding the workshop

Question 4: What changes have you seen in your family?

- Very positive changes- our daughter has stopped self-harming and our family's channels of communication have really opened up
- My husband realising his parenting style conflicting with mine
- Home more calm
- Positive
- Ability to talk and communicate to me
- Very positive changes

Question 5: Have the workshops made any difference to your relationship with your young person?

- I try to spend more time with her
- I have a far better understanding of her so more patient
- It is easier to talk to them about self-harm and made me calmer to discuss bad behaviours
- We are a little closer
- We talk more and I definitely listen better
- Same as above really, we're talking more about this subject
- My responses are more balanced and gone are the days of the knee-jerk reactions
- They have helped his father, and I develop a joint parenting strategy
- Have a better ability to discuss the issue from a more informed perspective
- I think more about wording things to her, try not to be angry
- Channels of communication are more open, she is delighted that we've attended the course, and I think this has made her feel more supported
- Better communication has improved relationships and there is conflict
- I can share information I now know with her

Question 6: Has the group made any difference to your young person's behaviour?

- Has told me she loves me!
- She is more open and likely to spend time with the family
- She talks to me more and wants to spend time with me, she hasn't cut 'as much' since I've been on the course
- He hasn't self-harmed for a while
- She is more open, bit more relaxed

- She seems more of a consistent mood and generally much happier
- She wants to know what we've been doing, so she's talking more about things
- (young person's name) feels that by attending the FLASH programme, I am showing a genuine interest in her and learning about self-harm, I believe she is harming herself less as a result
- She has been encouraged by our continued support and become more aware of the issue, much more willing to talk about the problems
- Keener to get help for herself
- She has not self-harmed for several weeks and is more willing/able to talk about it and about her feelings
- Behavioural improvement, more respect and understanding, better communication
- We can still communicate with each other

Question 7: What do you think could be done differently?

- Let participants have an idea of numbers in advance, perhaps run 9.30-2.30?
- Longer course! Not enough time together
- none

Question 8: What message would you like to give to funders about the workshop?

- Keep it going-please! It's so very valuable
- The workshop is an absolute necessity for parents!!! It prevents use of other service such as A+E and is needed throughout Essex; we had to travel two hours each way for each session!
- It has been invaluable to us as a family in a time of crisis
- It is such a worth-while course and is so necessary as more young people are self-harming, it is important to know that parents have support too
- We need more funding to keep this workshop going as there is still more people needing this and help for parents

Question 9: What message would you like to give to other parents who are thinking about attending a workshop?

- Do it! It's not scary and you'll get so much out of it, it will make a noticeable difference to the well-being of your young person and your whole family
- It may not give you the answers you are looking for but it sure will give you a greater understanding!
- Don't deprive yourself and your child/family of the opportunity to make things better!!
- To come
- Please do go if you have the opportunity, it is a rewarding course for parents, everyone is friendly, warm, and confidential
- To do this workshop to get the help for the parents that need it

Parents were given the opportunity to make a further comment:

- I found I could express emotions, something I can't do, and I will use this advice and understanding of how hard it is to have a child who self-harms but understand self-harm as well and that means I can help and support my daughter better

- It was interesting having trained/training counsellors on the course and sometimes a bit annoying
- Thank you so much!
- Many thanks, best of luck for the future
- An overall positive and enabling experience
- Very helpful facilitators and always providing useful assistance and information to help the group, very friendly and made all attendees feel very comfortable which could be difficult when dealing with an issue such as this
- Both facilitators were fantastic, eloquent and easy to communicate with, they are a great team and work well together, I feel privileged to be able to have had the chance to do this course
- The facilitators were absolutely great - wise, kind, knowledgeable, understanding and good people managers, the other participants were very generous in sharing their experiences and it was very comforting to feel that we are not alone in this situation
- Would like to thank the facilitators for all the information and support given over the last four workshops
- I have found this invaluable and think the course is amazing, I feel I would have cracked if I didn't have the support of the facilitators and understanding and empathy of other parents, facilitators were kind and caring and informative

Appendix B

Adolescent Experience

We asked the adolescents a range of questions on how they experienced the workshops. Below is a summary of the most common answers.

Question 1: Reason why you think your parent wanted to attend the FLASH workshop?

- Because I self-harm, on anti-depressants and am suicidal
- To learn how to deal with my self-harming and how to cope emotionally, as well as understanding me and listening to me
- To help herself cope, when I have my episode of self-harming, also to get help for me
- "Because they want to help me and support me. They wanted to go so they can learn about self-harming so then they can support me and understand."

Question 2: What was the experience of them coming to the workshop like for you?

- I don't have much opinion but happy my mum cares and is trying to learn
- They were far easier to talk to and I didn't like that I had to keep everything to myself because I didn't think they would understand or deal with it emotionally which was important to me
- I didn't really mind, it was nice to know that I was thought about, and I was actually cared for
- "I am really pleased that they went to the workshop because I feel like they do care about me, and they want to understand me."

Question 3: What do you think your parent got out the workshop?

- Not too sure, really
- A better understanding of why I was self-harming and how to talk about it effectively with me
- Help and advice, how to control my episode

Question 4: What changes have you seen in yourself/family

- Stopped the cutting, brought me to be more honest with mum
- I have stopped the self-harming!!! Mainly because I have felt like I can talk about how I am feeling rather than keeping my feelings in
- Mum is more confident on the problems
- "I think that my parents got so much out of the workshop because they always came back looking happy and every time, they have been more understanding."

Question 5: What do you think we could do differently in the workshops and what could we add to the workshops?

- Bringing us along one week to meet other people and talk about it
- I wish there was a workshop for the young people as well as the parents
- You do a great job as it is 😊
- "There is not anything that you should do differently. You have done a fantastic job!"

Question 6: What message would you like to give to funders about the workshop?

- It does help it's really important that we get help and our parents get advice too
- I think it's great as a lot of parents don't seem to understand and this opens up the channels of communications about an important topic
- Thank you
- "My parents wish to thank you for making this workshop available."

Question 7: What message would you like to give to other parents who are thinking about attending a workshop?

- If they ever struggle, they need to talk to someone its very helpful
- Your child will thank you so much for doing it, it may become the difference between losing your child and changing their life for the better
- It can help more than you may think and although they may not show it, but they will feel like you care 😊
- "It is definitely worth going because it has really helped my parents so it will definitely do the same for you. It is very beneficial to the whole family so just give it a go and I can assure you, you will be glad you went."

Appendix 5 - TEEN FLASH Overall Workshop Evaluation Report (2 groups)

Introduction

This report is compiled from the findings of the 16 young people who took part and/or completed the TEEN FLASH, or RAP workshops. RAP stands for Risky Adolescents and Parents; it was quickly evident that the young people did not like this name as they could not equate their self-harming with taking risks. So, the first group asked for their group to be called TEEN FLASH, as they too would be learning about self-harm. (FLASH stands for “Families Learning about Self harm”).

The first set of workshops were planned to be delivered as a set of four full day workshops to young people aged 11-18 years old who were exhibiting self-harming behaviour.

The Workshops aimed to create better communication and personal relationships between parent/carers and young people. In addition, TEEN FLASH aimed to reduce emotional stress and create positive changes in behaviour and encourage less risk taking through self-harm. TEEN FLASH allowed young people the opportunity to discuss self-harm as a concept and other influences on their lives with facilitators who have experience and knowledge of teenage behaviours, and the teenage brain. And who were able to deliver new ways of looking at topics in a non-judgemental and accepting way. Within the group rules ‘there’s no such thing as a silly question’ was included. This also allowed facilitators to ‘check out’ what young people were saying with a sense of acceptance and understanding from the youth group. It was quickly evident that work on raising self-esteem was necessary and this theme ran through all the workshops.

Core topics included

- Understanding the teenage brain – key teen brain facts – why do we do stuff?
Exploring risk taking behaviour & what the risks of self-harm are
- Listening and improving communication
- Raising self-esteem & self confidence
- Getting to know ourselves – Does how we feel affect how we behave?
- Recognising stress and moving forward
- Coping strategies and other ways of thinking.

Delivery

Two sets of TEEN FLASH workshop were delivered on alternate Saturdays. The first set (in Clacton) ran as four workshops. Two young people advised that they were going to miss a session, one due to a statutory visit to parents (a looked after young person) and the other due to a change in arrangements between parents as to when she could see her dad. Neither teen wanted to miss the workshop, so as a group, it was decided that we would run that session on a Sunday. This group felt very strongly that four workshops were not enough, and the facilitators concurred, as there was still work to be covered.

The second set of workshops were delivered on alternate Saturdays in Colchester, but with the addition of an introduction session on the advice of the previous group. A member from the previous group came to speak to the new attendees about their experiences at TEEN FLASH. This was a massive

achievement as when this young person started the previous group they would only speak in a whisper; their self-worth and esteem was so low. To see this teen chat confidently and ask the assembled group of young people if they had any questions was very heart-warming.

Of the sixteen young people who attended TEEN FLASH, ten had parents attending the FLASH group. One young person had both parents attend, but due to childcare issues one parent attended the workshop in Clacton whilst the other joined the latter group in Colchester.

Two young people were asked to leave the group as their emotional maturity and capacity to join in appropriately was beyond them; – both have been offered to join another group in the future. Parents were in agreeance with the decision and confirmed our decision, saying they had heard similar messages from school and EWHMS.

One young person decided they were unable to manage group work as they felt constantly overwhelmed ‘by all the people’. And one young person was in a school play – rehearsals were all day on a Saturday. This young person has asked to come on the next group. The school are not aware of her self-harming and she and her family did not wish to ask if she could join rehearsal later as this would disclose her self-harm.

Young people were contacted weekly by email, text, or phone between workshops. Fourteen young people responded to emails and contact. Of these fourteen, nine initiated conversations when they needed some support; three of these resulted in phone call’s due to distress felt at the time. One young person had no e mail or phone. One asked to be contacted via their parent only.

Both groups were adamant that they absolutely disliked ‘online support’ they wanted to speak to a ‘real person’ when they felt the need for support. Together we worked on a list of people who they felt they could ‘trust’ and call upon – the preferred organisations in both groups were The Samaritans, and Child Line. See Appendix A. You will notice that all of the organisations they mentioned involved ‘real people’. They were able to rationalise that they can get information from the internet but on the whole, it doesn’t give emotional support.

Each workshop was run by two trained facilitators, refreshments and lunch were provided. This created an environment which promoted nurturing and allowed everyone to feel welcomed and valued. There were some challenges over providing food; some young people were reluctant to eat in front of their peers, one wanted fizzy drinks and junk food, advocating that’s all they ate, and one felt the need to monitor what they ate, so they brought their own lunchbox. However, by week three they were all eating the food and enjoying the fresh fruit juice and instant hot chocolate provided. The groups were consulted as to their preferred foods and one week they wanted boiled eggs and toast! Which we provided. The second group requested pizza as a celebratory ending – one young person asked for a chicken sandwich as they disliked pizza. All this added to their feelings of worth and value. Conversations over refreshment and lunchbreaks provided opportunities for the young people to connect and we witnessed them being gently supportive of each other.

Referral route:

How the young people became aware of TEEN FLASH

- *Mum x 2*
- *Family Solutions x 2*
- *School Newsletter*
- *NHS*

- *Counsellor*
- *School and Mum*
- *Y.E.S*
- *EWMHS and School*
- *School*
- *EWMHS*

Teen demographics – Table A

No. of young people referred onto the workshops	35	Aged 11-13	18	Aged 14 – 16	17
No. of young people attending the workshops	16	Aged 11-13	7	Aged 14 – 16	9
No. of young people completing the workshops	12	Aged 11 – 13	5	Aged 14 -16	7
No. of parents who attended FLASH alongside their teen.	11	Parents of 11 -13 (both parents of one child)	4	Parents of 14- 16	7
No. of boys referred	5	Aged 11 -13	3	Aged 14 -16	2
No of boys attended	1	Aged 11 – 13		Aged 14 – 16	1
No of girls referred	30	Aged 11 – 13	15	Aged 14 – 16	15
No of girls attended	15	Aged 11 – 13	7	Aged 14 – 16	8
No of young people who identified as transgender once engaged in programme	2	Aged 11 – 13 (both female to male transgender) recorded above as females as that is how they were referred.	2	Aged 14 -16	

Table A

Measures

Evaluation of the Workshops included short questionnaires at the end of each session and a longer evaluation questionnaire at the end of the Workshop. We also conducted pre and post adolescent wellbeing scales as part of our outcome measures. The adolescent wellbeing scale was devised by Birleson to highlight possible depression in adolescents. The score has 18 questions relating to the adolescent's life and how they felt. The scale was also offered to the parents attending FLASH to complete. A score of 13 or more indicates likelihood of depression.

Outcomes

The Adolescent wellbeing Scores

Table B: 12 young people completed the pre and post evaluation in full

Note: *decrease is a positive result and a score of 13 or more indicates likelihood of depression.*

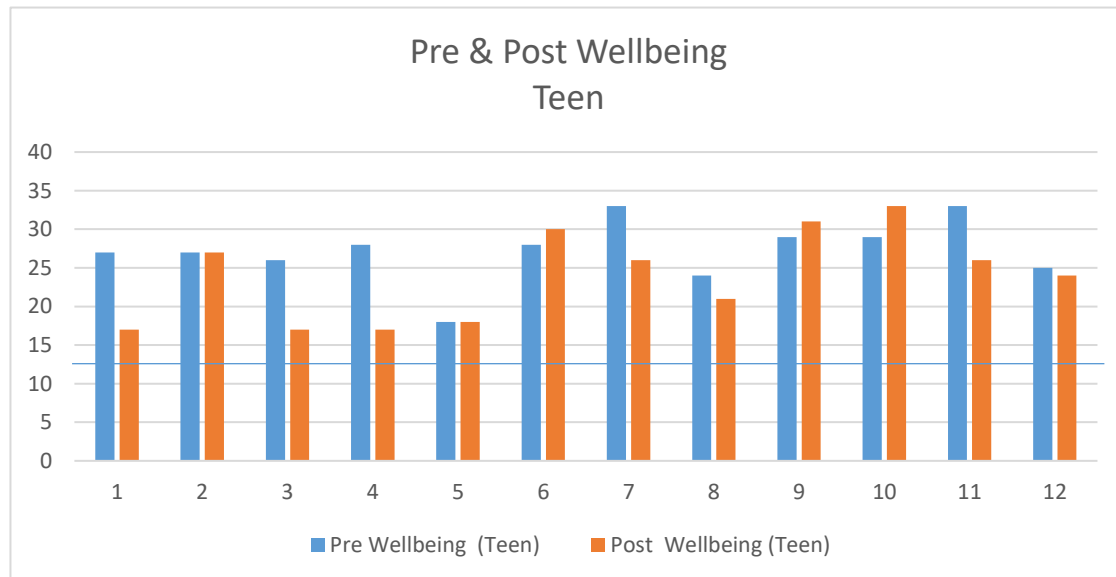


Table B

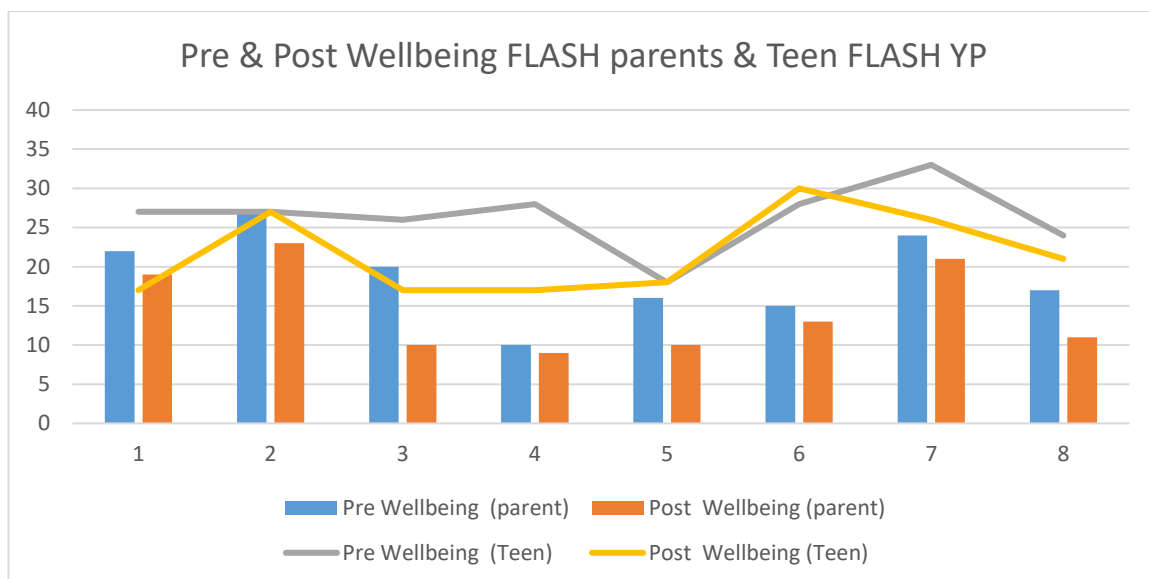
The pre-scores show that all 12 of the young people felt they were within in the clinical level of need for depression. The post scores show all the YP remain in the clinical level of need for depression however 7 scores were reduced, which is very positive.

3 scores were raised and 2 remained the same.

The post wellbeing paperwork was carried out on the final session of the workshops when 9 of the 12 young people were not looking forward to ending the group and in fact wanted it to continue. We believe this is reflected in their scores.

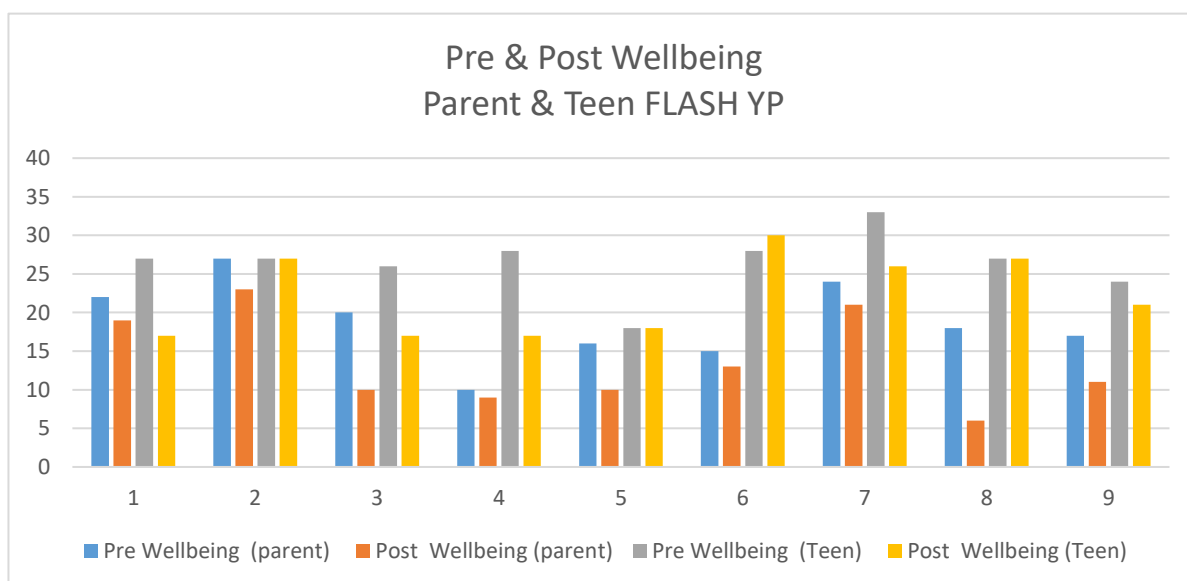
Table C; shows the all pre & post scores from the teens and their parents

Note; Teen number 9, 10, 11, 12 parents did not attend FLASH



This chart shows the YP ALL scored themselves higher than their parents scored them

Table : shows the pre & post scores from the teens and the parents who attended the FLASH programme



All 9 parents decreased their scores

5 YP decreased their scores, 3 remained the same, 1 increased

Final evaluations

Final evaluations were conducted with both groups to gain an understanding of what the young people's experiences had been during the groups – their answers follow.

A similar evaluation was given to the parents as we wanted feedback on how we engaged the young people and the adult's perspective of their young person attending.

Answers from the young person's perspective

Question: Was the timings of the sessions okay?	
Number of those who answered 'Yes':	Number of those who answered 'No':
12	0
Question: Were four sessions enough?	
Number of those who answered 'Yes':	Number of those who answered 'No':
2	10

Please note that one young person did not answer the above question*

Question:	What, for you, was most useful about the group?	
Answers:	- Knowing I wasn't alone, and people are there to support you. - Realising that it's ok to be down. - Making friends. - Meeting people, having open chats. - Meeting new people so I'm not alone, and discussion things in person and getting ideas. - I got to meet people going through similar stuff and help with stress. - Meeting new people and everybody is so kind. - Being able to openly say how we feel. - Self-esteem and confidence coats. - The teenage brain, self-esteem. - Learning about different things. - Meeting new people who are going through similar things to you.	
Question:	What, for you, was least useful?	
Answers:	- Having long discussions and less activities. - Everything was useful. - Talking about the meaning of self-esteem. - Learning about the brain, useful, but not at the same time.	
Question: Was the group what you expected?		
Number of those who answered 'Yes':		Number of those who answered 'No':
2		10
Expansions on these answers:		
- It was better and less scary. - I thought it would be less fun. - It was a lot more relaxed and informal than I expected but I liked it. - I thought It'd be boring, and I would be judged. - I didn't expect to make so many friends. - Much more understanding and less patronising. - I didn't think that they would be so supportive. - I thought everyone would be sad and it would be a negative environment. - It made me smile!		
Question:	Are there any other topics/issues you would have liked to talk about?	
Answers:	- Mental illnesses maybe? - I would have liked to have talked more about mental illness e.g. depression. - No and yes. - No. x 5 - Maybe we could have talked a bit more about why people self-harm.	

	• Yes. Sexuality and gender questioning. • Maybe being more personal but not triggering or disrespectful and only if you want to.		
Question: If your parent/carer is attending FLASH, have you noticed any change in their behaviour?			
Number of those who answered 'Yes':	Number of those who answered 'No':	Number of those who answered 'N/A':	
5	2	5	
Question: Have you changed anything about your behaviour since coming to TEEN FLASH?			
Number of those who answered 'Yes':	Number of those who answered 'No':		
8	3		
Please note that one young person did not answer the above question*			
Expansions on these answers:			
• Tried to not isolate myself. • More aware of different coping mechanisms. • I am more aware of my feelings. • I've tried other things before hurting myself. • Thinking more positively. • I've had less panic attacks. • I feel more confident in some things.			
Question: Has the group made any difference to your relationship with your parent/carer?			
Number of those who answered 'Yes':	Number of those who answered 'No':		
7	4		
Please note that one young person did not answer the above question*			
Expansions on these answers:			
• They're more understanding and don't have a go at me for self-harm as much. • Closer. • She understands a little more, I think. • Parent understands it more. • We're able to talk easier about stuff.			
Question:	What was the best moment, for you, in the group?		
Answers:	• When we said something that we didn't like about ourselves and were told the reverse (what others think of us). • The last session- a good and comfortable environment. • Making new friends, being able to trust someone. • Meeting everyone and hand of friendship. • Using the 'confidence coats.' • Meeting (young person's name). • Confidence coats, Jenga, affirmations. • Talking to people who understand. • (Young people's names) and me all laughing together because I don't feel alone. • When we got to get to know everyone better. • Everything.		
Question:	Did you feel supported in the group by the group leaders?		
Number of those who answered 'Not Supported':	Number of those who answered 'Unsure':	Number of those who answered 'Supported':	Number of those who answered 'Very Supported':
0	0	4	8

Question:	What would you say to a young person who was unsure about attending the group in future?
Answers:	• Try it, don't like it then leave, but try before judging. • Go, it's worth it, you shouldn't be nervous, everyone's lovely. • It's very helpful, I recommend it. • To give it a try and if it wasn't for them to try 1-1's. • You should. It's really helpful and gives you something to look forward to if you've had a sh*t week. • Try it even if you're not sure because it might help. • It's really informative and helpful and a lot less scary than what you'd expect. • Please go because it is so supportive and it's not as scary as you think! • They should go it's very helpful. • I think they should at least give it a go as everyone cares and supports you. • Everybody is so kind and you aren't ever judged, believe me you'd love it.
Question:	Do you have any other comments about the group and/or the group facilitators? (please feel free to leave any comments about taking part in the group)
Answers:	• Shelly and Debbi, thank you so much for an amazing 5 weeks. • They're lovely, ease your nerves and care about your opinion. • Fun, helpful and welcoming. • Fun, amazing, I wish it went on for longer. • I loved it and everyone here.

from the parent's perspective – this evaluation was given to all parents who had a young person attending TEEN FLASH

Question:	What do you think motivated your teen to attend TEEN FLASH?
Answers:	• Recommendation from support worker. • I suggested it to her at a time when the self-harm was completely out of control. She wanted a solution to it because she did not want to be hurting herself. • I think I motivated my teen initially, but I think she felt it would be useful to her. • Me. • She wanted to understand her feelings more and learn more constructive coping strategies. • He thought about it and made his own decision. • Pastoral teacher at school/posters. • I motivated her to attend. • I initially motivated my daughter to attend but she was quickly keen to attend as she wanted to try and understand more about her self-harming. • I found out about it and told her, but she was very open to coming. • To try and find ways to stop self-harming.
Question:	What was your experience of your teen coming to TEEN FLASH like?
Answers:	• Seemed positive after sessions, however, he played down its effects. • The first week she was very unsure but the emails asking about snack requests and dietary requirements meant a lot to her and put her at ease. After she attended the first course, she was really confident and happy to come back.

	• <i>I found the people running the course very friendly and they made me feel relaxed. My daughter seemed keen to attend each week, and she enjoyed the workshops.</i> • <i>Very welcoming on arrival. (Child's name) hasn't really said very much about the course.</i> • <i>She used some strategies she learned and applied some to help.</i> • <i>Worried at first as he never looked comfortable but better when collecting and Debbi spoke to me before and after- reassuring.</i> • <i>Slight reluctance but I think she found it interesting/helpful; she has attended each session.</i> • <i>We saw an improvement in her life; it was important for her to see that she wasn't alone.</i> • <i>My daughter was very reluctant to speak about RAP to begin with, but she now seems to be a lot more open as the weeks go on.</i> • <i>She was apprehensive at the beginning but has enjoyed the group.</i> • <i>Not much was said, one session was found to trigger him due to a poem that was read, other than that he didn't say much.</i>
Question:	What do you think they got out of the group?
Answers:	• <i>Some improvement in self-esteem.</i> • <i>I think the realisation that she is not alone but more than that, it shifted her belief that others only harm for attention and they don't mean it and therefore that is how others will view her. I think she understands now that it is a real management strategy but there are others that are more helpful and still effective. She has not harmed herself in several weeks and seems to be coping with difficult moments more effectively.</i> • <i>I am not sure, I just hope she listened well and took onboard some of the topics covered.</i> • <i>Different strategies to manage feelings.</i> • <i>More aware of triggers or if too late using strategies to cope but she is also aware she over commits herself to making changes to make life less stressful.</i> • <i>He didn't really say other than he enjoyed it and wanted to go the following week.</i> • <i>Meeting like-minded children and (hopefully) confidence about joining in and talking.</i> • <i>Techniques for dealing with anxiety and troubles.</i> • <i>My daughter doesn't give much away but I have noticed she recognises when her mood changes and can identify triggers.</i> • <i>An understanding of how you grow-up and develop, that she's not the only one that struggles with life.</i> • <i>To be totally honest, not a lot.</i>
Question:	What changes have you seen in your teen and/or family?
Answers:	• <i>She stopped hiding in her bedroom and has spent more time talking and engaging with me and her siblings.</i> • <i>My daughter has trouble dealing with other people's difficulties, she carried it by herself. Since attending, she has approached me for help/advice with dealing with a situation her friend was in.</i> • <i>She is more positive in her conduct and speech.</i> • <i>Bit too early to see many changes, but more inclined to discuss what has happened during sessions.</i>

	• <i>He has become more assertive and has been able to say no to mum when on contact.</i> • <i>She is more aware of her feelings and being mindful of stress.</i> • <i>She is not self-harming right now.</i> • <i>She has managed to stop harming, even in times of panic when she would normally disappear and then come back with harm; she is managing these situations different now and without causing harm to herself.</i> • <i>Sadly none, but this is not a failure of the course. (Young person's name) likely has issues beyond the scope of the course which is coming to light.</i>
Question:	What do you think we could have done differently for the teens or yourselves either during engagement onto the programme or during the life of TEEN FLASH
Answers:	• <i>Nothing springs to mind.</i> • <i>I'm not sure about doing things differently for the teens but little touches such as receiving a text saying that they are looking forward to seeing you can make a big difference.</i> • <i>Bean bags to sit on.</i> • <i>I am not sure; I might ask my daughter about that, although she said she wasn't ready to fully explore the issues.</i> • <i>Everything has been perfect!</i> • <i>Perhaps some feedback to parents. Despite trying to engage, very little information has been given to me via my teen, just a lot of shrugging when questioned about how the workshops have gone. My daughter was shocked that some of the children were smokers and were allowed to smoke. I have to agree, maybe not being permitted to smoke is one of the things young teenagers need, but that's just me, I believe in boundaries.</i> • <i>Nothing, the course seemed very good, however, my teen seems quite 'closed down'.</i>
Question:	What message would you like to give to funders about the group?
Answers:	• <i>The group is invaluable. It gives teens a safe place to explore what is going on in their heads; it helps support parents by giving an independent voice for teens to listen to.</i> • <i>More programmes like FLASH should be available, my daughter has been dealing with self-harm for 2 years with little support, and FLASH has opened up communication and empowered us to deal with the self-harm together.</i> • <i>That these groups are essential to mental and physical well-being of the young self-harmer and the family as a whole.</i> • <i>Worthwhile- can help 're-start' your relationship with your child.</i> • <i>Thank you for all your advice.</i> • <i>This course is a fantastic tool for families, to learn to support each other and become more emotionally prepared to intervene or manage and prevent crisis.</i> • <i>It's an amazing course, I have learnt so much!</i> • <i>I would like to say that a group like this is absolutely invaluable, and I would like to let the funders know how grateful I am as a struggling single mum, to have a place like The Ministry of Parenting, to turn to for help with my teenager.</i> • <i>Prior to this group, this young lady had long term and regular support from EWMHS, she was on Sertraline and Propranolol, and she was still harming every day. Since the beginning of the group, she has had one slip-up during a</i>

	<i>stressful time when she went back to harming but has had the longest time, she has ever been clear of harm since she started.</i> • <i>Definitely should continue. The course gives messages that will likely sink in later in life.</i>
Question:	What message would you like to give to other parents whose teens are thinking about attending TEEN FLASH?
Answers:	• <i>Encourage them to go, they will get a lot out of it, and gain an understanding of how they are developing through their teen years.</i> • <i>Take the leap even if your young person needs a gentle push, it's tough to go through but worth it in the end.</i> • <i>Absolutely necessary for the well-being of our teens.</i> • <i>Definitely encourage your child to attend, if possible, get teacher/pastoral/family friends to encourage them to attend.</i> • <i>Encouragement, it can only help.</i> • <i>Be brave enough to come on it. You will feel empowered and 'normal'!</i> • <i>Do it! It's so valuable and you learn so much.</i> • <i>To it, because you can only gain good things and maybe it would be a turning point for your teenager.</i> • <i>I thought she would be too scared to go and wouldn't be able to manage the group dynamic. She was so well supported that it was never an issue. I also worried that she just would not change but I had underestimated her desire to stop harming herself.</i> • <i>Definitely worthwhile.</i>

Summary

The results of the TEEN FLASH workshops supported through the iBCF Transformation grant have been a great success. The workshops have led to positive changes in the young people's attitudes to coping with stress and gaining a better understanding of the stressors they put upon themselves. Although we acknowledge that changes in the young people's self-harming behaviours are harder to predict as the programme does not directly aim to reduce the self-harming behaviours. However, it is clear from the results that the workshops did improve parent/young person relationships, thus supporting both during this difficult time, with young people reporting a greater acceptance and empathy from parents which in turn had a direct link to the reduction of the young person's self-harming behaviours.