

# **Mental Health Support (Dog Project)**

# **Introduction**

At Platform 1 we understand the importance and need for early intervention of mental health difficulties to ensure that children have the opportunity and ability to reach their full potential as adults. Approximately 75% of our current clients have been referred to us with difficulties that are traced back to early childhood, which continue to have a negative impact on their daily lives. We understand that services continue to be stretched by adults who have been unable to access support at the first point of difficulty and at Platform 1 we aim to change this. With this in mind we are piloting a project aimed at primary aged children to support them to speak about their difficulties, develop self-confidence and create self-awareness around mental health.

Below is an outline of how we propose to create and accomplish this project.

AIMS			
Introduction			
of our			
project			

School assembly
to narrate the
story of our
"Dog" to create
interest. The dog
will be introduced
to children as a
non-threatening
method of
seeking help and
support when
they need it.
Invite children to
participate in a
competition to
name our "Dog"
Send out surveys,
with
differentiation
according to age,
to our pilot
schools to

INTERVENTIONS

Our "Dog" will have a name and a personality developed through our website
Ensures that we create a workshop designed to cater to the prevalent issues identified and appropriate to the child's age and development

OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES
Create an interest in our
project amongst
children and staff.

IMPACT
Children will feel
encouraged and
safe to speak
about their
difficulty
Our "dog" will feel
more relatable
with a name and
the children feel
more ownership of
•
the process.
Children will feel
listened to and
engage more with
a subject that
applies to them.
This will ensure
that the workshop
and the morning



To support pupils and their families with their mental health (Where need has been identified by staff or a child's disclosure)

Once "the dog" has been integrated into the school environment we aim to provide different workshops to the school.

1:1 counselling

Family therapy

Class based awareness sessions

Small pupil group mental health support

Identification of need and further support requirements

Opening the lines of communication between individual family members. Creating a healthier home environment.

Increased selfconfidence and awareness of coping strategies. These sessions not only give children a voice but also permission to ask for support if required.

These groups are aimed at children who are identified as 'quiet' in class and perhaps find it difficult to engage with their peers or are experiencing anxiety..

Our aim is to support them to develop their self-confidence and build resilience.

They can also be for children with similar difficulties e.g. bullying, negative body image etc.

is of benefit to them.

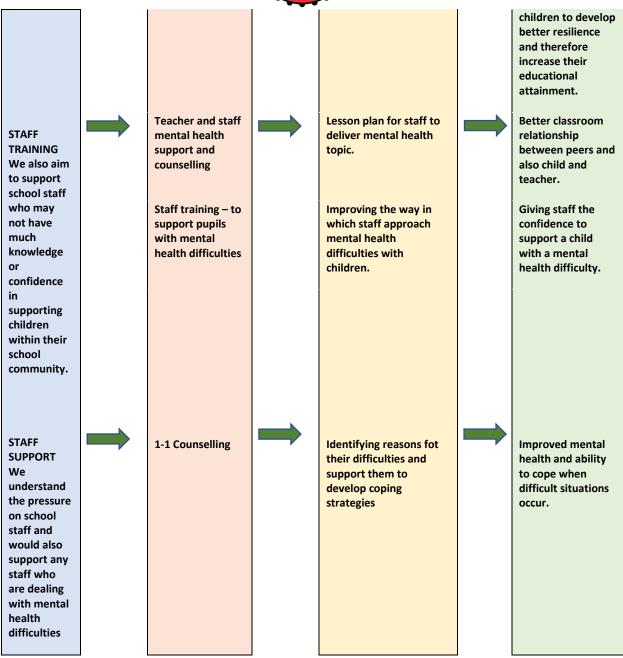
Improved mental health and wellbeing

Improved engagement with school community

Children who are struggling often feel 'different to others' and not confident enough to discuss when they need help. These sessions open up the topic of mental health in a fun, nonjudgemental way which validates any feelings they do not understand and need support with.

**Improved** attendance as a result of school refusal due to their difficulties and anxieties. Identification and development of coping strategies to help them through any difficult events. Emotional difficulties can be a barrier to educational attainment. These groups can break down this barrier by supporting the





## **Key Purpose:**

To provide a range of programmes and 1:1 support to improve the mental health of pupils, families and staff.

The sessions will be delivered by qualified, experienced and BACP accredited practitioners.



#### 1:1 Counselling

- Pupils identified via disclosures, small group work or school referral
- Methodologies include use of play therapy, Person-Centered Approach
- Liaise with social work team and other professionals where appropriate
- Referrals to specialist support if identified

#### **Family Therapy**

- Creating liaison between family members by opening a line of communication with each other.
- Identify any difficulties experienced by any individual and support them to recognize any
  effect this may be having on the family dynamics.
- Give all family members the space and time to have a face within their family.
- Support them to create a happy and healthy family environment.
- Support them to support each other

#### Class based awareness sessions

- Exploring "What is Mental Health"? Recognizing when your feelings are more than just sadness.
- "How to stay happy"
- "Who and when to talk to for support".

# Small pupil group mental health support

- Referrals by school wellbeing team
- If additional support is required refer for 1:1 counselling
- Maximum of 6 children per group.
- Range of topics including, anxiety, self-confidence/self-worth, peer relationships, body confidence, effective communication. Further topics may be identified throughout the work with the individual groups.

### Teacher and staff mental health support and counselling

- 1:1 counselling for 6 sessions
- Identifying any difficulties
- Support to recognize where fears and thoughts originate from
- Support to develop coping strategies
- Validating their fears or feelings and giving them the opportunity to 'off-load' in a safe and confidential setting.

## Staff training - how to support pupils with mental health difficulties

 Supporting staff with the knowledge of mental health difficulties to help them to recognize any children who may be struggling.



- Supporting staff to develop the confidence to talk with a child who reports that they are struggling.
- Giving the staff the knowledge of what to do and who to report to when a child is struggling
- Supporting them to liaise with family where necessary.