



Grant Report

Integrated Medicine Programme: Children and Family Complementary Therapy Workshops

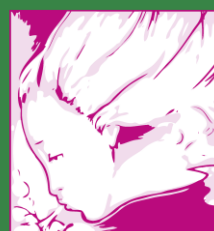


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Children and Family Complementary Therapy Workshops

Background

In April 2011 Freshwinds organised five educational and therapeutic workshops to support families of children with complex and/or palliative care needs. The aim was for families to learn self-help skills and enable them to fulfil their roles as parents, siblings and carers to the best of their ability. The objectives were

1. To increase family bonding promoting kinder and stress free relationships between parent-child, sibling-child and parent- parent, reconciling the role of parents as carers.
2. To teach children and young people, siblings and parents/carers simple therapeutic skills for use in the home or care environment to relieve common symptoms such as fatigue, pain, discomfort, recurrent infections, difficulty sleeping and constipation.
3. To explore alternative ways to alleviate anxiety and discomfort amongst children, young people and their families.
4. Enable opportunities for peer support, minimise isolation and enhance socialisation.

Workshops included therapeutic skills of massage, aromatherapy, reflexology and relaxation. The benefits of the workshops were aimed to be both for the child and their family.

- For children who are already receiving therapy treatment it enables the therapist to teach some more advanced techniques to enhance the family skills. This helps to reduce the need for frequent medical and other therapeutic appointments; therefore giving the child and the family some independence.
- Being able to use the techniques at home reduces the amount of stress on the child as a lot of the techniques help children to sleep and breathe better, making them feel a lot more comfortable and 'normal'.
- Parents and families feel more in control of the family's well-being and better able to cope, thus reducing stress and anxiety levels for both parties.
- The workshops encourage them to come together reducing the potential for breakups, which is higher risk in these families.
- Parents are able to establish links with other families, gaining peer support.

The workshops were delivered between July and December 2011 in a range of venues, ranging from Children's Centres, Special School and Hospice.

Results of the Grant Activity

The grant from The C Charitable Trust was for 5 child and family complementary therapy workshops. These were held as follows:

Date	Venue	Families*	Parents	Children	Staff
28.07.11	Acorns Children's Hospice (Selly Oak)	6	5	8	5
11.08.11	Harris House (Barnardo's)	3	3	5	2
17.08.11	Castle Vale Children's Centre**	4	6	6	3
15.11.11	Wilson Stuart Special School	11	4	11	9
08.12.11	Brays Special School	9	7	9	6
	Total	33	25	39	25

* The number of families is an amalgamated number depending on the number of children / parents that attended (including where a child attended with a venue staff member rather than a parent). For example: at Acorns, 6 families were supported whereas 8 children attended because some of the children were from the same family; and at Wilson Stuart 11 families were supported whereas 4 parents attended because some of the 11 children who attended were accompanied by staff members as the parents could not come.

** This included children attending the Children's Centre as well as children attending the related Child Development Centre.

The venues were selected to target families of children with significant health problems. Most of the children had multiple diagnoses, including:

- ADHD
- Asthma
- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Beta thalassaemia
- Cerebral palsy
- Chromosomal abnormality
- Colitis
- Congenital muscular dystrophy
- Cri du chat syndrome
- Developmental delay
- Down's syndrome
- Dystonia
- Eczema
- Epilepsy
- Hearing impaired
- Heart problems
- Hypocalcaemia
- I-cell disease
- Leukodystrophy
- Microcephaly
- Phenotypic diarrhoea
- Premature
- Sanfilippo syndrome
- Schizencephaly

- Septo-optic dysplasia
- Smith-Magenis syndrome
- Tracheostomy
- Visual impairment

Professionals who normally support the families at the various venues (e.g. teachers, support workers, nurses, therapists etc) were encouraged to contribute to the recruitment process for the workshops as well as to participate in the actual workshops. The advantages of this approach were:

- The professionals had the best knowledge of targeting families they worked with that would benefit and engage in the workshops.
- From previous workshops that we have held, we had learnt that some of the families had found it difficult to complete the workshop registration form (which requires them to include diagnostic details so that the workshops can be carried out safely). We therefore encouraged the professionals at the venues to help the families complete the registration form.
- Where parents were not able to come to the workshop, the children did not miss out because they could be accompanied by one of the professionals working with them. Furthermore, the professional could then show the parents the techniques that they had learnt in the workshop (i.e. transfer skills to the parents).
- By attending the workshop, the professionals learnt new skills that could be used to enhance their work with the children and families they support that did not come to the workshop as well as reinforce the learning of the families that did come to the workshops.
- Each professional has the potential to benefit a minimum of another 20-30 children in the year that they are responsible for.

The workshops specifically covered the skills of massage techniques and relaxation techniques as these were felt to be the most appropriate and beneficial for the families attending and within the context of a single workshop per venue. Each workshop was facilitated by two qualified therapists. The therapists were supported by at least one (sometimes 2) non-therapists from Freshwinds. During the workshops the therapists demonstrated therapeutic skills; observed and guided attendees to practice the skills on each other; and highlighted any safety considerations. Each family was also given a handbook of the things taught in the workshops to reinforce their learning and to act as a reference point for the future.

At the end of each workshop, the attendees were given a feedback questionnaire to complete. Three different questionnaires were used – one for the parents, one for the children (where appropriate) and one for the professionals.

Questionnaire	Number returned
Parent	16
Child	4*
Professional	23

**2 of the children's questionnaires were completed by the child and 2 by the child with their parent / carer.*
All the feedback was very encouraging.

Feedback from parents

Parents found the workshops helpful / informative and were happy with the standard of teaching and level of support given. They felt better equipped to deal with their child's needs and also felt that some of their own needs as carers could be met by using the techniques they had learnt. They recognised the benefits of the therapy techniques for themselves, their child and their family, including helping with physical and psycho-emotional symptoms. Parents left the workshops feeling confident about continuing to use the skills they had learnt and indicated that they would use these skills to help other family members as well as teach the skills to others. Furthermore, they felt that using the therapy techniques they had learnt will give them an opportunity to bond as a family.

Breakdown of the feedback from the 16 questionnaires returned by parents:

Feedback about the teaching				
Content	Helpful and informative		Not enough information	
	100%		0%	
Standard of teaching	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
	87.5%	12.5%	0%	0%
Level of support given	Trainers gave lots of individual support	Not enough support given	I felt encouraged to ask for support	I would have liked more support
	87.5%	0%	37.5%	0%

What did you learn in this session that you will find most useful to use in the home?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tummy massage on child, will find it useful to do on my grandchildren. • Techniques. • How to be more relaxed myself and to massage properly. • Massage for reflux. • Hand massage techniques to help [child] relax. • Relaxation techniques, and massage to do on family members. • Learnt how to massage the family, what techniques to use to help with my son's conditions. • The abdominal massage because I have belly pains at home. • Techniques to do massages with songs. • Useful songs and stories, also new techniques for massage. • How relaxed [child] was. • We learnt different techniques which is very helpful. • Technique of how to massage effectively - head massage in particular.

After the session how confident do you feel to try out techniques at home?		
Very confident	Quite confident	Not very confident
75%	25%	0%

Will you use these techniques with other people in the family?	
Yes	No
81.25%	18.75%

If yes, who?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother • Family members • My son and my partner • Wife • My parents, children and partner • Husband, son and daughter • My sisters, and my mom • [child], Dad • Foster daughter • Siblings, each other • Granddaughter • All

Question	A lot	A little	Don't know	Not at all
Will you be able to teach other family members some of the techniques you have learned?	37.5%	50%	12.5%	0%
Do you feel better equipped to deal with your child's needs?	43.75%	50%	0%	0%
Do you feel that some of your own needs as a carer can be met by using the techniques you have learned?	62.5%	18.75%	12.5%	0%
Do you feel that using the therapy techniques you have learned will give you the opportunity to bond as a family?	68.75%	25%	6.25%	0%
Did you enjoy taking part in the workshops?	100%	0%	0%	0%

How do you think these techniques might benefit your family?	You	Your Child / Children	Other family members
Less pain / discomfort	25%	43.75%	18.75%
Improved sleep	50%	56.25%	12.5%
Feeling more relaxed	87.5%	87.5%	12.5%
Better able to cope with problems	43.75%	31.25%	25%
Improved behaviour (e.g. less frustration, irritability, behaviour problems, anger etc)	43.75%	50%	6.25%
Improvement in specific symptoms (e.g. vomiting, constipation, spasms, stiffness, breathing, etc)	18.75%	62.5%	6.25%
Other (<i>respondent given space to write anything else</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constipation and stiffness • They helped to relax 		

On these workshops I would have liked more opportunity to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more time, I would have liked to learn more. • Use techniques, could use more practice. • Learn more massages techniques.
On these workshops there should have been less:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise, maybe an adult and then a separate class for the children and adults as well.
The thing which I liked most about these workshops is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made you feel very comfortable, not pushy at all. • Friendliness and helpful information. • Relaxed, comfortable environment . • I can go home now and use the techniques we have learnt . • Being hands on and having a go and learning how to do the techniques to pass on to my family. I found it all useful and really enjoyed giving and receiving. • That everybody got to take part and got to know more. • Very good and relaxing. • Working with my child in school with the teaching staff and learning new techniques. • The thing I like was massages. • Learning different techniques, bonding with our child. • Friendly staff, relaxing.
To help us plan future sessions is there anything else you would like us to include?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like more workshops we have really enjoyed our time. Thank you.

Feedback from children

Due to the nature of the complex care needs of the children's, most children were unable to complete feedback questionnaires. From the questionnaires that were returned it was clear that the children enjoyed the workshops. This was evident also from the observations made by therapists and comments by the parents and professionals attending the workshops. At the workshops, professionals regularly commented on their amazement at how the children / whole room relaxed down during the relaxation parts of the sessions. The therapists were also pleasantly surprised at how long the children were able to maintain their concentration during the relaxation sessions. The children who completed the questionnaires indicated that they benefitted from the therapies and felt that they had learnt something new. They enjoyed learning with their family and also made new friends.

Breakdown of the feedback from the 4 questionnaires returned by children:

I enjoyed the workshop	Very much	Not very much
	100%	0%
The workshop was	Good fun	Not much fun
	100%	0%

I made	A new friend	Some new friends
	75%	0%

I learned something new	Yes	No
	100%	0%

I like learning with my family	Yes	No
	100%	0%

Having therapies makes me feel happy	Yes	Don't know	No
	100%	0%	0%

Having therapies makes me feel better	Yes	Don't Know	No
	100%	0%	0%

The best thing about the workshop was:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting my feet massage. • Being a sleepy starfish. • The starfish and the hand massage. <p><i>(Note: the starfish is one of the relaxation techniques)</i></p>			

I enjoyed meeting other children because:			
You can know about them and play.			

When I have a therapy it makes me feel:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxed. • Very relaxed and sleepy. 			

I have learned how to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand massage. • Massage hands and how to relax. 			

I like learning with my family because:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I knew everyone. • If you forget something they can help you out. 			

Feedback from professionals

Professionals felt confident to continue using the techniques they had learnt and felt that using these new skills will benefit the children they work with, including helping the child get more out of their service. Furthermore, they felt that they would be able to cascade the learning of these new skills to parents of the families they work with. They also felt that using their new skills will help to further improve their relationship with the children.

Breakdown of the feedback from the 23 questionnaires returned by professionals:

Question	A lot	A little	Don't know	Not at all
Overall, how useful was the workshop?	100%	0%	0%	0%
Did you enjoy taking part in the workshop?	100%	0%	0%	0%
How confident do you feel to carry on using some of the techniques you learned in the workshop?	87%	13%	0%	0%
Will you be able to use the techniques you have learned to benefit children you work with?	78%	22%	0%	0%
Will you be able to teach parents some of the techniques you have learned (e.g. to the parents who were not able to attend the workshop with their child)	43%	52%	4%	0%
Do you feel that using the therapy techniques you have learned will help to further improve your relationship with the children you work with?	96%	4%	0%	0%
Do you feel that using the therapy techniques you have learned will help the child get more out of the centre?(e.g. calming distressed children so that they are more able to participate in activities?)	83%	17%	0%	0%

Any other comments about how the workshop will help you in your interactions with the child / family:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very useful run through of basic techniques, very helpful. • Thank you - especially back massage - story telling. • I will definitely use the story telling. Excellent way to give massage using stories for our younger clients - makes it fun as well as relaxing them. • Showing families techniques they could use appropriate for them, e.g. reflux, constipation, calming time for adults as individuals. • Very useful. • Reminds you to talk / communicate and listen with more than just words. • Having seen how the mothers and children enjoyed the session in a large group was helpful in planning future activities on site. • Yes the staff were very helpful in talking through the process of the massage. • Well talked through to make it easy to follow and understand. • Very good for the child to work with parents and staff - fosters good relationships. • The workshop helps to learn about the child's likes and dislikes and interact / spend quality time with parents. • It was a really good session the children will get a lot out of this massage and relaxation.

<p>On the workshop I would have liked more opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the actual massage, getting your hands on people teaches you more. • Learn new techniques to complement the therapies I practice. • Learn new techniques from colleagues in the same field, it is great to see how people giving therapies more regularly use it - also the way it is adapted for client groups. • Nothing, it was very balanced, maybe more time. • Learn more, but appreciate time limit, help with families I work with. • N/A - happy with what was delivered. • It was well structured, well time and well delivered - thank you. • Try all the techniques because they will help in all childrens different ways of relaxing. • Try the techniques on different children because you can find out what each child likes / dislikes. • Learn more about different massage techniques because it would benefit many children throughout the school.
<p>On the workshop there should have been less:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise, our big room is too busy, but it's the only big space we've got. • N/A - happy with what was delivered. • Maybe a little smaller as my child was easily distracted by large group. • It was well structured, well time and well delivered - thank you.
<p>The thing which I liked most about the workshop is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calmness, time allocated, participation clients, family and staff. • Breaking down the space barrier, consenting to touch is very "human". • Back massage techniques. • Lovely caring I gain experience. • The way the whole team and children spent time together, relaxed and benefitted from skill/therapies learnt. Very knowledgeable people from Freshwinds. • The staff are very approachable, answering all the questions and giving all families individuals time and attention. • All of it. • Everything. • Having the opportunity to share the experience with parents. • Was the opportunity for the children to relax and be quiet. • Having the 1:1 with the staff to ask questions. • A variety of techniques taught for feet, hands, back. Well timed session and everyone enjoyed the sleepy starfish. Stories and rhymes were lovely. • The foot massage as the child I was working with really enjoyed it. • The opportunity to learn new things and the interaction between staff/children. • Lots of parents came and took part. • Working with a child on a one to one basis and interacting with parents. • Lots of interaction with the child, parents and staff. • Worked at the right pace, ideas for stories of our own based on the massage - could you do a regular session?

Additional evaluation and monitoring

A further evaluation of the workshops will be undertaken of the families at after 3 months of workshop attendance. This will be to collate longer term impact of the workshops and will include both quantitative and qualitative monitoring.

Conclusion

In summary, the workshops were well received and resulted in a variety of benefits for the children, their families and the professionals that work with them. Importantly, parents and professionals felt confident to continue using the skills they had learnt and also to cascade the skills to others, thereby magnifying the impact of these workshops. Several of the professionals that came to the workshops commented that they would be happy to have further workshops organised or perhaps even regular workshops.

Some of the key learning points from these workshops are;

The importance of continuing to keep the workshops relevant and fun for children should always be a core element. The benefits of parent participation and the need to have future follow-up workshops to revisit and reinforce their newly learnt skills need to be considered. Throughout these workshops there has been a high level of participation by professionals. This has been seen as a valuable adjunct of support not just for the workshops but also carries a clear role if the skills remain relevant in their organisation, and for the children. From this consideration must be made to develop specific training skills programme for professionals only.

Below are some consented photos from the workshops.



**Demonstration of abdominal
massage**



Practicing back massage



Teaching hand massage