

Case studies: How have culture and creativity been supporting people in health, care and other institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Project: Worth My Wellbeing

Organisation: Odd Arts

Region: North West

Designed for: Young offenders in education settings, and NHS mental health institutions

“Throughout the week, young people discussed the difficulty young people – particularly young men – have in discussing emotions and wellbeing, but themselves engaged in all aspects of discussion despite this.”



Image credit: Odd Arts

Introduction

Odd Arts is a theatre and arts charity based in Manchester. We specialise in delivering performance-based workshops and therapeutic prison programmes, as well as other arts-based projects, with the aim of transforming lives and building confidence. Some of the themes we explore include: radicalisation, mental health and wellbeing, consent and sexual violence, knife crime and Child Criminal Exploitation. All of our work is underpinned by restorative, strengths-based and trauma-informed approaches.

A few of the projects we’ve been delivering during the Covid pandemic are Worth My Wellbeing and some two-staff-to-one-participant workshops with a GMMH service-user.

‘Worth My Wellbeing’ is run in partnership with the Rio Ferdinand Foundation and 42nd Street, delivering arts-based workshops to vulnerable young people on the theme of mental health and wellbeing. The aims of the project were to engage young male offenders in talking about mental health, promote awareness around wellbeing, and build confidence and resilience.

Our workshops with a GMMH NHS service-user were run in a local park and aimed to work on confidence and social interaction through arts-based, person-centred activities. The sessions involved two Odd Arts staff running hour-long workshops exploring games and drama which the participant had expressed a keen interest in.

Funders

Rio Ferdinand Foundation and Young Manchester

Partners

Rio Ferdinand Foundation, Salford Youth Justice, 42nd Street, Young Manchester and GMMH NHS

Who is it for?

Young offenders in educational institutions and NHS mental health service-users.

Are these people you have worked with before, or new participants?

Both

How many people took/are taking part?

Roughly 10 participants

Where is it happening?

North-West England

For how long has it been happening?

Projects began in August and September respectively, and are ongoing

What were/are the main outputs?

Performance showcase for Worth My Wellbeing, displaying what they had learned during the project.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

Building resilience, exploring theme of mental health and wellbeing, growing social confidence, supporting creativity in vulnerable young people and adults

Have you adapted existing work to make this happen? If so, how?

We've had to adapt a lot of our games and activities in order to stop physical contact between people and the sharing of any items such as pen and paper. Usually we work in larger groups of at least 3 participants but working 2 staff to 1 participant has helped in the Covid Pandemic. Working outdoors for our GMMH sessions has also aided the health and safety for both participant and Odd staff, rather than working indoors as we usually would.

Evaluation & Feedback

Multiple feedback techniques such as: continuum exercises; 'suitcase' evaluations (leave one thing behind and take one thing away with you); ending sessions by each saying something we're grateful for and something that pleasantly surprised us; anonymous feedback wall.

Staff comments, verbal and written feedback from young people, photos to show engagement and work, written case studies for individuals who have shown progress.

The formal evaluation is [available here](#).

What is your own impression of how it has worked? What have been the challenges and successes for you?

Worked incredibly well given the circumstances. Participants engaged really well for Worth My Wellbeing, committing to the whole project and sharing their thoughts and feelings. Challenges lie in

having to socially-distance and not share equipment, as well as having to adapt for the final session due to someone isolating from Covid. Overall a really successful and fruitful project.

Workshops with the mental health service user have been enjoyable for all parties, with the participant asking for further sessions. We are applying for funding so that we can work inside - weather makes it quite unpredictable as to when we can meet. He seems to be getting a lot out of it, and we can see him growing in confidence.

Are you reaching more people/fewer people/different people?

The same people we would have worked with but in a more controlled and intimate environment which has been a blessing in disguise.

What new skills have you or your colleagues had to develop to deliver this work?

Already used to adapting to the needs of those we work with but Covid has amplified this greatly. Being able to change the way we work with a moment's notice has been challenging and stressful at times but overall has made us more resilient.

What would you say has made this project possible?

Funders, determination and the drive to help those who most need it. The struggle for wellbeing and looking after mental health has been at the forefront of our minds during this pandemic and we will always strive to better the lives of the people we work with, in whatever way possible.

Further information

www.oddarts.co.uk