

Our Time

Helping young people affected by parental mental illness

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ACAMH Training Day – 11th November 2019



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parental mental illness

Who we are?

- Our Time is a UK charity which develops **interventions to support children & young people whose parents have a mental illness (COPMI) based on:**
 - **increasing their resilience;**
 - **reducing their risk** of developing mental health problems in later life.
- **Advocates for these children** within public policy & funding frameworks.



The Current Context

In excess of 3.4 million children and young people

in the UK live with a parent
with a mental health issue



8 children in every classroom

affected by parental mental illness

Our Time



Without help,

70% of these children could
develop mental health problems too.

This could cost the UK government **£180**
billion by 2021.



Research into adverse childhood experiences ('ACEs')

identifies parental mental illness as

one of the ten most powerful sources of toxic stress in young
people

NHS Digital Report 2018 states that “rates of mental disorders
tended to be highest in children living with a parent with poor
mental health”

A hidden issue

- Children don't identify or ask for help due to fear of stigma and bullying or interventions which put the family at risk
- Specific issues related to their home situation, not typical carers
- Withdrawn and compliant
- High levels of anxiety and hyper vigilance
- Issues of trust and attachment
- Social Isolation because of stigma and shame
- Low self esteem

Attachment issues

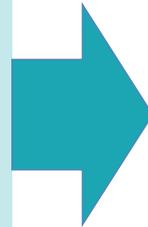
- Child finds it hard to get close to the ill parent and the parent withdraws
- Parent is present but absent – leads to confusion and sense of responsibility “there must be something wrong with me”
- Child adopts the parents thinking to stay close to the parent, begins the cycle of mental disturbance and disordered thinking
- Child becomes highly self-reliant and finds it hard to trust adults, will not easily accept help or support as it feel dangerous because its unreliable

However, this intergenerational cycle
can be broken through
recognition, early support &
intervention.

Our approach

3 key protective factors proven to build resilience:

- ✓ Knowing you are not alone
- ✓ Having a good explanation
- ✓ Having a trusted adult to talk to



Our Time's interventions harness these protective factors & have been shown to **increase understanding** of mental illness; **improve parent-child relationships**; **reduce feelings of fear, shame & isolation**; and **boost confidence**.

(Research by Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families)

What we do

KidsTime Workshops



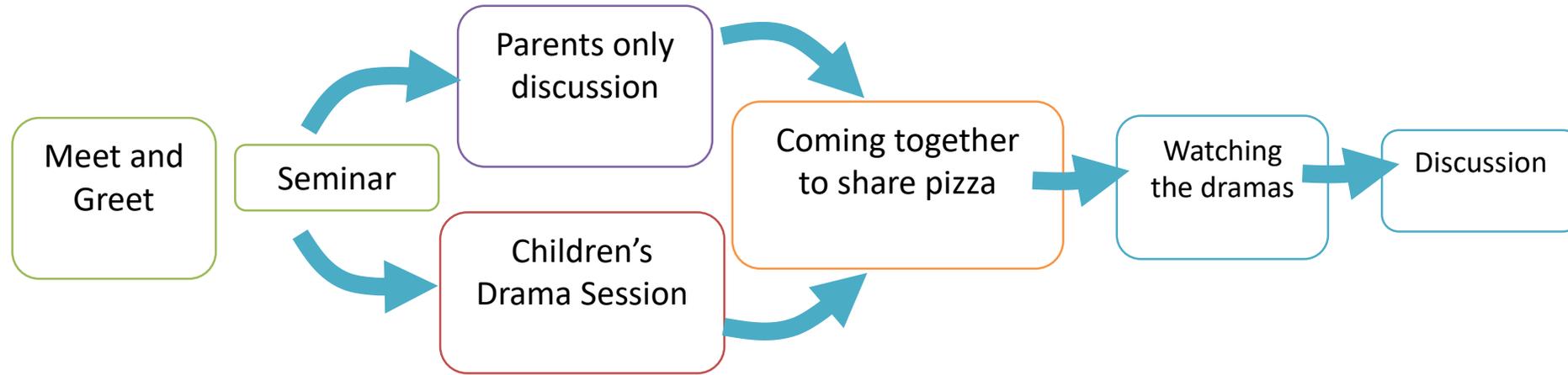
- Multi-family workshops
- Monthly after school for 2.5 hours
- Open referral
- Trained local teams
- Manual and resources
- Mixed funding

Who Cares? Programme



- Whole school approach
- Identify and support children of parents with a mental illness
- Awareness raising and training
- Resources – open source
- Mentoring – Teen Talk

KidsTime Workshop – what is it?



Monthly workshops where local families can connect and be with other people who share similar experiences, helping them to access information and support.

A recent evaluation shows that this intervention significantly diminishes the child's levels of distress and disturbance and to improve the caring approaches adopted by the parents.



Key principles of the Model



1. Systemic/whole family
2. Psycho-education – not therapy
3. Voluntary – active community
4. Stress reduction - drama
5. Voice
6. Psychological Separation – attachment
7. Language and Thought
8. Focus on the children

“At home you have to be an adult — look after mum, look after the house, give her medications — at Our Time’s workshops you’re having fun. You’re being looked after and you’re not looking after others.”

(KidsTime Workshop participant)

“The world is no longer such a dark and frightening place. I feel that Our Time has saved my life.”

(‘Who Cares?’ Programme participant)



Sources

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- Children's Commissioner Vulnerability Report, 2018
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- Rutter, 1966, Cooklin, Promoting children's resilience to parental mental illness: engaging in the child's thinking, BJPsych Advances, 2018
- Evaluation Report of KidsTime Workshops, Anna Freud Centre, 2010-2011, KidsTime Workshop Manual, Wolpert, An exploration of the experience of attending the KidsTime programme for children with parents with enduring mental health issues: Parents' and young people's views, Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 2014
- Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study, Public Health Wales, Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University, 2015
- The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 14, Number 4
- Navigating a metasyntesis on children's experiences of living with a parent with severe mental illness, Kristianna Dam, Elisabeth O.C. Hall, Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences 2016 (10.1111/scs.12285)
- KidsTime Workshops: Strengthening Resilience of Children of Parents with a Mental Illness, Klaus Henner Spierling, Kirsty Tahta-Wraith, Helena Kulikowska and Dympna Cunnane, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.87017>

Thank you

For more information visit

www.ourtime.org.uk

The logo for 'Our Time' is written in a white, cursive, handwritten-style font. The word 'Our' is smaller and positioned above the word 'Time'.

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