



North Yorkshire County Council



# Building capacity in the system through Attachment Awareness & Action Research

Developing trauma responsive practice: Introduction to NY  
Attachment Aware / Trauma Informed Project

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North Yorkshire County Council



Attachment Aware School



## In this session:

- Introduction to the Attachment Aware / Trauma Informed Project
- Action Research some initial findings
- Emotion Coaching and Circle of Adults



## What is an Attachment / trauma Aware Schools Programme?

- The Attachment Aware Schools project is informed by research and is an evidence based programme premised on the idea that an attachment-informed & trauma aware approach for professionals working with CYP, offers the best prospect for effective early intervention for children, whatever their age or family situation (Parker et al., 2015; Furnivall, 2012; NICE, 2015).
- It provides a coherent and integrated theoretical framework, discourse and practice for all professionals who work with children and young people, with the premise that this is everybody's responsibility. (Bath Spa University, Combined Summary Report: 'Impact Evaluation of the Attachment Aware Schools Pilot Project Phase 1, Stoke on Trent and Bath and North East Somerset Virtual Schools, May, 2016)



## Issues we face as a Virtual School

- Many of our young people are complex, have unmet attachment needs, issues of loss and trauma often causing children to be in a state of ‘fight, flight or freeze.’ Many children are ‘misread.’ Schools don’t always know how to respond and this can lead to increased exclusions
- **The aim of the Attachment Aware programme** is to support schools to develop policy and practice that is relationship-based and creates environments in which all staff can more successfully respond to the needs of vulnerable learners
- The programme operates from a **theory of change** that improved relationships lead to improved outcomes. It also draws from a social model of difficulty
- The programme advocates for **Relational Behaviour Policies**

## **Attachment Aware Schools Project: offer to schools**

- An **Audit Tool** via SLT, to identify the development needs of staff and a relational audit tool if you wish
- **Bespoke whole school training** & follow up sessions to build professional practice in the areas of **Attachment/ Early Developmental Trauma & Emotion Coaching** - an accessible, high empathy, high guidance approach, focusing on adult support and development of pupil self-regulation skills

## **Increasing capacity**

### **Evidence based Action Research**

- Most primary schools Action Research Project is in the area of **Emotion Coaching**, using EC Champions and measuring the impact of the approach in their setting
- Most Secondary schools are supported to evaluate the **Circle of Adults** model to help them to problem-solve around the needs of young people with more complex histories of developmental trauma

# Profile of schools

- **Involvement between 2017-20**

## **Totals 50 schools currently involved**

- 33 Primary Schools
- 12 Secondary Schools
- 3 Special Schools
- 2 PRS establishments
- 12 Pending, with interest expressed

## Attachment Trauma and Recovery Training Evaluation at 09.19

- **96.01%** of delegates indicated that the training had developed their **understanding about early developmental trauma** (Statement 1)
- **96.32%** of delegates indicated that the training had developed their understanding about **how attachment difficulties begin and how they can present in children and young people** (Statement 2)
- **96%** of delegates indicated that the training had developed their **understanding** about how such difficulties affect learning, educational and social development (Statement 3)
- **94.61%** of delegates indicated that the training had developed their understanding in the **meaning behind some of the behaviours that they see** (Statement 4)
- **91.86%** of delegates indicated that the training had developed their understanding about **how to support children and young people with these difficulties** (Statement 5)
- **93.26%** of delegates indicated that they were **satisfied** with the input that they had received from the training (Statement 6)

## Attachment Trauma and Recovery Training – extracts from evaluations

- “This is a must for all schools...this has been the best training I have ever had and has been very valuable”
- “It made me more aware of why behaviour is different in different children and the massive impact of attachment”
- “It really helped me to understand the mechanisms of the brain and how attachment affects learning” Senior Leader Secondary
- “Real life examples and linking past experience to the present really helped”
- *“The most valuable aspect of the session was the activity developing a Formulation: really unpicking a child’s needs linked to early trauma and identifying strategies that will work”* - Primary school teacher
- *“Another excellent training session, fabulous, engaging, educational, informative and a brilliant instructor”* - Primary Deputy Head

## NYCC Attachment Aware Schools project Action Research Secondary Schools 2019

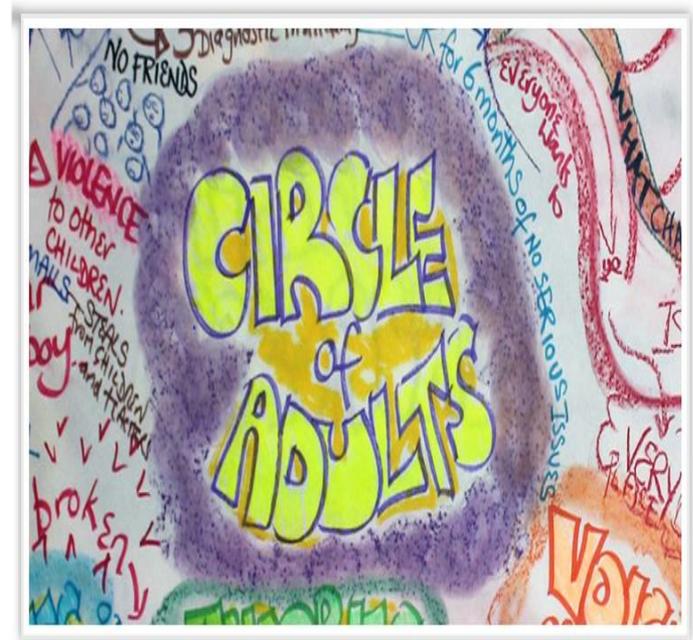
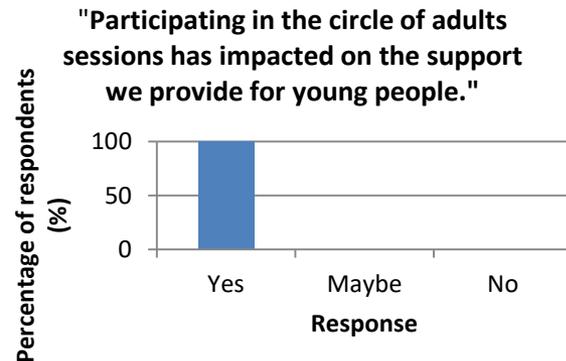
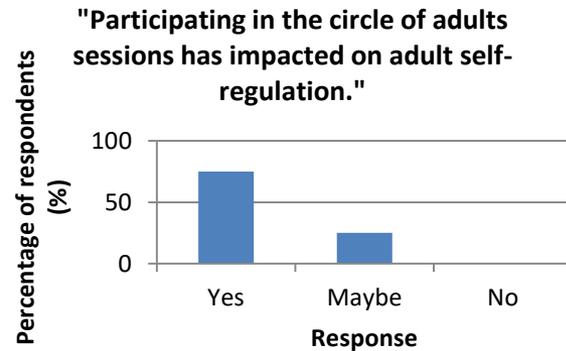
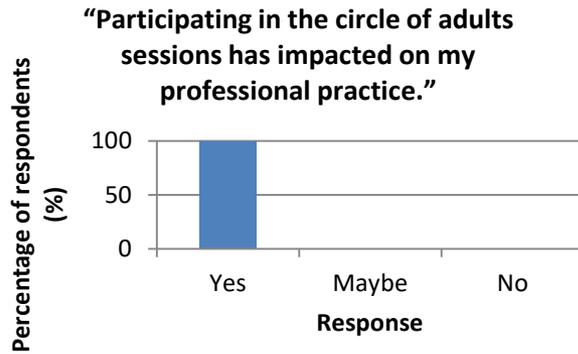
### Circle of Adults

- An inclusive, evidence based Psychodynamic problem solving approach
- Helps a group reach a deeper understanding about a young person's behaviours / unmet emotional needs
- Aims to evolve strategies which better accommodate unmet emotional and learning needs.
- The emotion which the child can evoke in the adult is openly explored in a safe and Psychologically containing way
- This can enable a change in perception / understanding of the young person.
- **'Greater understanding of the problem situation and empathy towards the focus pupil'**  
(Grahamslaw & Henson, 2015)

## Attachment Aware Schools Programme

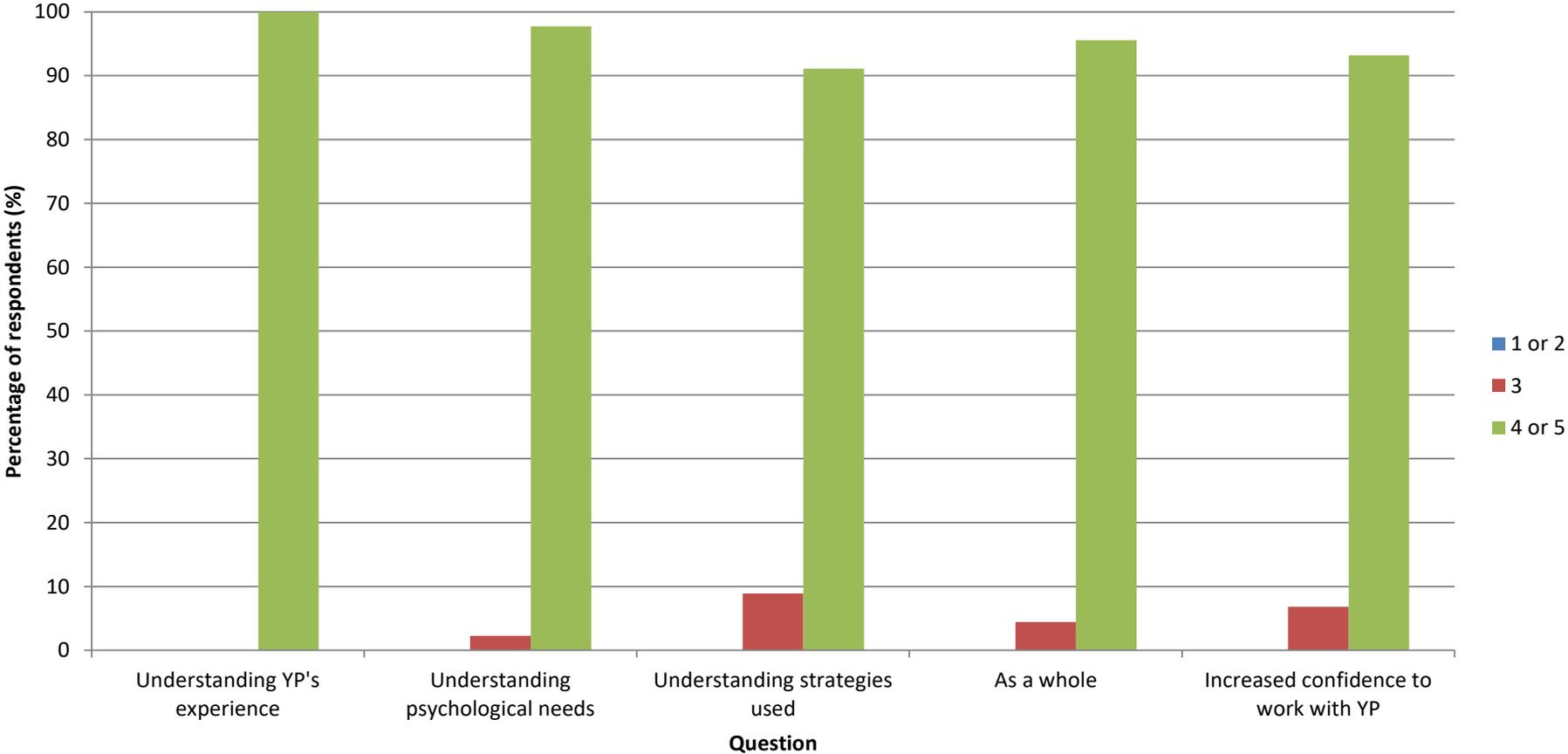
### All Exit Questionnaires Secondary Schools: Circle of Adults – preliminary evaluation

#### Impact



# Circle of Adults Evaluation Questions – preliminary evaluation

## Categories of response given to each circle of adults evaluation question (4 and 5 the most positive)



## Emergent themes show what was valued about the process

- **Insight / understanding / reassurance:** “Developing a greater understanding, learning from others, feeling reassured about my own understanding and handling”
- **Hope and way forward:** “Feeling that there is a way forward for this challenging child”
- **Voice of child & the story:** “Seeing things from T’s perspective as well as what we can do”
- **Impact on practice:** “This will improve my practice – thanks”
- **Emotionally containing group dynamic:** “Brilliant session”
- **Collaborative / sharing / honesty:** “Developing a joint understanding”
- **Clarification and insight:** “The process gave us the chance to reflect & clarify our understanding” “The discussion opens up ideas”

## What is Emotion Coaching?

Emotion Coaching is helping children to understand the different emotions they experience, why they occur



## Why do Emotion Coaching?

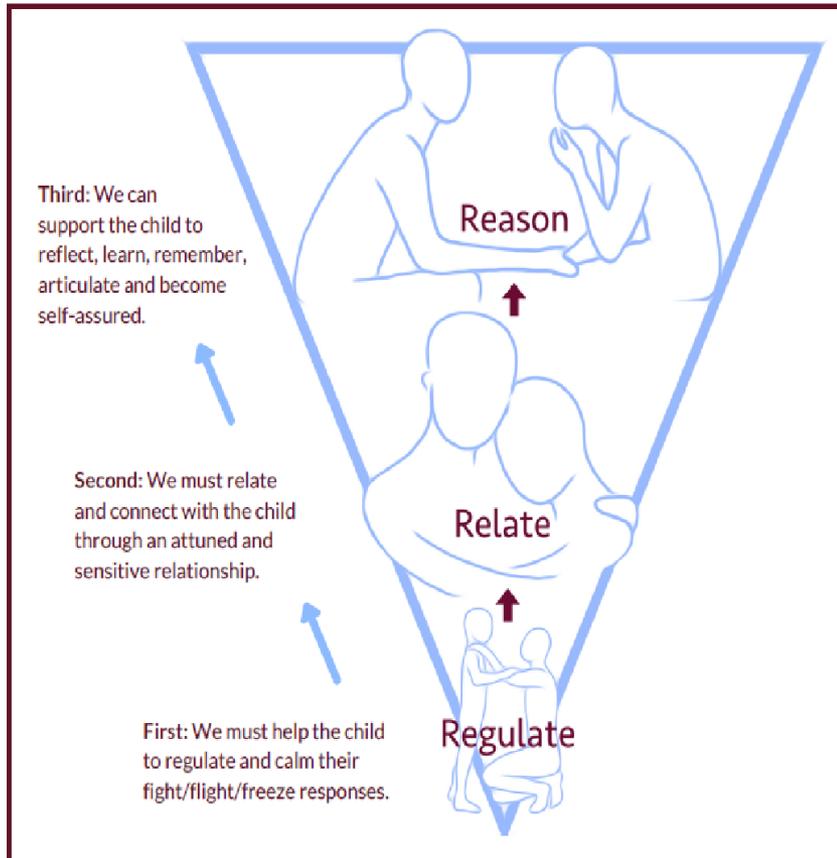
Emotion Coaching is an Evidence-based strategy.

Emotion-coached children:

- Achieve more academically in school
- Are more popular
- Have fewer behavioural problems
- Have fewer infectious illnesses
- Are more emotionally stable
- Are more resilient

(Gottman, et al 1996)

# Relationship / connection / building co-regulation -P and the 3 Rs



- **Protect, regulate, relate and reason**, so supporting reflection.
- **Protect** is about the adult relating to young people from their **social engagement system** and not their **social defence system**.
- This provides the highest level of 'safety cues' for young people through voice, tone, manner, choice of words and body language.
- (Margot Sunderland, 2019)

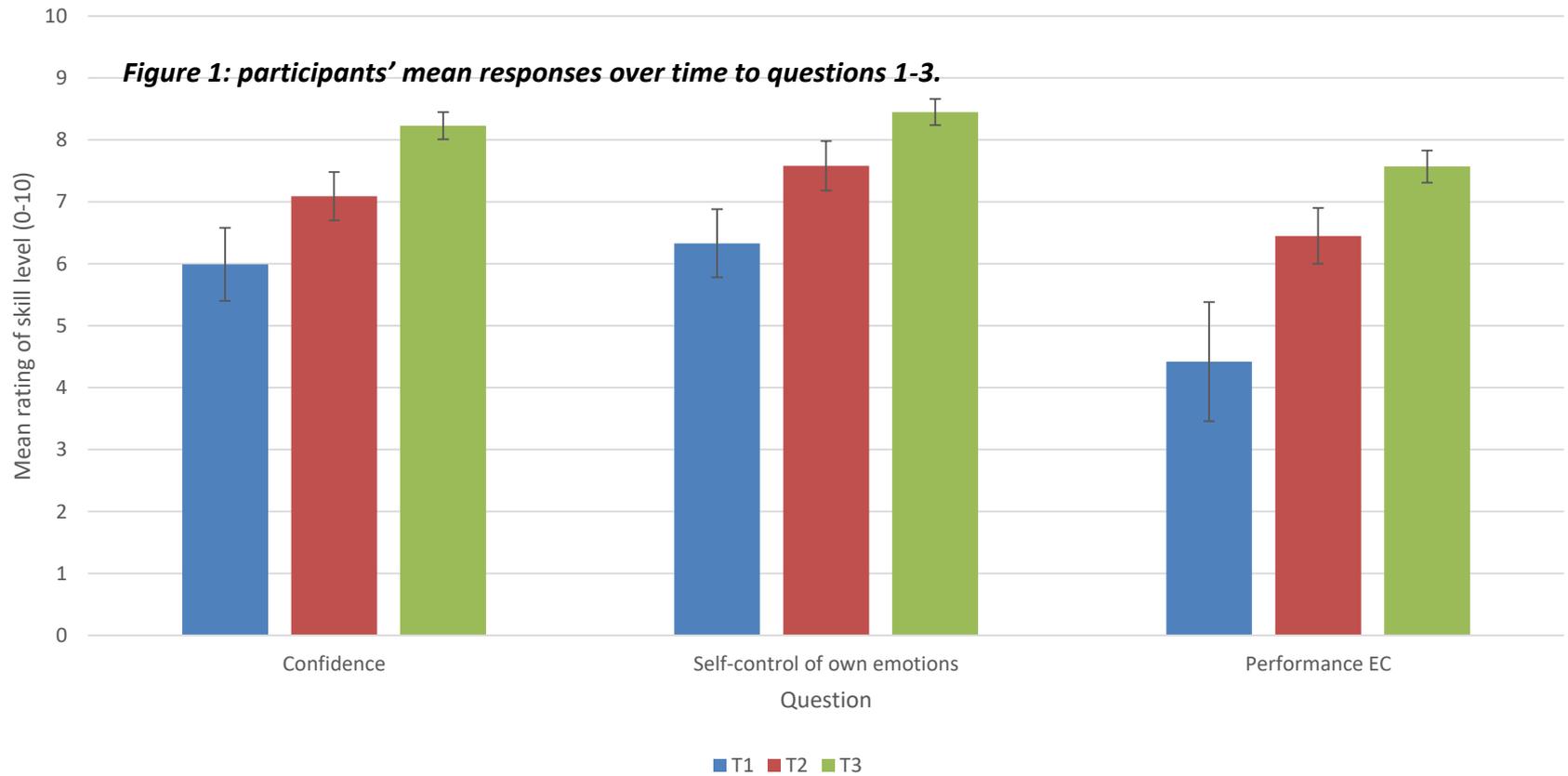
## **Action Research: Emotion Coaching**

- **Whole school approach** - “I think a whole school approach is key to implementing Emotion Coaching practices. Everyone who works with pupils directly needs to adopt the attitude in helping pupils to understand their own behaviours and the emotions behind them.” (Exit questionnaire Emotion Coaching April 2018)
- **Adult emotion** - “Helping the adult to be more in tune with their self-regulation and emotions helps the pupils to feel safer and more secure because we are trying to find out how pupils feel and what support they may need” (Exit Questionnaire Emotion Coaching July 18)

# Emotion Coaching Time Samples 2019

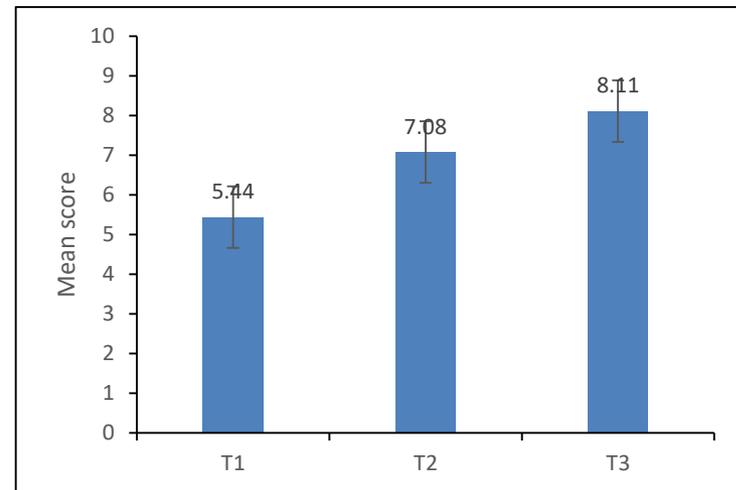
The mean of all participants' responses to each question at each time point is summarised in the Figure 1 below.  
4.2 at T1 to 6.45 at T2 and 7.57 at T3 (a mean difference of 3.15).

Mean self-rated confidence and skills in different aspects of emotion coaching over time



# Q1. Please indicate, on a scale from 1-10, your level of confidence in discussing pupils' emotional wellbeing.

- Bar chart showing increased confidence over time.
- Time post emotion coaching training had a statistically significant effect on the self-scores of participants for confidence,  $F(2,45)= 23.26$ ,  $p<.001$ .



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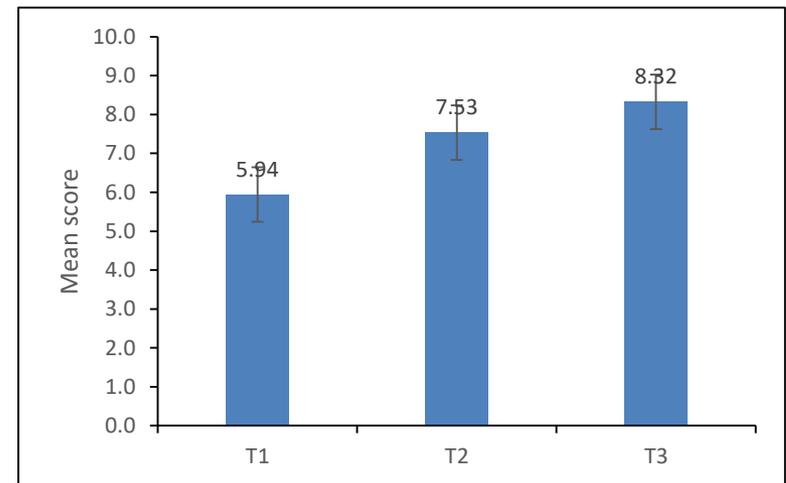


(0- Very low confidence, 10- Extr



## Q2. Please indicate, on a scale from 1-10, how much self-control you feel in respect of your own emotions when dealing with challenging behaviour.

- Bar chart showing increase in self-control of own emotions over time.



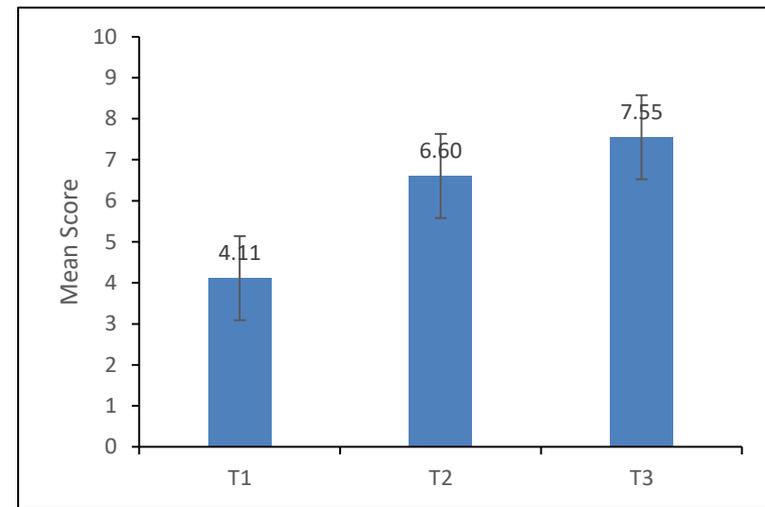
Emotion coaching training had a significant effect on self-scores of control when dealing with behaviour  $F(2,45)=17.39, p<.001$ .

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## Q3. Please indicate on a scale of 1-10, your performance in Emotion Coaching

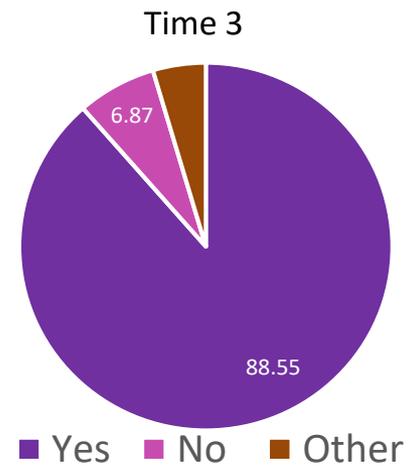
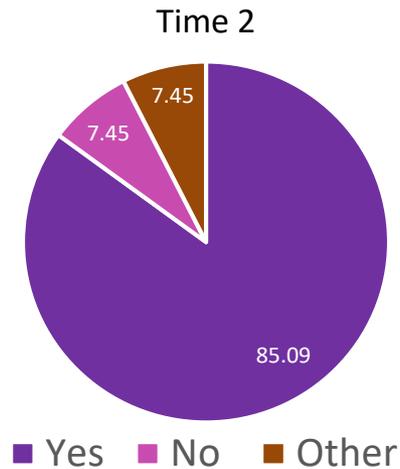
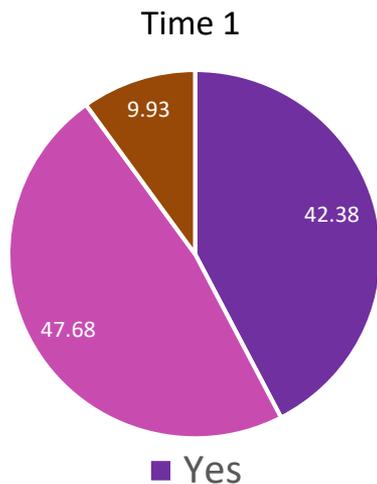
- Bar Chart showing an increase in mean self-scores in Emotion Coaching performance over time.
- Time post emotion coaching training had a statistically significant effect on the performance mean self-scores of participant  $F(2,45) = 25.80, p < .001$ .



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## Q4. Have you made use of Emotion Coaching in your practice?



Pie charts showing an increase in the percentage of participants using Emotion Coaching in their practice over time.

The largest increase is seen between T1 and T2 from 42% to 85%

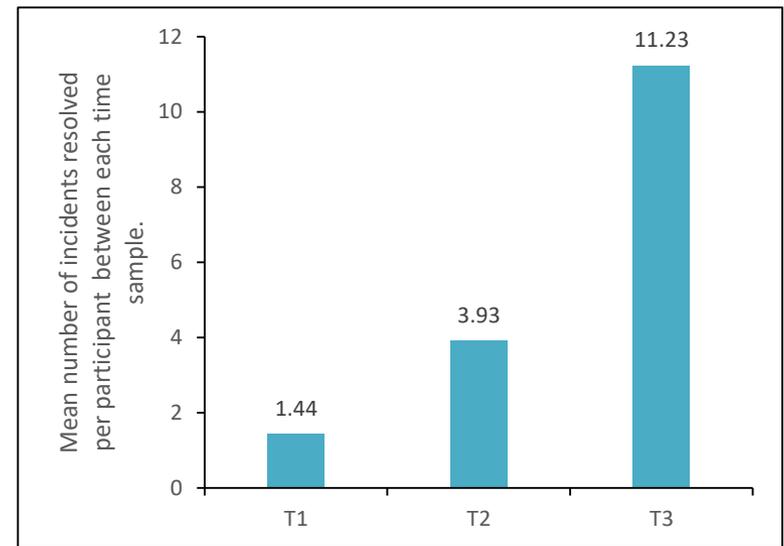


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# Q5. Total number of resolved incidents since last time:

- Bar chart showing the increase in the mean number of incidents in which the participants used their EC skills
- For those participants who responded with a number- (some wrote “loads” or “too many to count”) , the mean number of incidents resolved since last report increased over time (Time 1. M=1.44, S.E. 0.50, Time 2. M=3.93, S.E. 1.92, Time 3. M=11.23, S.E. 4.15)
- Data range for each time sample was too great with too many outliers to produce further significant statistical analysis. (e.g range of raw data in T3, 0-200+)



## Sample from Qualitative Data: Themes emerging

- T1 Beginning to understand
  - “I have dipped into ideas”
- T2 Learning and practising, making mistakes, increasing awareness of own emotion, confidence increasing
  - “It reminded me of things that I had missed”, “Stop panicking about completing all of the stages” ...”it feels right”...
- T3 Increased confidence, empathy, awareness of own emotion, reflection on process and adaption of process, recognition of impact on self regulation and behaviour
  - I am more aware of my emotions when dealing with incidents. I’m more empathetic with children’s emotions



- **Virtual School Project Development and Research Work:**
- **This is just to give an idea of how the Virtual School works to support the development of trauma responsive practice and how this links in with other local, regional / national work in this area and work in partnership with other teams**
- Contributing at local, regional and national levels through direct work with schools, Attachment Research Community (ARC) Educational Psychology (EP) Steering Group.
- Involvement in delivery of workshop at ARC Conference November 2018: Managing anxieties and challenges in schools. Ongoing
- Involvement in National Delphi Study Research to produce school evaluation tool in the area of early developmental trauma – for Staffordshire Virtual School complete 18- 19 (Staffordshire Trauma Informed Attachment Aware Self Evaluation Framework Sept 19)
- EP Lead Trainer for Emotion Coaching UK and via ECUK links with DfE
- Organise regional NE Interest group meetings Emotion Coaching with ECUK. [Next meeting 11.20](#)
- Nominated NYCC school. Mowbray School won the National ARC Timpson Award Attachment Aware School 2019. Dissemination of good practice virtual meeting June 20
- Involved with Oxford University Timpson Project 2019 -20 with a number of NYCC schools
- NYCC Multi agency Conference - Connect: Developing Relationships through Trauma Informed Practice 31<sup>th</sup> January 2020 with a Keynote by Karen Treisman
- [First virtual NYCC EC / Attachment interest group meeting 17.09.20](#)
- Virtual School and PIPA team / Social Care, virtual Emotion Coaching training for Foster Carers and telephone support during Covid 19.