Does Emotional Intelligence training for child and family social workers reduce stress?

Update on a 12 month randomised control trial

Research questions

- Does emotional intelligence matter for social work?
- Can emotional intelligence be improved through training?
- Does emotional skills training influence other outcomes, such as stress, burnout and social work practice?
Why might Emotional Intelligence matter for social work?

- Tension between protecting child and acknowledging distress for parents
- Experiencing verbal and physical aggression
- Paperwork requirements and targets
- Workload
- Managing expectations from other professionals
- Managing expectations from service users
- Recognising boundaries between professional and personal
- Organisation, supervisor and peer support

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What is Emotional Intelligence?

**INTRA - personal factors**
- Recognising emotions in self
- Managing emotions in self

**INTER - personal factors**
- Perceiving emotions in others
- Influencing emotions in others

**Understanding emotions**
Individual Differences in Trait and Ability EI

**Trait EI** – Petrides
- Typical performance
- TEIQue – psychometric test
- What am I like day to day? Self Efficacy
- ‘Self’ perception/ ‘Other’ perception

**Ability EI** – Mayer, Salovey & Caruso
- Maximum performance
- Test to identify low and high performers
- MSCEIT – psychometric test

Individual differences in stress appraisal and coping at work

Lazarus and Folkman 1984
Why is Emotional Intelligence important for well-being?

The importance of emotional competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of relationships (social &amp; marital)</th>
<th>Work performance (academic &amp; occupational)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schutte et al., 2001</td>
<td>O’Boyle et al., 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malouff, Schutte, Thorsteinsson, 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mental health & well-being

Martins, Ramalho & Morr, 2010

Physical health

Randomised Control Trial

Participants randomly selected to be in first or second training group

Every 6-8 weeks

53% n111

47% n99

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Work as usual

Receive training

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Every 6-8 weeks

12 months

Sample

210 child and family social workers

8 Local Authorities - England

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Methods - Measures

Predictors
- Work context
- Work experience
- Life events
- Work stressors (Caseload, working hours, Job Demands/Control)
- Personality
- IQ
- Emotional intelligence
- Emotional intelligence training

Outcomes
- Strain
  - Psychological
  - Physiological
- Burnout:
  - Emotion Exhaustion
  - Depersonalisation
  - Personal Accomplishment
- Social Work practice

Methods - Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local authority type</th>
<th>Size (Total children's social workforce) at 30 Sept 2014 - Headcount</th>
<th>Participant Total</th>
<th>% of participants to social workforce total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shire</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large unitary</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small unitary</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small unitary</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer London Borough</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of child and family social work

Number of participants by area of social work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Social Work</th>
<th>Wait list control group</th>
<th>Intervention group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering/Adoption</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time 1 – Baseline demographic characteristics by intervention group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic characteristics</th>
<th>Wait list control group</th>
<th>Intervention group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Male 11%</td>
<td>Male 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female 89%</td>
<td>Female 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Min year 22 - Max 59 years</td>
<td>Min 21 year - Max 61 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean 40 years</td>
<td>Mean 41 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 10.4 years</td>
<td>SD 10.7 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline
### Time 1 – Baseline workload characteristics by intervention group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload characteristics</th>
<th>Wait list control group</th>
<th>Intervention group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time as social worker</td>
<td>Min year 0.4 - Max 32 years Mean 6.9 years SD 6.7 years</td>
<td>Min 0.2 year - Max 20 years Mean 5.4 years SD 5.4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time to part-time</td>
<td>FT = 93%, PT = 7%</td>
<td>FT = 89%, PT = 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseload</td>
<td>Min 1 case - Max 147 cases Mean 18 cases SD 18.5 cases</td>
<td>Min 2 cases - Max 63 cases Mean 17 cases SD 9 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working extra hours in last week</td>
<td>Min 0 hours – Max 50 hours Mean 8.3 SD 10.3</td>
<td>Min 0 hours – Max 45 hours Mean 10.8 hours SD 11.8 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra hrs - how compensated?</td>
<td>Paid = 0% TOIL= 83% Neither = 17%</td>
<td>Paid = 1% TOIL= 86% Neither = 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking time off in lieu (TOIL)</td>
<td>Yes = 50% No = 50%</td>
<td>Yes = 50% No = 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline*

### Emotional Intelligence training

- Two days training x 5 hours
- Adapted from RULER Programme - (Ability EI model) (Dr Marc Brackett, Yale Centre of Emotional Intelligence)

**Day 1**
- What is emotional intelligence?
- Function of emotions
- Identifying emotions – self
- Using emotions in thinking
- Understanding emotions

**Day 2**
- Managing emotions – self + others
- Interpreting Emotional Intelligence Individual feedback profiles
What was your most useful learning point from the programme? Feedback

- Learning about myself
  - Reflecting on my EI profile
  - Considering areas for development
  - Gaining confidence
- Defining EI
- Importance of clarifying emotion terms
- Using the tools
  - Putting them into use at work
  - Developing strategies that are effective for me
- Impact of environment on emotion
- Physiology of emotions
- Group work
- Using emotion to facilitate thinking

Analysis

Multilevel model, time points within subjects

- Outcome variables
  - Psychological strain
  - Physiological strain
  - Burnout
- Predictors
  - Time
  - Group
  - Time by group
- Controlling for
  - Age, sex, life events, job demands, job control, IQ, Trait EI, Ability EI, Personality, social desirability
Outcome variables - Strain

- **Psychological Strain** (GHQ12)
  - e.g. unable to concentrate, sleep loss, worrying a lot, difficulty making decisions, feeling depressed, unable to cope with everyday life, loss of confidence, loss of self-worth

- **Physiological Strain**
  - Feeling faint, nausea, pain in chest, breathless, hot or cold, numbness, weakness

Time 1 – Baseline strain by group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strain</th>
<th>Wait list control group</th>
<th>Intervention group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physiological strain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low = 1, high = 5</td>
<td>Mean 1.51 SD 0.61</td>
<td>Mean 1.48 SD 0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological strain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low = 0, high = 3</td>
<td>Mean 1.04 SD 0.47</td>
<td>Mean 1.08 SD 0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline
Preliminary results – Psychological strain (GHQ12)

- No significant differences between intervention and control group
- **Small effect of time**
- No significant interaction Time*Training Group
- Within subjects - **significant effect of: life events, work demands, job autonomy, Neuroticism, Trait EI**

Preliminary results – Physiological strain

- No significant differences between intervention and control group
- No significant differences by time points
- No interaction: Time * Training Group
- Within groups - **significant effect of: Work demands, Trait EI, Neuroticism**
Outcome variable - Burnout

- Emotional exhaustion – emotional resources depleted
- Depersonalisation – feel negative and cynical towards service users, tend to dehumanise service users
- Personal accomplishment – dissatisfied with personal accomplishments in work, evaluates self negatively.

Time 1 – Baseline Burnout by group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout</th>
<th>Wait list control group</th>
<th>Intervention group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>Mean 2.38 SD 1.09</td>
<td>Mean 2.58 SD 1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low = 0, high = 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depersonalisation</td>
<td>Mean 1.06 SD 0.66</td>
<td>Mean 1.24 SD 0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low = 0, high = 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Accomplishment</td>
<td>Mean 4.35 SD 0.73</td>
<td>Mean 4.20 SD 0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low = 0, high = 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline
Preliminary results Burnout: Emotional Exhaustion

- No significant differences between intervention and control group
- Significant small effect of time
- No significant interaction Time*Training Group
- Within subjects - significant effect of work demands, Trait EI, Social Desirability

Summary of preliminary findings

- Psychological strain (Life events, work demands, job autonomy, Neuroticism, Trait EI)
- Physiological strain (Work demands, Trait EI, Neuroticism)
- Burnout – emotional exhaustion (Work demands, Trait EI, Social Desirability)
Why no effect of training?

- Self selection?

- Format of training
  - 2 day vs regular 2 hrs per week over a number of weeks
  - More regular training allows for practice and follow-up
  - Possible in social work setting?

- Content of training?
  - Some repetition of knowledge
  - But good evaluations

- Trainer? But good evaluations

- Work demands so high that training would not make a difference?

Next steps

- Final report and launch 28 June 2016

- Assess extent of transfer of training

- Assess impact of training on 8 domains of Social Work Practice (consultation and empathy, analysis, approach to learning, adaptability, cooperation, coping, organisational skills, approach to exercising authority)

- Qualitative data – 63 interviews on social work context and emotional demands of social work
Emotional intelligence in social work 2012 – 2015. PI - Dr Laura Biggart – UEA, UK

Thanks to.....

- Economic and Social Research Council, UK
- Participants
- SRA – Dr Emma Ward, Social Work, UEA
- RA’s – Laura Cook (SWK), Jennifer Bowler (PSY), UEA
- Collaborators
  - Professor Gillian Schofield – Social Work, UEA
  - Professor Philip Corr – Psychology, City University, London
  - Professor Clive Fletcher – Occupational psychology – Goldsmiths, London
  - Dr K.V. Petrides – Emotional Intelligence, University College London
  - Dr Chris Stride – Statistician, Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield
  - Peter Jordan, Social Work, UEA

Project website

Keep track of project progress and related news

l.biggart@uea.ac.uk

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