ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

UEA University of East Anglia
School of Psychology
School of Social Work

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

Update on a 12 month randomised control trial

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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?

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Why might Emotional Intelligence matter for social work?

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- 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?

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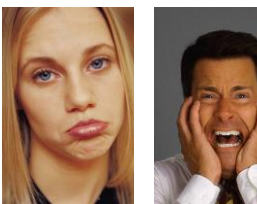
INTRA - personal factors

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

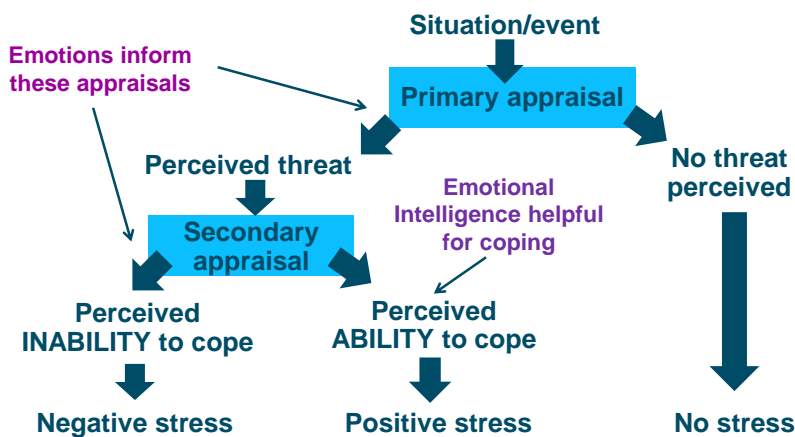University of East Anglia

Trait EI – Petrides
- <u>Typical</u> performance
- TEIQue – psychometric test
- What am I like day to day? Self Efficacy
- 'Self' perception/ 'Other' perception

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

Individual differences in stress appraisal and coping at work

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Situation/event

↓

Primary appraisal

Emotions inform these appraisals →

↙ **Perceived threat**   ↘ **No threat perceived**

↓

Secondary appraisal

Emotional Intelligence helpful for coping

↙   ↘

Perceived INABILITY to cope   **Perceived ABILITY to cope**

↓   ↓   ↓

Negative stress   **Positive stress**   **No stress**

Lazarus and Folkman 1984

Why is Emotional Intelligence important for well-being?

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The importance of emotional competence

Quality of relationships (social & marital)
Schutte et al. 2001
Malouff, Schutte, Thorsteinsson, 2014

Work performance (academic & occupational)
O' Boyle et al., 2011

Emotional Competence

Mental health & well-being
Martins, Ramalho & Morin, 2010

Physical health
?

Mikolajczak 2015

Randomised Control Trial

Participants randomly selected to be in first or second training group

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53% n111

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Receive training

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Work as usual

Complete questionnaires

47% n99

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Work as usual

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Complete questionnaires

Receive training

Complete questionnaires

Every 6 -8 weeks

Every 6 -8 weeks

12 months

Sample
210 child and family social workers
8 Local Authorities - England

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Methods - Measures

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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
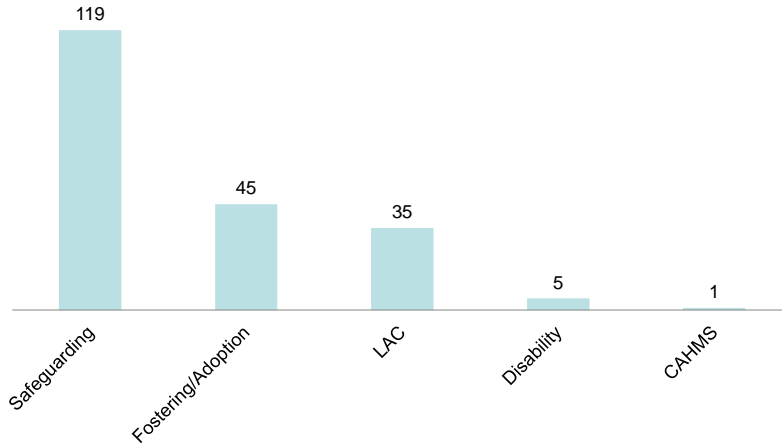 - Personal Accomplishment
- Social Work practice

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Methods - Sample

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Local authority type	Size (Total children's social workforce) at 30 Sept 2014 - Headcount)	Participant Total	% of participants to social workforce total
Shire	538	79	15%
Shire	341	16	5%
Shire	275	44	16%
Shire	199	12	6%
Large unitary	192	18	9%
Small unitary	130	27	21%
Small unitary	94	5	5%
Outer London Borough	88	9	10%
Total	**1857**	**210**	**11%**

Type of child and family social work

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Number of participants by area of social work

Area	Number
Safeguarding	119
Fostering/Adoption	45
LAC	35
Disability	5
CAHMS	1

Time 1 – Baseline demographic characteristics by intervention group

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Demographic characteristics	Wait list control group	Intervention group
Sex	Male 11% Female 89%	Male 15% Female 85%
Age	Min year 22 - Max 59 years Mean 40 years SD 10.4 years	Min 21 year - Max 61 years Mean 41 years SD 10.7 years

No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline

Time 1 – Baseline workload characteristics by intervention group

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

No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline

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Emotional Intelligence training

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- 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

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- 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

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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

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- **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

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Strain	Wait list control group	Intervention group
Physiological strain Low = 1, high = 5	Mean 1.51 SD 0.61	Mean 1.48 SD 0.51
Psychological strain Low = 0, high = 3	Mean 1.04 SD 0.47	Mean 1.08 SD 0.47

No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline

Preliminary results – Psychological strain (GHQ12)

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- 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**

Intervention group

Wait list control group

Intervention group receive training

Control group receive training
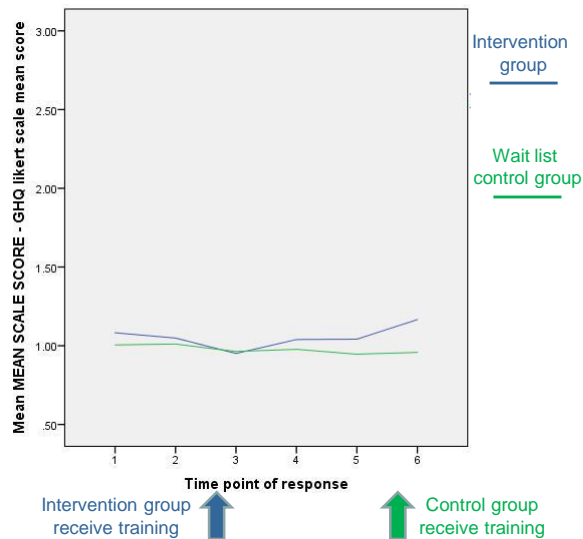
Preliminary results Physiological strain

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- 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**

Intervention group

Wait list control group

Intervention group receive training

Control group receive training
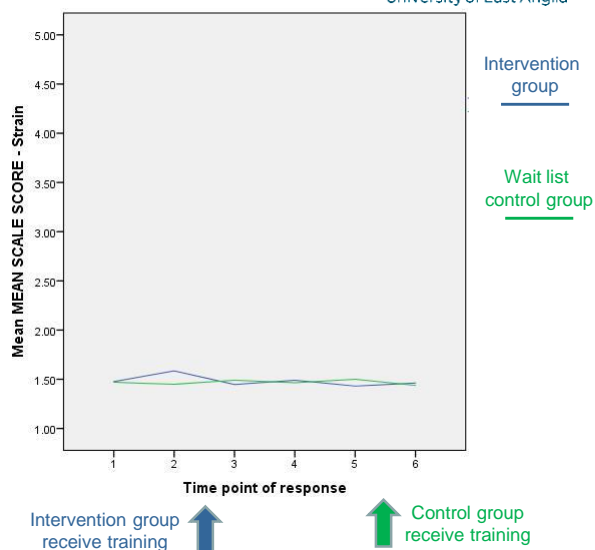
Outcome variable - Burnout

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- 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

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Burnout	Wait list control group	Intervention group
Emotional Exhaustion Low = 0, high = 6	Mean 2.38 SD 1.09	Mean 2.58 SD 1.28
Depersonalisation Low = 0, high = 6	Mean 1.06 SD 0.66	Mean 1.24 SD 0.92
Personal Accomplishment Low = 0, high = 6	Mean 4.35 SD 0.73	Mean 4.20 SD 0.79

No sig differences between intervention and control group at baseline

Preliminary results Burnout: Emotional Exhaustion

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- 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**

Intervention group

Wait list control group

Intervention group receive training

Control group receive training
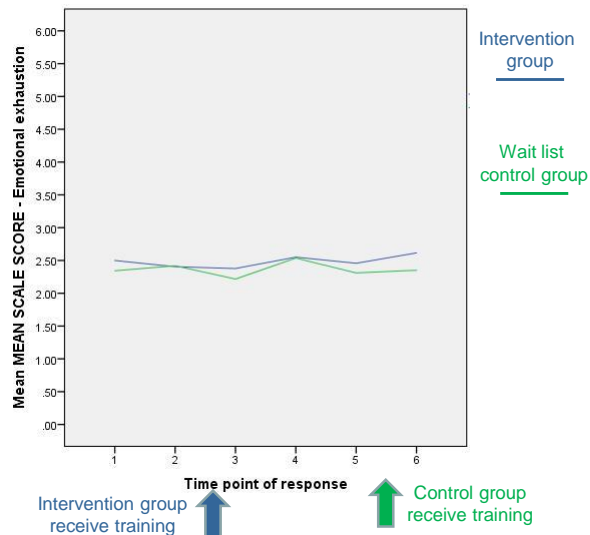
Summary of preliminary findings

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- 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

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Emotional intelligence in social work 2012 – 2015. PI - Dr Laura Biggart – UEA, UK
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- Participants
- SRA – Dr Emma Ward, Social Work, UEA
- RA's – Laura Cook (SWK), Jennifer Bowler (PSY), UEA
- Collaborators
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  - 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

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