Empowering young people: multi-disciplinary expressive interventions utilising Diamond9 evaluative methods to encourage agency in youth justice

"Listening to the honest, unfiltered voices of children and young people in the secure estate is of great importance." (User Voice 2018, 4)

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Introduction

Recent research on arts and sports in the (adult) criminal justice system suggest arts and sports projects can have a positive impact on offenders. Arts programmes have been shown to help increase offender's self-esteem, communication skills and self-worth (Allen et al. 2004, Miles & Clarke 2006, Parker et al. 2014, Wilson et al. 2009, Wilson & Caulfield 2009). Arts- and sports-based programmes have commonly been employed to improve prisoners' overall learning capacity and motivation, enhance self-efficacy, help offenders explore and develop prosocial identities and positive relationships with others and act as a 'catalyst' for positive psychological and attitudinal changes and therefore contribute, directly and indirectly, to desistance from further offending.

The research presented herein utilises a mixed method approach to evaluating sports and arts-based interventions within a Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) in England and Wales, adopting the Diamond9 model and semi-structured interviews, considered further below. This is the first time the model has been adopted within a Secure Children's Home; an under-researched area of the criminal justice system. Accordingly, the results provide an original insight into the voice of this currently underrepresented demographic of the Secure Estate. The Secure Estate incorporates: SCHs, Secure Training Centres (STC), and Young Offender Institutions (YOI).

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Secure Children's Homes are locked institutions for young people aged between 10 and 17. SCHs accommodate some of society's most complex and vulnerable young people, yet they have evaded sustained academic attention. These young people can be categorised into 2 groups: – (i) young people placed by the Youth Justice Board as a consequence of conviction for offending; and, (ii) young people in the care of a local authority accommodated under section 25 of the Children Act 1989 as part of the local authority's general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. Andow and Byrne (2018, 46) highlight that "children entering a secure environment on welfare and justice legislative orders are broadly similar in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics and background experiences…[but] the same clear overlaps are not seen with children detained on mental health grounds." Differences exist in terms of familial demographic and childhood experiences (Andow and Byrne, 2018, p.50). Research suggests that that 60% of children in the criminal justice system have significant speech, language or communication difficulties, 30% have a learning disability, 10% suffer from anxiety disorders and 5% have symptoms of psychosis (Bryan et al. 2007, Hughes et al. 2012). The association between speech and language disorders and behaviour difficulties is well established (Humber and Snow 2001; Tomblin et al. 2000). Communication problems tend to be labelled as behaviour problems and difficulties in understanding make young people very vulnerable in relation to education (Hooper at al. 2003). In comparison to the general and adult population, young offenders exhibit much higher rates of: learning disability (post-traumatic stress disorder; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); and other psychiatric disorders, notably conduct disorder (Royal College of Psychiatrists 2006).

The article and the project provide data which bridges an extant gap across research conducted in adult prisons, and youth offender institutions. Such data collection engages a unique set of challenges arising out of the composition of Secure Units.

The aim of this ongoing project is to examine whether dance and sports-based programmes enable young people to develop a pro-social identity, as well as contribute to building positive social networks. Arthur's (2005, 2007, 2017) research indicates that children involved in crime, particularly where that involvement is persistent, have often had difficult, deprived backgrounds and serious multiple problems in terms of their school achievement, psychological health and drug abuse. Every study of the personal and social experiences of young people in custody reveals that they have almost universally endured various kinds of abuse, neglect, deprivation and misfortune (Arthur 2016). Children in custody are far more

likely than the general population to have been in local authority care, to have suffered family breakdown or loss, to be homeless or insecurely housed and to have experienced child abuse. These children are the most disadvantaged, have the poorest educational experiences and are more likely to suffer from poor health, including mental health and substance misuse (Arthur 2010). Between 65-78 per cent of young people in the secure estate have had a period of non-attendance at school (Gyateng et al. 2013, 39); over 53 per cent of young people in custody meet the threshold for conduct disorder (Fazel et al. 2008) and 60 per cent have speech and communication difficulties which significantly impacts on the ability of these children to engage with mainstream educational approaches (Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists 2009, 8). Surveys indicate that 18 per cent suffer from depression and 10 per cent have anxiety disorders (Fazel et al. 2008).

Young people and the pro-social identity

Desistance theorists have identified the importance for offenders of a 'hook for change', something that will engage them and enable them to develop a pro-social identity, as well as contribute to building positive social networks. Two master themes for success were identified from the literature (Millward and Senker 2012): dissociating from an offender identity and authoring a new non-offender identity. Children and young people who offend "need to develop a coherent, pro-social identity for themselves" (Maruna 2001, p.6) if positive outcomes are to be achieved. Young people's identities are "fluid and changeable" (CLINKS 2013, p.3-4); this fluidity creates opportunities to develop interventions focused on facilitating healing, growth, and identity transformation. These opportunities ought to operate as a catalyst for change in the lives of children in conflict with the law. Effective intervention programmes should ultimately result in "the young person shifting their identity away from one that is conducive to offending to one that promotes a crime-free life, social inclusion and wellbeing" (Beyond Youth Custody 2017, p.24). Interventions should, therefore, impact upon a young person's emotional and psychological well-being (Wilson and Caulfield 2009), on their anger and aggression (Blacker et al. 2008), on their engagement with further education and training (Wilson and Caulfield 2009) and on reducing the risk of reoffending (Cox and Gelsthorpe, 2008).

Research suggests a medium for change is not necessarily tools or programmes but rather the existence of a trusting, empathic and consistent relationship between children and professionals (Creaney 2018, France and Homel 2006). As Lord notes, children and young people are most likely to "express emotions in empathic therapeutic relationships, [and] when

they have positive perceptions of [their workers]" (Lord 2016, p.116). Such constructive relationships between youth justice professionals and young people, where both parties are equal, can help to facilitate positive outcomes (Drake et al. 2014). If positive relationships have been established, children can "engender a sense of personal loyalty and accountability" (CLINKS 2013, 5).

Collaborative child/practitioner partnerships, premised on "empathy, warmth and genuineness…" (Hudson and Sheldon 2000, 65) can help to build relationality, and allow trust to develop (Hughes et al. 2014, 6). In addition, custody-based cognitive skills programmes for young offenders can lead to a reduction in future reconviction (Cann et al 2005). In particular, leisure-time activities can be used as part of strategies within both custodial and community settings to inspire positive change in marginalised young people and alleviate offending or anti-social behaviour (Lewis and Meek 2012a, Morgan and Parker 2017).

The North East of England is an important site for this research, given the proportionately high numbers of children in care compared with the rest of the UK (80-92 children in care in the North East per 10,000 children under 18, compared with national rates of between 60 - 62 per 10,000 children). 30% of children in Newcastle live in poverty compared to an English average of 20.1% (Newcastle City Council 2017). Children of lone parents, disabled children and those from certain (but not all) ethnic minority backgrounds are at greater risk of living in poverty (Newcastle City Council 2017). In 2011, 52.3% of children in the North-East of England left school with 5 or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A*-C including English and maths (Newcastle City Council 2017). This was below the national average (58.3%). Academic achievement among young people living in deprived areas is lower than the average (Newcastle City Council 2017). The highest regional prevalence of kinship care (1.7%) in the UK was seen in the North East. Kinship care is defined as an instance where a child was growing up in the care of a relative but in the absence of parent/s. Kinship placements are privately arranged between relatives, where no private law orders are made and where kinship carers are not approved foster carers (Wijedasa 2015).

Finding a voice

The research findings at the present stage, outlined below, are modest, but significant in providing important data, which bridges a gap in the literature. There is "limited research

from within the Children and Young People Secure Estate" generally (User Voice 2018). The majority of existing literature focuses on the benefits of recreational activities in adult prisons, young offender institutions, and youth training centres. In that context, few dance and "sports-based interventions, particularly for the youngest prisoners in the secure estate, have been evaluated" (Parker et al. 2014). There is a dearth of evaluative study relating to the voice of young people in SCHs (Andow and Byrne, 2018, p46).

Andrews and Andrews evaluated the benefits of sport-based interventions in a SCH, utilising a "participant observation" model, designed to tell "two stories", that of the young people and staff, through "the researcher's [*sic*] personal narrative" (Andrews and Andrews 2003, 535). Ellis explained, however, that "there are only a handful [of studies] which consider the views of children in secure children's homes", and those studies emphasise the policy, practice and efficacy of SCHs in terms of intervention (Ellis 2016, 1556).

Several recent evaluative studies have highlighted the "user voice" in relation to specific issues pertinent to the Secure Estate. For example, "Spice and the Secure Estate" (User Voice 2018); "Safeguarding and the Secure Estate" (Children's Commissioner 2011); and, "Restraint and the Secure Estate" (User Voice 2018). In the former study, User Voice collected important data from young people across the Secure Estate, including SCHs, using a variety of data collection methods. Despite this research, User Voice highlighted some of the challenges faced in conducting data collection in SCHs. For example, one SCH refused to allow focus groups to take place without security staff present, and this impaired the "independence and authenticity of the information collected" (User Voice 2018, 40).

Similar concerns were raised in Andow's (2020) ethnographic study of a SCH, where she witnessed young people and staff "working together to perform a misleadingly harmonious 'institutional display' [to OFSTED], motivated by a shared sense of institutional identity", despite significant complaints from both groups regarding the operation and management of the Secure Children's Unit. The User Voice (2018, 40) Study also opted not to include SCHs in surveys; "resources for the surveys were focused on the STCs (Secure Training Centres) and two YOIs (Young Offender Institutions) as the population sizes are much greater and provided greater opportunity to engage more [children and young people] CYP" (User Voice 2018, 42). The smaller size of SCHs is recognised as a benefit in terms of their operation (Secure Accommodation Network 2014), but it results in low sample sizes in research and, as such, resources are frequently directed towards the comparably higher numbers in STCs and YOIs. In respect of sample sizes in SCHs, eleven young people from SCHs were engaged in the latter two studies.

Ellis' (2016, 1556) recent "ethnographic" research goes beyond the studies outlined above by providing "an in-depth picture of the 'everyday' for the [female] children living in a secure children's home." The work undertaken in the present study advances the literature by including both male and female participants in a mixed-method evaluative study utilising intensive dance and sports-based intervention programmes provided by an external provider within a SCH.

Drake *et al.* (2014) note that if effective child/practitioner relationships are to be built then children's voices need to be heard and acted upon. This ongoing project aims to give a voice to children and address the power balance between children and state authorities. The goal is to understand the child's vantage point as valid and unique. As Alderson argues, "To involve children more directly in research can rescue them from silence and exclusion, and from being represented, by default, as passive objects" (Alderson 2004, 142). Methods which rely solely on verbal and written competence and "provide limited access to the emotional and symbolic aspects of children's experiences and media-related modes of expression" have been criticised (Bragg 2007, 36). Researching the views and voice of the child has burgeoned over the past 25 years as understanding about children's agency, competence, and participation in society have changed. Across diverse fields of study, researchers have been investigating how best to elicit information from children about their experiences, preferences, perceptions, sensations, attributions, thoughts, and feelings (Saywitz et al. 2010). These types of investigations are common in consumer, child care, and educational research, and studies of children's experiences online using the internet and social networking sites. They are used in the health sector to understand what children know about everyday health and well-being, illnesses and treatment management, and to understand children's perceptions of pain and the effects of pain medications.

Concurrent with this proliferation in research, there is a growing recognition that children are knowledgeable about their own needs and experiences. Consequently, traditional notions of children and childhood have been re-examined. The nearly universal acceptance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) sets a legal benchmark for children's participation in decision-making about matters that affect their own lives. In concert with near-unanimous support of the United Nations CRC and shifts in conceptualizations of the ''child'' and ''childhood,'' research, policy, and theory make clear

the need to better articulate the levels of participation that may be made available to children –

> "The voices of children themselves must be prominent in [the] exploration of what is going on in their lives—we must approach children as knowing subjects" (Children's Rights International 2005, 27).

Article 12 of the United Nations CRC recognises the young person as an independent holder of rights and reflects a deeper appreciation of the autonomy of the child. MacKenzie defines autonomy in the following terms: "[t]he principle of respect for autonomy … gives rise to an obligation to try to empathically engage with the other's experience, to imagine what the other person's situation is like for her, given her cares, values and concerns" (MacKenzie 2008, 512). At the core of Article 12 is a conception of children as articulate social actors who have much to say about the world, as people who can be encouraged to speak out through the adoption of participatory methods of research (James 2007). A commitment to conducting research with children and young people, rather than about them requires researchers to develop techniques "to break down the power imbalance between adults and children, and … creat[e] space which enables children to speak up and be heard" (O'Kane 2008, 126). However, Warshak contends that ''most procedures for soliciting children's preferences do not reliably elicit information on their best interests and do not give children a meaningful voice in decision making" (Warshak 2003). Some authors argue that accessing children's views is a "difficult enterprise" (Sharp 2002, Woods, 2000) that poses methodological challenges for the researcher (Downe 2001, 166). Socio-cultural psychologists have also questioned the dominance of traditional developmental approaches to researching children. They assert that children appear less competent when they are subjected to clinical interviews, tests and surveys in experimental settings than when observed in their everyday social environments (Vygotsky 1978, Hogan 2005). Research concerned with understanding children's views and experiences needs a methodological approach that shows and enables children's competencies within their everyday social settings (Alderson 2004, Kellett and Ding 2004). Consequently a range of multi-sensory methods such as arts and sports activities, the use of cameras, audio recordings, child-led tours and mapmaking have been developed which shift the balance away from the written or spoken word (Clark et al. 2003) and potentially allow a wider range of children to participate in research (Davis and Watson 2000).

Methodology

A rigorous and innovative mixed method design was adopted to explore participant viewpoints on the way in which the young people made "sense of their experiences and the world in which they live" (Holloway 1997, 1) and in which the young people's participation in the research is foregrounded and acknowledged (James 2007, 262). This approach emphasised "giving a voice" to a "hard to reach" group of young people to allow them the opportunity to share their experiential knowledge and lived experiences and fill the "gap" in qualitative research undertaken on young peoples' experiences of a SCH and their ability to cope with life outside of the SCH. An innovative methodology called the Diamond9 was used to examine whether a small-scale intensive dance based intervention in a SCH could confer psycho-social benefits on this population of young people. The second phase of the project, engaging a sports-based intervention is considered further below. The initial phase of the project allowed young participants to explore ways of expressing emotions through cross-art form collaborations. Responses were monitored and analysed to develop effective evaluation methods and to clearly evidence how the objectives - developing and maintaining hope, acquiring social and human capital, fostering personal and social strengths and resources - contribute to desistence agendas. The project aimed to provide the young participants with the tools needed to cope with life outside of the SCH and to reduce their capacity for reoffending. This approach to improving outcomes for young people aimed to develop an enhanced model for early intervention to meet the multiple and complex needs of young people in a way, which reduces the burden on criminal justice and community safety resources.

Organisation of the Programme

The research team worked with an external dance company to provide the dance element of the programme. The programme ran for one week, with the data collection taking place during the week of the programme (Diamond9) and two weeks after it had concluded (interviews). Any young person who was resident in the SCH was allowed to take part in the programme, unless the SCH took the view that it was not appropriate. The possible reasons for exclusion from the programme were primarily welfare-focused, where due to fluctuating mental health issues or behavioural issues it was inappropriate for the young person to be involved and/or where the young person declined to be involved. The research team viewed it

extremely important that each young person should have this opportunity, even if no data was gained from them.

As the young people would only be able to take part in either dance lessons or an alternative art and creative writing sessions, a taster day the week prior to the programme was organised. There were two evenings of taster sessions, so the young people could try all sessions and then decide which they wanted to participate in. All of those who were involved in teaching the young people attended and took part. A member of the research team also attended the dance taster session, with the aim of introducing themselves to the young people so that they would be familiar with them when asked to participate in the Diamond9 and interviews. After the taster days, the young people who wanted to participate let the staff know and a list was provided to the research team. It was made clear via the consent forms and in session briefings that engagement was optional, and that the young people could withdraw their consent at any time. Members of the research team were present during the week but did not take part in the creative arts sessions. It was important that the young people were familiar and felt comfortable to talk with them, but the researchers wanted the young people to enjoy the sessions rather than being concerned that they were being monitored.

The work undertaken by the young people in relation to both activities contributed to a final performance. This meant that the young people were working towards an end goal, rather than simply learning how to dance or create art. The dance performance was performed by one young person, who completed all of the Diamond9 evaluations, discussed below, and the dance teachers. The students who took part in the art sessions made costumes for the dancers. They could then see their work used in the final performance and how the programme and final performance linked together. For example, during the arts sessions, aboriginal masks were made which were worn by the dancers when performing. The masks also served another purpose, as the SCH wanted to film the performance so the young people could review it and see their achievements. The faces of the young people could not be recorded and the masks addressed this issue. The recording did not leave the SCH. The final performance was attended by other young people in the SCH who had not taken part in the programme and staff working in the SCH. It was a positive end to the programme and allowed the young people to showcase their work. Those who participated in the programme were presented with certificates.

Ethical approval

All members of the research team contributed to the ethical approval application, and ethical approval was obtained and approved from the Faculty of Business and Law Research Ethics Committee at Northumbria University, on 16th May 2018, and the Local Authority of the Secure Children's Home. Northumbria University is a member of Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) and are required to follow the policies are procedures. The NSCP brings together partner agencies across the city to ensure there is a joined-up approach to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Its work crosses the boundaries between the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors and builds upon the best practice achieved by the Area Child Protection Committee. As the project involved vulnerable children, much consideration was given to minimising any detrimental effects. The research team met regularly with staff from the SCH to discuss any issues and how to address them, and all of the data collection methods, and their contents, were approved by staff. The main issue was how to record consent from the young people in a way which ensured that all information was confidential and anonymous, as the team were not permitted to take anything the children had written on outside of the unit, nor could recordings on electronic devices be made. The list of young people the research team were provided with only contained the initials of those who wanted to participate and the "house" they belonged to; the young people are grouped into residential groups or houses within the SCH. It was decided that the research team would explain the project and any ethical considerations to the young person, including withdrawal from the project and anonymity, and if they were happy to participate they would tick next to their initials. This sheet was kept in the SCH and only accessible to the staff working with us on the project and the researchers. This maintained confidentiality, as the only staff who were aware of participation were the ones who were working with us and present during the data collection, as was a safeguarding requirement for the researchers' safety. This approach to consent demonstrates our commitment to viewing the young people involved as reliable, voluntary and competent participants in research (Farrell 2016, 226). All data was collected, processed, retained, stored, and disposed of in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The data storage followed legally defined criteria, and ensured that all uses to which the data was put during the research were consented to by the participant. The identities of the study's participants was protected and anonymised to preserve confidentiality. All information that could be referred to individuals was excluded/redacted before storing (in computerised form) and presenting the data. All computer files were saved with a password and then encrypted using winzip. The research team were never left alone

with a young person, due to safety, and a member of staff from the SCH was always present. Staff knew of any issues with the young person and any "triggers" which could cause them to behave inappropriately. The staff also helped explain to the young person what the project was about and what they had to do. The staff at the SCH were extremely helpful. If any issues arose, the young people were able to discuss those issues with their key workers and other professionals available in the SCH.

Methodology-The Diamond9

The data collection and evaluation used the "Diamond9" collection method, which allows each participant to rank their engagement with the project in terms of emotional response. This is an innovative research method developed from research in primary education, which produces a hierarchy validated by the contemporaneous group discussion and further unpacked and confirmed by interviews. The Diamond9 encourages discussion about the relative importance of certain factors to the participants and is a "thinking skills tool", which encourages and facilitates discussion (Clark et al. 2013). The Diamond9 facilitated a qualitative, inclusive and child-centred approach to researching "with" young people rather than research being done "to" them (Nind 2014). The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods allows for the development of a richer dataset as it creates the conditions for easier comparison between participants while also keeping their experiences personal to them and highlighting these differences. It creates a space for the young participants to talk about the issues that most affect them and allows for the young person's agenda to take precedence. This method of data collection has not been previously used with an under-researched population, such as, the young people residing at the SCH.

The Diamond9 is a tool used to rank different categories of emotional statements. The young people involved were presented with a board with a diamond shape on it and eight cards with emotional states written on them, for example, "I feel more confident" and "I feel frustrated with my life". The young people were also then asked to provide one emotion not included on the eight cards, to write it on a blank card and to place the card on the board. They were asked to rank the emotional states in the order of how they are experienced, for example, the emotion they experience most strongly at the top of the board and the emotion they experience least at the bottom and to organise the other emotions accordingly in between. Any emotional states which were placed on the same row had the same level of experience. Due to ethical considerations, the young people completed each Diamond9 individually, but

the researchers emphasise that this exercise also works well in a group setting. Members of the research team took written notes of the conversations around the placements of the cards. If some of the young people chose to take part in the evaluation exercise as an individual, they were asked between two to four questions about why they have ranked the cards in that particular order. Once the Diamond9 was complete, the member of the research team recorded the final placement of the cards with a hand drawn diagram. The research team ensured that the young people engaging in the Diamond9 evaluation exercise were not identifiable within the research records. The exercise took approximately 5 minutes to complete, depending on the person involved; and was repeated at the start of the creative arts programme, the middle and the end. The placement of the cards are accorded a numerical value during the data analysis; larger numerical values represent the higher placement of cards, and accordingly, the greater importance of the card's placement, displayed on Figure 1. According numerical values in this way allows for the generation of easily digestible data and the ability to create mean figures.

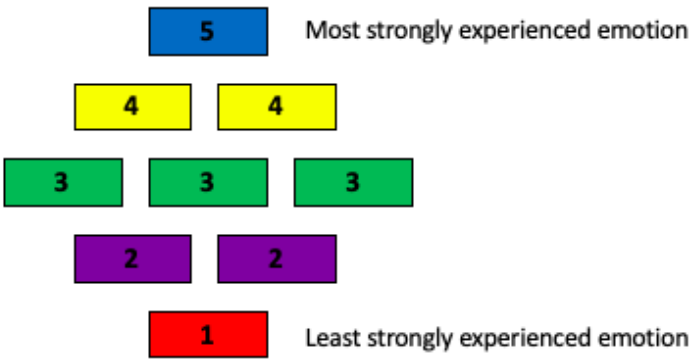


Figure 1 – Diagram showing the layout of the Diamond9 and the value attached to the placement of emotional statements for quantitative analysis

The Diamond9 allowed the research team to generate a rich data source, collected over 3 sessions during the one-week programme. The first session took place on the morning the course started (Monday), prior to any dance lessons, the second in the middle of the week (Wednesday), and the last at the conclusion of the course, after the final performance to the rest of the SCH (Friday). The number of young people who participated varied throughout the week. At the first data collection session, we had six participants. For the second and third data collection session, we only had one participant, whose results are displayed and discussed below. This was mainly due to the young people either not wanting to do the

Diamond9 again, or being unable to, e.g. behavioural issues. All of the young people involved were between the age of 11-17. The young person who undertook the complete Diamond9 session was female, but we had a mix of genders during the first session.

The data allowed the research team to analyse the emotional response to the dance programme as an effective mode of expression. The Diamond9 revealed a depth of engagement that other methods would not necessarily generate. For example, the research team were able to monitor, in real time, the full extent of engagement from the young people, with each member of the team; follow up interviews allowed for full integration of the pilot, and provided an opportunity for reflection. The data was captured two weeks following the project by the research team. During this week, four individual interviews were conducted with young people who had started the course and had completed the first Diamond9 session. Again, this was a mix if genders, with three females and one male participating in the interview. A member of staff from the SCH was present during these interviews, and though the young people were given the option for them not to be, none expressed their wish for this. The questions asked of the young people focused around which sessions they did/did not enjoy, if they felt that they were able to express themselves during these sessions (if so, how; how they felt afterwards and why), if they noticed a difference in how they felt before the programme and afterwards, and whether they thought this experience would be helpful to them in the future.

There were also interviews conducted with two members of staff at the SCH, who had worked with the young people during the intervention week. Questions explored their impression of the dance and creative arts programme on the young people and the difficulties which are faced by SCH at this time. Two members of staff have confirmed that the Diamond9 method has now been fully integrated into other programmes of work undertaken by the SCH.

Methodological issues

There were some difficulties with the methodology for this project, which ought to be noted. These difficulties were not due to lack of planning and communication with the SCH, but rather the unpredictable nature of these kinds of accommodations. Firstly, not all of the young people who were willing to take part were able to on the first day of the project. There had been an incident in one of the houses and the young people were not able to leave. This excluded some of the sample, which the research team would otherwise have had access to.

The young people did, however, still participate in the programme and one volunteered to participate in an interview after the programme had concluded. Secondly, whilst multiple young people conducted the Diamond9 on the first day of the programme, some decided not to complete the other Diamond9s or were not able to participate on the days of data collection. This meant that the research team lost access to those young people for the purposes of Diamond9 evaluation, but some did take part in the interview. Lastly, we had issues during the first round of data collection with the Diamond9s. The plan, which was encouraged by the staff at the SCH, was to take a picture of the completed Diamond9s (which would not breach confidentiality) on a camera owned by them, which would be kept on the premises. The pictures would then be transferred to us. On the day, the SCH had some staffing issues, which meant that we had less time with each young person to collect the data. The researchers took pictures of the completed Diamon9s on that day, and attempted to take a written note of the placement of the cards, but due to the rush it was not possible to complete the notes. Further, the picture of the first Diamond9s were never sent to us by the SCH, though requested several times, and due to incomplete notes, we did not have a complete first Diamond9 for the data presented below.

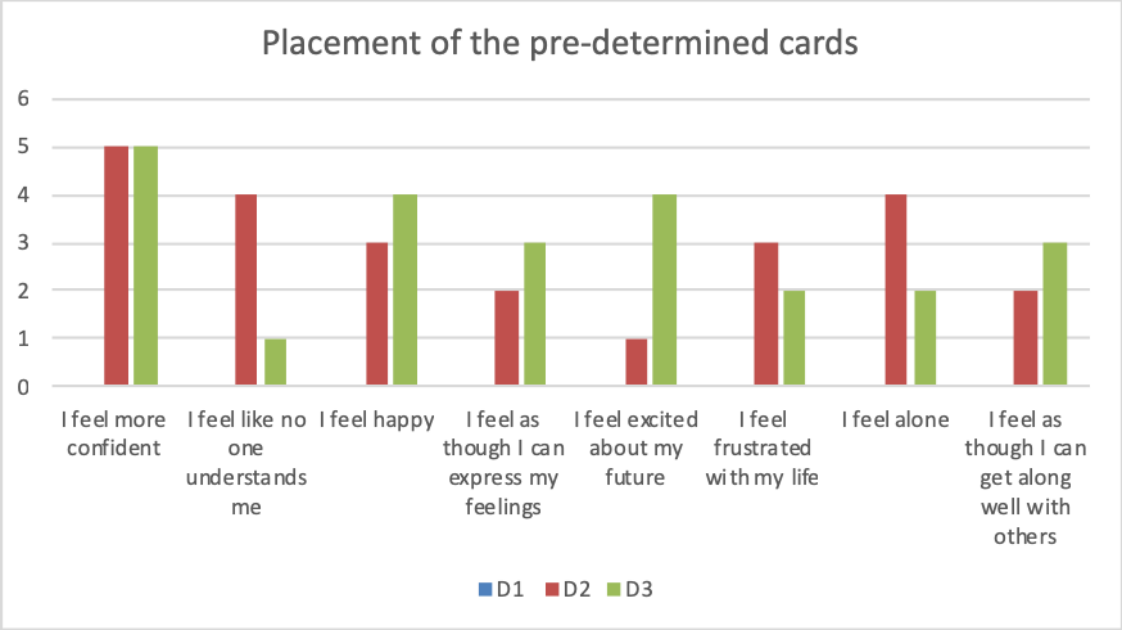
It is important in any research to be transparent and honest about the data collection process, and any issues which arose, to be able to assess the quality and reliability of the result. We had various issues during the data collection process, which were to do with how difficult it can be to collect data in a SCH, due to staffing issues, confidentiality, and the young people themselves. This is not uncommon in these kinds of settings and, though there are not many studies of this kind, Andow (2020) reported similar issues with the management of a SCH in her research. Whilst we are not able to present a full Diamond9, due to the missing photograph, we are able to present the data from the middle and the end of the week, along with the interview data from both young people and staff at the SCH.

This is a small data set, but the authors believe that this is sufficient to show some influence of the creative arts programme on young people and a reliable pilot study to develop for future projects, detailed below. Our approach contrasts with other approaches that often begin with predictions and aim to identify causality from an ‘‘outsider’’ perspective (Millward 2006), and provides a compliment to important quantitative findings on youth offending. A small number of intensively analysed cases are typical in qualitative work of hard to reach young people (Smith and Eatough 2006). For example, Millward and Senker (2012) recruited

three male participants from one youth offending service (YOS) in their study of how male young offenders on community orders made sense of their offending behaviour. The small number of participants allowed the researchers to engage in an in-depth study of what it means to be an offender on a community order, with the view of generating insights into effective rehabilitation.

Findings

The findings and discussion are outlined in this section. The data presents some connection between the creative arts programme and the positive emotions felt by the young people. The Diamond9 results presented and discussed were completed by one young person who took part in the dance element of the programme and participated for the whole week. No other full Diamond9s were completed by any other young people during the data collection.

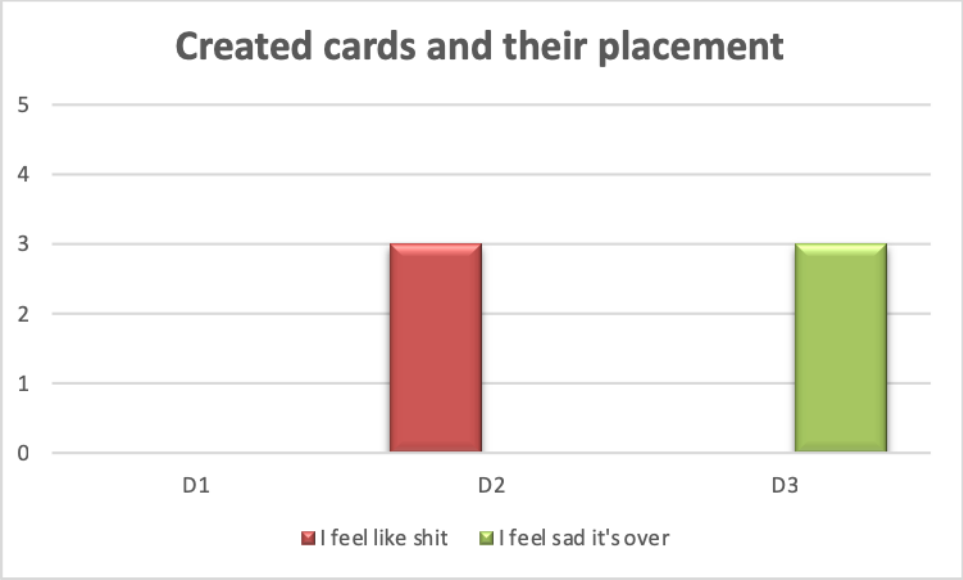


Graph 1 – Graph showing the placement of predetermined Diamond9 emotional statements

As stated above, there were some issues around gaining all of the data collected from the secure unit. We did not get the data from the first Diamond9 and, thus, it is not presented on this graph. There was some change apparent over the week of the creative arts programme. To reiterate, the first session took place on the morning the course started (Monday), prior to any dance lessons, the second in the middle of the week (Wednesday), and the last at the conclusion of the course, after the final performance to the rest of the SCH (Friday). During this young person's first data collection session, the researcher had started to make a note of the card placement, before the next young people were brought in to do their session, but they were brought in early, and this disrupted any notes taken. They were unable to complete the

notes on the placement, as they needed to remove the cards to maintain the confidentiality of the placement from other young people. What is clear from the notes is that in the first Diamond9, “I feel more confident” was not placed in the top of the board and, therefore, this card rose to the top placement during the second and third Diamond9 session. During the second Diamond9, the participant stated that this was, “because of the dancing”. From the second to the third Diamond9, “I feel excited about my future” rose significantly. This participant indicated that they wanted to continue with dance lessons and the programme clearly had an effect on how they considered their future. Other positive emotional statements also rose in strength of feeling over the course of the programme, such as, “I feel happy” and “I feel as though I can get along well with others.” They did not rise significantly, but overall the more positive statements increased. This is supported by anecdotal comments made by a member of staff, who said that they noticed, once the young people became comfortable with the dance, that they seemed more confident afterwards and enjoyed focusing on something positive, rather than the attention on them being negative.

The negative statements decreased in strength over the programme. Emotional statements, such as, “I feel like no one understands me” and “I feel alone” dropped significantly and were perceived to be less strong emotions. When asked during the interview whether they felt as though they were able to express themselves during the creative arts sessions, this participant responded saying, “Yes, I could express emotions in the dance. One move I made up, like an angry step (stamping foot) ended up in the final performance. It felt good to express yourself.” The creative element of the dance classes allowed this young person to express themselves in a way which may not have been possible in their usual activities in the SCH. A member of staff in their interview noted that this participant has, since the programme ran, put more detail and attention into tasks given in the SCH, such as, art work.



Graph 2 – Graph showing the emotional statement cards created during the Diamond9 and their placement

The tone of the creative cards changed over the course of the programme. Even in the middle of the programme the young person was still not feeling positive and made a card of "I feel like shit". The final Diamond9, which was conducted immediately after the final performance, displayed the effect of the week on this young person. They were emotional after the programme had concluded and said that they "felt sad it's over". They felt as though they had made friends with the dance teachers and enjoyed getting up each morning to participate. They were upset that they would not have these dance lessons anymore, but also that they potentially would not see those who ran the programme again. It was very moving for the researchers to see the impact on this young person and the change in the created cards was reflected in their interview:

> *It took me away from arguments in the house, gave me some space. I was so happy doing it and was upset when it was over. I'm glad I've got the memory of it and what they taught me. It upped my confidence. I used to get angry and punch things. I don't feel as angry as much – I think the week helped. It was not difficult before, but I got away from arguments.*

Clearly the young person who participated in the dance programme for the whole week felt it had made a difference to their time in the SCH and potentially to their future. It allowed them space away from their normal routine in their house, which they could feel frustrated in and

misbehave with negative emotions. The result is consistent with the literature on how interventions should impact a young person's emotional and psychological well-being (Wilson et al. 2009) and their anger and aggression (Blacker 2008).

This participant did believe that the programme would be beneficial to them in the future, but especially because to "tell people what I did – you can do things in here [the SCH]". It may be that this course was not something they had expected to have been able to have taken part in whilst they were in the SCH and they felt it was something they could share with people when they left.

Not all of the participants who were interviewed were this positive about the effects of the programme. A participant who had taken part in the arts and creative writing programme stated, when asked if they noticed a difference to how they felt prior to the creative art sessions compared to afterwards, that they felt the same than before, but in a good way and in a happy mood. They enjoyed the arts sessions, which were different to what they had done in school and will continue with art in the future. This intervention indicates an impact on engagement with further education and training (Wilson et al. 2009). Others who took part sporadically did not report a difference in their emotions during and after the programme had taken place. One participant stated that they felt no different after they had taken part in a dance class even though they, "sometimes [find] it difficult to express myself, but I'm not sure if the dance classes helped". They did say, however, that the dance classes had made them feel more confident than they had before, but they were not sure why. The final participant in interview said that they had enjoyed the dance classes, but it did not change the way they expressed themselves and there was no difference from before they participated. They did not feel as though they expressed themselves through dancing and did not think it would be beneficial to their future.

Overall, it appears that the young people who participated more in the programme benefitted more from it. This could have been because of the relationships they developed with the dance teachers and the feeling that they were part of something from outside the SCH. It could also have been that consistent participation will have developed more of a change than intermittent participation, whereby the full effects of the programme may not have been experienced. This was indicated during an interview with a member of staff, they stated that the young person who had taken part in the final dance performance was "like a different

person*"*, but the others were "half and half". It could, however, be that not all young people connected with creative arts, whether that be dance, art or creative writing, particularly if they did not feel talented in this area. This connection may be influenced by the self-image of a young person and whether the activity is thought of as something which will improve their image. A member of staff did note that when attempting to engage a young person with an activity it is "all about how they are perceived by other people*"* and they may be engaged for a couple of hours and then not want to continue. This is why the research team would like to replicate this study with a different programme activity, discussed further below. The authors are unable to draw conclusions regarding the lasting effects of the pilot study and the impact on reducing the risk of reoffending (Cox and Gelsthorpe 2008). To be able to highlight this impact a longitudinal study would need to be conducted, which the research team will consider for the future.

During interviews, staff highlighted the skills the young people developed during the week. This included teamwork and interpersonal skills, both with each other and with those running the programme. One staff member noted that the rules the dance team enforced, which could not be broken, ensured consistency, which is something needed in the SCH. The other staff member noted the use of communication skills and how the young people interacted and "networked" with those running the programme. The ability to interact with new people for a longer period of time seemed to advance their skills, both generally and within the activity which they took part in.

The researchers also asked staff members generally about their experience of working in a Secure Children's Unit and the issues they currently face. One staff member noted that money can sometimes be an issue, especially when providing programmes like the one in this study. They did, however, note that if this programme indicated a positive outcome then this funding may become more available to Secure Children's Units. The other member of staff said that conflicts with the young people in different houses is an issue, so organising large activities like this programme can be difficult. Both staff members noted that the creative arts generally were becoming less prominent in the SCH, even though they did engage with music and art on a regular basis, but that they should be continued for young people, due to the benefits mentioned.

Using the Diamond9

The Diamond9 proved to be a useful tool for the pilot study. The research team were able to collect data at vital points of the programme, to measure the effect of the creative arts sessions. The ability to collect data quickly which is easily comparable would have been more difficult with more traditional methods, such as, formal interviews. The method allowed the young people to become part of the research, to create something and give them more of a voice, which was an aim of the project. The Diamond9 departs from methods which rely on verbal and written competence, as criticised by Bragg, and offers those researching with children an alternative way to elicit information from young people (Bragg 2007). The Diamond9 created the space for the young people to express their emotions and opinions, providing them with some power and control over the research process and a way to conduct research *with* the young people (O'Kane 2008).

Conducting interviews with the staff on the effects of the programme on the young people provided an insightful input to the results. Children can appear less competent when they are subjected to clinical interviews etc., than when observed in their everyday social environments (Vygotsky 1978, Donaldson 1978, Bronfenbrenner 1979, Hogan 2005). Discussing the programme with the staff who were present during the week and observing the young people they work with provided additional depth to the findings.

Next stages-extending the methodology

Growing the data-set

This project is an initial Pilot project, and it is the intention of the research team to broaden the scope of the initial dance-based intervention, and, accordingly, grow the data-set. The research team are in the process of developing the data-set by engaging in the second stage of the project with the SCH. This second stage is designed to develop the original study in light of feedback from the young people, recent government initiatives to develop Sports-based programmes across the youth justice system, and also recognising that some of the young people might have already participated in the original study (Ministry of Justice 2018. Sports-based interventions have frequently been identified as a form of best practice generating a positive response from both staff and young people (User Voice 2018). During the second stage, the SCH will be revisited to engage in a programme of activity utilising sport rather

than dance. We will use sports such as boxing, touch rugby, football and yoga as a vehicle to help young people develop important life skills (including coping, educational, employability and other skills.

The second stage of the project is a collaboration across Northumbria Sports Foundation, the research team within Northumbria Law School, and the SCH. The Northumbria Sport Foundation (reg. 1111675) provides sporting opportunities to develop people and communities, focusing upon the North East of England. Whilst the Foundation is linked to Northumbria University, it is structurally and financially independent. The second stage builds upon the original Pilot Study in several key ways , and is designed to engage staff and key workers at the SCH throughout the programme. The revised model will utilise pre-and-post evaluative meeting(s) with staff at the SCH. The pre-and-post meeting(s) will identify what staff seek to achieve from the project, and is designed to ensure that both staff and young people engage as active learners in the process as a means of breaking down barriers to communication. These meetings will follow the "ROAMEF – Rationale, Objectives, Appraisal, Monitoring, Evaluation, Feedback" evaluation cycle (HM Treasury 2018). This development should assist in engaging staff in the authorship of the programme, in addition to ensuring that the needs of both staff and the young people are met. Full ethical clearance will be sought from Northumbria University and the guidance from the British Psychological Society will be adhered to.

At a more practical level, the above change should reduce staff rotation during the programme; an issue which researchers and staff at the SCH recognised as having potentially impacted on the level of engagement with the semi-structured interviews and the initial Pilot Study, more generally. During interview, a member of staff based at the SCH suggested that the programme might operate more successfully if the SCH staff that were involved were "more organised and consistent for the week for both sessions…". The member of staff said that "dealing with [the project] and sorting… it died out when I wasn't at work, as I was there for the first half of the days".

The ROAMEF evaluative cycle seeks to engage staff at every stage of the process and to consider whether goals identified by staff during the pre-assessment have been met, in addition to discussing how to further develop the evaluative study. The Diamond9 tool utilised during the initial stage has been developed in response to feedback by staff and young people at the SCH, and the reflections and observations of the research team. For

example, the emotional statement cards have been modified to reflect wellbeing concepts as a measurement. The research team felt as though the emotional statement cards used in the pilot study were effective, but did not measure a wider range of emotions and functions that we now wish to capture. The interviews are also being developed in light of the findings in the first study, and the recommendations identified above. For example, the research team noticed a theme of the week was the young people enjoying visits and classes from external providers, rather than internal staff delivering courses. The interviews with both staff and young people will focus more heavily on the benefits of external providers coming into the Secure Unit than it was in the pilot study. We are also considering conducting interviews with the staff who run the external courses, to gain their insights into working with the young people and in a Secure Unit. A less formal approach to this method of data gathering is likely to generate a better response; the gathering of data via semi-structured interviews is designed to replicate more casual conversations than a structured interview; shorter interviews are also likely to generate a better response (Andrews and Andrews 2003, 537).

Conclusion

This article has provided an overview of a successful research pilot programme on the use of an arts-based intervention in a SCH in England and Wales, utilising the Diamond9 as an evaluative tool to place the young person's voice at the centre of the analysis. Research to date highlights the importance of adopting a child-centred approach to intervention models to engage young people and to break down barriers relating to perceptions of authority and lack of individual autonomy. The arts-based programme ensured that the young people involved were able to make a choice regarding the programme, and/or whether or not to engage in evaluative exercises. The data collected via the Diamond9 mixed method evaluative approach and semi-structured interviews presented some interesting findings relating to the experiences of young people and staff who engaged in the programme, and the benefits associated with such programmes.

The study represents the first time the Diamond9 model has been adopted within a SCH. As explained, SCHs represent an under-researched area of the criminal justice system; this might be due to, in part, the more complex demographic in SCHs, and, in part, that

resources are directed towards larger institutions where research may have greater generalisability. In this respect, the results, though modest, provide an original insight into the voice of this currently underrepresented demographic of the Secure Estate, and highlight the benefits of arts-based programmes in such settings.

The follow-up study has been developed in light of feedback from the young people, and staff, in addition to current government initiatives in relation to rehabilitative programmes in the youth estate. The second study, at the same SCH, involves an intensive sports-based programme, utilising the ROAMEF evaluative cycle to support staff, the Diamond9 evaluative method, and enhanced semi-structured interviews engaging both staff and young people. The study will help to refine the programme, and will provide important comparative data for further analysis.

This article is part; the presentation of the results of a somewhat modest but important evaluation of the use of arts-based interventions in SCHs; and, part an invitation for interested stakeholders and potential collaborators to contact the authors to discuss the possibility of developing and replicating this important study at international level.

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