


Improving Resilience and Employability Outcomes of Homeless Young People with Mental Skills Training



DR JENNIFER CUMMING CPSYCHOL CSCI AFBPSS FHEA
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



Young people are overrepresented
as homeless in Scotland:

12%

Of Scotland's
population is
aged 16-25

VS.

25%

Of Scotland's
homeless
population is
aged 16-25

The logo for Shelter Scotland, featuring the word "Shelter" in a large, white, sans-serif font above the word "Scotland" in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, all set against a solid red square background.

Shelter
Scotland



Range of services working to address homelessness

But, the evidence-base to inform commissioning & practice is limited



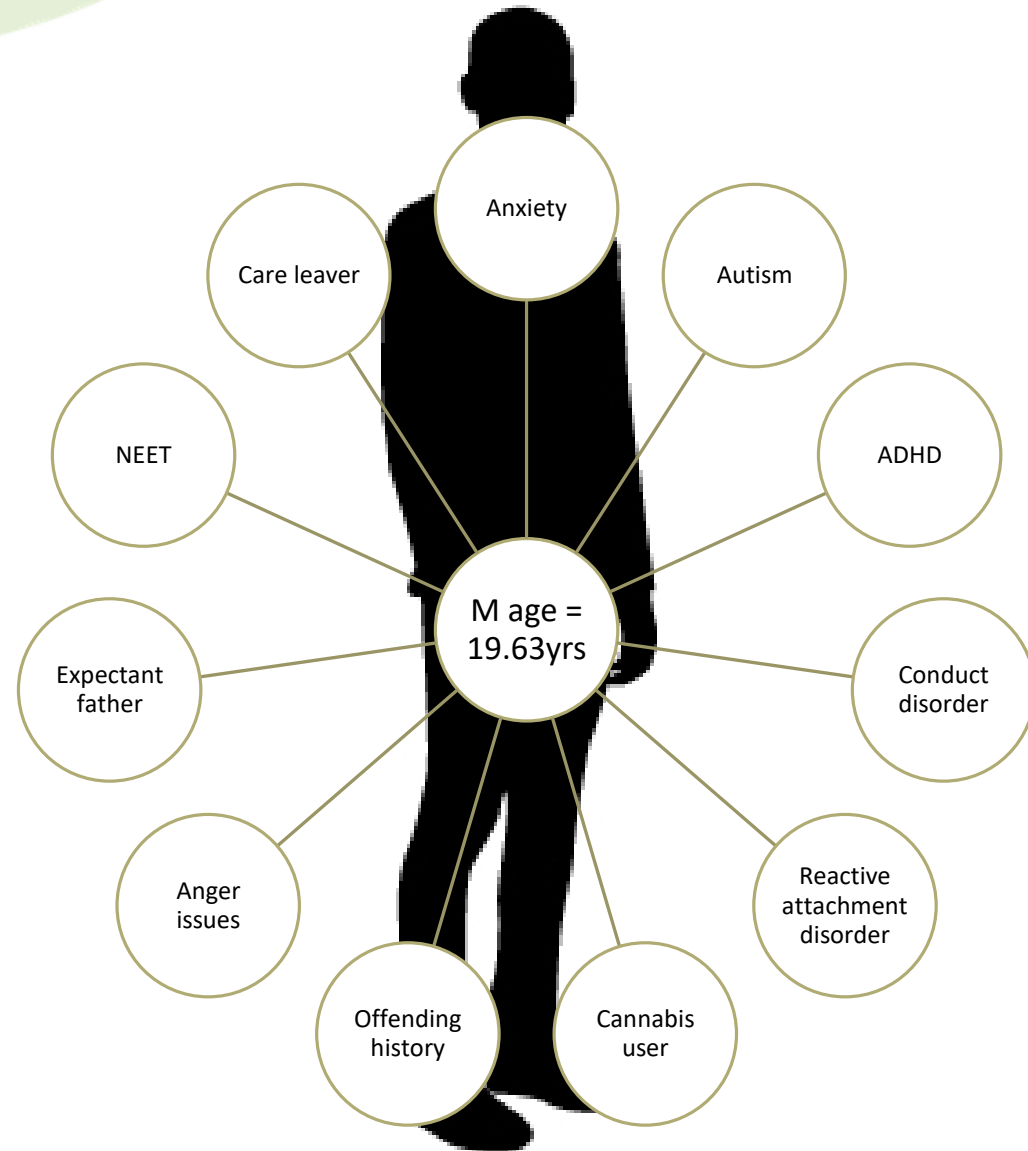
What works?

For whom?

Why?

How to implement?

Severe & multiple disadvantages of homeless young people adds to the challenge



NEET = not in education, employment or training

Housing & support offer within a “psychologically-informed environment”

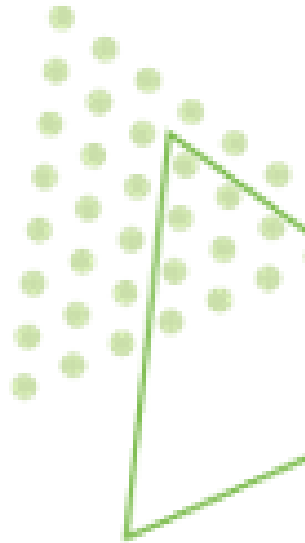


Lots of options for developing more psychologically-informed approaches for staff to take





But how to directly address negative impact of stress & adversity on young people's:



COPING

DECISION-
MAKING

INFORMATION
PROCESSING

INTERPERSONAL
SKILLS

SELF-
REGULATION

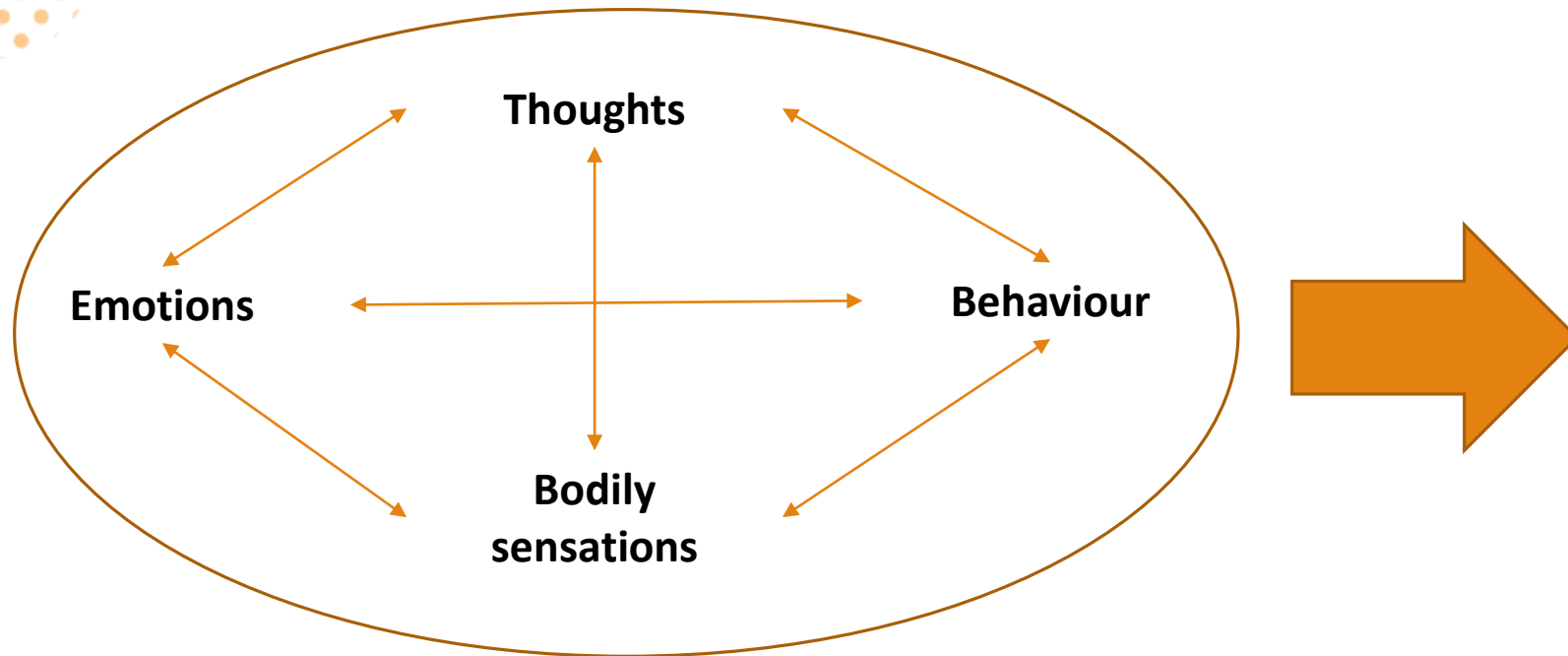
STRESS
MANAGEMENT



My Strengths Training for Life™ (MST4Life™) is a strengths-based programme for developing young people's mental skills



Mental skills is a resiliency factor associated with superior sport performance under intense pressure



E.g. Nicola Adams, GB Boxer & Olympic Champion

MST4Life™ helps young people to develop mental skills to thrive and successfully engage in EET

Inputs

Challenging & meaningful activities

Skill building opportunities

Positive relationship with caring peers & adults

Short-term outcomes



↑ Thriving



↓ Unhealthy/risky behaviours

Long-term outcomes



Education



Employment

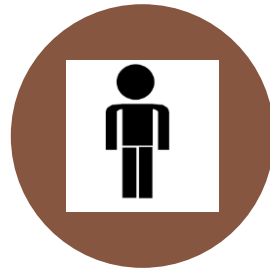


Training

MST4Life™ has been delivered to 611 homeless young people



- 36.6% EET
- 37.6% NEET
- 25.8% Unable to work



- 16-24 years
- 56% female, 43% male, 1% transgender
- 52% White British, 48% BAME

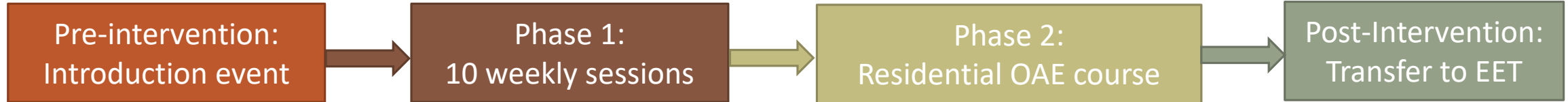


- Supported accommodation
- Floating support



- Multiple support needs
- 9% learning disability

The MST4Life™ delivery model is flexible, adaptable, meaningful and young person-led



Phase 1 of MST4Life™ are 10 group sessions held in supported accommodations & community locations



Example activity = Identifying support networks

“I realised my niece and nephew could be my medics, because they heal any sadness or pain I feel. More than just a good activity, it allows you the skills to transfer into real life. I now know, without hesitation, who to call in times of crisis”
 – MST4Life participant



CAPTAIN

NAME _____

BEST QUALITY:

- TRUSTWORTHY /10
- FUN /10
- KNOWLEDGE /10
- CARING /10
- ROLE MODEL /10





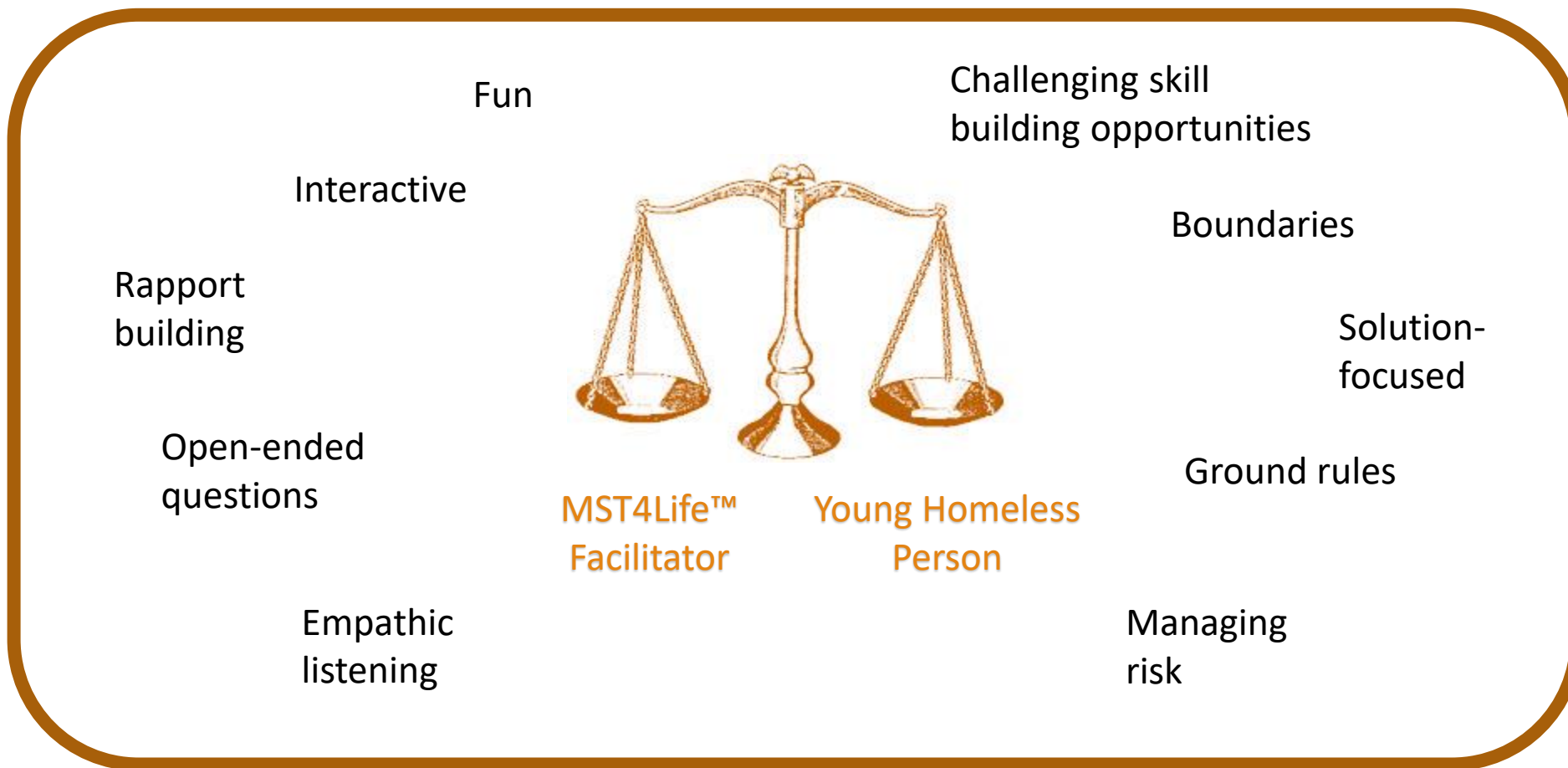
Example mental skill: relaxation techniques

“You breathe in for three seconds, then you breathe out for three seconds, and then you just pause. And it actually helps you focus on your breathing and it relaxes you. And just takes your mind off things and you’ve got to ignore all the little distractions around you it really does work. You should try it.” –MST4Life participants



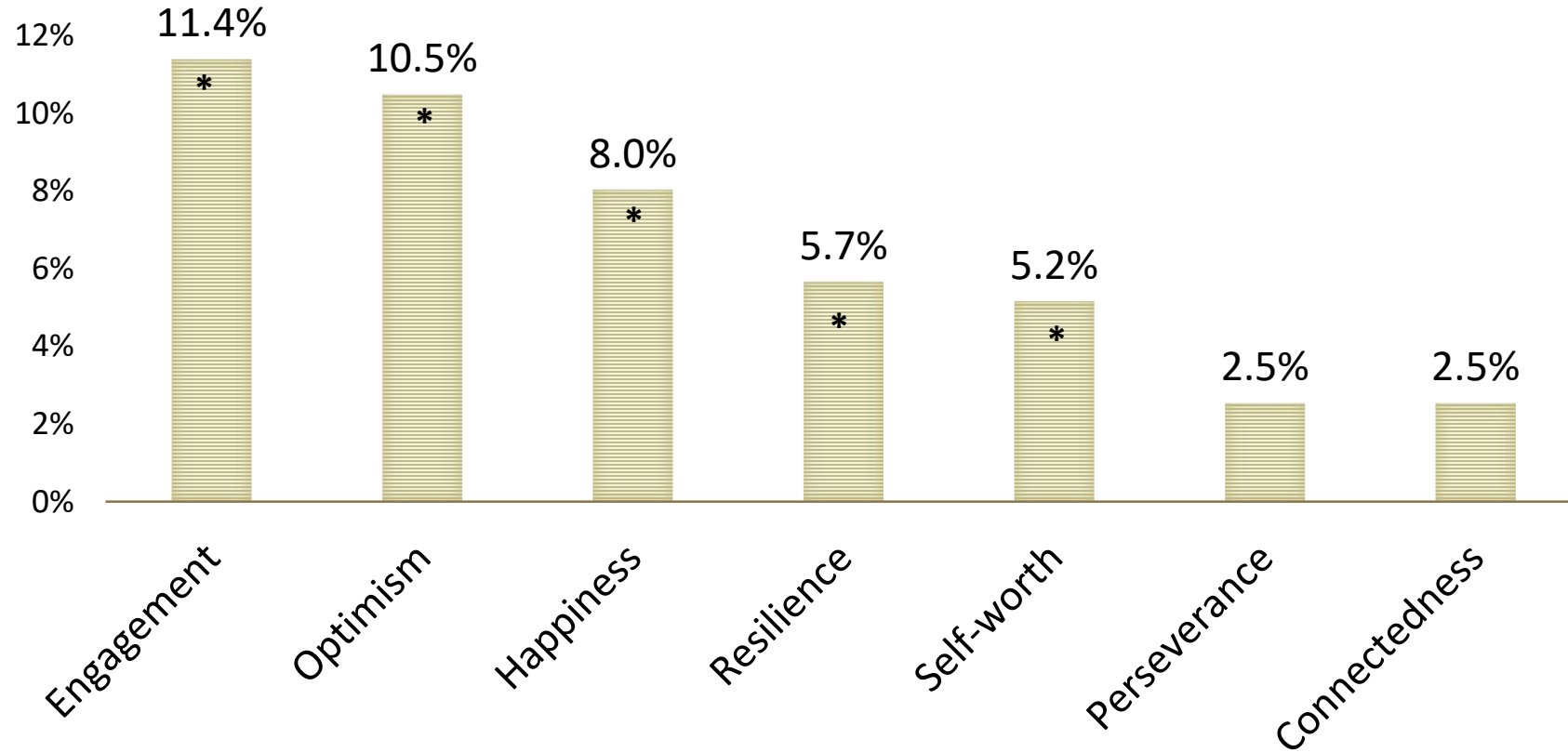
Phase 2 of MST4Life™ promotes transfer of learning and further development of mental skills in a challenging setting

MST4Life™ delivery style is informed by St Basils' PIE and strengths-based psychology



MST4Life™
improves
resiliency and
well-being
(short-term
outcome)

% PRE-POST PROGRAMME CHANGE

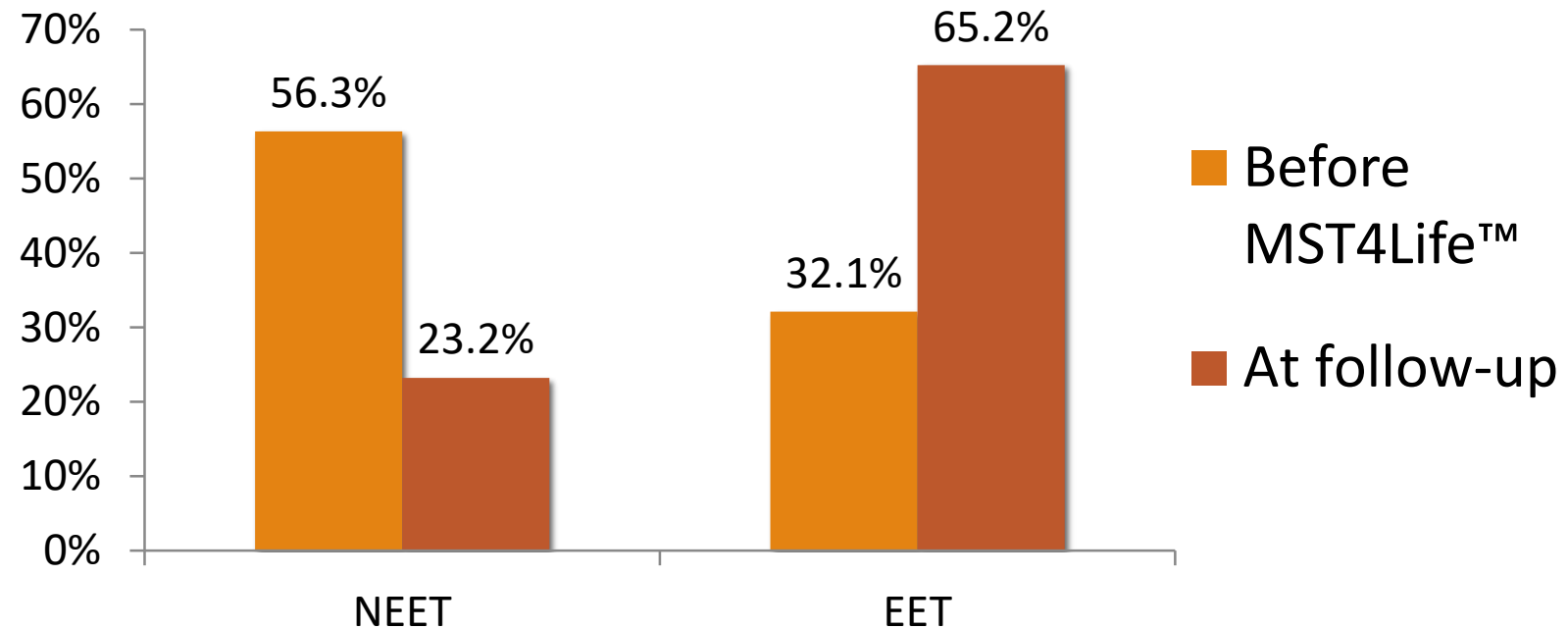


CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson (2003)

EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-Being; Kearns et al., (2015)

Self Description Questionnaire III; Marsh et al. (1984)

MST4Life™ increases likelihood of moving NEET→EET
by 30 percentage points





*"I learned to **control my anger**. Even though I don't have an anger problem, I never knew how to control my anger, but I learned to. I guess sometimes talking to people in a calm voice actually does help. You don't always need to raise your voice."*

- MST4Life™ participant

*"The **confidence** I found in myself to do the activities is the confidence I feel I need to move on to my next step, which is hopefully to find a job or volunteer."*

- MST4Life™ participant

*"I can get up in the morning and look for jobs or go out and get a job. I don't have to wake up and put myself down. In a way **this programme has motivated me to do a lot of things**. If I didn't come to this programme I'd still be in bed sleeping really, doing nothing, or just watching TV."*

- MST4Life™ participant

Programme sustainability: 34 St Basils staff have been trained to deliver or champion MST4Life™



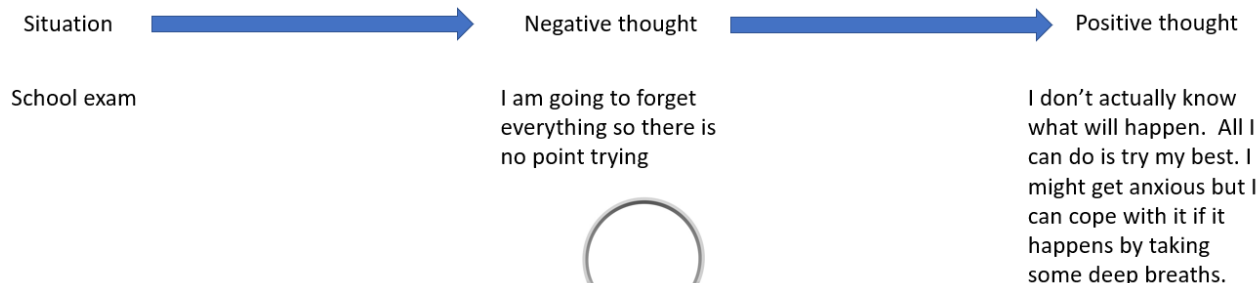
What is mental skills training?

The systematic development & application of mental techniques and skills

Psychological theories & background

Example = Reframing

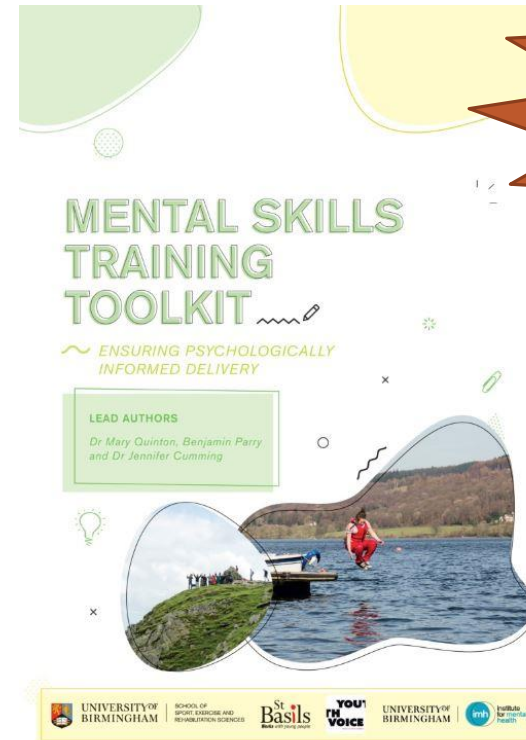
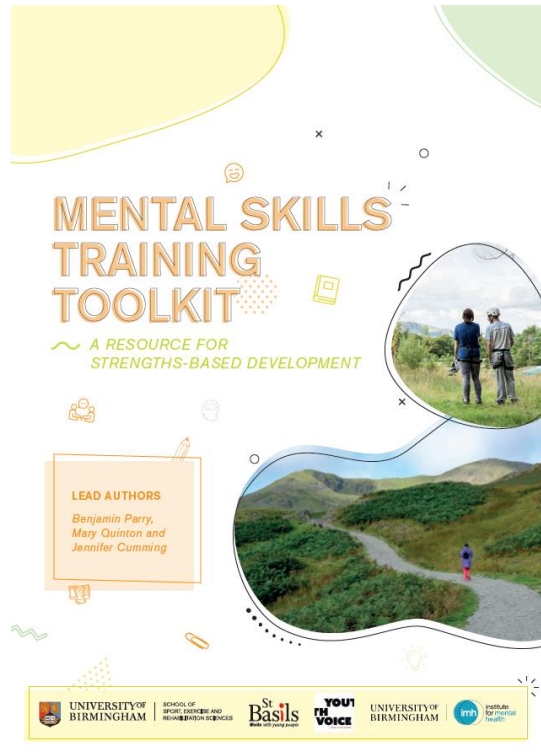
changing the way we view things and finding more positive ways of interpreting and approaching situations and circumstance



Mental techniques & practical application

Sharing the learning via co-designed toolkit & resources

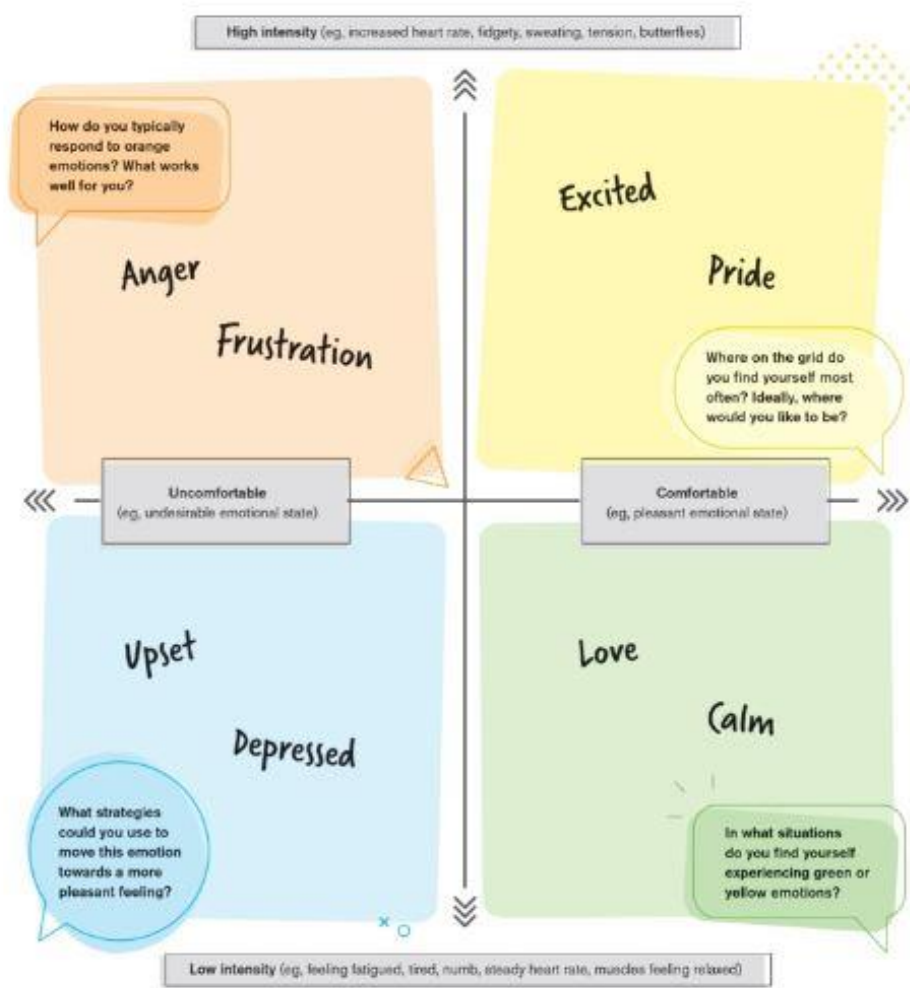




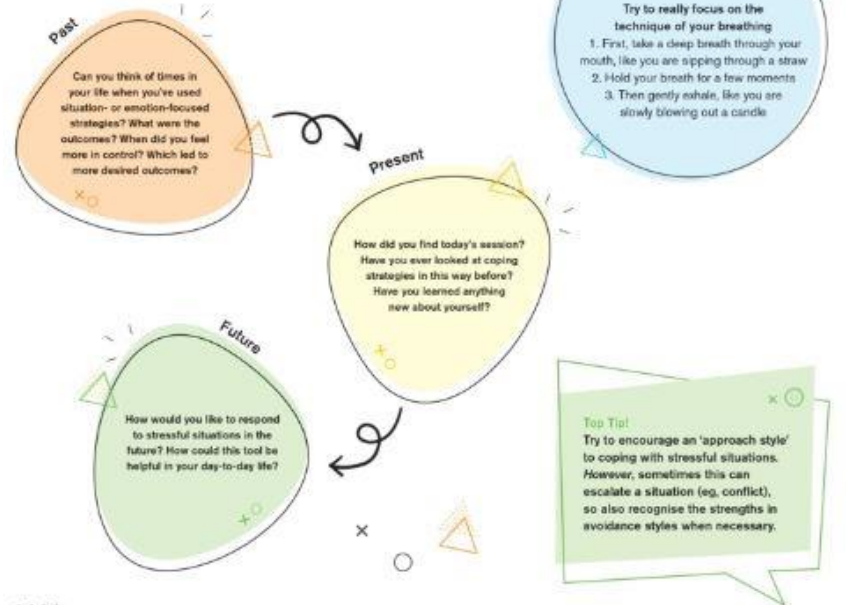
Final toolkit
Available now
Free digital download

Practical & user-friendly & accessible toolkit & delivery guide

Emotional awareness grid example



Reflection questions on the tool



Action plan

Practice makes permanent!

When first using the tool, identify less stressful events, ones which you can already manage pretty well, and try applying the STOP tool.

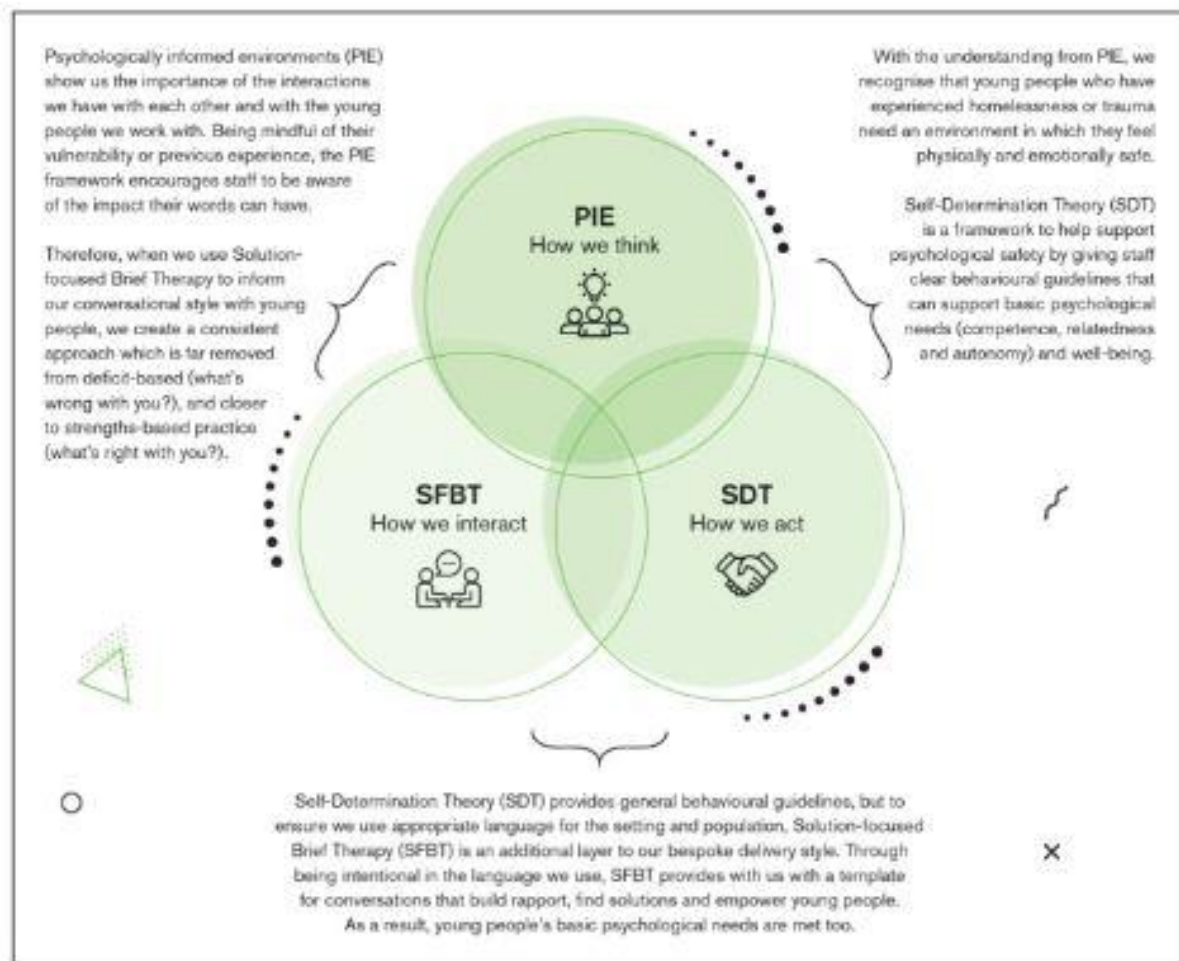
This will give yourself a chance to try different strategies. If you're very emotionally aware, how can you try and be more situation focused? Or, if you're a good problem solver, could you try and focus on regulating your emotions?

Practice different skills that work for you. Just like a sports person will practise a physical skill until they master it, practise your psychological skills consistently to ensure they're easily accessible when you need them!

Over time, identify more stressful situations where the STOP tool could help you manage different scenarios.

To do...

How PIE, SDT and SFBT interact to support basic psychological needs and well-being



SKILLS FOR CONNECTING

To support people's basic psychological need for relatedness

It may seem like common sense, but a friendly and welcoming approach can be extremely powerful for satisfying young people's basic psychological need for relatedness. Emotions are contagious, and so how you act can 'rub off' on others in both a positive and negative way. So, if you are relaxed and appear comfortable, it's more likely others around you will be too.

During our time delivering the MST4Life™ programme, we've learned these actions help to develop a good rapport with young people, which in turn lays an important foundation for their engagement with more formal types of support.

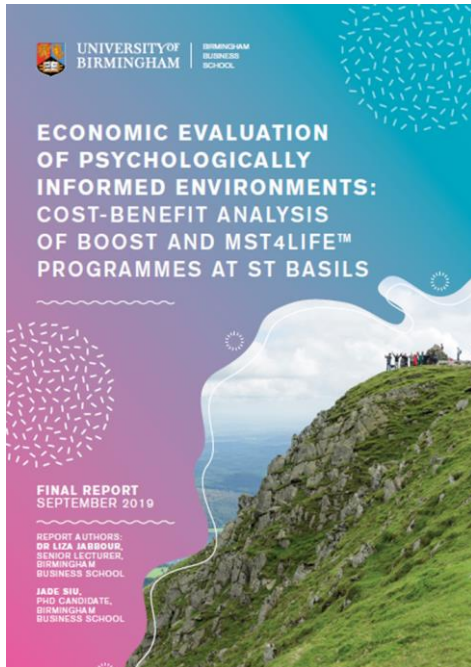
Developing rapport is the foundation of all the tools in the toolkit and an essential part of the process – it is important to spend the necessary time and not rush this part.

PRO-BEHAVIOURS	WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?
Coming across as friendly, welcoming and relaxed	This could be physical behaviours such as maintaining eye contact and open and positive body language. It is also important to pay your full attention to the young person. If it seems like you are preoccupied or dealing with other people/tasks then they may disengage.
Validation and active listening	Validation is showing recognition or acceptance of another person's thoughts, feelings, emotions and behaviours as understandable. It's letting the young person know that it's ok if they feel stressed or low sometimes, rather than trying to force them to be positive at a time when it is difficult to do so. For tips on active listening, see page 4.
Relatable and engaging in informal conversation	Getting to know each other better about more general things can help build rapport. Of course, it's important to maintain boundaries, but sharing a common love of music, for example, may help the young person feel more comfortable engaging.

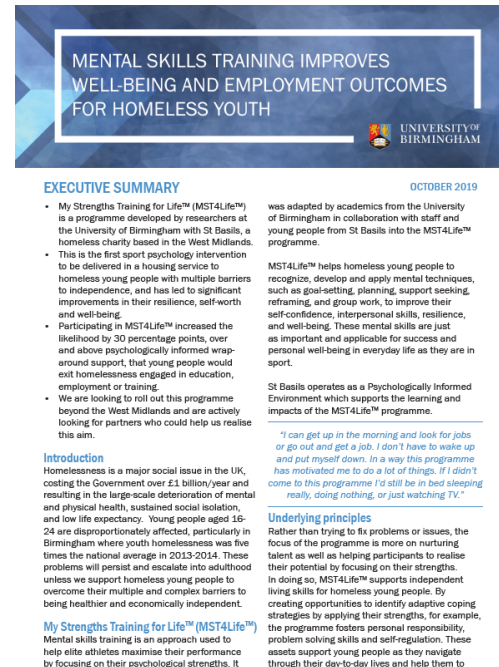
ANTI-BEHAVIOURS	WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?
Just focused on the task	We often say that the activities or the tools themselves are not the intervention, it is the delivery style. So although the toolkit includes valuable tools, try not to sacrifice completing the tools in place of rapport development with the young person. In other words, try to avoid seeing it as a 'tick box' exercise to complete.
Restricting opportunities for interaction	We appreciate there can often be time pressures and high caseloads in this type of work, but we also believe that every interaction is an opportunity. So try to avoid rushing the end of a session and even look for times to stay for that extra cup of tea!
Unfriendly style	Try to avoid coming across unfriendly, standoffish or 'too' professional, which could inadvertently come across as not caring or not considering the young person's needs and cause the young person to disengage.



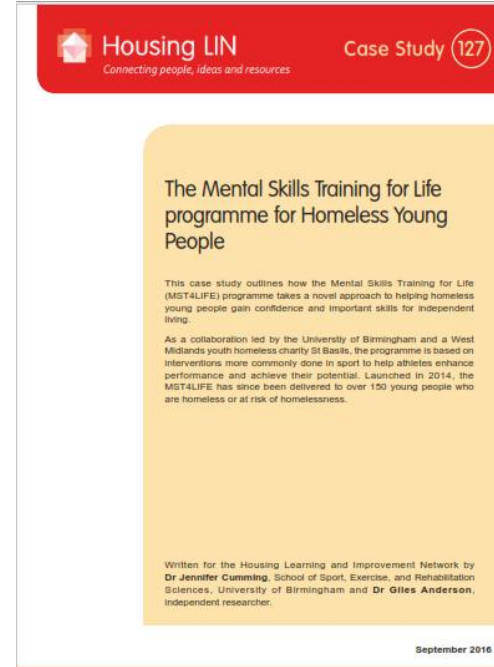
Visit www.sprintproject.org to download the toolkit, delivery guide and other free resources



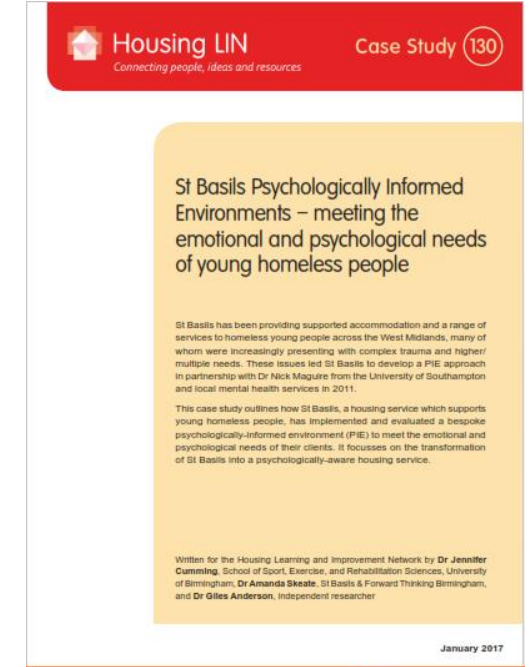
Evaluation Report



Policy Brief



Case Study



St Basils' PIE

Thank you!

The MST4Life™ Team



Dr Jennifer
Cumming



Dr Mary
Quinton



Dr Sam
Cooley



Dr Mark
Holland



Benjamin
Parry



Richard
Whiting



Fiona
Clarke

Jean Templeton, the staff and young people from St Basils and Youth Voice, Dr Amanda Skeate, Dr Liza Jabbour, Dr Sarah-Jane Fenton, Jade Siu, Karen Saunders, Prof Janice Thompson, Georgia Bird, Saul Shrom, Grace Tidmarsh, Lauren Page-Hammick and Homeless Link, Creative Media (UoB)



Edith Murphy Trust

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Email: J.Cumming@Bham.ac.uk



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