

Supporting Children and Young People Impacted by Domestic Abuse – Bambu Project

Evaluation

Young people at a desk

Key information

Publication type: General

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Description of programme

The [Bambu Project](#) aims to provide trauma-informed, early intervention support for children and young people (CYP) who have been impacted by domestic abuse.

Bambu operates across eight boroughs, providing one-to-one trauma-informed, early intervention support to children and young people of all genders aged 11 to 24 impacted by domestic abuse.

The support lasts up to 20 weeks and includes one or more of the following types of support, depending on age and need:

- Resilience sessions to support with coping mechanisms and safety planning.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to provide psychoeducation and trauma support.
- Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) support for children exhibiting abusive behaviours.
- Play therapy for children with additional needs or severe trauma.

The service aims to fill a gap in support for CYP impacted by domestic abuse but who would not otherwise be receiving support they need. This may include CYP who are not at risk of offending or exploitation and who are not receiving therapeutic services.

Bambu also aims to effect positive change by improving system understanding of what good support for CYP impacted by domestic abuse looks like, and by improving system ability to identify and respond to their needs.

Evaluation summary and methodology

Cordis Bright were commissioned by London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to evaluate Bambu. This final evaluation report summarises findings from the previous process evaluation as well as exploring impact across the Bambu programme.

The report presents findings on Bambu's outcomes for children and young people as well as the broader system, highlighting learning to take forward for future programme delivery and commissioning.

The methods informing this report are:

- **Staff Consultation:** Interviews with 17 wider Bambu partners, two workshops with Bambu practitioners, Interviews with 11 Bambu Staff members.
- **Young Person Consultation:** Discussions with 9 young people, 7 anonymised case studies, 20 Surveys at end-of-support.
- **Quantitative Data:** Programme monitoring data and outcomes data using two tools (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and Life Satisfaction Scale).

In addition to the full evaluation report, the findings have also been summarised in a youth-facing report which can be found below.

Key findings

The evaluation found that Bambu is meeting a critical need in many local areas in a way that bridges the gap for young people who would otherwise not receive support.

Qualitative research indicated the intervention is high quality, person-centred and trauma-informed and makes a difference to young people and families it has supported.

Interviews with the young people found positive examples of progress for young people in the key areas of improving wellbeing, reducing behavioural and emotional difficulties, improving family relationships, and improving engagement with services.

Quantitative data showed indications of positive change, supporting these findings. This included noted improvements on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (n= 68); half of young people reported improvement in their total difficulties score, which suggests that young people experienced an overall improvement across domains.

The Brief Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) (n=40) demonstrated an increase in average scores for life satisfaction, with the largest improvement in self-perception. These positive changes across both tools ties into the qualitative findings that Bambu's person-centred, high-quality support impacted numerous areas of young people's lives.

In terms of wider systems change, Bambu was found to have made progress towards cultural shifts within the wider system, fostering greater awareness of the impacts of domestic abuse.

Limitations to the evaluation include potential sample bias towards those who had a positive experience, and small sample sizes for the quantitative data collection, due to outcomes collection being introduced partway through delivery. Nonetheless, this theory-led evaluation found substantial promising evidence of the difference the programme is making.

Emerging best practice

- **Support model:** The flexible, person-centred, trauma-informed approach was widely recognised and valued, and the exit process was felt to be supportive for young people. Factors enabling these areas of success included: highly engaged, skilled practitioners; and a responsive, reflective approach.
- **Broader system impacts:** Bambu has contributed to improved professional practice in supporting young people affected by DA. It has helped professionals recognise young people as victims/survivors in their own right and adopt a more trauma-informed approach. Bambu has influenced greater awareness of the impact of DA, improved professionals' confidence in identifying and addressing young people's needs, and modelled good practice, particularly in multi-agency and school settings.
- **Supporting access to other services:** Bambu have signposted, made referrals, and advocated for young people to improve their practical access to services, as well as increasing young people's openness to accessing services other than Bambu. The Bambu programme also supports young people while they wait for referrals to other services such as CAMHS.
- **Improved multi-agency working:** There were clear indications of positive progress in multi-agency working across a range of services, including schools, social services, police and health services. However, there were still areas where partnerships and multi-agency working could go further.

Challenges and lessons learned

The evaluation provides a number of recommendations to improve the delivery and commissioning of such services.

Challenges included:

- **Creating and maintaining consistent awareness of the service** across all eight London boroughs was a continued challenge for Bambu. Areas with overlapping existing support found that levels of referral to Bambu were lower.
- **Partnership with schools** is a useful mechanism to identify and engage young people. Practical help from schools is also needed to help find a physical place to hold sessions and allow young people to arrive for these on time. However, schools often de-prioritised these sessions over regular schoolwork. Further work could be done on this partnership-building to achieve maximum impact.
- **Practical and logistical challenges in the delivery** of the programme, including sometimes lengthy travel between boroughs and venues; difficulty finding community venues to conduct sessions with young people who prefer not to have their sessions in schools; managing multiple formats for consent forms and other administrative information; and potential confusion about branding.

- **Engaging young boys**, despite the even gender split among young people who received support, in some cases boys showed a tendency to disengage earlier and/or to engage less deeply with support.

Read the reports

Read the [Bambu Youth Facing report \(PDF\)](#).

Read the [Bambu Final Evaluation report \(PDF\)](#).

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