



Fitzrovia Youth in Action



As a result of lockdown/COVID-19, both aspects of this programme – i.e. the therapy sessions for parents and the peer mentoring sessions for children and young people - are being delivered remotely/online.

Reducing the impact of inter-parental conflict on children’s mental health – a new project from Tavistock Relationships and Fitzrovia Youth in Action, funded by Children in Need

About the project

Tavistock Relationships and Fitzrovia Youth in Action have been funded by BBC Children in Need to deliver therapeutic support to separated parents who are struggling to have a constructive and collaborative relationship, and also a peer mentoring to the children of those parents. The project aims to help improve outcomes for children, via a combination of these two elements.

The therapeutic element – delivered by Tavistock Relationships at its centre in 56-60 Hallam Street, London W1W 6DA – will involve 3 assessment sessions (two to parents individually, one to parents together, to agree a focus for the therapy), followed by 6 sessions of fortnightly couple therapy. There is an opportunity for a further 3, monthly follow-up sessions if this is deemed helpful by all parties. Mentalisation-based couple therapy for separated parents aims to help parents think about the possible impact of their conflict on their children – and the impact of their conflict on their parenting.

The peer mentoring programme – a six to eight week programme covering a variety of aspects of young people’s lives and relationships – will be delivered to small groups of young people aged 11-18 by Fitzrovia Youth in Action from its centre in 66-68 Warren St, London W1T 5NZ.

The programme explores themes that have been linked to promoting positive mental health which have been co-produced by young people. These themes have been developed and shaped from evidence based models such as, ‘The 5 ways to Wellbeing’¹ and The ‘Resilience Framework’² as protective factors in supporting mental wellbeing. The themes that the programme will cover may vary as the group will be led and guided by the young people who attend themselves. However, core topics that are explored are usually: mental health, relationships, self-esteem and resilience. This link shows how Fitzrovia’s peer mentoring scheme works (the footage relates to a schools-based programme but the one for this project will adopt a similar approach:
<https://youtu.be/zHSZCco3w14>

The two elements of this project are very much linked. The parents must be able to engage in therapy, and the children of those parents must be interested in participating in the peer mentoring programme.

(See further details on page 2, overleaf.)

¹ <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/five-ways-to-wellbeing-in-the-uk/>

² <https://www.boingboing.org.uk/use-resilience-framework-academic-resilience/>

The purpose of the parents' initial 3 sessions

- To check for risk
- To explain what the project is and enlist their support in encouraging their children to access the peer mentoring group
- To work with the parents to think about what their shared agenda might be for the therapy ahead
- To think what the parents might be worried about in terms of joint sessions
- To see if parents can mentalise on their children – and mentalise at all in presence of their ex-partner
- To individually give the parents a chance to tell their story of the relationship, break-up and what has gone wrong since.

Who we will accept for this project

- Parents prepared to sit in a room together (we will not accept parents who feel unable to do this).
- Parents should ideally have two or more children (all aged between 10 and 18).
- Parents must undertake to talking to their child/children about the peer mentoring programme, and the children would need to be prepared to try an introductory session in that programme. Tavistock Relationships and Fitzrovia Youth in Action will be producing a leaflet for children explaining what the peer mentoring programme covers and how it can help young people.

Please email or phone Richard Meier on rmeier@tavistockrelationships.org or 020 7380 1964 if you are interested in making a referral or finding out more about this project.