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Improving socio-emotional health and school performance for pupils in early secondary education with Pyramid: a school-based, early intervention model.

Improving socio-emotional health and school performance for pupils in early secondary education with Pyramid:
a school-based, early intervention model

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Pyramid

Today's talk

- Brief background: context for the research

- What is Pyramid?

- Evaluating Pyramid

- Research findings: a snapshot

- Implications, challenges and future directions

- Questions

Background: CYP's mental health

*"Mental health problems have important implications for every aspect of young people's lives"
(Chief Medical Officer, DH, 2013, p.78)*

- Psychological distress among CYP is growing and many do not access timely and appropriate support (Thorley, 2016)

- Mental health problems in childhood & adolescence are associated with multiple poor outcomes (e.g. Gibb et al., 2010; Mychailyszyn et al., 2010)

- Foundations for good mental health and SEWB are laid during childhood and adolescence and impact across the life course (Carta et al., 2015)

- A public health priority? (DH, 2015; HCHC, 2014)

Pyramid

Mental well-being: the role of schools

A common access point for mental health services?

• Better placed to address school-related stressors

• Can ease the pressure on specialist CAMHS

• Facilitates a wider culture within schools that values mental health and wellbeing

But..

• Competing school priorities; schools can be 'overwhelmed' (NCB & NHS Confederation, 2013; Taggart et al., 2014)

• Evidence-based models of good practice (e.g. Pyramid)

What is Pyramid?

Pyramid is a manualised, school-based intervention that supports quiet, withdrawn, socially isolated children and young people (aged 7- 14-years) to develop socio-emotional competences and enhance their well-being

Primary school, transition group, and secondary school Pyramid clubs

A strengths-based approach

Resilience: *"the perfect target for preventative strategies focused on children's mental health"* (FitzHerbert,1997, p31)

Self-esteem

Resilience

**Social skills
Children find their
'voice'**

Optimism & hope

Building friendships, developing confidence

http://www.uwl.ac.uk/pyramid/welcome

Pyramid

Aims of the Pyramid evaluation

- Addressing gaps in the extant evidence base

- Does Pyramid impact on the emotional health of pupils in early secondary education?

- Does Pyramid impact on pupils' school performance?

- What are the 'active ingredients' involved in Pyramid that bring about change?
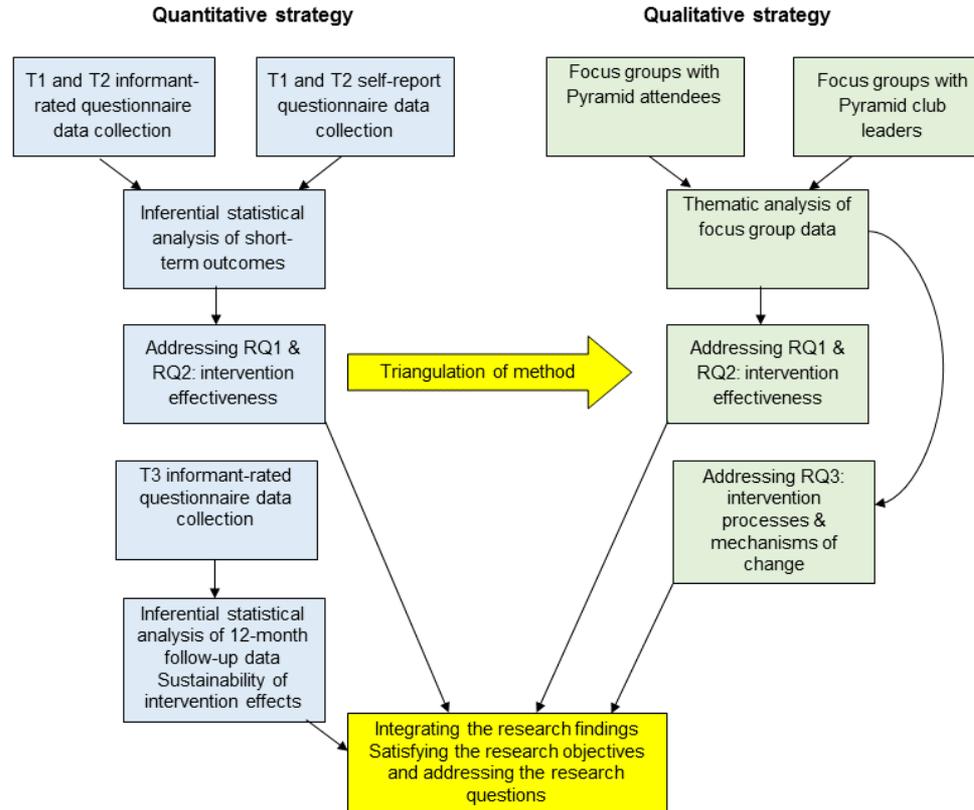
Study design

"Understanding how and why programs work, not simply whether they work, is crucial" (Dixon-Woods et al., 2011)

SEWB measures: Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997; Goodman et al., 1998); WBQ (New Philanthropy Capital, 2010)

School performance measures: Subject ability self-concepts; progress in English and Mathematics (NC levels)

Quantitative results: a snapshot

- Objective and subjective measures of SEWB demonstrated significant improvements in socio-emotional well-being for the Pyramid group at short-term and longer-term follow-up with large effects.

Table 1. Participants' Total Difficulties scores (SDQ: Goodman, 1997) at T1, T2 and T3

	UK SDQ norms: (age11-15) Mean (SD)	Baseline (T1) Mean (SD)	Post-test (T2) Mean (SD)	12-month follow-up (T3) Mean (SD)
Pyramid group	6.30 (6.1)	14.40 (4.94)	9.24 (5.43)***	9.11 (5.42)***
Comparison group		5.43 (5.09)	5.20 (5.40)	5.61 (5.50)

***p < .001

Quantitative results: a snapshot

- Impact was not moderated by gender, ethnicity or SES

- Comparison group of non-intervention peers showed minimal fluctuations across the same time period

- Significant cross-over interaction for pupils' subject ability self-concept: Pyramid had a 'buffer effect' on typical 'dip' phenomenon characteristic of this developmental period

Qualitative results: a snapshot

- Thematic analysis of service user and club leader data provided evidence to support Pyramid's effectiveness (SEWB and school performance outcomes)

"It helped me with my confidence, for making new friends and stuff like that" (Jessica, Sc4)

"They both ask questions and are so much more interactive in class" (Club leader 5, Sc5)

- Behaviour change drivers identified

BCPs: setting; delivery; and content of Pyramid

BCTs: demonstration and practice; social reward; social support; and goal setting

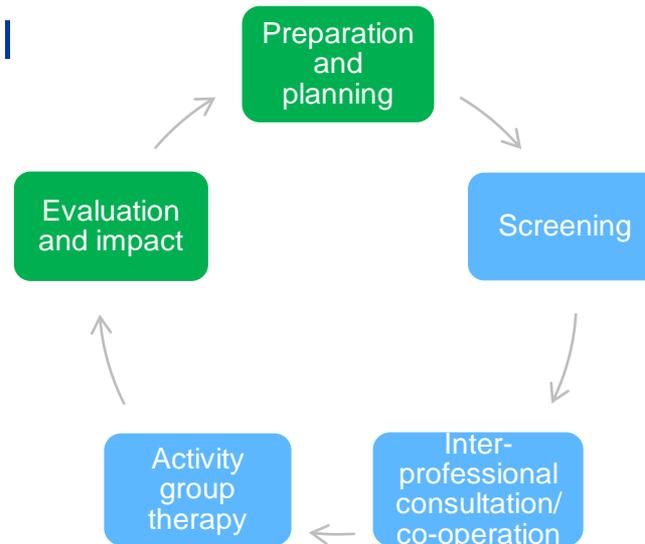- Legacy and development of the Pyramid model

"I think it's about how it's affected them in the long-term...it's opened doors for them really" (Club leader 2, Sc5)

"If another club ran you could talk to them about what it's like 'cos you've already done it" (Perseus, Sc6)

Implications, challenges, future directions…

- Pyramid five-part model

- Developing partnerships and networks

- Fluctuations in funding and other macro level changes

- Enabling emotionally healthy children and young people achieve their potential

"I used to get bullied and stuff which basically put me inside of a shell but Pyramid helped to break that shell."
(Year 7 Pyramid club member, 2015)

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