



<b>Case Studies</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Development of sustainable practise in Education through an ACE lens.
<b>Intro</b>	<p>Educational settings are always subject to change, be it staff turnover, the natural cycle of the student population or the many initiatives and directives, statutory duties and inspection frameworks that come and go with time and tide.</p> <p>There are many constants however and foremost among them are young people with challenging circumstances that are reflected in their behaviours, their relationships and ultimately their attainment. The lifelong consequences of an unproductive and unsuccessful education are societal costs that are becoming harder to bear.</p> <p>Can we effectively and proactively intervene to raise outcomes for adversely affected young people by adopting and embedding trauma and ACE informed practices within specific settings and across society generally? Do these measures impact beneficially on those who have not suffered as a result of ACE's? I believe the answer to both questions is yes.</p> <p>If we consider how smoking was once ubiquitous and how all of society bore the cost of the littering, environmental pollution and negative health consequences, we can then reflect on how public education and alternative products have led to a continuing decline in the number of smokers. We can understand that the decrease in the prevalence of smokers means fewer young people take up smoking as it has not been modelled to them by key influencers.</p> <p>It is not a great leap for us to recognise that adopting trauma and ACE informed practice could lead to similar benefits and reduced costs to us all. If students can be retained in mainstream settings where positive relationships and an awareness of the negative impact of toxic stress inform the provision for every child then attainment at the main transition points could be significantly higher allowing those adversely affected in childhood to break the cycle of harm. If we can widen education about ACE's to the parents and care givers then we may be successful in changing the nature of home environments and begin to stop ACE's from occurring. As in my reference to smoking, the environment for all improves if we tackle the problem collectively. In taking relevant information to parents and carers we aim to change the behaviour of key influencers, change what the child sees and experiences and ultimately change society.</p>
<b>Background and context of initiatives</b>	<p>A colleague recently joked that he had forestalled an argument with his partner with the words " We'd better have this conversation later or we'll be giving the kids ACE's". Having related his tale there was the sudden recognition that cultural change was a reality, I cannot think of a finer example of how our work around ACE's has come to underpin much of what we do at Witton Park Academy and seemingly in our homes too.</p> <p>Already recognised favourably through Ofsted inspection for our pastoral</p>



	<p>care at Witton Park Academy; there was a recognition that we could do more and go further to support staff as well as students if we went beyond reliance on our key staff influencers and developed a whole school approach which would empower all of our colleagues, improve behaviour further, improve relationships across the whole school population and potentially further improve outcomes at 16 for our students.</p> <p>EmBRACE included many recognisable facets of behaviour management, pastoral best practice and those admirable traits that key staff model daily in their ability to positively influence young people and build constructive relationships. Initial discussions with Sue Irwin meant we were confident that the project was in line with our own strategic goals and provided an opportunity to review and evaluate ourselves through an 'ACE lens'.</p> <p>EmBRACE is not a prescribed set of policies nor is it a neat package of lesson plans and resources. EmbrACE is ultimately a reflective tool that enables each setting to review current practice, identify what needs to change and begin the process of implementing that change. There are base principles but there can never be an off the shelf solution, each setting must assess and address its own needs and goals. What is required in every setting undergoing this process is the recognition that children and adults in that provision are suffering, that how we interact can alleviate some of that suffering and provide tools to self-manage the issues that individuals face.</p> <p>To be successful there must be a long-term commitment to change which transcends any current political or educational vogue and/or passing inspection-based focus. Regardless of any time specific judgement on any individual setting around 10% of any student and staff body will have four or more ACE's, young people and adults will still experience a range of traumatic events and our responsibility to them does not pass with the rear end of the lead inspectors taxi departing our gates.</p>	
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Supporting Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Senior leadership backing and identified staff with authority and freedom to implement programmes.</li><li>• The support of Sue Irwin Ltd and the high profile given to this agenda across Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and partners.</li><li>• A cohort of staff, not all with prior knowledge and expertise, prepared to take responsibility to develop skills and knowledge beyond their routine school duties.</li><li>• The number of self-referrals from students following the EmBRACE workshops. This was particularly significant in securing backing to continue and develop school systems due to the identification of a cohort of academically successful students that did not demonstrate negative behaviours but came forward having recognised that they were affected by the described symptoms and reactions. This section of the student body had previously not been the beneficiaries of existing pre-EmBRACE processes. Had it not been for the pilot programme their needs would most likely not have been identified nor catered for unless there had been</li></ul>



		<p>some crisis point reached and their need revealed. It is worth reiterating at this point that WPA had been recognised for the high quality of its pastoral provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial successes during the EmBRACE pilot that convinced staff and students of the value of interventions.</li> <li>• Successful GCSE results in excess of those expected for some students that had been in the first wave of interventions.</li> <li>• The results of a whole school ACE survey that supported the key findings of previous studies within BwD and confirmed the statistical basis for the project.</li> <li>• Staff seeking advice about students and the effective sharing of good practice.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Challenging Factors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key staff providing interventions at risk of being overwhelmed by the amount and nature of the issues facing students. A number of significant disclosures have been made during coaching sessions that have led to safeguarding measures being taken. Therefore, the need to expand staff capacity. This would be the third time we have sought to increase the number of staff involved since the inception of the programme.</li> <li>• Consistency of approach from staff. It can be difficult for new staff to manage the transition from one school culture to the prevailing WPA climate and some staff are slow adopters.</li> <li>• Having time to liaise and reflect upon the process.</li> <li>• The need to build in supervision for key staff which is a pressing and significant area for development.</li> <li>• An increase in the complexity of issues and number of students presenting. This could be a positive reflection on the value students place on the systems in place but equally we feel there are significant financial pressures in particular that are adversely impacting on the home environments of our students. Those financial pressures are evident in the difficulties of providing sufficient social care interventions within our catchment but also on household budgets themselves.</li> <li>• The belief that identifying ACE's will lead to students reliving trauma or suffering increased toxic stress as a result of education about ACE's.</li> <li>• Training capacity and materials need to be developed urgently to increase capacity to meet the significant interest in this field.</li> <li>• The need to develop the universal nature of the ACE conversation, specifically to generate wider media interest and focus on this field which would go a long way to alleviating reluctance to engage with these issues across the sector. The wider the conversation the greater the scope for schools and other settings to get on board through peer to peer networks.</li> <li>• There can on occasion seem to be a prevailing attitude that no change can be implemented without additional monies. I would argue significant change can be implemented for minimal cost in a setting that really wants to make a difference.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<p><b>Key actions taken</b></p>	<p><b><i>Ace Awareness assemblies and whole school ACE survey.</i></b></p> <p>Assemblies were given to each year group, where BwD Borough Council's</p>



		<p>ACE's animation was shown alongside the School's vision of providing support to students and staff adversely affected by ACE's and other pastoral concerns were shared. This was combined by an explanation of growth mindsets.</p> <p>The survey was conducted through Google classroom using a Google forms questionnaire, the form was anonymised but did allow for contact details to be supplied if students felt that they wished to find out more about programmes and resources within WPA. This facility was a direct consequence of the clearly identified preference of some students to self-refer into our programmes once they were in receipt of knowledge about ACE's or had recognised their own symptoms from the workshops and assemblies they had attended about toxic stress.</p> <p>Support Assemblies have happened every half term to the whole school on areas such as growth mindset, motivation, strategies to help understand yourself better and manage your thoughts and emotions in particular through brain-based learning.</p>
	<b>Timescales</b>	Now in the second full academic year of implementation.
<b>Outcomes ( and Efficacy )</b>	<p>There has been a steady increase in the number of pupils attending our coaching sessions. These sessions are conducted on a timetabled basis and the number of sessions and the longevity of the programme for each student is personalised. Support will be available to any given individual student for as long as they feel they require this intervention.</p> <p>There have been additional tutor time intervention sessions before school for year 11's, and are to be thought of as positive reinforcement for those students that have received more structured interventions previously or act as a triage for those who want more information and advice before seeking additional support or being offered a place on the 1-1 programme. Thus far this academic year there have been around 60 sessions to 20 students.</p> <p>A similar system is in place for Y7 students identified on transition to secondary school and a small cohort of these receive weekly sessions in tutor before the school day. This is a positive reinforcement of strategies given to the students and as a forum to discuss any matters arising from lessons or social times that are relayed by teaching staff or are raised by the students themselves.</p> <p>This is an area for further development as the aim is to work more closely with feeder schools to enable them to identify students that may need intervention in Y6 so that these students can be familiarised with their new school and begin to build relationships with key staff.</p> <p>To this end WPA staff are delivering sessions on ACE's to staff in primary feeders and encouraging the development of complimentary programmes</p>	



	<p>to EmbrACE within these settings.</p> <p>Discussions with senior leadership teams in a number of primary feeders have been held to develop effective communication with parents and care givers to increase ACE awareness.</p> <p>EmbrACE interventions have also been provided to staff; one member of staff had 15 sessions and from that has improved their attendance from below 50% to around 95%. Relationships with students are greatly improved as is the consistency of student outcomes as they now have a settled and productive teacher.</p> <p>Success looks different for every student but in terms of our interventions there have been a number of significant milestones.</p> <p>Many students no longer need coaching sessions anymore because they are now resolving their own issues, e.g. a pupil who had been suffering from depression/ suicidal thoughts had 6 sessions which helped enormously. He stopped the sessions but a month later had a really bad day and Jennifer Robinson (lead practitioner) was ready to book him back in for more sessions. When approached the next day he was smiling and overjoyed and said it's ok I remembered everything I had worked through and knew I needed to just tackle it head on, I did and I feel much better.</p> <p>This is a great example of success as pupils will continue to have life challenges, our aim is that they are able to know how to handle them, to assess whether they need support, to know what tools to use and where to go for support if needed.</p> <p>After a few sessions pupils know who to contact if they need further support. From that our aim clearly is to support pupils to a point where they are able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess their situation</li><li>• Know what tools they have that they can use to help them</li><li>• Know if they need support or if they can tackle it on their own</li><li>• Know that if they need support who is the most beneficial person to support them at this time.</li><li>• Staff are asking about students and are asking what they can do to support.</li><li>• Staff asking for support in strategies to support pupils.</li><li>• Staff making referrals for pupils see the students' reasons for not engaging as reasons for needing support as opposed to being defiant or lazy or not interested and therefore reasons for sanctions.</li><li>• Staff seeing the bigger picture of the pupil and using different approaches to support the pupil, knowing that their life chances once they are out of mainstream education are very different.</li></ul>
<b>Transferability</b>	We are working with a number of primary and secondary settings to develop their own responses to this agenda. We are working with the Police and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to create ACE-



	Informed communities and ACE informed staff and institutions, which sits within the Pennine Lancashire ACE Framework.
<b>Contact</b>	Steve Archer, Jennifer Robinson, Ian McNulty Witton Park Academy Buncer Lane Blackburn BB2 6TD 01254 264551 <a href="mailto:Sarcher@wittonpark.org.uk">Sarcher@wittonpark.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Jrobinson@wittonpark.org.uk">Jrobinson@wittonpark.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Imcnulty@wittonpark.org.uk">Imcnulty@wittonpark.org.uk</a>