

Case Studies	
<b>Title</b>	Blackburn with Darwen Transforming Lives vision for Building Adverse Childhood Experience-Informed Communities
<b>Brief summary</b>	<p>In the absence of a national model for England on how communities and organisations should respond to ACES, Pennine Lancashire are developing their own framework and developing a coordinated population approach to reduce children's exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).</p> <p>In line with this framework for ACEs, Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) has been driving the ACE agenda for a number of Years.</p> <p>In November 2017 the Localities and Prevention department began their journey to become an ACE informed organisation.</p> <p>Led by consultant Sue Irwin we were introduced to ACEs through the EmBRACE (Emotionally and Brain Resilient to Adverse Childhood Experiences) model approach of culture change by reflective practice, in order to become a trauma informed organisation and community. This case study offers a reflection and overview of our journey so far.</p>
<b>Background and context of initiatives</b>	<p><b>Background:</b></p> <p>Our wish to become an ACE informed organisation is in line with the national and international research based on the belief and intention that positive outcomes for people can be achieved through building their self-resilience and breaking the cycle of some of their behaviour.</p> <p>BwD was the first area in the UK to undertake a population-based ACE survey. Led by BwD Public Health, it identified the prevalence of ACEs across the Borough and identified poor health and social outcomes in adulthood. Almost half of adults living in BwD suffered at least 1 ACE, with 12% having suffered four or more ACEs (Bellis et al., 2013). Research shows the more ACEs someone has experienced, the greater the risk of them experiencing a wide range of health-harming behaviours and diseases as an adult. This impact therefore must be considered within all communities and all sectors.</p> <p>As well as Transforming Lives/ Neighbourhood teams adopting ACEs as a focal point for our future development, ACEs are a priority agenda on the Children's Partnership Board and in addition, a local school over the last two years has been working with consultant Sue Irwin to support students in a trauma informed way. Locally we now have several providers</p>

who have accessed ACE awareness and training.

BwD has been Transforming Lives (TL) for nearly five years by supporting families and adults within the community. Whilst this multi-disciplinary collaborative way of working is obtaining positive outcomes for people, it is largely effective through service provision and interventions of support.

Transforming Lives in becoming ACE aware wants to use the knowledge, science and research from the biology of the impact of trauma on the brain and further improve our offer that is achieving positive outcomes for people. We are coming to realise the impact of ACEs and the scientific link to brain development. Becoming ACE aware enables us to identify how, in becoming ACE informed, we can be more effective in our practice and interventions.

From the beginning of our journey it has been important that the development and focus of a Place Based and Strength based approach is essential in achieving the right culture across the whole of the organisation. Sue Irwin introduced the model and values of EmBRACE and this is now proving to be beneficial and influential in enhancing our culture.

**Context of initiatives:**

The EmBRACE model of approach is important; it is not prescriptive. Given our current way of practising i.e. person, family centred and requiring a range of skills and abilities to engage with people, the EmBRACE model was particularly important, which is about the permission and autonomy to work at a pace that is appropriate for staff, yet still recognising the needs of the organisation.

EmBRACE includes 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 adults to 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'.

Transforming Lives to support families and individuals in the community who have a range of issues, by offering information, sign-posting, co-ordination and providing positive interventions, is about people building individual self-reliance and community capacity. Taking the research and

	<p>science and in particular using reflection, to understand what that looks like in practice, to enhance the positive outcomes that are already being achieved through the transforming lives, is the way we want to continue our learning.</p> <p>Witton Park Academy, from their two years' experience reaffirms, "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>Our journey started with a base line of good practice and evidence of outcomes being achieved, however our belief is that we can improve and enhance this and improve people's outcomes by them becoming self-reliant; believing they can increase their resilience, not have to rely on a provider service and believe in their own capacity for changing their behaviour.</p> <p>We recognised the need for an ACE Champion; Senior management supported this along with time and autonomy to move forward with the EmBRACE values of reflection, this also allows time to work with the existing organisation's pressures and requirements.</p> <p>There is recognition that this is long term commitment to change.</p>
<p><b>Implementation</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Factors</b></p> <p>Key considerations to implementation were:</p> <p>Consultant lead and ACE internal Champion (prior knowledge not necessary). This ensured the drive forward, monitoring and support for reflection.</p> <p>The flexibility and 'permission' to respond to the workforce needs and the organisation's requirements e.g. targets, finance, payment by results.</p> <p>Recognition that this is long term commitment to change.</p> <p>Willingness and acceptance to support a time-frame which</p>

		<p>fitted in with the EmBRACE time-frame.</p> <p>The current culture has experience in dealing with change and was receptive to learning and adapting to further change. Within this, they are receptive to enhancing their culture to become a trauma-informed culture.</p>
	<p><b>Challenging Factors</b></p>	<p>The use of new language, unfamiliar to ourselves and viewed as jargon by us or the people we support has been a challenge.</p> <p>Staff manage and coordinate some very complex situations, individuals and families. There has been an initial professional caution in practising or using language that they may not be familiar with. Staff were keen to continue to achieve effective and engaging relationships with the people they work with and avoid any potential barriers through un-useful communication. The challenge is to ensure that the appropriate support and guidance is available. Ongoing support, time and opportunity to exchange early experiences in how ACE informed practice develops is necessary; this enables staff confidence to build and best practise to be shared.</p> <p>As in most organisations some people aren't as eager to take on board new challenges - fixed mind-sets achieved through being experienced and doing a 'good job so far', require ongoing examples of what works well and what evidences additional positive outcomes. The use of effective, plain language that is informed and developed by staff themselves, through their interventions is a key factor to progression - as they learn and 'grow'.</p> <p>There is a challenge to maintain the drive for continuous capacity building and embedding the necessary culture. It's a never ending journey – a journey not a destination.</p> <p>Ensuring the appropriate culture is essential; knowing accurately 'where an organisation is', what do staff actually know and feel is ongoing. A practise of continuous reflection and listening is required.</p>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<p><b>Key actions taken</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We started with providing ACE Awareness sessions in November 2017 to a cross section of staff from the neighbourhood teams.</li> <li>• This followed with informal drop in sessions for staff, with an expectation that everyone was responsible for using this opportunity. The objective of the drop-ins was to reflect on</li> </ul>

		<p>becoming ACE aware and consider next steps for themselves. Flexibility allowed them to attend on their own or with a colleague/s.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sue Irwin transferring the reflection's obtained from the drop-ins onto the case study template, which offered a framework to start using new language and begin building their confidence in practice</li><li>• ACE Champion facilitating 1 to 1 support for staff to complete case reflections through an ACE lens. Feedback during this resulted in the case reflection template being altered.</li><li>• Community becoming ACE Aware. An early provision of a Community ACE Awareness session took place in March 2017. This was identified by a Neighbourhood Manager and took place to address a particular community, specific partners within that community and their challenges at that time. This provided those partners (including volunteers) with new information that was relevant to them all and gave a reason for common language. This then instigated the start of a Community ACE network.</li><li>• Capacity building was addressed by early identification of an ACE champion. It then increased by a Neighbourhood Manager and a Community Connector being supported, by the consultant, to facilitate a Community ACE Awareness session; allowing for capacity building to commence at an early stage.</li><li>• Neighbourhood Manager led an additional ACE Awareness session with statutory service partners (Police, Third sector).</li><li>• Transforming Lives panel ACE awareness session organised for May 2018 – to enhance partnerships, build up further networks, collaborative thinking and practice and ensure the use of a common language regarding ACEs.</li><li>• Reviewing Transforming Lives QA Systems, policies and procedures which included any reviews through an ACE lens.</li><li>• 'Next steps' being identified and agreed periodically after reflection – e.g. now at stage of opening discussions directly with education and continuing conversations with Police and community partners.</li></ul>
--	--	--

	<b>Timescales</b>	This is a long term journey – continue to ensure ACEs is fully embedded and developed through our multi-agency approaches and collaborative working.
<b>Resources</b>	<p>Development of the Resilience Toolkit</p> <p>Case reflections pro-forma</p> <p>Identifying an ACE champion</p> <p>Ensuring the time for staff/teams to reflect</p>	
<b>Outcomes ( and Efficacy )</b>	<p>Practise that enables interventions to identify Root Cause can influence a decrease in staff involvement time by identifying focus of intervention and a belief in an individual’s self-reliance – or cease repeated re-referrals.</p> <p>Empowered staff – Staff ACE awareness has enabled ACE informed practise. Their reflections on how this has influenced their conversations, decisions and outcomes with people has empowered and inspired them.</p> <p>Increased knowledge and experience in ACES has developed staff confidence and they are now developing more accessible tools to engage with people about ACEs. They are contributing to developing a Resilience Toolkit.</p> <p>Staff involvement in reviewing policies and procedures is influenced by their ACE informed practise</p> <p>Through our existing positive partnerships and collaborative working in Transforming, initial evidence is showing a positive receptiveness of continuing to learn and practice in a Trauma Informed way and developing a common language.</p>	
<b>Transferability</b>	Working in partnership will continue. Collaborative dialogue and creative responses will continue. Agreed intervention plans from an ACE informed lens are achievable and effective for a range of partners and organisations.	
<b>Further information</b>	<p>Rosemary Molyneux</p> <p>BwD Localities and Prevention Blackburn Town Hall Blackburn</p>	
<b>Contact Details</b>	<p><a href="mailto:Rosemary.molyneux@blackburn.gov.uk">Rosemary.molyneux@blackburn.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Mobile: 07793794735</p>	