

**Living Life to the Full Programme
Aware Defeat Depression**

**Interim Report
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1.0 Terms of reference

An evaluation of the Living Life to the Full Programme was commissioned by Aware Defeat Depression to provide an evidential basis of the impact and effectiveness of the programme on their clients with mild to moderate depression. The group based programme was delivered across Northern Ireland to a variety groups ranging in size and delivered at day, afternoon and evening sessions from 2009 to 2010.

2.0 Evaluation summary

The evaluation findings presented in the interim report are based on the combined data for 22 groups who have completed the Living Life to the Full Programme with Aware Defeat Depression. The evaluation information is compiled from self report data provided by participants at the start and end of the programme. The evidence base on the effectiveness and impact of the LLTTF programme derives from these self reported methods which have been triangulated across three standardised forms; pre and post questionnaires from Chris Williams and the GHQ12.

3.0 Evaluation methodology

Participants were asked to complete two documents at the start of the course, two at the end and one at a follow up session 6 weeks after the course completed. In keeping with the consistency of using the Chris Williams approach his pre registration form and post course questionnaires were distributed to participants. In addition, a standardised population measure of psychological morbidity, the General Health Questionnaire 12 (GHQ 12) was also completed at the beginning at end of the course. The GHQ is a short 12 item scale which The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) is a subjective measure of psychological wellbeing. It was developed by Goldberg who described the measure as a psychological well-being measure: The GHQ is specifically concerned with the hinterland between psychological sickness and psychological health.

3.1 Profile of course participants

At this point in the programme the evaluation database consists of 22 groups who have completed the Living Life to the Full Programme. The types of groups that the course was delivered to are listed in Table 1. The groups not selected for mild to moderate depression have been highlighted but included in the total sample for this report.

Table 1: Groups involved in the Living Life to the Full Programme

Name	Number	Group Type
Derry	6	Mild – moderate depression
Derry*	3	Workplace
Derry	1	LGBT
Lisburn	1	Mild – moderate depression
Lurgan	2	Mild – moderate depression
Enniskillen*	1	Carers
Strabane		Workplace
Magherafelt	2	Mild – moderate depression
Belfast	4	Mild – moderate depression
Magilligan*	1	Ex-Prison Officers
Ballymena	1	Mild-moderate depression
Total	22	

**not target group of mild to moderate depression*

The demographic profile of participants finds that 22.5% are male and 77.5% female, an average age of 43, 50% of participants are employed with 22% unemployed and 24% full time at home. Ethnic group was predominantly White (99.2%) and one person from the Travelling Community (0.8%). 8.6% stated they were registered disabled.

Health profile information supplied on the form indicates that 75.6% of participants reported to be taking medication for depression or stress. 69.1% stated they were

currently attending their GP for depression or stress at Session 1. When asked about support from other sources, 15.5% stated they were attending the health service to see a nurse, psychiatrist, counsellor or psychologist, 8.3% reported attending a private counsellor, while 3.8% had an involvement with Social Services.

Participants were asked about their decision to enrol in the programme. 99.1% concurred that the reason for their enrolment was to have life skills in their own life. A small number gave other reasons in addition to wanting to gain life skills, 3.3% are a carer or friend of someone facing distress, one person is a health care professional and 2.2% are voluntary sectors workers.

4.0 Evaluation Findings

4.1 General Health Questionnaire Scores

The matched GHQ scores for participants link their score on the scale at the first session to their score on the scale at the last session. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of scores across all participants ranging from 0 to 12 points. The results indicate a skew towards the higher end of the scale (more depressed) at the first session. Mean score at this time interval is 6.5138 with a standard deviation of 3.908. Participants present at the final session completed the GHQ12 for a second time. Figure 2 displays the results before categorization was applied. This shows a redistribution of scores to the lower end of the scale (less or not depressed). The mean score at this time interval was 0.9833 with a standard deviation of 2.107.

Statistical comparison between the before and after GHQ12 scores found a statistically significant difference between scores at Session 1 and scores at Session 8; ($t=18.399$, $df=179$, $p<.000$). This finding suggests that participants overall reported experiencing a positive shift in their mood by the end of the sessions.

Figures 3 and 4 display the GHQ12 categorisation into the categories used by the scale; 'happy', 'not depressed' and 'depressed'. The raw scores presented in Figures 1 and 2 have been transformed to account for the categorization used by this scale. The raw scores have been presented separately to illustrate more clearly the

distribution of participant's scores across the scale before narrowing these scores down into three non clinical scale assigned categories.

Figure 1: GHQ raw scores at the start of the course

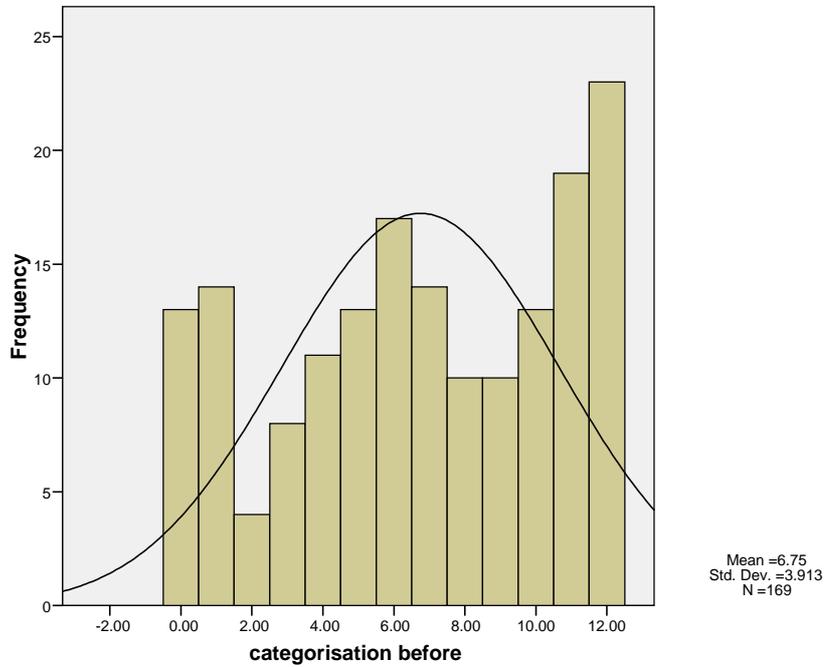


Figure 2: GHQ raw scores at the end of the course

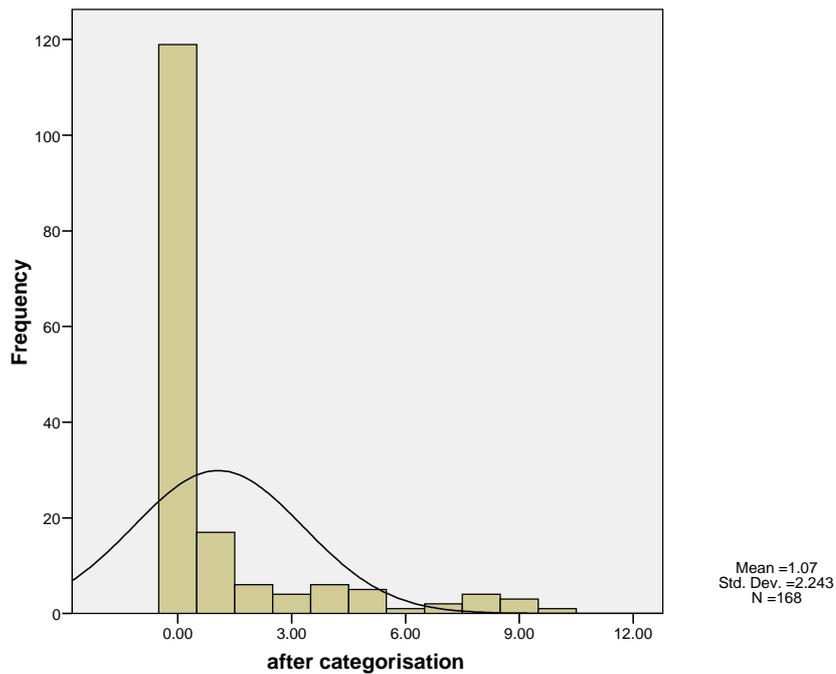


Figure 3: Categorisation of GHQ scores at the start of the course

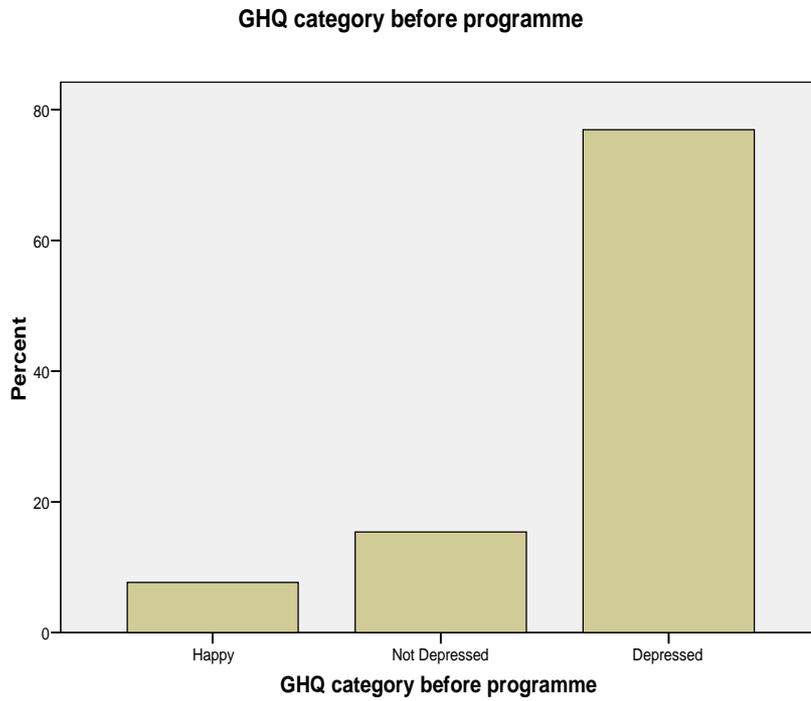
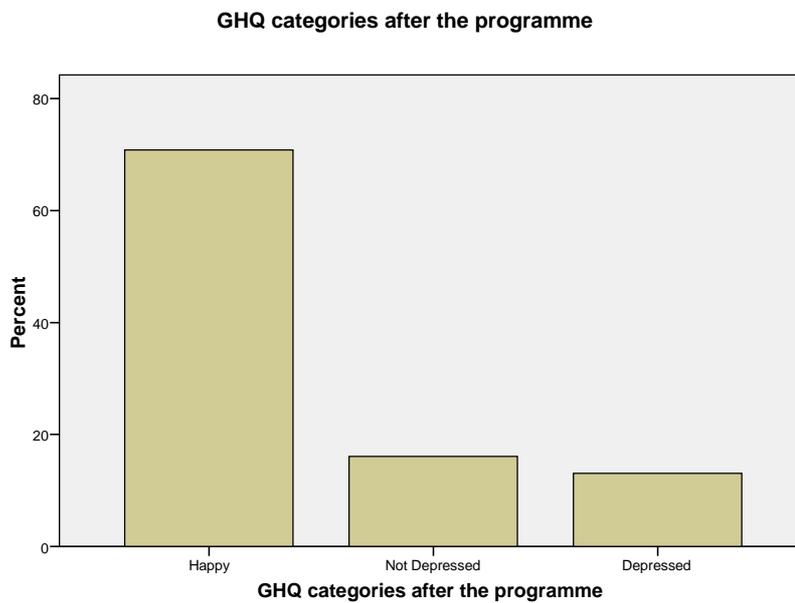


Figure 4: Categorisation of GHQ scores at the end of the course



4.2 Chris Williams Pre and Post Programme Questionnaires

4.2.1 Impact of the course on participants' knowledge and understanding of depression

Participants completed the Chris Williams pre and post programme questionnaires which explored the knowledge and understanding of stress and depression and asked questions about the benefits of the programme. The overall usefulness of the sessions formed part of the questions put forward in the post programme questionnaire. The mean score (using a 7 point scale) for participants in this sample was 6.714 with a standard deviation of 0.758.

When asked about recommending the programme all participants who completed this question stated they would recommend Living Life to the Full Programme (n=146).

A number of key questions are asked on the Chris Williams' forms at pre and post programme intervals which allow for a comparison in responses to be made in participants' knowledge and understanding of depression and low mood. Table 2 details the mean scores at pre and post programme and the statistical comparison between these two time points for each item. As shown below there is a statistically significant difference for each item paired suggesting an increase in participants' knowledge and understanding of low mood and stress. A further examination of the findings indicate that the items; 'your ability to plan activities to boost how you feel', 'your ability to plan ways to boost your confidence' and 'your ability to respond positively to your negative thinking' showed the biggest shift on the 5 point scale from less knowledge and understanding to more knowledge and understanding about these issues.

Table 2: Mean comparisons of knowledge and understanding of low mood and stress at pre and post programme intervals

	Pre Programme mean	Post Programme mean	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 your ability to understand how low mood and stress affect you	3.2414	4.4138	5.557	28	.000
Pair 2 your ability to plan activities to boost how you feel	2.5517	4.2414	9.405	28	.000
Pair 3 your ability to respond positively to your negative thinking	2.1379	3.7931	9.153	28	.000
Pair 4 your ability to plan ways to boost your confidence	2.2857	3.8929	9.279	27	.000
Pair 5 your ability to overcome practical problems in your life	2.7500	3.7857	5.291	27	.000
Pair 6 your ability to overcome unhelpful behaviours in your life that are worsening how you feel	1.9643	3.7500	7.035	27	.000
Pair 7 your ability to overcome problems of anger and irritability in your life	2.5185	4.1111	7.638	26	.000
Pair 8 your ability to do things that make you feel happier and healthier	2.5714	4.0357	7.481	27	.000

4.2.2 Participant feedback on impact of LLTTF

Participants in their open ended feedback offered comments about what they found most helpful on the course. Examples of these comments are presented below and illustrate the different experiences reported across the 22 groups;

being offered help and applying the advice given
breaking things into small chunks
confidence building, vicious circle, 10 things that make you feel better
coping strategies
dealing with everyday bad thoughts and how to get rid of these
every part of the course was important to me
getting to listen to others experiences and help retrain my thoughts to be more positive
have advised a friend she should do the course
how easy it was to talk and listen to teachers
how to build my confidence
how to control bad thoughts
I have already recommended the course to family and friend as I know how much of a help it is to me
I have been battling post natal depression for some time and feel I learnt now how to turn things
I was able to understand why I was feeling like this and how I can change it
it is a full package which is brilliant and makes sense
just illustrating situations that I did not realise I was partly creating and looking at things diff
realising that thoughts affect everything and I can control these and change them
socialising and recognising faults within myself
talking with other people about their problems
the friendly and non judgmental teachers
the more I understand about thoughts and behaviours the more I understand about myself
the resources
the way the teachers broke things down easily and explained everything
the whole course was helpful
this course was way above my expectations and I learned so much I did not expect to
understanding the causes of anxiety and depression

Participants were asked about the impact of the programme on their lives. The responses illustrate the personal stories of individuals' experiences of the skills and knowledge gained from the programme. These individualised comments corroborate the shared impact of positive improvement on mood, increased knowledge about life skills relating to depression and stress and constructive changes made to participant's lives. Examples of these comments are provided below;

a very positive impact of how I want my life to be

course was very useful and everyone I think benefited from it

enjoyed it and will practice it in everyday life

feel happy and relaxed

feeling better about myself

felt I got a lot from it and very useable information for everyday life

felt it was so helpful to me

given me a new start for me as a stronger and capable person who can cope with life again

has enabled me to help myself and taught me the way I want to do things in the future

has made me feel more positive about life and myself

highly useful and good to meet others with similar problems

huge impact I feel much more in control

I am much more able to help myself after this course

I am much more aware of how to deal with day to day problems it has helped me a lot

I believe it will improve things for me

I enjoyed the course and it made me think about myself and how I can cope better with my depression

I felt so relaxed after this course

I found everything very helpful and know it will make a difference

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience

improved mood and stress management

it has given me more awareness of low mood and how to combat negative thoughts and understand thoughts

liked all the topics that were covered this has helped me alot

looking forward to seeing what the future brings with my new attitude and approach to life

made such a difference to me

more confidence in work

more confident and don't feel alone

my thinking has changed about myself

positive for my thinking styles

positive impact

realising my thoughts cause my feelings I can now control my feelings and make myself feel better

really enjoyed this and look forward to the future now

the course helped me develop skills to cope with depression and understand how I feel which I really will help me sort out a lot of problems

the temper session, now I will take 5 mins and re address the situation at work differently

this course has been a turning point for me and I hope to build on it further

this course has changed my life and made a big difference to how I feel and think

this will change my life

time will tell but I believe this is going to make a big difference to me

will see this course as a new beginning

5.0 Six week follow up session

Evaluation information for the 6 week follow up session is available for 5 of the 22 groups. Chris Williams' follow up questionnaire was used at this session but GHQ scores are available for one group. Future reunion sessions will have participants complete the GHQ12 and the Chris Williams questionnaire together.

Based on the evaluation information available at this point, comparisons between participant's knowledge and understanding of low mood and stress at the last session and six weeks later at the reunion session revealed no statistically significant differences. This finding suggests participant's knowledge and understanding did not diminish significantly over this time period and the information and skills gained in the Living Life to the Full Programme were retained.

GHQ scores were only available for one group so comparisons could not be generalized to the larger sample group. Results for this group did reveal a similar pattern of GHQ scores at the reunion session to the last session.

5.1 Feedback on course content and resource materials

Participants were asked on the questionnaire about how useful they found each booklet and if they used them in their own life. The table below suggests that participants reported to have read their booklets since leaving the course and found them very useful in their everyday life.

Table 3: Participants reports of reading their booklets and the utility of these booklets

	Have you read the booklet?	Have you found this session useful in your own life?
'Why do I feel so bad?' since the course?	73.7	94.7
'I can't be bothered doing anything' since the course?	94.7	100
'Why does everything always go wrong? since the session	73.7	100
'I'm not good enough' since the course?	75.0	100
'How to fix almost everything' since the course?	78.9	100
'Are you strong enough to keep your temper?' since the course?	75.0	84.2
'10 things you can do to feel happier straight away' useful in your own life?	80.0	94.7

Further open ended feedback about the impact of the programme was given at the end of the questionnaire. The comments provided are summarized below;

A very positive impact and an important learning experience which is helping to make small changes

Beneficial in terms of improving my understanding and providing practical steps to take

Completely changed my life for the better

Helped me to unlock and explore feelings and bounce back quicker when I feel low

I am trying to overcome panic attacks and have been cutting down on tablets I have been taking

It changed how I dealt with situations and have stuck with the information given and been using it

It has helped me immensely and day to day I am coping a lot better

It made me view things that were getting me down in a different light

6.0 Conclusion

The findings of this evaluation for all groups combined suggest that their experience of low mood and stress has significantly decreased by attending the LLTTF course at Aware Defeat Depression. This is supported both by the Chris Williams Questionnaires and by the statistically significant shift in GHQ scores by the end of the programme.

Participants reported a significant improvement in their knowledge of low mood and stress and indicated that they were more aware of how to overcome unhelpful behaviours that impacted on their low mood. Personal stories about changes in their lives during and after the programme further support the evaluation findings that the Living Life to the Full Programme has had a positive impact on symptoms of mild to moderate depression in the target groups and in other non target groups.