

09.12.24

Dear Miranda,

We are extremely grateful to all at the Beer-Harris Memorial Trust for the grant towards our 20-week group in Bristol. Please find below some information, as requested, on the work that was enabled by the Trust's input.

Brief history of the charity

Soundwell was founded in 2000 after expressed demand for a community-based music therapy service for adult mental health recovery. Strong links were made with community mental health teams and 3rd sector mental health support organisations, who referred people into a weekly music therapy group. Since then, Soundwell has grown from strength to strength and now operates a menu of services, for adult mental health recovery and also carers wellbeing, in Bristol and Bath.

Details of project supported by BHMT grant

We worked with 11 people to enable them to attend and engage in their initial meeting/assessment- with a support worker or family member if necessary. We agreed with them which Soundwell session would best suit their needs and prepared them for this. In the majority of cases, it was the 20-week group, but for some, it was a singing, monthly open or online group, or in 2 cases, 1-1 was more suitable. If Soundwell wasn't suitable after this, we signposted on to other services, as appropriate. The 20-week group ran from January 2024, finishing mid-July, 2024. Signposting after the group to other opportunities in the community was important. 11 people directly benefited from this activity.

Areas of mental health addressed and profile of the recipients

People with a wide range of need accessed this group. Everyone was very isolated and were managing distress and various incidences of historical trauma and bereavement. Diagnoses included severe depression, features of dissociation, anxiety, mood disorder and historic psychosis. There were a range of additional needs, e.g. physical disability & illness, autism, caring responsibility, mild learning difficulty, agoraphobia.

Impact of the project

Of the 5 people who then joined the 20-week group, 100% reported improved wellbeing, 100% experienced reduced isolation and 87% demonstrated increased interpersonal skills. Examples of improved wellbeing include improved mood during and for some time after attending sessions. Improved mood led to, in one person, increased motivation and confidence in establishing a support group themselves. One person particularly was able to be extremely expressive using the instruments, improvising with others, which he felt to be crucial in releasing feelings of frustration, anger and loss. This release and catharsis, which was appropriate in the context of being in a group, led to more personal disclosures from others and an intimacy in the group that supported the outcomes of reduced social isolation and increased interpersonal skills.

All were able to explore, prompted by the music, some very personal issues, that others could relate to and were supportive of. Often, dynamics and relationships within the members' families were discussed and support or tools for managing situations of conflict were suggested around this. We would hope that for some, their family lives might become a little easier. As often happens in groups, our clients realised, some for the first time, that they weren't alone in their situation, which helped eased feelings of isolation and also improved interpersonal skills.

We are sorry that we are not able to send photos of the group itself but have attached a photo of staff playing the instruments, and our impact report for your viewing too. We do hope that this will suffice but please do be in touch if you would like any further information.



Kind regards,

Em and Zoe- Co-Directors of Soundwell

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