

Building Resilience in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People Through Drumming, Relationships and Sailing

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Solace
Partnerships

Welcome

We want people to participate but please use the 'raise hand' facility to ask questions and contribute when others are talking.

Please be considerate to others - together we want to create a safe, open and reflective space to learn.

You can turn on live captions on by clicking on the 3 dots at the top of your screen if you need this.

The link to the feedback form will be put in the chat.

Please do take the time to complete it after the session.

Thank you!



Aims & Objectives

Aim: To explore the impact of positive activities drumming and sailing

- Explore what we mean by resilience within the context experienced by unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people
- Consider desired outcomes and impact on young people
- Seek to understand and listen to participants' subjective experiences of activities – informing ongoing work



What do we mean by resilience?

A term or measure used to describes the capacity to adapt to stressors and recover from adversity. (BPS)

To maintain psychological wellbeing in the face of adversity.

What does this mean for this group of young people?

The young people have suffered significant harm often in their own country and on their journeys.

They are the ones that survived.

The struggle continues in the UK with asylum processes, substantive Home Office interviews and needing to evidence their persecution and lack of state protection.

“If you’re going through hell, keep going”

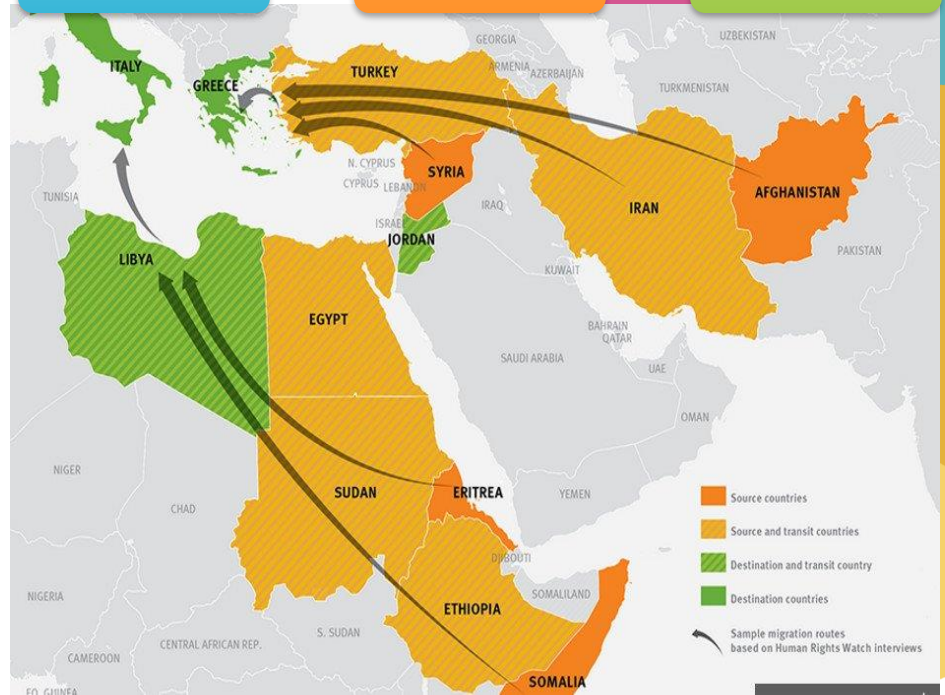
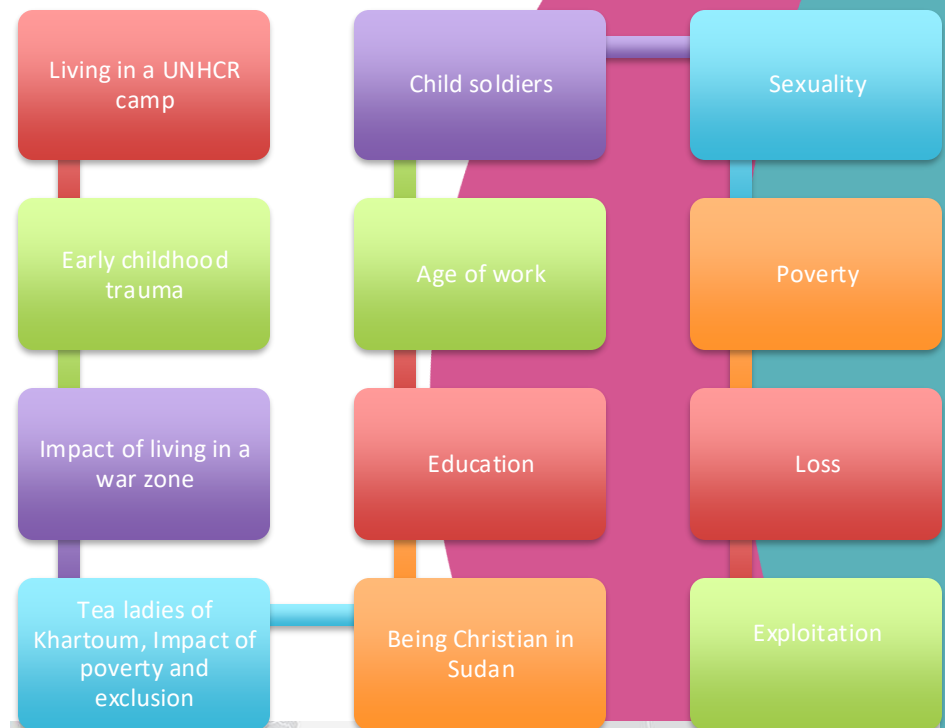
- Winston Churchill

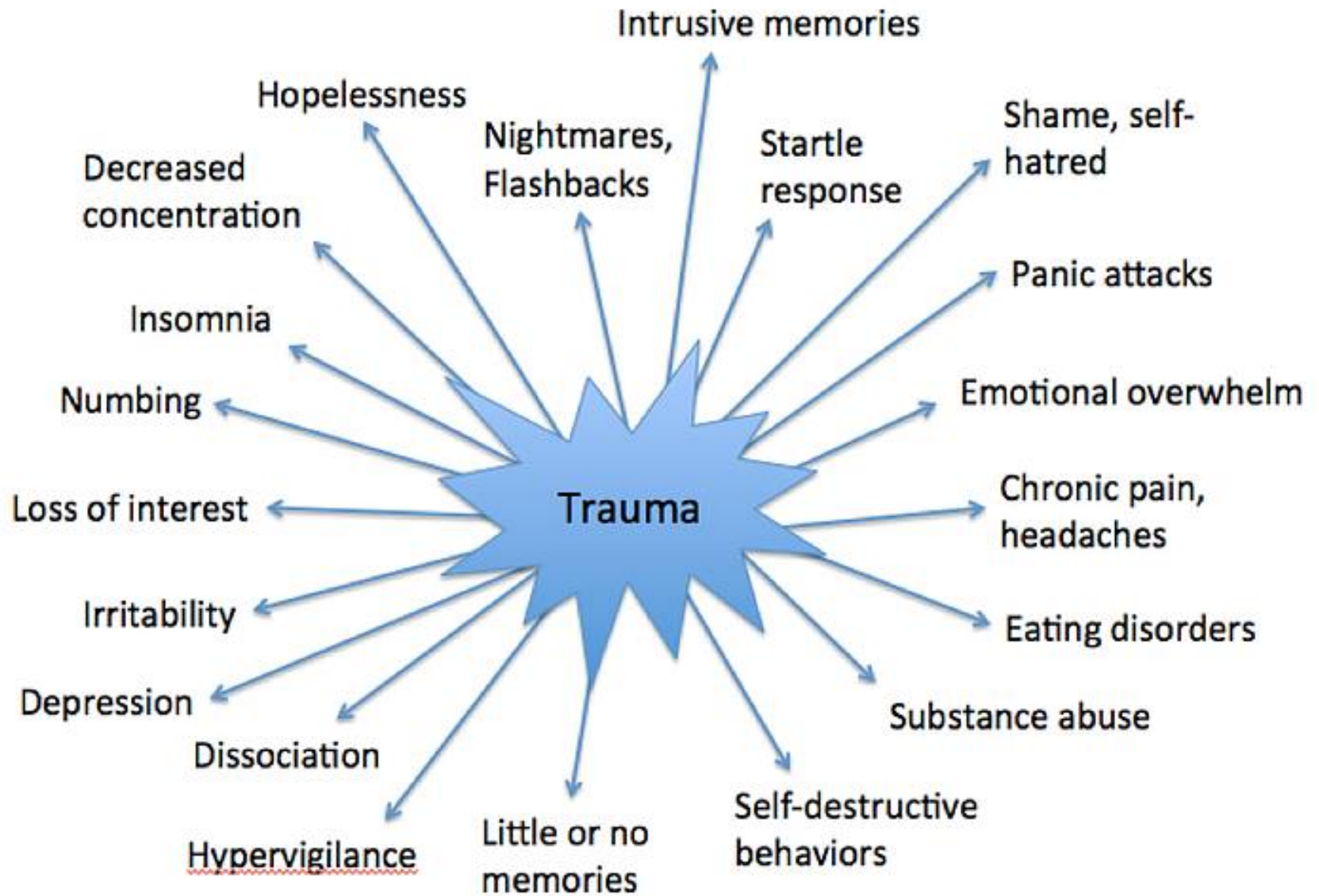


A brief explanation

First of all, they are a child or a young person first!

They have the same needs, dreams and abilities just as any other young person, with a differing range of experiences.





Adapted from Janina Fisher

Our Projects – Intentions for Resilience

We will introduce some young people who have benefited from these projects. We have consent and the young people look forward to sharing their stories.

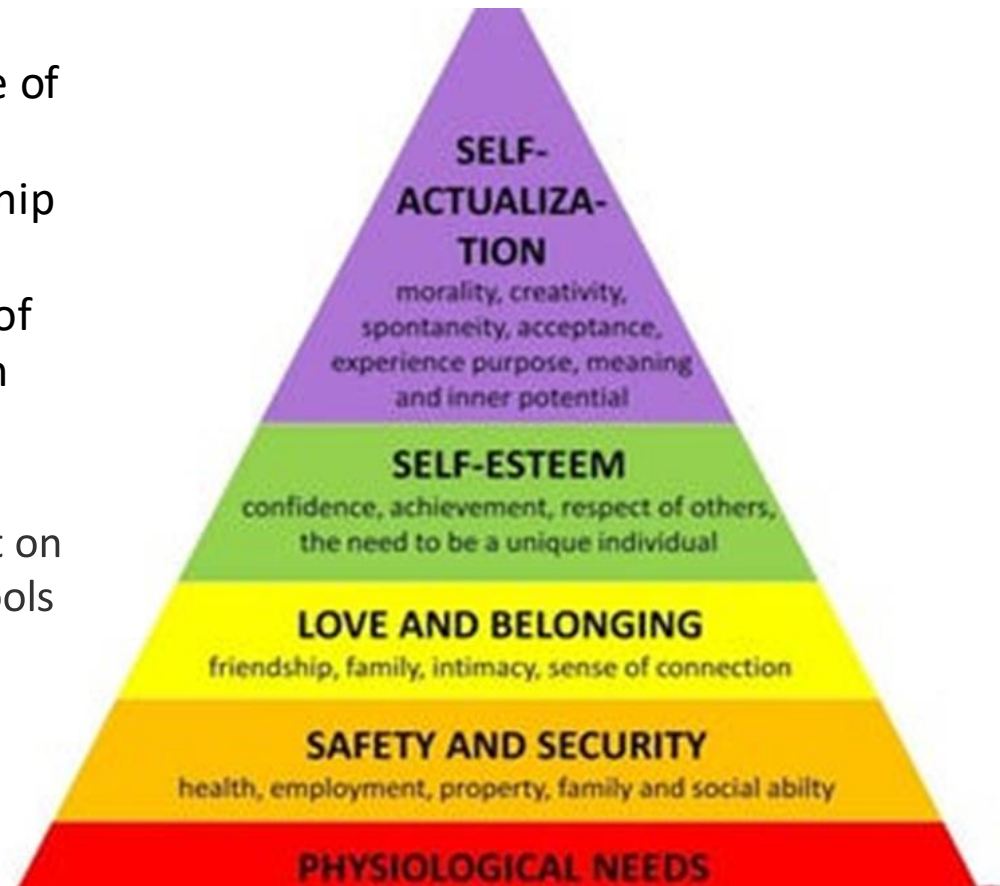
"Some are born here,
some are drawn here but
we all call it home"
Mahmoud



Differentials between early adversity, trauma and attachment contrasted with separation, loss and uncertainty

The importance of creating a sense of safety, security, welcome and belonging, community and friendship and the impact this has on self-esteem, worth, confidence, sense of achievement, acceptance, problem solving and creativity/expression

We wanted to have a positive impact on these factors, build teamwork and tools for emotional regulation.



It is not just drumming and sailing!

- The importance of our investment as practitioners
- Elements for success include: planning, commitment and consistency, organisation and structure, staff training, interpretation, inclusion, lots of fun and dynamic practice!





Resilience Through Drumming Intentions:

- Safety
 - Welcome
 - Belonging
 - Celebration of Culture and Home Lands
- Teamwork
- Connection
 - Through food and communal dining
 - Shared experiences
 - Play
- Impact on self-esteem; community; confidence, achievement, creativity

Rationale



- Drumming provides a physical, rhythmic outlet for emotions and stress
- Is accessible - Does not need experience or skill at the start
- In itself is a therapeutic activity
- Group drumming fosters teamwork, communication, and trust
- Research shows music interventions improve mood, confidence, and resilience
- Using an artist from a country of origin amplifies connection, community and celebration
- Continued input develops skill, confidence and self-esteem
- Tools for emotional



Outcomes

'The whole is greater than the sum of the parts'

- Achieved intended outcomes

Unintentional outcomes:

- A singer
- A conductor
- Self-led groups
- Peer to Peer support
 - Across housing groups
 - Older to younger
- A tool used during difficult times
- Energy and joy!



- Drumming is a low-barrier, inclusive intervention
- Promotes psychosocial wellbeing and trauma recovery
- Enhances engagement in wider social activities
- Complements social work, education, and therapy support

Interview with Hashim

"when I'm drumming with the voice, it's feeling good, changing my mood"

"Is very good relationship. Yes, we like brothers, yes, that's why I'm so happy to share with them"

"When some of my friends come to my house, we don't have anything to do. Yeah, so we just drumming and singing in my house and like a little party. Nice"

"I feel more confident, but we respect each other, and that's why they let me to lead them"

"...more confident we are good, really good, actually. They know how to drum, they are more confident than last year"

"I guess they told me that when they told me to sing in mic, I was very, like, very afraid, or scared, nervous. Yeah, nervous, little nervous, when, I'm just a starter. Now I'm feeling more confident, and then just I found myself I do it very nice. It was brilliant"

"... Yes, food is making everyone close and yeah, very good, and it fills our bellies ready for drumming"

"we are like brothers, everyone feeling happy and making, making nice, made in nice mood, and we just enjoyed it"



Conclusion

- Drumming is a promising tool for ongoing developmental work
- Provides a safe space for developing aspects that build resilience
- Clear evidenced development of community, connection, self-esteem, confidence, skill and creativity (self-expression)
- Further research needed to explore long-term impact and scalability





Does sport, in particular sailing, have an impact on a young person in care's character?

- Authors: Morven Goff, Mia McKean & Andrew Goff
- Affiliation: Norfolk Children Services and Solace Partnerships.
- Partner: Canterbury Christ Church University





Background and Rationale

- 78,150 children in care in England (Baginsky et al., 2017) 83.630 2024.
- Only 6% of care leavers attend university (Gypen et al., 2017)
- Young people in care often face limited access to positive activities
- Aim: Explore whether sailing impacts character and wellbeing
- Sport supports physical and mental wellbeing
- Marginalised groups often excluded from sports (Quarmby, 2018)
- Research shows sport can develop character and re-engage youth (Sandford & Duncombe, 2011)
- Sailing offers opportunities for challenge, independence, teamwork



Method

- Participants: 20 UASC, aged 16–18, in supported accommodation
- Design: 6 week programme of learning to sail. Followed by national schools regatta
- Measures: Pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, observational notes, reflective journals
- Facilitators: Psychology student MSC Clinical Practice for research and Social Worker for on water activity (Dinghy Instructor)

A photograph of two young men on a sailboat. The man in the foreground is smiling and making a peace sign. He is wearing a red jacket and a black life vest. The man in the background is also smiling and holding a smartphone. He is wearing a pink jacket and a black life vest. The background shows the mast and rigging of the sailboat against a blue sky.

Research Focus

Character attributes studied
(RYA & Bill Lucas):

- Creativity
- Confidence
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Determination
- Independence
- Performance

Results – Overall Trends

- Happiness: Increased across all groups
- Confidence: 75–100% felt more confident by end of week
- Independence: Growth in ability to work and act alone
- Teamwork: 70–100% improved ability to collaborate
- Determination: Clear improvement in motivation and resilience





Example Findings

- One participant began week withdrawn and unhappy (rated 1/10 on happiness)
 - End of week: reported enjoying sailing and feeling more confident
 - Shows structured sport can improve emotional wellbeing

"The last time I was in a boat I had a broken leg and I couldn't swim..."

"I can't remember the last time I just played in the water"



Conclusion

- Sailing positively impacted young people in care
- Improved happiness, confidence, teamwork, independence
- With structured support, young people in care can thrive
- Programme offered life skills and emotional growth

Sailing builds confidence, independence, communication

- Aligns with Lucas (2017) and RYA research on 'character through sailing'
- Confirms sport's power to re-engage and empower marginalised youth
- Importance of access and opportunity for young people in care



Plymouth July 2021

- 450 young people from all over UK competing in National Schools Regatta



2022 Draycote

- First time we won the Rookie fleet
- 22 young people from Norfolk
- Outcomes the young people overwhelmingly said a sense of purpose and belonging

Solace at Draycote outcomes

- 6 young people for 5 days sailing at Draycote
- After only 6 lessons they came 4th 7th 9th 11th 14th and 21st in the rookie fleet
- Impressed the Royal Yachting Association with their skills on and off the water
- They didn't know it but educated other people about refugees by their enthusiasm and skills.
- Learned how to race in tough weather conditions in a big fleet
- Made friends with young people from all over the country
- Won the arm wrestling, football and frisby throwing
- Have been invited to sail a Tall Ship
- RYA are keen to continue their involvement
- Enjoyed playing which they sometimes find hard



Relational trauma requires relational
repair”
Dr Karen Triesman

- **Empathy fuels connection, sympathy drives disconnection**
- Brene Brown
- An empathic response will not try to provide solutions, but involves the ability to *feel with someone else*.



Quote of week

After hearing the English young people moaning about the pasta bake

We are not hungry or thirsty here why are they not happy Mr. Andy.

I need to swap boats with Adil his is faster

My boat broke so I used my leg (used his long leg to push to sail out)

Can we come back next year

We have competed every year since winning the Rookie fleet 3 years on the trot.





Coming to shore downwind at speed

Gaining confidence reducing
that fear of failure.

When we see our young people
flourish and grow.

**"Being able to feel safe with other people is
probably the single most important aspect of
mental health; safe connections are
fundamental to meaningful and satisfying
lives,"**

Conclusion and final thoughts

- When planning support – let the group dictate what is needed
- Young people's voices at the heart of delivery
- Practitioner participation is crucial – in it with them
- Be clear about what your intended outcomes are – what are we collectively developing and building on?
- Ask critical questions – Appropriateness? Impact? Development?
- Be prepared for changes, learning as you go and investment!



It is worth it!

**Please provide
some feedback**

