The Place2Be

Integrated school-based counselling services that help children grow up with prospects, not problems

The need
Today’s school children face all kinds of challenges that can throw them off course, from gang culture on the streets to abuse at home. Unless they are given the means to cope, their feelings of sadness, fear and anger can easily spill over in the classroom – and in society. Poor behaviour, truancy, low academic achievement, exclusion, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, involvement in crime; these can all be the consequence of leaving children’s problems unaddressed. Over 90% of young offenders had a mental health problem as a child.

What we do
By giving children the chance to explore their problems through talking, creative work and play, we enable them to cope now and make better-informed decisions about their lives and help prevent more serious mental health and behavioural problems in later life. When children are happier and less preoccupied with problems, they find it easier to learn and so their educational chances are much enhanced.

The Place2Be is working with 172 primary and secondary schools across the UK, supporting 58,000 children up to the age of 13, often in areas of great deprivation. Services are available to children coping with a range of complex problems such as bereavement, family breakdown, alcohol and drug misuse, domestic violence, physical and emotional abuse, trauma and bullying.

Making a difference
Evidence shows that children using The Place2Be have enhanced self-esteem, better communication skills and the ability to develop more fruitful relationships. Place2Be schools also show significant improvements, such as less disruption in class, better grades, higher attendance rates and fewer exclusions – all of which have a positive impact on staff morale and retention.

Distinctive service model
- A wide range of interventions, including universal, targeted, individual and group work, to meet children’s and families’ needs
- Engagement with a range of stakeholders in working towards the shared goal of improving children’s mental health and providing support to parents and carers
- Embedded in the school system and integrated into the day-to-day life of each school, its staff and pupils

Key Benefits
- Improved mental health and wellbeing of children and young people
- Children aged 4-13 years are better able and prepared to learn, resulting in increased prospects and enhanced aspirations
- Parents more engaged with their child’s school and better prepared to support their child’s needs
- Improved staff welfare and morale
- More emotionally literate and caring school culture
- Increased capacity of local communities to support children’s emotional wellbeing through greater access to training and Tier 2 mental health services
- Improve accessibility to range of on-site services for children, parents, and school staff.

Cost-saving to society
For every £1 invested in The Place2Be, there is a £6 cost-saving to society.

If we save just one child from exclusion in each Place2Be school we save society over £9 million a year. (Misspent Youth Report, New Philanthropy Capital, 2007)

For more information, please request a copy of Cost Effective Positive Outcomes for Children and Families: An economic Analysis of The Place2Be’s integrated school-based services for children. September 2010.

Training and support
The Place2Be offers a number of training programmes developed from practical experience over the last 16 years. The trainings are designed to build local capacity, enhance emotional literacy, develop skills and initiate lasting change in the whole school community.

For all school based staff
- Training in basic counselling and communication skills
- Training to develop greater understanding of the causes of children’s difficulties and strategies to address them

For individuals wishing to specialise in counselling
- A Professional Qualifications programme from Introductory Course to Postgraduate Diploma and Masters in Counselling Children in Schools (validated by OCN and the University of East London)
The Place2Be in Cardiff

The Cardiff schools
- Glan-Yr-Afon Primary School, Llanrumney
- Grangetown Primary School, Grangetown
- Herbert Thompson Primary School, Ely
- Moorland Primary School, Splott
- Ninian Park Primary School, Grangetown
- Windsor Clive Primary School, Ely

The six Cardiff schools have a combined school population of over 2,000 pupils.

Each week 100 children receive one-to-one support.

In the hub’s first year, 785 children accessed The Place2Talk; our self-referral.

The story of The Place2Be in Cardiff began in 2005, when six primary school Head teachers realised that there was a need to provide counselling support for the children in their schools. After an extensive research, they selected The Place2Be with its whole-school approach. They persevered for over four years and were finally granted the much-needed match funding by Cardiff City Council and the Welsh Assembly Government as one of four primary pilots in the national School Based Counselling Programme.

The Cardiff Place2Be Hub was officially launched in April 2009. Each hub school now has a specialist on-site team of paid professionals and trained volunteer counsellors who deliver a range of services for children and their families. This integrated, tiered approach includes group and one-to-one counselling, advice and support for parents and support for teachers and school staff and is available on site for up to three days a week in each school.

In 2008 the Welsh Assembly Government announced its national school based counselling strategy to support the health, emotional and social needs of pupils and lead to a healthy school culture. The key aim of the programme was to set out a plan to develop school-based counselling services - that are independent, safe, accessible and of a high standard for all children and young people across Wales.