

GAMH Young Carers Intergenerational Collaboration

Young Carers Project and Later Life Matters (both Big Lottery funded projects) through consultation and discussion agreed that both projects would benefit and learn from sharing each other's experiences, knowledge and strengths. With additional funding from JMA Trust, a number of workshops were held with a local playwright to write short stories about the experiences of both young carers and older people. As a result of this initiative an Intergeneration Book of Memories and Stories was produced and is available on request from the project.

One of the young carers went on to share her personal story with others in the group.

Young Carers Story (Holly, age 12)

In life people leave, people stay.

If they leave they either go for a bit or leave forever. Everybody once.

In life people are down, depressed, left out or gets anxiety or loses someone close to them.

I know the feeling but you can't explain it. It's a feeling you are feeling but you don't know what it is. Or it could be like the world is ending but you have got this hope inside of you that you will get through it.

You've got to force the hope out of yourself. But you can't forget to smile. Sometimes in life you try to smile but you can't so you give up. Don't give up. Giving up doesn't always mean 'giving up'. Sometimes it simply means you are strong enough and smart to let go. Smiling doesn't always mean you are happy, but it's a different story. It could be completely different.

Crying isn't bad. Sometimes you hold it in too long and you burst. It's okay to cry. Bullying could mean a lots of things. One single person could say something or do something to make you feel less powerful over yourself. They can be jealous of you, or they want to be like you, or could be brought up to be a bad person. But one thing you always need to know is that you're you, - your own hero and you have the power over yourself but no one else.

Never ever forget to be happy, the word itself means, - is accepting where you are in life and making the most of it. Being happy doesn't always mean everything is perfect, it means you've decided to look beyond the imperfection.

All you have to do is smile, be happy, be your own hero, designing your own garden, decorate your own tree, play your own music. If there was 1 million sad faces, be the one to make them smile and you yourself don't hide your face, be who you are. Be who you want to be.

The playwright went to support the participants to create short drama pieces from the extracts of the booklet. The booklets and drama were showcased at an Intergenerational Event on 21.9.16 attended by young carers and later life participants from across the city, their friends and family.

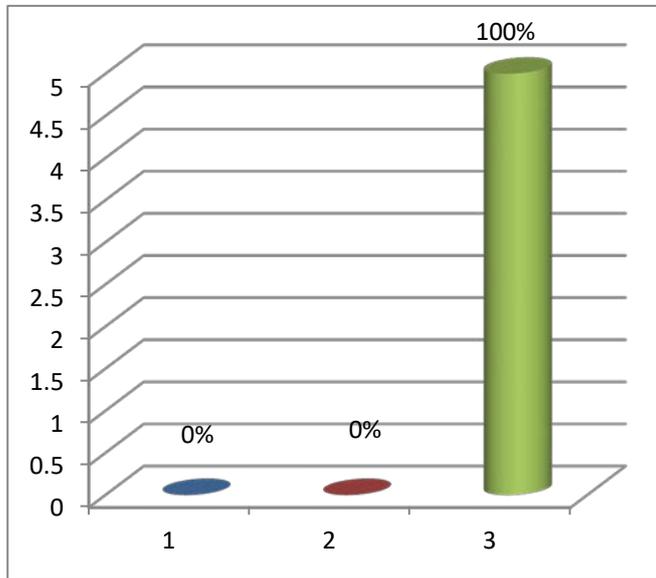
The booklets were further exhibited during the Moving Minds Exhibition as part of the Mental Health Arts and Film Festival at Kelvingrove Art Gallery on 15.10.16 as part of Scottish Mental Health Awareness Week.



Young Carers Post Programme Evaluation

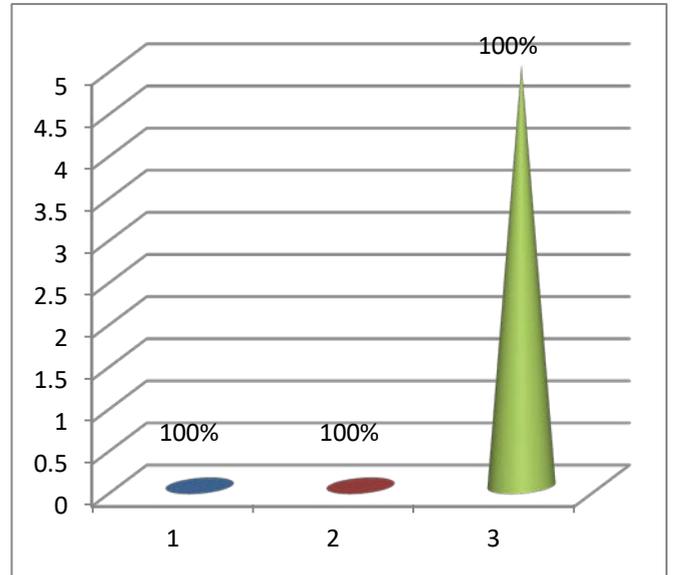
Question 1

Having done the programme please rate your understanding of older people in relation to mental issues.



Question 2

Having done the programme please rate your understanding of coping strategies used by health older people in relation to mental health issues



There was a 100% improvement in understanding for both categories.

Question 3

What are your thoughts about doing the joint project? Responses were as follows:

Excellent

Interesting to hear their stories. Talking our loud was fun.

I enjoyed finding out about older people's lives

I loved it!!!

I felt it was very useful and interesting to find out what life was like years ago.

I got a better understanding of older people too and what they are actually like

Enjoyed company of older people and their stories

I would enjoy to do this again comparing stories was good

I love seeing the perspective of anyone older as they have more experiences

Feedback from playwright:

The intergenerational project was a fascinating, rewarding project. There are real contrasts in the two groups; - some of the older participants had mobility issues, while the young participants wanted to run around. However when the young people paired up with mature participants, they really grew to respect and talk to each other. They shared stories together, and wrote them down, and then got the writing printed. Participants grew in confidence in terms of speaking up, expressing themselves and working as a group. Performing their own writing was even more of a challenge. Maturer participants had strong voices, full of years of life experience. The youngsters had lots of energy, but had to learn about volume, projection and consistency. Performing to an audience of peers made them feel strong. They received lots of positive feedback about their writing and performing. As soon as we finished performing the short sharing, the young participants instantly asked "When are we doing it again?"