

EVALUATION OF APPLIED DRAMA PROGRAMME FOR TEENS IN FOSTER CARE



Presenter:

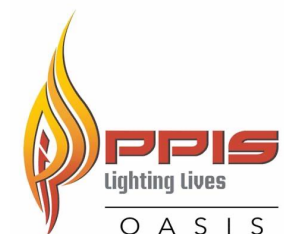
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Outline

1. About PPIS Oasis
2. Applied Drama Programme
3. Evaluation Tools
4. Findings
5. Limitations
6. Recommendations
7. Conclusion

About PPIS Oasis

- PPIS Oasis Centre for Fostering was started in 2017 to meet the needs of children in foster care
- Children are in out-of-home care due to abuse, neglect and abandonment
- Currently PPIS Oasis provides case management, counselling and other therapeutic services to 152 foster and kinship care children

Introduction

1. Children in foster care often have experiences of abuse and neglect leading to multiple traumas (Fostering Perspectives, 2005) and increased risk for emotional and behavioral issues (Beyerlein & Block, 2014)
2. Counseling sessions may not sufficiently address trauma or PTSD due to their verbal nature and sessions usually focus on the adjustment at foster care or school related issues
3. Foster children may also struggle to articulate their experiences verbally, necessitating non-verbal interventions for expression
4. PPIS has utilised art and play therapy since 2021 to offer foster children a safe space to express their thoughts and feelings

Introduction (Con't)

5. Non-verbal forms of therapy are highly effective in empowering foster children to emotionally regulate themselves and build psychological resilience (Malchiodi, 2015)
6. Applied drama programmes have been effective in allowing children/teens to express themselves and to build social skills (Gresham and Elliott, 2008)
7. “Dramatic reality opens a play space that brings together both the real and the imaginary, allowing for the act of creation and use of imagination to solve problems and reflect. There are no external limitations of using dramatic reality, the flexibility of the activities makes it well suited for therapeutic intervention.” (Gallant, 2023)



Applied Drama Programme

1. Social workers collaborated with Theatre Practitioner Mr Adib Kosnan and University of the Arts Singapore Academic, Dr Edmond Chow to plan the sessions and devise a custom matrix for programme evaluation
2. In June 2023, 4 sessions of group applied theatre focusing on resilience and self esteem and 1 bonding activity were implemented
3. 10 foster teens (FT) aged 13-17 years old
4. Duration in foster care between 4-10 years



Session Outline

Session	Objectives	Activities
Session 1: What is Devising?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the fundamentals of theatre and devising• Establishing ground rules• Using images to tell a story and creating new stories from combining images	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction and ground rules• Word Association (Group Activity)• Creating Structures• Sculpting Images• Reflection and debrief
Session 2: Tableaus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With prompts from the instructor, students will work together using non-verbal communication to physically form images in various shapes (i.e. either a bird's eye view or from the front)• Every team member must be involved in each tableau	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warm-up - Silent Shapes• Small Group Tableau - Our Stories (1st Phase of Presentation)• Reflection and debrief
Session 3: Refine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The small groups will be given time to recap what they have created so far and add on a new short action scene that should be around 2 to 3 minutes long• In the course of each small group action scene presentation, the class will work together to dig deeper into the desires and motivations of each person's chosen character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warm-up Drama Games• Recap - Rehearsing a short scene• Who's In Your Head?• Rehearsal - Our Stories (2nd Phase)• Reflection and Debrief
Session 4: Finale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students are given time to make final adjustments before presenting their completed stories to their peers and instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recap and Final Rehearsal for Our Stories• Final Sharing & Debrief

Evaluation Tools

1. Resilience Indicator

- a. Developed by Dr Edmond Chow
- b. Operationalised Resilience as the ability to navigate an experience along 5 distinct levels
 - i. Level 1: Navigating Feeling distressed, out of control, blaming others
 - ii. Level 2: Navigating Self Awareness of Emotions
 - iii. Level 3: Navigating Boundaries and Seeking Support
 - iv. Level 4: Navigating Confidence
 - v. Level 5: Navigating Adversity into goals OR Grit
- c. Indications of dramatic engagement- passive, mid active and fully active

Resilience Indicator

Resilience Indicators Levels of Dramatic Engagement	Level 1: Feeling distressed and out of control, blaming others	Level 2: Having self-awareness (of triggers, needs, emotions)	Level 3: Maintaining support and healthy boundaries	Level 4: Having self-belief/ confidence/ humour	Level 5: Transforming adversity into goals
Simple (Passive to Low Active)	Deny or reject responsibility for feelings, consequences, actions and state in life (Reluctance to participate)	Display (non-verbal) feeling states, needs through the body (Non-verbal)	Display interest in listening to and understanding different points of view (Passive engagement)	Follow instructions; abide by rules (Not self-directed yet; Subservience)	Demonstrate predictability in responses to change (Scripted/ Expected)
Developing (Mid Active)	Demonstrate receptiveness to things and events with intermittent participation in drama/life, but give up easily (Intermittent participation)	Articulate and express deeper feelings using slightly nuanced vocabulary (Verbal)	Collaborate with peers to present meaningful performance; Draw on allies and networks for support (Active engagement, still focused on self)	Demonstrate self-confidence in taking on challenges, sometimes adopting healthy sense of humour (Self-directed)	Adapt to changing circumstances and respond accordingly, versatile in improvisational elements; consider implications of their thinking (Improvisational/ Fresh)
Developed (Fully Active)	Demonstrate maturity towards things outside of their control, and participating fully in all things, drama, events. (Full participation)	Act on complex thinking and interconnected issues around triggers, emotions and needs (Action)	Respect differences, and offer constructive feedback, helping others who need more support (Care towards others)	Adopt a higher sense of purpose, faith, spirituality for life's goals; overcome oppressiveness head-on (Spirituality)	Sustain commitment to roles; confidence to challenge the direction of the work (Leadership)

Evaluation Tools (con't)

2. Focus Group Discussion

- a. Asked questions on participants' experiences, emotions, coping mechanisms, and the effectiveness of the program

3. Pre and Post Survey

- a. Survey questions sought to understand
 - i. how receptive participants would be/were to applied drama as a therapeutic modality, and
 - ii. how participants understood their own sense of self-esteem and resilience

Findings

Resilience Indicator

1. By the end of the 1st session:

- a. Only 60% of participants were at Mid or Fully Active Engagement at Level 2 (self-awareness), 4 (confidence), and 5 (grit)

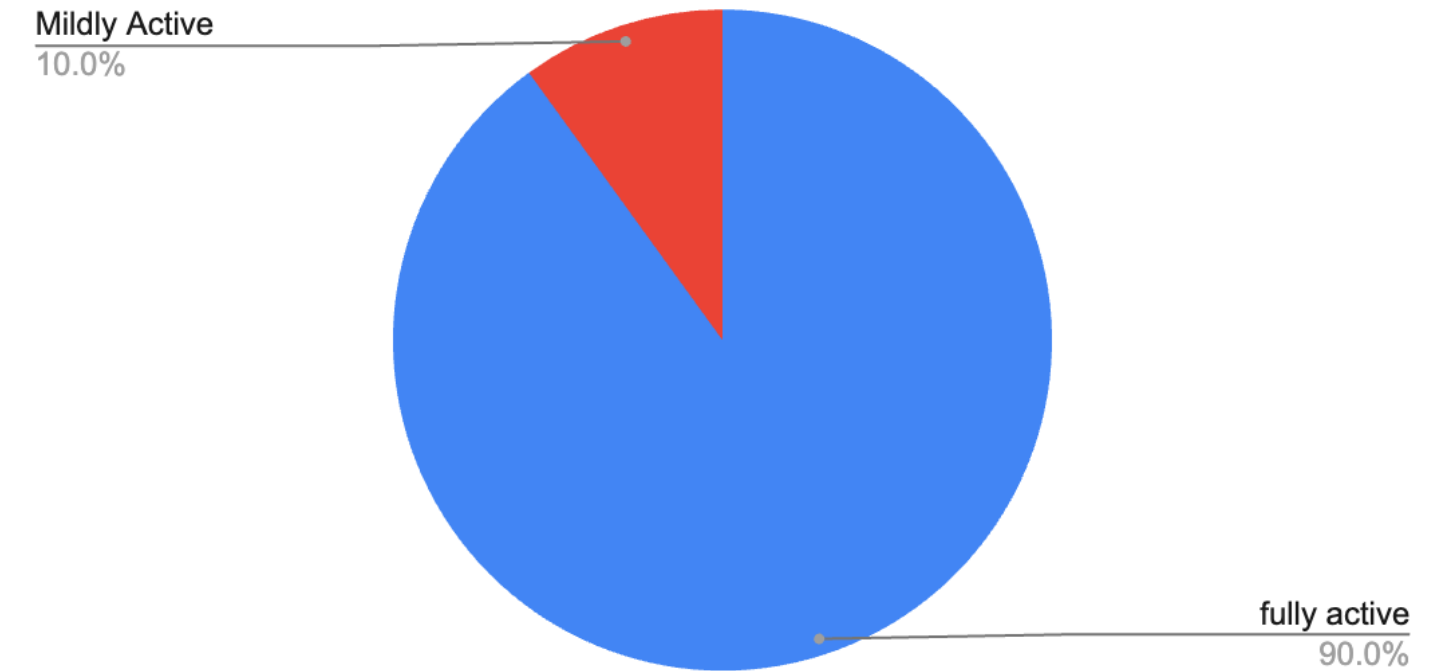
2. By the end of the 3rd session:

- a. The % of participants that were at mid or fully active engagement at level 3 dropped by 20%, but recovered to 100% at mid or fully active engagement by the end of the last session

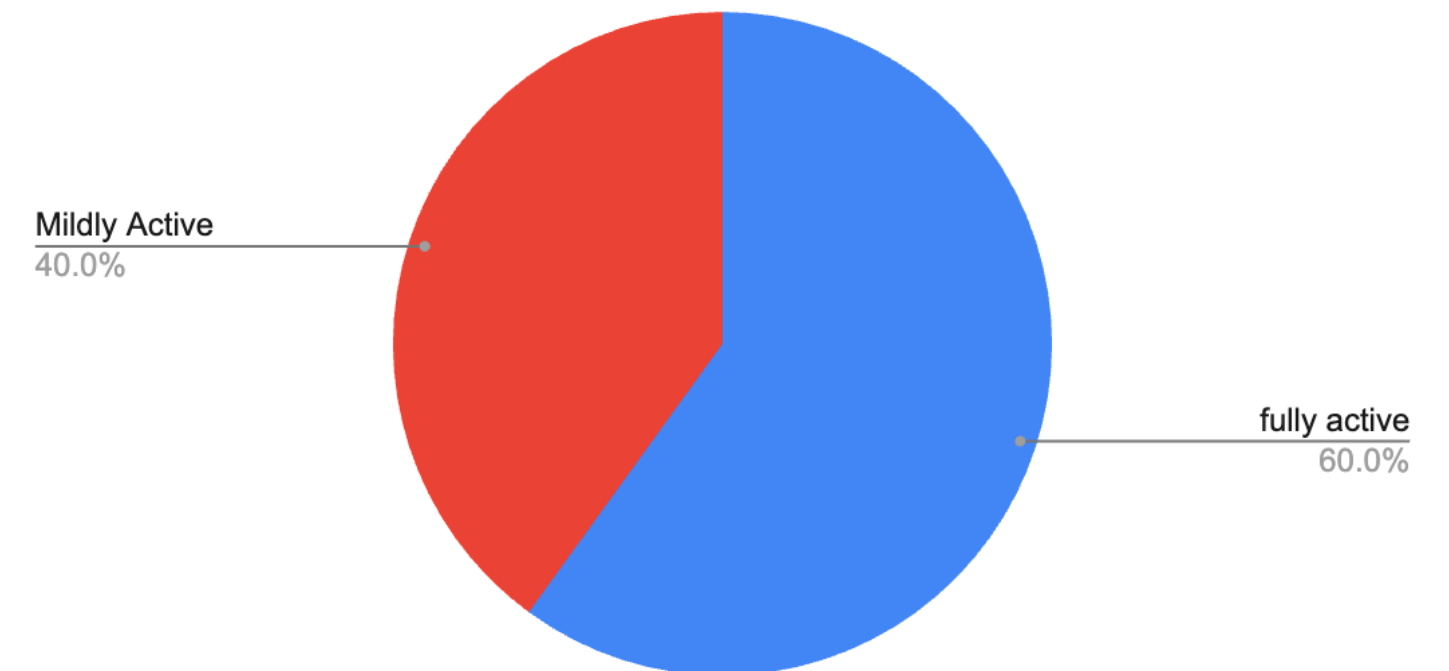
3. By the end of all 4 sessions

- a. All participants reached at least Mid or Fully Active engagement across all 5 levels of resilience

Level 1 Resilience (Enduring Distress) After 4 Sessions



Level 4 Resilience (Confidence) After 4 Sessions



Findings

Group Discussion Core Themes

1. Emotional Expression To Build Resilience

- a. FT Female (13 yrs)- "Find it easier to share my feelings with people here as opposed to friends."
- b. 2 FT (M-14 and F-16) shared that the programme helped them to reflect about their experiences of being bullied and they could identify with the participants

2. Relearning Healthy Boundaries Through “Dramatic Playspace”

- a. FT female (16 yrs) shared that praying helped her to cope
- b. Several participants mentioned that drama helped them to safely explore how they build trust with those around them

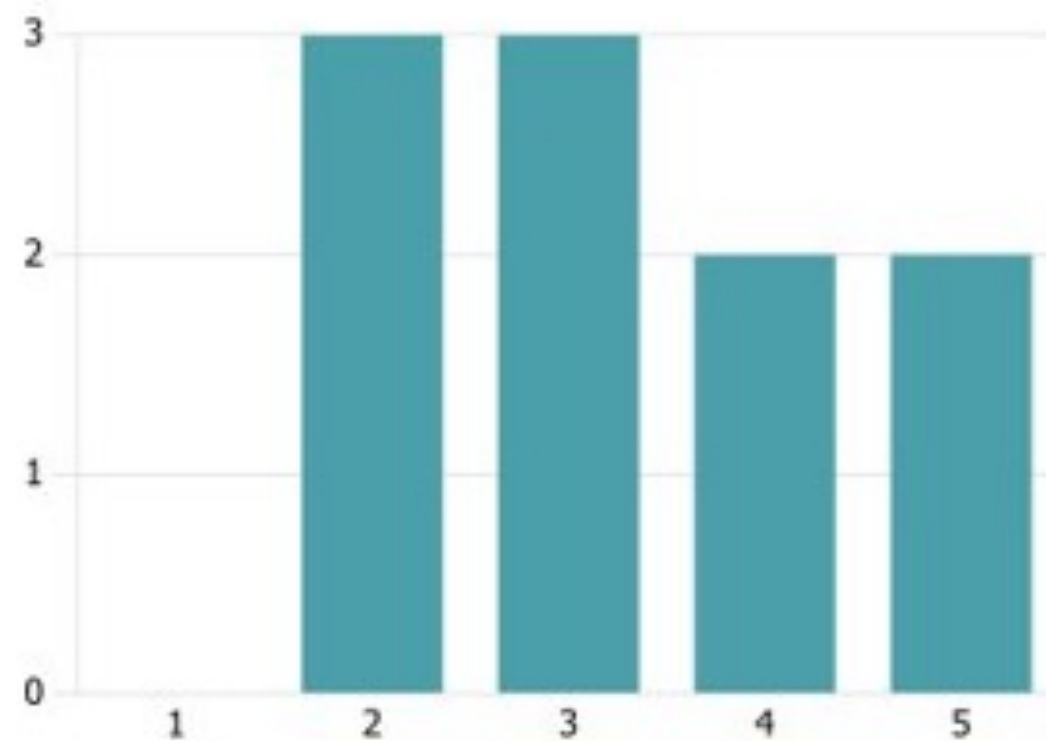
Findings

Pre and Post Surveys

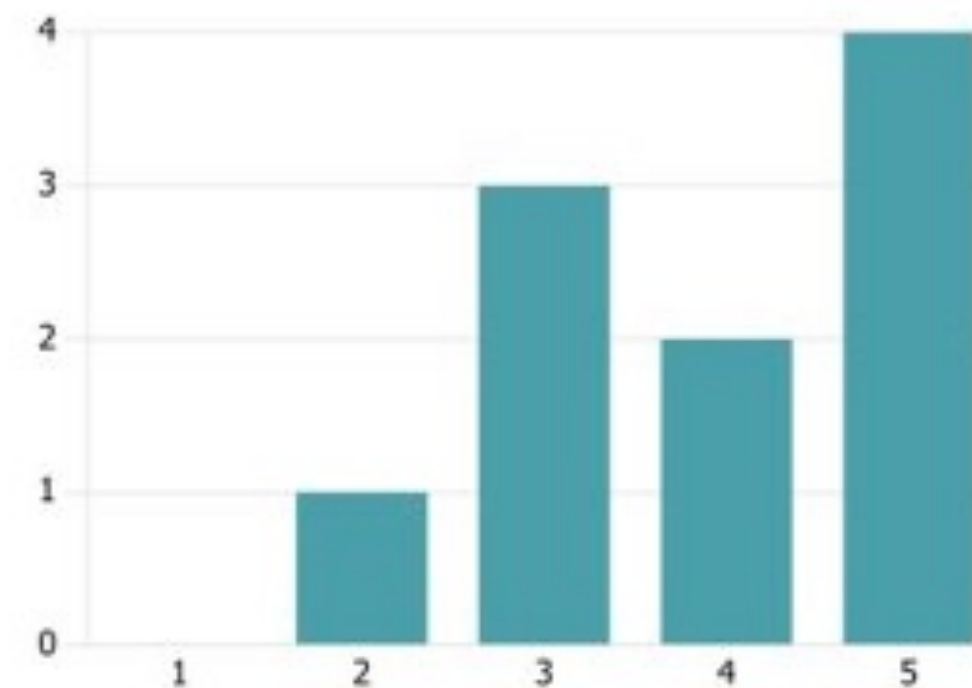
Improved sense of resilience post programme

25. I am able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks.

(1: Fully Disagree - 2: Somewhat Disagree - 3: Not Sure - 4: Somewhat Agree - 5: Fully Agree)



Pre-Programme Average Score: 3.30



Post-Programme Average Score: 3.90

Findings

Pre and Post Surveys

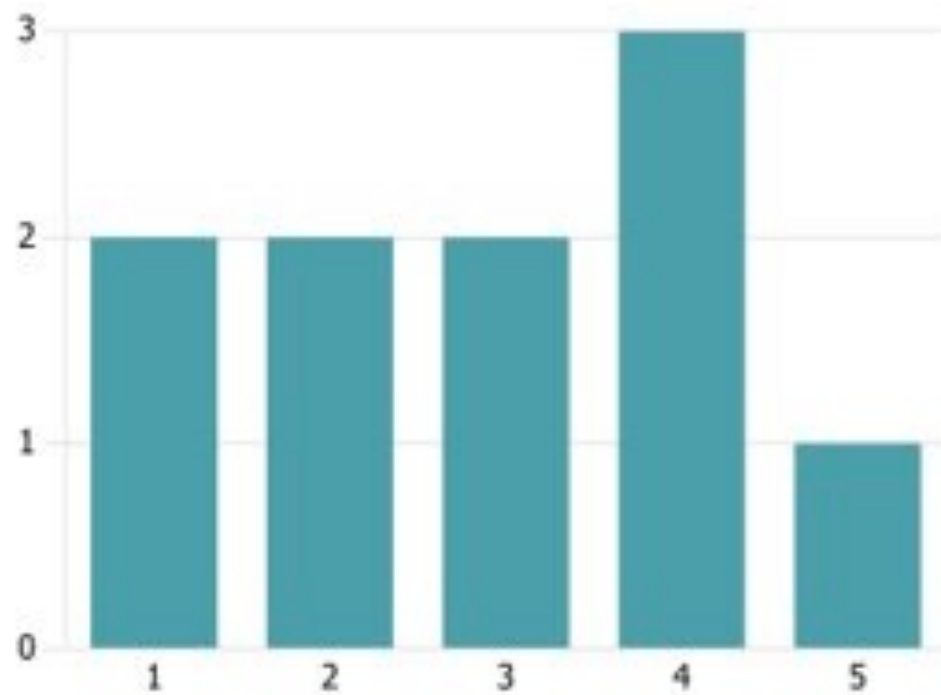
Improved awareness of upsetting emotions

12. I think about why I get upset.

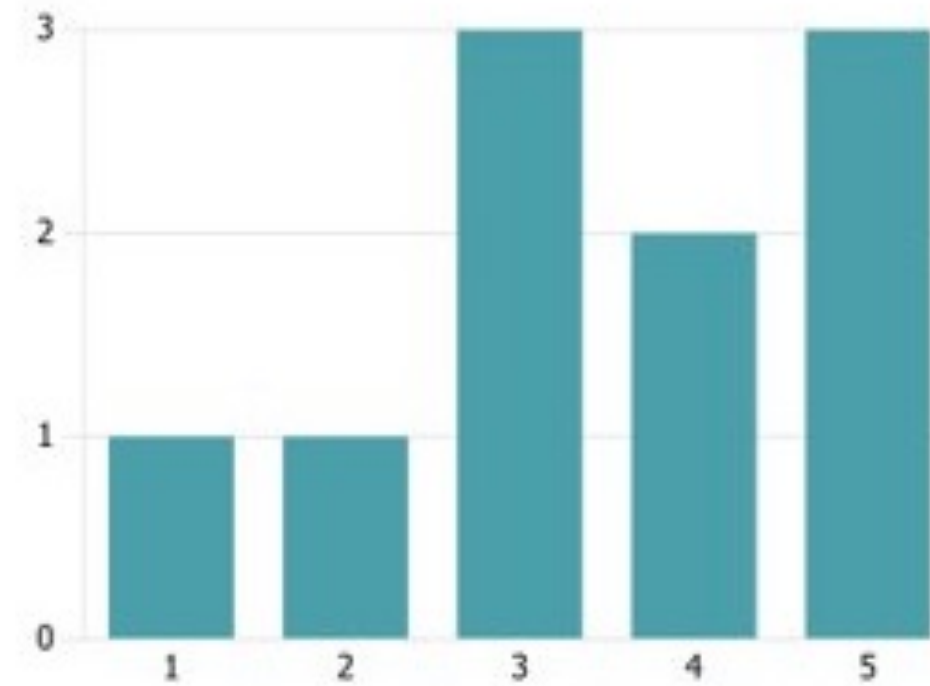
(1: Fully Disagree - 2: Somewhat Disagree - 3: Not Sure - 4: Somewhat Agree - 5: Fully Agree)

[More Details](#)

 Insights



Pre-Programme Average Score: 2.90



Post-Programme Average Score: 3.50

Limitations



Short-Term Evaluation: Focus groups and observations might only capture immediate reactions and changes, not long-term outcomes of the programme



Complexity of Measurement: Measuring the impact of applied drama therapy involves complex variables like emotional and psychological changes, which are difficult to quantify accurately over 4 sessions



Subjectivity and observer bias: Observations can be subjective and may not capture the internal experiences and feelings of the teens

Recommendations



Curate sessions based on the emotional coping mechanisms of foster teens



More training for social workers before they observe and rate the FTs during the programme



Programme design to put stronger emphasis on building healthy boundaries, trusting others and being open to receiving support

Conclusion



Through drama, foster teens had an improved awareness of their emotions and were more aware of coping mechanisms that improved their sense of resilience



Using applied drama in group work provided a safe space for foster teens to express themselves amongst peers

References

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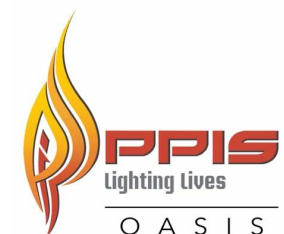
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Thank you!

We welcome your questions
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