Kendal Integrated Care Community
Working Together for a Healthier Happier Community

I Matter Fundamentals Evaluation - – Kendal PCN Summer 2023

We sent out questionnaires to approximately 54 parent participants

We have received replies from 30 to date

The parents have all approached the Kendal GP's with concern about their child.

As a complement to other available options families were offered the option of I Matter Training focussing on their skills to help their child

About the classes
Parents were offered
An expression of interest questionnaire
A registration questionnaire
4 75min taught I Matter class on zoom with small group of other parents including discussion
A 14 day email course with a daily 5 minute clip
Consultation on registration questionnaire
Then Option for 4 fortnightly classes
A few were offered option to retake the class a second time

Classes were mixed ages - respondents children were aged between 0-17 yrs

11 attended alone 15 attended with a family member 2 attended separate groups

Participants had had a concern about their child for a varied duration from Less than 3 months to more than 5 years

Participants attended between 2 and more than 8 sessions

Respondents views on the training were as follows:

The training was relevant and interesting	26/28 strongly agreed 2 agree
The facilitators were knowledgeable and well informed	28/28 strongly agree
The facilitators helped create a safe learning environment	26/28 strongly agree 2 agree
I learned ideas that I now use to help me to help my child	25/28 strong agree, 3 agree
The initial questionnaire was useful and got me thinking	25/28 strongly agree 2 agree
The consultation was useful and helped clarify questions	24/28 strongly agree 4 agree
I have made changes as a result of what I learned	24/28 strongly agree 4 agree
My relationship is progressing in a healthier-happier direction	21/28 strongly agree 7 agree
I have more I want to learn	18/28 and 10 enough for now
I would recommend this course to other parents/professionals	27/28 strongly agree 1 agree
Would you be willing to talk to someone about your experience	21/28 yes

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Dr Cathy Betoin Clinical Psychologist
Jacqui Wilson Social Prescriber

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QUALITATIVE COMMENTS

Have you accessed any other support in relation to your concerns about your child?

School
GP - led to the referral to iMatters
School, CAMHS
School - just pastoral care staff, no SENCO involvement.
LRGS - was spending time seeking support from the School Nurse for low confidence/self esteem issues
Changed to QKS for Year 11 - dropped out of school after first half term of sixth form
GP - seen two different GPs over a year but since refused to attend appointments
CAMHS referral - refusal to engage
Privately saw a therapist for 2 months but then refused to engage
School & pastoral support at QKS
GP
Action for Children
Private councellor
Barnardos
Cahms

2 x GP appointments. 1 wasn't very helpful and didn't know how to support. The other was when we were referred to iMatter.
CAMHS
No
School nurse, GP, Paediatrician, Occupational Therapy, Speech and language therapy, audiology.
Have sought support for him via school and his GP
No other
CAMHS, GP and school
I went to my GP and they suggested imatter
None before this
My child attended the Decider Life skills online course through Barnardo's
School have been very supportive.
I went to ask the GP for help and she referred me to the I matter programme.

Why did you decide to take part

Originally desperation to do something. Then, in a nutshell, I learnt that I matter!

To refresh understanding and aplication of i-matter principles and to do this alongside other families/parents to aid insight into their and my ongoing issues and the benefits of applying the i-matter approach
My son has become a recluse, has dropped out of school and is refusing to engage with the world. Our relationship was becoming broken and I needed to learn better ways of supporting him as I was becoming very depressed and starting to struggle myself.
Wanted the reassurance and guidance that we were dealing appropriately with our sons challenges but also gain more in-depth knowledge on strategies and techniques to use.

We were at desperation point, needing some expert advice on how best to manage our child through this difficult period. It was putting pressure on the family unit, and causing arguments and disagreements, so we wanted to learn how best to approach things so we could also support each other better.
It was to understand our child from her point of view& learn a more effective way of communicating with them.
How to have a better relationship with my some and help him manage his emotions.
Wanted to see if I could learn any new strategies to communicate and engage with my daughter who had become withdrawn and more challenging due to anxiety.
I was keen to manage my own thoughts and feelings around the difficulties my child was having in order to provide better support for my child.

I didn't want my focus child to continue down an aggressive pathway for dealing with stress etc.

I wanted to learn techniques to improve my relationships.
It was on offer and recommended to us.
I wanted to learn new skill to help my child deal with his emotions. It's helped the whole family
Mainly to understand how to help my daughter the best way possible
My child's behaviour was unmanageable at times and I was looking for help wiht setting limits
I felt that I had nothing to loose taking part in the programme. My relationship with my son had deteriorated. I was concerned that his impulsive and aggressive behaviour would end up with him being expelled from School as he had been suspended on a number of occasions.
I wanted to understand my sons behaviour and support him.

If you were to describe your experience of the I Matter Fundamentals Workshops for other parents what would you say?

I found iMatters incredibly helpful.

The way it's delivered is is a 'no pressure' environment. You feel supported by the leaders; it's informative and interesting - learning things you wish you'd known years ago. Talking and listening to others in the group gives a sense of not being alone or the only one that's 'getting it wrong'
It was useful to listen to other parents and to compare their experiences and issues to my own. It was also useful to have the input of the i-matter trainers.

Very supportive and helpful. Wish Id done it 2 years ago when our problems first started surfacing!
It’s a valuable and worthwhile course as really makes you think about your child, their triggers and their behaviour. It is also and informative course and great that you can share experiences with others experiencing similar problems and challenges.

I've talked about it very positively to friends. For starters, it's fantastic that there is something for parents in similar situations to us who don't require more specialist help, but just need guidance, someone to get advice from and someone to vent to about frustrations!
It is everything that every parent needs to part-take in. It absolutely changes your whole parenting skills for the better.

Brilliant—insightful and practical.

It has been thought provoking, allowing me and my husband to reflect on how we deal with challenging situations and how we can support each other in helping our daughter.
It was a fantastic, unbiased, informative and supportive facilitated environment where I could learn, and reframe thinking, with a group of others in similar situations. A safe space to share and understand pressures parents face.

Firstly I would say to anyone considering doing it- do it!

I will be honest, before I did the course I felt like I was a failure, that I should be able to cope, everyone else does right?

But, the course was exceptional and showed me a new light. As a group we could share experiences, cry and laugh.

I really feel like all my relationships have improved since doing the course and I am immensely grateful for that.

It is important to be able to reflect and say it is 'you' that can make a positive change to your relationships.

A very positive experience, we were taught to understand situations and how to handle them. A great insight to how things can escalate out of control.

I absolutely loved it and I think every parent needs to have access to this information. I have 4 children so this will help benefit everyone.

highly recommend, open my eyes up to the way I was currently managing my daughters issues, I really had no idea the best way to help

It helped me understand what I needed to change about my interactions with my child and how I needed to structure family time to help manage the undesirable behaviour. It also gave me the opportunity to discuss specific situations and get specific strategies to use in these situations.

I found it hard and challenging to think about my feelings Cathy and Jacqui were amazingly supportive and encouraged me not to give up.

The programme was very informative and helped me understand and unravel the triggers which led to confrontation in my sons and I relationship. I liked the pace of it, between sessions, you have time to absorb the ideas. And time to put the ideas into practise. I liked the fact that it was very practical. Ideas were put in an accessible way that you could easily understand. I really liked the diagrams and the charts visualizing the information.

It was in a really nice small group. I felt everyone was honest and kind and listened to one another. The workshop enabled me to move my thoughts forward and to be positive, more flexible and more supportive to my son.

What are the key changes you have made and what has the result been?

I have tried to step back and ignore actions that I dislike or don't agree with and where possible focus on the good things.
This is still a work in progress, it doesn't come naturally to me and feels like I'm not instilling any discipline. It goes against my instinct and to an extent makes me feel like a doormat. However, in recent weeks my focus child has been more able to talk to me which is a real turnaround and I realise I find it hard to take the extra knocks as I'm at such a low ebb myself.
Accepting the limits of my influence and changing the way in which I seek to influence my son. There has been a greater focus on enjoying being together and rebuilding the fundamental relationship. L continues to mature and while there is plenty to continue to work upon, he is more helpful and cooperative and we enjoy time together more frequently.
I have learnt to look after myself better, to stay more controlled so that i can provide a more consistent support and approach for my son. I have gained more understanding of his situation and my reactions.

I remain more calm when I am being challenged
I try to set enforceable boundaries instead of blowing hot and cold by trying to enforce rules that i cannot maintain

I am less negative in my approach, although I still cannot see the future
Never try to speak to our child about hat has happened when he is in an agitated or heightened state…. Always wait until he has calmed down and then have a chat to him.
Always ensure we discuss afterwards about why a difficult situation happened and how could we have done things differently.

Remember we were a team and to tag team if one of us is struggling.
Continue to have firm boundaries and expectations even when emotionally we are stretched and struggling.

Understanding the importance of managing my own stress levels and emotions when beginning to manage a difficult situation with my child has been very useful. I have tried to remain more calm, although it is sometimes very difficult in reality!

Understanding that children's developmental ages differ has also been helpful so that we can reduce our levels of expectation in terms of what our child should or shouldn't be able to do.

Being more mindful of things that might trigger a misunderstanding. Understanding my child& not react to everything. Knowing when to bring a situation back to a calmer state. This has helped with having a happier, overall better& healthier relationship.
A calmer home environment. Able to deal with own stress better.
I've tried to back off a bit, not ask too many questions particularly because my daughter finds it difficult to talk about feelings.

Tried to focus on small positive steps and not difficult or challenging situations to help form good foundation to build better relationship and communication.

I have a much stronger, calmer, confident approach back to parenting, which in turn has relaxed and strengthened my relationship with my child. In turn his behaviour is calmer, and more mature and he is gaining confidence improving at school.
I honestly feel if this hasn't been available and delivered in the way it was by Kathy and Jacqui there would have been a very different path followed by my child that would have been incredibly detrimental to his adult life.
I am kinder to myself and believe in my parenting. I use resources (grandparents etc) to ensure that I am rested and not as stressed as that was the real cause to some of my challenges.

When I feel myself getting stressed with situations with my child, I can challenge my thinking and go back to the principles of the course.
My relationship with my children is strong because of the changes I made, and I can use all the information and techniques for my younger child.
A better understanding of my child and how we communicate as a family.
Clear instructions to my child and comfort them when I say no. Make sure the demands on my child are doable and check they have enough resources. A snack can really help a situation.
Not get annoyed or angry when my daughter has issues, learned to adapt and understand why she struggles
We have made clear the behavioral expectations in the home and consequences of inappropriate behaviour. We spend more time together that does not involve electronics. My child rarely has behavioral outbursts now and when he does, he usually spontaneously apologizes once he has calmed down (and the apology seems genuine).
To find the right time to talk to him. He's a lot calmer because I'm calmer with him when he's at home. It is Impossible to have a conversation If we are both at loggerheads.

Concentrating on the positives rather than the negatives.
Reinforcing structured boundaries such as, no screens after 10. Leading to a good night's sleep.

If you were to sum up your key take aways from the training what are they?

I am the adult, and I have to remember that in the heat of the moment

My daughter is not doing these things out of spite, but that they are a reflection of a lot of uncertainty and anxiety about how she fits into her family and social groupings

This is a long term process, and that there is no simple, one size fits all solution.
I need to be an authoritative parent not a passive one.

Less words and more action, which I still need to keep building on.

Working on my own anger and frustration and disappointment

More insight in my behaviour and responses as a reaction to events
• I am the grown up - keep calm and centred whenever possible
•Ups and downs are natural part of life
• change is possible

Stay calm.
Think how little their brain is (developmentally!).
My house my rules...Firm and clear.
Needing to give myself so time away. To take care of myself.
Mainly the same answers from the last question. I think they overlap.
The main, the most important and the core one is
"I MATTER" as simply as that.

It's natural for kids to be a mirror of their parents.
My own self-loathing has had a really detrimental effect on my focus child and my attempts to teach by 'don't do as I do...' have failed tremendously.
I demand respect but don't show any for myself and then am surprised and angry when I don't get it from my children.
iMatter is just the best name for this program - it's made me see that I provide material goods for my kids but not sufficient emotional support.
It's important to have positive interactions as a base from which to work on more challenging issues. Showing love is more effective than showing control. It's important to trust the process and be patient.

My son needs support outside of that which I can offer.
To stay calm and in the green zone as I am no good to my son or myself if I let myself get on the red zone (whatever the situation)
To be kind to myself & know we are doing the best for our child.

Always use a closure conversation after a challenging or difficult situation.
I need to be more supportive in order for my child to learn and develop and change, and I need to behave more like a role-model for him.

Healthier child-parent relationships are very important for an overall well-being. Children need to be nurtured, heard& supported to thrive in their mental health& confidence.
That my personal state of mind and approach is a major factor in my sons behaviour.
Concentrate on the positives in the relationships, look after myself to be in the best place for my daughter.
Keeping pace
Reminding of basics
Communication
Development of child's brains

The little voice that was on my shoulder saying I was 'failing', or 'everyone else is coping-why aren't I?' has been replaced by an iMatter voice. it is a positive voice that says be Confident, be Consistent and be Kind.
A massive positive impact on our family, we now have a different child and we operate as a family unit together.
understanding my daughter and her needs

Keep trying to understand the triggers that lead to conflict and waiting for the right moment to talk.
And if I stay calm it helps everyone around me. If you are not feeling very strong in yourself how can you be strong in your Parenting?

How could we improve this course

For me iMatters was a 'perfect fit' I've needed help for a very long time but don't consider I'm worth the time and effort of a counsellor 1-on-1.

The fact that this was geared around helping my child was the reason I was able to undertake it.

I was unable to attend all the sessions. It would have been valuable to me to have attended more but there was a clash with work commitments.

Being more competent with technology and to feel more confident sharing sensitive personal issues with a group of strangers.
We have been able to attend at the times of the courses, however, many parents would struggle, so having a bit more flexibility for daytime or evening would be better.

We have been lucky to be paired with 2 other families who seem to also be very supportive of our own situation, however they have much older children (14 and 16) with very different problems. Although I understand that the content of the course is applicable to all ages / relationships, it makes it difficult to talk about our problems when they are obviously dealing with something much bigger and more impactful to their own lives. It sometimes makes me not want to talk about our issues as it doesn't seem as important. We had a couple of really good weeks when everything seemed to fall into place and we didn't have anything negative to say, but it felt really unfair to celebrate that in front of the other parents who had been in tears about their week.

If we were paired with parents of similar aged children, or children experiencing similar problems, it would be far more beneficial. Currently we find the information Cathy tells us very useful and interesting, but the rest of the session isn't very relevant to us.

It would be really useful to have access to the resources that are shown in the sessions in advance, so that we can make notes on them during the sessions and keep them for future reference. It's a lot to take in in a short space of time.

Sometimes questions are sprung on us in the session and it's very difficult to think of specific examples on the spot, especially when other parents are waiting and listening. If we had the questions in advance we could think of the best examples to use and discuss. I often think of these after the sessions and wish I'd mentioned them!

When we joined the first zoom session, we actually realised that we knew one of the other parents as they work at our child's school. It hasn't been an issue and we trust that they are keeping all information confidential, however, it may have been useful to learn who the other parents were prior to the session in case there were to be any issues with being part of the same session.

The questionnaires are too long, repetitive and confusing. Found them challenging to complete. I think they could be refined.

I'm not sure it could.
Perhaps face to face session offered for those who prefer

I can't suggest improvement when I thought it was excellent.

I really liked that we could share our issues as a group. Yes, it is awkward at first because we don't like to say things out loud that we feel bad about, but, I could try to learn about issues that would or could arise later in my focus child's life.
Maybe having hand outs or online materials

Wish I'd of had more time to attend the other lessons
It would have been helpful to have more space between the initial course and block of follow-up sessions and then a 4 to 6 month follow-up session.

Cathy and Jacqui are an amazing team. The course came at just the right time for me.

What questions do you still have?

I'm now paying for my focus child to speak to a therapist and my daughter has asked that I seek help myself. I hope I can make the effort to continue my learning.

The ongoing support is excellent and continued check ins help to question the situation and refocus.

How best to approach to school and get them to support my son with his individual needs more in the structured classroom environment as not very confident in the sharing of information & support network. Appreciate they are under staffed and over stretched but the child's well being should still be paramount.

Putting everything we've learnt into reality is difficult. You think you know it and can apply it, and then situations come up when it just seems impossible to make progress using those methods.

We made progress, but have gone backwards, and feel we need to continue to have guidance on dealing with specific situations.

At what point would you suggest the child himself would benefit from having some help from a specialist?

I would always be open to learn.

I can't think of specifics at the moment, but as my child has evolved, I have new questions that I did not have at the time of the course.

I would like to learn more about Dyslexia and understanding learning difficulties which will also help me at work.

Any other questions or comments?

Thank you for providing the service
Thank you for the help you have been able to give.

Thank you so much for such a valuable and worthwhile journey and so lovely to share experiences in confidence with other parents who don't judge or make assumptions.

Sincere thanks Cathy & Jacqui for leading the sessions & a your knowledge and information sharing.

This course literally saved my family. I never in a million years thought we'd be where we are today. This came just at the right time in our lives. I will forever be grateful for it& definitely recommend to every parent out there!

A big thank you to Cathy and Jacqui for providing this service, really helpful.

Just a huge big thanks to the local services for commissioning this wonderful project. Your very lucky to have women like Kathy and Jacqui on board.

I am so thankful and relieved that I did this course. I learnt so much. I am so grateful to Cathy and Jackie.

I'm really glad I did the course. And thank you, at times I thought I can't do this, It's too hard having to really think. But I'm so glad I did it because our home is really calm now. And me and Johnny laugh a lot. I've got so much to thank you for.