



Moving Forward in Recovery

EDP Drug & Alcohol Services
and TheHorseCourse Pilot

Summer/Autumn 2015

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Summary: Aims and Outcomes



The aim of the pilot was to monitor the effectiveness of TheHorseCourse as a tool to engage people to move them forward in their recovery journey away from problematic alcohol or drug use.

Who was targeted?

Twelve people were selected for the pilot who EDP identified as:

- those who are difficult to engage
- those who are making very little progress in their recovery
- those who have been through treatment on numerous occasions without being able to maintain abstinence for any significant length of time.

One was unable to participate (taken into custody for a previous offence), making the pilot group eleven.

Those taking part in the pilot were a mixture of opiate and non-opiate users with varying lengths of dependency. The pilot was not about the severity of their use but about their progress in recovery.

The programme was offered to both men and women.

TheHorseCourse engagement and retention



Only 1 participant did not complete the full course, dropping out halfway through. However, his case study suggests that he still benefitted from the course.

Core skills developed in TheHorseCourse

Participants were coached by TheHorseCourse facilitators to rehearse and repeat 8 core skills linked to recovery. The specially trained horses provide in-the-moment feedback and success. Averaging scores for the eight participants of the pilot that we have data for at this stage, TheHorseCourse Skills Star data showed a positive shift in all 8 areas (notably Calmness, Focus, Empathy and Confidence as a Learner) and a 12% positive shift across the whole star.

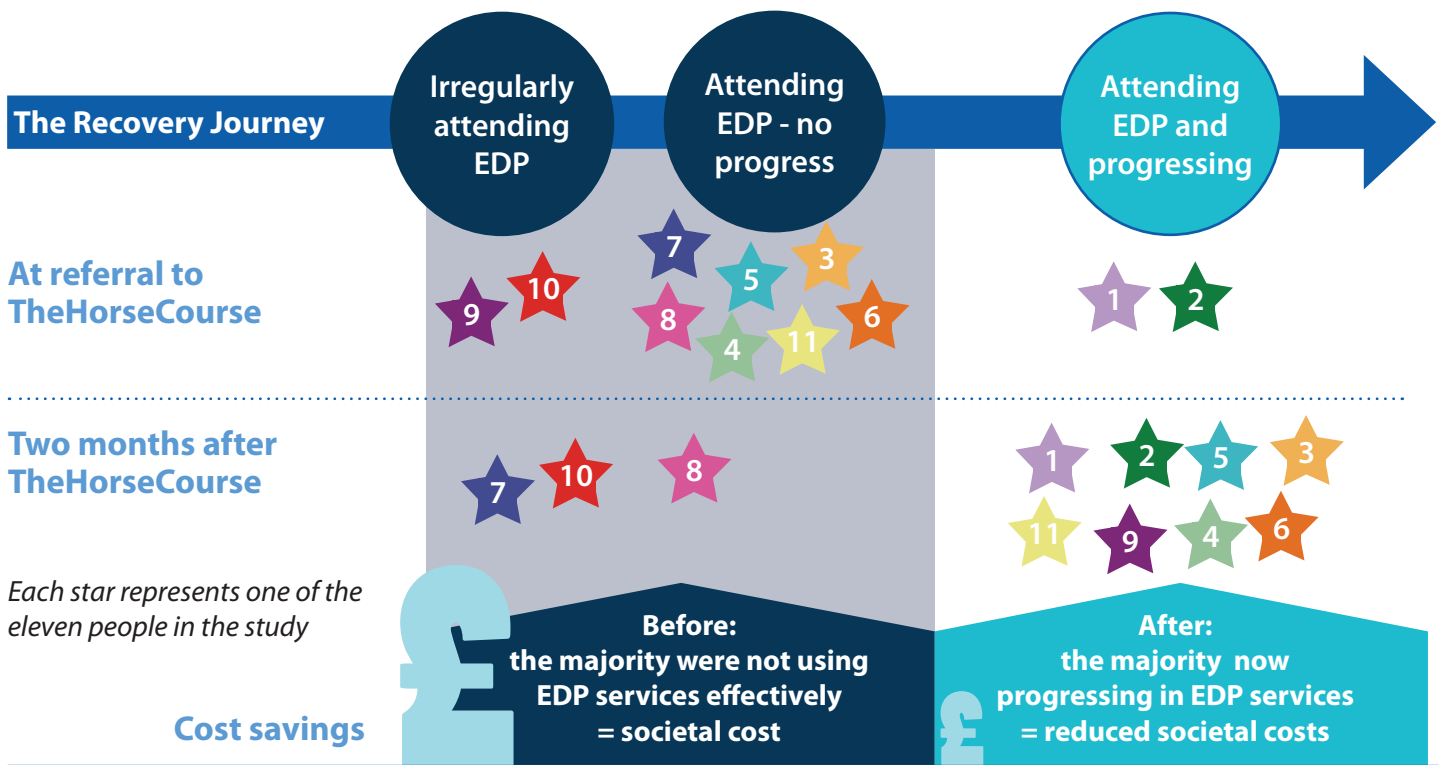


Engagement	Responsibility	Calmness	Assertiveness
Planning	Perseverance	Empathy	Communication

Success and Recognition

All ten who completed the programme passed Parelli Natural Horsemanship Level 1, externally video-assessed in the USA - a significant achievement.





Key success indicators per participant

Participant	Lasted the 5 day course?	Improved engagement/ progress with EDP	Improved coping skills (THC star data)	Improved coping skills (case studies)	Reduced substance use (case studies)	Passed Parelli Level 1
1	✓	n/a	+8%	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	n/a	-16%	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	+28%	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	+47%	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	+9%	✓	-	✓
6	✓	✓	-22%	✓	-	✓
7	✓	✗	+9%	-	-	✓
8	✓	✗	+22%	-	✗	✓
9	✓	✓	+31%	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✗	-	-	-	✓
11	✗	✓	-	-	✓	-
Positive results	10	6	7	7	6	10

Introduction and Aims

EDP Drug & Alcohol Services (EDP) supports people to address problems related to drug and alcohol use, working both in prisons and in communities. The EDP service in Dorset identified a group of people within the service who were not moving forward in their recovery. EDP define this group as:

- Those who are difficult to engage
- Those who are making very little progress in their recovery
- Those who have been through treatment on numerous occasions without being able to maintain abstinence for any significant length of time.

Following TheHorseCourse's proven success¹ in engaging offenders and young people, EDP approached TheHorseCourse to develop a pilot. EDP wanted to explore whether the innovative equine-assisted behaviour intervention - for people who are disengaged or not progressing with conventional talk-based interventions - could be a tool for moving this group of people forward in their recovery. The tool was not utilised as a drug treatment due to the known non-effectiveness of equine therapy for this, but rather a way of engaging people who are not moving forward in their recovery to progress with the support of EDP.²

Funding was awarded from Big Lottery's Awards for All programme for a pilot programme. The grant funded twelve people to undertake an intense and challenging week-long programme, named ReStart, which focused first on developing engagement and willingness to learn and then the eight core life skills tracked with TheHorseCourse Skills Star:

Engagement Enthusiastically takes on new challenges, whilst taking care of own confidence	Responsibility takes full responsibility for own thoughts, emotions and actions	Calmness Has the habit of calmness and knows how to create it, even in difficult situations	Assertiveness Able to be boundary & assertive, without getting aggressive or upset
Realistic Planning Stops to think before acting, makes a realistic assessment of situations and plans accordingly	Focus & Perseverance Works towards goals despite setbacks	Empathy Sees the needs of others, offers care and support, feels closely connected	Communication Two way, respectful, assertive communications. Has language to talk about thinking and emotions

The facilitators teach, rehearse and repeat these eight key resilience skills (shown above and in TheHorseCourse Skills Star on page 23) in an intensive and challenging, but fun way with feedback in-the-moment from specially trained horses. There is no discussion of the past. All sessions take place in action with the horses, there is no classroom content or talk-based therapy/counselling. These eight skills support the needs of people in the recovery journey.

The ReStart is usually delivered in five consecutive days, working for approximately two hours per day with 1-to-1 facilitator support. For the pilot four of the ten people attended a two day course working for five hours per day. This was to explore whether a shorter course could be equally effective whilst saving on transport and logistics.

Development of skills is embedded in work towards a horsemanship goal of Parelli Level 1³. Tasks are guided by the facilitator and the horses are selected and trained to provide especially clear and easily observed physical feedback to those taking part, many of whom will not have interacted with horses prior to taking part in the programme.

¹<http://www.thehorsecourse.org/evidence>

² Department of Health (England) and the devolved administrations (2007). *Drug Misuse and Dependence: UK Guidelines on Clinical Management*. London: Department of Health (England), the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly Government and Northern Ireland Executive. P.37. para 4.3.1.7

³ <http://www.parelli.com/>



On the last day, each person has a robust reflective session with their facilitator - looking at their progress in each of the areas of TheHorseCourse Skills Star. Upon successful completion of the course, they are presented with a certificate.

The aim of the pilot was to understand if TheHorseCourse could be used as an effective tool to engage people to move them forward in their recovery. This in turn would enable EDP to offer a wider selection of engagement tools to people who have different recovery needs and who struggle with talking based interventions.

EDP Drug & Alcohol Services identified twelve people who were not moving forward in their recovery and in some instances not benefitting from talking therapies (See Steve's Case Study on page 4). One of the people was not able to attend as he was taken into custody. This reduced the number of people involved in the pilot to eleven of which 6 were male and 5 female. One only completed half of the programme, but we have tracked his progress nonetheless. Those in the pilot were a mixture of opiate and non-opiate users with varying lengths of dependency. The pilot was not about the severity of their use but about their progress in recovery.



In 2014, EDP saw 173 people and 27 of these either declined the intervention or started and did not complete (15.6%). The partnership wanted to explore engagement tools that focused on increasing the engagement and motivation of this very specific group of people ensuring that the funding given reached those for whom it was needed rather than simply a "nice to do" activity. Those taking part all were difficult to engage, those who were making very little progress or people who have been through treatment on numerous occasions without being able to maintain abstinence for any significant length of time.

The pilot also gave both organisations the opportunity to consider the possible cost savings that could be made as a result of moving people who were not moving forward in their recovery.

Pilot Measures and Outcomes

A number of measures were used to monitor the effectiveness of TheHorseCourse for those who took part, including:

- Participant Experiences
- Engagement with EDP Services and progress in Recovery Journey
- TheHorseCourse Skills Star
- EDP Staff Reflections

Participant Experiences

People were able to feedback their thoughts about TheHorseCourse while taking part and in the months afterwards to their EDP keyworker. This was collected from their case files and put together with information about their lives before they took part in TheHorseCourse into a written narrative of their experience. A summary for each person is included on pages 12 to 22.

Before taking part in TheHorseCourse many people stated that they were isolated, found it difficult to focus, struggled with anxiety or being able to communicate or had a lack of self-belief or self-esteem. All of which are barriers preventing them from moving forward in their recovery.

After TheHorseCourse many people showed improvement in their self-awareness, behavioural issues, confidence, demeanour, motivation and attitude. In particular those who have moved on in their recovery journey have gained employment, taken on volunteering roles or have stable housing.

The majority of people have made progress in their recovery, with only three not having any meaningful engagement with EDP by the end of the pilot. Every person spoke positively of TheHorseCourse and the effect it had on them.

Two months post-course follow up forms were sent out to each referrer, following up on four open questions on the referral form. Of the eight who responded, all reported improvements in: Relationships, Identity (self esteem, self image) and Engagement with Treatment for their participants. There were positive shifts in the majority of clients in Problem Behaviours but not all.

Engagement with EDP Services and progress in Recovery Journey

Attendance at EDP services and the progress seen in their recovery journey was measured before, immediately afterwards and two months post TheHorseCourse. This was recorded within the case files of those who took part in the programme for all 11 in the study.

The detailed recovery journey on page 3 graphically demonstrates the success of the project in terms of engaging people in their recovery journey. At referral, seven people were attending treatment with EDP but making no progress and two were only attending irregularly. **Only TWO people were making progress. Two months post intervention the picture has turned on its head: EIGHT people are making progress**, one is attending but making no progress, one is attending irregularly and one has ceased any engagement (for unknown reasons).

The pilot highlighted that TheHorseCourse as an



engagement tool was at its most effective immediately after the programme finished. This effect held for most people even two months later, showing that EDP had managed to continue to engage and progress those people, indicating successful partnership working.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star

At referral to TheHorseCourse each key worker, in consultation with the participant, completed a referral form including TheHorseCourse Skills Star (see page 23) recording where they were on the star for each of the 8 skills covered. The Star was again completed two months after the person took part in the programme to compare with their scores from referral.

The table below shows the average gains for the group in each of the 8 areas on TheHorseCourse Star. The individual people’s star scores are recorded in the mini case studies from page 12 onwards. Data is not yet available for three of those who took part in the course (Person 7, Person 10 and Person 11) and so they have not been included in the table.

Of the eight for whom we have follow up star data at this stage, two participants moved backwards in their overall skills (Person 2 and Person 6). Despite this drop they were both assessed as having improved overall against other measures used in the study. A possible explanation is that they were more realistic about their own skill levels later in their recovery journey than they had been at the outset.

The positive shift overall supports many people’s experiences as seen in the mini case studies and also the increased engagement with treatment shown by the majority of people. Due to the very small scale of the pilot there is no statistical significance to this data, but it helps build the picture for each person in the study.

	Assertiveness	Focus	Responsibility	Empathy	Calmness	Realistic Planning	Communication	Engagement	% shift over whole star
shift %	+5%	+18%	+10%	+19%	+17%	+6%	+8%	+13%	+12%

EDP Staff Reflections

The pilot has allowed staff to reflect on the effectiveness of TheHorseCourse as a tool to engage people to move them forward in their recovery journey. Theresa Oliveira Meneses, who coordinated the project on behalf of EDP, felt that the course had an obvious impact on those who attended.

“The pilot had a 91% completion rate where only 50% was expected. I had consistent contact with seven of the twelve initially referred and they all, without exception, reflected deeply on the course, their own behaviour and how their conduct impacted on the horse. All who completed TheHorseCourse acknowledge that it was their own behaviour which created challenging situations with the horse and/or facilitator, rather than blaming the horse/facilitator for the issue. Increased confidence and motivation were noted in the majority of these seven, as was a desire to broaden their horizons and to take up new activities. Additionally, a calmer demeanour and less inclination for impulsivity was also noted, and evidenced in EDP services after TheHorseCourse.”

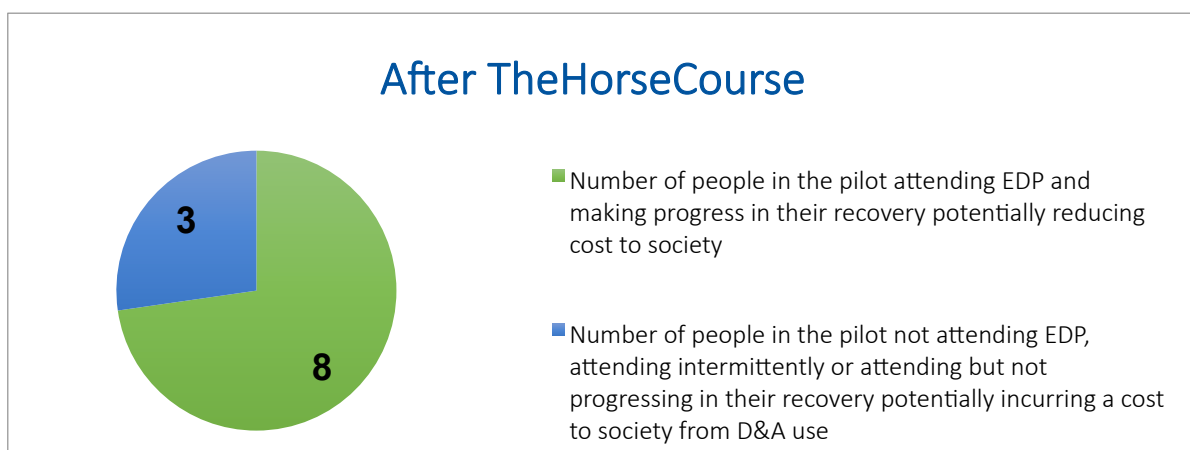
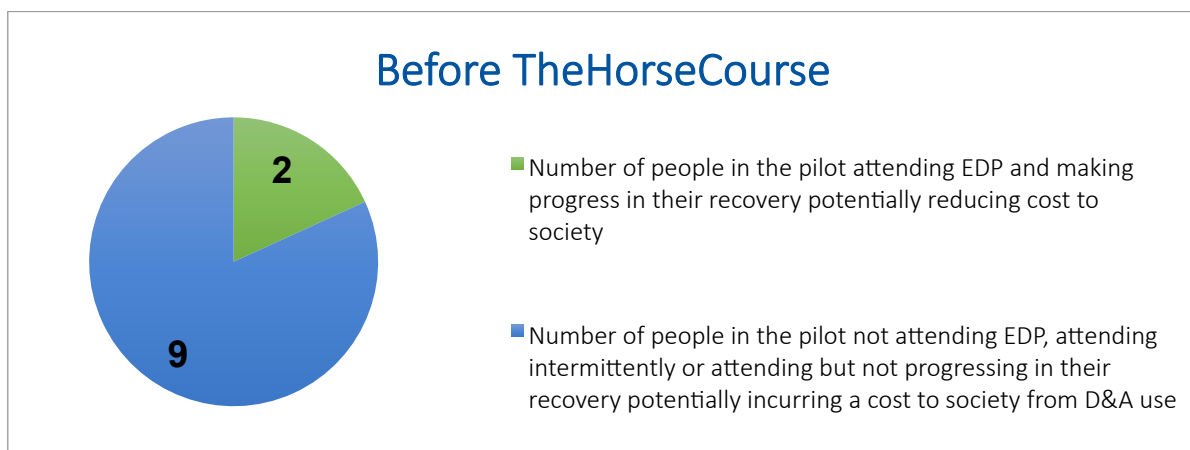
Potential cost savings

Public Health England's report 'Alcohol and Drugs Prevention, Treatment and Recovery; Why Invest?'⁴ identifies that there is a £21bn cost to society for alcohol-related harm and a £15.4bn cost as a result of drug addiction. The same report states that every £1 spent on drug treatment saves £2.50 in costs to society. Therefore finding engagement tools that will work for people who are not making progress in their recovery journey can be seen to improve the effectiveness of our service and may potentially reduce the cost to society.

All of those referred to TheHorseCourse EDP were identified by EDP as:

- Those who are difficult to engage
- Those who are making very little progress
- Those who have been through treatment on numerous occasions without being able to maintain abstinence for any significant length of time.

At the start of the project nine of the eleven identified people either failed to attend EDP, attended intermittently or attended but made no progress in their recovery journey. These people have the potential to incur a cost to society through their drug and alcohol use. Two of those identified were attending EDP however they were making very slow progress in their recovery.



⁴ www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/why-invest-2014-alcohol-and-drugs.pdf

Two months post intervention, eight were making progress in their recovery; making good use of the EDP service and at the same time potentially reducing societal costs through progress in recovery. Three were not making progress in their recovery and therefore not maximising the resources available to them in addition to the possible cost to society.

Given the cost to society of problematic drug and alcohol use going untreated, the shift of 55% of the group from not progressing to moving forward in recovery is extremely important. If alternative engagement tools which are not based on talking therapies, such as TheHorseCourse, were offered to difficult to engage people we could see more people moving forward in their recovery thus potentially reducing costs to society.



Case Study: Steve

Person
4

Being involved in TheHorseCourse gave Steve a confidence which has really helped him to communicate with others in way a he never had before.

"What can I say? It changed me in so many different ways. It brought me out of myself and really took me away from me. I've spent so many years working on myself and recovery. You focus on yourself so much. The whole course was great. It was something that I'll never forget."

Steve had been coming to EDP for 5 years on and off. He stopped taking heroin 8 years ago which was the start of a long journey of recovery for him. He had tried a number of interventions offered by EDP but struggled to move forward in those environments.

"I'd done all the talking stuff and I wanted to move forward. I was frustrated and it used to come out wrong. I couldn't voice it properly. They run a SMART group at EDP every week and I couldn't get it. I was disruptive every time I went."

"I think me for me personally I'd gone straight to that mode of being in recovery: Talking it; being it; doing it. And I'd reached that stage where it was my life. I wanted to move forward not stay still. My thinking needed sorting."

Steve was looking for something else to help him and he was invited to take part in TheHorseCourse.

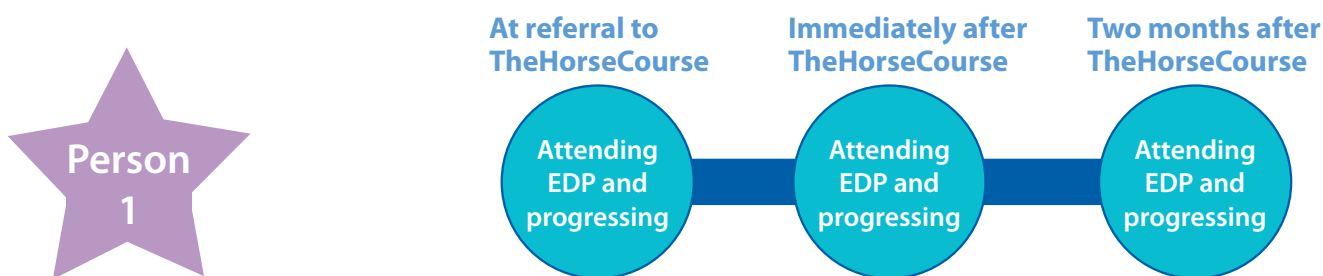
"I didn't feel part of the world or part of the things around me – the groups and things like that. My thinking was going me, me, me. And that horse just brought me right back down to earth. Everything wasn't about me. Straight away I just felt at ease. Maybe it's why the smart group didn't work for me. It felt like a school atmosphere and authority and I just couldn't get it. I felt like I was pushing against it."

"At TheHorseCourse you had to concentrate. It was light-hearted but it was about knowing the horse and listening to the ladies that were there. And I just listened to everything that was said to me. They were patient. You don't feel like you were doing it wrong. If you do make a little mistake it's not a big major disaster. They didn't make you feel uncomfortable. And being with a big horse. You don't want to upset him. Kicking off or being irritated would stress them out or spook them so you have to be aware of that and keep calm. I had to relax as I looked tense and the horse would pick up on that."

"It was looking at my personality rather than my circumstance. I'd think 'look at me I can do this with the horses'. A horse actually moved sideways because I asked him to just by using my hands. It was like you were talking to it but you weren't – just moving your hands. Obviously they get used to that and they are trained. But they don't have to. They could be stubborn and not move."

"Previous courses I had done had opened my head up and then TheHorseCourse helped me to communicate and be at peace with myself. In the past someone would have asked me how it went and I would have said 'it was great'. But because of TheHorseCourse I can talk about it and I'm really glad about that. It's had a massive impact on me. Something like that which came at a time that I really need it. I didn't need more therapy. That was therapy for me."

Mini Case Studies: 1-11



First attended EDP services in 2011 until 2013 after being involved in other services since 2007. Returned to EDP in 2014 until present.

Person 1 was attending EDP services before TheHorseCourse and was making some progress. He would become agitated if academic instruction became too much for him to cope with and had a lack of self-belief in his abilities.

Attended the 5 day programme in June 2015.

Immediately after TheHorseCourse he attended EDP and was making progress. His alcohol use decreased. He showed a much more positive outlook, despite being faced with a number of challenges. He attended college once a week, was bidding on independent accommodation and probation had noted an improved demeanour and conduct. In the months after TheHorseCourse he continued to attend regularly and make progress although he has relapsed once. He is drug free and doing voluntary work which is contributing to his abstinence. Talking about TheHorseCourse has allowed him to broach things with his workers in a positive way allowing him to engage and feedback about how he is feeling. He gained confidence from TheHorseCourse. His worker commented *"I think he surprised himself with his ability to control such a large animal."*

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 1																
Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
1.5	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	+8%
Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course																



First attended EDP Services in 2009 until 2010 after being involved in other services since 2007. Returned to EDP in 2013 until 2014. Returned again in 2015

Person 2 attended groups at EDP regularly before TheHorseCourse and was making slow progress but was occasionally disruptive and found it difficult to focus. He was using mephedrone and would drink 10 cans a week. He stated that he hoped TheHorseCourse would give him more confidence and enable him to become more assertive.

Attended the 5 day programme in June 2015.

Immediately after TheHorseCourse he continued to attend EDP and make progress. Staff have said that he appeared to be more aware on the effect his body language had on others and how he may be perceived in a different way than he intended. Post-course he stated that at that moment his life is the best it has ever been. He felt loved and valued and, though he continued to make mistakes and to behave impulsively at times, the incidences of this had greatly decreased. He started attending St John’s Ambulance and was keen to gain qualifications with them. He continued to go to the gym regularly and found this hugely beneficial.

In the months since attending the course he continues to attend although he has occasionally been disruptive in groups finding it difficult to focus. He has not re-offended. He is no longer using drugs and his alcohol use has reduced to 5 units a week. He regularly discusses his experience of TheHorseCourse.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 2																
Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	-16%
Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course																



First attended EDP Services in 2010 until 2012. Returned to EDP in 2013 until he left treatment in 2015 after participating in TheHorseCourse.

Before TheHorseCourse Person 3 was attending EDP but was not progressing. He was isolated, did not socialise and had poor self-esteem. He had no motivation and was unable to make changes stick. He stated that he could not see himself in the world and did not know who he was or what he wanted from life. He wanted to make good decisions for which he was responsible rather than letting the past own him. He took cannabis daily with occasional days without any use.

Attended the 2 day programme in June 2015.

Immediately after taking part in TheHorseCourse he reduced his cannabis use. He was attending EDP and making progress. He stated that TheHorseCourse helped him to open his mind up regarding going back into the world. In the months after the course he has moved on from the service after getting a job.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 3

Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
0.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	+28%

Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course



First attended EDP Services in 2009 after being involved in other services since 2007 and is still in treatment with EDP.

Person 4 was engaging with EDP but not progressing before TheHorseCourse. He was struggling to move forward in his recovery, was isolated and had communication issues. He was no longer taking drugs but was being prescribed an opioid substitute. He hoped that TheHorseCourse would give him greater self-awareness which would benefit his relationships particularly with his children who were in foster care.

Attended the 5 day programme in September 2015.

Since TheHorseCourse he has been attending EDP for 1-1 and group work sessions and making progress. He increased his coping strategies for managing difficult emotions and some of his ongoing child custody issues are now being managed constructively. He is maintaining abstinence long term and has greatly reduced his prescribed opioid substitute use. He strongly believes that the skills he learnt on TheHorseCourse has enabled him to reduce without lapsing.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 4

Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
2.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	+47%

Rated byreferrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course



At referral to TheHorseCourse

Immediately after TheHorseCourse

Two months after TheHorseCourse



First attended EDP Services in 2015 until present.

Before TheHorseCourse Person 5 was using heroin. She stated that she had issues with isolation and loneliness. She attended EDP but was not progressing and still continued to use heroin.

Attended the 5 day programme in September 2015.

Immediately after TheHorseCourse she continued to participate in treatment and stated that she had increased motivation to maintain abstinence and to resume custody of her baby. She managed challenges better and asked for help more readily. In the months after the course she was attending EDP and making progress. Staff at EDP have observed an increased confidence and enthusiasm for life.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 5																
Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
4.0	2.5	1.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	+9%
Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course																



At referral to TheHorseCourse

Immediately after TheHorseCourse

Two months after TheHorseCourse



First attended EDP Services in 2011 until 2012 after being involved in other services since 2001. Returned to EDP in 2014 until present.

Before TheHorseCourse Person 6 did periodically attend EDP but was not progressing and was prescribed methadone. She wanted to take part in the course to help her to increase her self-esteem and confidence, whilst experiencing something different and getting out of her comfort zone in a safe environment.

Attended the 5 day programme in August 2015.

Immediately after TheHorseCourse she regularly attend EDP. She was making progress but had experienced a number of personal challenges which she managed very well. She had two one off uses of heroin however in the past this would have resulted in a full blown lapse to block out her emotions. She was working hard to remain positive and applied to become a peer supporter with EDP. She was also keen to secure some voluntary work. She was using techniques learnt at TheHorseCourse to avoid panic attacks and she attribute many of the positive changes that have happened to her despite the relapse to the course. In the months after the course she is attending EDP and making progress. She has taken on chairing a meeting at EDP’s Dorchester services.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 6

Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
4.0	3.0	4.0	2.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	-22%

Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course



First attended EDP Services in 2015 after being involved in other services since 2010 and left at the end of the year after taking place in TheHorseCourse.

Person 7 came to TheHorseCourse at a time in her life when she had made a lot of changes which had already increased her confidence and self-esteem but recognised that she still had some work to do. She wanted to start volunteering with EDP to help boost her confidence and wanted to take part in the course to learn techniques to manage her emotions.

Attended the 5 day programme in September 2015.

Immediately after TheHorseCourse Person 7 had achieved abstinence after reducing their drinking to 10 units three times a week. She was attending groups and planned to apply to become a peer mentor. During the course she fed back to her key worker, "Amazing day at TheHorseCourse. Thank you so SO so much! Feels like Xmas has come early, excited is an understatement. Loving it!" In the months after the course she is irregularly attending EDP but has expressed an interest in completing EDP Dorset's peer mentoring training and is in contact with facilitators of TheHorseCourse.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 7																
Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
3.0	4.0	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.0	4.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	+9%
Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course																



At referral to TheHorseCourse

Immediately after TheHorseCourse

Two months after TheHorseCourse



First attended EDP Services in 2014 until present after being involved in other services since 2006.

Before TheHorseCourse Person 8 was attending EDP but was not making progress. He could identify what he needed to do but was not able to follow through. He was abstinent from illicit drugs but was being prescribed opiate substitutes. He stated that he was isolated and had low confidence. He hoped TheHorseCourse would enable him to get out of their shell more to mix with others. He felt the course would be something to give him structure and to look forward to.

Attended the 5 day programme in June 2015.

Immediately after TheHorseCourse he continued to attend EDP but was not making progress and staff raised concerns about his drug use when he had previously been abstinent. In the months after TheHorseCourse despite some significant setbacks (overdose) he has stated that they had a new commitment to abstinence and has started to open up to staff. He is now stable although he is still associating with the same social group which is a barrier to change for him.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 8																
Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
2.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	+22%
Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course																



First attended EDP Services in 2007 until 2008. Returned to EDP in 2015 until present.

Before TheHorseCourse Person 9 attended EDP irregularly and had issues with her alcohol use. She suffered from anxiety and worried about what people thought of her. She had low self-esteem as a result of being bullied in the past and various health issues caused by their drinking. She hoped the course would help her to have more structure and confidence to improve her social network.

Attended the 2 day programme in July 2015.

Since the course person 9 has been attending EDP weekly for 1-1 sessions and is making progress. Her alcohol use decreased from 15 units daily to 10 units twice or three times a week. She felt confident enough to dress up and take part in the Dorset Recovery Day and Carnival Procession showing an increase in social engagement as well as engagement with the service.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 9

Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
1.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	3.0	3.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	
Rated by referrer with participant at referral time and again 2 months post course																



At referral to TheHorseCourse

Immediately after TheHorseCourse

Two months after TheHorseCourse



First attended EDP Services in 2009 until present after being involved in other services since 2006.

Before TheHorseCourse Person 10 attended EDP irregularly was prescribed an opiate substitute and additionally would use drugs once a week. She stated that she felt isolated and had no family contact although she had good relationships with professionals. She was anxious and had issues with her self-esteem and self-belief. She hoped that TheHorseCourse would help her with her self-confidence and communication and increase their learning of a new skill.

Attended the 5 day programme in August 2015.

Throughout TheHorseCourse and immediately afterwards she was very positive, was attending the Dorset Back on Track service and making progress. However in the months after the course she became disengaged and has left Dorset Back on Track. She attend EDP irregularly and continues to have intermittent engagement with the needle exchange services in Weymouth.

TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 10																
Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
0		1.0		2.0		2.0		2.0		2.0		2.0		3.0		
Post course data not currently available																



First attended EDP Services in 2011. Returned to EDP in 2012 until present.

Before the Horse Course Person 11 was attending EDP but was not progressing and he smoking cannabis daily. He could be aggressive when he felt threatened or frustrated which in the past had led to being arrested and imprisonment. He had volatile family relationship and unhealthy personal relationships. He had low self-esteem and a negative self-image. He also felt that he lacked drive and focus. He hoped that being involved in The Horse Course would help him to gain perspective on his own ability to change and to make change permanent. He also hoped it would help him to get a bit of hope for his future.

Attended the first day of the two day programme in June 2015 but did not complete due to transport concerns.

Although he did not complete all of the programme, immediately after The Horse Course person 11's attendance at EDP continued to be consistent, his alcohol use halved but his cannabis use doubled. In the months after the course he is attending EDP and has reduced his use.

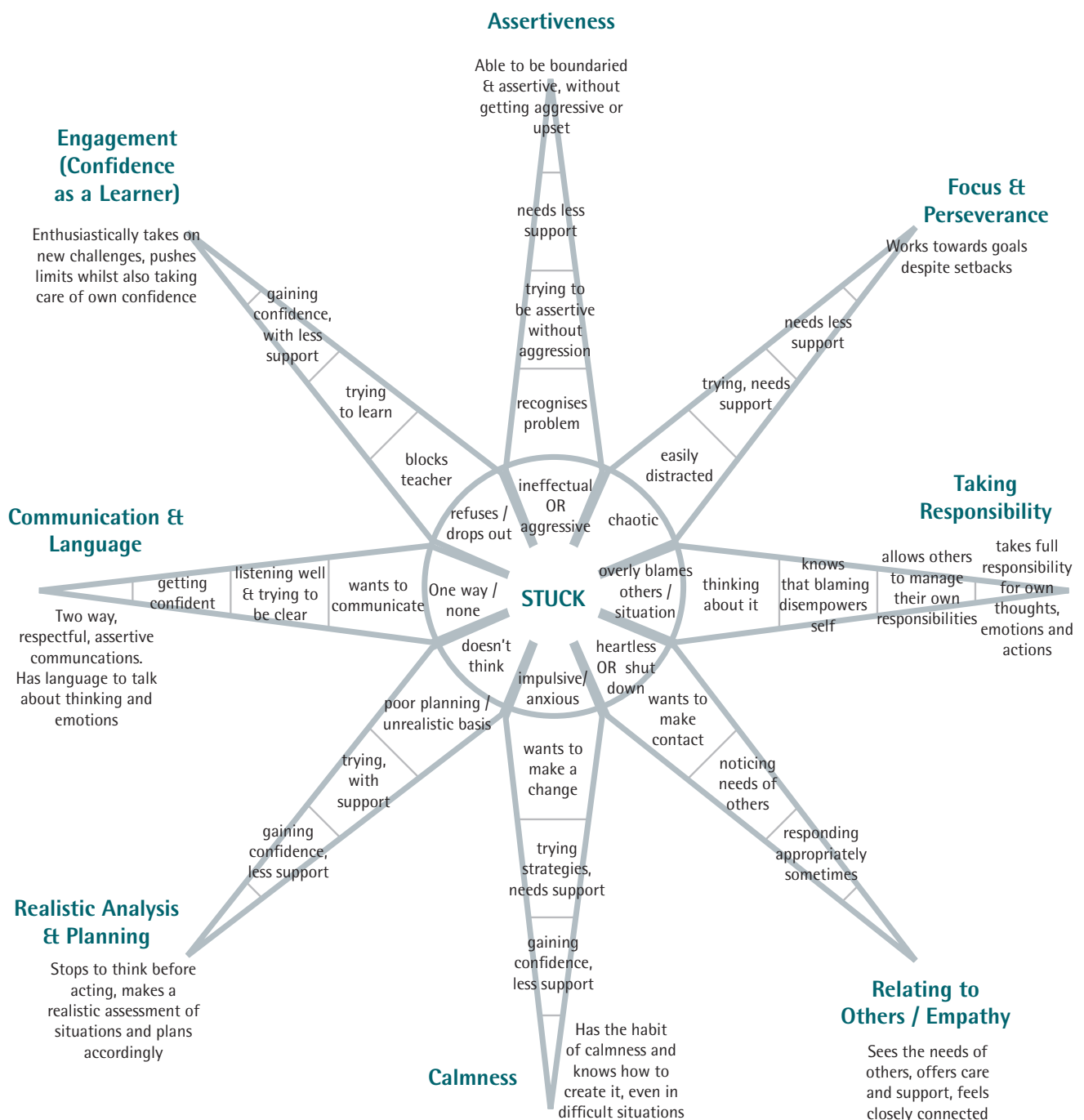
TheHorseCourse Skills Star data for Person 11

Assertiveness		Focus		Responsibility		Empathy		Calmness		Realistic Planning		Communication		Engagement		% shift over whole star
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
2.0		1.0		1.0		3.0		0		1.0		2.0		2.0		
Post course data not currently available																

TheHorseCourse Star

The Star is used by TheHorseCourse as a pre-course referral tool. Usually it is filled in by the referrer based on their own view of the participant at this time point, and then re-assessed two months post-course as part of TheHorseCourse standard monitoring and evaluation process. In this study however, the Star was filled in by EDP key workers **in collaboration** with the service user at both time points.

The Star is also used as a teaching tool within the course. On the final session of the course participants sit for half an hour to reflect on their journey. This is one of two short paper-based sessions during the 10 hour course – the rest is in action. They take home a star marked with a before and after score showing their distance travelled throughout the course. The discussions centre on the activities that have taken place on the course and the changes that can be evidenced that week. Participants are encouraged to think about how they could take their shifts in skills and habits back into “real life”.



Conclusions

- TheHorseCourse was, for the majority of people, an effective tool to engage and move forward in their recovery journey.
- TheHorseCourse as an engagement tool was at its most effective immediately after the programme. This effect held for most people even two months later, indicating successful partnership working.
- Two months post intervention, 55% of the group had changed from making limited use of EDP services to making good use of the EDP service, potentially reducing wider costs to themselves and society.
- TheHorseCourse also provided people with a gain in 8 core skills important for the recovery journey. TheHorseCourse Skills Star data was scored at referral time and again 2 months post-course, (by the EDP referrer and the participant together). Averaging scores for the nine participants of the pilot for whom we have data at this stage, there is a positive shift in all 8 areas, especially
 - Calmness (up 17%)
 - Focus & perseverance (up 18%)
 - Empathy: seeing the needs of others and responding appropriately (up 19%)
 - Engagement, or Confidence as a Learner (up 13%)

and a 12% positive shift across the whole star. This is not as high as seen for TheHorseCourse with other cohorts, which is to be expected in working with a group known to be particularly difficult to reach and shift.

- All participants spoke positively of TheHorseCourse and the effect it had on them in their recovery journey.
- Five shorter sessions on consecutive days were more effective than two long days.
- The one participant who completed only half the course still made progress in recovery, attributing some benefits to the course.
- The Parelli Level 1 horsemanship certificate (externally video assessed in USA) may have contributed to self-belief and pride. All 10 completers achieved this.

TheHorseCourse has received funding from The Lloyds Foundation to continue this work in partnership with EDP. The funding will allow 20 people to be referred from EDP to TheHorseCourse over the next year for ReStart courses and 40 additional people for lighter touch interventions or inreach.



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