



Government statistics show **1 in 10 children will experience a mental health problem**. This number is likely to be increasing. We know that many more experience significant emotional and behavioural difficulties which increase vulnerability, impact on learning and can be a real barrier to academic achievement. Disadvantaged children are even more at risk of this and as thresholds for child and adolescent services are increasing, it is harder to intervene early and prevent difficulties escalating.

Future in Mind (2015) is the government's policy on mental health for children and young people. It recommends an increasing role for schools in building resilience and adopting whole school approaches to promoting mental health and well-being. At the same time, there is an important drive to reduce stigma surrounding mental health problems.

CUES-Ed is committed to supporting these recommendations and has developed an innovative psycho-education project - '**Who I Am and What I Can: How to Keep My Brain Amazing**', designed to improve the emotional wellbeing and resilience of primary school children. The core package consists of an 8 session whole-class intervention delivered by highly skilled practitioners. Each session is interactive, draws on a range of multi-media sources and is embedded within evidence-based cognitive behavioural practice.

The CUES-Ed package aims to boost each child's emotional and academic potential by teaching them how to notice the signs when things aren't right – such as an increase in worry, a change in appetite or sleep patterns and difficulties in friendship groups. It teaches cognitive strategies and behavioural techniques to help manage difficulties. The approach enables children to learn that their thoughts, feelings and behaviour are interconnected and that there are practical things they can do to manage life's ups and downs, both at home and at school.

The **whole-class approach** means all children are educated about how to maintain mental health, it can reduce stigma and encourage shared learning opportunities. Class teachers are encouraged to promote and practice the CUES-Ed techniques outside of the sessions to embed the ideas into the classroom.

To date we have worked with over 4000 children across different schools. Teachers and pupils have recognised benefits of the package in children acquiring positive coping strategies, better recognition of difficulties and children being more likely to ask for help.

For more information on the project, please email cues.ed@slam.nhs.uk or visit www.cues-ed.co.uk

BBC Article:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-38148892>

South London Press Article:

<https://www.londonnewsonline.co.uk/13156/pioneering-project-gives-kids-head-start-managing-mental-health/>

See reverse for CUES-Ed outcome results 

SOUTHWARK 2017 KEY OUTCOMES

- Pupils and teachers across 15 primary schools in the London Borough of Southwark provided feedback and completed outcome questionnaires measuring emotional and behavioural difficulties (Me & My Feelings, M&MF; Deighton et al., 2013) and overall emotional wellbeing (Children’s Outcome Rating Scale, CORS; Duncan, Miller & Sparks, 2003) before the first session and after the final session.
- Children who scored within the borderline/clinical range for emotional difficulties ($n=119$) and behavioural difficulties ($n=87$) on the M&MF before CUES-Ed, show significant improvements following the intervention, with the group means shifting from ‘clinical’ to ‘borderline’ ($p<.001$) (Figure 1).
- Both the whole sample ($n=479$) and sample of children who reported a score below 32 indicating lower levels of wellbeing ($n=209$) improved their scores from before to after CUES-Ed ($p<0.001$) (Figure 2).

Figure 1: M&MF mean scores

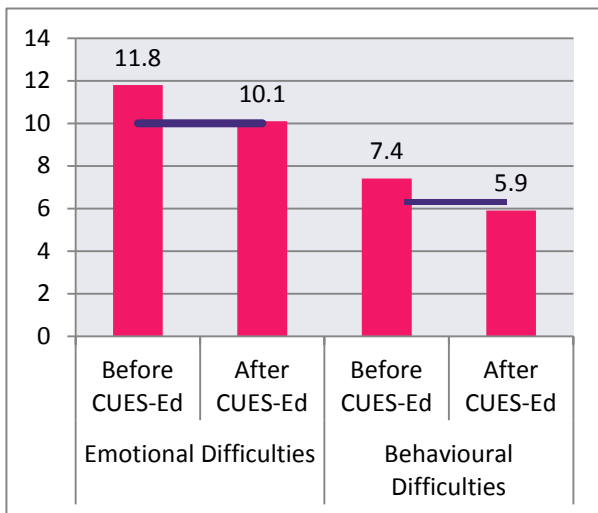
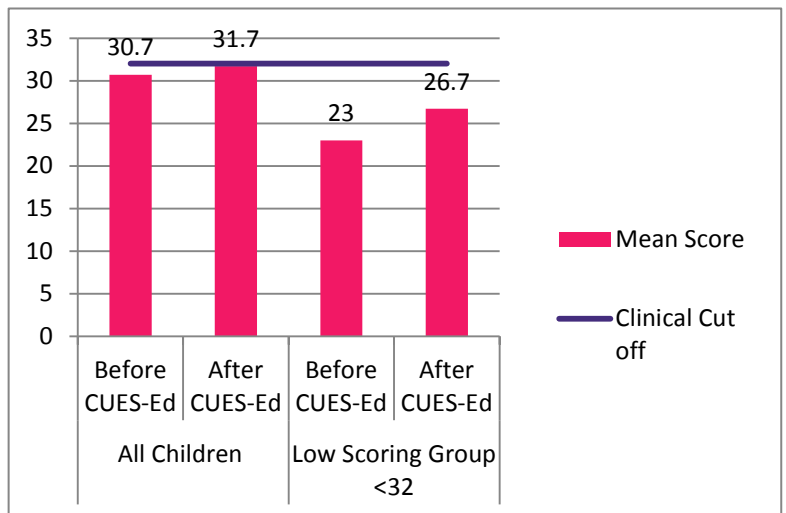


Figure 2: CORS overall mean scores



Qualitative feedback

- 84% of children reported that CUES-Ed helped ‘quite a bit’ or ‘lots’.
- A thematic analysis of written evaluations showed the majority of children reported improvements across different areas after CUES-Ed (Table 1).
- Teachers report being better able to communicate about emotional difficulties with children and improved behaviours in the classroom. They also report continuing to use CUES-Ed strategies in the classroom.

Themes
<p style="text-align: center;">Increased repertoire of coping strategies</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Relaxation techniques, behavioural techniques to improve mood, strategies for managing feelings of anger and frustration</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Increased knowledge</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Understanding links between physical and emotional wellbeing, understanding confusing of difficult experiences</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Increased use of cognitive strategies to manage emotions</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Use of positive self-talk, noticing thinking traps and ‘catching thoughts’</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Improved emotional regulation</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Improvement in behaviour, improvement in concentration, and improvement in feelings of sadness anger and worry</i></p>

Table 1: Themes identified by children as useful in a thematic analysis of their feedback