

**Disseminating the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme
across a rural Welsh county:**

Report to Powys teaching Health Board and Powys County Council

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Abstract

This practice paper reports on the way that the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (IY TCM) has been disseminated across Powys, a rural Welsh county. Evaluation of the first cohorts who were trained in IY TCM between 2011 and 2016 reported significant change in staff perception of key pupil's social and emotional well-being on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and significant reduction in teacher occupational stress measured by the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI), following completion of the programme. Robust measures from previous Incredible Years studies were used. The value of a designated IY Lead, unique partnership approach and inter-agency agreement for facilitating success are discussed. Early feedback from online groups delivered in Powys during the Covid pandemic are also presented.

Introduction

This practice paper reports on the way that the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (IY TCM) has been disseminated across Powys, a rural Welsh county. This programme has a wide evidence base (Hutchings et al. 2013; Early Intervention Foundation, 2017) for its effectiveness. Evaluation of the first cohorts who were trained in IY TCM between 2011 and 2016 are presented, with results from robust measures used frequently in Incredible Years studies. The value of a designated IY Lead, unique partnership approach and inter-agency agreement for facilitating success are discussed. Early findings from online groups delivered during the Covid pandemic are also discussed.

Over the last three decades, teachers have reported increasing levels of behavioral problems within the classroom (Hutchings, Williams, Martin and Pritchard, 2011) particularly among boys, and these children are at high risk for social and emotional problems, poor school attendance, school dropout, academic failure and delinquency (Webster-Stratton, Reid, & Stoolmiller, 2008). They are often taught by teachers who feel poorly prepared (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008) and are less likely to receive support and positive feedback from their teachers and peers (Arnold et al., 1999). A supportive teacher and a positive classroom environment improve the academic achievement of high-risk children (Werner, 1999). High levels of praise for appropriate behaviour improve children's behavioral, social, and emotional adjustment as do the use of proactive teaching and positive discipline strategies (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008).

Teaching can be a stressful career (Newberry and Alsop, 2017). Teachers report some of the highest rates of work-related stress, anxiety and depression (DoE, 2019). Difficulties with classroom management are a significant stressor (Hayes, Titheradge, Allen, and Allwood, 2019; DoE, 2019), which can impact on teaching quality and result in exit from the profession (Aloe et al., 2014). Teacher well-being has an impact on pupils (Hayes et al., 2019) and their experience of stress can be linked with a less positive approach (Webster-Stratton and Herman, 2010; Hanif, Tariq, and Nadeem, 2011). Support is vital, particularly for newly qualified teachers, and class-based social emotional programmes should be available (Harmsen et al., 2018). These studies demonstrate that there is a need for effective, evidence-based classroom intervention programmes to support teachers.

The Incredible Years (IY) Teacher Classroom Management Programme

The IY programmes for parents, children and teachers have demonstrated efficacy and effectiveness from high-quality randomised controlled trials (RCTs) for both the prevention and treatment of conduct disorder (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011).

The IY TCM programme (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2002; Webster-Stratton, 1995/2022) is delivered to groups of teachers for one day a month over five or six months. It aims to improve teacher–pupil relationships by improving home–school links, increasing

teacher competencies in supporting children in the classroom, and developing children's social and problem-solving skills. Specific skills include proactive teacher strategies around rules and transitions and ensuring that fewer clear, positive and specific instructions are given (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2002; Webster-Stratton & Taylor, 2001). It also incorporates strategies to maximize behaviour change through a collaborative delivery style (Hutchings, Gardner, & Lane, 2004; Webster-Stratton, 2012). Teachers identify key classroom management skills through discussion, observation of videotaped examples of classroom situations, role-play rehearsal and classroom-based practice between sessions, including behaviour planning. Feedback is provided at the start of the following session, and verbal and written assignments are reviewed and returned (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2002).

Delivery of the TCM programme with fidelity is key to achieving the outcomes seen in the many studies which have provided a robust evidence base. Webster-Stratton and Herman (2010) note the importance of quality training, supervision, adherence to delivery protocols, and evaluation. Peer networks, IY champions and mentors play a significant role within local multi-agency teams.

Key factors for programme success are: building teachers self efficacy and confidence through collaborative relationships; goal setting and self monitoring; experiential learning and self reflection; ensuring consideration of cognitions and emotions; clear conceptual content structure with the visual IY pyramid; encouragement to relate content to teachers' own settings; and a supportive infrastructure (Webster-Stratton et al., 2011).

Evidence for the IY-TCM Programme

A number of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) of the IY series undertaken by the programme developer have included the TCM programme in various combinations with the IY parent and/or child programmes. (Webster-Stratton, Reid, and Hammond, 2001; Webster-Stratton, Reid, and Hammond, 2004; Webster-Stratton, Reid, and Stoolmiller 2008).

Other studies have examined the TCM programme in combination with other components. Shernoff and Kratochwill (2007) evaluated the IY-TCM programme in a pre-

school setting in conjunction with mental health consultations. Teachers in the TCM plus consultation condition reported significantly higher confidence and acceptability ratings, and significantly greater use of proactive instructions. Williford and Shelton (2008) also examined the effectiveness of an adaptation of the IY-TCM programme delivered using mental health consultation. Teachers in the intervention group reported significantly greater use of effective teaching strategies and stable levels of child disruptive behaviors across the school year compared to teachers in the control group who reported increasing levels of disruptive behaviour across the school year.

There have been a number of studies of the TCM programme as a stand-alone intervention. A pilot cluster RCT in 24 Jamaican preschools found significant benefits in child behaviour based on observations, teacher reports and parent reports (Baker-Henningham, Walker, Powell, & Gardner, 2009; Baker-Henningham, Scott, Jones, and Walker, 2012). Teachers said that the programme promoted children's social competencies, school readiness, positive teacher-child and teacher-parent relationships. Furthermore, they felt that the TCM programme enhanced their professional skills and supported their development (Baker-Henningham and Walker, 2009).

Carlson, Tiet, Bender, and Benson (2011) examined teachers' perceptions of the usefulness and frequency of use of classroom management strategies following completion of the IY TCM training. Significant increases in pre-school teachers' perceptions of positive strategy use were found and maintained 16 weeks later. Evaluations have been ongoing in many other countries including the United States, England, Norway, Portugal, Ireland, and New Zealand (Hutchings, 2012). In addition to the study by Hutchings et al. (2012), other key RCT studies in the USA and Ireland led to the TCM programme receiving a high rating (Early Intervention Foundation, 2017) for significant positive effects on outcomes (Ford et al., 2018).

In an urban area of the United States the TCM intervention led to more proactive teacher strategies, improvements in pupil emotional regulation, pro-social behaviours, social competence and academic results ((Reinke, Herman and Dong, 2018; Chuang et al., 2020). Chuang et al (2020) suggested the potential impact for creating positive outcomes for pupils

showing externalised behaviours. Pupils with high social, emotional and behavioural needs benefitted most in Hickey et al.'s (2015) RCT study of short-term outcomes in Ireland, which found improvements in teacher-pupil relationships and pupil emotional symptoms. There were reductions in teacher stress, disruption and use of negative classroom management strategies after training in the TCM skills. Similarly, outcomes from a cluster RCT in rural and semi-rural schools in the United States suggested that there were gains for pupils with greater needs in pro-social skills and attentional focus. There were also improvements to the classroom climate within that school year (but not sustained the following year), following teacher attendance on TCM (Murray et al. 2017). Another cluster RCT study used a person centred analysis to look at teachers' perceptions of parental engagement and how this links with teacher views of pupil performance. They found that this can alter favourably following reflection facilitated by TCM (Thompson et al., 2017). Teachers' sense of affiliation to their school moderated positive classroom techniques used (for teachers with less sense of affiliation) and outcomes for pupils (for teachers with a greater affiliation) in a study by Sebastian et al.(2019).

An initial RCT in the south west of England (Ford et al, 2018) with 80 schools, established a significant positive intervention effect on pupil behaviour and mental health after 9 months, but not at 18 or 30 months. In Norway all early primary years teachers were trained in TCM (Aasheim, Reedtz, Handegård and Martinussen, 2018) and significant positive changes in pupil behaviour and social skills were reported by teachers following intervention. A recent study in Portugal concluded that TCM contributed to increased teacher use of effective management strategies, including labelled praise, in their study group where young people experienced economic disadvantage (Gaspar et al., 2022). TCM may help to reduce disparity between social groups (Seabra-Santos et al., 2022).

Recent TCM participants in a UK study gave positive feedback about structure, theory, delivery of the programme, and opportunities for reflection. There were cultural differences in materials presented. More on applying strategies for older children and focus on context was requested (Allen et al., 2022). In Ireland, initial results have suggested personal benefits for teacher well-being (Kennedy et al., 2021). A comprehensive RCT in Wales (Williams et al., 2019) reported positive changes in interactions and in pupil behaviour

in class following the TCM programme; notably pupils were more able to remain focused on schoolwork. They acknowledged the TCM programme as a universal effective teacher classroom management programme.

Development of the IY programmes in Wales

The IY basic parent programme was introduced into North Wales in 1998 (Hutchings et al., 2007b). In 2001, Gwynedd County Council Education Department decided to pilot the introduction of the IY Child and TCM programmes (Hutchings et al., 2004). In 2002 Bangor University started to evaluate the child and teacher programmes in Wales.

The first two TCM courses in North Wales were run during 2002/3 and attended by 23 teachers. The response of these teachers was assessed using the Teacher Satisfaction Questionnaire (TSQ, a teacher report questionnaire – Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2002) and a subsequent semi-structured post-course interview. Teacher responses were overwhelmingly positive and they had all made use of the strategies taught and gave extremely positive reports on the usefulness in the classroom of the methods taught (Hutchings et al., 2007). A subsequent observational study of teacher and pupil behaviour undertaken in their classrooms that was reported in the same paper showed significant differences in teacher and child behaviour in the classrooms of teachers that received the training.

As a result of the positive feedback, and in the light of positive school inspection reports highlighting the programme, Gwynedd seconded a headteacher to support the training and embarked on providing IY-TCM training to teachers in all of its 102 primary schools. This provided an opportunity for an RCT (Hutchings et al., 2013), which evaluated the efficacy of the programme. Specifically, it assessed whether training teachers in TCM principles improved staff behavior, whether any observed improvements impacted on pupil behaviour classroom-wide, and whether these effects could be demonstrated with children at risk of developing conduct problems. Six intervention and six control classrooms comprising 12 teachers and 107 children (aged 3 to 7 years) were recruited. The primary outcome measure was independent classroom observations using the Teacher–Pupil Observation Tool (Martin et al., 2010). Multi-level modeling analyses were used to examine the effect of the

intervention on teacher, classroom, and child behavior. Results showed a significant reduction in classroom off-task behaviour ($d = 0.53$), teacher negatives to target children ($d = 0.36$), target child negatives towards the teacher ($d = 0.42$), and target child off-task behaviour ($d = 0.48$) among TCM trained teachers. These results demonstrated the efficacy of the programme and its impact on both teacher and child behaviour (Hutchings et al., 2013).

As results from studies of the child and teacher programmes in Wales filtered through, and as the IY philosophy matched the Welsh Government's developing discovery-based Foundation Phase early years education approach, over a five year period from 2008 – 2013 the Welsh Government awarded funding for programme leader training and resources. This incorporated support for the child and teacher programmes for staff from local authorities across Wales, alongside funding for leader training for the IY parent programmes. All 22 Welsh authorities accessed TCM training.

The Powys strategy and unique approach

The journey 2005 to 2016

Within Powys there was a unique approach in adopting the Incredible Years suite of programmes for parents, teachers and children. In 2005 a Consultant Child Psychologist was appointed by Powys teaching Health Board to take the clinical lead in training and supporting the development of Incredible Years (IY) across the county. This enabled the development of an integrated approach to supporting families, schools and children in Powys, with consistent messages regarding the development of social and emotional competence in early years settings, schools and at home, building common and complementary skills across the workforce and settings.

The psychologist built an alliance with agencies from the Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP), including educational psychologists, advisory teachers, schools and early years settings, to promote and deliver the Teacher Classroom Management (TCM) and pupil 'Dinosaur' programmes, which help young children develop social competence

skills. Third sector commissioned providers offered central coordination of programmes for parents. A significant factor was the support of a senior strategic manager from within the CYPP who proved a very effective champion.

Following presentation of evidence and early results, the CYPP incorporated delivery of the Incredible Years programmes into the Family and Behaviour Support strategy, linked with the Powys One plan. The Powys strategy included multi-agency investment, training, delivery and planning at both a strategic and operational level; participation in ongoing research and evaluation linked to Bangor University; a carefully planned holistic approach with strategic alignment of classroom and parent programmes; and investment for a supportive infrastructure.

Investment enabled the psychologist to offer leadership, training free of charge and mentorship for all of the IY programmes. Colleagues from the voluntary and statutory sector were able to train alongside each other, use common strategies across agencies, and develop partnership working based on an IY model. All training was provided by the Lead. A second mentor for the 'Dinosaur' programme supported staff in schools and there were a number of local champions. Regular consultation and supervision was offered to trainers and group leaders which increased the likelihood of fidelity. Rigorous programme delivery, as set out by the programme developer and demonstrated in many studies (Mihalic et al., 2002), was particularly important to achieve outcomes in line with the evidence-research base.

School staff were recruited by invitation via their Headteachers and advertisement was through a local authority link. There was promotion of the advantages of a local Lead and Trainer and opportunities for training and support; the benefits of the IY approach for pupil wellbeing, for personal professional development; gaining a new perspective on classroom management; and the growing body of research showing positive outcomes (eg in the US and in Wales). Schools were aware of endorsement of IY across the county, providing confidence in ongoing access to training and expertise. The Lead provided a rolling programme of training enabling new staff to train or others to refresh and consolidate skills. Many staff had also been involved in delivering IY groups for parents with positive feedback. Some head teachers and senior teachers were able to train as trainers in TCM, disseminating information to colleagues and providing ongoing support. Schools were able to reference that

they ran the Incredible Years programmes when applying for accreditation as part of the 'Healthy Schools initiative'.

The success of this approach secured recurrent funding and was recognised in the granting of a national NHS award in 2012. The local authority requested that all schools in the primary phase be trained to further embed the approach.

On the strength of initial programme success and the engendered confidence, other evidence based social competence programmes have been able to access similar funding streams, are well received and widely implemented in the county, for example the KiVa anti-bullying programme, which began implementation in 2012 (Stewart et al., 2021). Latterly the IY Incredible Beginnings programme for early years childcare staff has been widely rolled out and evaluated (Crumpton, 2020; Brisland and Evans, 2023).

Analysis of early data 2011 to 2016

A project undertaken by a psychology assistant in 2016 allowed data to be analysed from a cohort of sixty members of school staff, including teachers, headteachers, and teaching assistants from primary schools across North Powys who took part in TCM training after being invited to attend by the Powys IY Lead via their Headteachers.

Two robust measures used consistently in IY studies were completed pre- and post-training as part of a routine TCM evaluation to ensure fidelity, allow participants to reflect on, and evaluate effectiveness over time.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997), a 25 item measure of social and emotional well-being, has five scales consisting of five items each: Emotional symptoms; Conduct problems; Hyperactivity/ inattention; Peer relationship problems; and Prosocial behavior. Scores can be classified as 'close to average'; 'slightly raised'; 'slightly lowered'; 'low' or 'high', etc. A 'high' or 'very high' score above the cut off of 15 could potentially indicate a cause for concern. At the first session each participant

was asked to complete the SDQ with a focus on a specific pupil in class. At the end of the last training session the SDQ was repeated for the same pupil.

The Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) developed by Fimian (1984) uses a self-report 5-point Likert-type response scale (ranging from 1 to 5) that measures occupational stress experienced by teachers. An overall score is calculated based on sources of stress across five dimensions: Time management; Work related stress; Professional distress; Discipline and motivation; and Professional investment. A score of 33 or over is considered a marker for a moderate level of stress. Each participant completed the ten-item version of the TSI at the beginning and end of the course. A subset of TSI items particularly related to classroom management was created using five items for specific analysis (ie. Difficult class, Noisy class, Poor pupil attitude, Maintaining discipline and Impolite behaviour).

Fifty repeated TSI measures were completed pre- and post-training. Forty-eight SDQ measures, completed pre- and post-training, were matched so that scores for each participant could be compared and perceived progress for a pupil in class could be evaluated. Responses were excluded if matching was not possible (n=12) due to administrative error, where circumstances had altered and/or staff were no longer able to attend all sessions or no longer working with the key pupil.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) results

Total SDQ scores

<i>SDQ Total Mean scores (n=48)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	22.62	16.44	5.18
<i>SD</i>	5.77	6.33	6.32

The reduction in SDQ Total mean scores between pre- and post-training was significant ($t(54)=6.08$, two tail $p < 0.001$). (see the table above for mean scores). Prior to training 84% of participants' scores on perceived difficulties for a key pupil were in the 'high' or 'very high' range where there could be a 'possible cause for concern', and this had reduced to 51% post-training. Therefore, around a third of participants' scores had moved out of the range where there could be cause for concern.

SDQ Conduct scores

<i>SDQ Conduct scores (n=48)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	4.85	3.36	1.49
<i>SD</i>	2.65	2.26	2.16

The reduction in perceived Conduct problem mean scores pre- and post-training was significant ($t(54)=5.12$, two tail $p < 0.01$). Further there was a reduction in the percentage of scores for students in the 'high' or 'very high' range from 53% pre-training to 33% post-training. Therefore 20% of participants' scores had moved out of the range where there could be cause for concern.

SDQ Hyperactivity scores

<i>SDQ Hyperactivity scores (n=48)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	8.47	6.71	1.76
<i>SD</i>	1.75	2.44	2.51

There was therefore a significant reduction in teacher reports of student hyperactivity post training ($t(54)=5.21$, two tail $p < 0.01$). The percentage of scores for students in the

‘high’ or ‘very high’ range reduced from 82% pre-training to 44% post-training. Therefore 38% of participants’ scores had moved out of the range where there could potentially be cause for concern.

SDQ Emotional Symptoms scores

<i>SDQ Emotional Symptoms scores (n=48)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	3.31	2.6	0.71
<i>SD</i>	2.82	2.21	2.62

There was a significant reduction in emotional symptoms post course ($t(54)=2.01$, two tail $p<0.05$).

SDQ Peer Problems scores

<i>SDQ Peer Problems scores (n=48)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	4.98	3.76	1.22
<i>SD</i>	2.14	2.12	2.09

The reduction in perceived Peer Problems mean scores pre- and post-training was significant ($t(54)=-4.15$, two tail $p<0.01$). Additionally, 38% of scores for students in the ‘high’ or ‘very high’ range pre-training reduced to 24% post-training. Therefore 15% of participants’ scores had moved out of the range where there could be cause for concern.

SDQ Pro-social scores

<i>SDQ Pro-social scores (n=48)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	3.31	4.65	1.34
<i>SD</i>	2.18	2.2	2.41

There was a significant increase in post-group pro-social scores ($t(54)=4.33$, two tail $p<0.01$). Additionally, 55% of scores for students in the 'high' or 'very high' range pre-training reduced to 29% post-training.

Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) results

TSI Total Stress scores

<i>TSI Total Stress scores (n=50)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	28.58	25.62	2.97
<i>SD</i>	11.87	11.54	7.85

There was a significant reduction in teacher reported stress post-training ($t(59)=2.93$, two tail $p<0.01$).

TSI subscale for items relating to classroom management

<i>TSI Subscale scores (n=50)</i>	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<i>Mean</i>	7.88	6.38	1.5
<i>SD</i>	3.97	3.64	2.7

A separate analysis was carried out on a subset of TSI items particularly related to classroom management (ie. Difficult class, Noisy class, Poor pupil attitude, Maintaining discipline and Impolite behaviour). Post-group teachers reported significantly less stress relating to classroom management ($t(59)=4.3$, two tail $p<0.01$).

Qualitative outcome measures

Outcome feedback was captured using TCM session evaluations and a detailed final TCM evaluation questionnaire. Staff who attended early 'in person' TCM training in Powys found the content and strategies presented 'useful' or 'extremely useful' in their work. They felt key pupil well-being, and classroom behaviour generally, had either 'improved' or 'greatly improved'. They reported feeling calmer, positive, more confident and in control, and that they had gained strategies to create positive interactions with pupils.

Some comments from evaluation forms from early 'in person' TCM cohorts of teachers:

<p>'I feel more confident about managing challenging behavior'</p> <p>'Helping me maintain a positive attitude to teaching and learning'</p> <p>'Helpful and informative with strategies to help me work with more challenging behaviour'</p> <p>'Video content was excellent'</p> <p>'A very useful workshop'</p> <p>'Very useful ideas and strategies to try in school'</p>

The journey 2016 to 2023

From 2016 to the present time the delivery of the IY TCM programme has continued with funding from an annual grant from Powys Local Authority for the ongoing roll out of the suite of IY programmes for parents, teachers and children. There continues to be a strong multi-agency partnership and a Powys Health service Lead for IY in Powys.

Challenges arose due the retirement of the Lead from their full time post in 2018, but she has continued to offer part time input to oversee management of provision and offer supervision for practitioners. Furthermore, in 2020 the advent of a global pandemic meant that face to face groups were not possible, which necessitated a significant change to the model of service delivery. The team responded by offering TCM training online via the Microsoft Teams platform to support practioners during the pandemic and this has been well received. The appointment of a part time Primary Mental Health Practitioner in 2020 has been fundamental to the success of facilitating online TCM groups. Since 2020 six TCM programmes have been delivered online at a rate of two per year. Forty eight members of teaching staff have attended the online groups. Respondents who completed evaluative measures reported enjoying the course and noted the benefit of opportunities to gain support (particularly during the pandemic and when schools were unable to be open), alongside a range of positive ideas and teaching strategies. Quantitative analysis of completed measures for groups delivered online is in the early stages. A flavour of quotes from participants' feedback from virtual groups are included below and in the appendix.

As the impact of the pandemic has reduced over time it has been possible to offer some in person training in 2023. Further online delivery of TCM groups is planned. This mixed delivery model affords access for teachers who are based in more rural parts of the county.

'Thank you for a wonderful course.'

'All aspects of the program were helpful.'

'I have enjoyed this course from start to finish.'

'It was great to be able to take away so many ideas to go and implement.'

'The videos used to demonstrate this within the session were also really useful.'

'The course has been so beneficial and helpful for my teaching. The sessions have lifted my spirits in Covid times and reminded me I'm not alone. Thank you!'

Summary

This paper reports on the successful approach in Powys to delivering IY TCM, with some early evaluation data to demonstrate effective delivery. Annual feedback and reporting led to continued funding, adoption into strategic planning, and request for all primary schools to be trained to embed the programme within the county. The factors which contributed to success are considered. Appointing a designated Consultant Child Psychologist Lead to develop Incredible Years within Powys was crucial to supporting programme development. The Lead built alliances across agencies, offered training and support, and promoted IY to enable development of an integrated consistent approach to supporting families, schools and children. Development of local champions, and academic links with colleagues at Bangor University were important. The demonstrated positive impact further increased confidence and led to the programme being linked with strategic objectives and adopted into Powys plans.

Evaluation of early IY TCM training data in Powys from 2011 to 2016 reported significant changes in staff perceptions of key pupil's social and emotional well-being on the SDQ measure following completion of training. Significant improvements were found on overall Total SDQ scores and for each of the five domains measured, with reductions in emotional difficulties, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and peer problems, and an increase in pro-social behaviour. A significant reduction in occupational stress was reported by participants following course completion, measured by Total TSI scores. Furthermore, results on a sub-scale of TSI items particularly pertinent to classroom management, showed that stress experienced in relation to having a difficult class, having a noisy class, poor attitude or impolite behaviour from pupils, and maintaining discipline, were significantly reduced. Significant improvements overall and in every measured domain of social and emotional well-being for a specific pupil, as perceived by staff, again demonstrate the effectiveness of TCM. Findings were in line with the results of Baker-Henningham et al. (2012) where TCM trained teachers reported improvements in pupil well-being and an increase in prosocial behaviour on the SDQ, compared to a control group. These results match those of Henningham and Baker et al. (2018) and in the meta-review by Korest and Carlson (2021) who point out that IY TCM may prevent teacher burn out and improve retention.

Teacher occupational stress levels as measured by the TSI decreased significantly, as did stress associated with classroom management issues. This would have implications for teacher well-being, enjoyment of their role and teaching quality (Hayes et al., 2019). Allen et al. (2019) suggested there are cumulative benefits from positive staff-pupil relationships, and that teachers were more able to see things from a pupil's perspective following TCM training. IY TCM reduces staff stress (Hickey et al., 2015); affords opportunities for staff to increase competence, manage their class differently and has positive effects for their pupils' well-being and future potential (Hutchings et al., 2013; Reinke et al., 2016; Ford et al., 2019).

Challenges arising in earlier years were related to coordination of groups so that staff from schools spread across a wide rural area could travel to, and attend, each session of the training. The availability of a central venue was key, aiming to help to avoid a lengthy travel distance for each participant if possible. Considerations for schools were the measures which needed to be in place so that teachers could be released from class, in the context of staff shortages and illness. The cohesion and coordination afforded by having a designated IY Lead for Powys and their networking with local IY champions mitigated some of the challenges of a population spread across a rural geographical area.

More recently the impact of the global pandemic has had very challenging and complex implications for young people, families, schools and teachers, and everyone. TCM training has been offered online via the Microsoft Teams platform which has meant that staff were able to access training without travelling and to connect with colleagues from remote parts of the county. Staff supported one another with technology challenges such as gaining a reliable and clear online connection.

A new addition to the IY suite of programmes - Incredible Beginnings (IB) – which draws upon the success of the IY TCM approach and strategies is now offered to early years setting staff in Powys. Staff trained online recently have evaluated the IB programme very positively (Brisland and Evans, 2023).

This paper demonstrates the effectiveness of TCM in rural Powys, highlights the important factors in the success of the programme, and adds to the evidence for TCM as a teacher-focussed classroom management intervention which leads to significant improvements in pupil and staff well-being. Very positive feedback was given by an early cohort of TCM trained staff, who stated that they, and all pupils in class benefitted from the intervention. Evaluation of recent online TCM groups is ongoing; early information suggests that current participants have found the training effective and very supportive for their practice. The impact of reduced stress levels for staff and improved pro-social, behavioural, and emotional outcomes for pupils are hugely important, particularly for young people's experience of school and their future potential.

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Appendix: Feedback comments from online TCM group participants (2020 – 2023)

‘I was able to build up a comfortable relationship with the other adults on the course virtually and share my experiences of teaching during Covid and this is down to the friendly atmosphere and was established from session 1.’

‘I really enjoyed being in a virtual room with another person – really nice to talk and share ideas of what they are doing in their school (also just having a general chat of these difficult times and sharing our feelings).’

‘Really enjoyed the course. Wish we were all together in a room ...Diolch’

‘This gave me many ideas and strategies for my ‘tool box’ which I will definitely be taking away and using in the future.’

‘..(Group leaders) did a fantastic job of getting us to think outside of the box and from different view points.’

‘Maybe some of the video clips were sometimes controversial but this also helped to highlight to us what we’d do differently so I think all parts were helpful.’

‘I liked how each session focused on a different layer of the pyramid meaning we could build up a toolkit of strategies.’

‘I liked how we were encouraged to talk and share rather than sit and listen. It was very interactive.’

‘I have gained a lot from this program. It has been lovely to talk with others and gain ideas which I have tried throughout.’

‘(Group leaders) were always so encouraging and positive. They really made you think about your successes from the programme.’

‘Such a fantastic workshop and so much to take away! Will be sad to see them end. Really makes you evaluate your day + what small differences can make such big wins. Diolch!’

‘Thank you (group leader) for an incredible delivery of this course.’