

HeadStart Newham – Bounce Back

[Bounce Back](#) is a programme run by HeadStart Newham that helps young people build resilience and develop confidence to face challenges in everyday life. The programme, run in schools across the borough, offers face-to-face support individually and in groups with a HeadStart-trained Youth Practitioner, as well as a free online [catalogue](#) of tips, tricks and information to help young people realise their strengths, look after their physical health and manage difficult situations in many areas of life.

Resilience Framework

[Resilient Therapy](#), developed by Professor Angie Hart and Dr Derek Blimcow from the BoingBoing Community, inspires the [Resilience Framework](#) that underpins the Bounce Back programme. Based upon a range of psychological paradigms and incorporation of evidence-based academic research, the Resilience Framework provides a [toolkit](#) for parents and practitioners to learn practical strategies to help develop resilience in children and young people. These include highlighting achievements; encouraging young people to see a positive and realistic future, such as through building support networks with likeminded people and emotional support groups; and helping a young person understand where they have come from and where they are now. The Framework draws upon and converts multi-disciplinary research into user-friendly, one-page sheets to help practitioners and individuals in different areas to help disadvantaged young people build their resilience. It incorporates areas of a young person's life under five categories: 'basics', including a healthy diet and enough sleep, 'belonging', including understanding what has happened in your life, 'learning', including highlighting achievements and organising yourself, 'coping', including understanding right from wrong and being brave, and 'core self' including knowing and understanding yourself and instilling a sense of hope.

Bounce Back implements this framework through a targeted intervention for primary school pupils in years 5 and 6 who have been identified, by themselves or a professional, as having at least one indicator of an emerging mental health problem, such as difficulty making friends and disruptive behaviour in class. The young people are offered between 7 and 10 weekly sessions with their Youth Practitioner, who they work with to explore their difficulties, learn new ways to manage and maintain wellbeing and develop practical skills to make positive life changes. The Youth Practitioner supports their young people to learn about 10 different markers of positive mental wellbeing and resilience, split into 'moves' and 'skills':

Moves	Skills
Staying in control and keeping cool	Planning for success
Tackling difficult relationships	Learning from experience
Planning and achieving your dreams	Staying motivated
Sleeping better	Dealing with tricky situations
Noticing the good things in life	Being able to ask for help
Being more active	
Doing what you're good at	
Having positive relationships and finding your crowd	
Eating healthily	
Finding someone to trust and talk to	

Young people are provided with a resilience behaviour change workbook to complete as they progress through the programme, and aspired changes to the young people's lives

include improved relationships, enhanced ability to problem solve and a reduction in presenting difficulties from the beginning to the end of the programme. All of these envisioned outcomes contribute towards preventing mental health problems from developing by addressing them at an early stage and with a holistic, person-centred and relational approach.

'I've never been social before Bounce Back, I like to play now and I like going out with friends more. Before I used to just walk around at break time. Before Bounce Back I had friends, but Bounce Back told me friends can help' – Young person, Bounce Back participant¹

Outcomes

A mixed methods service evaluation² of Bounce Back by Valdeep Gill and Michelle Mooney from the HeadStart Newham Research Team found statistically significant improvement across emotional and behavioural, self-esteem and problem solving areas.³ Pre and post measures of presenting difficulties are scored on a scale of 0-20, and divided into thresholds: 0-9 indicating low, 10-11 slightly elevated, and 12-20 high levels of difficulty in each area concerned. Whilst 78.7% of young people in the study scored 'low' on emotional difficulties before they began Bounce Back, 13.6% scored 'slightly elevated' and 7.7% scored 'high'. Of all of these young people participating in the programme, post-participation evaluation by Gill and Mooney found that 22% of these children showed 'reliable' improvement, indicating a decrease of at least 3 points on the emotional difficulty scale. Their report also established areas of development and progression in the participating pupils, from the perspective of staff. One Learning Mentor reflected that

'We've seen [the pupil] progress from the beginning to the last session. [They have] been able to tap into [their] empathetic side and tap into a different side of [their]

¹ Gill, V., Mooney, M. (2018). *BounceBack Newham: A review of Year 1 HeadStart Newham intervention delivery from the perspective of pupils, school and delivery staff*. Retrieved from: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/BounceBack-Newham-Full-research-report-2016-17.pdf>.

² Ville, E., Gill, V. (2019). *Bounce Back Newham: an evaluation of intervention delivery and outcomes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BounceBack-Newham-Full-research-report-2017-18.pdf>.

³ Gill, V., Mooney, M. (2018). *BounceBack Newham: A review of Year 1 HeadStart Newham intervention delivery from the perspective of pupils, school and delivery staff*. Retrieved from: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/BounceBack-Newham-Full-research-report-2016-17.pdf>.

personality, and then [they've] blossomed into somebody slightly different' – Bounce Back Learning Mentor

Staff described observable changes in the pupils following engagement with the programme, including language development and articulation, growth in self-confidence, a sense of belonging and a curiosity towards their behaviour which led to active change making.⁴ The reasons for referral to the programme were grouped into one or a combination of four categories⁵:

- Internalising behaviours: such as pupils with low self-esteem
- Externalising behaviours: such as pupils who are disruptive in class
- Educational needs: including those with low attainment
- Difficulties at home: including recently bereaved pupils

Young people with the highest reported success were those with the highest levels of engagement with the programme. Amongst those who showed lower levels of positive change from the beginning to the end of the programme were those with internalising behaviours who tended to find it more difficult to actively engage.

'Since it gave me confidence, I can do more things. Because of Bounce Back, the confidence they gave me, I can maybe put my reputation up so people will know me and it can make me a bit popular' – Young person, Bounce Back participant⁶

In 2020, further research regarding the impact of Bounce Back was undertaken by Humphrey & Panayiotou,⁷ in which all 326 participating pupils across 24 schools had at

⁴ Gill, V., Mooney, M. (2018). *BounceBack Newham: A review of Year 1 HeadStart Newham intervention delivery from the perspective of pupils, school and delivery staff*. Retrieved from: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/BounceBack-Newham-Full-research-report-2016-17.pdf>.

⁵ Gill, V., Mooney, M. (2018). *BounceBack Newham: A review of Year 1 HeadStart Newham intervention delivery from the perspective of pupils, school and delivery staff*. Retrieved from: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/BounceBack-Newham-Full-research-report-2016-17.pdf>.

⁶ Gill, V., Mooney, M. (2018). *BounceBack Newham: A review of Year 1 HeadStart Newham intervention delivery from the perspective of pupils, school and delivery staff*. Retrieved from: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BounceBack-Newham-Full-research-report-2016-17.pdf>.

Humphrey, N. & Panayiotou, M. (2020). Bounce Back: Randomised trial of a brief, school-based group intervention for children with emergent mental health difficulties. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. Online First. Retrieved from: https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s00787-020-01612-6?sharing_token=nM554z8tbvWtRtYD-8qULve4RwIQNchNByi7wbcMAY7VIgq3E11FJS-bxPKs6bfoO5hAu3w3rpo-amm-

least one indicator of an emerging mental health need as assessed by the referring teacher, using the HeadStart Newham target population criteria (e.g. mild/moderate anxiety or low mood which does not meet threshold for CAMHS referral). The results showed that Bounce Back engagement led to a statistically significant reduction in emotional problems, and further analysis showed that moderate to high levels of attendance were both associated with greater reduction in emotional problems. The authors concluded that Bounce Back is a promising intervention for reducing children's emotional difficulties, such as worry. They recommended greater support for participating children to attend fully with the intervention could optimise its potential benefits.

Keys to success

Youth Practitioners have fed-back different areas of success and enjoyment in their participation in the programme. Amongst areas of reported success, a whole school approach to mental health support was a significant factor:

'My better experiences of delivering Bounce Back have been in schools where the whole school has been involved in the process, so classroom teachers, head teachers, heads of year and support staff, are all involved in supporting the process of the young person involved in Bounce Back. They would have a regular member of school staff checking in on them in between Bounce Back sessions to see how they're doing'
– Bounce Back Youth Practitioner

They also described how having a whole school approach was not only helpful for the participating young people's wellbeing, but also other pupils in the school who had not yet engaged with the programme:

'Having a whole school approach also helps the other young people that are not involved in Bounce Back. They start to get an idea of what building resilience can do for you. A lot of the time I will get a young person asking me after sessions what Bounce Back is and how it can help them' – Bounce Back Youth Practitioner

'Normally a teacher would be angry, but a Youth Practitioner is just calm' – Young person, Bounce Back Participant

They have also referred to the importance of involving parents in their child's work with Bounce Back:

'We've got parents involved a lot of the time, as part of the sessions we may also give the young people a task or something to think about in between sessions. So then the pupils might go home and find their trusted person to talk to at home, which a lot of the time is a parent or a sibling'

'When we first introduced HeadStart and Bounce Back this year there were quite a few parents who went, "there's nothing wrong with my child", and it was that resistance that we expected. It was only when they came in, they had the assembly with the children and they really started to see that progress throughout the year' – Youth Practitioner⁸

This feedback of the importance of a whole-school and family-wide approach to mental health and resilience support for children and young people is central to the methodology behind Resilient Therapy and the Resilience Framework, which discourages the view of resilience as an individual characteristic and emphasises the importance of the community in promoting positive mental health. This understanding of resilience, championed and evidenced by the BoingBoing Community and its practice, has been taken on by the British Psychological Society:

'We need to change how we work in formal services and be brave enough to work with and through others, dropping 'done to' models and swapping for 'done with'... This might mean we need to find meaningful ways to work with people facing adversity on overcoming that adversity, through co-production, alliances and partnerships.'⁹ – British Psychological Association, as referenced [here](#) by the BoingBoing Community

'It has helped me take part in the talent show, because I was like 'no, I don't want to do that', but then I started doing Bounce Back, it raised my confidence, I'm not sure, it's just something in Bounce Back that just did it' – Young person, BounceBack participant¹⁰

⁸ HeadStart Newham. (2020). Learning from HeadStart Newham: working with schools to promote a whole school approach to wellbeing. Summary of key findings from school staff and HeadStart Resilience Training Leads. Retrieved from: <https://www.headstartnewham.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Progressing-whole-school-approaches-interim-report-1.pdf>.

⁹ The British Psychological Association. (2020). *The importance of community action and community resilience in the response to Covid-19: what role for psychology?* Retrieved from: <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Community%20action%20and%20resilience%20in%20response%20to%20Covid-19.pdf>.

¹⁰ Gill, V., Mooney, M. (2018). *BounceBack Newham: A review of Year 1 HeadStart Newham intervention delivery from the perspective of pupils, school and delivery staff.* Retrieved from:

