



# **Mental health outcomes for survivors: Findings from an evaluation of community-based domestic abuse services**

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# Outline



- ❖ Introduction to the evaluation and service
- ❖ Evaluation methods & who used the service
- ❖ Mental health outcomes for service users
- ❖ Facilitators and key service elements



# The Roadmap Evaluation

- The Evaluation

women's aid  
until women & children are safe



- Evaluation Team  
PI: Professor Nicky Stanley (UCLan)
- Co-produced with Survivor researchers
- PhD students



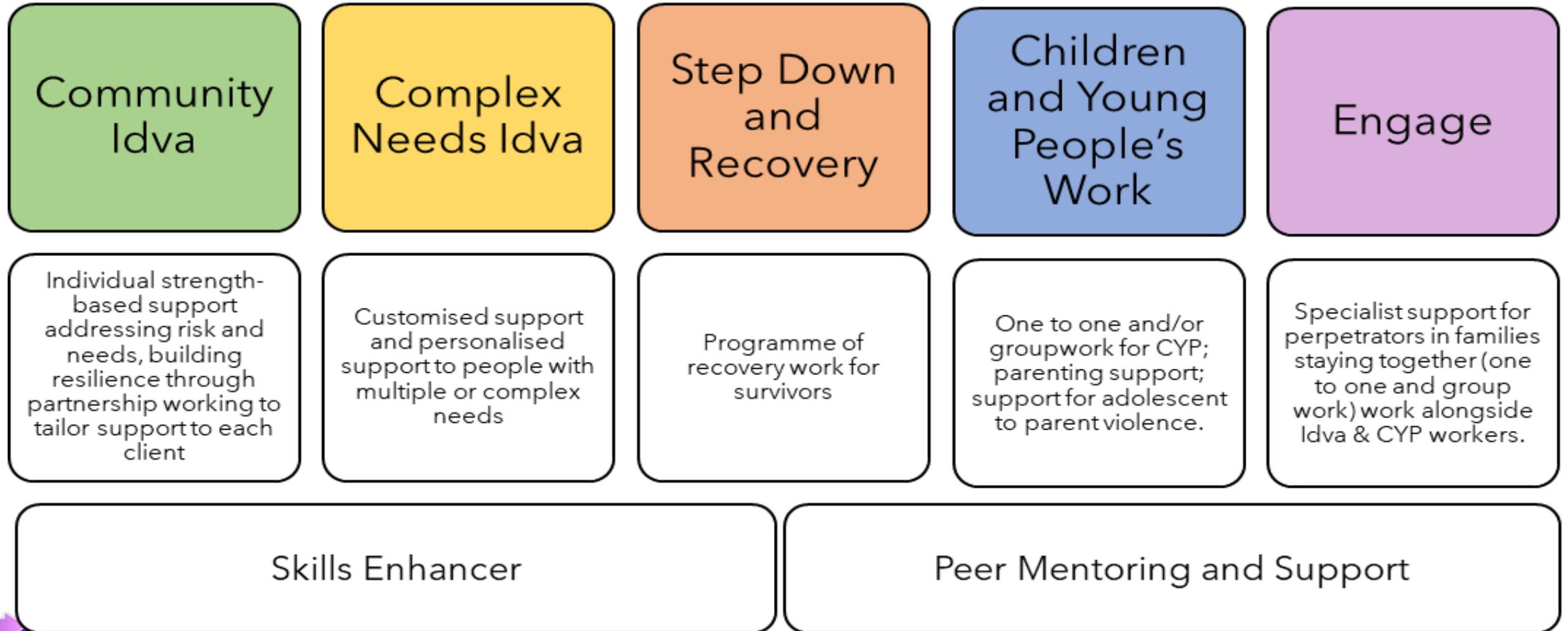
PRIFYSGOL  
BANGOR  
UNIVERSITY



University of  
East London



# SafeLives Commissioned Services



# Who used the Service



Service users in the evaluation period: November 2018 – December 2020:

## 481 female survivors

74% aged 26-45

83% White

94% heterosexual

84% had at least one child

23% had a disability

## 270 children

52% male, 48% female

83% White

66% aged 4-10 years

## 56 perpetrators

72% aged 26-45

82% White



# Evaluation Methods & Data Collected

Method	Details	N
Survivor outcome Measures	Self complete: T1 (baseline), T2 (+12 weeks) T3, (+24 weeks) & end <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Safety</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Coping and Confidence</b> (REVA, Kelly et al 2014)</li> <li>▪ <b>Wellbeing</b> (Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale)</li> <li>▪ <b>Health</b> (EQ-5D-3L)</li> </ul>	T1: 188 T1-T2: 88 T1-T3: 56
Individual interviews	Semi-structured Majority telephone interviews.	54
Focus group interviews	Online, at the end of the course	5 (21 women)
Family case studies	Mother, child/children, workers, case data	6
Staff interviews & survey	Qualitative interviews	14
	Online survey	15



# Findings

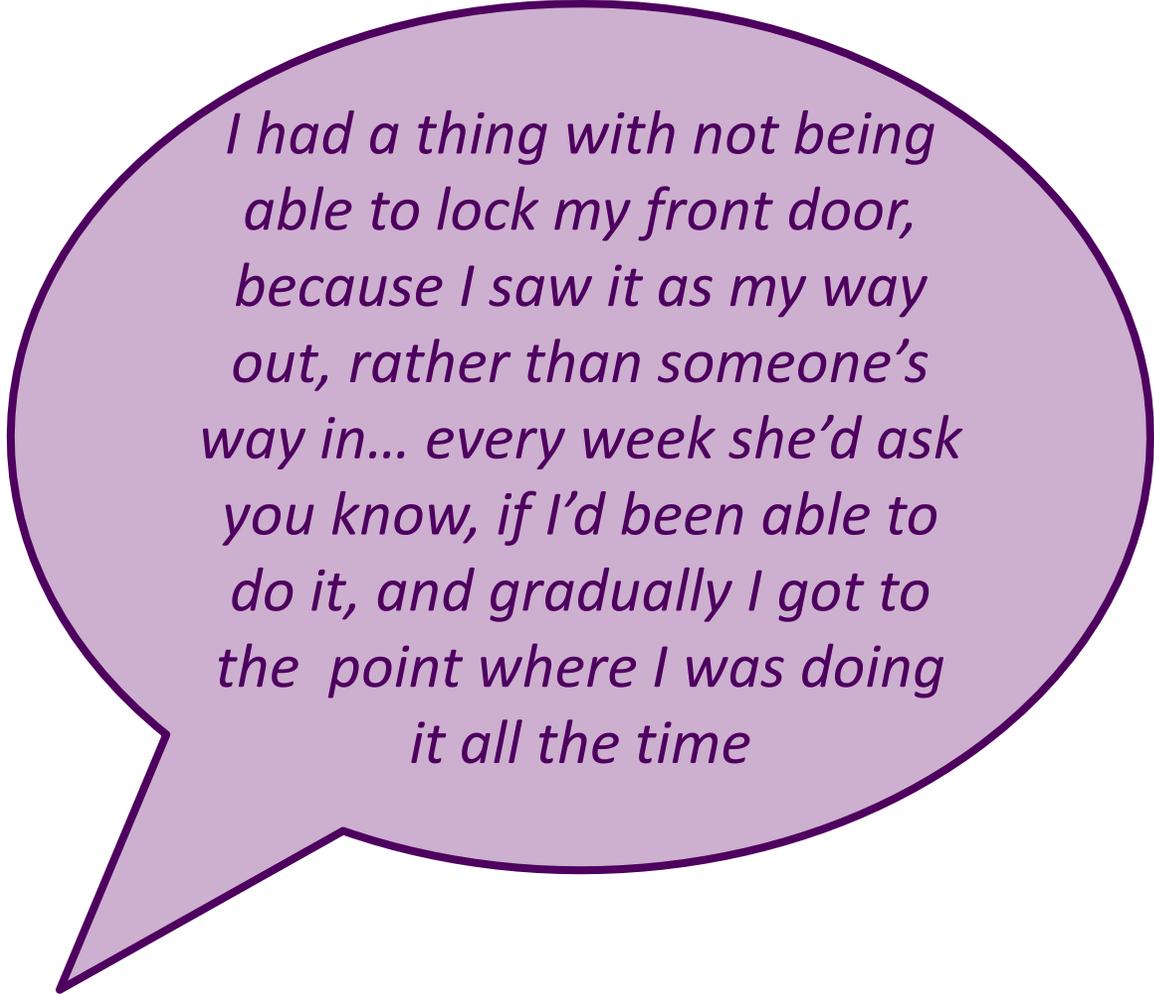


# Impact on survivors' safety

T1-T2 T1-T3

I have felt safe	*	
My home felt safe and secure	*	*
I have felt safe moving around my neighbourhood	*	*
I have felt safe online	*	
I have felt that it is safe for my children to spend time with their father (if relevant)	*	
I know where I can go for help when I need it		

\* = significant change using the Wilcoxon signed ranks test



*I had a thing with not being able to lock my front door, because I saw it as my way out, rather than someone's way in... every week she'd ask you know, if I'd been able to do it, and gradually I got to the point where I was doing it all the time*



# Coping & confidence

## Your Coping and Confidence

2. Can you rate the following statements thinking about how you have felt over the last two weeks:

	Never	Not very often	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
I have felt able to cope if things have gone wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have felt able to deal with my daily life	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have been able to make my own decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have felt able to speak to people about my experiences of abuse, if I wanted to	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have been able to manage my use of alcohol/medication/ drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have been able to get a good night's sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have been confident about doing new things	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have felt in control of my life	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have good relationships with my children	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have known that I was not responsible for the abuse that happened to me	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I have been able to recognise if other people have been behaving abusively	<input type="checkbox"/>				

## T1 - T2 changes

- I have felt in control of my life
- I have been able to get a good night's sleep
- I have been able to recognise if other people have been behaving abusively
- I have known that I was not responsible for the abuse that happened to me

## T1 - T3 changes

- I have felt able to deal with my daily life
- I have felt able to speak to people about my experiences of abuse if I wanted to



# Coping & confidence

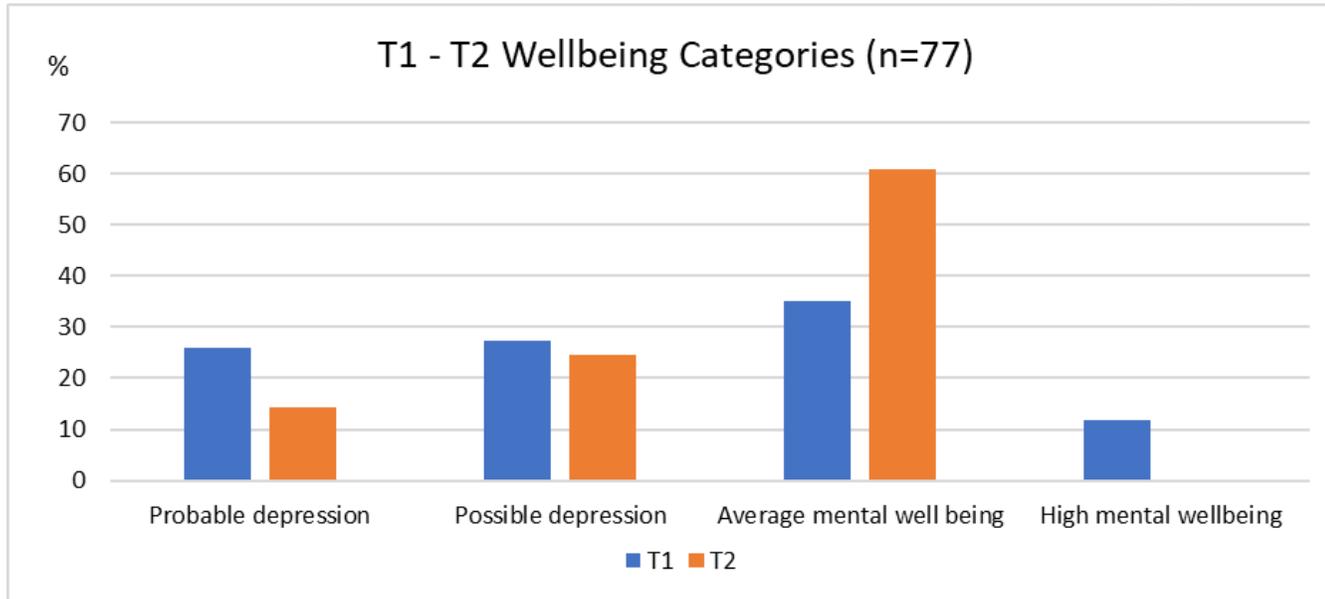


*I'm a completely different person now, you know. I'm sort of really positive, confident, I've started my own business.*

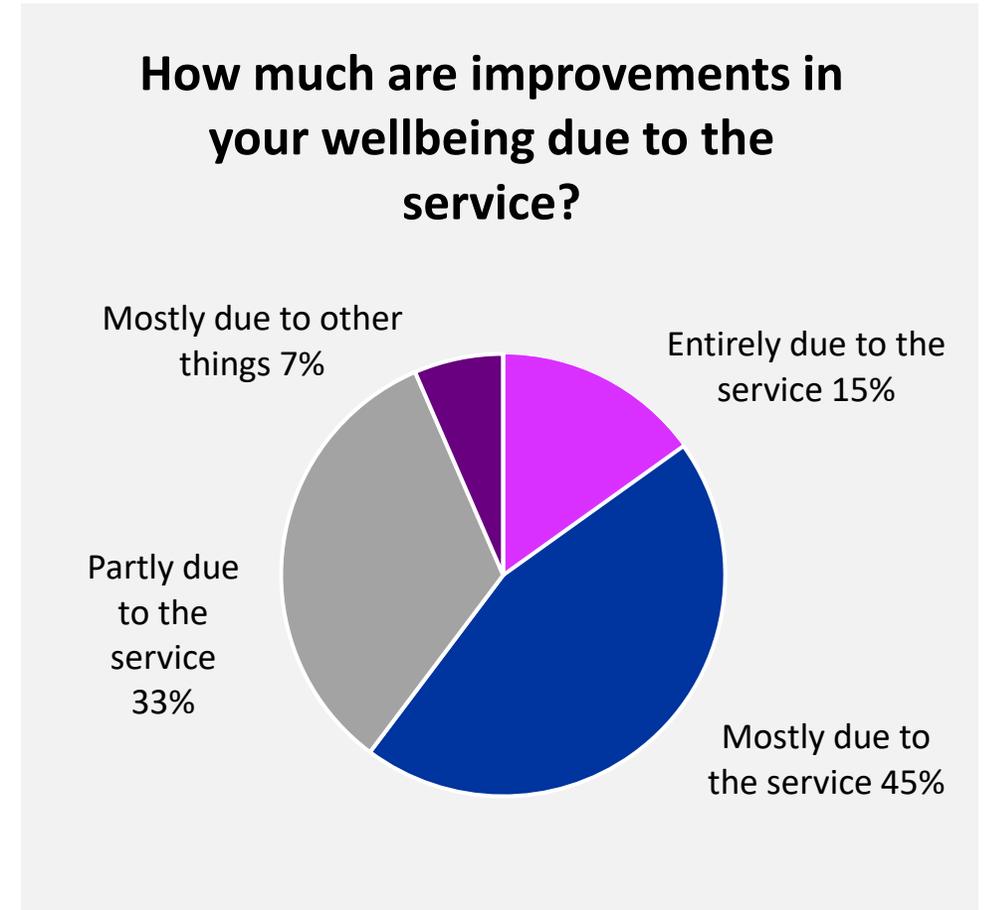
*...because the support I received and the support the boys received, ...I have more knowledge now, before I didn't have... just understanding - ...then I did the course...- that impact was on the boys as well. So, I can see that more clear...and it's just easier to deal with that as well.*



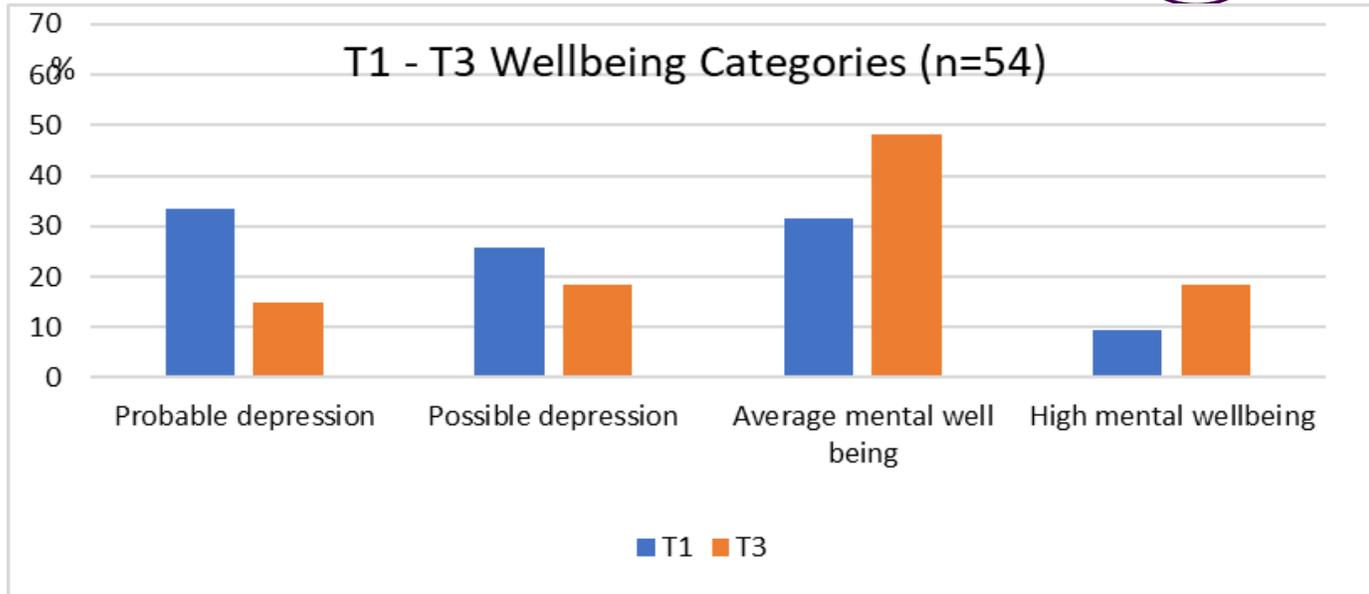
# Wellbeing T<sub>1</sub> – T<sub>2</sub>



**Mean wellbeing (SWEMWBS) score**  
**T1-T2, increased by 1.11, 21.62 to 22.72**  
 UK women national mean: 23.6 (Ng Fat et al 2017)



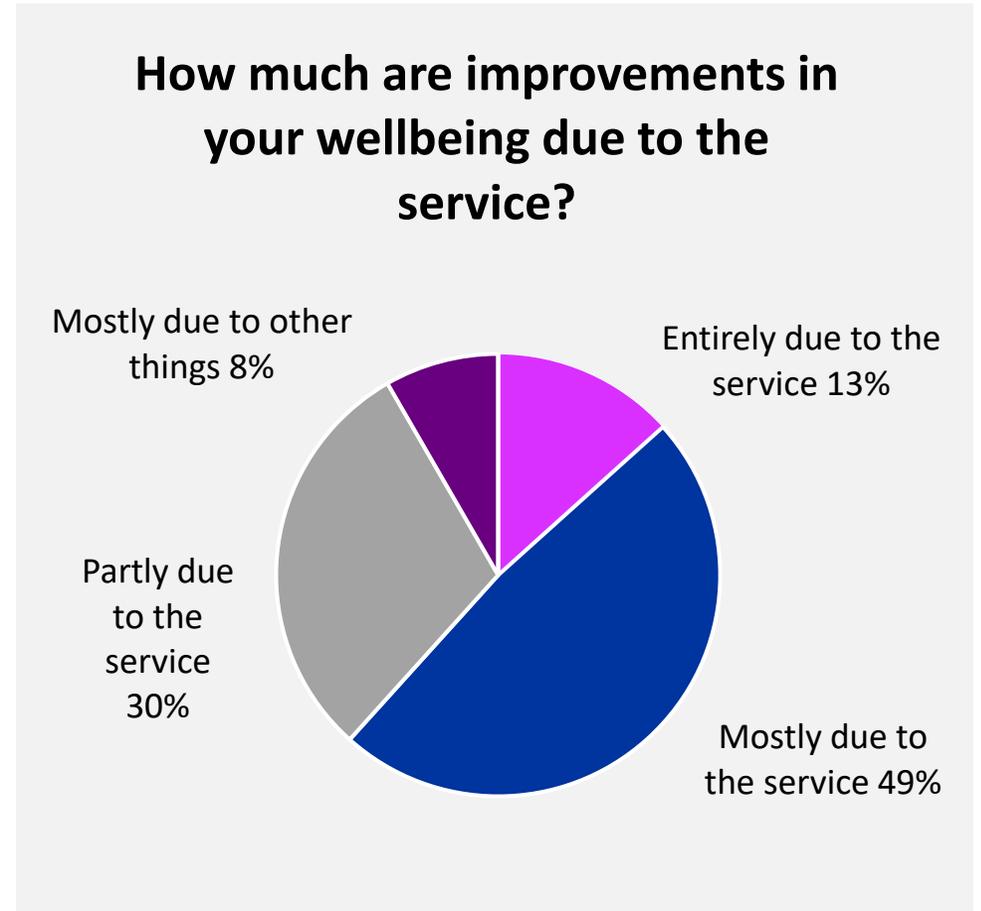
# Wellbeing T<sub>1</sub> – T<sub>3</sub>



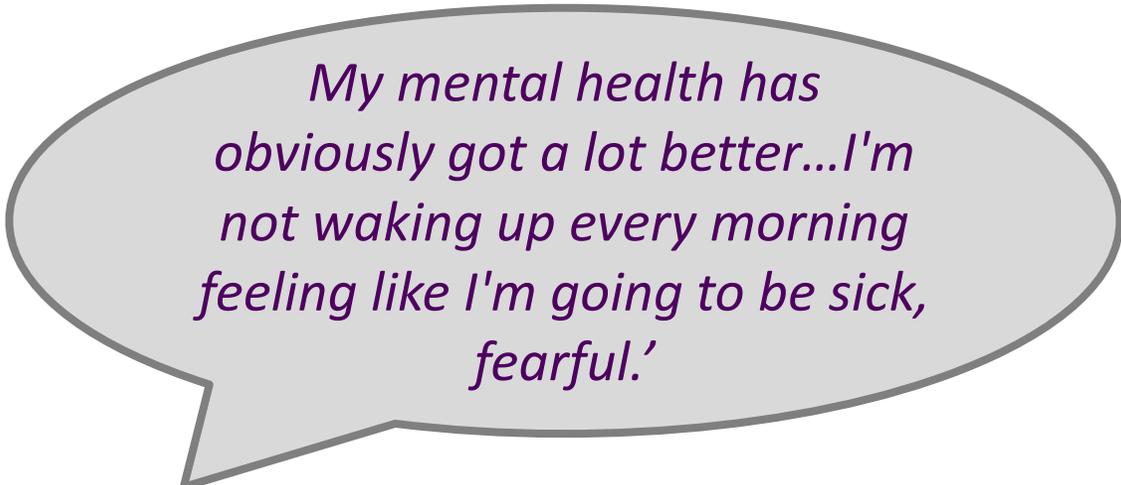
## Mean wellbeing (SWEMWBS) score

T1-T3, increased by 2.54, 20.71 – 23.3 ( $p < 0.001$ )

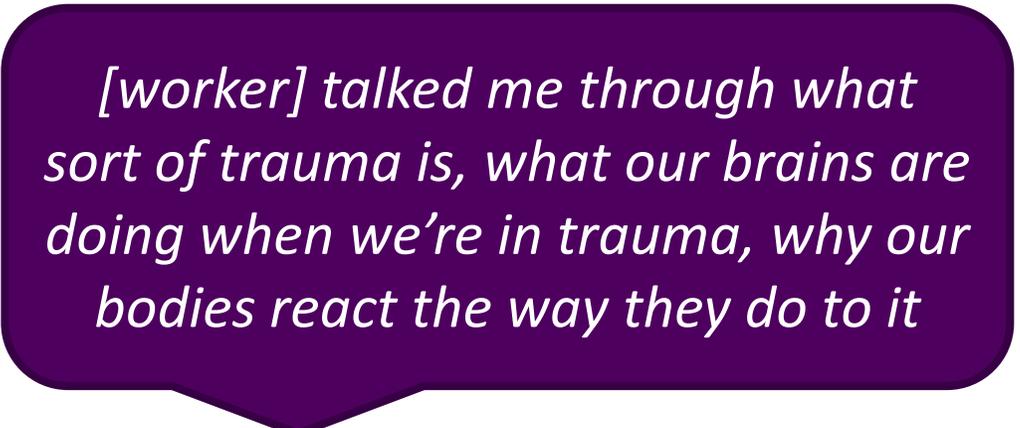
UK women national mean: 23.6 (Ng Fat et al 2017)



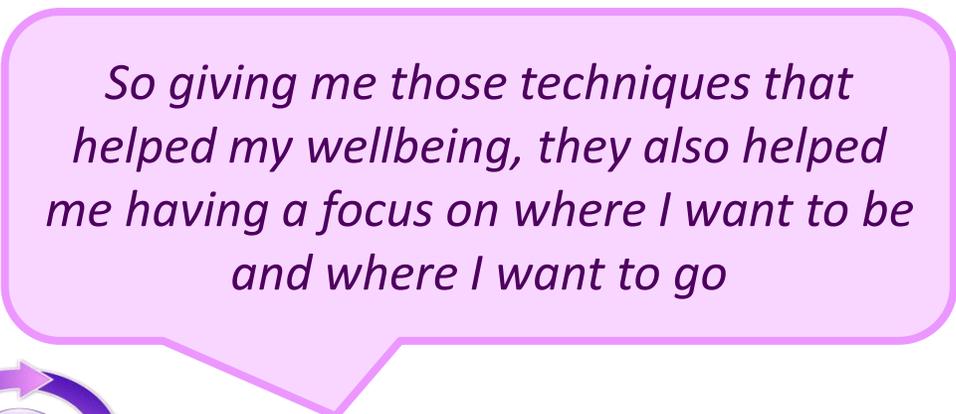
# Wellbeing – Survivors interviews



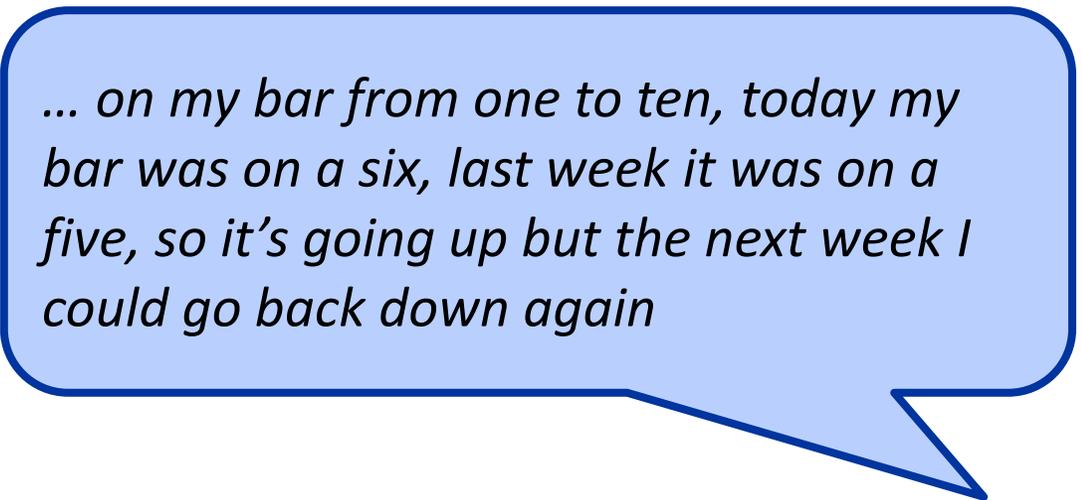
*My mental health has obviously got a lot better...I'm not waking up every morning feeling like I'm going to be sick, fearful.'*



*[worker] talked me through what sort of trauma is, what our brains are doing when we're in trauma, why our bodies react the way they do to it*



*So giving me those techniques that helped my wellbeing, they also helped me having a focus on where I want to be and where I want to go*



*... on my bar from one to ten, today my bar was on a six, last week it was on a five, so it's going up but the next week I could go back down again*



## Service elements: IDVA support

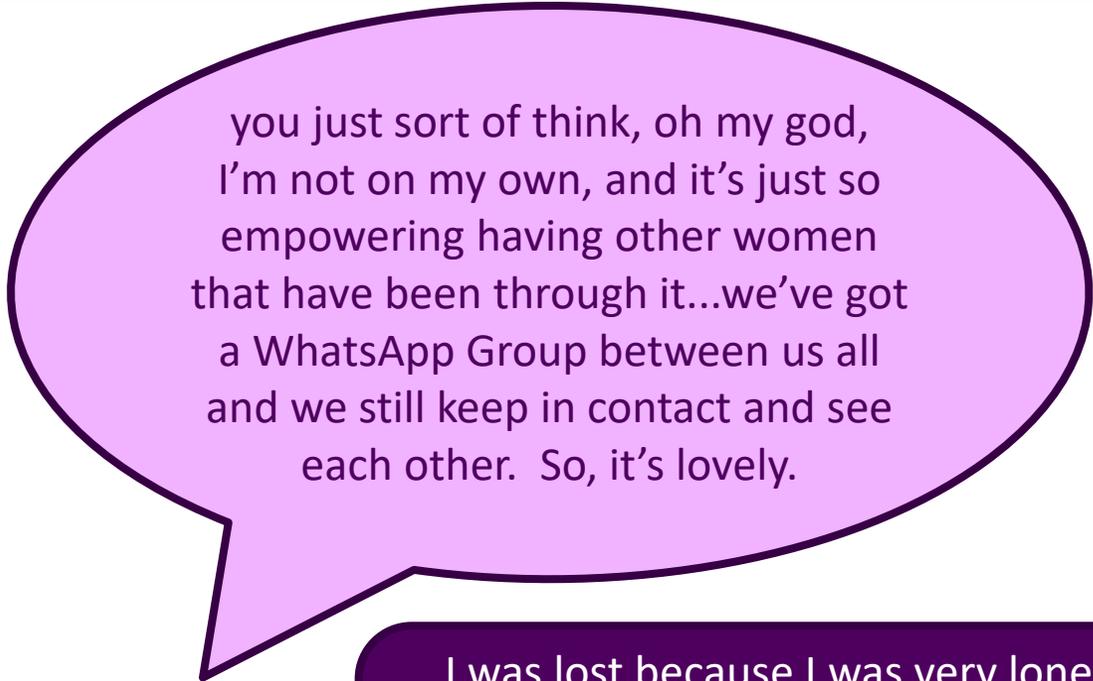


...it was about, obviously, getting my son back.. getting all the court stuff sorted, because I didn't know nothing, she helped me with that, by keeping my mental state stable because I get really high anxiety when, to do with my son's dad. And ... she spoke about how much, what the different, emotional abuse and all different abuse that I've gone through, because I acknowledged, because before I didn't know.

Just having that contact, somebody to talk to and make me see that it wasn't right and sort of give me some pointers and different ways of handling things for myself. And to encourage me to have time for me, which is difficult when you're a mum of four on your own



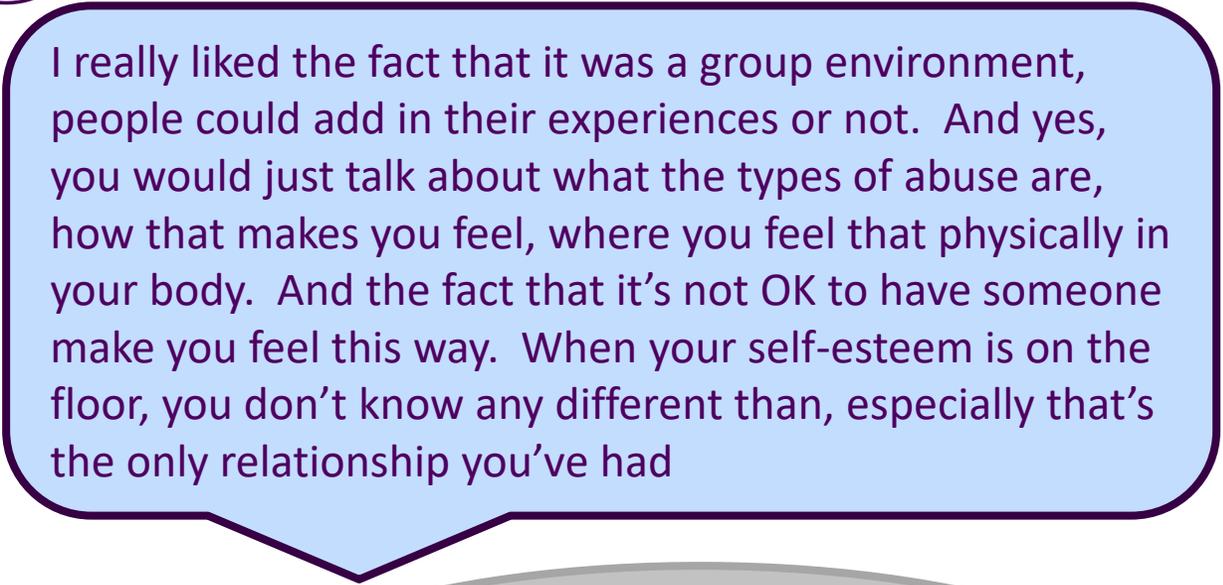
# Service elements: Group work & support



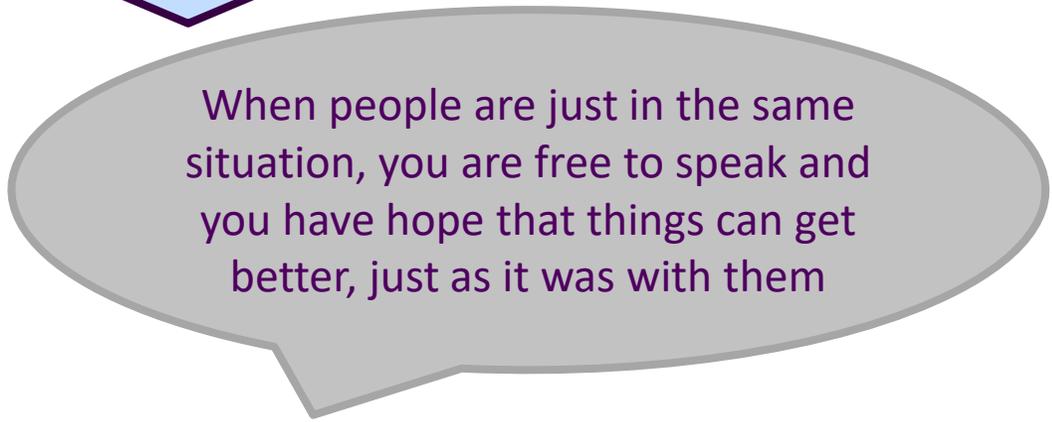
you just sort of think, oh my god, I'm not on my own, and it's just so empowering having other women that have been through it...we've got a WhatsApp Group between us all and we still keep in contact and see each other. So, it's lovely.



I was lost because I was very lonely. I had no friends, I had no contact with neighbours, with my colleagues. I was really isolated and I needed the group work, just to feel a part of society.



I really liked the fact that it was a group environment, people could add in their experiences or not. And yes, you would just talk about what the types of abuse are, how that makes you feel, where you feel that physically in your body. And the fact that it's not OK to have someone make you feel this way. When your self-esteem is on the floor, you don't know any different than, especially that's the only relationship you've had



When people are just in the same situation, you are free to speak and you have hope that things can get better, just as it was with them



## Service elements: Counselling



*I'm kind of feeling that anxiety thing coming back, and the fact that I've only got two more sessions of the counselling and then it's like, then what?*

*It's been pretty life changing in a mental sense. I'm getting so much better from that. I've not triggered since I've had the therapy.*



# Facilitators to delivery



- Variety of interventions to meet individual needs: survivors valued both individual and groupwork options
- Survivors valued being listened to and understood, and felt that the work matched their pace.

*I just felt that I was listened to and that what, what I was saying was being acted on, so it was very much sort of led by me if that makes sense, and what I needed.*

*She explained everything that they could help, for me, and for the children. And always individually...It was like, we can offer this for [older son], we can offer this for [younger son], and I thought, it was always really personalised.*

*they're all singing off the same sheet. They're all working with you as a team and I think that is amazing.*



# Conclusions and Recommendations



- Survivors reported **increased confidence and self-esteem and improvements in mental wellbeing.**
- Survivors had **low levels of mental health.** For work with all survivors, especially those with complex needs, to be effective, the links between DVA and mental health services, substance misuse services and other health services need to be strengthened.
- Value of **survivor-centred services.** Survivors valued exerting choice over the pace and type of interventions they received
- Survivors value a **flexible service** responsive to changing needs, offering individual and groupwork, support with parenting and for children and their partner (where applicable). This requires substantial resource, integration of staff roles and a clear service remit.



# Thank you



Thanks to SafeLives and Women's Aid who commissioned the evaluation and all the survivors, children, staff and experts by lived experience who contributed to the study.

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