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## Managing Moods

**Managing Moods** is a programme of group work for older adolescents who are often overwhelmed by their emotions and may be using unhealthy ways to cope, including **self-harm**. This programme was developed in 2015 by two very experienced Educational Psychologists within Shropshire Council's **Educational Psychology Service**, Anne Murray, Senior Practitioner and Sheri Wright, Specialist Senior. It uses **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)** which includes: Emotional Regulation, Distress Tolerance, Mindfulness and Interpersonal Effectiveness.

The programme is led by an Educational Psychologist supported by a member of school staff and run for **one hour a week over 10 weeks**, with a follow-up meeting after 3 months. The sessions are highly structured and focus on teaching new skills and building confidence. Self-harm is not referred to explicitly within the group, to guard against the risk of contagion.

To date, 3 groups have been run in two secondary schools with female students mainly from **Year 10** (ages 14-15 years). The results have been "**extremely statistically significant**" using pre and post group measures on two scales. On the **Coping Self-Efficacy Scale**, participants rated themselves on a scale between 0-10, where 0 = cannot do at all and 10 = certain can do, on questions including: "When things aren't going well for you, how confident are you that you can keep from getting down in the dumps?" Results were at the **0.0001%** level of significance. On the **Difficulties in Emotional Regulation Scale**, participants rated themselves between 1-5, where 1 = Almost never and 5 = Almost always, on statements including: "I experience my emotions as overwhelming and out of control." Results were at the **0.0002%** level of significance.

At the end of the programme, when participants were asked to say what they had enjoyed, comments included:

- **"I really enjoyed the Managing Moods' course and due to the strategies, I am now able to go into town without having a panic attack or worrying."**
- "Learning different coping mechanisms and realising that other people have problems."

When asked if there was anything the girls were doing now as a result of the Managing Moods' group, which they were not doing before, comments included:

- **"Doing things when upset, instead of sitting there."**
- "Going for a walk, having a bath or listening to music when angry."
- "Feeling more positive about problems as I know they won't last forever."
- "Saying positive things to others."

If your school or college is interested in running a Managing Moods group, please contact the **Shropshire Educational Psychology Service** for further details and costs.

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