

thewarriorprogramme

RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIAL 2015





When Richard attended the Warrior course in May 2013 he was unemployed and caring for his brother. Following the course Richard fulfilled one of his goals by visiting family in New Zealand where he caught this amazing fish. On his return home he took up martial arts again and is now an instructor as well as working for One Vision Housing Association as caretaker for their offices.

“the bold step the Warrior Programme has taken has been repaid by a positive outcome – ex-Service personnel do indeed benefit from this intervention.”

AIR VICE-MARSHAL RAY LOCK BSC CBE
Chief Executive, Forces in Mind Trust

Many organisations exist to support ex-Service personnel facing difficulties in their transition to civilian life, and a large number claim to improve mental health or mental well-being. It is known that around a quarter of the general population will suffer a common mental health disorder, and the ex-Service community is not immune from such conditions (neither, it should be said, is it proven to be any more vulnerable).

Recognising this need, the Armed Forces charities sector has spawned treatments, therapies and other support programmes that cover the full spectrum of interventions, not of all of which have necessarily been proven to be effective. Indeed, a common criticism heard from outside the sector, and occasionally from inside it too, is that there are too many organisations that whilst probably not doing harm, equally do not necessarily do any good.

That is why the Warrior Programme should be congratulated for electing to bring Southampton University in to provide an independent evaluation, and also to subject their findings to peer review by King's Centre for Military Health Research, King's College London. As a Trust whose aim is to provide an evidence base that will influence and underpin policy making and service delivery, deciding whether to fund this research was not difficult for us.

We are therefore delighted that the bold step the Warrior Programme took has been repaid by a positive outcome – ex-Service personnel do indeed benefit from this intervention. The challenge I would now place before the Warrior Programme is not just to build upon these findings and ensure a sustainably funded throughput of candidates, but also to continue the search for evidence of long-term benefit.

As well as supporting the Warrior Programme in their work, I hope this Report also encourages other charities to look for evidence of how they too can offer the most effective support. Our ex-Service personnel deserve a great deal; but most of all, the deal they deserve is the one that works.



AIR VICE-MARSHAL RAY LOCK BSC CBE
Chief Executive, Forces in Mind Trust

thewarriorprogramme

This report is another important milestone for Warrior. Milestones, however, measure not just distance already travelled, but the road ahead. And there is still a long way to go.

Extending Warrior's reach into all parts of the UK, to all parts of the Veteran community, including families, is one challenge. Making sure the aftercare and ongoing support is available is another, highlighted by this report. Both will require organisational and logistical effort, and sustainable funding. There is a job of 'constructive collaboration' to be done here; with Services, government and the broader family of forces charities.

It is clear now that Warrior is "on to something". I know first hand that this is an organisation that can scale-up and deliver. The issues Warrior tackles will be with us for the long-term – and Warrior is part of the solution.

Ultimately, I want all Veterans to know that there is a support network available: different organisations with different specialisms – physical recovery, mental and emotional support, re-integration – but working towards the same goal.

Warrior has come of age and earned its place at the forefront of care for Veterans.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETD) ANTHONY PALMER CB CBE
Chairman, The Warrior Programme



Legal & General's business is largely built on two principles:

- What we do should be socially and economically useful; and,
- The way we do it should be based on strong data and rigorous analysis.

Warrior's approach fits these criteria exactly, and we have been delighted to support their work. This independent, peer-reviewed study bears out the anecdotal, qualitative data that comes across so powerfully in individuals' stories. As such it adds significantly to the stock of 'intellectual property' available to those working in this important area.

Third-sector organisations including Warrior often have better knowledge of the particular issues they are dealing with than either government or the commercial sector, but it is rare to see this knowledge reinforced by such thorough analysis. There is a lesson for the broader charitable sector here: evidence of this sort needs to be better disseminated and understood, in order to support funding applications and hence drive positive social change.

Most importantly, this evidence tells us that Warrior is on the right track, but that more needs to be done to secure sustained improvements for Veterans and their families. Warrior has exciting plans to deliver that programme and make these improvements a reality.

We wish Warrior well as they build on the findings of this study.



GRAHAM PRECEY
Head of Corporate Responsibility, Legal & General Group Plc

IS THE WARRIOR PROGRAMME EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING FUNCTIONAL DIFFICULTIES AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS IN EX-SERVICE PERSONNEL?

A RANDOMISED, CONTROLLED TRIAL

G THANDI, N GREENBERG AND NT FEAR
KING'S CENTRE FOR MILITARY HEALTH RESEARCH AND THE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY MENTAL HEALTH,
KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

This study was commissioned to investigate the effectiveness of the Warrior Programme in reducing functional difficulties associated with emotional distress and stressful events in a sample of ex-Service personnel.

The Warrior Programme is a third sector organisation that was founded in 2007 with the aim to help people with emotional distress, including depression and anxiety, severe enough to lead to addiction, unemployment, social exclusion and homelessness, to regain control of their lives. They initially worked with homeless people across London, people isolated through migration, addiction, unemployment or family breakdown. The Warrior team designed a programme specifically for ex-Service personnel, which was piloted in early 2009, with a grant from the Royal British Legion. The success of this pilot supported their decision to focus on ex-Service personnel.



PROFESSOR NICOLA FEAR

METHODS

The Warrior Programme, a novel intervention aimed at reducing dysfunction associated with emotional distress and stressful events that may have occurred pre, during or post service is based on Time Line Therapy® (TLT) techniques. A randomised controlled trial (RCT) was designed and conducted by the University of Southampton on behalf of the Warrior Programme. The RCT was conducted to determine if the Warrior Programme's personal development programme is effective in reducing primarily functional difficulties (i.e. occupational and social difficulties) and secondarily emotional distress in ex-Service personnel. Fifty two ex-Service personnel were included in this RCT (Diagram 1). The participants were randomly allocated to either the treatment group or the waiting list control group.

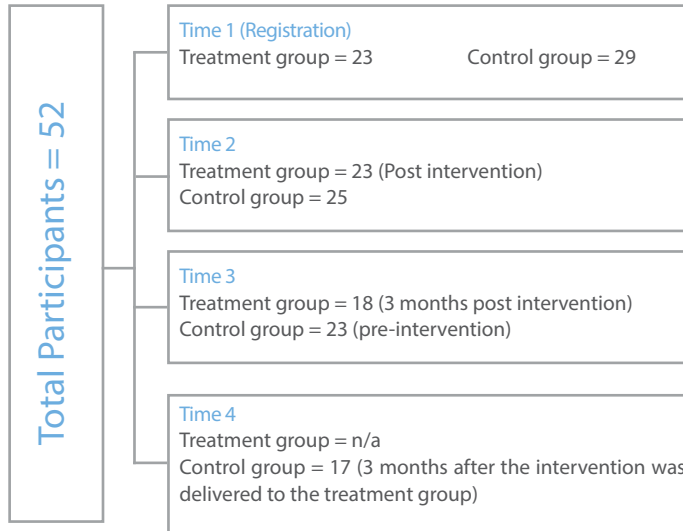
Participants provided data on a range of functioning, psychological and social well-being measures pre-intervention, post-intervention, and at follow-up.

Analyses were conducted to investigate if there were any statistically significant changes in the participants' functioning, psychological and social well-being following the intervention and to investigate if there were any statistically significant difference in the outcomes of the treatment group and control group. Further analyses were conducted to examine the impact of the intervention in the control group (which was provided to them 3 months after that of the treatment group). As the Warrior Programme was primarily aimed at improving functioning, additional information was collected by the Warrior team in February 2014 regarding employment status of all participants. Data analysis was completed by researchers at King's College London.



PROFESSOR NEIL GREENBERG

Diagram 1: Number of participants recruited into the RCT and the number of participants available at each follow-up point.



RESULTS

The sample consisted of 52 participants, 49 (94%) were male and three (6%) were female. 33% (n=17) were employed, 21% (n=11) were looking for employment and 44% (n=23) were not working nor looking for work. Forty-seven participants (90%) reported having been previously diagnosed with a mental health problem. Of the 47 participants who reported having been diagnosed with a mental health problem, 81% were receiving some form of help. A Fisher's exact test of independence was conducted using data from the RCT, the participants in the Warrior Programme had statistically significant higher prevalence of depression, anxiety and probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), compared to both the general population and other military populations (Figures i and ii). These differences were expected given the Warrior Programme is targeted at those individuals who had previously explored other programmes and techniques without success, and who wanted to reduce their self-reported functional and emotional difficulties.

Compared to participants in the control group, study participants who received the intervention reported over time (Figures iii, iv, v and vi):

- a statistically significant decrease in functional impairment scores based on the Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS),
- statistically significant improvements in Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE) scores, general self-efficacy, self-reported anxiety and depression and self-reported PTSD scores.

The impact at the 3-month follow up, although reduced, was still statistically significant for the CORE, self-reported anxiety and depression, self-reported PTSD scores and the WSAS. However, the remaining impact is unlikely to be clinically significant.

Once the control group had received the intervention, they too reported statistically significant improvements post-intervention across all measures, except the WSAS.

Though not directly measured as an outcome of the RCT, of those followed up in February 2014 (n=41), 28 were employed (49%) (compared to 17 at the start of the RCT), and two were under the care of Combat Stress (a charitable provider of formal mental health treatment) for their mental health problems. Of particular interest is that of those who were not working nor looking for work at Time 1 and completed the course [n=21], 52% were employed at follow up in February 2014. This may indicate improvement in their engagement and functioning.

DISCUSSION

The results of the RCT show that those participants who received the Warrior Programme reported improvements in their functioning and emotional well-being immediately on completion of the course. However, during the 3-month follow up period, improvement, although still evident, was not maintained to the same degree. Thus at follow up, whilst there were still statistically significant differences on some measures in relation to the pre-intervention scores, these differences were unlikely to be clinically significant. Further, scores on all measures were above the usual clinical thresholds (i.e. participants would still be likely to be regarded as functionally impaired or emotionally distressed). These differences were expected given the Warrior Programme is targeted at those individuals who had previously explored other programmes and techniques without success, and who wanted to reduce their self-reported functional and emotional difficulties.

Though not directly measured as an outcome of the RCT, there may be an effect of the Warrior Programme on occupational functioning. However, this would need further investigation in subsequent evaluations.

What these results suggest is that the improvements made during the Warrior Programme might be further maintained if suitable "top up" sessions could be delivered at regular intervals after the programme is complete. The format, content, method of delivery and timing of these "top up" sessions require consideration. We recommend that future studies of the Warrior Programme (including "top up" sessions) should follow up participants for longer periods of time (e.g. at six and nine months) and include practical measures of day to day functioning such as work, availability (and quality) of supportive relationships and signposting to other support services.

FIGURES

FIGURE I. OVERVIEW OF THE PREVALENCE OF PROBABLE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN GENERAL POPULATION STUDIES COMPARED TO THE WARRIOR PROGRAMME STUDY

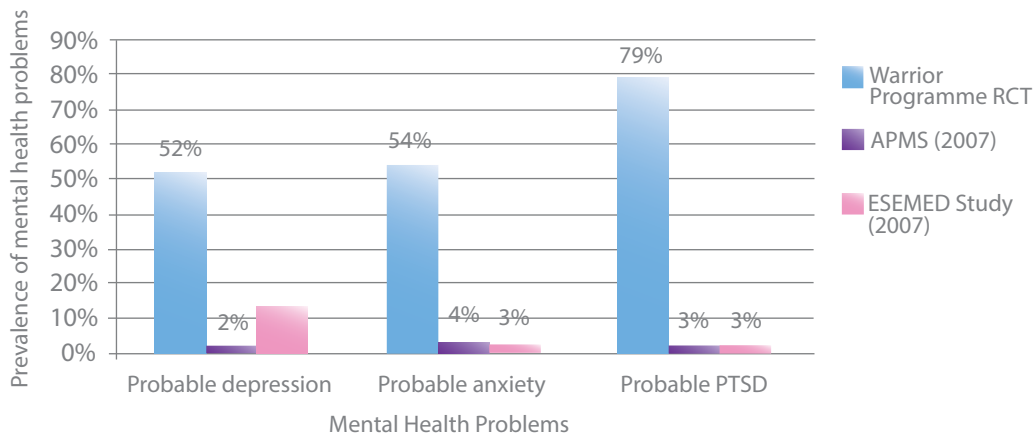


FIGURE II. PREVALENCE OF PROBABLE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN MILITARY POPULATION STUDIES COMPARED TO THE WARRIOR PROGRAMME STUDY

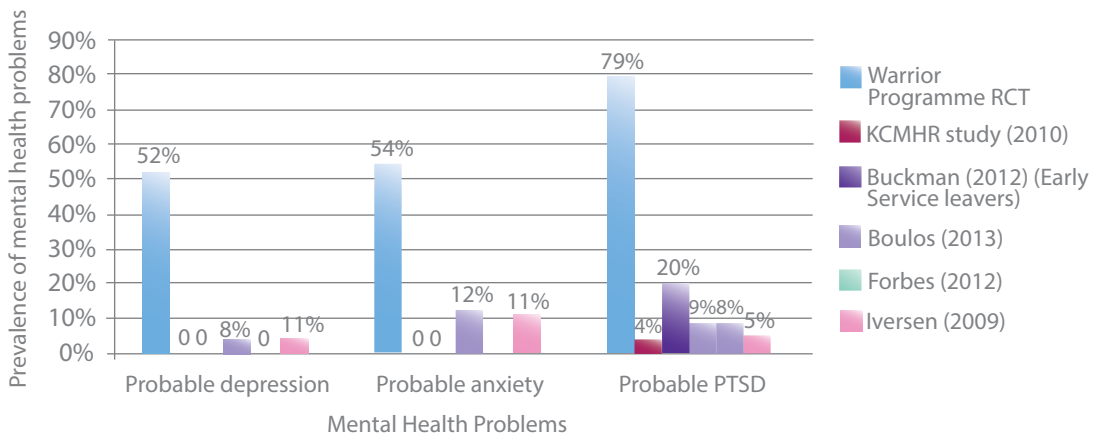
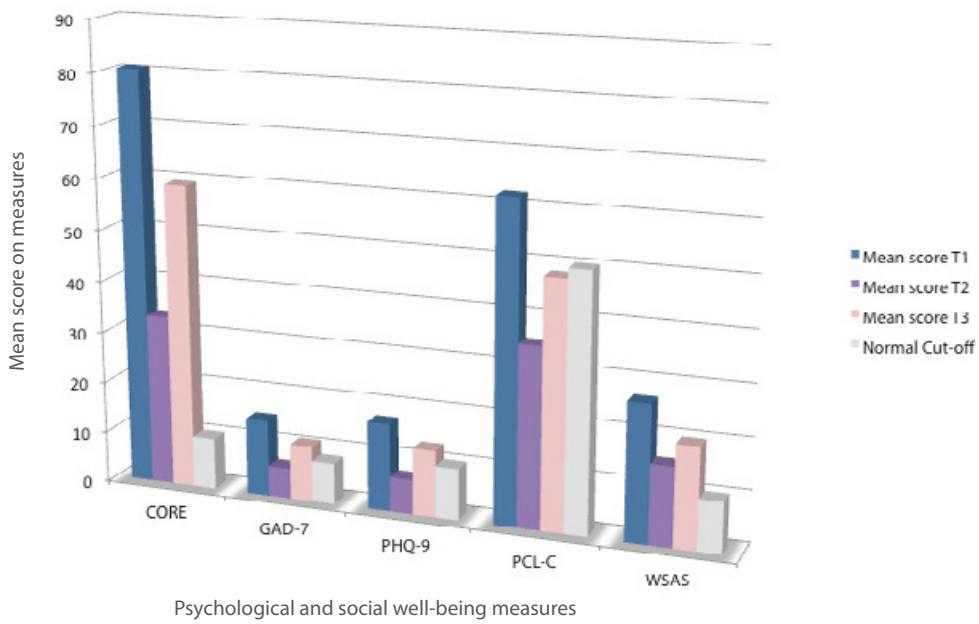
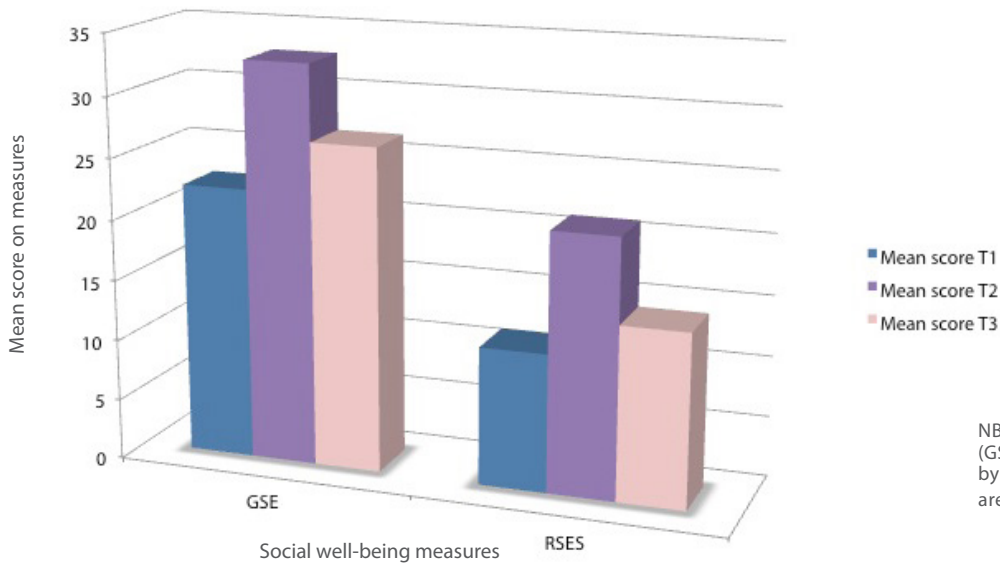


FIGURE III. MEAN SCORE ON ALL MEASURES AT PRE-INTERVENTION (T1) AND POST-INTERVENTION (T2) AND FOLLOW-UP (T3) AND NORMAL CUT-OFFS ON ALL MEASURES FOR TREATMENT GROUP



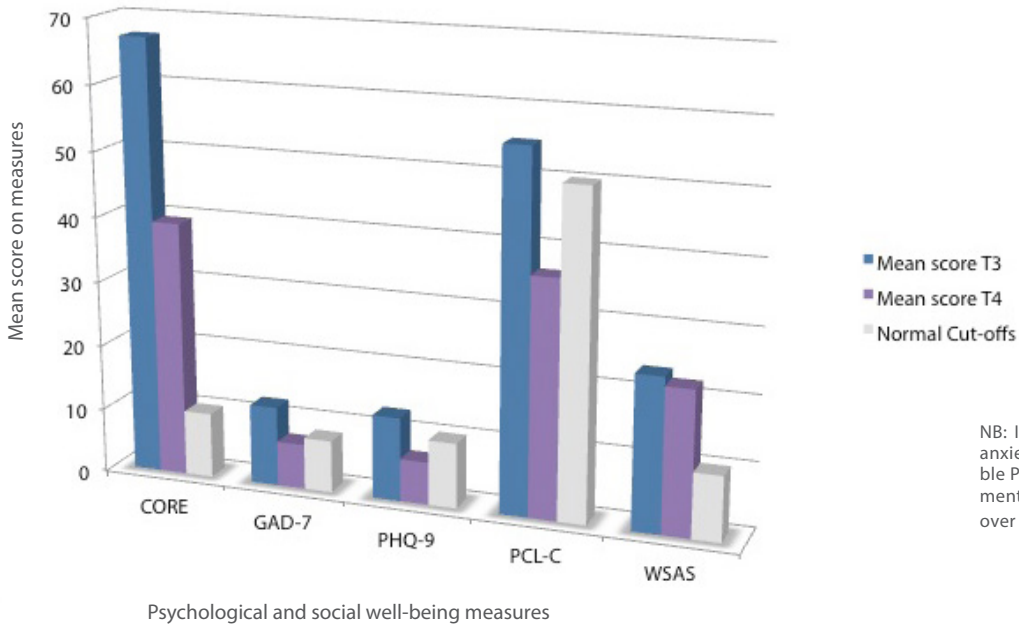
NB: Improvements in global distress (CORE), anxiety (GAD-7), depression (PHQ-9), probable PTSD (PCL-C), and work and social adjustment (WSAS) is shown by a decrease in scores over time.

FIGURE IV. MEAN SCORE ON ALL MEASURES AT PRE-INTERVENTION (T1) AND POST-INTERVENTION (T2) AND FOLLOW-UP (T3) AND NORMAL CUT-OFFS ON ALL MEASURES FOR TREATMENT GROUP



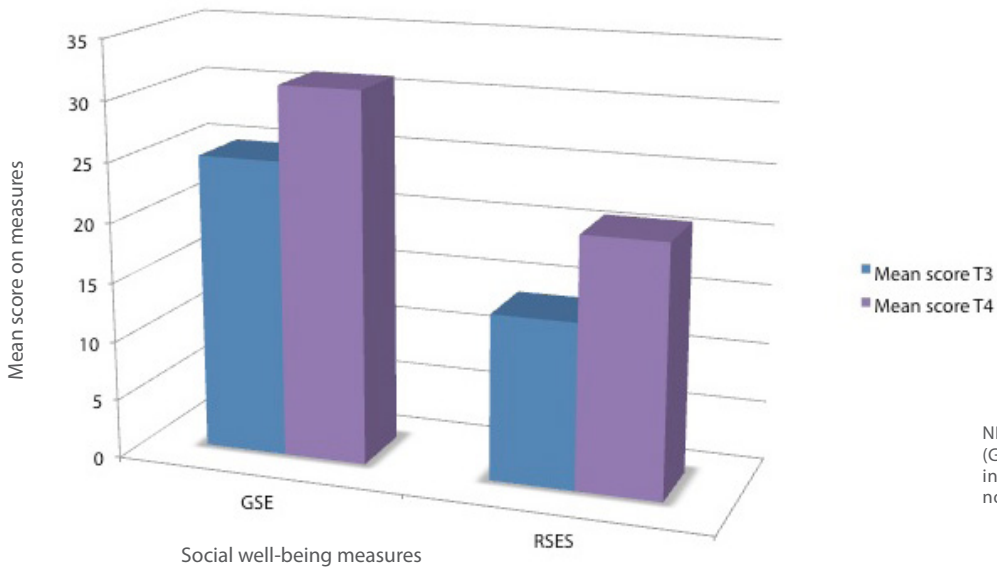
NB: An improvement general self-efficacy (GSE) and in self-esteem (RSES) is shown by an increase in scores from T1 – T3. There are no normal cut-offs for these scales.

FIGURE V. MEAN SCORES ON ALL MEASURES AT PRE-INTERVENTION (T3) AND POST-INTERVENTION (T4) AND NORMAL CUT-OFFS ON ALL MEASURES FOR CONTROL GROUP



NB: Improvements in global distress (CORE), anxiety (GAD-7), depression (PHQ-9), probable PTSD (PCL-C), and work and social adjustment (WSAS) is shown by a decrease in scores over time.

FIGURE VI. MEAN SCORES ON ALL MEASURES AT PRE-INTERVENTION (T3) AND POST-INTERVENTION (T4) AND NORMAL CUT-OFFS ON ALL MEASURES FOR CONTROL GROUP



NB: An improvement in general self-efficacy (GSE) and self-esteem (RSES) is shown by an increase in scores from T3 – T4. There are no normal cut-offs for these scales.



Warrior John painting in his studio

“One year on 52% of those who had previously been unemployed and not looking for work were now employed.”

SUSTAINED CHANGE AND THE LASTING IMPACT
POST RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL FOLLOW UP



65% of participants were unemployed at the time of taking part in the RCT. They had a statistically higher prevalence of depression, anxiety and probable post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) compared to both the general population and other military populations.

One year on we reviewed their activity: 68% of those followed up [28 out of 41] were now in employment or training and importantly 52% of those who had previously been unemployed and indeed not looking for work, and who completed the course [21], were now employed. A remarkable and life changing achievement for those individuals and a real illustration of the sustained change enabled by the Programme.

This internal monitoring post RCT at the one year point reinforces findings from the RCT, which although not specifically designed to identify the effects on levels of employment, indicated that the Programme may have a positive impact on functioning and engagement.



Warrior Paul Gooding, centre, teaching woodwork skills

OVERALL PARTICIPANTS EXPRESSED A RANGE OF SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO THEIR LIVES.

ENGAGEMENT

A key aim is to improve participants' ability to engage with other services that can help them overcome the challenges they face.

"I had done nothing with my life for years. After Warrior I took everything that was offered to me. I'd been unemployed all that time before, then I applied for a job and got it straight away – they said I was the most proactive unemployed person they had ever seen".

"The Programme made me more open to trying other things to help my recovery. At the moment I'm involved in an experimental medical trial which is helping me to be healthier."

EMPLOYMENT

Getting a job is a key element in supporting people who experience significant challenges in life. The evidence suggests improvement in this area.

"Immediately after the Programme I had a really difficult situation at work that went on for about 6 months. Before I would have completely lost it. But although I found it really difficult, my determination and what I learnt on the course helped me to see it through. Now I'm back in the role that I wanted to be in".

"I'm applying for jobs now which I couldn't have done before. Warrior gives me more options, it opens things up".

EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

Participants report not only greater awareness of emotions and their impact, but also an increased ability to deal with them.

"The course changed my way of thinking from negative to positive... I've learnt self control so that I can deal with my anger without being violent. I haven't been in trouble with the police or been violent since I went on Warrior – that's a complete change".

EMPOWERMENT

The requirement to engage and take ownership of the process of the Warrior Programme was helpful and empowering both during the Programme and afterwards.

"Warrior is respectful and positive. You have to work for it and it makes you concentrate on what you are going to do."

"It's great to know that they are there if you need them, but I can honestly say that what I learnt means I can do it on my own."



Colin with his grandson

"I've got a better relationship with my family. My relationships with my daughter and grandson are second to none."

COLIN

COLIN

ARMY, 1ST BATTALION THE DEVONSHIRE AND DORSET REGIMENT

"Before I went on Warrior I was seriously depressed. I'd attempted suicide four times. The drinking wasn't that bad but I was doing a lot of cocaine. I'd been unemployed for 15 years and I was at absolute rock bottom – I couldn't see any solution.

I got the programme straight away – I understood that it was all about empowerment. It empowered me to look at what had happened in the past and to understand that the way I was dealing with it was really detrimental to my health. Once I was able to cast all that off it just felt so different; I had a smile on my face. What they taught me has really helped; it changed things straight away and that's kept on ever since. Things have kept on improving.

I've gone from being unemployed and suicidal to being a qualified security guard. I can make £700 to £1,000 per week and I do all kinds of work – music festivals, corporate security, retail – and I travel all the time. At the end of the week I've got money in my pocket; I'm not struggling trying to survive on benefits. At Christmas I can buy the things that I want and feel good. After the programme I started doing a bit of work with the army and it went on from there – it just got better and better.

Before the programme I was a recluse. I didn't go out or socialise. I couldn't sleep and I couldn't deal with my emotions and feelings. Now I've made new friends and I can go out and socialise – before I was always wary of people but now I can talk to them easily. I sleep through the night – I don't pace around all the time like I used to. I still get emotional about other people's trauma but I can deal with my own so much better – I feel cool and calm. I get bad days, but that's what they are – one day – and I know that tomorrow will be better, and it is.

People have seen the difference in me; my behaviour is not extreme like it used to be. I've got a better relationship with my family. I've learnt that it's all about communication and listening. My relationships with my daughter and grandson are second to none. I'd like a relationship of my own and I can feel a bit lonely sometimes. At the moment I'm travelling and working so much I haven't had time to do that, but I firmly believe that it will happen when the time is right.

If I hadn't gone on Warrior I'd be dead by now. I look back on it and realise that. If you put the effort in, it really does work and I'd encourage anyone to go on it. I did go to a refresher and now I feel like I can do it without help. It's great to know that they are there if you need them, but I can honestly say that what I learnt means I can do it on my own."

CHRIS

ARMY, 1ST BATTALION QUEENS REGIMENT

"I carried a huge amount of baggage and anger into the army when I joined in the 1970s. Back then, there wasn't the kind of understanding there is now. When I was a younger man, we all felt like you shouldn't need help – we were supposed to be the tough guys. I left the army in the 1980s and eventually was convicted and served time for serious assaults, including battering a guy with a baseball bat until he was nearly dead. Those are the things that I am most ashamed of.

Eventually I ended up in a hostel for servicemen and another soldier recommended the Warrior Programme. I was really sceptical before I went and I think I was difficult to deal with when I was on it. I was part of the negative group. At one point I detested the guy who was running the course. I needed a lot of one to one help and they gave it to me, even though I was difficult and challenged things.

I had done nothing with my life for years and then after Warrior I did 18 different training courses. I took everything that was offered to me – computers, First Aid, HGV, Security, Customer Service. I'd been unemployed all that time before, then I applied for a job and got it straight away – they said I was the most proactive unemployed person they had ever seen.

Now I have somewhere to live, I've reconnected with my kids and I have work. The course changed my way of thinking from negative to positive. It coached my mind to feel different and think different and that has carried on – it's given me the character to deal with problems. I've learnt self control so that I can deal with my anger without being violent. I haven't been in trouble with the police or been violent since I went on Warrior – that's a complete change.

I spend a lot of time working with various charities and I think the course has helped me to understand other people better so that I can help them. The Warrior Programme makes people face reality and helps them to learn how to deal with it in a positive way. If I'd been able to go on it when I was young, I can't imagine what a great place I would be in now. But I'm doing really well and it will carry on."



The Warrior RCT Course February 2013 at the Legal and General training centre, St Monica's, Kingswood

JIM

ARMY, COLDSTREAM GUARDS

When I went on the Warrior Programme it wasn't the best of times. My long term relationship had come to an end because of my mood swings and PTSD. I was never physically violent towards my partner, but I was giving out mental abuse without really understanding it. For my partner, it was like walking on eggshells. She never knew what mood I'd be in or if the house would be smashed up when she got home. I had a huge amount of frustration and anger. At work, I went through so many keyboards my boss said they didn't have any more.

The break up really hit me hard – other people could see the symptoms but I didn't and I didn't see the end of my relationship coming. It gave me the kick up the bum that I needed. I got in touch with Combat Stress and they referred me to the course.

I realise now that back then my reason for going on the course was because I wanted to be back in a relationship. I didn't realise that I needed to do it for me, not to be with someone else. It was only quite a while afterwards that I understood that I needed to do things for myself. I remember saying to someone, I can't say how it works, but it has. It's helped me massively. After about 6 months I hooked up with the young lady that I'm currently with and it's great. I'm trying to do it right this time and it's working. I understand so much more. My relationship with my teenage daughter is a thousand times better. She actually wants to spend time with me now, it's not something she has to do. We have fun, it's really successful and not boring like it used to be because I didn't want to do anything or go anywhere. Now we go out and have fun together.

The programme has really helped with my anger. Now I channel it in a different way. I was doing DIY the other day and the drill wasn't doing the job. Before I would have launched it down the garden, but instead I packed it up and went and had a cup of tea. When I'm driving I don't get angry now, I just think 'oh they must need to get somewhere before me' and if I'm stuck in traffic I just accept that I can't do anything about it. That's a massive difference!

I don't feel I need to do the exercises we learnt. But what I do is to put into practice the ways of thinking that we were taught – that's what makes the real difference. Immediately after the programme I had a really difficult situation at work that went on for about 6 months until it was finally sorted out. Before, I would have completely lost it. But although I found it really difficult, my determination and the stuff I learnt on the course helped me to see it through. It also meant that my workmates supported me – that would have been hard if I'd been angry all the time like before. Now I'm back in the role that I wanted to be.

I would recommend the programme to anyone. It really worked for me."





The Warrior Team

“Our Programme enables individuals to make extraordinary changes to their lives...”

CHARLOTTE COLE
Founder Trustee, The Warrior Programme

OPERATIONAL RESPONSE TO RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

The evidence from the RCT and our subsequent monitoring is positive and supports our goals to progress and strengthen our service.

The RCT identified two important areas of focus: The reinforcement of post course support to maintain and embed what has been learnt on the course, and the longitudinal measurement of participant outcomes, to include practical measures of day to day functioning.

The charity has acted on both of these recommendations: We have strengthened the post course support with regular refresher sessions, delivered regionally, and are developing on-line support tools to enable beneficiaries to access material and advice more flexibly. Beneficiaries are now monitored on a monthly basis, including their employment/activity status. This process is being reinforced to enhance the quality of evidence and to enable real time feedback on beneficiaries' progress and support needs.

The challenges going forward are to build on these achievements and to deliver a sustainable service to those Veterans and their families most in need.

Our focus is to:

- Further collaborate with partners to integrate and embed the Programme within the care pathway for Veterans and families.
- Conduct further research to evidence the long term benefit to Veterans and family members.
- Expand our national footprint to include Wales, Scotland and Ireland.



CHARLOTTE COLE

THE FUTURE

The Warrior Programme has demonstrated commitment to evidence based outcomes from its inception and this remains central to all we do. Our Programme enables individuals to make extraordinary changes to their lives and, crucially, markedly increases their engagement with specialist and mainstream support services.

Our key priority now is to evidence, quantify and articulate the consequential benefits to the broader support services, both statutory and non statutory, of individuals participating in the Programme. This will identify how Warrior can enable better use of existing infrastructure and investment as participants engage more effectively with support services and the lead time to independent living is therefore reduced.

As the Programme is developed as a cost effective element of the broader care pathway, and the possibilities arising from our service are better understood, we believe we can offer more to help prevent individuals reaching acute and critical states.

Part of this process will involve developing Warrior to meet the needs of wider beneficiary groups, including those in the criminal justice system and disaffected youth. As with our work with Veterans we will continue to offer a holistic approach, including family members in our support.

Demonstrating the social and financial benefits of the Programme, broadening our beneficiary groups and delivering our service as part of recognised care pathways in partnership with sector specialists will underpin our drive to secure and build sustainable funding for the future.



CHARLOTTE COLE
Founder Trustee

THE WARRIOR PROGRAMME

1 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL
Tel 0560 204 3180
info@warriorprogramme.org.uk
www.warriorprogramme.org.uk

The Warrior Programme is a company limited by guarantee [no. 6263721] registered in England, and a registered charity [no. 1120893].
Registered office: Quadrant House, Floor 6, 4 Thomas More Square, London E1W 1YW



Veteran family member, Teresa (left), fulfilling her goal of voluntary charity work

The Warrior Programme would like to thank Dentons and their creative team for producing this brochure on their behalf



