

**Rose, J., Temple, S., McGuire-Snieckus, R., Wood, F. Vatmanides, O., and Parker, R. (2016)  
Somerset Emotion Coaching Project Evaluation Report. Report for Somerset County Council. Bath:  
Institute for Education, Bath Spa University.**

The research, commissioned by Somerset Public Health (SPH), formed part of an innovative response to growing national concerns about children and young people's mental health, and the role which schools and other sectors of the children's workforce might play in addressing this. SPH wished to train a network of champions for children's mental health across the whole children's workforce and developed the role of lead practitioners in every school, an exercise which had never hitherto been undertaken in the UK. As a further innovation Bath Spa University (BSU) proposed that the training should take the form of Emotion Coaching, a model which BSU had developed in individual community areas, but which had never previously been applied across a whole county.

There were two key research questions:

1. To what extent had the training developed an increased awareness of and sustainable network for supporting children's mental health within the children's workforce?
2. To what extent had it promoted the increased use of available resources and inter-agency working?

The training programme was jointly delivered by BSU and EHCAP, a training organisation run by a local GP. The main research was undertaken by BSU. An independent evaluation was undertaken by the University of Exeter, and published as an annex to the main report.

Data collection included pre- and post-Emotion Coaching Questionnaires, Exit Questionnaires, and behaviour indices. Both versions of the pre- and post-Emotion Coaching Questionnaires were administered at two points in time: T1 = one academic year pre-training and T2 = one academic year post-training, by separate samples. A paired sample t-test was applied to the Emotion Coaching Questionnaire data for each questionnaire version. Exit Questionnaires were collected at one time point, one academic year post-training. Chi-square analysis was used to analyse the Exit Questionnaire data. Qualitative data from focus group discussions and free-text responses in the Exit Questionnaires were collected to supplement the quantitative data, which was analysed using inductive coding, constructivist grounded theory and constant comparative method.

The study found significant evidence of increased awareness of emotional mental health issues among project participants. This impacted on professional practice and on the children themselves, including behaviour and wellbeing. There was also evidence of increased take up of specialist resources and services. While the internal and external evaluations were very positive overall, the researchers found clear evidence of the need for a whole school approach and the active support of senior leaders for the lead professional role of emotion coach champion to be fully effective in individual schools.

An initial draft of the report was discussed with senior officers and members of Somerset County Council, including the Public Health Consultant and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, on 16 December 2015. A dissemination conference was held on 21 January 2016, attended by over 70 delegates from local schools and services. All county councillors received a copy of the executive summary of the report. The findings of the study were also discussed in Parker, R. and Levinson, M.P. (2018) 'Student behaviour, motivation and the potential of attachment-aware schools to redefine the landscape.' *British Educational Research Journal*, 44 (5). pp. 875-896.