

focus group of children with attachment disorders

rhythmic input within a group dynamic - polyvagal theory. when children are in a group and getting rhythm

helps self esteem and leadership skills

opportunity to focus on the children in informal setting

using the group dynamic to create connections to help attachment disorders.

Rhythm would regulate the children emotionally

Needs: music and movement

movement releases endorphins and helps them regulate

prep is in breaks and show is outside school hours

-----

### **Your project**

#### **Your idea (Step 5 of 6)**

#### **What would you like to do?**

**Here are some ideas of what to tell us about your project:**

#### **What you would like to do**

#### **What difference your project will make**

#### **Who will benefit from it**

#### **How long you expect to run it for. This can be an estimate**

#### **How you'll make sure people know about it**

#### **How you plan to learn from it and use this learning to shape future projects**

**Is it something new, or are you continuing something that has worked well previously? We want to fund both types of projects**

**You can write up to 300 words for this section, but don't worry if you use less.**

Currently, there is little opportunity for children with SEN to express themselves fully and improve their interpersonal skills and relationships. Participating in our focus groups, children with SEN are provided with a safe space and dedicated understanding so that they can flourish. With this, there is substantial evidence that the medium of rhythmic music can benefit SEN children substantially, especially those with attachment disorders.

Building upon our present Newcastle focus groups, we will expand out into different areas of the UK. Utilising qualified psychologists, we will teach aspects of rhythm with experienced trainers. The children will gain experience with various instruments in a comfortable, collaborative and calming space while also cultivating leadership skills, self-confidence and independence.

The focus groups will run across the year with 350 children participating. Conducted during school breaks we will be staging an end-of-year play to showcase their newfound confidence, not least in their chosen instrument. The musical play will be of a professional standard inclusive of lighting, sound and costumes allowing the children to demonstrate what they have learnt.

After completion of the programme, we will conduct a meeting to establish the lessons learnt and any improvements for future projects.

We will be publicising the project through notice boards in SEN dedicated schools and social forums aimed at those with attachment disorders.

When previously trialled, we saw that children with attachment disorders were positively affected by this experience. Due to the nature of attachment, children are in a constant state of 'fight-or-flight' and satisfying their immediate needs is important. We, however, have seen that focused hours of informal collaboration fosters social engagement amongst neurodivergent children. According to research (cited as the Polyvagal Theory), the mode of rhythm is crucial to regulating the temperament of attached children allowing for confidence in group settings.

### **How does your project meet our funding priorities?**

**A good application should do at least one of these three things:**

**Build strong relationships in and across communities**

**Improve the places and spaces that matter to communities**

**Help more people reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage**

**We're also keen to support people and communities most adversely impacted by COVID-19. We can support you to:**

**continue to deliver activity, whether you are responding to the immediate crisis or supporting recovery activity**

**change and adapt, becoming more resilient in order to respond to new and future challenges.**

**You can write up to 150 words for this section, but don't worry if you use less.**

### Help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage

Emphasising social interaction at a child's critical stage of development (9 - 11 years old) is imperative to social engagement. By increasing the time spent with other neurodivergent children in informal settings, we will improve the quality of their interactions by developing interpersonal skills to form social bonds. Introducing rhythmic music to children with attachment disorders increases the levels of serotonin and dopamine in their brain thereby improving their mood due to this endorphin rush. Consequently, children can learn coping mechanisms for their disorders through emotional regulation at a young age. This will be a huge help to them in functioning in social situations long-term. Due to the nature of attachment disorders, isolation and repetition are extreme triggers of emotional meltdowns. During the COVID-19 pandemic quarantine, SEN children were particularly affected as opportunities for social engagement were scrapped. Delivering our project allows us to support the recovery of SEN children and increase trust.

### **How does your project involve your community?**

**What do we mean by community?**

**We believe that people understand what's needed in their communities better than anyone. Tell us how your community came up with the idea for your project. We want to know how many people you've spoken to, and how they'll be involved in the development and delivery of the project.**

**Here are some examples of how you could be involving your community:**

**Having regular chats with community members, in person or on social media**

## **Including community members on your board or committee**

**Regular surveys**

**Setting up steering groups**

**Running open days**

**You can write up to 200 words for this section, but don't worry if you use less.**

Our project benefits the direct community of SEN children; the community is defined here as a group of people sharing a characteristic. This is also inclusive of parents of SEN children, teachers, and community leaders allowing us to involve the wider community and promote social cohesion.

Advertising in local papers across the UK and increasing awareness through social media (targeted advertisements and posts) allowed those who are not directly part of the SEN community to be involved by advocating for therapeutic means of engagement for the most vulnerable of our society.

We pioneered the idea through conception in a local primary school where the trial proved successful and evoked camaraderie between SEN children, their parents and their teachers. This formation of trialling with 15 children, their parents and the teachers enabled us to gain a sense of what works for the children actively and not theoretically. It allowed us to pull from all backgrounds to develop a project that is fully inclusive and culturally sensitive.

Setting up a steering group of parents, teachers and community leaders gives us the 'big picture' ensuring the children's progress will be monitored throughout according to various frameworks.