

Four case studies use Holme Wood Resi/Dance participants' own words to describe how the project affected them, their families and their lives.

Heartbeats of Holme Wood

Personal journeys from the Dance United Yorkshire Resi/Dance project in Holme Wood

Dr Louise McDowall

Heartbeats of Holme Wood: personal journeys from the DUY Resi/Dance project in Holme Wood

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Introduction

These case studies present participants' own words about their experience alongside a word cloud created from their text. We suggest there is an interesting textual 'conversation' for the reader when viewed in this manner that we hope you will experience.

During the study, external stakeholders commented how they wanted to see someone's journey and preferred a narrative about this than quantitative material on participants. These case studies illustrate this and provide helpful information. For example, they may help arts organisations around approaches that work, for funders and others to be able clearly to see impacts/positives and/or to chart a journey.

We have provided thematic headings within the text so that if you notice or are intrigued by a heading that appeals to you, you can navigate straight to it. Or you may be interested in the whole journey of a person/people.

<u>Case study 1</u> is from a girl in the Holme Wood youth company.

<u>Case study 2</u> is from two boys both in the Holme Wood youth company (interviewed together)

<u>Case studies 3</u> and 4 are two different women who attended the women's fitness/dance classes

Case Study 1: girl from Holme Wood youth company



Challenges as a teen living in Holme ood

Peer pressure, I think that's like a big thing. So, there's a lot of people in Holme Wood who like to smoke weed, drink alcohol, and I feel like that puts a lot of pressure on their friend's cos "Oh you're not gonna come with us?" or like, "Oh, why are you scared or whatever?"

It's like, people trying to fit in, and not being outcasted or being in these friendship groups - so say they're not like necessarily bad people, but cos they're under the influence of their friends ... their mirroring other people's actions.

Preconceptions about dance

I've always been like, fascinated in like dances and musicals. Like, in primary d'ya know when they used to put on the plays and stuff...

Like I loved how like full of energy and all over the place some of them where when they were dancing.

It's [dance] like, it's a way to express yourself, help like with your mental health and stuff.

And I've always just like felt like it's just, yeah, exactly how to express yourself and umm not like dance is for anyone in particular. Anyone can dance. Anyone can do this.

Appeal of the DUY sessions: encouraging your individuality

Like stuff like this, it helps you have your own voice and have your own sense of individuality. And like there's a lot of people who don't like have that voice, and they feel like they just have to blend in, copy, do the same like, d'ya know...sheep's.

...they focus a lot on like consent and having these chats, and it makes you feel comfortable in your own identity, where you come from, like it's ok what class you are, income, like all that stuff whatever your sexuality, ethnicity, like it's really inclusive.

And it makes you like, from the beginning feel comfortable in like, your skin and who you are and then build on what do you like? What do you like to do? Like what path do you wanna go down? We can help you in this way, d'ya know what I mean? It's nice.

You feel like you're not being judged, and you're with a set of people who are going through similar things as you.

What helps you to take part in dance?

To be honest just having the opportunity. Like, it's not so much "Oh I'm gonna go there cos of this or that" it's like, it's something that helps me with like anxiety, getting me out of the house, and doing something.

Having somewhere where you can go, where it's safe and like, Covid friendly and you can also have like that opportunity to talk to people.

Also having really nice people, because I feel like I wouldn't really wanna come to Dance if it were like horrible dance teachers or horrible people. Cos [DUY Dance Tutors] are lovely and like they're very welcoming and you just feel like, like you wanna come don't ya? Cos, not only for obviously the dance but, like it's your community, it's your dance like...

Like they make you wanna come because they're so, like inviting and welcoming and they're genuinely nice people.

Work with me not against me

So say if [the dance tutor] is all nice and professional around you, and then when we get to dancing they're like [shouting] "What are you doing?" Like, "How dare you" or "You need to do this, or you need to do that". Like, instead of trying to help you grow and saying "Oh that was good, but you could improve on this" like saying like "Oh, you did that wrong, you need to go from the top that was horrible" ...working with you instead of against ya.





Encourage me

Cos there has been days where I've not felt like coming or I don't really feel good that day. And then [DUY Dance Tutor] has encouraged me to come, she's not forced me to come.

Like, there's a difference between forcing and saying "You have to come, like you're gonna let us all down. We're not gonna be able to get the dance right because you're not there".

Like, it's more "Oh it's ok if you're not here this time if you don't feel well. We'd be happy to have you here if you can come, like cos we know you can do it. You can push yourself. But, like now we can just work around like say if you're not in that spot we'll work around that spot and then we'll like put you back in when you come back".

Researcher: ... it makes it easier to then make you wanna return

Yeah

Exceeded expectations

I thought it was like really fun, that it'd be like nice ta come to like dance lessons and continue with this. Cos obviously the people were nice, the dance was fun, like it was something new. And umm when I did come, and I got all like these wonderful opportunities to perform, and like just opportunities left, right and centre. It was like exceeded what I thought it would be like.

I don't think like I took it in that I could have this, these opportunities...

So, it definitely exceeded what I thought could happen. And then obviously got my Bronze [Arts Award] qualification and that.

Dance United has like, helped me know like, that I can have these opportunities. And that I can do all these wonderful things and projects...It's not just thinking about it, or visualising it, like you can put that into action.

DUY approach – growth mindset

[They're] just really inviting, and the way they work is like really involving, and it makes you feel comfortable, good about yourself, like you can do it. And focusing on growth and being the best that you can be in a supportive environment.

Like I could come to dance, and we can dance but we can also like talk about other things, or how like life is going, how I'm feeling, it's like a growth in like confidence, and like self-esteem as well. Like, knowing that I don't have ta, umm be insecure, or like "I'm not good enough" or "I can't do this", or like, d'ya know like getting past my self-limits. Like how I'm limiting myself from being the best that I can be.

What they have learnt about themselves through dance

I've learnt that I like how I can express myself through dance, that's definitely something that I enjoy doing, and that it helps with my anxiety and stuff.

I've learnt that it's also a good coping mechanism for different things, that I don't have to like bottle stuff up or energy, I can get that out in dance. So, I've just learnt that that's a good way for me to express myself and get any pent-up energy or emotions out.

So, when you start to remember it [the dance] and like the moves flow and err maybe some moves that you didn't necessarily know how to do and you've worked on it, and you can do 'um now. There's that sense, that its rewarding, and you can be like proud of yourself.



Case Study 2: two boys from the Holme Wood youth company



Living in Holme Wood

It's a bit tough, living in Holme Wood with all quads going around all the time.

It's ok growing up around here, it's just like with all the crimes and all the people running 'round 'ere but there is quite a few good people around here if you look to find them.

Cos if you grow up around here you know the area like...if something bad happened you know where your families are, you know where the people are to help ya, and just you know where everything is.

To have arts provision in Holme Wood

It's great, but erm most people don't expect things like this for an area like where we have ...

It's quite unexpected.

That it's free, you don't need 'ta pay its really good, you can learn quite a lot off of it, and it's a really fun decision to make.



Impact of DUY's Resi/Dance

It provides kids who like dancing it lets them do that with other people who also like it.

It relieves stress cos of the music and it also gets us off the street where most of the bad things are, and it also like helps us get through things. Cos I was going through something bad like throughout what happened and I'm ok with it now, but it's still hurting a bit, but it's helped me get over it.

It just feels so much safer here.

It has changed me quite a lot cos before I was always mean to people, I wasn't listening to teachers, I just wasn't being the best person I could be. [Now] I listen to teachers, I do good in school, I help around the house a lot now and I'm just changing.

It's made me behave a lot better and kinder towards people.

Impact of dancing here – help/support

There has been one time where I wanted to quit because of an incident that happened outside of school. And then one person here stepped in. So, I wanted to quit because of that but I kept going.



Cos at the time then, I just like, had a little trouble, had little problems at home so I just wanted to get out of the house sometimes and here helped.

I've got a really short fuse, sometimes I'm just a ticking time bomb. I get angry a lot easier outside of dance. Err, lately when I've been coming I've been getting a lot calmer, cos umm I had really bad anger issues but now I've learnt to control it.

There has been a time where I have actually quit. It was during the zoom sessions... and after that it, some things were just going on in my life, so I wanted to get away from the dancing.

It was an offer from one of the Dance United [Yorkshire] staff [that helped me come back].

Biggest thing I have learnt through being part of Resi/Dance

It's just like the dancing, cos before like I didn't know how 'ta dance at all that's why else I wanted to join. So, I could learn something new.

How to enjoy things that I like.



Researcher: and did you...find that more difficult before to do?

Y-yeah ...

Does a project like this keep people out of trouble?

Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

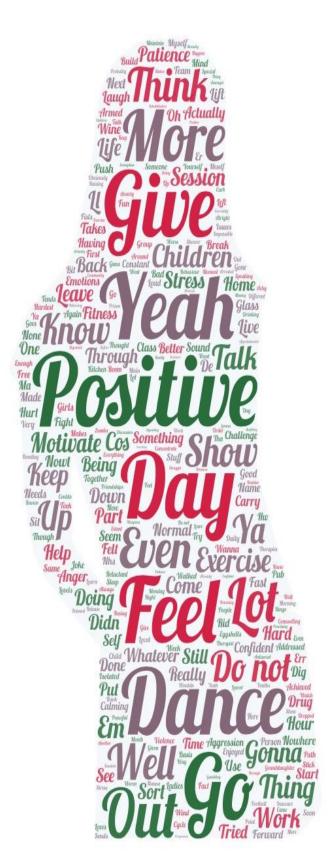
Researcher: And in what ways does it do that?

Cos of like, one of my old friends like we don't talk as much but we are still friends. But before in primary he used to smash car windows and things, but I've got him out of it. But umm this has helped get my mind off of things like that.

Researcher: So, do you think that you might've been going down that path too?

Yeah. I was just around the wrong people at the wrong times.
Because when there's trouble going on outside, people are dancing in here, they just completely take their mind off it and focus on the dancing.

Case Study 3: woman from the Resi/Dance women's classes



Living in Holme Wood

Living in Holme Wood raising children that live with me is a struggle...there's a lot of violence, a lot of drug use, a lot of antisocial behaviour...to keep them [children] on the right path is hard work.

Even though we have that violence amongst us, if something tends to happen, or someone goes missing...we all seem to stick together, we have that.

You live life on eggshells as soon as they [children] leave... you're on eggshells...now they don't just fight with fists, they fight with weapons and guns and most of the youths they're all armed.

Initial pre-conceptions around dance

I thought "Yeah I am gonna give it a go".

The fact that I did Zumba at one point put me off, because it were too fast ... couldn't keep up, so it were just the mind, when you're going into something like that and you're already stressed from your day to day life you don't wanna go in there and start doing like really fast things because it really just – it sends you even worse.

Appeal of the DUY sessions

I think the main thing for me and is what sounded appealing was...it said fitness but tha' dance part made it sound more fun.

I actually enjoyed it, and I came out like I'd achieved something, even though it might sound like it's just a dance class, but I'd actually achieved something. And then as it progressed, I could actually see myself achieving more, I were even going home and practising the routine in the kitchen.

I would even show, like my granddaughter and stuff like that, I'd show 'er and she were really enjoying like, "Nanna does dance" and stuff, so she loves that.

Physicality over talking

I think talking's like the hardest part. I'm reluctant to talk about it. I've tried counselling and tried all sorts of therapies and that, but none of that works. It just seemed to dig everything back up and hurt more... I didn't wanna challenge myself on that [talking through things], so through exercise I felt confident enough to challenge me-self through that.

Yeah, when you're working it out you feel better about yourself as well, so yeah it does give you that...

Dancing with peers

It sort of like gives you a lift, when we walked out, and I were speaking to girls I was like "Oh I could just like do that again". Normally in exercise I'd be like "No, I'm not doing exercise" but when you go in, I think like you feel confident because there's other ladies around you, like they're the same as you. Because they're not all confident, but you go in there and you see them, and you build together as a team. And some of them we've even made good friendships out of 'em as well...it's just like the bonding as well...we have a laugh as well.

Motivation/lifeline

Very insecure, being isolated a lot with having obviously children having the needs that they have. So, to get out is almost impossible because they don't leave so I can't leave. They don't go nowhere, so I don't go nowhere.

So, it gives me the motivation to carry on. Even that one session, can help push me like through that week.





The motivation - it gives you the get up and go, even the next day, you think "Well I did that" and I still do some of the exercises every morning in the kitchen, just to keep it going. So, I think when I go back Monday, "I'm gonna be alright. I'm gonna do that, I'm gonna do that better, and I'm gonna keep going".

Emotional regulation

...when you're warming up and you do that, like the stress relieving part of it, where you get the anger and aggression. I think that helped me more than anything, because I'm, really known as an aggressive person. So, to learn to curb that and use it in another way were actually a good thing.

My mind had given up before I'd started... And then when I pushed forwards and realised that I could actually do things... Next day as well, you do feel a bit achy but you feel relaxed mentally.

But in there you feel like, you've had your group session where you've all had a laugh, you've had your exercise, you've had your like de-stress moment... you've had it all. All in that hour...You can't even get that off a therapist off NHS.

And then when we've done all that, to get all these emotions. It's like we get rid of all the emotions and then we go into the dance. Which makes it feel more, I don't know, you just feel like you've just dropped all a load and then going into the dance where you can just be free.

I wouldn't be able to concentrate to do the dance. I don't think the dance would work if I didn't do them first to get all that, and then go into the dance, and then after you do the calming. Where you

know you're calming cos you just feel like you're going to sleep. Where it's like so peaceful ...it takes you to different levels, it's like a drug... it just takes ya someplace else.



'Me time'

When you've got nowt, nowt really to motivate you at all, you're just doing your things, like my life on a daily basis is just constant appointments with children. And just to come and do that just for meself to get, after that hard day, you just feel like most people they'd have a glass of wine or whatever, that is my glass of wine.

To just, me time and just wind down. So yeah, that is, that's my time and it helps with it being local.

Being a positive role model for my children

But it's also, it's showing ma children like, normally I'd probably go to bingo, so that's showing gambling, or I'd go to a pub, that's showing 'em drinking, so going to do something motivation, like dance or fitness or whatever else it shows them...that if I'm doing it, it's not all bad.

[from dancing has...] More patience, 100 % more patience. When you've come down and you've gone from your session and you've done whatever you have to do, you've left a lot of your anxiety, a lot of your anger and aggression and ... your stress is - you leave in that room and then you go home and when you've had a shower and you come down and you just feel like you've got more patience to carry on

Case Study 4: 2nd woman from the Resi/Dance women's classes

Finding comfort and confidence through vulnerability

"I'm just like well fat people can't dance, why should I bother trying?" And I was so terrified of making myself vulnerable and dancing.

...from the first moment I came [DUY] made me feel so comfortable and since then like...I've really enjoyed it.

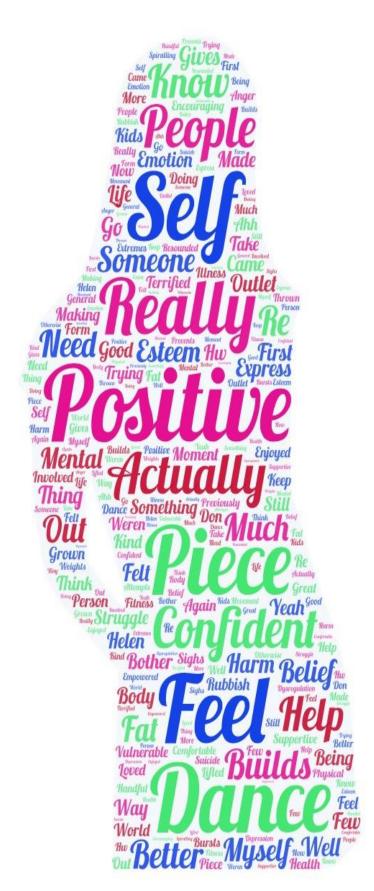
I've grown in so much like confidence because of it, like previously...I weren't ever the most body confident person but that's got better.

Importance of encouragement in instilling belief

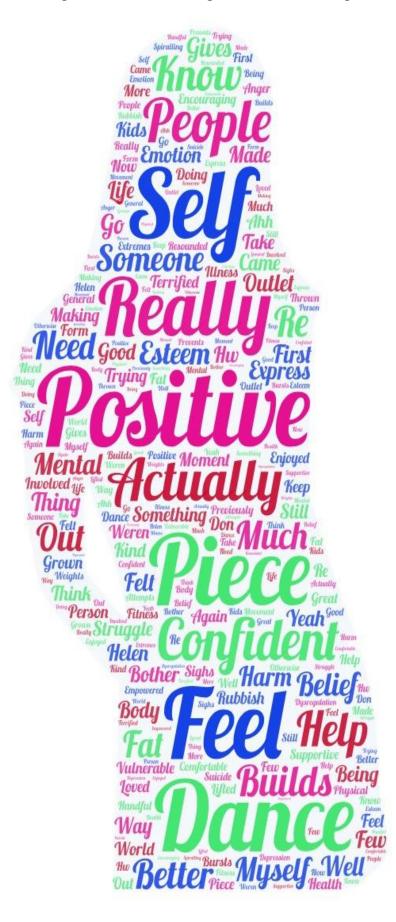
To actually have someone [say] "No actually you're really good at this" You know, it — again builds selfesteem, builds that confidence, where you think "Yeah actually I can do it. I can take on the world". Like, [sighs] I've had like only a few people, a handful of people in my life that have kind of had belief in me to do something.

A form of expression that aids my mental health

I need to still go because not only does it help with fitness it really helps with mental illness, and mental health in general. Struggling with emotional like dysregulation. Like – like the kids in HW I struggle to express what I'm feeling, or I feel



things in extremes. Dance gives me that outlet, gives me something to express.



Dance is more of a physical thing, I feel so much better after I've danced, I'm just "Ahh I feel great now, like a weights lifted and I've got all that out of me because I've just thrown it into the movement and into the piece".

Enables me to feel

But to actually be able to feel emotion in some form or other is why dance is helpful for me because otherwise I keep it in or it bursts out in anger, or spiralling depression, self-harm, suicide attempts. That's what dance does for me, it prevents that. I don't need to self-harm because I've got an outlet.