



Emotional Intelligence and Burnout in Child and Family Social Work: Implications for policy and practice

Research Briefing

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We realise that everyone who works with or for looked after children is extremely busy, with many pressing demands on their time, but also know that all involved recognise the importance of research as the foundation for evidence-based policy and practice. We very much appreciate their generosity in sharing their experiences and insights.

Our special thanks go to the child and family social workers who took part in the evaluation of the Emotional Intelligence Training for their valuable contribution to this project. Their participation in the process of providing training in emotional resilience will help to provide important messages for policy and practice.

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1. Introduction

Work-based stress and burnout are widely recognised as important problems at work among a range of public service professions including: teachers, police officers, nurses and social workers (McQueen, 2004; Bennett, Evans & Tattersall 1993; Kyriacou, 2001; Burke, 1994). Emotional intelligence skills are associated with less burnout (Melita, Prati & Karriker, 2010), but there is little consistent evidence to show the benefits of emotional intelligence interventions on practice. This project assessed the benefits of Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence training for child and family social workers in relation to stress and burnout using a randomised control trial. The occupation of social work was chosen because of the emotionally demanding nature of the job.

The rate of work related stress and burnout among social workers is high compared to similar professions, (Lloyd, King & Chenoworth, 2002). For example, Curtis (2010) estimated the average working life of a social worker was eight years, much less than that of 15 years for similar demanding professions such as nurses. The Health and Safety Executive 2013 reported that those working in human health and social work occupations had 2,090 stress cases recorded per 100,000 people working in the last 12 months, higher than for any other industry (HSE 2013). Such levels of stress and burnout contribute to high vacancy rates, particularly in the areas of child care, young people and families. Survey data show a vacancy rate of over 14% and a turnover rate of 15% amongst child and family social workers at the end of September 2013 (Department of Education 2014). The associated costs of stress to employers, through increased recruitment and training expenditure, are significant. No less important are the psychological and physical effects on individuals. Therefore, finding ways to reduce stress at work would have benefits for employees, employers and service users.

1.1 Common stressors at work

The most common work stressors have been identified over a number of years in stress research and summarised in by the Health and Safety Executive (2007) into 6 work stressor themes:

1. **Demands** (including caseload, work patterns, work pace, working hours and the working environment).
2. **Control** (how much say the person has in the way they do their work).
3. **Support** (which includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organization, line management and colleagues).
4. **Relationships at work** (which includes promoting positive working practices to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour).
5. **Role** (whether people understand their role within the organization and whether the organization ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles).

1.2 Stress

Seyle's (1980) model of stress describes the phenomenon of stress as the generalised physiological response to stressors (negative and positive) which involve changes in hormonal systems designed to activate the body for action, (often referred to as the 'flight or fight' response). These changes in physiological arousal are considered to be adaptive to deal with short term demands, but become a problem if prolonged, leading to a wide range

of psychosomatic symptoms (Chandola, Heraclides and Kumari 2010), such as insomnia or sleeping too much, muscle tension, muscle aches, headache, digestive system problems, and tiredness.

Stress is a natural physiological and psychological reaction to changes and demands in the environment and helps the body and mind prepare for action. People tend to thrive when there are demands at work, but they begin to struggle when demands exceed their capacity (e.g. skills or resources) or time available to respond (See also Section 1.7).

1.3 Emotional demands in social work

Social work places high emotional demands on individuals often leading to a depletion of emotional resources (see McFadden, Campbell and Taylor 2014 for a review). The role of child and family social workers involves witnessing trauma and neglect and the consequences of these on vulnerable children and families. The role also requires that social workers play a key part in containing high stakes emotional situations and social workers have to establish relationships with families who are unwilling to engage with them (Ellett, Ellis, Westbrook & Dews 2007). In their work environment, social workers are increasingly working in settings where resources are often restricted and work in frequently changing organisational structures with consequent changes in team membership (See Moriaty, Baginsky and Manthorpe 2015 for a review).

Given the emotional demands of the social work role, enhancing Emotional Intelligence resources could be one way of providing social workers with the skills required to cope with these emotional demands. The Social Work Task Force (2009) report highlighted the need for social workers to have 'a particular mix of analytical skills, insight, common sense, confidence, resilience, empathy and use of authority' (Department of Health, 2009, p.16). In the latest revision of social work standards (Department of Education 2014), emotional competencies have not been explicitly mentioned, even though social worker responses to the consultation stated that emotional competencies were a key element for good practice Department for Education (2015). Emotional resilience is often seen as a desirable characteristic for people at work, particularly those working in emotionally demanding professions. Resilience has been defined as the ability to bounce back from adversity (Anderson, Beddoe and Davys 2012) and key elements of Emotional intelligence (Emotional Self-Awareness, Emotional Expression, Emotional Self-Control) appear to be central to psychological resilience (Armstrong, Galligan, Critchley 2011). There have also been recent calls for more research 'to examine how psychological screening might inform the selection of social work students (and potentially qualified staff) and the extent to which their emotional and social competencies impact on their training experiences and subsequent professional career' (Kinman & Grant, 2010, p.12).

1.4 Project aims

Given this interest in stress and emotional resilience in social work, the aim of this research project was to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, stress, burnout and social work practice and also assess whether Emotional Intelligence training for social workers would reduce their burnout rates and improve their practice over time.

1.5 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence covers the ability to identify emotions in oneself and others and to manage emotions in oneself and others. Two models of Emotional Intelligence are used in this project: the Ability model (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso 2004) and the Trait model (Petrides, Pita & Kokkinaki 2007). The Ability model defines Emotional Intelligence as cognitive ability (being able to think about emotion states) whereas the Trait model defines Emotional Intelligence as a personality construct (how confident people feel in dealing with emotions or self-efficacy). The domains for each model can be seen in Table 1 below. We used both models of Emotional Intelligence for this project to see which Emotional Intelligence model best predicted stress, burnout and practice.

Table 1. Emotional Intelligence Domains

Similar domains across both models

	Ability Emotional Intelligence Domains	Trait Emotional Intelligence Domains
1	Recognising emotions in others	Emotionality (Emotion expression, Emotion recognition, Trait empathy, effective relationships)
2	Managing emotions in oneself	Self-Control (stress management, emotion management-self, low impulsiveness)
3	Managing emotions in others	Sociability (social awareness, assertiveness, emotion management – others)

Dissimilar domains across both models

	Ability Emotional Intelligence Domains	Trait Emotional Intelligence Domains
4	Using emotions to help thinking	Well-being (Trait optimism, Trait happiness, self-esteem)
5	Understanding emotions (knowledge)	Adaptability and self motivation

1.6 Emotional Intelligence and Social Work

Howe (2008) argued that 'social work and social care are essentially relationship-based practices...[which] can only be conducted with skill and compassion if the worker is emotionally intelligent' (Howe, 2008, p.181). It is the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of Emotional Intelligence which capture the complexity of the social work role, allowing the assessment of managing one's own emotional responses in addition to other people's emotional distress. Morrison (2007) specified five aspects of social work for which Emotional Intelligence is relevant:

1. engagement of users
2. assessment and observation
3. decision making
4. collaboration and co-operation
5. dealing with stress

Emotional Intelligence increases the chances of accurately perceiving emotions in self and others in a reflective rather than impulsive way, which then allows for decision making which acknowledges the emotional context rather than ignoring it. Research into Service user's perspectives of practitioners consistently indicates that they value social workers who are able to empathise, listen, show understanding, and take time to explore possible solutions (e.g. de Boer & Coady, 2007). Ruch (2005) highlights the importance of reflective practice for social work performance across four areas of practice:

1. the service user
2. the professional self
3. the organizational context
4. the knowledge informing practice

Ruch's work suggests that Emotional Intelligence competencies would be of use for social work practice. The Munro review (2010) also calls for a move away from a compliance culture to a learning culture in which social workers are encouraged to use their judgement more often than just relying overly on prescribed guidance (Munro, 2010). Emotional Intelligence theory suggests that making good decisions in emotionally demanding contexts requires good emotion self-knowledge as well as the ability to understand complex emotional situations and be empathetic to others.

1.7 Individual differences in stress response

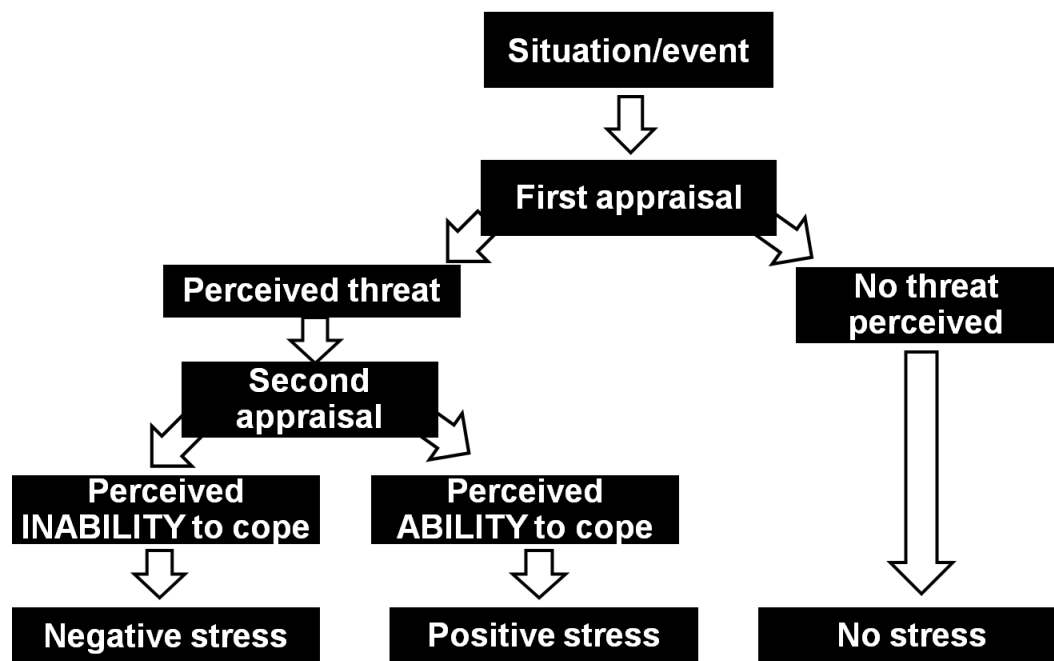
Researchers have explored why some people get stressed and others do not in response to the same event. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) outlined a useful model (see Figure 1) to explain these differences. In their model:

- Individuals have an initial set of thoughts (appraisal) about any event, identifying the situation as threatening or non-threatening to them.
- If the situation is evaluated as non-threatening, then they do not experience stress.
- If the situation is identified as stressful, a second set of thoughts consider whether they have the resources to cope with the situation or not.
- If they feel able to cope, then the individual will feel positive stress, (prepared to take some action towards handling the situation).
- If they feel unable to cope, then the individual will feel negative stress (feeling a sense of helplessness in relation to handling the situation).

Emotional Intelligence gives people extra coping strategies during the secondary stage of Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress appraisal model, thus making individuals high in Emotional Intelligence less likely to appraise a situation as stressful.

Research shows that Trait Emotional Intelligence helps reduce physiological responses to stress and is strongly associated with mental health. (Mikolajczak and Luminet 2008, Martins, Ramalho and Morin 2010).

Figure 1. The Stress appraisal and coping model



Lazarus and Folkman 1984

1.8 Emotional Intelligence Training

Whilst a number of studies have evaluated Emotional Intelligence Training, they have often used small samples, not included a control group, have been limited in their measurement of job performance, or used only one method for measuring of Emotional Intelligence (Schutte Malouff, & Thorsteinsson 2013, Matthews Zeidner and Roberts., 2004; Nelis, Quoidbach & Hansenne, 2009).

This project aimed to fill these gaps using the context of social work which places many emotional demands on its practitioners. Of those studies that have undertaken Emotional Intelligence intervention research (e.g. Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008, Cherniss Grimm and Liautaud (2010), it has been found that Emotional Intelligence intervention does improve emotional competencies and that these do last into practice. However, it appears that Emotional Intelligence intervention effects reduce over time and that in order to maintain a competent Emotional Intelligence level there needs to be ongoing training provision.

2. The Research Project

The research project had two studies: Creating a social work practice self-reflection tool and evaluating the effect of Emotional Intelligence Training on stress, burnout and social work practice. Each of these studies will be outlined in turn below.

2.1 Study 1: Creating a social work practice self-reflection tool

The first study aimed to: identify characteristics of good social work practice from multiple perspectives; create a self-report tool for good practice and validate this tool. Following a literature review on social work practice and focus groups were held discussing characteristics of good social work practice. Themes from this focus group data were coded

and compared to the Professional Capabilities Framework and Health Professions Council Standards and revised. A questionnaire was compiled to represent these themes and sent out to child and family social workers in 76 Children's Services Departments in England. Further revision of the questionnaire following analysis took place and the second version of the Questionnaire was used in the randomised control trial.

2.1.1 Participants

Focus groups were undertaken with five stakeholder groups: child and family social workers, supervisors, social work educators, young people and parents. Numbers in each group are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Participants in Focus Groups - Characteristics of a good social worker

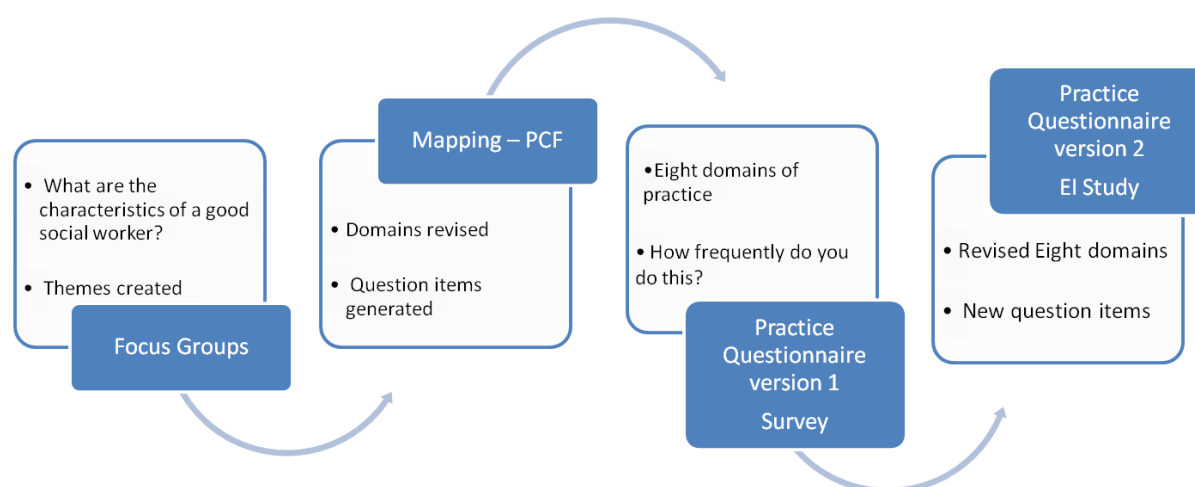
	Male	Female	Total
Social workers	0	5	5
Managers	0	8	8
Lecturers	3	5	8
Young people	2	4	6
Parents	2	2	4
Foster carers	0	3	3
Total	7	27	34

For the first survey on the social work practice questionnaire we circulated it to 76 local authorities out of 152 in England. Twenty seven agreed to participate (by sending it to Child and family social workers), 16 refused, and 34 gave no response. We received 407 responses across 23 local authorities; see Appendix 1 for response details.

2.1.2 Method

The Social Work Practice Tool was developed in different phases which are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Development of Social Work Practice Tool



Focus groups

For the focus groups we asked each group to think about child and family social workers they had known and think about the things social workers did (behaviours) which demonstrated good practice. Using thematic analysis, we coded for initial themes and generated the themes which can be seen in Table 3 below.

Mapping – Professional Capabilities Framework

We took the themes generated from the focus groups and compared them with the Professional Capabilities Framework and revised the themes.

Survey – Practice questionnaire version 1

We created 150 items for an initial questionnaire of social work practice and included some open response feedback questions. We revised the questionnaire following statistical analysis and consideration of the open response feedback.

Practice questionnaire version 2

For the second version of the questionnaire participants were asked to think about the frequency with which they had undertaken each behaviour. For example, for the statement:

I let service users tell me their story. (I gave them time to describe their situation and problems, did not interrupt or divert them.

Participants were asked to respond choosing one of the following options.

1. Not at all. I demonstrated only isolated elements of this behaviour very infrequently.
2. Occasionally. I demonstrated some elements of this behaviour occasionally.
3. Sometimes. I demonstrated many elements of this behaviour but rather inconsistently.
4. Regularly. I demonstrated many elements of this behavior in many situations.
5. Most of the time. I demonstrated all or most aspects of this behavior in many situations.
6. Always. I demonstrated all aspects of this behavior consistently.

Table 3. Social Work Practice Tool - Skills Domains Development

	First themes from Focus Groups	Second themes after PCF standards mapping	Third themes after survey
1	Cognitive (Knowledge, Reflection, Procedural skills, decision making, thinking skills)	Knowledge (theoretical academic knowledge, knowledge of systems, lifelong learning approach)	Analysis (gathering evidence, checking assumptions, identifying patterns, evaluating evidence, integrating information, systematic thinking)
2	Communication (Interpersonal skills, enabling understanding)	Communication (Interpersonal skills, enabling service user understanding, keeping people informed)	Consultation and empathy (listening, empathy, enabling service user understanding, promoting service user autonomy)
3	Relationships (Engaging with service users, collaboration with other professions)	Relationships (Maintaining relationships, empathy skills, management of emotional situations, collaborative skills)	Cooperation (minimal conflict, resolves conflict, shares information, reliable, helpful)
4	Self-management (Self-awareness, emotion management)	Emotion management (Self-awareness, able to express feelings, emotion management, seeking support)	Coping (Positive strategies: Problem solving, cognitive reframing, expressing emotion, social support. Negative strategies: Avoiding problem, wishful thinking, social withdrawal, self-criticism)
5	Traits (Honesty, calm, approachable, assertive)	Case work skills (evidence gathering, evaluation of evidence, reflection, decision making, procedural skills, taking action)	Adaptability (more adaptive: takes action, adapts to change. Less adaptive: prefers stability)
6	Values (belief in people's ability to change, non-judgemental)	Values (diversity, belief in people's ability to change, non-judgemental)	Exercising authority (Relationship with service user, manages service user behaviour, democratic participation)
7	Other (importance of a good manager, importance of organisation support)	Professional Role (attitude to status and power, identifying poor practice, dealing with conflicting interests)	Approach to learning (enthusiastic about learning new things, keeps knowledge current, anticipates demands, prepares for change)
8		Work-time management (adaptable to organisational constraints, time management beliefs/behaviours, daily time management skills)	Organisation (meets deadlines, plans ahead, reviews cases, time management)

2.2 Study 2 - Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence Training, stress and burnout

The second study was a randomised control trial to evaluate the effect of Emotional Intelligence Training on stress and burnout. A Randomised Control Trial is a gold standard research design which randomly allocates participants to each group, in this case either into the early training group or the later training group. This random allocation helps account for individual differences such as different levels of stress or Emotional Intelligence in each group. For example, if the early training group had people who were more stressed than those in the later training group; this difference could influence the results.

2.2.1 Participants

Participants for study 2 were 209 child and family social workers recruited across eight local authorities in England. The local authorities varied by authority type, size and urban/rural location, see Table 4.

Table 4. Participants by local authority type and size

Local authority type	Size (Total children's social workforce) at 30 Sept 2014 - Headcount)	Participant Total	% of participants to social workforce total
Shire	538	78	15%
Shire	341	16	5%
Shire	275	44	16%
Shire	199	12	6%
Large unitary	192	18	9%
Small unitary	130	27	21%
Small unitary	94	5	5%
Outer London Borough	88	9	10%
Total	1857	209	11%

The majority of social worker participants worked in Safeguarding, Foster Care/Adoption and Looked after Children services, see Table 5.

Table 5. Participants by type of child and family social work

Type of social work	Number of participants	Percentage of total participants
Safeguarding	118	57%
Foster Care/Adoption	45	21.5%
Looked after children	35	17%
Disability	5	2%
CAMHS	1	0.5
Non-assigned	5	2%
Total	209	100%

Forty-six of the 209 social workers who started the study withdrew over the study period, accounting for 22% of the original sample. Reasons for participants withdrawing from the study included: maternity leave, workload, leaving the authority, leaving social work and sick leave. In the intervention group, 109 participants started the study and 18 (17%) participants

withdrew. In the wait list control group, 100 participants started and 27 (27%) withdrew. Further breakdown of withdrawal rates can be found in Appendix 1. The final sample total was 164, see Table 6.

Table 6. Final sample by gender and training group

	Intervention group	Control group	Total
Women	n78 88%	n61 86%	n139 87%
Men	n8 12%	n13 14%	n21 13%
Total	n90 100%	n74 100%	n160* 100%

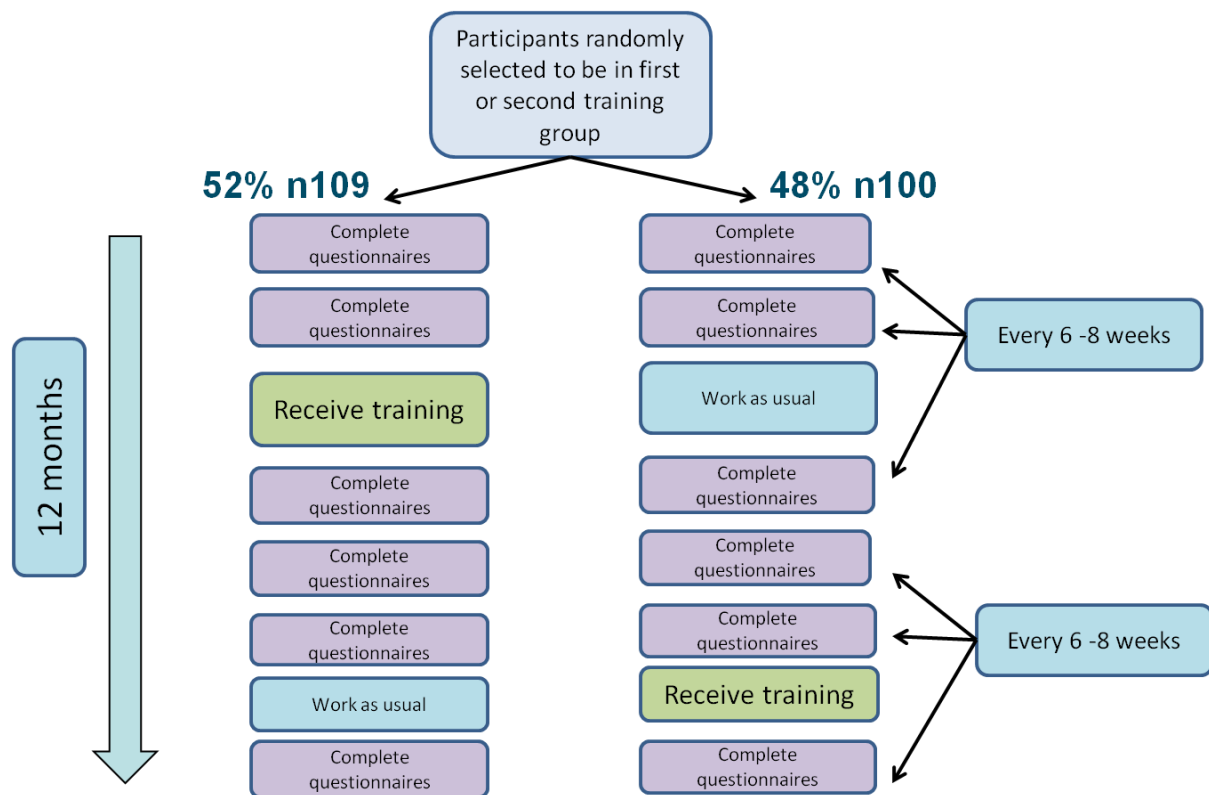
*No gender information supplied=4, final sample = 164

Participants' age ranged from 21 to 61 years. The mean age was 40.69 years, (SD10.48), there were no significant differences in age between training groups at Time 1 (baseline).

2.2.2 Method

Participants were briefed about the project before they consented to take part in the randomised control trial. Participants were requested to complete six online questionnaires at approximately two month intervals across a 12 month period and attend a two day Training session on Emotional Intelligence during the same 12 month period. Participants were randomised into two groups: the training intervention group were randomised to receive the Emotional Intelligence Training first and the control (wait list) group received the Emotional Intelligence Training at the end of the study period, thus acting as a control group in the intervening period (See Figure 3).

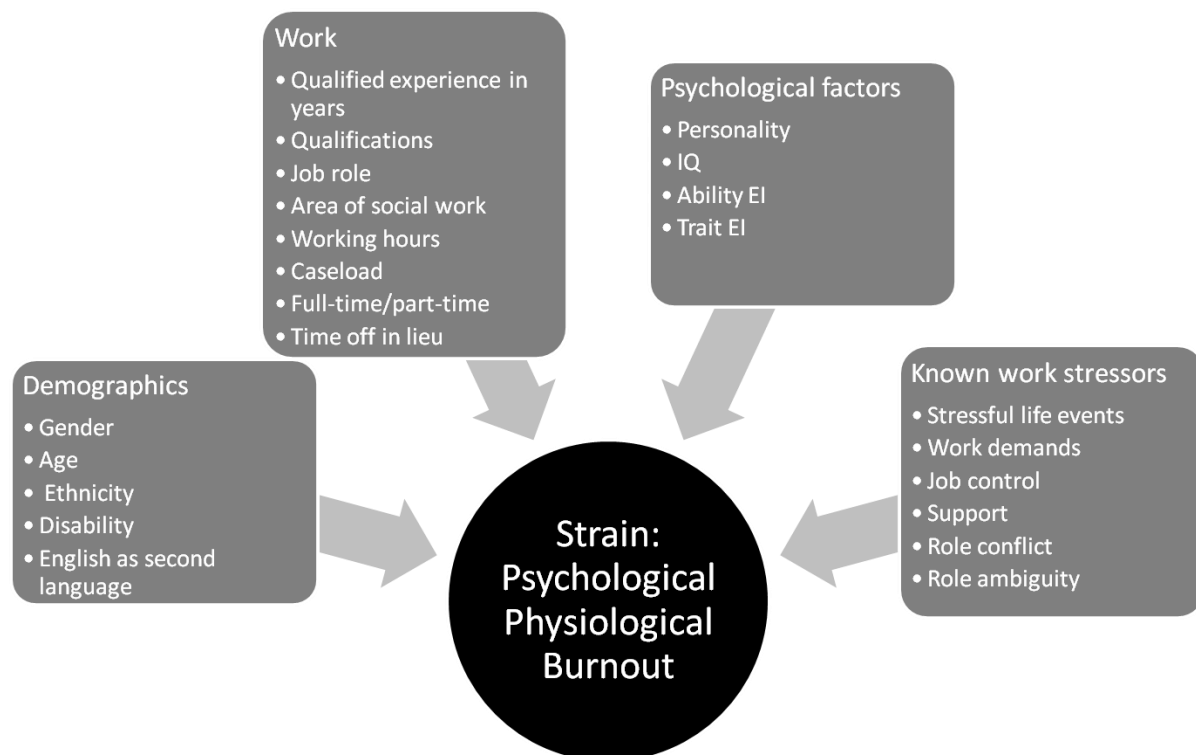
Figure 3. Participants' route through the Emotional Intelligence Training Study



2.2.3 Measures

The online questionnaires included questions about participants' demographic details, work context, social work experience, reported psychological and physiological stress and burnout, personality, work demands, stressful life events and Emotional Intelligence. The choice of work related measures for the questionnaire were based on previous research measuring common stressors at work (Health and Safety Executive 2007, Hayes 1999). More details of the measures are outlined in Figure 4 below and Appendix 2.

Figure 4. Measures used in the Emotional Intelligence Training Study



Work Context Interviews

Fifty three participants across the eight local authorities were interviewed (a quarter of participants in each local authority) to give some background context about their team and physical work environment, emotional challenges and rewards at work, coping strategies, training take-up and provision, organisational support and supervision.

2.2.4 Emotional Intelligence Training

The Emotional Intelligence Training was developed for the study using the RULER Programme (Brackett & Rivers 2014a) as a framework. The RULER programme was developed by Marc Brackett from the Centre for Emotional Intelligence, Yale University for Schools (teachers, managers, administrators and children) and offers several training programmes. The first training programme covers The Anchors of Emotional Intelligence (4 days) and it was this programme that was adapted to two days for this study. Two days training was offered, as two days appeared to mirror the format of training offered in the area of Emotional Resilience/Emotion Intelligence in the Social Work profession. An outline of the programme is provided below.

Day 1

- What is Emotional Intelligence?
- Function of emotions
- Identifying emotions – self. Introduction of the Mood Meter
- Using emotions in thinking
- Understanding emotions

Day 2

- Managing emotions – self + others. Introduction of the Meta-Moment and The Blueprint
- Interpreting Emotional Intelligence Individual feedback profiles. (Each participant received a confidential Emotional Intelligence profile and feedback from the MSCEIT Ability Emotional Intelligence Test as part of the training.)

3. Findings

3.1 Emotional demands and rewards in child and family social work

Participants from the focus groups in Study 1 and interviews from Study 2 were asked what they found emotionally challenging at work. Emotional demands at work clustered into three domains: Demands from service users, demands from organisations and personal demands.

3.1.1 Demands from service users

Child and family social workers primary work is with children and families who are experiencing distress and trauma. Witnessing this distress and trauma has an emotional impact on social workers who empathise with the children and families they work with. Social workers work to contain and manage the emotions of those children and families, but also have to contain their own emotional responses on a frequent basis.

“I suppose the most stressful thing is coming across the angry person, the frustrated families that then that transfers on to you because I find that really difficult because that barrier and that blockage, it's really difficult to get past that and it's very, very draining.”

This process of containment takes a lot of emotional energy and is further complicated by the ever present tensions around managing the balance between protecting the child and acknowledging distress for parents. Further tensions exist in managing different approaches from encouraging behaviour change to imposing removal of the child.

Social workers frequently enter families' lives at times of crisis and are usually not welcomed by the family, therefore social workers can experience verbal and physical aggression. Even when this is not necessarily a frequent occurrence, the worry about the threat of violence or verbal abuse is also a significant emotional demand.

Whilst social workers report many rewards of their work (see Section 3.1.5), they often work with uncooperative and/or disengaged service users which can be very dispiriting, demotivating and concerning. Social workers are often more aware of the consequences of disengagement than the service user and this knowledge of the consequences of service user behaviour can be a source of constant worry that social workers carry in their mind day-to-day.

Even when social workers have engagement from service users, social workers often struggle to find the funding for the most effective resources for them. Consequently, social workers often have to manage the expectations of service users and deliver disappointing news.

3.1.2 Demands from the organisation

Participants reported struggling with the demands of a large, complicated and ever changing workload. High caseloads were one issue for workload, but alongside this were requirements for paperwork, IT recording, reports and statutory visits within specified timescales.

“Not being able to engage with families. That is really, really difficult. Sometimes the pressure of the job, the amount of paperwork you’ve got to do, the amount of things that you’re constantly told we haven’t done yet; get weekly reminders of the visits that we haven’t done, which really means the visits we haven’t put on the system so it’s the pressure of that sort of paperwork and the bureaucracy.”

The considerable number of these deadlines makes organisation and time management a key part of the role and a role which needs effective systems to ensure most efficient use of the scarce time available. However, ineffective administrative and IT systems were also stated as contributing to demands at work either due to being removed (e.g. administrative support), being complicated to use or frequently not working. The workplace environment also contributed to emotional demands through layout (e.g. open plan offices, hot desking), which created noise disturbance or difficulty finding a desk and not having everything to hand. The lack of a desk to return to after often difficult home visits also added to a sense of emotional disorientation. Practical issues also added to loss of time (e.g. removal of parking near the office) thus adding extra time to achieve tasks (e.g. time walking back to office from visit/s, or planning visit schedule so as to minimise travel time to office). Whilst it was recognised by participants that all of these issues on their own could be overcome, the cumulative effect of them, on top of already demanding and complicated work, were an added burden.

Due to the emotional nature of the work with children and families, social workers rely heavily on peers, supervisors and the organisation to support them in their work. Support at work is even more important in social work due to the confidential nature of the work. Whilst many social workers reported that they received good support from some peers and supervisors, social workers also reported frequent lack of support, often due to high staff turnover leading to supportive colleagues leaving teams and agency staff being used to fill vacancies. Social workers perceived a lack of support and understanding of the demands on them from the organisation. This was in part from a perception that senior managers did not appear to listen to social worker concerns when raised and partly from a perception that senior managers prioritised paperwork and resource targets over families in need.

3.1.3 Demands from external organisations and the media

Participants also reported that managing expectations from other professionals was emotionally demanding. Other professionals often misunderstood the scope of social workers’ role and responsibilities, alongside having a lower threshold of risk. Consequently, social workers find themselves having to take time to explain why they are unable to take the action that other professionals feel is required and deal with the antagonism this misperception often creates.

Social workers were very aware of the negative perception of the profession that people outside the profession have and were frustrated at having no clear mechanism of addressing misconceptions held by the media about social work. Whilst it is understandable for external stakeholders to put pressure on child and family workers to protect children, the organisational response to this pressure has tended to foster organisational cultures which seek to monitor social work activity in order to be able to target blame rather than being solution focused. Working under such scrutiny, however necessary it may be, is also emotionally demanding.

“There are so many things you could do with a social work qualification where you’d probably be able to see young people. You’d probably not be hated by everyone you work with and you would probably actually be able to do the things that would make a difference.”

This theme about the external perception of the social work profession supports recent research in this area (see Legood, McGrath, Searle, & Lee 2016).

3.1.4 Personal demands

In addition to the frequency and severity of distress and trauma that social workers have to deal with, they also report having to deal with their individual emotional reactions to their work, what might be distressing for one social worker may not be to another. Sensitivity to these individual differences by peers and supervisors is important for support.

Managing boundaries between professional and personal identities was reported as emotionally challenging because of the frequency with which social workers are dealing with conflict. Social workers reported that it took a lot of effort to not take (aggressive) comments personally and see comments as directed towards their role. Another demand was to create a separation between work and life, especially preventing the infiltration of work into their private lives via email and mobile working.

“I think it’s just really important to make sure that you have got balance and you don’t become too sort of involved, too involved in the cases. I think it’s really important to make sure you have got some sort of time, you know, you’ve sort of got strict boundaries where the, perhaps on the weekend or the you know, you’ve something else that you’re focussing on, and make sure that you have time to have that sort time for yourself.”

Social workers reported being disillusioned and disheartened with social work due to the negative views and misconceptions of the profession that they encountered from other professionals and the media. Within their organisations, the fear of blame or making a mistake created a great deal of anxiety and promoted over-work and presenteeism.

3.1.5 Emotionally rewarding parts of the social worker role

Even though there are many emotional demands of being a child and family social worker, social workers also report emotionally rewarding parts of the role. Social workers overwhelmingly found making a difference to children and families lives very rewarding, partly through seeing the change happening and partly through contribution to positive outcomes.

“I like to see families moving on from difficult situations and that, in the nicest cases, that’s when children are able to remain at home and you see the improvements for the child or children and their parents are being able to take on new skills or new ways of being able to think about parenting um, that can be really positive and rewarding.”

Social workers also reported that direct work with children and families was very rewarding, including building good relationships and trust. Receiving positive feedback from service users, colleagues, supervisors, managers and other professionals made a big difference to feeling that social worker’s work was worthwhile and that they were valued. Social workers valued working with colleagues and other professionals both in terms of meeting ‘brilliant’ people but also enjoying the shared sense of purpose and camaraderie. Social workers valued the sense of achievement that came with closing cases, completing reports and making progress. Continued learning, in relation to the role, service users and self-awareness was also reported to be very important. Less prevalent themes reported were the enjoyment of the problem-solving element of the role along with the variety of the job and autonomy. Pay and holidays were also mentioned in helping to make the job rewarding.

3.2 Stress and burnout

3.2.1 Baseline work characteristics

To understand the working lives of the participants before the study began, we recorded important indicators of work demands such as working extra hours, caseload, number of years qualified social work experience, full and part time contracts and whether participants took their time off in lieu when they worked extra hours, see Table 7.

Table 7. Participant workload characteristics at Time 1 (Baseline)

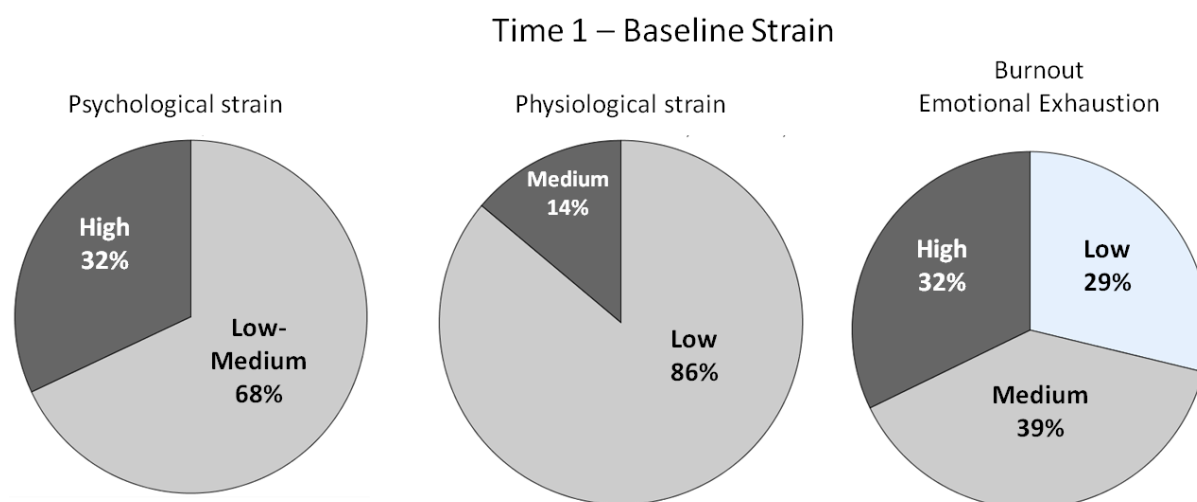
Workload characteristics	All participants
Years experience	Min year 0.2 - Max 33 years Mean 6.1 years (SD 6.1)
Full-time to part-time	FT = 90%, n137 PT = 10% n15
Caseload	Min 2 cases - Max 35 cases (outliers 63 & 147 cases) Mean 16 cases (SD 7)
Working extra hours in last week	Min 0 hours – Max 50 hours Mean 9.5 (SD 10.87)
Taking time off in lieu (TOIL)	Yes = 51%, n74 No = 50%, n72

There were no significant differences between the Intervention and Control groups for any of the workload characteristics at Time 1 (baseline), see Appendix 1. This was important as it shows that the random allocation to training groups works to evenly distribute important factors which could affect stress over the two groups.

3.2.2 Baseline Strain

The proportion of participants experiencing high rates of Psychological Strain at Time 1 was 32%. None of the participants reported high levels of Physiological Strain at Time 1. The proportion of participants experiencing high rates of Emotional Exhaustion at Time 1 was 32%, see Figure 5.

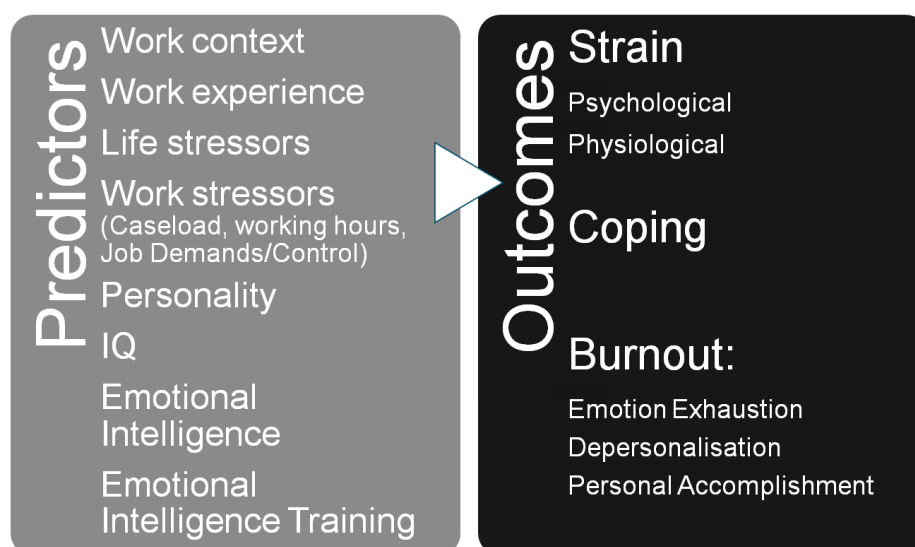
Figure 5. Baseline levels of Strain at Time 1



3.2.3 Predictors of Strain

From the randomised control trial we tested the predictive effect of common stressors in one statistical model on three types of stress: psychological strain, physiological strain and emotional exhaustion (one form of burnout), see Figure 6

Figure 6. Predicted model for Predictors of Strain



The significant organisational and life predictors of each type of strain can be seen in Table 8 below. Psychological strain is predicted by high work demands, stressful life events, less leader support, less training and development opportunities. Physiological strain is predicted by less training and development, having less years experience as a social worker, having less peer support and experiencing resource difficulties (having to make trade-offs between cost savings and service user care, work being affected by staff shortages and feeling pressured to do the minimum required rather than the best quality possible). Emotional exhaustion is predicted by high work demands, less leader support and having fewer years experience as a social worker.

Table 8. Organisational and life events associations with Strain

	Psychological Strain	Physiological Strain	Emotional Exhaustion
Work demands			
Leader support			
Stressful life events			
Training and development opportunities			
Years of social work experience			
Peer support			
Resource difficulties			

3.3 Emotional Intelligence, strain and burnout

Trait Emotional Intelligence (EI self-efficacy) predicts all forms of strain in that high Trait EI predicts lower psychological physiological strain and lower emotional exhaustion. The personality factor of high Neuroticism (low stability and high anxiety) predicts higher psychological and physiological strain but does predict not emotional exhaustion and high Ability Emotional Intelligence (EI skills) predicts lower psychological strain. Social desirability (the extent to which a person wants to show desirable characteristics to others) only predicts emotional exhaustion.

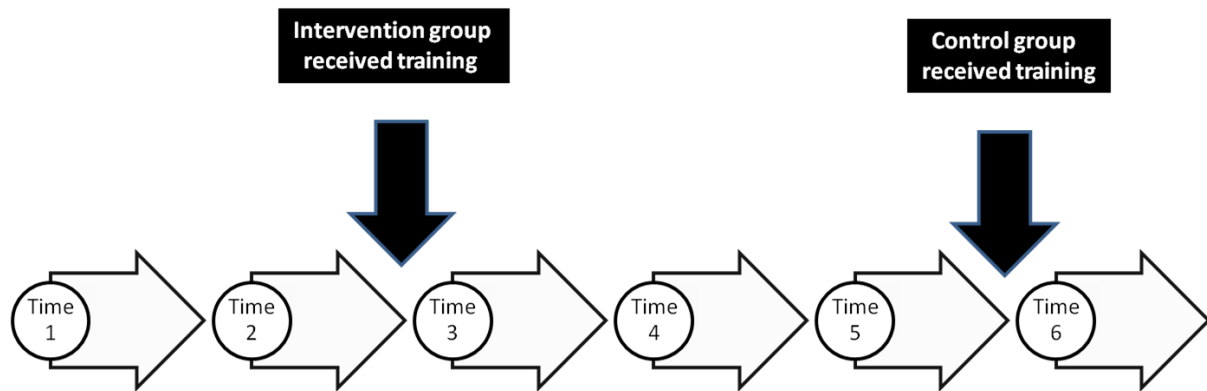
Table 9. Psychological associations with Strain

	Psychological Strain	Physiological Strain	Emotional Exhaustion
Personality - Neuroticism			
Trait Emotional Intelligence			
Ability Emotional Intelligence			
Social desirability			

3.4 Emotional Intelligence Training, strain and burnout

Participants were randomised into two groups at the beginning of the study. The early intervention group received the Emotional Intelligence Training early in the study period (between Time 2 and 3) and the control group received the Emotional Intelligence Training towards the end of the study period between Time 5 and 6), see Figure 7.

Figure 7. Measurement time points and training times



The majority of participants attended the training with slightly better attendance in the Intervention group than the Control group, see Table 10.

Table 10. Training attendance

Training attendance	Attended training	Did not attend training	Total
Intervention group	91%, n83	9%, n8	100%, n91
Control group	86%, n63	14%, n10	100%, n73
Total	89%, n146	11%, n18	100%, n164

3.4.1 Effects of Emotional Intelligence Training on Strain

If Emotional Intelligence Training was associated with decreased strain, we expected to see a difference in baseline strain (Time 1 and 2) and follow up measures of strain at Times 3, 4 and 5 over time. If Emotional Intelligence Training was associated with decreased strain, we also expected to see a difference between levels of strain between the intervention group and control group at Times 3, 4 and 5.

The means and standard deviations for each group at each time point can be seen in Table 16 in Appendix 4.

Using Longitudinal Mixed Model analyses, we tested for differences across time and differences between groups for psychological strain, physiological strain and emotional exhaustion and for an interaction of time by group. This interaction between time and group differences would show an effect of the Emotional Intelligence Training.

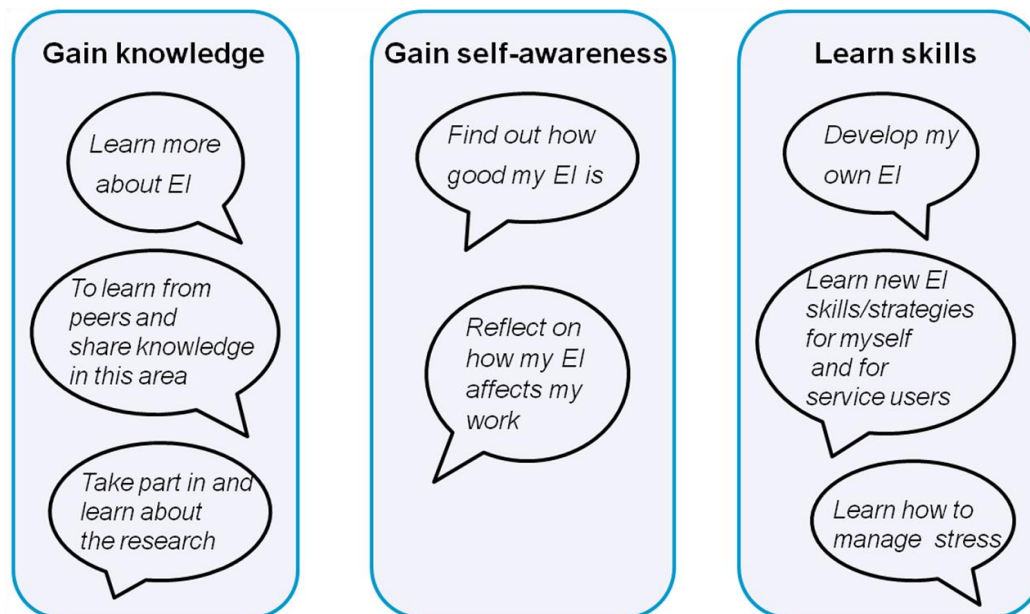
There were no statistically significant effects of Emotional Intelligence Training on psychological strain, physiological strain or Emotional Exhaustion. See Figures 13, 14 and 15 in Appendix 5.

3.4.2 Participants' feedback on Emotional Intelligence Training

Although there was no statistically significant effect of Emotional Intelligence Training on strain, participants' feedback about the training was very positive.

Participants were asked what their objectives were for attending the Emotional Intelligence Training, their reasons fell into three themes: Wishing to gain knowledge, self-awareness and learn new skills in Emotional Intelligence. See Figure 8.

Figure 8. Participants' objectives for attending the training



The majority of participants stated that their objectives had been achieved, that the emotion skills learned could be put into practice and that they would recommend the training to colleagues. See Figure 9 below.

Figure 9. Participant ratings of the training



The majority of participants rated the trainer as good or very good, see Table 17 and 18, Appendix 6

Best things about the training

From the open response feedback, some of the best things about the training were a chance to reflect, learning from colleagues, gaining new resources, the trainer and relevant nature of the training. Some examples of comments under each theme are given below.

Reflection

Getting the emotional intelligence scores helped me to reflect and change some of the ways in which I work. I now stop and think about how the other person may view me, especially when working with parents who are chaotic or angry.

The training helped reflect on how my emotions may impact on decisions I may make in my work and to remember to be aware of this and the influence it has.

I liked being able to reflect on what my emotional range is and identify what my comfort zones are and what emotions I tend to avoid.

Learning from Colleagues

The openness of being able to talk, to speak with people who I had not met and to have realised that we are going through the same thing, its not just me!!

I particularly enjoyed the group work and discussions around understanding emotions, emotion processing and managing emotions

Exploring different perceptions, understanding the tests, talking with people from different teams about EI

Gaining new resources

Practical exercises that I could use with service users

I liked the conceptual model of the 'mood meter' and appreciate its value in my personal and professional life.

I found the I was feeling/they were feeling activity (blueprint) would be a useful activity to use with my clients

The Trainer

I felt that the trainer is very knowledgeable and did not use jargonistic language to explain the different aspects of the emotions/course

I felt it was delivered well by the trainer, and she was able to explain and respond to questions, approachable and relaxed

I thought the trainer was fascinating, and what she spoke about was very thought provoking and really made me look at why I sometimes feel like I am burnt out and under too much pressure. It's because I am actually under too much pressure and not just being unprofessional or soft or other useless adjectives to beat myself up about.

Training was Relevant to the role

The format of the training was interactive and there was a clear structure. The format allowed you to interact with other people in the group and to discuss issues pertinent to the job role.

The focus on making it relevant to social work practice and working with service users

I enjoyed the various **activities** we did on the programme, I thought a lot of them could be adapted as tools to use when working with various service users

3.4.3 Training Transfer into practice

Training provides an insight into different ways of doing things and tasks or tools to help put new ideas into practice. Participants were asked a few weeks after the training whether they had used three of the range of tools introduced in the training either at work or at home and how useful the tools had been. Three of the tools were referred to: the Mood Meter (for identifying emotions), the Meta-Moment (for managing emotions) and the Blueprint (for identifying and managing emotions in self and others). Overall use of the tools was low. However, the median ratings from those who had used the tools were higher for the Mood Meter and Blueprint. More notable was that, on average, the Control group both used the tools more than the Intervention group and also found them more useful on average. The low rates of use and usefulness of the Intervention group might go some way to explaining why there was no effect of training in the Intervention group. Box plots showing the range of feedback ratings and median can be found in Figures 16 and 17 in Appendix 7.

3.4.4 Why didn't Emotional Intelligence Training have an effect on stress and burnout?

There are a number of possible reasons why Emotional Intelligence Training in this project did not show any effect on stress and burnout. Firstly, the majority of participants were experiencing relatively low levels of stress. Secondly, the majority of participants were relatively high in Trait Emotional Intelligence which is associated with low stress. Thirdly, the training format, although well received, did not include any follow-up to help refresh knowledge and give encouragement to participants to put techniques into practice. Fourthly, participants went back into the workplace after training to work with other colleagues and managers who had not received the training, it may have been harder to find the time to try and change ways of doing things and ways of thinking without support from colleagues who were also familiar with the training. It is also possible that Emotional Intelligence Training may not be enough on its own to mitigate the high emotional demands of child and family social work.

In spite of the lack of effect on stress of Emotional intelligence in this study, there are still good reasons for providing self-awareness training around issues of stress and emotional resilience, particularly if they are part of a whole organisation approach to stress management. A systematic organisational approach to tackling stress at work involves risk assessment of work demands, management awareness training and provision of Employee Assistance Schemes. Provision of such training should also include forms of follow up which are embedded in organisational systems and also train everyone in the organisation. There are also other reasons, over and above stress, for providing such training such as influencing the emotional climate of the organisation (e.g. Brackett & Rivers 2014b) and improving relationships (Schutte, Malouff & Thorsteinsson 2013).

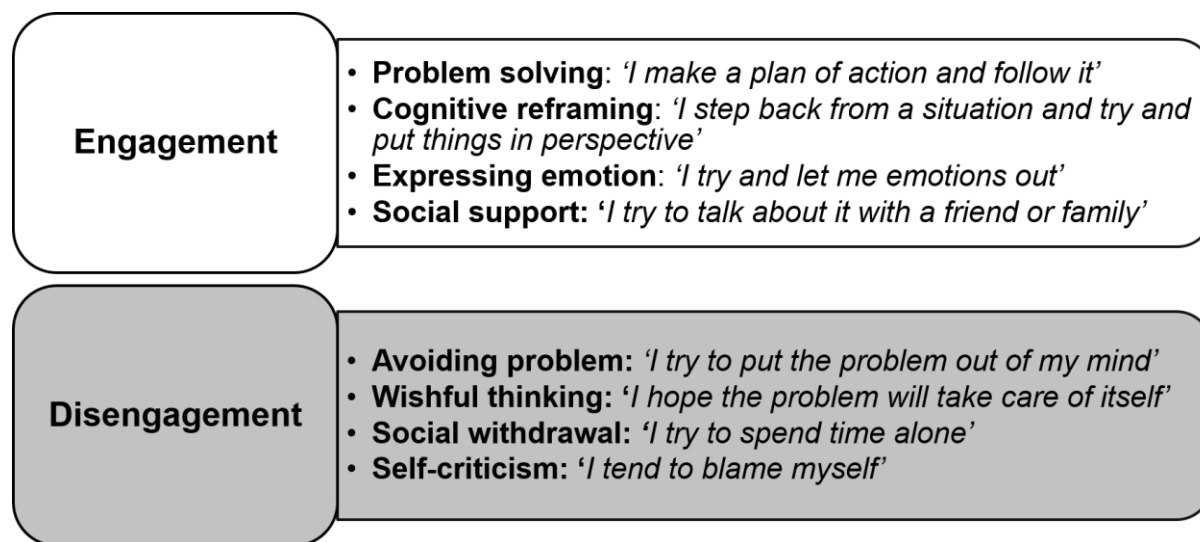
3.5. Development of social work practice personal development tool

One of the aims of the project was to try and capture key characteristics of social work practice by developing a self-report tool. The first stage was to create the key domains and items for such a tool and explore how such a tool related to stress and Emotional Intelligence. The second version of the social work practice self-report questionnaire was used in the Randomised Control Trial, giving 5 waves of data to explore the reliability and validity of the tool. Statistical analysis validated the eight domains in the revised questionnaire, thus allowing further development of this tool which is ongoing (contact the lead author for more information).

3.6. Coping strategies

Coping strategies were measured in the randomised control trial and considered in the work context interviews. Coping has been found to cluster into two broad strategies: engaged and disengaged (see Figure 10 below), with more effective strategies usually associated with engaged approaches rather than disengaged approaches (Quoidbach, Mikolajczak, & Gross 2015). In this study, Engaged coping strategies predicted Personal accomplishment at work whilst Disengaged coping strategies predicted all forms of strain: psychological, physiological and emotional exhaustion.

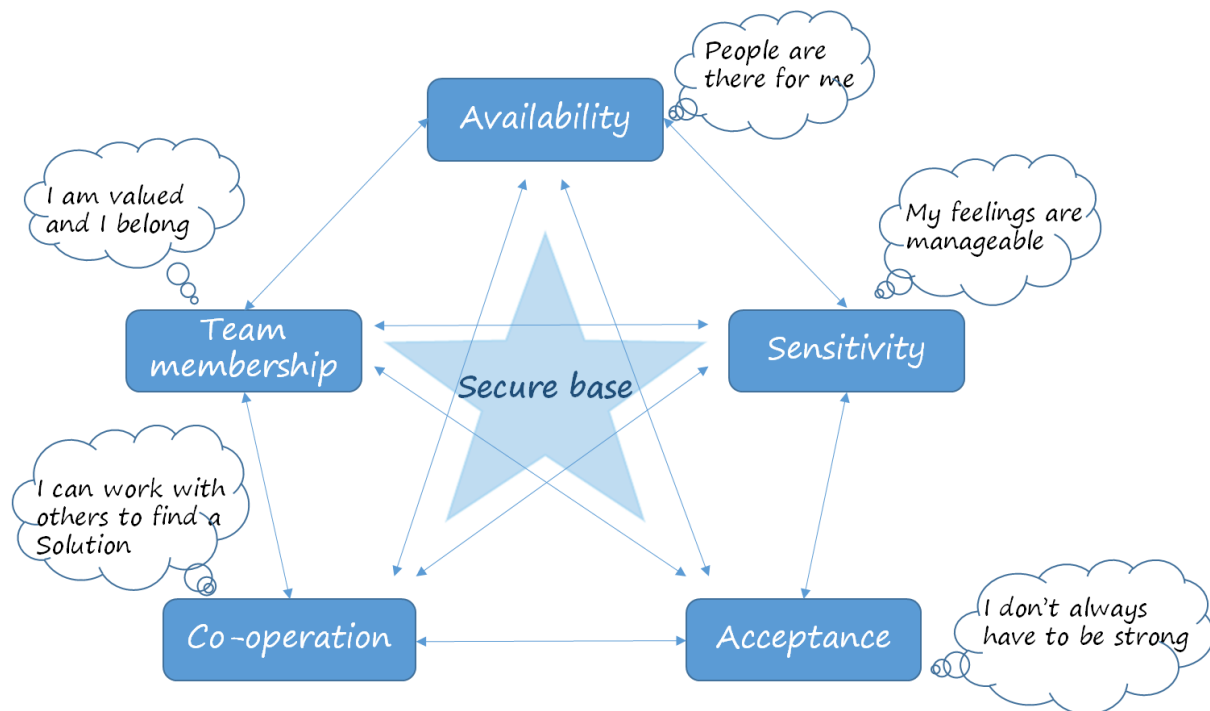
Figure 10. Coping strategies



Many of the emotion management strategies covered in the training were Engaged coping strategies.

From the interview data, strategy themes from coping strategies used by the participants mapped onto the strategies shown in Figure 10 above. Social work teams are often referred to as part of the social support strategy (Collins 2008) and, from additional analysis on social workers use of team; we developed a model which shows how the team and organisation are very important for providing a secure base for social workers. The original Secure Base Model was developed by Schofield and Beek (2014) for therapeutic caregiving, within a fostering and adoption context, to help infants, children and young people move towards greater security and resilience. Using the themes generated from the work context interviews, we adapted the original Secure Base Model to fit the workplace setting, see Figure 11 below.

Figure 11. The team as a Secure Base © Schofield and Beek (2014)



The concept of the secure base comes from Attachment theory (Bowlby 1969) in which our relationships with significant others who are available, sensitive to our needs and reliable provide us with a safe haven to return to when life is stressful and provide us with comforting internal mental models when we are physically away from them. These secure attachments enable us to engage with the world and help us remain resilient when life is stressful. In the context of emotionally demanding occupations, the supervisors and team often provide a work related secure base. Each theme is outlined below.

Availability: Teams work well as a secure base when members of the team are available either in real time or virtually and that members of the team can also rely on other members to be available to them.

Sensitivity: Team members who show interest and sensitivity to how others of the team might be feeling and show that they care (e.g. by talking or providing tea, food) help each other believe that they can manage their feelings.

Acceptance: Team members who can provide constructive help and advice when things go wrong show an understanding that everyone makes mistakes and that it is unrealistic to expect to be perfect all the time. Beliefs around the need to be seen as 100% competent at work can create unrealistic expectations which can create stress.

Co-operation: Teams who work together to solve problems and provide direction and advice help give social workers confidence that if they encounter a problem that others will work with them to find a solution. This helps alleviate feelings of isolation which can be a source of stress.

Team membership: Shared ownership of work and the recognition by the team of each member being both a colleague and a person helps contribute to social workers believing that they are valued and belong which helps sustain self-worth.

Building teams that can provide a secure base requires good leadership and can be facilitated or hindered by workplace environments. Teams need opportunities to meet, have spaces to have confidential conversations and somewhere to relax away from the desk. One of the difficulties of the recent introduction of hot desking and open plan offices can be that social workers do not have a physical 'secure base' which creates uncertainty about where work can take place (in the office, at home, in the car?) and can reduce the chances of meeting colleagues over the course of a day. Increasing uncertainty into a role, which is already dealing with high levels of uncertainty with their cases, will increase levels of stress. Reducing opportunities for working and meeting with colleagues takes away an important buffer of stress in this profession. Opportunities to connect with team members remotely via messaging systems were helpful where team members were dispersed.

4. Summary

One aim of this project was to create a social work practice tool to help social workers reflect on their practice. This tool has been created and further work will take place with social workers to refine it for introduction into social work and practice educator training. Another aim was to evaluate the effect of Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence Training on stress and burnout for child and family social workers. Whilst Emotional Intelligence Training did not show any statistically significant effect on stress and burnout, participants rated the Training very positively. However, few participants used the training tools in practice which may have explained the lack of training effect. Further work to evaluate different formats of training, such as including follow-ups and embedding follow-up into supervision systems, is needed. The study confirmed social work as an emotionally demanding profession, suggesting that particular attention should be given by employers to the workplace environment and social worker support. Recommendations for senior managers, team leaders, supervisors and social workers are given below.

4.1 Implications for policy and practice

It can be useful to think about managing stress in three ways:

- Prevention – i.e. tackling the root causes in order to prevent stress occurring, e.g. workload management
- Ongoing support – providing resources to help coping, e.g. training and help with symptoms
- Providing help and support once stress has become a problem, e.g. Employee Assistance Schemes

4.1.1 Key messages for policy makers

- It is important to recognise and *acknowledge* the value of the collaborative and supportive work that social workers do, for parents and children and other professions. Such acknowledgement needs to be explicitly made to both social workers themselves and external stakeholders.
- If social workers are to be optimally effective, it is essential that they have realistic workloads and good administrative support. The demands for more recording and regulation should come with provision of sufficient resources.
- Social workers have a positive role to play in the lives of children from troubled and abusive backgrounds. Many young people themselves speak positively about the help they have received from their social workers. In order to sustain social workers in post and make the most of the economic investment made in them through training and post-qualifying experience, policy makers need to take account of the emotional demands of this profession, alongside workload issues.

- Emotional demands in social work and ways of managing these should be provided within qualifying social work training and continuing professional development.
- Given the strong link between Trait Emotional Intelligence and Strain, consideration could be given to screening applicants to social work training, so that support could be customised for those with low Trait Emotional Intelligence.

4.1.2 Key messages for local authority senior managers

- The Health and Safety Executive provide an essential framework for employers for considering tackling stress at work. This framework provides a step by step approach to managing stress (HSE 2007).
- Senior managers should receive training on managing stress at work both for themselves and their teams.
- Senior managers should ensure there are clear systems to hear the views of social workers about workload issues and to provide feedback as to what action has been taken to address such issues.
- Senior managers should aim to create a positive emotional climate where social workers have the opportunity to undertake direct work, receive positive feedback, have influence over their work environment and have opportunities for collaboration and learning as this is likely to mitigate the emotional demands of the social work role.
- Senior managers need to identify the factors (hazards) that are causing stress in their workplace. There will be some commonly known hazards as described in this briefing, but each workplace is likely to have factors unique to their workplace.
- Senior managers need to establish regular systems to monitor stress in their workplace and *involve their team managers and social workers* in finding solutions to workload issues and improving the workplace environment.
- Senior managers have a responsibility to ensure effective links with and agreements for some form of Employee Assistance Programme.

4.1.3 Key messages for local authority team leaders

- Team leaders should receive training on managing stress at work both for themselves and their teams.
- Team managers should ensure that social workers have the opportunity for *reflective* supervision.
- Team managers should enable social workers to discuss workload issues using a solution focussed approach by having workload on team meeting agendas as a standing item.
- Supervisors/Team Leaders should consider ways in which they and team members can be accessible and available to each other for support and advice.
- Consideration to induction activities would be beneficial to facilitate integrating new members to the team to help them feel as if they belong.
- Team members should be encouraged to jointly problem solve on complex issues/cases.

4.1.4 Key messages for social workers

- Make use of supervision opportunities to reflect on the emotional impact of the role both on yourself and on your practice.
- Aim to raise concerns with supervisors, team leaders about workload or complex cases you may need help with, rather than trying to persevere alone.
- Use your team as a resource for tea and sympathy, advice and guidance. Be available to do the same for your team members as well.
- Remember that none of us are emotionally invincible or all-knowing, therefore thinking about using engaged coping strategies can be helpful when we feel overwhelmed.
- Identify what you find emotionally rewarding at work and at home to help you recognise and celebrate when things go well.
- Identify what your stressors are and develop relevant coping strategies, which may come from the list below, but may also come from learning new skills.
- Engaged coping strategies:
 1. **Plan ahead:** - How will I feel? How will others feel? Can I change where things happen, layout of rooms, or in what order they happen?
 2. **Reframe:** What can I control? What is not in my control? Focus on what is in my control. Think of the bigger picture. Take time out to think.
 3. **Exercise:** Any kind of physical activity to: use up emotional energy; help breathing; regain perspective; give a break from thinking.
 4. **Tackle the problem:** What is the root cause? Tackle the root cause. Seek advice/help with this. What problems might be on the horizon? Learn new skills to prepare for change/challenge.
 5. **Seek social support:** – Talk to colleagues, family and friends. Listen to different perspectives. If support is not immediately available, bring to mind someone who loves and/or respects you .
 6. **Modify mood:** Before any challenge, visualise it going well in detail. Think of something that makes you smile. Pay equal attention to the positive. At the end of each day bring to mind at least one positive thing.

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6. Appendices

6.1. Appendix 1 - Participant response details

Table 11. Responses to the first survey of the Social Work Practice Tool

Gender	First Survey Responses
Male	16%, n65
Female	83%, n338
No response	1%, n4
Total	100%, n407

Role	First Survey Responses
Social workers	60%, n245
Advanced Practitioners	11%, n45
Team managers	17.5%, n71
Service Managers	4%, n16
IRO	3.5%, n14
Educators/trainers	1.2%, n6
Other roles	2.5%, n10
Total	100%, 407

Table 12. Proportion of participants who withdrew from the study by local authority

Local authority type	Participant Total	Number of participants withdrawn	% participants withdrawn
Shire	78	14	18%
Shire	17	3	17%
Shire	44	9	20%
Shire	12	3	25%
Large unitary	18	6	33%
Small unitary	27	6	22%
Small unitary	5	0	0%
Outer London Borough	9	4	44%
Total	209	45	21.5%

Table 13. Baseline work characteristics by intervention group

Workload characteristics	Wait list control group	Intervention group
Years experience	Min year 0.4 - Max 32 years Mean 6.9 years (SD 6.7)	Min 0.2 year - Max 20 years Mean 5.4 years (SD 5.4)
Full-time to part-time	FT = 92%, n61 PT = 8%, n5	FT = 88%, n76 PT = 12%, n10
Caseload	Min 1 case - Max 147 cases Mean 18 cases (SD 18.5)	Min 2 cases - Max 63 cases Mean 17 cases (SD 9)
Working extra hours in last week	Min 0 hours – Max 50 hours Mean 8.3 (SD 10.3)	Min 0 hours – Max 45 hours Mean 10.8 hours (SD 11.8)
Taking time off in lieu (TOIL)	Yes = 50%, n32 No = 50%, n32	Yes = 51%, n42 No = 49%, n40

6.2. Appendix 2 - Measures for the Emotional Intelligence Training Study

Demographic details

Data was collected on gender, age, ethnicity, disability and having English as a second language.

Work context

Fifty three participants across the eight local authorities were interviewed (a quarter of participants in each local authority) to give some background context about their team and physical work environment, emotional challenges and rewards at work, coping strategies, training take-up and provision, organisational support and supervision.

Work experience

Knowledge and experience contribute towards feeling able to cope and buffer stress therefore all participants were asked about their social work experience: length of time as a qualified social worker, type of qualification, length of time at their local authority at the time of the study, length of time in their team and their post. Participants were also asked about their job role and area of work (Early intervention/children in need, safeguarding, looked after children, fostering and/or adoption, children with disabilities, youth offending, CAMHS).

Stressful life events

Stressful life events were tracked across the 12 months using the Life Events Inventory (Spurgeon, Jackson and Beach 2001) which ranks 57 stressful life events which participants ticked if they had occurred in the time period since the last questionnaire. We measured this to control for known life stressors' effect on stress.

Work stressors

Common work stressors were included following the Health and Safety Executive's (2008) work stressor themes:

1. Demands (including caseload, work patterns, work pace, working hours and the working environment).
2. Control (how much say the person has in the way they do their work).
3. Support (which includes the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organization, line management and colleagues).
4. Relationships at work (which includes promoting positive working practices to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour).
5. Role (whether people understand their role within the organization and whether the organization ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles).

Psychological strain

Psychological strain was measured using the short form of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ (12) Goldberg 1997) which measures anxiety and depression and includes items on being unable to concentrate, sleep loss, worrying a lot, difficulty making decisions, feeling depressed, unable to cope with everyday life, loss of confidence, loss of self – worth.

Physiological strain

Physiological strain was measured using somatic complaints domain from the Brief Symptoms Inventory (Derogatis 1993) covering the following physiological symptoms associated with long term exposure to stressors: Feeling faint, nausea, pain in the chest, breathless, hot or cold, numbness, weakness.

Burnout

Burnout was measured using Maslach's Burnout Inventory (1996) and has three domains: Emotion Exhaustion (the extent to which someone is emotionally over extended); Depersonalisation (the extent to which someone feels cynical towards service users) and reduced Personal Accomplishment (the extent to which someone feels less competent and unable to achieve work objectives).

Personality

There are known effects on stress of personality, therefore personality was measured using a 20-item measure based on the International Personality Item Pool (Cooper, Smillie and Corr 2001) covering the Big Five model of personality: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism.

IQ

Ability Emotional Intelligence has been argued to be a form of intelligence, therefore IQ was controlled using a shortened version of the Raven's Progressive Matrices which is a measure of IQ which does not rely on language knowledge. This was useful for our sample which included participants who had English as a second language. Participants were given 20 minutes to complete 25 picture completion tasks (Half of the original 50 items).

Emotional intelligence

Emotional Intelligence was measured in two ways: Trait Emotional Intelligence (self-efficacy) and Ability Emotional Intelligence (Emotional Intelligence skills). Trait Emotional Intelligence was measured using a 30 item short-form Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Petrides 2009) which covers four domains: Well-being, Emotionality, Sociability and Self-control. Ability Emotional Intelligence was measured using the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (2002) which measures four domains of: Emotion identification, using emotions to facilitate thinking, understanding emotions (emotion knowledge) and emotion regulation of self and others.

Social Work practice

Social work practice was measured using the tool developed by the authors in Study 1 with eight domains: Analysis, Consultation and empathy, Cooperation, Coping, Adaptability, Exercising authority, Approach to learning and Organisation.

6.3. Appendix 3 - Stressor influences on Strain

Table 14. Work stressors influences on three types of Strain

	Psychological strain (GHQ12)	Physiological strain	Burnout - Emotional exhaustion
Work demands	✓ (High work demands higher psychological strain)	ns	✓ (High work demands higher emotional exhaustion)
Job control			
Stressful life events	✓ (Stressful life events more psychological strain)	ns	ns
Leader support	✓ (Less leader support higher psychological strain)	ns	✓ (Less leader support higher emotional exhaustion)
Training and development opportunities	✓ (Less training and development higher psychological strain)	✓ (Less training and development higher physiological strain)	ns
Years social work experience	ns	✓ (Less years experience higher physiological strain)	✓ (Less years experience higher emotional exhaustion)
Role clarity	ns	ns	ns
Pressure to perform	ns	ns	ns
Role conflict	ns	ns	ns
Peer support	ns	✓ (Low peer support higher physiological strain)	ns
Resource Difficulties	ns	✓ (High resource difficulties higher physiological strain)	ns

ns = no statistically significant correlation

Table 15. Psychological associations with Strain

	Psychological strain	Physiological strain	Burnout - Emotional exhaustion
Personality - Neuroticism	✓ (High neuroticism higher psychological strain)	✓	ns
Personality - Openness	ns	ns	ns
Personality - Agreeableness	ns	ns	ns
Personality - Extraversion	ns	ns	ns
Personality - Conscientiousness	ns	ns	ns
Trait Emotional Intelligence	✓ (Low Trait EI higher psychological strain)	✓	✓
Ability Emotional Intelligence	✓ (Low Ability EI high psychological strain)	ns	ns
Social desirability	ns	ns	✓ (Low social desirability higher emotional exhaustion)
IQ	ns	ns	ns

ns = not statistically significant

6.4. Appendix 4 – Rates of three types of Strain at each time point

Table 16. Means and standard deviations for three types of Strain at each time point

Type of strain	Psychological Strain		Physiological Strain		Emotional exhaustion	
Time point	Intervention Group	Control group	Intervention Group	Control group	Intervention Group	Control group
Time 1 (Baseline)	m 1.08 sd .48 n78	m 1.01 sd .38 n57	m 1.48 sd .52 n78	m 1.47 sd .53 n57	m 2.50 sd 1.31 n78	m 2.34 sd 1.03 n57
Time 2 (Baseline)	m 1.05 sd .46 n79	m 1.01 sd .37 n56	m 1.59 sd .66 n79	m 1.45 sd .53 n56	m 2.41 sd 1.33 n80	m 2.42 sd 1.00 n56
EI TRAINING 1 Intervention group						
Time 3	m .95 sd .50 n68	m .96 sd .41 n56	m 1.45 sd .56 n69	m 1.49 sd .56 n57	m 2.38 sd 1.17 n69	m 2.22 sd 1.09 n57
Time 4	m 1.04 sd .45 n71	m .98 sd .38 n61	m 1.49 sd .55 n71	m 1.46 sd .57 n60	m 2.55 sd 1.23 n70	m 2.54 sd 1.24 n62
Time 5	m 1.04 sd .40 n64	m .95 sd .41 n58	m 1.43 sd .48 n64	m 1.50 sd .63 n58	m 2.46 sd 1.32 n63	m 2.31 sd 1.24 n58
EI TRAINING 2 Control group						
Time 6	m 1.17 sd .55 n64	m .96 sd .39 n57	m 1.46 sd .51 n63	m 1.44 sd .48 n58	m 2.62 sd 1.30 n64	m 2.35 sd 1.08 n55

6.5. Appendix 5 – Effect of Emotional Intelligence Training on three types of Strain

Figure 13. Line graph showing **psychological strain** by time and training group

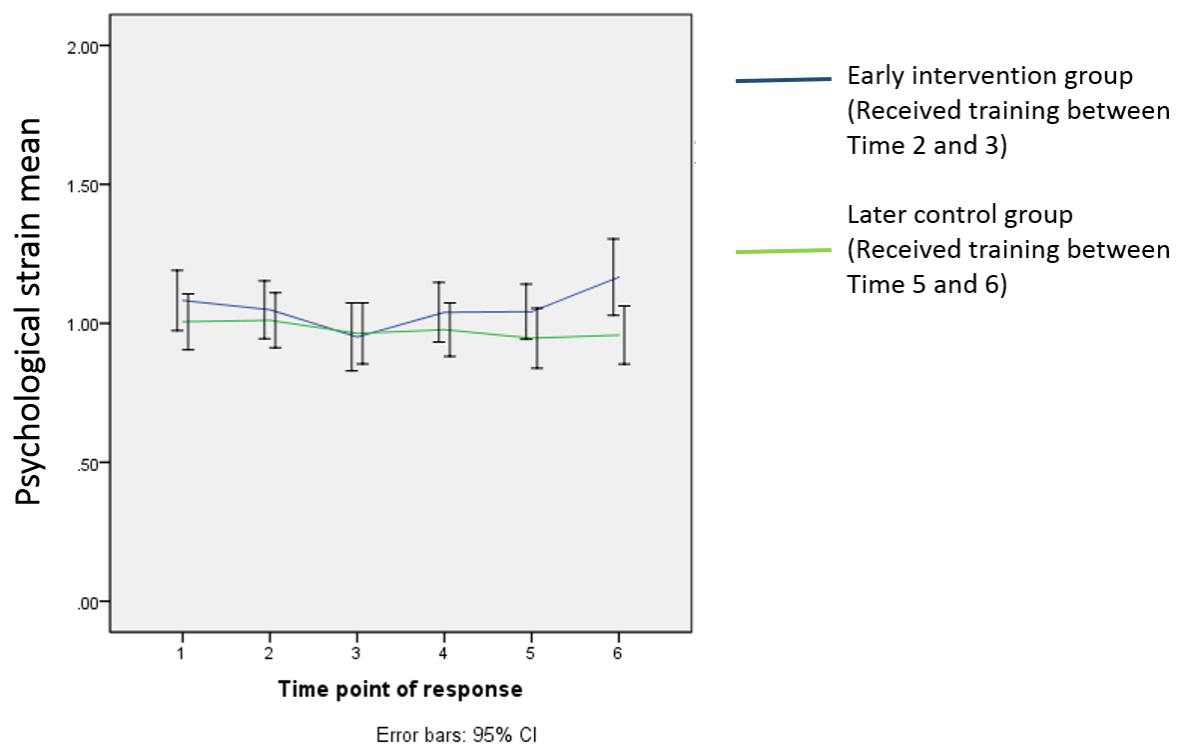


Figure 14. Line graph showing **physiological strain** by time and training group

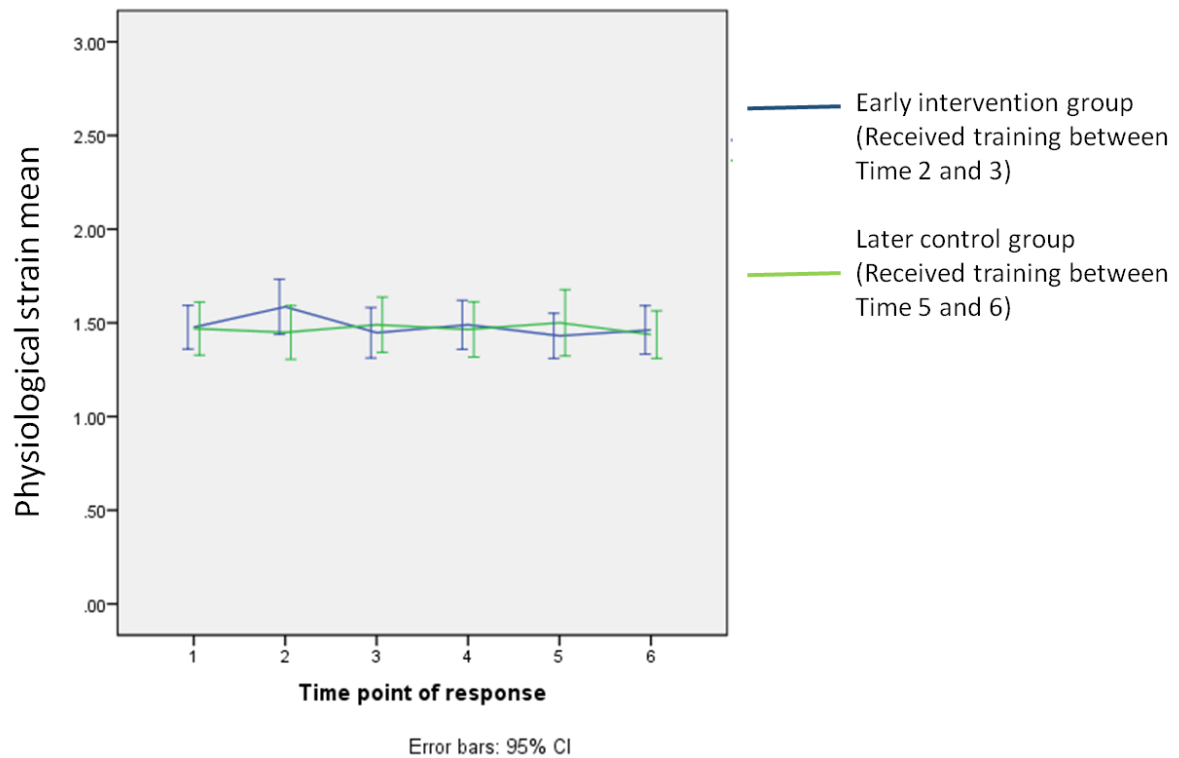
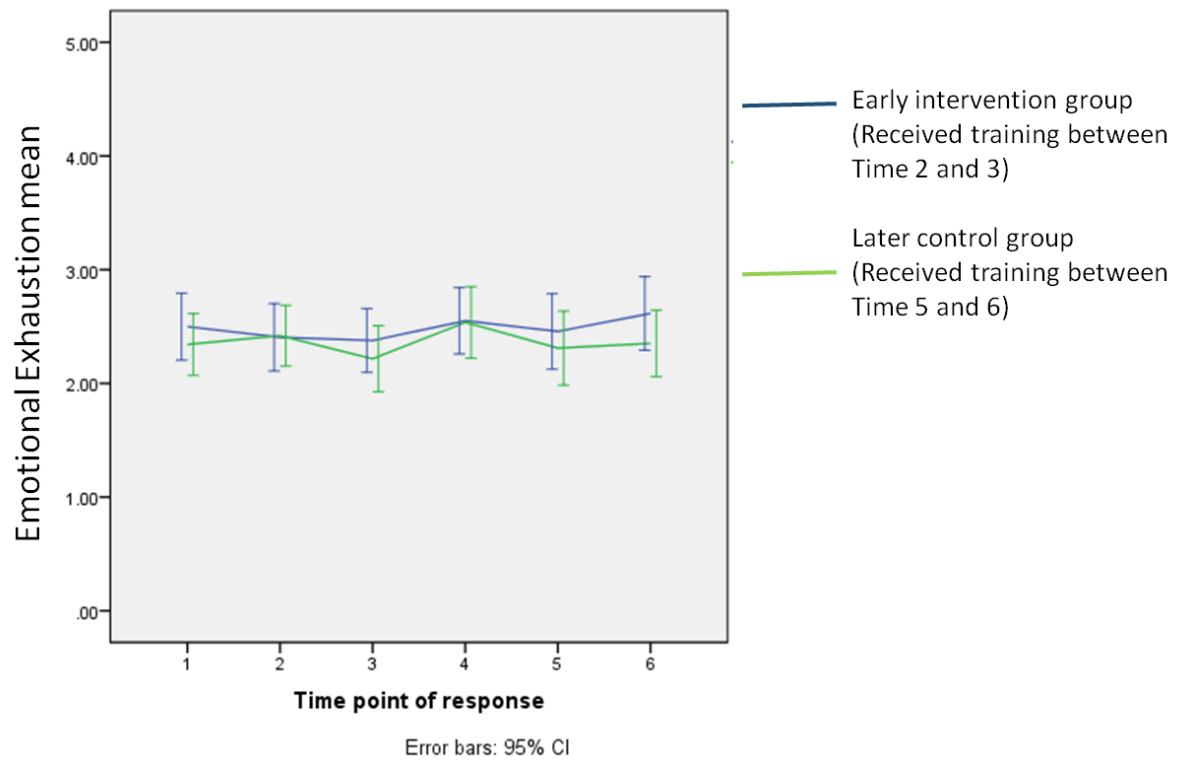


Figure 15. Line graph showing **Emotional Exhaustion** by time and training group



6.6. Appendix 6 - Participant evaluation of Emotional Intelligence Training

Table 17. Participants' ratings of the Emotional Intelligence Training programme

Question	Somewhat/partly	Mostly/completely	Total
Were your personal objectives achieved?	25% n28	75% n82	100% n110
Has the training helped you reflect on how emotion skills could be used in your job role?	30% n33	69% n77	100% n110
Would you recommend colleagues to attend this programme?	22% n24	78% n86	100% n110

Table 18. Participants' ratings of the Emotional Intelligence Trainer

	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very good	Total
Trainer knowledge	0% n0	1% n1	11% n12	88% n95	100% n108
Organization of sessions	0% n0	5% n5	21% n23	74% n108	100% n136
Obvious preparation	4% n4	1% n1	16% n18	79% n89	100% n112
Style and delivery	0% n0	5% n5	29% n32	66% n71	100% n108
Responsiveness to group	0% n0	2% n2	21% n23	77% n83	100% n108
Producing a good learning climate	0% n0	4% n4	20% n22	76% n81	100% n107

6.7. Appendix 7 – Participant use of three of the Emotional Intelligence tools

Figure 16. Rates of use of three Emotional Intelligence tools (1=low, 5=high)

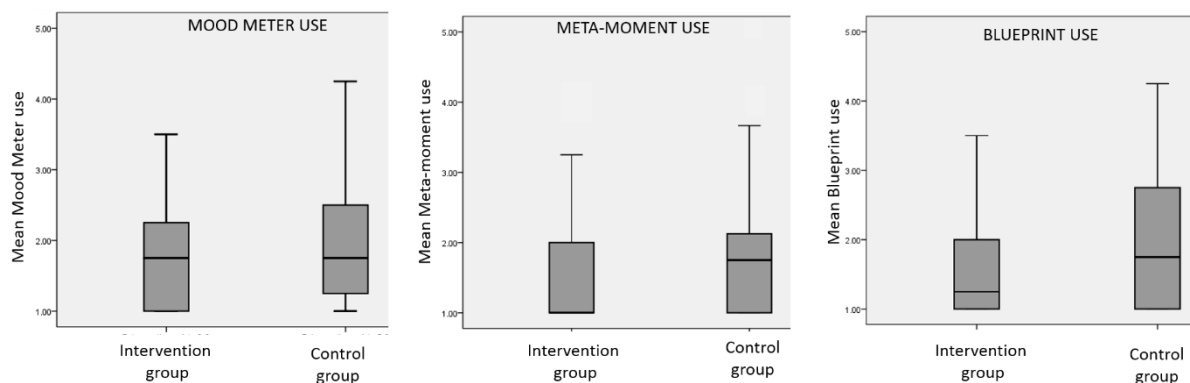


Figure 17. Usefulness of using three Emotional Intelligence tools (1=low, 5=high)

