

# Working effectively with young women affected by gangs



A B I A N D A

3-day training, January 2019

Abianda is a social enterprise which works with gang-affected young women, and delivers training and professional development to those who work with them. Our training is co-facilitated by Abianda Founder Abi Billingham, and Abianda Young Trainers, who are young women who have been affected by gangs in some way. Our 3-day training is also co-facilitated by our Solution Focused Therapist.

Our 3-day training is an intensive and practical three-day training programme that improves the skills of practitioners so they are more able and confident to support gang-affected young women. Practitioners practice tools and techniques and develop skills to:

- Respond to gang-affected young women who can be both ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’
- Bring about a culture shift in the way services are delivered to young women who have a history of non-engagement
- Address barriers and safety issues that prevent young women engaging in our services
- Support young women to increase their knowledge of: the risks for gang-associated young women; sexual violence, exploitation and domestic violence in the context of peer groups and gangs; anger; and healthy relationships
- Work in a more effective and reflective way with young women whose behaviour can be seen as ‘aggressive’, ‘risky’, and difficult to engage with and to support them to develop skills to navigate risk

Practitioners leave our training with the theory, techniques and tools from the Abianda model that can be used straight away in their day-to-day practice – including participatory and solution focused therapy techniques.

This report presents evidence of impact from our 3-day training delivered in January 2019. Attendees came from across the country, and included practitioners from Children’s Services, CSE and missing teams, Youth Offending Services, VAWG charities, and the NHS.

## Quantitative data

Participants were asked to rate their confidence and skills **out of 5** at the start and end of the training:

Topic	Before	After	Diff
My <b>ability</b> to respond effectively to young women affected by gangs and county line activity	2.9	4.1	1.2
My <b>confidence</b> to work with young women affected by gangs and county line activity	3.1	4.1	1
My <b>skills</b> to work effectively with young women affected by gangs and county line activity	2.9	4.2	1.3

	Score
Average seminar rating	<b>9.3 out of 10</b>
% of attendees rating the training 10 out of 10	<b>65%</b>
% of attendees who would <b>recommend</b> the training to colleagues	<b>100%</b>

Impact of the training	
% of attendees who will <b>cascade information</b> to colleagues and managers	80%
% of attendees who will <b>change their practice</b>	90%



## Best Hopes

Participants were also asked to define their own three “Best Hopes” for the training, reflecting our participatory model of practice, in which we ask young women to determine their best hopes from their work with Abianda.

Participants’ best hopes included:

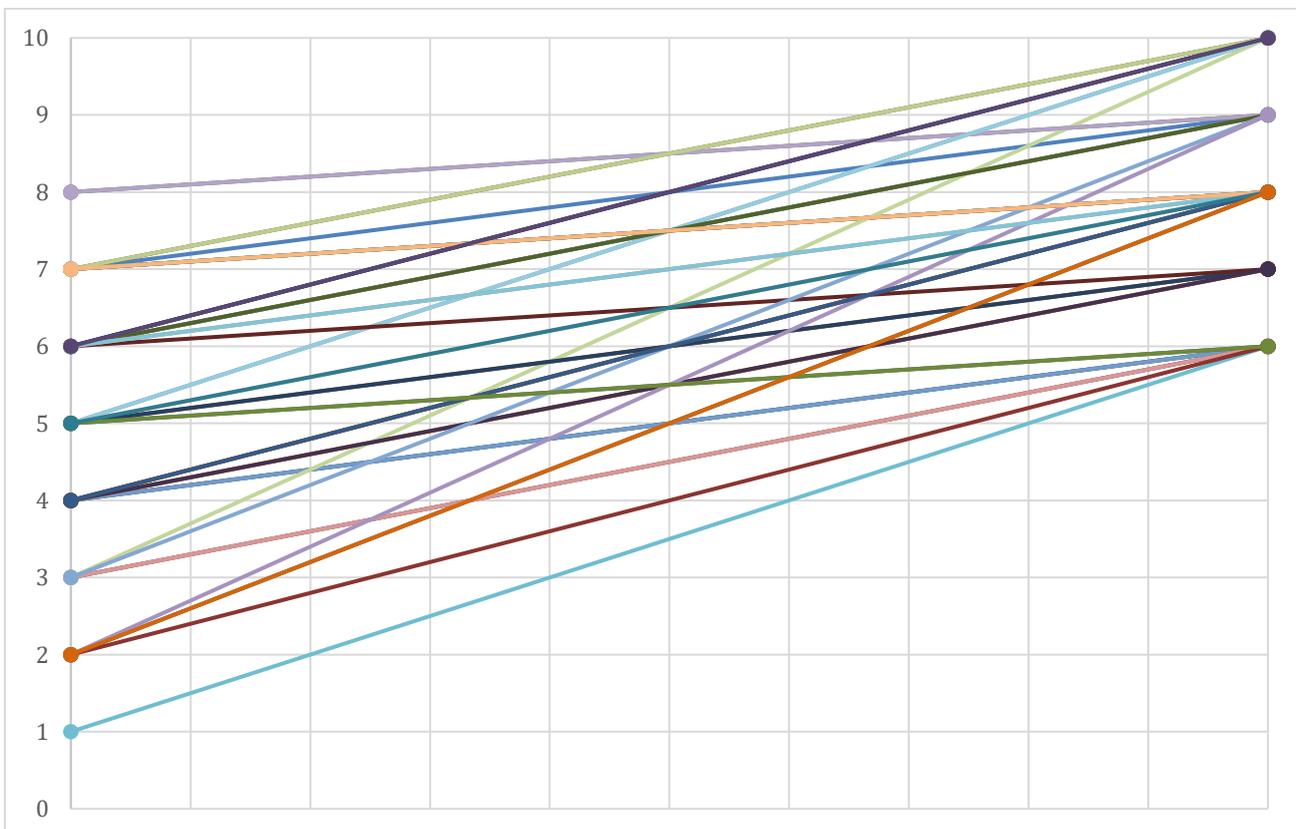
- To become aware of the signs and symptoms of a young girl involved in gangs
- To be able to develop thinking in CAMHS service
- To feel more certain that the expectations of my team are valid in the work we do moving from CSE / Missing / Gangs to more broader exploitation / county lines, CCE etc.
- To gain methods on how to communicate effectively with young people
- To take away some ideas, strategies and tools to use in my work
- To feel more confident when championing this approach at a senior strategic level
- To grasp a better understanding of the barriers the YP have and why they have them
- To use SFBT effectively
- To gain confidence in challenging cultural ideas about responding to young women within my service
- To have a better understanding of a young women’s life experiences surrounding this topic

We asked participants at the start and end of training “On a scale of 0 – 10, where ‘0’ is the worst things have ever been and ‘10’ is where you’ve got your best hopes, where on the scale are you now?”

The table below shows the average score for each Best Hope at the start and end of the training:

Best Hopes	Before	After	Difference
1	4.7	7.6	2.9
2	5.2	8.2	3
3	4.8	8.4	3.6

This chart shows the change in scores for all participants’ Best Hopes from the start to the end of training:



## Qualitative data

As well as cascading information (80% of attendees) and changing their practice (90% of attendees), participants said they would make the following changes:

- Use solution focused approach in supervision to support the team and embed this approach in their work
- Included young people in safety planning
- Apply tools, use women and young people as the greatest resource to solution and best hopes
- Empower young people to make their own safety plans
- Learn to master solution focused techniques so I can use effectively with young people

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the 3-day training – highlights are presented here:

- This is the best training I think I've ever been on in 19 years in the CSE/Gangs/vulnerable adolescent/sexual violence field. I loved the range of activities, discussion, values and involvement of the young trainers. Will be raving about this!
- Extremely knowledgeable trainers. I felt the training was presented really clearly and I have been able to walk away with new knowledge on how to engage YP. I really liked how you are able you see the sessions played out as it makes it easier to then take it away and put it in my own practice.
- Everyone was extremely knowledgeable and also encouraged and involved everyone. The skills and sessions are well thought out and considered with young women's experience central to them.
- Amazing opportunity to hear women's voices and narratives. Amazing opportunity to learn new skills
- The whole approach in Abianda's work is refreshing and gives me hope and confidence that the skills and tools this training has provided can improve practise
- The training was superb and gave so such knowledge/info around SFBT, amazing tools, demonstrations and a space to try out activities to develop skills. I feel more confident and have more resources and skills to work with gang affected young women.
- The training was insightful and inspiring on every level. There is no element that I think I won't use going forward.
- Use of demonstrations in training is genius! It's like watching live telly. Loved it. Gives you space to think, visualise and get sucked into the moment.

Participants were also asked to provide feedback on the Young Trainers who cofacilitated the training:

- They were all fabulous, insightful and I felt privileged to hear their life stories.
- Really really loved the opportunity to hear the voices of the amazing young women. I have learnt so much.
- Very beneficial to have the girls involved in the training! Thank you for your personal experiences and opinions on how they like to be worked with.
- I really appreciated the advice and testimonies of the young trainers. It was very insightful and inspirational.
- The young trainers - just amazing to have your voices, input, energy and souls. So important to include this element that is often shielded away.
- Feel honoured to have the testimonies of the young trainers and to have their expertise and guidance in how I can be a better social worker.

