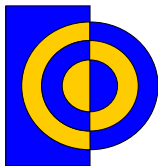


LONGITUDINAL STUDY
OF THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF THE
MAYUMARRI HEALING
PROGRAMME FROM 2005 TO 2009

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LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE MAYUMARRI HEALING WEEK PROGRAM OF GUESTS WHO ATTENDED IN 2005.

Executive Summary of Results

This study followed up clients of Mayumarri who had participated in pre program, immediate post program, and six month and four year post program surveys of the effects of the Mayumarri healing week on various aspects of their lives. The aspects surveyed were those which have been shown by the literature to be impacted by child abuse. The vast majority of respondents who attended the Mayumarri Healing Week continued to show significant decrease in their average depression scores 4 years after completing the program. Respondents also felt that the healing week had continued to have a sustained positive effect on their lives and the improvement in their physical health, some aspects of their mental health, employment prospects and their relationships with their partners and children had been sustained and in some cases continued to improve since completing the program.

The Measures

1. **The Depression Index** is a 10 point scale. Each response on the scale was scored between 0 to 10 with 0 meaning that the visitor did not feel they had that particular symptom of depression at all and 10 meaning they felt that they had that symptom very strongly. The best possible total score was 0, indicating that the visitor had no symptoms of depression and the worst possible total score was 100, indicating that the person had experienced strong symptoms of depression on all 10 measures. The Mayumarri Depression Index has been validated against the Beck Depression Scale and correlates with this scale at 0.83. The questionnaire also contains a section which asks people to indicate the types of abuse they had suffered as children and whether they had a problem with illicit drugs, alcohol or gambling within the last 6 months. The Depression index is administered on day 1 of the programme (See Appendix 1), again on day 5 and again at approximately 6 months and four years after completion of the programme (See Appendix 2), Completion and return of the questionnaires is entirely voluntary.

2. **The Healing Week follow-up questionnaire** (See Appendix 3)

All guests of Mayumarri who completed the Healing Week Program and agreed to participate were posted a follow-up questionnaire 6 months and four years after completing the program. This questionnaire is designed to assess if the program has had a positive effect on their lives in terms of their physical and mental health, employment and family relationships. These particular aspects of guests lives were chosen for the survey because childhood trauma is seen to have a major impact on these aspects of peoples lives (Beitchman et al,1992; Springer et al, 2003).

The 4 year follow-up information was collected from those people who took part in the Healing Week Program at Mayumarri between January and December 2005. The evaluation was completed in May 2009 so the actual time since completing the program ranged from 41 months to 52 months.

Demographics and Response rates

311 survivors of child abuse took part in a Mayumarri Healing Week Program during the 12 month period between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2005. Of these 281 completed the Depression index on day one of the program providing a response rate of 90% on day one and 271 completed the index after completing the program on Day five, providing a response rate of 87% for this measure immediately post program. Seventy eight percent of the participants were female and participants were aged between 16 and 74 years with an average age of 37 years.

Of the 281 Healing Week participants who completed the Depression index on day one of the program, 245 provided forwarding addresses and were posted follow-up questionnaire 6 months after completing the program. Of these 28 were returned "not at this address". Of the remaining 217 participants, 104 completed 6 month post program depression indexes were returned by post, providing a response rate of 48%.

In 2009 Mayumarri attempted to follow up the 104 people from the 2005 guests who had completed their 6 month follow up surveys. 29 were not contactable, 6 had requested no further contact after completing the 6 months follow up, 3 were overseas and 1 was in hospital. Of the remaining 65, 51 participants agreed to complete the survey either by telephone, email or post. This constituted a response rate of 49% of the 6 month follow up cohort and 78% of those who were contactable. 43 women and eight men ranging in age from twenty eight to sixty nine years old completed the 4 year follow up survey. This comprises 16% of the original 311 survivors of child abuse who took part in a Mayumarri Healing Week Program during the 12 month period between January 1, 2005 and December 31, 2005.

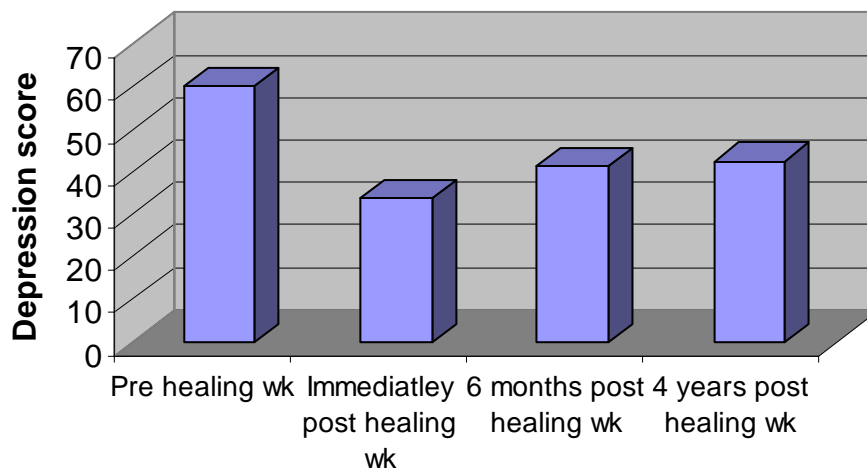
The following report records the major outcomes for these 51 guests over time. Some guests did not answer every question, therefore no of subjects are reported for individual survey questions.

Depression Scores

77% of healing Week guests had been diagnosed with depression prior to attending healing week

All guests were asked to complete a depression scale immediately before and after healing week, at 6 months follow up and at 4 years follow up. One guest did not complete the 4 year follow up depression scale but did complete the follow up survey so is not included in this section of the analysis. There was a highly statistically significant reduction in the remaining 50 guests depression scores 4 years post healing week from a mean depression score of 60 to a mean score of 43 ($t=4.6, df=49, p<.0001$).

Mean Depression scores over time
n=50



The Healing Week 4 year Follow-up questionnaire

Effect on healing

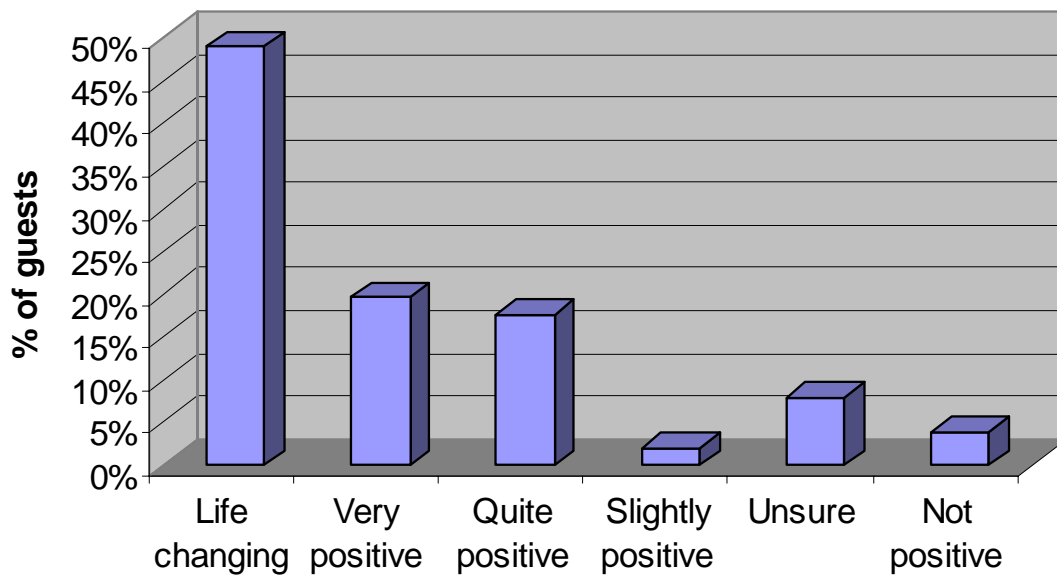
4 years after healing week

- 88% of guests reported that the healing week had a positive effect on their healing from childhood trauma
- 8% were unsure and
- 4% said it had not had a positive effect

Chart1 shows how respondents rated the overall effect of their Healing Week four years after the healing week.

Overall Effect

n=51



Physical health

Respondents were asked how they rated their general health in the month before attending Healing Week. 76% of the respondents reported having poor health before attending Mayumarri. Those who had responded that they had poor health were asked whether their general health had improved in the four years since completing the healing week. 86% of respondents reported improvements in their health. 39.6% stated their physical health had improved “a lot” and 45.8% stated their physical health had improved “a little”.

Relationships with children

- 31 (61%) of guests had children in their care
- Of these 65% (20) said they felt they had been abusive to their children prior to attending healing week
- Of the 19 who answered at 6 months follow up 90% reported that their relationship with their children had improved
- 4 years later 6 of these people no longer had children in their care. Of the remaining 13, 92% reported that their relationship with their children had improved since completing their healing week.

Effect on primary relationship

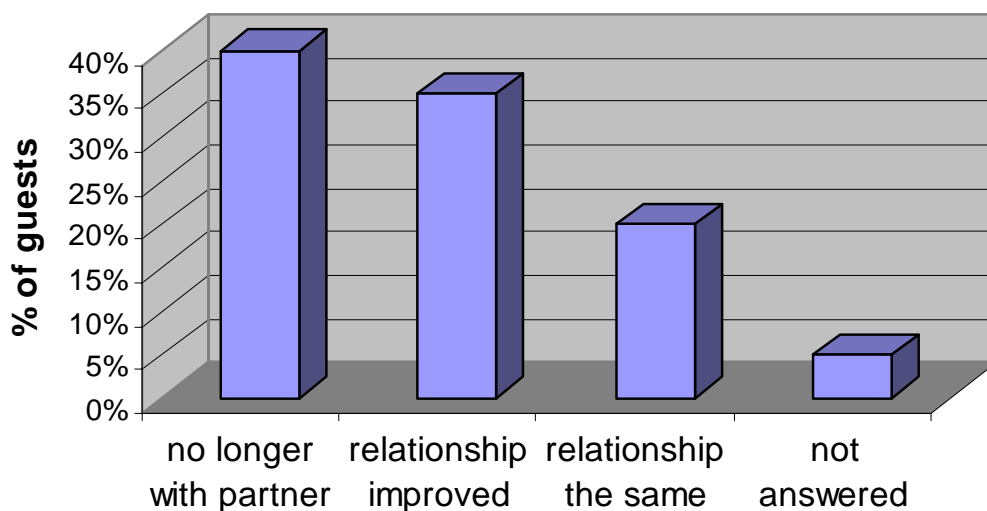
Respondents with spouses or partners were asked if they believed that their relationship with their spouse had been abusive prior to the Healing Week. 27 guests had a partner at the time. Of these 74% considered their relationship abusive. 4 yrs later of those who believed they were in an abusive relationship 75% had either left the relationship or felt the relationship had improved.

Chart 3 shows how respondents who believed their relationship had been abusive rated the effect of their Healing Week on their primary relationship four year after the healing week.

Effect on primary relationship

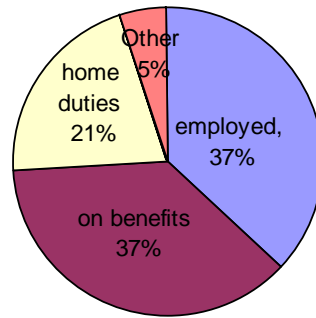
n=27

Employment

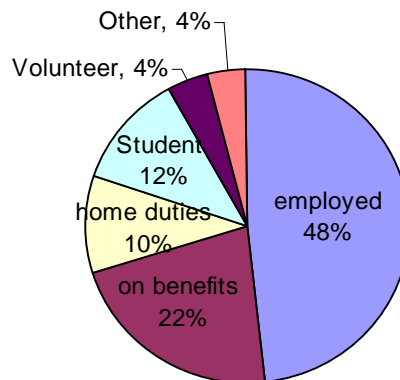


Charts 3 (n= 43) & Chart 4 (n=50) show respondents' employment status immediately before attending Healing Week and 4 years post Healing Week. The number of people on government benefits had reduced from 37% to 22%.

Prior to healing week



4 years post healing week

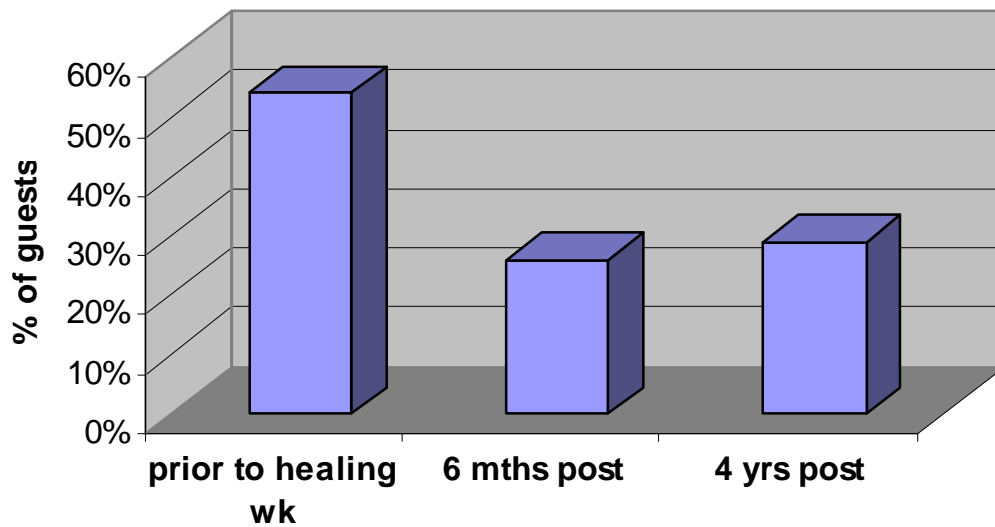


Problems with illicit drugs, alcohol or gambling

On the first day of Healing Week respondents were asked whether in the last six months they considered they had a problem with illicit drugs, alcohol, or gambling. 54.3% (25) said yes they had a problem. Of these respondents ten considered that they no longer had a problem 4 years post program ($X^2=6.21, df=1, p=0.01$). This is a statistically significant decrease and provides a long term success rate of 40%.

Chart 5 shows what percentage of respondents considered they still had a problem with illicit drugs, alcohol or gambling, four year after the healing week.

Problems with illicit drugs, alcohol or gambling



Psychiatric Problems

35% of respondents who answered this question (13 of 43) had spent time in a psychiatric hospital at some point in their lives. Four of these reported spending time in a psychiatric hospital during the 6 months before attending healing week. 9 respondents reported spending time in a psychiatric hospital during the 4 years since attending Healing Week and 5 of these had spent time in a psychiatric hospital during the 6 months before completing the 4 year follow up. There does not appear to be any improvement in psychiatric problems for a core group of respondents who continue to be admitted to psychiatric facilities for treatment.

Discussion

The vast majority of respondents in this study felt that the healing week had continued to have a sustained positive effect on their lives and that the improvement in their physical health, their mental health, employment prospects and their relationships with their partners and children had been sustained and in some cases continued to improve since completing the program.

The major strength of this study is the longitudinal nature of the follow ups. It is rare to have participants of a program of this nature followed up at all, let alone at 6 months and 4 years post program.

The major weakness of this study is the low response rate which brings into question the possibility of bias in the findings. Use of voluntary self completed questionnaires is unfortunately the only possible methodology despite the difficulties experienced in collecting sufficient data. The wide geographic spread of our ex-guests made any other methodology impractical. Our client base suffer from drug and alcohol problems as well as being very transient making collection particularly difficult as it is for any organisation working with this group of clients. The people who respond are not

necessarily totally representative of our client base. However there has been a good correlation between our end of the week results and the 6 month and 4 year follow up results. We endeavoured to increase our response rate by phoning, by reassuring and also reminding the respondents the response is completely voluntary and confidential. It is however difficult for some of our clients to respond to some of the more personal questions.

The results of the four year survey were remarkably similar to the six month survey showing that the participants had sustained the improvements in their lives. Some of those surveyed may have done second or even third healing weeks over the period. We did not ask that question.

The only slightly disappointing result was that there was no significant decrease in those being admitted to psychiatric hospitals, showing that serious mental illness takes time to heal from, and four years may not be long enough. However, this finding reassured us that respondents were not just telling us what we wanted to hear, and that in fact the responses were honest even when they did not reflect positively on the effectiveness of the healing programme.

The methodology by necessity was simply pre and post surveys as it was not possible to have a control group. For ethical reasons we could not ask people to go on a waiting list to attend the programme and because the Mayumarri model is very different from most other services on offer it is very hard to use another programme as a comparison group.

The results show long lasting (and perhaps permanent) changes to participant's health and general welfare after (for most of them) just five days of a programme. The high satisfaction rate and the high number of people who considered the programme life changing are therefore not surprising.

References

- Beitchman, J.H., K.J. Zucker, J.E. Hood, G.A. Dacosta, D. Akman and E. Cassavia 1992 A review of the long term effects of child Sexual abuse, *Child Abuse and Neglect* 16;101-118
- Springer, K. W. J. Sheridan, D. Kuo and M. Carnes (2003) the long term health outcomes of childhood abuse: An overview and a call to action. *Journal of Internal medicine* 18:864-870

APPENDIX 1: The Depression Index (Administered Day 1 and day 5 of the program)

Mayumarri Self-Assessment – Entry

Coney Creek Lane, Quorrobolong NSW 2325

Phone: 02-4998 6003 Fax: 02-4998 6041 Email: mayumarri@hunterlink.net.au

To meet the funding requests of our parenting grant we must conduct an annual Research Project into the way we influence the mental health of those who attend the Healing Week Program.

THIS IS A COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY SELF-ASSESSMENT. We ask that you fill out the assessment on arrival, on exit, and again three months later. We do implore you to assist us by filling out the questionnaire below and returning it to one of the Carers. No personal information will be passed on to any other person or organisation and we do not require your name.

• Have you been diagnosed with depression?	Yes	No			
• Have you ever considered you had a problem with illicit Drugs, Alcohol, or Gambling	Yes	No			
• If yes, has this been in the last six months?	Yes	No			
• Please circle which substance has been a problem for you:	Illicit Drugs	Alcohol	Gambling		
• Type of Abuse – please circle:					
Physical	Emotional	Sexual	Spiritual	Neglect	Ritual
• Was you abuse within the family?	Yes	No			
• Was your abuse outside the family?	Yes	No			

On a scale of 1 to 10 how much are you **inconvenienced** by any of the following problems?

**Place a number from 0 to 10 in each box 0 = means you don't suffer from that issue
10 = means you really do suffer from that issue**

- Little interest or pleasure in doing things.
- Having trouble concentrating on things.
- Being fidgety or restless.
- Feeling tired or having little energy.
- Feeling a failure, or that you have let yourself or your family down.
- Poor appetite or over-eating.
- Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much.
- Feeling down, depressed or hopeless.
- Having trouble with connecting in an intimate way.
- Thoughts that you would be better off dead.

Total

Membership No. or Initials: _____ Date: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____

Thank you for participating in our survey. This information is for recording purposes only – it will not be passed on to any other person or organisation.

APPENDIX 2- The Depression Index (Administered 6 month post Healing Week)

Mayumarri Self-Assessment – Post Exit

Coney Creek Lane, Quorrobolong NSW 2325

Phone: 02-4998 6003 Fax: 02-4998 6041 Email: mayumarri@hunterlink.net.au

To meet the funding requests of our parenting grant we must conduct an annual Research Project into the way we influence the mental health of those who attend the Healing Week Program.

THIS IS A COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY SELF-ASSESSMENT. We ask that you fill out the assessment on arrival, on departure & again six months later.

- Have you been diagnosed with depression in the last 6 months? Yes No
- Have you had any problems within the last 6 months with Illicit Drugs, Alcohol or Gambling? Yes No

If yes, please which ones: Illicit Drugs Alcohol Gambling

- If you were diagnosed with depression at the time of your healing week, do you still suffer with depression? Yes No

On a scale of 0 to 10 how much are you **inconvenienced** by any of the following problems?

**Place a number from 0 to 10 in each box 0 = means you don't suffer from that issue
10 = means you really do suffer from that issue**

- Little interest or pleasure in doing things.
- Having trouble concentrating on things.
- Being fidgety or restless.
- Feeling tired or having little energy.
- Feeling a failure, or that you have let yourself or your family down.
- Poor appetite or over-eating.
- Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much.
- Feeling down, depressed or hopeless.
- Having trouble with connecting in an intimate way.
- Thoughts that you would be better off dead.

Total

Thank you for participating in our survey.

Post Exit

This information is for Recording Purposes only – It will not be passed on to any other person or organisation.

Membership No. or Initials: _____ **Date:** ___ / ___ / ___

Length of Stay: _____ **Age:** _____ **Sex:** **Male or Female**

APPENDIX 3: The Healing Week Follow-up Questionnaire (Administered 6 months post program)

SURVEY OF MAYUMARRI GUESTS FOR THE HEALING WEEK _____

Mayumarri is evaluating our Healing Week programme. Could you please help us by taking a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire? There is no need to put your name on the questionnaire.

Date of Healing Week ___/___/___

Today's Date: ___/___/2006

Please tick appropriate box

Are you: Female Male

1. Do you consider the healing week has had a positive effect on your healing?

Yes No Unsure

2. If positive, how would you rate this effect?

Life-changing Very positive Quite positive Slightly positive

3. Overall how would you rate your general health in the month BEFORE attending your Healing Week?

Excellent Good Poor

4. Since your Healing Week has your general health improved?

A lot A little Not at all

5. If you're a parent do you believe you were abusive to your own children, prior to the healing week?

A lot A little Not at all Not applicable

6. Do you feel your relationships with your children has improved?

A lot A little Not at all Not applicable

7. If you have a partner/spouse do you believe your relationship with your partner was abusive BEFORE your Healing Week?

A lot A little Not at all Not applicable

8. Since your Healing Week, do you feel your relationship with your partner has improved?

A lot A little Not at all Not applicable

9. Which of the following best describes your employment status BEFORE attending your Healing Week?

Employed full-time Employed part-time Unemployment benefit

Sickness benefit Sole parent benefit Home Duties _____

Other (eg. Volunteering) _____

