


# U-evolve Annual Report

Supporting a Generation Through a Global Pandemic



"[Since working with U-  
evolve] I understand my  
feelings better and this  
helps me understand  
myself"

Sam\*, XX

"I started dealing with  
difficult thoughts and  
attempted suicide. I'm doing  
a lot better now and I think  
counselling helped a lot  
with that."

Alex\*, XX

"School is going way better  
than before, I'm focusing  
more, I don't have a foggy  
brain so much, I've been  
working hard, and I get to  
sit exams next year"

Ally\*, XX



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## About us

U-evolve is a growing charity providing early-intervention mental health support to young people across Edinburgh. Our aim is improved mental health and wellbeing for young people; met through our innovative Therapeutic Coaching model and 360 service package which sees us work 1:1 with young people struggling with their mental health, deliver group workshops in schools and youth groups, and provide training for parents/carers and frontline professionals.

## Our mission

To deliver 1:1 Therapeutic Coaching and mental health and wellbeing workshops to young people and their network of support

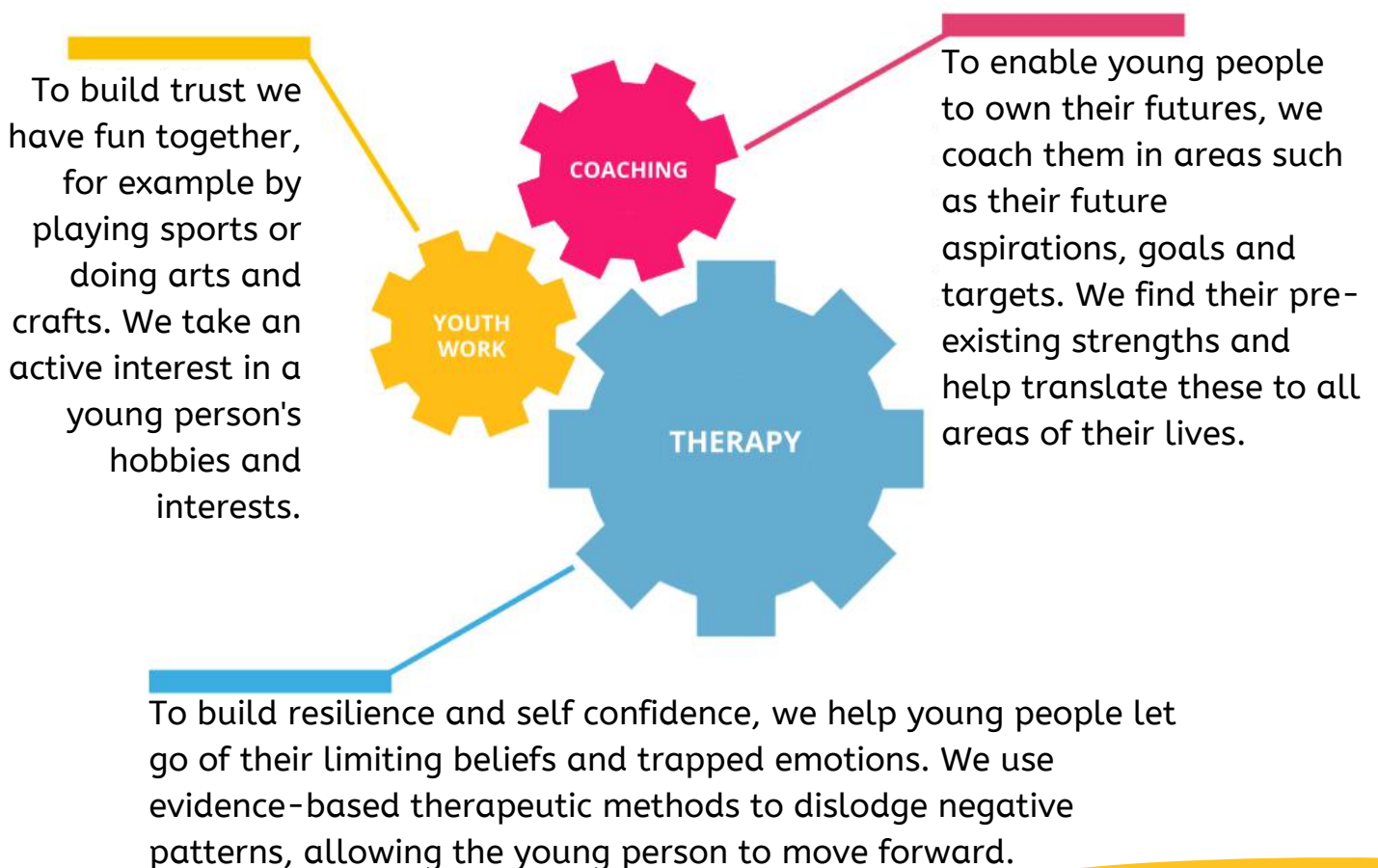
## Our vision

A world where young people are mentally strong, emotionally secure and believe in themselves.

# Therapeutic Coaching

U-evolve's signature model of support was designed to give young people with multiple Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) the flexible and relational support they need to pursue positive futures. Proven over six years of service delivery, Therapeutic Coaching blends evidence-based theories and practices from Coaching Psychology, Counselling and Therapy.

For young people, this means that we allow them to guide their time with us. We work towards their goals and go at their pace, our unique model of support brings together Coaching, Therapy and Youth Work; we create a trusting environment and relationship, our Coaches are relatable and their support is long-term.



# Our services

We support young people with a 360-service package; working with young people directly, with peer groups and with the adults in the lives of young people.



## 1:1 Support

Long-term support delivered to young people struggling with their mental health by our Therapeutic Coaches.



## Peer workshops

Tailored group sessions with young people to cover topical issues and provide a mental health education, delivered in schools and youth groups.



## Adult training

Training for adults in the lives of young people; Parent and Carer workshops on supporting their young people and upskilling for frontline professionals to develop trauma skills and awareness as well as self compassion.



# The Big Picture

We all know the difficulties that the last 20 months have brought. The reality of living in lockdown, living in fear of a virus, and living in such uncertain times has brought challenges and triggers to all. The younger generation have been one of the most acutely affected groups, with many struggling in a new society that has seen them cut off from friends, education, and hobbies for long periods and has strained relationships at home, school and with peers. With much still unknown around the future, young people are worrying about their careers, the jobs market, and their education after so many months of remote learning and cancelled exams.

- 67% of young people believed that the COVID-19 pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health.
- Almost two fifths of young people who responded to Lockdown Lowdown stated that they felt Moderately or Extremely concerned about their mental wellbeing
- 43% of young people say their anxiety levels have increased due to the pandemic
- 32% say they feel “overwhelmed” by feelings of panic and anxiety on a daily basis
- 69% of young people feel like their life is “on hold”





# Our year in numbers

Supporting a generation through a global pandemic saw us grow as a team, find a home as an organisation and reach young people in new ways. It was a year of many firsts for all!

57

young people received 1:1 support

20

young people supported virtually

6

tablets and phone lines distributed to support virtual service delivery

1

series of our podcast was released on Spotify



7

our team grew to 6 FT and 1 PT members of staff

12

on-demand support videos added TalkHub

100

hours of Therapeutic Coaching funded by our Kiltwalkers

525

we moved into new office space at 525 Ferry Road

53

professionals trained in trauma skills



# Our impact

Our support has never been more in demand, and the results from the last 12 months show exactly why. We support young people to achieve their goals, giving them long-term support to develop sustainable tools that they can use for the rest of their life.

90% of young people reported their problems to be better after working with U-evolve

70% of young people reported that U-evolve have helped a lot or a great deal in other aspects of their lives (not just the issue they came to us with).

60% of young people who were experiencing difficulties in their lives felt able to cope well after working with U-evolve



# Our impact

Sometimes change can be difficult to see when you are in the middle of it. Our before and after data paints an important picture of the work that we do with young people.

80% of young people had above 'average' stress levels when beginning work with U-evolve, by the end of our final term


60% were reporting average stress levels

50% of clients reported either 'very high' or 'high' levels of distress at the beginning of their 1:1 Therapeutic Coaching, this has reduced to 10% by the end of the academic year.

"I can honestly say that without the support from U-evolve, we would not be able to provide the appropriate intervention support to meet all our pupils needs."

40% of young people reported 'very high' or 'high' levels of behavioural difficulties at the start of their work with us, reduced to 0% by the end of the year.

The 60% of young people who started the service with low self-esteem scores have moved to having high or normal self-esteem



“I am less nervous, more happy. I’m less angry (I used to be angry all the time)”

Jamie\*, XX

“I wanted to be better in school and I succeeded that expectation with the help of U-evolve.”

Robin\*, XX

“I feel less annoyed in school and calmer and more controlled”

Ellis\*, XX

# U-evolve's Year in Three

As an insight into U-evolve we asked Becky, our CEO, Eilidh, our Founder, and Shelley, our Chair, about the year passed and the year to come.

## What are you most proud of this year?

**Becky:** I am so incredibly proud of the U-evolve team, and how we have lived our values throughout this incredibly challenging year. We have kept young people in control of their service with us, adapting to use video calling, telephone and text support. We've supported each other, without judgement, and prioritised wellbeing and self care as a staff team. We practice what we preach, and role model for young people.

**Eilidh:** I'm proud of the young people that we support. In the most difficult circumstances, our young people have shown up, benefitted from, and engaged with the U-evolve service. This goes against how the data suggests vulnerable people would react and speaks volumes to the commitment to their own positive mental wellbeing and change.

**Shelley:** I am incredibly proud of the resilience of the team and how they responded to the pandemic.

# U-evolve's Year in Three

What's been the biggest challenge this year?

**Becky:** Like many organisations, we've seen a big increase in the need for our service. We're determined that all young people who want to access U-evolve can, as quickly and conveniently as possible. We've had to be innovative and brave, and have grown a great deal over the last 12 months. We've been incredibly fortunate with the partnerships we've made, and with the grants we've been able to access. I'd like to personally thank every individual, school, grant maker and organisation who has helped us this year. It really has been a team effort.

**Eilidh:** Ensuring that during the pandemic our U-evolve staff team did not lose sight of their own wellbeing. Our staff supported young people throughout a collectively traumatic period, it was important that they still had time for their own self-care and they we supported them to avoid burnout.

**Shelley:** Last year was an incredibly challenging year for society as a whole as the coronavirus pandemic closed down large parts of our lives. During the year, our services reflected the Scottish Government guidance and we supported as many young people as we possibly could while protecting both our colleagues and the young people we support from the risks of coronavirus.

# U-evolve's Year in Three

What are you most looking forward to for 21/22?

**Becky:** I'm looking forward to taking our brilliant services city wide. It's more important than ever that all young people can access the support they need quickly and easily. We've worked so hard this year to improve our access points for young people, our financial viability and grow our team so that we can support more young people to build the confidence, resilience and secure sense of self they need to thrive in the futures they choose.

**Eilidh:** I'm looking forward to the "new normal" – whatever it may look like! I hope it will see us having schools open consistently and we will all get used to having Covid in our lives and managing this. For U-evolve, I can't wait to see us grow our services across Edinburgh, we will continue to do our essential work in North Edinburgh and are looking forward to bringing this to more communities across the city.

**Shelley:** I am looking forward to engaging young people in our service design, decision making and in our governance structure.





# Case Studies

Young people come to U-evolve for support through a variety of referral routes and with varying experiences. Each young person is in charge of their own sessions, leading the way on what is important to them and what they want to achieve.

## Jay's Story

Jay came to U-evolve as they were presenting as volatile in school and in the community. Their behaviour was challenging and offending, they weren't coping in class and were at risk of exclusion. Jay "wants to be good" but "I have tried thousands of times and it hasn't worked". Despite their situation, Jay wants to do well, go to college and maybe university.

Our support of Jay came at an important time for them. During our first term we focused on grounding and co-regulation as Jay appeared to be hypervigilant in sessions, finding it difficult to sit still and speaking very quickly. Unable to self-reflect or self-regulate, Jay's lack of focus was causing them problems in school and we worked on body-regulation to overcome this. As we moved into our second term, we also moved into lockdown and onto virtual sessions. It transpired there were difficulties with parental relations which was impacting Jay greatly. Our sessions allowed them a safe place to vent their frustrations and develop coping strategies to manage their ongoing challenges. Jay has spoken of how valuable the sessions during lockdown were to them. "The sessions help me get stuff off my chest, I feel a lot calmer afterwards and I really enjoy it. It helps me understand things and calm down"



# Sam's Story

Sam\* came to U-evolve with PTSD, following the suicide of their father, and low mood and lack of motivation. “I keep having nightmares about my dad, I keep zoning out and thinking about it, I'm trying my best to cope.” Sam was numbing their feelings by playing more than 10 hours of games per day to avoid flashbacks. Their motivation and hope for the future was low, with their network of support describing them as “depressed”. Sam was losing their identity in the trauma, disassociating, and unable to engage with their education or think about their future.

Sam's goal was to better manage their PTSD symptoms and their Coach started by providing techniques such as: grounding, breathing and anchoring so that they were able to take back control of their symptoms. They went on to support Sam's processing of emotions through counselling and moved on to future focused work to understand and overcome Sam's dissociation. Working together, Sam was supported to make small, manageable changes and to work through the aftermath of their dad's death.

Now, Sam PTSD is under control, they are “not having flashbacks anymore” and have “stopped playing Xbox all day every day.” By processing their emotions and adopting healthy techniques: “School is going way better than before, I'm focusing more, I don't have a foggy brain so much, I've been working hard, and I get to sit exams next year” as well as giving Sam the motivation to take up and commit to new hobbies. Whilst still grieving their loss and facing difficult emotions, Sam's time with U-evolve has built resilience, understanding of their emotions, and given them coping techniques for life.



## Ally's Story

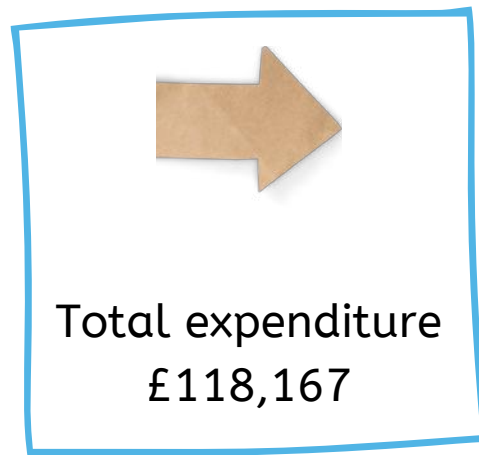
Referred to U-evolve following antisocial behaviour in community and due to difficulties managing mainstream education, Ally was clear they wanted to work towards setting and achieving goals. Ally came to U-evolve wanting to turn their life around, to stop getting into trouble in the community and move away from a future that of crime, pursuing one of hard work and family instead. This motivation was hugely helpful in their work with U-evolve.

Sessions focused on the person they want to become, the person they feel they are now, and experiences in the past which may have made things difficult for them. Ally said he often “loses it” in situations and feels overwhelming anger, Ally’s Coach worked with them to understand what they need in this situation and adopted a solution focused framework to help them resolve the parts of themselves that they don’t like, but that they sometimes feels they need, leading to instances that may harm them and others.

Ally’s motivation is paying off, they are staying out of trouble and have a weekend job. They have maintained participation in healthy hobbies and habits and feels working with U-evolve “is helping me understand myself more”

# Financial Summary

We have been delighted by a year of growth, in both the reach of our service and the size of our team. Our expansion into new areas of Edinburgh and the building of our team with service delivery and support staff has been supported by a year of great financial growth.



Our signed financial accounts for year-end March 2021 are available on request from [hello@u-evolve.org](mailto:hello@u-evolve.org) and from our website.

## Future Plans

U-evolve will continue this growth into 2021-2022 as we work towards our ambition of being accessible to all young people in Edinburgh by forging new partnerships in schools and with youth groups as well as increasing online self-referrals. To support this, we are working towards a financial strategy which prioritises income diversification. Increasing our income streams is key to ensuring our growth is sustainable and will allow us to access unrestricted income that can be used to best support our services.

# Thank you, Funders

A huge and heartfelt thank you to all of our Funders, your support has enabled us to support a generation through a global pandemic without a break in our service. From all at U-evolve, and all those that we support, thank you.

Bailie Gifford

City of Edinburgh Council

Corra Foundation

Dunedin Harley Davidson Trust

Edinburgh University

EVOG

Foundation Scotland

Gannachy Trust

Henry Duncan Grants

Hospital Saturday Fund

James Sim Trust

Leathersellers

Muirhouse Housing Association

National Lottery Awards for All

Pilkington Charitable Trust

Robertson Trust

Scottish Whisky Fund

SCVO

Stafford Trust

The Bruce Trust

The Rozelle Trust

Third Sector Resilience Fund

## Thank you, Partners

This year our work in schools has looked a little different, but we are delighted to have maintained our fantastic partnerships in North Edinburgh. We would like to thank all of the school staff for choosing our service to support their young people and working alongside us to help their pupils thrive.

Broughton High School

Craigroyston High School

Spartans Alternative School

## Thank you, Supporters

A final note to our Supporters. Whether you have donated, shared a social media post, taken on a fundraising challenge, or told someone about our services; thank you! At U-evolve we are building a community of individuals who want better mental health support for our young people, more access to services and value better understanding in our communities: thank you for being part of this mission. We could not do this without you, thank you.




# Our year in pictures

Whilst a lot of this year has been spent behind screens, we have still had one to remember at U-evolve!







“In the process of learning to understand myself I feel like U-evolve has helped me to become happier and more at ease.”

Jo\*, XX

“I will take these coping skills forward in to the rest of my life and be safe in the knowledge that I can call back on them if I need them in the future.”

Chris\*, XX

“...it never once felt like I was talking to a teacher but rather a really supportive friend.”

Cammy\*, XX



SC04586

u-evolve.org  
hello@uevolve.org



@uevolvescotland



@uevolvescotland



/uevolvescotland



U-evolve