



Executive Summary: Baobab

M&E 2023

Our 2023 Monitoring and Evaluation report had three interrelated aims: 1) provide up-to-date information on service user's characteristics, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, 2) assess the experience of service use, and 3) identify areas of improvement based on service user feedback.

The questionnaire was completed by a total of 24 service users between May 23rd and November 15th, 2023 (about a third of our population of young people in individual psychotherapy at the time). The data was analysed and the report written up by Dr Rebecca Lane (Clinical Psychologist).

Clinical Psychometrics and Mental Health:

The 2023 cohort exhibited high levels of depression (PHQ-9) and anxiety (GAD-7), with 54.17% of participants scoring in the moderate to severe range for depression and 62.5% of the sample reporting symptoms indicating moderate or severe anxiety. Scores in both measures were significantly higher than prevalence figures typically found among studies of forcibly displaced groups in other countries and contexts. Additionally, a quarter of the sample (25%) reported being moderately or severely bothered by "strange or unusual thoughts," such as hearing voices or seeing images related to past trauma.

We also tested for Trauma and Complex PTSD (using the ITQ survey). Most participants fulfilled the criteria for clinical PTSD with close to a third meeting the criteria for Disturbances in Self Organisation.

Compared to a study of a similar demographic in Canada, participants in 2023 reported *less* difficulties on average with affect regulation and *greater* reflection – findings that point to some positive effects of engaging in regular psychotherapeutic work. However, they also reported *more difficulties* with emotional suppression than comparable demographic from Canada. The higher rate of suppression than clinical samples of peers in other settings suggests it is a primary, though potentially concerning, coping mechanism.

Social Externalities and Practical Barriers

- Homelessness: This was a major finding in 2023; 58.3% of participants had experienced homelessness at least once since arriving in the UK, and one was homeless at the time of the study.
- Alcohol and Substance Use: While most (79.17%) did not use substances, approximately 1 in 5 did.
- Bullying and Discrimination: 25% of participants reported being bothered by bullying, and 12.5% reported receiving negative remarks regarding their status, religion, or skin colour "quite often" or "all the time".



Service Impact

Despite high levels of need, participants reported strong engagement with the "Five Pillars" of the Baobab model.

- Psychosocial Support: 87.5% of participants reported that Baobab helped them with their feelings, and 83.33% rated individual psychotherapy as "very helpful".
- Belonging: 95.83% of participants expressed a sense of belonging to the Baobab Centre community.

Recommendations

- Continue the resilience-building community model to foster belonging and reduce isolation.
- Implement targeted workshops for independent living skills (ex. budgeting and cooking) to address gaps caused by disrupted childhoods.
- Explore therapeutic models like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) or Compassion Focussed Therapy (CFT) to address sleep challenges, chronic pain, and feelings of shame.