

## **GENERAL FEEDBACK**

The most consistent feedback from services/individuals who have purchased a set of 'el' cards agree that they are 'one of the best tools available'. Although 'childlike' in appearance, they 'have a powerful effect on the client'. This 'very impressive' set of cards are 'invaluable' and have completely 'enhanced the way people work with clients'. Which ever settings the 'el' cards are used 'positive results' are achieved 99.9% of the time.

'Other cards are very 'busy' and have words which could suggest feelings clients are not experiencing. With 'el' cards the clients are able to express themselves openly and honestly. There are no words or suggestions which can influence the outcome for the client, which gives the client control of themselves, something which is often missing from their lives.'

When used with clients who struggle to put into words the range of emotions they feel, they can, once they start to explore their chosen cards, reach a much deeper level of work and insight into their own emotional make-up. This is also particularly good for clients who have remained in 'stuckness' for a long period of time. The feedback from this area is 'amazing'.

Clients who have used the 'el' cards regularly state that 'they have helped me to connect to my underlying emotions'. On exploring their chosen cards they 'realise just how complicated their emotions are' and when they start interacting each 'el' card with others, it provides them with a picture of their 'interlocking and complicated emotions which feed on each other'. (This exploration is known as the Jigsaw spread)

## **YOUNG PEOPLE FROM AGE 4 TO 25**

For this section the feedback has been collated from schools and young people's services. The feedback from this group is extremely positive and more than one counsellor / support worker have achieved exceptional work with these cards from young people aged 4 to 25.' They like the 'childlike images because they look hand drawn' which helps them to engage quickly and to depth. Although some of the younger children may struggle with the lack of meaning, they can be used to good effect by creating a form of narrative therapy to tell their own stories, it also can help them to create their own individual drawing which is unique to them. Younger children love playing with these cards and can quite often reveal things unconsciously.

Using these cards in school also helps with forming relationships with pupils who have anxieties about accessing support and special needs services. Using these cards seems to 'free up their creativity and helps to facilitate exploration of their thoughts and feelings', especially children and young people who are 'reluctant to talk about issues'. They help them to 'focus on their emotions'. Once a young person engages with them they quite often ask to use them when they are going through a difficult time.

The older group of young people like the flexibility of the cards and the way they can be interpreted differently when considering different issues.

Young people who have challenging behaviour and emotional difficulties find they can express themselves through these 'el' cards. Many who are unable to read or write are not intimidated by the 'el' cards because they have no words on them. They use them to create their own emotional language and can also use them to form a life story book.

**A must have for every school especially now emotional literacy is high on the school agenda.**

## **ABUSE VICTIMS**

The current feedback from this sector is from domestic abuse victims and adults of childhood abuse. The age range is currently from 14 to 75, although this list is not exhausted.

'I have one adult survivor of childhood abuse who hates and loves these 'el' cards. They are 'loved' because they allow her to 'let go of the effect the abuse has had on her life', however, they are 'hated' because they make her challenge and own her very difficult emotions about her childhood experiences'.

They help clients to express very complicated and mixed emotions. Clients also like these cards because they can visually see hope when they use the 'past, present & future spread'. This spread not only assists in identifying areas of work that still needs looking at, but also area of their life where progress has being made, which in turn reinforces their future 'hopes and aspirations'.

The 'el' cards can work very deeply with abuse victims, therefore only a suitably qualified professional should use them in this specialist sector.

One client describes what it is like to use the 'placards';

Relatively early in my journey of discovery/recovery the Emotional Literacy Cards were introduced. I selected the cards which reflected my feelings at the time. With each card came the question why it had been used and how does it make you feel. Certain cards were discarded which symbolised the feelings/experiences that were to be rejected/overcome. The use of the cards clearly identified my innermost feelings which although being a painful experience it was a necessary one. The use of pictorial cards helps clarify the feelings in ways that words could achieve.

Although it was over two years ago that I was first introduced to the cards I still remember the experience vividly such was the impact. The cards have been used again recently to help identify those issues/feelings that were still causing difficulty. Although the first use of the cards revealed the depth of the feelings/damage the latter use identified the final pieces of work that needed to be done but was also a celebration of the extent of the recovery process.

The Emotional Literacy cards are a powerful but necessary tool when used with the victims of abuse. The journey through the dark pit of abuse is not an easy one and the use of the Emotional Literacy Cards does not make that less painful. However they do clarify and identify the feelings/damage involved and the work of recovery can then commence. (AB)

## **BEREAVEMENT, LOSS & GRIEF**

Emotional Literacy cards are an 'invaluable resource' for clients whose grief has also been complicated by many past issues. They can help clients who actually present with other issues to connect to bereavement, loss and grief issues that are 'playing in the background'.

The 'el' cards are especially good for clients who need to 'hold' their grief, it allows them to see and physically hold their complex emotions. From this they can start their 'letting go' process in a way that feels safe for them.

'El' cards are used very positively in hospice settings.

## **CORPORATE MANAGEMENT**

Surprisingly 'el' cards have found a market in corporate management. They are used to help identify mission, vision & values. They can help unblock personal and inter departmental issues which are creating blocks to growth. Although professionals at this level can struggle with the 'crayon style images' once they have engaged with them, they quickly view them as an excellent tool.

## **COUPLES COUNSELLING.**

The 'el' cards help couple to communicate and/or express their feelings towards each other. By using a set of cards each they begin to look at different ways/methods of expression. Frequently the same cards are chosen but the feelings/meanings is different to that of the other, which facilitates discussion and at last the couple begin to communicate .

This work can also be applied to **FAMILY AND GROUP SESSIONS.**

## **DISABILITY**

Proven to be very useful for counselling people with learning difficulties and disabled people with speech impairment. Other areas who have responded well to using 'el' cards are people with Down's Syndrome who benefit by using them as a communication tool for their emotions and expressions.

One counsellor who purchased them for her work never got to use them because her autistic son who has difficulty expressing himself now uses them and they have proven to be a 'godsend'. 'I can get a much clearer picture of his mood now depending on what card he selects.'

The 'el' cards have been sold to other people to use within the autistic spectrum and feedback is awaited.

'El' cards have been known to help monosyllabic people with other problems, e.g. ADD to open up and start talking about their feelings. They can help to discriminate between emotions by providing them with their own unique 'language'.

## **PRISON WORK**

The 'el' cards have started to be used in the prison environment. One counselling team in a prison within the Liverpool area uses them every day. The prisoners have responded very well to them and they are now exploring emotions and feelings that have been repressed for many years. This particular team feel that 'el' cards are a central and invaluable tool and since attending an 'el' workshop have been able to take their work to another level.

## **YOUTH OFENDERS TEAMS**

The 'el' cards have gone into many local authority teams to work with youths at all levels and are used independently from the 'Mapping My Offence'(MMO) model used by some YOT's. The 'MMO' was initially created by Shelly Khaled at Newham YOT, London in which the 'el' cards were incorporated into one of the modules. The model consists of identifying core values in relation to the offenders loyalty, friendships and family. These are explored in relationship to a 'victim empathy package' in which their offence and what has influenced them is put into context. The 'el' cards are then introduced to explore the offenders emotions, hopes etc in the past, present and future spread, in which the future part of the spread identifies the area of work to concentrate on in recovery. Using the 'el' cards in this model has helped to stop re-offending in more youths. This particular model has been used in at least one conference and if you require more details about the MMO model, please contact Shelly Khaled on 0208 430 2341.

## **SUMMARY**

Heartlands Emotional Literacy Cards are used in a variety of settings including probation, prisons, hospices, individual therapists, NHS, local authority, foster care, schools, special needs, YOT's, learning disabilities, voluntary organisations, just to name a few!

All levels of professionals can use 'el' cards, you just need to remember to work within your competency levels.

If you wish to 'try before you buy' please look at the workshops available. The workshops are also invaluable for people who already own a set and which to explore different ways of working.