

ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

# Being a Boy

2023 Evaluation Report



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Being a Boy Project 2023 was an **effectively targeted project that engaged boys on Free School Meals, a key underrepresented demographic at Arts University Bournemouth (AUB).**

All the participants involved were from target groups, with many meeting multiple widening participation criteria. Being a Boy is having a positive impact on young men participating in the project in the Dorset area and is influencing the development of similar activities at a national level thanks to the projects profile from awards, conferences and the Boys Impact Hub.

The 2023 series engaged 61 attendees (42 unique learners, up from 18 unique learners in 2022) from six different education providers. For 2023, the Being a Boy Evaluation Star was introduced to support our learning linked to **Ulster University's Taking Boys Seriously Principles (hereon referred to as TBSPs)**. The evaluation for the Being a Boy project 2023 has demonstrated an overall increase in the confidence of participants across the workshop series.

Evaluation found that different workshops resulted in participants gaining different skills and experiencing a variety of benefits. This demonstrates the importance of having individual objectives and outcomes for each workshop. It also indicates a potential for maximum benefit from engagement in multiple workshops.

The 2024 Being a Boy workshop series will continue with further development of the Evaluation Stars with support from a focus group of previous participants, with a more robust plan in place for capturing qualitative data from the workshops. New targets around engaging more education providers and an introduction of a new creative workshop to ensure fresh opportunities for participants returning to the workshop series.

**Being a Boy is firmly embedded into AUB's 2024-25 to 2027-28 Access and Participation Plan, with six workshops planned for each of those academic years.**

This document summarises the evaluation of the 2023 Being a Boy activity and recommendations for the 2024 workshop series.

# 61

Attendees engaged across the programme.

# 42

Unique learners engaged across the programme.

# 18

Increase in learners from 2022.

## INTRODUCTION

The Being a Boy Project was launched in the 2021-2022 academic year as a new pre-16 Access and Participation initiative to support working-class boys at AUB. Activity was developed to meet the challenge of supporting boys' educational attainment on a local and national level.

Playing to our strengths as a world leading provider of creative Higher Education, the project mobilises AUB's expertise to provide mechanisms for students to **explore issues relating to masculinity, identity, and the educational success of young men.**

The 2022-23 academic year saw the student facing workshops double, from three workshops in 2022, to six in 2023. With this increase in activity, it was imperative to explore new opportunities to effectively evaluate the participants experiences and understanding of the projects aims and objectives.





# RATIONALE

In 2023, The Office for Students highlighted the importance of supporting attainment raising in schools as part of the 2024-25 onwards access and participation plans. With the expectations that higher education providers consider:

## 1

How they can address the risk posed to fair access and successful participation by knowledge, skill and attainment gaps emerging across childhood by making meaningful and effective contributions to supporting schools to raise pre-16 attainment.

## 2

How they can expand and promote diverse and flexible pathways and provisions.

## 3

How they can improve the mental health of their students.



For the last decade, discourse on the substantial gap in rates of progression to higher education for working-class boys has been a regular focus of politicians, educators, and those with an interest in equitable access to educational opportunity.

Recent TASO research<sup>1</sup> has outlined the link between metacognition and attainment at GCSE. This is supported by EEF<sup>2</sup> studies exploring metacognitive skills and attainment at both primary and secondary school level. To support the efficacy of metacognitive strategies to raise student attainment, this Strategic Intervention assumes such an approach to be a robust vehicle by which to develop activity in this area. Evidence from Pinkett and Roberts<sup>3</sup> also asserts that mental health, peer pressure, relationships, and socio-economic inequality are also contributory elements to the gap in GCSE attainment for boys in receipt of Free School Meals. With regard to the role of educational professionals who work with young men, research suggests (Heyder and Kessels, 2015<sup>4</sup>; Myhill and Jones, 2006<sup>5</sup>; Jones and Myhill, 2004<sup>6</sup>) that gendered perceptions and assumptions play significant role in pedagogic practice. As such, in parallel to activity facing young people, the Strategic Intervention will conduct activity focused on the development of professional practice.

AUB's Access and Participation Strategy for pre-16 has involved building strong partnerships with alternative provisions, widening participation schools, community and third sector organisations to support activity to raise attainment. With a clear focus on the issue with gaps in GCSE outcomes and HE progression for working-class boys. Positioning itself as a university leading discussions, sharing best practice and innovative activity to support these young men.

Being a Boy was launched in 2021-22 as

a newly established access programme at AUB and early evaluation<sup>7</sup> evidenced its positive impact for participants. In its pilot year, the project received national recognition for its innovative approach. This Strategic Intervention builds on that foundation, deploying more robust evaluative practices, and expanding the model to engage a larger cohort of young men in a broader suite of creative activity.

The team had previously engaged with some fantastic research by academics such as Diane Reay, Mike Ward, Nicola Ingram and Steve Roberts in the development phase of the project to develop a greater understanding of working-class boys' negotiations of identity, masculinity and educational success. However, the 2023 workshop series took this research further by embedding Ulster University's TBSPs<sup>8</sup> into evaluation and piloting the Being a Boy Evaluation Star.

The heart of the project will always be taking the time to listen and work with the young men, as they are the experts on being young men right now. Our aim is to avoid rolling out activity 'to' groups based on stereotypical assumptions, and instead begin working with them to build relationships and understanding.

In February 2023, Arts University Bournemouth launched the second series of our Being a Boy project, mobilising creative subjects, including Creative Writing, Acting, Photography, Dance, Illustration, and Fashion Branding and Communication as vehicles for young men to express what being a boy means to them. The rationale for the projects continuation and development is an exercise in research to increase our understanding and ability to support working class young men. The use of creative subjects provide space for learning with our young men, as we tailor the project based on the learning and reflections each year.

<sup>1</sup><https://taso.org.uk/news-item/taso-launches-report-on-attainment-raising/>

<sup>2</sup><https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/metacognition>

<sup>3</sup>Pinkett, M. and Roberts, M., 2019. Boys Don't Try? Rethinking Masculinity in Schools. Routledge

<sup>4</sup>Heyder, A. and Kessels, U., 2015. Do teachers equate male and masculine with lower academic engagement? How students' gender enactment triggers gender stereotypes at school. *Social Psychology of Education*, 18, pp.467-485.

<sup>5</sup>Myhill, D. and Jones, S., 2006. 'She doesn't shout at no girls': pupils' perceptions of gender equity in the classroom. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 36(1), pp.99-113

<sup>6</sup>Jones\*, S. and Myhill, D., 2004. 'Troublesome boys' and 'compliant girls': Gender identity and perceptions of achievement and underachievement. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 25(5), pp.547-561

<sup>7</sup><https://webdocs.aub.ac.uk/Being%20a%20Boy%20Impact%20Report%202022.pdf>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/social-work-and-social-policy/research-themes/taking-boys-seriously>



## 2023 WORKSHOP SERIES

The Being a Boy project 2023 comprised **six student facing workshops**, that provided creative channels for participants to reflect on what being a young man means to them and their own lived experiences.

The workshops were an innovative mechanism to conduct an exploration of the possible implications for boys' future health, happiness and educational success.

The project engaged 42 unique learners (aged 12-16) across six different workshops:

### EMPOWER

Creative writing workshop  
11 May 2023  
Ashley Hickson-Lovence

### IDENTITY

Fashion Branding and Identity workshop  
15 May 2023  
Kieron O'Connor

### CHARACTER

Acting workshop  
13-14 June 2023  
Dan Boyden

### CAPTURE

Photography workshop  
5 July  
Conrad Tracy

### LIFT OFF

Dance and movement workshop  
12-13 July 2023  
Lawrence James

### FREESTYLE

Illustration workshop  
17 July 2023  
Joel Lardner

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Young men could choose to participate in one or multiple workshops in the series, with individual sign-up being core to the project and workshop participant capacity ranging from 12-20 young men. Keeping the workshop sizes below standard class sizes and requiring individual sign-up, supports the creation of a non-school like environment for the participants. With the ability to give the young men the autonomy to challenge by choice by engaging in the workshop series.

## OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

The 2023 Being a Boy Project has seen the project **align the objectives to Ulster University's Taking Boys Seriously Principles (TBSPs)**<sup>9</sup>.

Taking Boys Seriously is a longitudinal research project committed to working alongside adolescent boys and educators to promote flourishing across diverse educational settings.

The project has embedded Ulster University's Taking Boys Seriously Principles (TBSPs) into its design and evaluation as of the 2023 workshop series. There are **ten principles that support working with boys as relational learners**.

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**Across the suite of workshops, Being a Boy 2023 had four key objectives that underpin the project as a whole, which are to:**

- Engage meaningfully with boys (TBSP 8).
- Value the voice of boys (TBSP 10).
- Challenge and affirm masculine identities (TBSP 4).
- Utilise a 'strengths-based approach' to learning (TBSP 3).

With each workshop benefiting from the expertise of different creative mechanisms for the young men to explore the themes of the project, each workshop was also given two objectives to focus on.

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<sup>9</sup><https://www.ulster.ac.uk/research/topic/social-work-and-social-policy/research-themes/taking-boys-seriously>



# OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Table 1 (below and continued opposite) shows a breakdown of each workshop’s objectives and outcomes, set out in the 2023 Being a Boy Project proposal:

	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	TAKING BOYS SERIOUSLY PRINCIPLE
<b>EMPOWER</b>	<b>Challenge and affirm masculine identities</b>	Participants are comfortable discussing sensitive and controversial issues not typically addressed in schools	TBSP 4
	<b>Challenge and affirm masculine identities</b>	Participants feel more confident talking in front of peers  Participants feel motivated, valued, and empowered	TBSP 10
<b>IDENTITY</b>	<b>Identify blocks to boys learning</b>	Participants connect more with subjects and being actively engaged in their learning	TBSP 6
	<b>Enable creative learning environments</b>	Participants discover new life skills, by learning in a range of different ways  Participants feel less boredom in the learning environment	TBSP 9
<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>Promote positive mental health</b>	Participants are more self-aware regarding their own stress triggers, fears, and anxiety	TBSP 5
	<b>Connect boys to learning content</b>	Participants relate their life experiences within a broader socio-economic context  Participants demonstrate an increase in confidence, self-esteem, and self-image	TBSP 7

Table 1: A Table Showing the Objectives and Outcomes for the Project in 2023.

	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	TAKING BOYS SERIOUSLY PRINCIPLE
<b>CAPTURE</b>	<b>Engage meaningfully with boys</b>	Participants increased confidence in expressing and questioning their thoughts and beliefs	TBSP 8
	<b>Demonstrate dignity and respect</b>	Participants feel valued in the learning environment  Participants demonstrate increased self-worth	TBSP 2
<b>LIFT OFF</b>	<b>Recognising the primacy of relationships</b>	Participants have a renewed sense of belonging to education	TBSP 1
	<b>Utilise a ‘strengths-based approach’ to learning</b>	Participants demonstrate increased self-determination, resilience, and independence  Participants can articulate an appreciation of their abilities and potential beyond academic success and increased self-determination, resilience, and independence	TBSP 3
<b>FREESTYLE</b>	<b>Enable creative learning environments</b>	Participants enjoy learning and having more fun	TBSP 9
	<b>Connect boys to learning content</b>	Participants relate their life experiences within a broader socio-economic context  Participants making clearer connections between their learning and everyday lives	TBSP 7

Table 1: A Table Showing the Objectives and Outcomes for the Project in 2023.



# EVALUATION

For 2022, pre and post workshop evaluation of the young men's experiences was gathered using surveys on Mentimeter.

This method did provide us with a dataset that correlated with findings from the *How to be a Boy* documentary and interviews, showing an improvement in confidence across all measures. This dataset can be found in Table 2 (below):

2022 workshop series	Number of participants	Confidence	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Change
<b>EMPOWER</b>	11	Writing confidence	3.2	4.4	<b>+1.2</b>
		Confidence to write about me	2.8	3.9	<b>+1.1</b>
		Confidence to write about being a boy	2.7	3.7	<b>+1.0</b>
<b>CAPTURE</b>	10	Photography confidence	3.4	4.3	<b>+1.1</b>
		Photography about me	3.1	3.6	<b>+0.5</b>
		Photography about being a boy	2.9	3.4	<b>+0.5</b>
<b>LIFT OFF</b>	4	No survey due to smaller number of participants			

Table 2: A table showing the confidence data gathered from the Being a Boy Project 2022 Evaluation.

However, there were challenges using a digital survey platform including:

- Not all of the young men had mobile phones that they could use to access the survey.
- Anonymous feedback meant that when participants had attended multiple workshops, the data across the workshop series could not be explored.
- The word clouds that can be created using the system were initially displayed on the screen, which encouraged humorous responses.
- Technology distracted from what the participants were actually being asked to do and took them "out" of the workshop atmosphere to use their phones and/or laptop provided.





# CREATING THE EVALUATION STAR

Considering the challenges presented using a digital survey platform, and other recommendations from the 2022 workshop series influencing the development of the 2023 workshop series, it was a great time to pilot a new evaluation approach.

**Thus, the Being a Boy Evaluation Star Pilot was developed to provide a quick, non-digital mechanism for the project to gain vital data** on how the young men perceive their confidence/self-efficacy, skills and knowledge linked to the Being a Boy Project Objectives.

The series objectives and outcomes have been linked to the Taking Boys Seriously Principles to ensure clearer evidence base for evaluation of activities. This resulted in many more factors that needed to be taken into consideration when evaluating the impact of each workshop. Demonstrating a need for a more robust evaluation tool to be piloted.

Building on a concept used in counselling services, which was already familiar to the Access and Participation Team, which allows clients to self-assess their levels of confidence in particular areas (Cruse Bereavement Care, Bereavement Compass, 2013 – image included below in Figure 1).

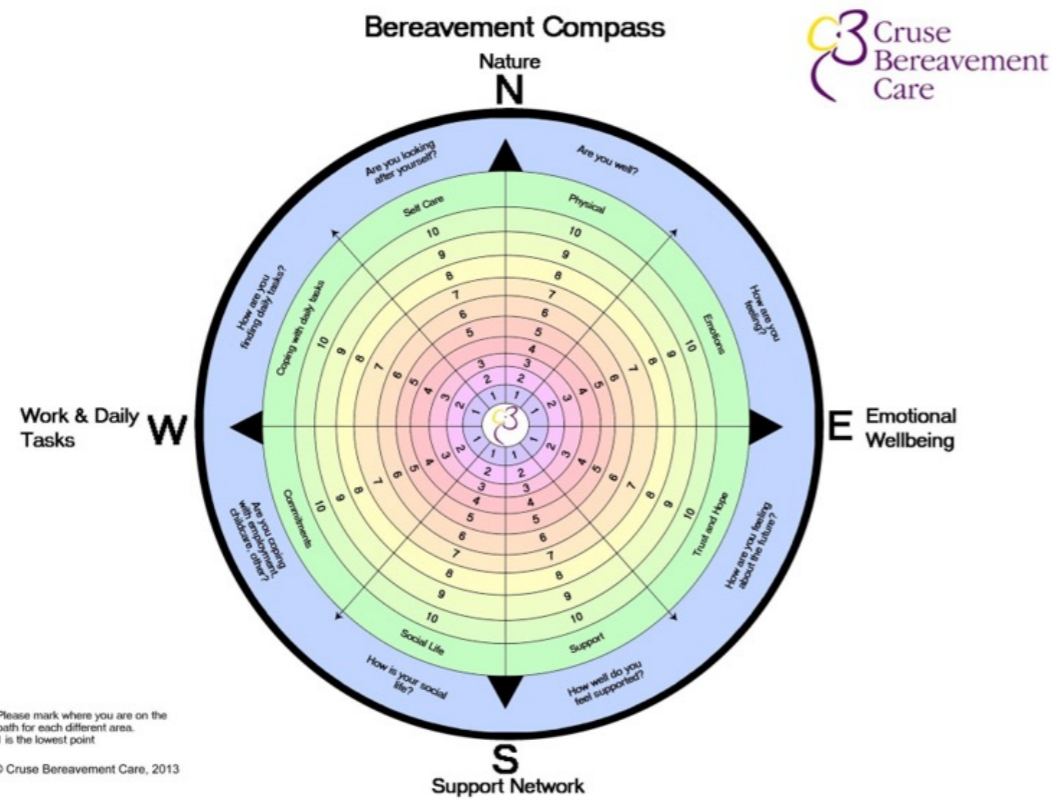


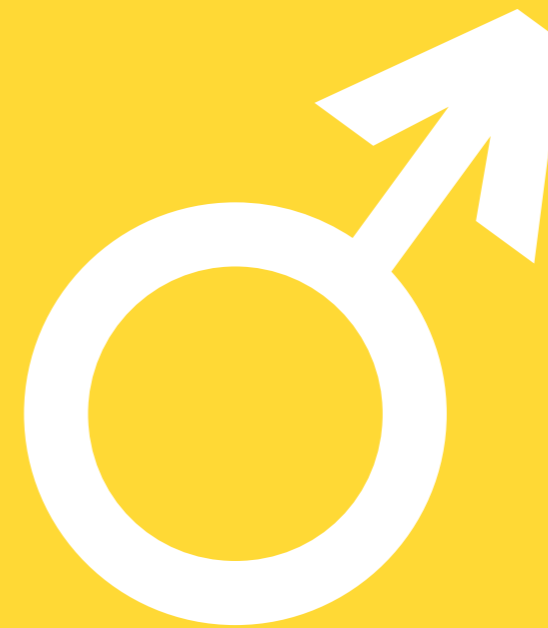
Figure 1: Cruse Bereavement Care, Bereavement Compass, 2013.

Design of the Being a Boy Evaluation Star focussed on wanting the young men to leave the workshops feeling motivated, valued, and empowered. With an appreciation of what they are good at beyond their schoolwork.

Outcomes stars are an evidence-based tool, designed to both support and measure change when working with people and has a key focus of collaboration<sup>10</sup>, which is fundamental to how the Being a Boy project wants to engage with its participants. With the project having clear outputs in terms of delivering the series of workshops, for our evaluation there was a need to focus on the outcomes, and possible changes for the young men engaging with the series (MacKeith, J. 2011 p98).

Further research highlighted the breadth of use of evaluation stars in a variety of settings, particularly around housing, care, and support where a participatory approach to assessment has been taken (MacKeith, J. 2011<sup>11</sup>). With the project having ethical approval for using the young men's creative artefacts for further analysis, the Evaluation Stars could provide an additional tool to facilitate follow up interviews and conversations around their experiences, with a tangible physical document showing potential changes linked to each statement.

A key reason for choosing to develop an evaluation star for the project evaluation was because it supports the 'reversal of roles underlined by power and knowledge' putting the service user, or in our case participants in a more powerful role in the process when exploring their experiences of the workshops (Arvidson, M. & Kara, H. 2013<sup>12</sup>). The project is at the core a listening project to learn more about the young men and their experiences, therefore having an evaluation star that allows them to further tell us their experiences linked to the project's objectives and outcomes, supports us in this listening and learning.



<sup>10</sup>[www.outcomesstar.org.uk/about-the-star/what-is-the-outcomes-star/history-of-the-star/](http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/about-the-star/what-is-the-outcomes-star/history-of-the-star/)

<sup>11</sup>MacKeith, J. (2011). The development of the Outcomes Star: a participatory approach to assessment and outcome measurement. *Housing, Care and Support*, 14(3), 98-106.

<sup>12</sup>Arvidson, M., & Kara, H. (2013). Putting evaluations to use from measuring to endorsing social value. Working Paper. Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC), Birmingham.

# PROJECT THEMES AND STAR STATEMENTS

Using the Taking Boys Seriously Principles (TBSPs), three key areas were identified that we wanted to address feelings of self, challenging and affirming masculinity, and healthy expression. The TBS principles were then reworded into statements, with the aim of making the terminology more participant friendly. The statements in Table 3 (below) form the pre and post evaluative elements of the star:

Table 3: A Table Showing the Project Themes and Evaluation Star Statements.

<p><b>BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE/SELF-EFFICACY)</b></p> <p>I feel...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– I feel motivated, valued, and can make my own choices.</li> <li>– I feel like I own my story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead (TBSP 3).</li> <li>– I know what I'm good at, and can talk about how and why it's important (TBSP 3).</li> <li>– I feel confident sharing my thoughts in front of others (TBSP 10).</li> </ul>
<p><b>EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)</b></p> <p>I can/I am...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– I am respected and respectful when sharing thoughts, concerns and opinions (TBSP 10).</li> <li>– I am able to talk about things which are difficult (TBSP 4).</li> <li>– I am treated like a young adult (TBSP 10).</li> </ul>
<p><b>BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)</b></p> <p>I know/I understand...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– I understand that some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others (TBSP 4).</li> <li>– I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings (TBSP 4).</li> <li>– I know how to express and question what I think and believe about things that are important to me (TBSP 8).</li> </ul>

There were plans to run focus groups with participants from the 2022 Being a Boy workshop series for feedback on the statements and further development. However, this was not possible due to physical health challenges of the Being a Boy Project Lead. This is included in the recommendations for further development of the Evaluation Star for the 2024 workshop series.

# BEING A BOY EVALUATION STAR PILOT

The statements collated and formatted into the Star which was then printed and given to participants to complete pre and post workshop use by the participants. The 2023 version is included below in Figure 2.

The printed evaluation star was given to participants at the start of each workshop after a brief introduction to the Being a Boy project and explanation of the ongoing research as part of the project. These copies were collected in and marked with a number 1 to show they were pre workshop. At the end of the workshop, a second copy was handed out to the participants to complete and collected on departure.

Participants and their parents/carers/guardians had received information about the ongoing Being a Boy Project

research when signing up for their chosen workshop/s, including receiving consent forms for data collected using the Evaluation Star, analysis of artefacts created during the workshops and possible post workshop series interviews. These consent forms were either emailed back to the university before the workshop, paper copies handed in on arrival on the day of the workshop or collected post workshop. All participants consented to their data being used apart from one, whose data therefore does not feature.

With plans for the evaluation star to be used in follow up interviews and re-shared with the boys for completion at the Being a Boy 2023 Celebration Event to continue our learning from this cohort.

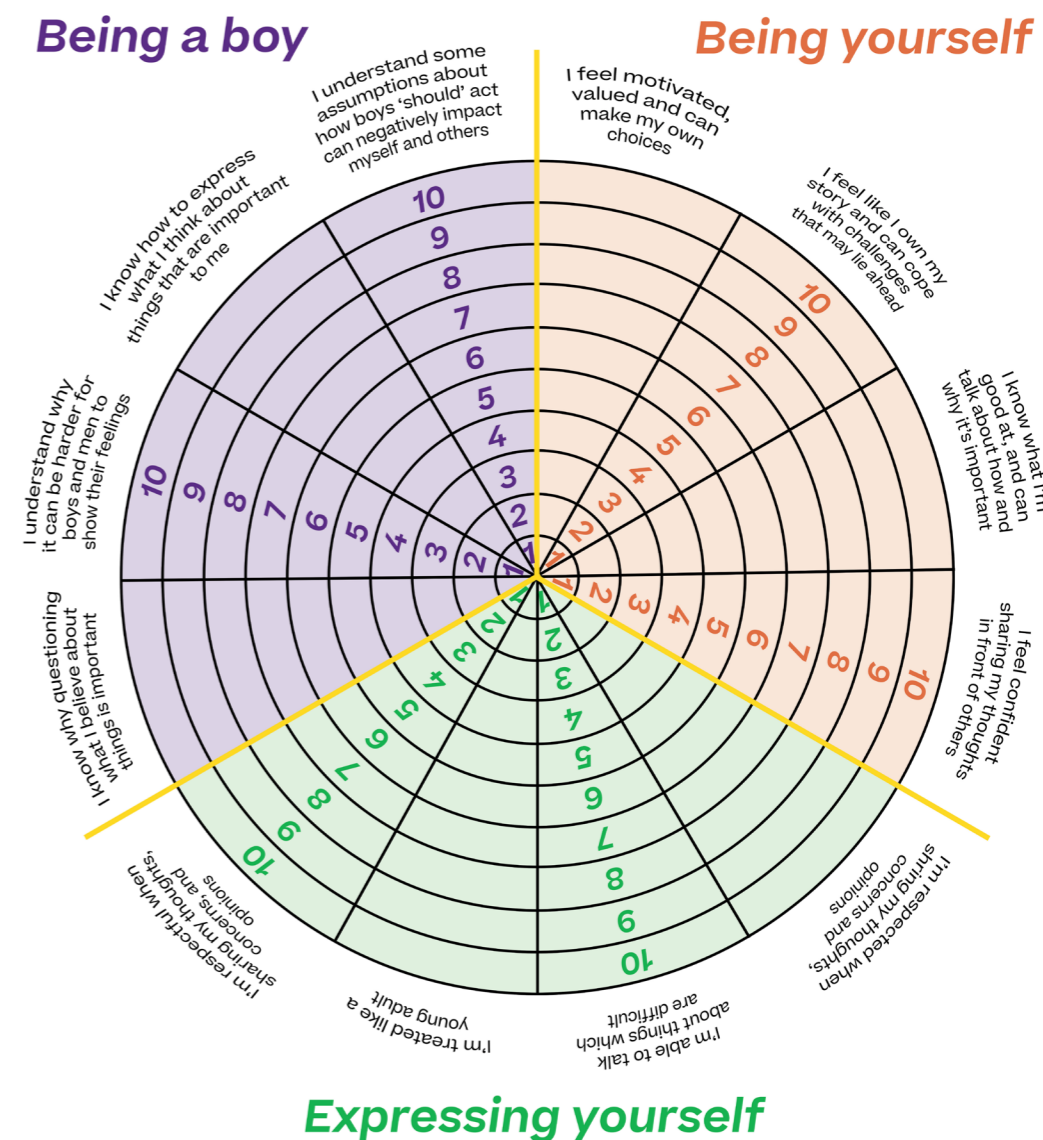


Figure 2: The Evaluation Star for Being a Boy 2023.



# ANALYSING THE DATA

The Evaluation Star data was first input into an excel workbook looking at the workshops on an individual basis. For each workshop, the pre and post statements are included with the score from each participant, including a total for each theme (Being Yourself, Expressing Yourself and Being a Boy). This was then collated into an average, with participants with incomplete data excluded from the average.

A workshop series page was then created to show all six workshops together with their average pre workshop score, post workshop score and the difference for each statement. Table 5 (page 21) is a condensed version of this just showing the averages for each three themes and not the individual statements.

Once this data had been collated a second excel workbook was created to highlight which participants had attended two or more workshops. This data would allow us to explore any potential impacts and patterns on repeat attendance in the workshop series and could also help us identify participants for individual follow up interviews for wider research.

Table 4 (opposite) highlights the 12 participants that engaged in two or more workshops.

Table 4 also shows the majority of the twelve attended two of the six workshops, with one participant attended all but one workshop. Interestingly none of the repeat attendees engaged with the Lift Off (dance) workshop.

Included in Table 4 is the widening participation criteria for the repeat participants. Across the series 100% of the participants met one of more of the AUB Access and Participation Eligibility Criteria.

# 100%

Of participants met one or more of the eligibility criteria

Table 4: A table to show the spread of participants across the workshops and their WP eligibility criteria.

PARTICIPANT	WP CRITERIA	EMPOWER	IDENTITY	CHARACTER	CAPTURE	LIFT OFF	FREESTYLE	NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS ATTENDED
1	PP FSM	♂			♂		♂	3
2	PP FSM	♂					♂	2
3	PP FSM	♂	♂					2
4	AP FSM	♂	♂	♂	♂		♂	5
5	YC	♂			♂			2
6	PP	♂					♂	2
7	FSM			♂	♂			2
8	PP FSM	♂					♂	2
9	AP FSM		♂	♂	♂		♂	4
10	PP FSM SC		♂		♂			2
11	PP FSM		♂		♂			2
12	PP SC		♂		♂			2

YC = Young Carer  
 PP = Pupil Premium  
 FSM = Free School Meals  
 AP = Alternative Provision

SC = Service Child  
 WPPC = Widening Participation Postcode  
 CE = Care Experienced

## WORKSHOP OVERVIEW DATA

Participants were asked to complete the evaluation stars at the beginning and end of the day for each Being a Boy workshop.

Table 5 (opposite) shows the averages from all four statements in each theme of both pre-workshop and post-workshop evaluation stars.

Not all participants completed the pre and post evaluation. Table 5 includes how many participants were excluded from the averages due to incomplete data.



### BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE/SELF-EFFICACY)

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I feel motivated, valued and can make my own choices	7.7	8.1	+0.4
I feel like I own my own story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead	7.3	8.3	+1.0
I know what I'm good at and can talk about how and what it's important	7.3	7.9	+0.7
I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others	6.4	7.8	+1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>+4.2</b>

### EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	7.0	8.3	+1.4
I'm able to talk about things which are difficult	6.6	7.6	+1.0
I'm treated like a young adult	7.2	8.0	+0.8
I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	7.8	8.4	+0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>+3.4</b>

### BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I know why questioning what I believe about things is important	7.2	8.2	+1.1
I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings	8.4	8.9	+0.5
I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me	7.5	8.2	+0.8
I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others	7.8	8.7	+1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>+4.0</b>

Table 5: A table showing the total averages of each workshop's pre and post survey statements organised by theme.



Table 5 (page 21) shows a positive increase in self-assessed confidence, skills, and knowledge across the whole series. With an **average increase of +4.21 in confidence and self-efficacy, +3.45 in skills and +3.96 in knowledge.**

Arguably, these increases demonstrate the effectiveness of the workshops' overall ability to make a meaningful impact on its participants and help the project meet its overall desired outcomes, aligned with the taking boys seriously principles.

It is important to consider the participants experiences before completing each evaluation star and to consider any pressure they may have presumed or felt when completing the evaluation stars. Feedback from staff was that more time and consideration was given to completing the evaluation stars at the beginning of the workshops, compared to at the end of the workshops when there was a perceived lack of time. This time and consideration varied from participant to participant, with some taking more time to consider and question each statement, asking for clarification when needed, compared to others who completed the whole star extremely quickly. Twelve of the participants attended multiple workshops across the series, having the same evaluation star. The introduction to the star at each workshop was therefore potentially not as engaging for these young men as it was no longer something new and fresh. Considerations for how to adapt future variations of the evaluation star and how it is introduced at each workshop, to take into account those participants attending multiple workshops needs to be carefully considered.

There were some comments from participants saying things along the lines of "but you want us to show that we have improved" this was met with feedback from staff explaining that attending a workshop and realising you know less that you thought you did at the start is just as valuable as realising you've learnt more; that there are no right or wrong responses to the evaluation stars as it's a personal reflection providing a snapshot of that moment. Whether or not the young men accepted this as an explanation and whether this perceived pressure

impacted their scoring is difficult to prove or disprove.

It is suggested that factors such as workshop enjoyment, workshop facilitation, and the organisation of the day as a whole may have influenced the participants scoring. Some ten stars were not completed across the workshops, and therefore they have been removed from the data set. It is possible that these stars were not completed due to the layout of the stars. For example, at the start of the day, there appeared to be confusion about how to complete them as not all statements had the numbers listed. In addition to this, at the end of the day some participants had to leave quickly and either missed completing the evaluation stars or did not have time to complete them fully.

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# 11%

Increase in confidence

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# 12%

Increase in skills

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# 7%

Increase in knowledge





Table 6: A table showing missing evaluation stars by workshop.

	EVALUATION STAR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT CONSENTED TO THEIR DATA BEING USED	NUMBER REMOVED FROM DATA SET	REASONING FOR REMOVAL
<b>EMPOWER</b>	Pre	14	1	Incomplete
	Post		1	Missing
<b>IDENTITY</b>	Pre	12	6	Missing
	Post		6	Missing
<b>CHARACTER</b>	Pre	9	1	Missing
	Post		2	Missing
<b>CAPTURE</b>	Pre	9	0	
	Post		0	
<b>LIFT OFF</b>	Pre	5	1	Missing
	Post		0	
<b>FREESTYLE</b>	Pre	12	1	Missing
	Post		1	Missing
<b>TOTAL</b>	Pre	61	9	
	Post		10	

Table 6 (above) shows a breakdown of how many evaluation stars were missing from each workshop.

To have six evaluation stars missing from the Identity workshop is significant as it means half of the participant data is missing. This is something that needs to be more closely monitored in the future development and use of the evaluation stars.

There was a lot of information packed into the star for young men aged 12-16, therefore, level of the engagement in the evaluation stars did vary, with some young people not appearing to take as much consideration in reading and completing the stars. This highlights the importance of having the focus group to work on the statements for future iterations of the Evaluation Star, with the possibility of focusing on fewer statements, or having bespoke stars for each workshop. This could potentially provide more detailed insights into how the project is meeting each workshop's objective.

The Evaluation Star was created focusing on the **four key objectives that underpin the project**:

- Engage meaningfully with boys (TBSP 8) which is evaluated in the Being a Boy (Knowledge) theme.
- Value the voice of boys (TBSP 10) which is evaluated in the Being Yourself (Confidence/Self-Efficacy) and Expressing Yourself (Skills) themes.
- Challenge and affirm masculine identities (TBS P 4) which is evaluated in the Being a Boy (Knowledge) and Expressing Yourself (Skills) themes.
- Utilise a 'strengths-based approach' to learning (TBSP 3) which is evaluated in the Being Yourself (Confidence/Self-Efficacy) theme.

This allowed us to use one evaluation star across the whole workshop series for the pilot year and providing us with the ability to make comparisons across the series. Table 7 (overleaf) shows the data for the series as a whole.





**BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE/SELF-EFFICACY)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I feel motivated, valued and can make my own choices	7.7	8.1	+0.4
I feel like I own my own story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead	7.3	8.3	+1.0
I know what I'm good at and can talk about how and what it's important	7.3	7.9	+0.7
I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others	6.4	7.8	+1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>+4.2</b>

**EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	7.0	8.3	+1.4
I'm able to talk about things which are difficult	6.6	7.6	+1.0
I'm treated like a young adult	7.2	8.0	+0.8
I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	7.8	8.4	+0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>+3.4</b>

**BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I know why questioning what I believe about things is important	7.2	8.2	+1.1
I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings	8.4	8.9	+0.5
I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me	7.5	8.2	+0.8
I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others	7.8	8.7	+1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>+4.0</b>

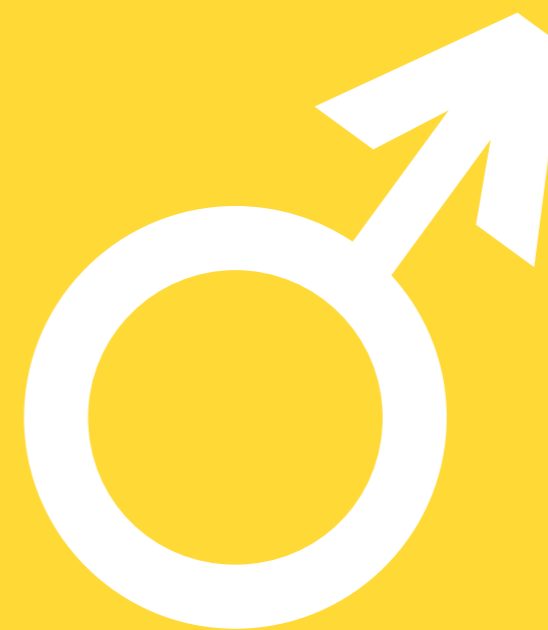
Table 7: A table showing the pre and post workshop data across the whole series.

Using the data to evaluate the series as a whole, a positive increase can be seen across all statements. With the highest increases of +1.4 in confidence in sharing thoughts and feelings in front of others and in feeling respected when they are sharing their thoughts, concerns, and opinions. This is great to see as a key aim of the Being a Boy project since its creation has been for the young men to feel as though they are being treated as young adults, and that dialogue is opened to begin discussing challenging topics and encouraging the young men to voice their opinions knowing that they will be listened to.

The themes of confidence and self-efficacy had the highest increase of +4.2, which is particularly important as for some of the young men it is the first time, they have engaged with AUB and therefore the location and people are unfamiliar<sup>13</sup>.

With the exception of the Iford, Ferndown and Compass boys, all the participants attended as individuals so were coming into the workshop series without the presence of a previously known trusted adult and/or peers.

So, to see their confidence increase is a testament to the boys themselves for putting themselves out there and trying these new creative workshops.



<sup>13</sup>Blower, A. & Rainford J. (2023), Internalizing the Present in the Articulation of the Future Masculinity, Inequality, and Trying On New Possible Selves, *Boyhood Studies*, 16(2), 109 – 132.



## Using the data to focus on the learning at a workshop level

Looking back at the data at workshop levels there are some higher increases that are useful to explore further, and can be seen highlighted in Table 8 (opposite).



### BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE/SELF-EFFICACY)

Workshop	Participant data included	Participant data excluded	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
Empower	13	1	27.8	31.3	+3.5
Identity	5	7	32.6	35.9	+3.3
Character	8 (7 post)	1 (2 post)	28.6	34.6	+5.9
Capture	9	0	31.9	34.4	+2.5
Lift Off	4	0	25	32.3	+7.3
Freestyle	11	1	26.4	29.2	+2.8
<b>Average</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>28.71</b>	<b>32.95</b>	<b>+4.21</b>

### EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)

Workshop	Participant data included	Participant data excluded	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
Empower	13	1	25.2	29.6	+4.4
Identity	5	7	33.7	35	+1.3
Character	8 (7 post)	1 (2 post)	29.3	33.1	+3.9
Capture	9	0	29.8	33.8	+4.0
Lift Off	4	0	30	34	+4.0
Freestyle	11	1	26.6	29.7	+3.1
<b>Average</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>32.53</b>	<b>+3.45</b>

### BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)

Workshop	Participant data included	Participant data excluded	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
Empower	13	1	29.3	31.3	+2.0
Identity	5	7	28.6	36.7	+8.1
Character	8 (7 post)	1 (2 post)	31.5	36.3	+4.8
Capture	9	0	32.6	34.3	+1.6
Lift Off	4	0	31.3	36.5	+5.3
Freestyle	11	1	28.5	30.5	+2.0
<b>Average</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>34.26</b>	<b>+3.96</b>

Table 8: A table highlighting the key workshop data points requiring further exploration.



Identity, the fashion branding, and communication workshop saw the biggest increase in pre and post workshop for knowledge with an increase of 8.1. Looking more closely at the data for this workshop, of the four statements in the Being a Boy (Knowledge) theme, the lowest pre-workshop average with 7.6 was for the statement “I know why questioning what I believe about things is important” and the lowest post workshop average with 8.6 was the statement “I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me”. The workshop had a clear focus on physical expression and self-reflection through clothing and design, it is arguable that this why it saw higher post workshop reflections.

Table 9 (below) shows the break down across each statement.

### BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I know why questioning what I believe about things is important	7.6	9.1	+1.6
I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings	8.4	9.7	+1.3
I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me	8.3	8.6	+0.3
I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others	8.4	9.3	+0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>+8.1</b>

Table 9: Show the breakdown of the statement responses both pre and post workshop.

We can see that the main difference came around ‘I know why questioning what I believe about things is important.’ This is particularly significant as the workshop was a fashion branding and communication workshop and therefore explored several stereotypes around masculinity and identity, when it comes to styling. The participants also had the opportunity to work with current AUB students and have a peer-to-peer relationship as part of the learning experience. The intention here was to provide them with a space where they could be challenged and challenge in a less hierarchical context<sup>14</sup>. It could be argued that providing a space where the young men have a sense of equity and representation may have led to greater self-reflection after taking part in the workshop, as shown in Table 9. It should also be noted that this is the workshop were six pre and post evaluation stars are missing, so 50% of the voices of the participants are not recorded in the data.

The biggest difference in pre and post survey for Expressing Yourself (skills) was for the Empower, creative writing workshop. This is interesting as arguably is the workshop the young men would be joining with the most experience in from their English lessons at their education provider. However, the workshop encourages the young men to explore writing in a very different way to a “typical” English lesson and the workshop facilitator creates a strong rapport early on in the workshop with the young men, sharing his experiences of what it means to be a boy and a man<sup>15</sup>. This was captured in the 2022 How to be a Boy Documentary focused on the 2022 Empower workshop, and a similar energy was created for 2023. Looking at the data this increase appears to be linked to the young men feeling as though they were treated as adults and equals during the workshop.

This highlights the importance of the young men getting to know the workshop facilitators and creating a sense of shared creation and ownership of the workshop environment<sup>16</sup>.

Character and Lift Off, which are both two-day workshops had consistently positive high increases across all three themes. Both of these workshops are performative creative mechanisms, Character being an acting workshop and Lift Off a dance workshop. Having the participants engage with the workshop across two days provides more opportunities for sharing and connection, providing a safe and supportive environment in the build up to an optional performance in front of a live and friendly audience<sup>17</sup>. Encouragingly, all participants chose to engage in the performance element in both workshops. Arguably, this demonstrates that this approach to engagement with the participants is effective.

We can see some comparatively high increases compared to the series as a

whole in confidence and self-efficacy in Character which had an increase of 5.9 and Lift Off which had a 7.3 increase in the post-workshop evaluation. This is particularly interesting as Character was the acting workshop and Lift Off the dance workshop, and the young men had the opportunity to perform in front of a friendly audience at the end of each of these workshops. The data suggests that taking part helped them to feel more confident sharing their thoughts and feelings in front of others, which is reflected in the data across the whole series. By providing a sharing element in these two workshops the young men were potentially able to more clearly reflect on the choices they had made in the creation of the performances and have instantaneous feedback from their audience.

This increase in pre and post evaluation for Character and Lift Off is further highlighted in Table 10 (below) when looking at the average of statements across all three themes (Being Yourself, Expressing Yourself and Being a Boy).

	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Difference
<b>EMPOWER</b>	27.4	30.7	3.3
<b>IDENTITY</b>	31.6	35.8	4.3
<b>CHARACTER</b>	29.8	34.6	<b>4.8</b>
<b>CAPTURE</b>	31.4	34.1	2.7
<b>LIFT OFF</b>	28.7	34.2	<b>5.3</b>
<b>FREESTYLE</b>	27.1	29.8	2.6

Table 10: The average Pre and Post workshop statement for all themes across the workshops

The data in the Table 11 (page 32) and Table 12 (page 34) provide a closer look at Character and Lift Off with some further analysis for each of the workshops.

<sup>14</sup>Hooks. B., (1994), Teaching to Transgress, New York: Routledge.

<sup>15</sup>Blower. A. & Rainford J. (2023), Internalizing the Present in the Articulation of the Future Masculinity, Inequality, and Trying On New Possible Selves, Boyhood Studies, 16(2), 109 – 132.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup>Rainford. J., (2020), Confidence and the effectiveness of creative methods in qualitative interviews with adults, International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 23(1), 109-122



**BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE/SELF-EFFICACY)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I feel motivated, valued and can make my own choices	7.6	8.9	+1.2
I feel like I own my own story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead	7.8	9.0	+1.2
I know what I'm good at and can talk about how and what it's important	7.0	8.3	+1.3
I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others	6.3	8.4	<b>+2.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>+5.9</b>

**EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	6.9	8.3	<b>+1.4</b>
I'm able to talk about things which are difficult	7.0	8.0	+1.0
I'm treated like a young adult	7.1	8.1	+1.0
I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	8.3	8.7	+0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>+3.9</b>

**BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I know why questioning what I believe about things is important	7.4	8.9	+1.5
I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings	9.3	9.0	<b>-0.3</b>
I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me	7.1	9.1	<b>+2.0</b>
I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others	7.8	9.3	<b>+1.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>+4.8</b>

Table 11: A Table showing the differences in Characters pre and post workshop statements.

**The objectives for the character workshops were to:**

- Connect boys to learning content (TBSP 7).
- Promote positive mental health (TBSP 5).

These objectives were taken from two of the principles that were not directly drawn from the statements to create the evaluation star, but all the statements are closely linked. *The Being a Boy Character Documentary* helps to evidence the young men engaging with the learning content of the workshop series and working together across the two days to perform final pieces in two groups.

The promoting positive mental health objective is of significance when looking at the knowledge statement "I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings" that is highlighted in yellow in table 11 for having a -0.3 difference from the pre and post evaluation stars. Arguably, this change could be because of the strong male role models delivering the workshop series, that openly and honestly spoke about their experiences with the young men, demonstrating that men can and do show their feelings.

**Looking at the three workshop outcomes below the project can evidence changes in the second two outcomes:**

- Participants relate their life experiences within a broader socio-economic context (TBSP 7).
- Participants are more self-awareness regarding their own stress triggers, fears, and anxiety (TBSP 5).
- Participants demonstrate an increased in confidence, self-esteem, and self-image (TBSP 7).

This is because of the performative nature of the workshops that allowed the workshop facilitators to see the change in confidence across the two days, in terms of sharing and performing with the group.

Irene Smith, CIAG Lead at Iford Academy and Longspee Academy, said,

**“It was lovely to see how their confidence has grown, how they felt they were able to share various things with us as an audience, people they may not have seen before.”**

The evaluation stars also show a +2.2 difference for "I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others", +1.4 for "I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns and opinions", +2.0 for "I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me", +1.5 for "I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others" echoing that the young men themselves felt these changes in confidence at the end of the two days.



**BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE/SELF-EFFICACY)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I feel motivated, valued and can make my own choices	7.3	7.3	0
I feel like I own my own story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead	7.3	8.8	+1.5
I know what I'm good at and can talk about how and what it's important	5.5	8.8	+2.5
I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others	5.0	8.33	<b>+3.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>+7.3</b>

**EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	7.0	9.3	<b>+2.3</b>
I'm able to talk about things which are difficult	5.8	6.8	+1.0
I'm treated like a young adult	8.3	8.0	<b>-0.3</b>
I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	9.0	10.0	+1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>+4.0</b>

**BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I know why questioning what I believe about things is important	6.8	8.3	+1.5
I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings	8.8	10.0	+1.3
I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me	7.0	8.5	<b>+1.5</b>
I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others	8.8	9.8	+1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>+5.3</b>

Table 12: A table showing the difference in Pre and Post Lift Off Workshop evaluation statements.

**Lift off focused on the two following workshop objectives:**

- Utilise a 'strengths-based approach' to learning (TBSP 3).
- Recognising the primacy of relationships (TBSP 1).

Looking at the data in table 12, it is arguable that the increase in confidence illustrated in the young men's post-workshop reflections demonstrate the importance of a strengths-based approach.

In terms of the primacy of the relationship the Lift Off workshop is the smallest in the Being a Boy workshop series this year, having four young men engage for both days. Knowing that dance is a subject area that often young men find more challenging to engage with<sup>18</sup>, the promotion of the workshop emphasises movement rather than dance to improve accessibility. The group work extremely closely together, learning how to safely perform lifts. This safety aspect and need for the workshop facilitators to step in and provide clearer instructions when needed maybe why the statement "I'm treated like a young adult" had a -0.3 decrease.

**The Lift Off workshop had three outcomes, which were:**

- Participants can articulate an appreciation of their abilities and potential beyond academic success (TBSP 3).
- Participants have a renewed sense of belonging to education (TBSP 1).
- Participants demonstrate increased self-determination, resilience, and independence (TBSP 3).

The first outcome was achieved through the young men physically choosing to participate in all aspects of the dance workshop and exploring this creative form outside of academia. The focus of the workshop was exploring strength and physicality, building trust within the group

and developing and experimenting with their movements to choreograph both individually and in the group. Learning that they can try new things (none of the participants had engaged with dance activities before) and that this workshop did not explore the more academic elements of dance, instead focusing on the physical and mental health benefits of dance as a sport. Viewing dance as a professional sport and understanding the physical strength and resilience involved in dancing provided opportunities for the young men to learn more about their skills outside of their usual educational curriculum.

The second outcome was achieved by the young men feeling welcomed and appreciated within a new education environment for the two days. For several of the young men this was their first visit on campus at AUB and for all of the young men the first time they were in a professional dance studio environment. Dance is not a subject area that had previously engaged with and therefore working with two dance lecturers and a current AUB dance student gave the young people an insight into further educational opportunities linked to dance. The trust built within the group and with the workshop staff, supported the young men in feeling confident in voicing any worries around putting on a short performance to a friendly audience at the end of the two days. There was a strong sense of comradery and belonging achieved and identified by the young men, their supports and observers of the performance.

<sup>18</sup>Rainford, J., (2020), Confidence and the effectiveness of creative methods in qualitative interviews with adults, International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 23(1), 109-122



The third outcome focused on self-determination, resilience and independence. Through the workshop the young men were challenged to take a lead on the choreography with the support of the dance professionals. They were encouraged to keep trying new things and develop their creative performance to reflect what they felt empowered to share through the medium of dance. Dance as a sport has a lot of flexibility in terms of both individual and group expression. The young men were challenged to work together to create a cohesively choreographed performance, while allowing space for individual strength and performance elements to be shared. The level of resilience demonstrated throughout the two days was exceptionally high, dance is a physically demanding workshop and towards the end of each day, the young men challenged themselves to stay engaged in such a physically demanding workshop.

Feedback from observers on the day really highlighted the development of confidence, teamwork and resilience across the two days. In addition, strong working relationships were developed with the dance workshop professionals.



# REPEAT WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT DATA: PARTICIPANT FOUR CASE STUDY

Twelve young men engaged in one or more workshops across the 2023 series.

Table 13 (below) highlights how many young people attended multiple workshops:

Table 13: A table showing the distribution of participants across the workshops.

NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS ATTENDED	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
2	9
3	1
4	1
5	1

Participant Four, a young person on free school meals studying at an alternative provision attended the most workshops, and therefore a closer look at their data set will follow.

Participant Four, a young man studying at a local alternative provision provider engaged with all workshops apart from Lift Off in the 2023 series. However, data was missing for them from the Identity workshop at both the start and end, which is consistent with several participants for this workshop. This young man also participated in the 2022 workshop series and in all three workshops, as well as the Documentary Production workshop for *How to be a Boy*. The young man also attended both years' Celebration events with the support of his family and teachers. The Access and Participation Team have been able to build a strong working relationship with this participant and have anecdotal information on this young man's development across the two years of Being

a Boy and ad-hoc visits to the campus and school as part of wider work supporting young people studying in alternative provisions to add a further richness when looking at the data.

Table 14 (page 38) shows the difference in pre and post workshop star data for each statement for Participant Four.

When the participants are given the post-workshop evaluation star, they do not have their pre-workshop evaluation star in front of them, so are reviewing the statements without the comparison in front of them. The table below shows that Participant Four's data shows a positive difference on all statements, apart from one, "I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns and opinions" which was the same score for pre and post.



**BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE/SELF-EFFICACY)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I feel motivated, valued and can make my own choices	7.75	9.75	+2.0
I feel like I own my own story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead	8.5	9.5	+1.0
I know what I'm good at and can talk about how and what it's important	7.75	8.75	+1.0
I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others	8	8.75	+0.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>+3.8</b>

**EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	6.75	9.5	+2.75
I'm able to talk about things which are difficult	7.25	8.5	+1.25
I'm treated like a young adult	6.0	7.0	+1.0
I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions	8.5	8.5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>+4</b>

**BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)**

Statement	Pre-workshop	Post-workshop	Change
I know why questioning what I believe about things is important	8.5	9.0	+0.5
I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings	9.25	9.75	+0.5
I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me	8.0	9.0	+1.0
I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others	7.25	9.25	+2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>+3.2</b>

Table 14: A table showing Participant Four's statements responses across the themes.

The biggest increase overall was in the Expressing Yourself (Skills) theme. When we first met participant four, they were a very loud, outwardly confident young man, who enjoyed making their peers laugh and would “perform” in group settings. We know that homelife was not always easy, due to mental health challenges within the home. Participant Four had been studying at their alternative provision for several years with no plans of changing education provider until post-16 studies. Initial conversations exploring future career plans were met with answers such as “dunno”, and enthusiasm around learning and creativity was not evident during those initial meetings.

Participating in the Being a Boy project and feeling valued and as an expert, due to his own lived experiences was something that seemed exciting and gave him the opportunity to have more visits off campus and feel like a “VIP” with visits including lunches on campus, which helped us build rapport and provide opportunities to get to know the young men in less formal/ classroom settings.

Initially Participant Four sometimes struggled to build rapport with his peers involved in the project, as a slightly younger participant, enthusiastic, eager to talk and get involved was not always met positively by his peers. His confidence

and ability to articulate himself in a way that did not ostracise him from his peers, built throughout year one of the project, with the group building a really strong and supportive working bond. This confidence can be seen in the pre-workshop averages for the Being Yourself (Confidence/Self-Efficacy) theme in the table opposite and was really noticeable to staff involved in the project when returning for the Empower workshop at the start of the 2023 series.

A more mature and focused young man joined us than the previous year. **An increased sense in pride in his work was also evident and noticeable in the difference in handwriting from the artefacts from each year.** There was also excitement and a forward focus towards this year’s workshops celebration and an understanding that his voice, work and experiences were being championed through the project.





## Participant Four – pre-workshop evaluation star

Table 15: Participant Four's pre-workshop and post-workshop scores across the workshop series (excluding Identity).

Statement	Empower	Character	Capture	Freestyle	Average
<b>BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE)</b>					
I feel motivated, valued and can make my own choices.	8	6	8	9	7.75
I feel like I own my own story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead.	9	7	9	9	8.5
I know what I'm good at and can talk about how and what it's important.	8	7	8	8	7.75
I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others.	5	9	8	10	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>25.6</b>
<b>EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)</b>					
I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions.	6	6	7	7	6.75
I'm able to talk about things which are difficult.	7	8	6	6	7.25
I'm treated like a young adult.	3	6	6	6	6.0
I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions.	10	7	8	8	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22.8</b>
<b>BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)</b>					
I know what questioning what I believe about things is important.	9	9	7	9	8.5
I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings.	8	10	9	10	9.25
I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me.	8	6	9	9	8.0
I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others.	7	7	7	8	7.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26.4</b>



## Participant Four – post-workshop evaluation star

Table 15: Participant four's pre-workshop and post-workshop scores across the workshop series (excluding Identity).

	Statement	Empower	Character	Capture	Freestyle	Average
<b>BEING YOURSELF (CONFIDENCE)</b>	I feel motivated, valued and can make my own choices.	10	10	9	10	9.75
	I feel like I own my own story and can cope with challenges that may lie ahead.	10	10	9	9	9.5
	I know what I'm good at and can talk about how and what it's important.	9	9	8	9	8.75
	I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others.	8	8	9	10	8.75
	<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>29.4</b>
<b>EXPRESSING YOURSELF (SKILLS)</b>	I'm respected when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions.	9	9	10	10	9.5
	I'm able to talk about things which are difficult.	8	9	8	9	8.5
	I'm treated like a young adult.	5	8	7	8	7.0
	I'm respectful when sharing my thoughts, concerns, and opinions.	9	8	8	9	8.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>26.8</b>
<b>BEING A BOY (KNOWLEDGE)</b>	I know what questioning what I believe about things is important.	10	9	8	9	9.0
	I understand why it can be harder for boys and men to show their feelings.	9	10	10	10	9.75
	I know how to express what I think about things that are important to me.	9	8	9	10	9.0
	I understand some assumptions about how boys 'should' act can negatively impact myself and others.	8	10	9	10	9.25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>29.6</b>



Looking at Table 15 (page 40-41), it shows Participant Four's pre-workshop and post-workshop scores, including their average scores across the series (excluding Identity). It shows that although an increased confidence was noticeable to staff, there was an awareness of the vulnerability involved in the Empower workshop, highlighted by the statement 'I feel confident sharing my thoughts and feelings in front of others' where a five was scored, compared to eight, nine and ten in the other workshops. This could be for several reasons. Firstly, that the Empower workshop involves written work in a way that the other workshops do not, and that the participant knew going into the workshop as a repeat attendee that they would be building up throughout the day to reading one of the poems they were writing. It could also be that as it was the first workshop in the series, the group was forming and reforming, with several familiar faces returning for a second year, that

there was more uncertainty around sharing in front of the group and staff present. As the participants are all studying at a variety of education providers, some returning participants would not have seen each other for a whole year, which for young people aged 12-16 is a significant amount of time. This confidence in sharing for Empower scored an eight post-workshop, showing a healthy increase.

There is also a significant difference for Empower in the pre-workshop score for being treated as a young adult, scoring three compared to six and nine later in the series. Hopefully, this is because the young people to feel as though they are treated as young adults when involved in the Being a Boy project, and that that is not usually the case in education settings and often at home for this age group. For all workshops apart from Freestyle there was an increase from pre to post scores for being treated like a young adult.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The evaluation for the Being a Boy project 2023 has demonstrated an overall increase in the confidence of participants across the workshop series. Workshops Character and Lift Off had the most significant rise in confidence as well as consistently high increases across all three themes. It is suggested that this could be due to the performative nature of the workshops as well as the longer duration. Participants engaged across two days, allowing for more opportunities to share and connect, as well as fostering a safe and trusting space with staff and peers. The Identity workshop saw the biggest rise in knowledge, in particular, surrounding the exploration of why it is important to question ones' own beliefs. It is argued that this could be due to the workshops focus on masculinity and style, as well as the collaborative elements of the workshop. Additionally, the workshop also employed current AUB students to help devise and run the workshop activities. It is suggested that this provided them with a space where the young men could be challenged and could challenge in a non-hierarchical context and that this could have led to a greater self-reflection of their own beliefs.

Concurrently, the evaluation found that different workshops resulted in participants gaining different skills and experiencing a variety of benefits. This demonstrates the importance of having individual objectives and outcomes for each workshop. It also indicates a potential for maximum benefit from engagement in multiple workshops. The case study of Participant Four demonstrates the range of benefits that arise from taking part in multiple workshops as well as the impact of sustained contact over multiple years. Arguably this allowed for a deeper exploration and engagement with the topics for the participant as well as the collection of both evaluative and anecdotal evidence. The development of Participant Four's confidence, sense of value and self-worth, as well as his ability to relate to his peers was evident in both his evaluation star responses as well as his overall demeanour and behaviour. This demonstrates that multiple points of contact do foster trust and rapport between staff and participants, and that this leads to better engagement with the intended topic and more opportunity for a variety of objectives and outcomes to be

achieved for individuals.

Therefore, we can confidently say that the Being a Boy project is having a positive impact on young men participating in the project in the Dorset area. It is influencing the development of similar activities at a national level thanks to the projects profile from awards, conferences and the Boys' Impact Hub.

The young men have highlighted that they have enjoyed participating in the workshops, with a significant number returning for the Celebration and Documentary Premiere, as well as several already having signed up for the 2024 workshops.

Educational professionals within the young men's education providers have highlighted the positive impacts on behaviour and increased confidence of the young men on returning to their settings. Parents and supporters have appreciated having their young men celebrated in education environments and engaging in positive conversations about their young men and their achievements.

The Evaluation Star Pilot has provided us with a wealth of data which has demonstrated clear alignment with our objectives and outcomes across both the series as a whole and for individual workshops. However, the reduced capacity of the team meant that the lack of qualitative data collected this year has limited the depth of examination and has highlighted the need for further development of the evaluative methods to ensure accurate measurement of the projects impact and demonstration that the project meets its stated objectives and outcomes.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2024 EVALUATION

The Being a Boy Evaluation Stars Pilot has highlighted areas to further develop and improve the use of the Evaluation Star to evaluate the effectiveness of the project:

- 1** Redesigning the star to ensure that numbers are shown for each statement, to limit confusion from participants when completing the stars.
- 2** Working with a sample of young men from the 2023 workshop series to review the wording of the statements to ensure the phrases are as clear as possible for the young men aged 12-16 participating in the workshops.
- 3** Ensuring a qualitative data collection element is incorporated into the 2024 evaluation to compliment and further explore and situate findings from the evaluation stars.
- 4** Exploring opportunities to share/ reflect on work created with a wider audience at the end of the workshop to increase feelings of confidence, which was potentially demonstrated in data from Character and Lift Off. Developing the workshops and/or Celebration event to provide more opportunities for sharing could boost confidence further.
- 5** Developing a participant agreement to support creating a shared creation and ownership of the workshop environment.



## Recommendations for Being a Boy 2024

# 1

AUB is committed to delivering six workshops as part of the Access and Participation Plan:

- Opportunity to explore group dynamics in workshop delivery by delivering a bespoke workshop for Ferndown Upper School's young men involved in their FUS are serious about boys programme.
- Opportunity to continue learning, develop research and support for young men that are young carers through a bespoke workshop for MYTIME Young Carers.

# 2

Co-create a participant's code of conduct with young men that have engaged in the 2022 and/or 2023 Being a Boy workshops to support the creation of successful workshop environments.

# 3

Firm up structure of workshops, sticking within the 9.30 – 14.30 timings that work for our education providers, but to provide clear start, end and breaks to help with flow of the series.

# 4

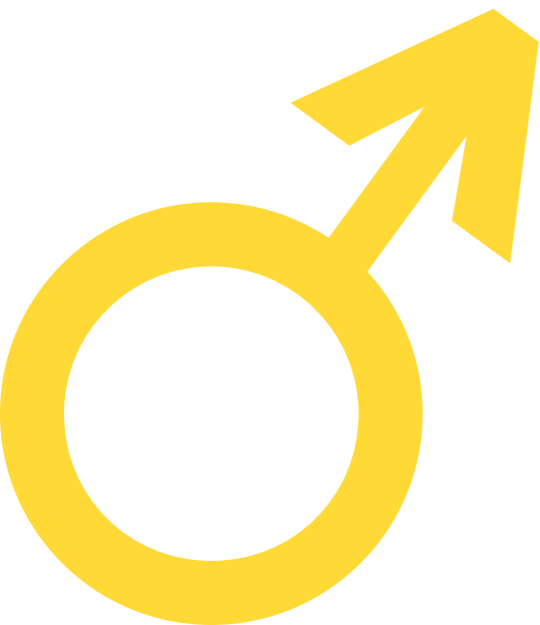
Explore opportunities with BA (Hons) Make-up for Media and Performance who have expressed an interest in delivering a Being a Boy workshop.

# 5

Develop the Being a Boy Evaluation Star with further considerations being taken into account from the Being a Boy 2022-2023 Evaluation Report.

# 6

Engage more education providers in the workshop series. In 2023 we had young people join the workshop from six different educational providers, despite promoting the activity more widely. A target of having attendees from eight different education providers for 2024.



## CONCLUSION

AUB has committed to continuing with the development of the Being a Boy Project in the 2024-25 to 2027-28 Access and Participation Plan Objective 1 to:

**“Increase the GCSE attainment of boys in Dorset, who are eligible for free school meals, working with educational partners to close gap in GCSE attainment for the group.”**

The Being a Boy Evaluation Star Pilot has allowed us to collate a much larger and richer data set compared to the 2022 workshop series. Further development of the Evaluation Star for the 2024 workshop series can support the continued development and learning in how AUB are supporting young men and our understanding of their lived experiences and learnings from participating in the Being a Boy Project.

Simplifying the Evaluation Star and tailoring it to each workshop, will allow more rigorous evaluation of whether the workshops are meeting their objectives and outcomes. And, where they are not, to support the development and tweaking of content to increase our learning and listening opportunities provided by the young men engaging in the workshop series.



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