

GRIT: GROWING RESILIENCE IN TEENS

2025 Impact Report

Building resilience in young people
across Hitchin, Letchworth and
surrounding areas.

Registered Charity Number: 1176272

OUR REACH

585

young people supported

of which



513

were new referrals

GRIT gave me good ways to think about things so I can make my own ways of helping myself.

Young person

20

students were trained as peer mentors

463

young people took part in 1:1 coaching, with

16

teachers trained in the Four Corners Method to support our peer mentoring programme



2 awards won

High Sheriff Award: Sport for Good
General Practice Awards 2024: Clinical Improvement in Mental Health

Highly Commended - Sported Awards: Campaign or Initiative of the Year 2025



50 young people took part in our 12-week GRIT programme with

85%

of young people sharing it improved their ability to manage emotions



65 young people attended our continuation programme

89%

completing the programme



GRIT gave my daughter the confidence to share her experience with us whilst also helping her recognise the validity in her feelings, to talk through her challenges and to empower her to develop skills and strategies to deal with these. We don't know what the future holds, but early intervention has meant this is being dealt with in the first 6 months of becoming an issue, rather than waiting until unhealthy behaviours become entrenched and normalised, which would have serious health implications and potentially necessitate more resource-intensive and longer-term interventions.

Thank you again for this helpful and potentially trajectory-changing support.
A parent

Through GRIT support, **85%** of young people find managing challenging emotions easier – the first step towards positive change.

Every young person deserves to feel capable of facing life's challenges.

At Growing Resilience in Teens (GRIT), we help them build the mental, emotional and physical strength to do just that.

GRIT is a community based early intervention service which supports young people aged 11-24 in Hitchin, Letchworth and surrounding areas to improve their mental health, wellbeing and resilience through a unique combination of non-contact boxing and health and wellbeing coaching.

One in four young people aged 17–19 in England today have a probable mental health disorder*.

In Hertfordshire alone, **17%** of young people rate their life satisfaction as low, and **5%** report self-harm**. Additional challenges of household poverty, overcrowded housing and limited access to early support services make it extremely difficult for young people to advocate for themselves or influence decisions***.

Within Hitchin and Letchworth, there are neighbourhoods that rank among the 30% most deprived in England. When considering income deprivation that affects children, some of these neighbourhoods fall into the lowest 20%****.



We see the difference every week, calmer classrooms, more self-aware students, and young people who believe in themselves again.

Assistant Headteacher

Through GRIT, young people learn to identify what's important to them, make informed choices, and speak up for themselves in school, community, and family settings. As their confidence rebuilds, the ripple effect is clear. Young people communicate better, schools see greater engagement, and communities become more connected and compassionate. Young people become role models for their peers, contributors to their communities, and champions for their own wellbeing.

Sources

*<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2023-wave-4-follow-up>

**<https://www.servicesforyoungpeople.org/about-services-for-young-people/news/yphw-survey-results-march-2024/>

***Many of those we support live in areas of high deprivation and inequality with some neighbourhoods that rank among the 30% most deprived in England

****Index of Multiple Deprivation and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index at English indices of deprivation 2025 official statistics, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 30 Oct 2025, accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025>

From surviving to thriving: The Four Corners Method

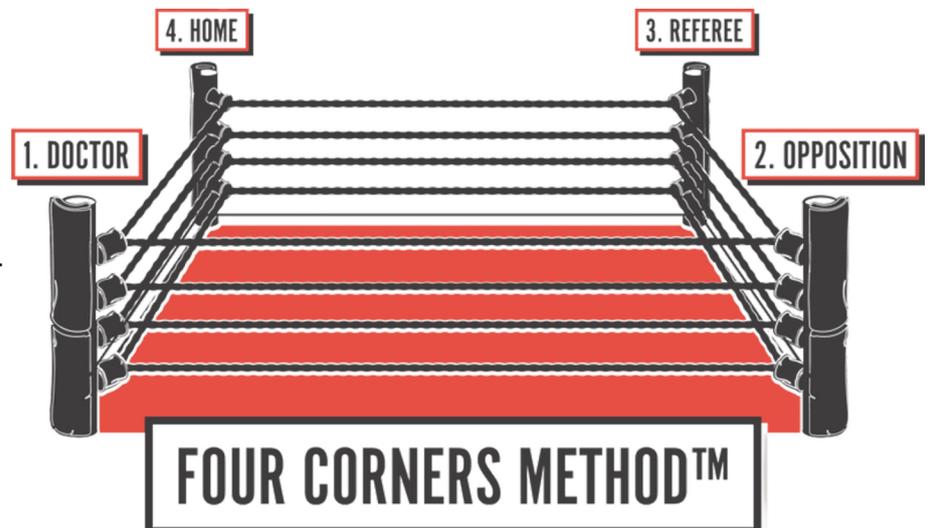
By blending non-contact boxing, health and wellbeing coaching, and psychoeducation, GRIT helps young people, aged 11-24, build resilience, regulate emotions, and re-engage with learning and life. Our unique, evidence-based Four Corners Method is at the heart of all our services. These include the 12-week group GRIT Programme, 1:1 Coaching, our GRIT Continuation Programme, Small Group Programmes and Peer Mentoring Programme.

Our programmes meet young people where they are, emotionally, mentally and socially. We recognise their reality as the starting point for change and provide a safe space to explore who they are and what they need to thrive. Movement is an important part and non-contact boxing may be introduced when it supports engagement, focus or self-awareness.

While this may not feature in every session, the boxing metaphor remains central throughout, offering a powerful and relatable way to explore resilience, strength, and personal development.

"I really enjoyed GRIT it was the only thing I looked forward to in the week, and it's quite amazing how different I look at certain situations and try and help, not to be a part of a bad situation."

A young person



Doctor Corner – representing the physical self, understanding how the body reacts and responds to the environment, mastering emotions.

Referee Corner – representing rules and values, exploring how it feels to be emotionally and physically safe and support to make the right choices.

Opposition Corner - representing challenges and adversity, encouraging young people to learn from their experiences and take the opportunity to empower themselves.

Home Corner - representing the relationship with self, exploring how to create healthy relationships with others which will serve a young person throughout their life.

For more information on our Four Corners Method, please visit gritcharity.org/four-corners-method/



Case study: Connor

Connor's confidence had crumbled. He'd withdrawn from clubs, avoided social settings and become increasingly isolated. When Connor first arrived at the GRIT Programme, he couldn't bring himself to step inside the gym. His hands shook, his eyes fixed on the floor, and every part of him was tense with anxiety.

A GRIT coach met Connor outside, brought him into the gym and gently encouraged him to put on a pair of gloves. It was just a few minutes of light pad work, but it was enough.

That small act of trust became the spark that brought him back the following week. The structure and rhythm of the training helped him to feel grounded while the coaching conversations gave him space to open up, first to his coach, then to others in the group.

As the weeks passed, Connor's confidence grew. The young person who once waited outside was soon leading warm-ups, demonstrating technique, and welcoming new participants. The transformation was remarkable. He learnt not only how to box, but how to recognise his emotions, stay calm under pressure, and believe in himself. He'd built genuine friendships within the group and developed a sense of belonging he hadn't felt for years.

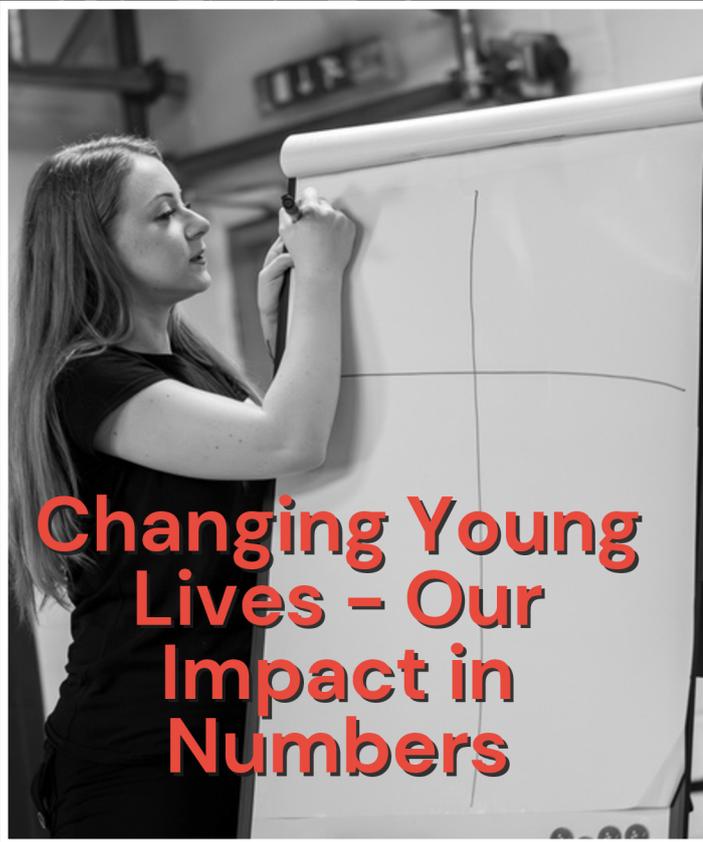
Connor is thriving.

He's continuing his studies, enjoys playing football, and has become a positive role model for other young people.



GRIT has helped me with school and life in general - managing my anger, I've made new friends, I'm no longer being bullied. I feel more confident in class and less overwhelmed being in such a big school.

A young person



Changing Young Lives - Our Impact in Numbers

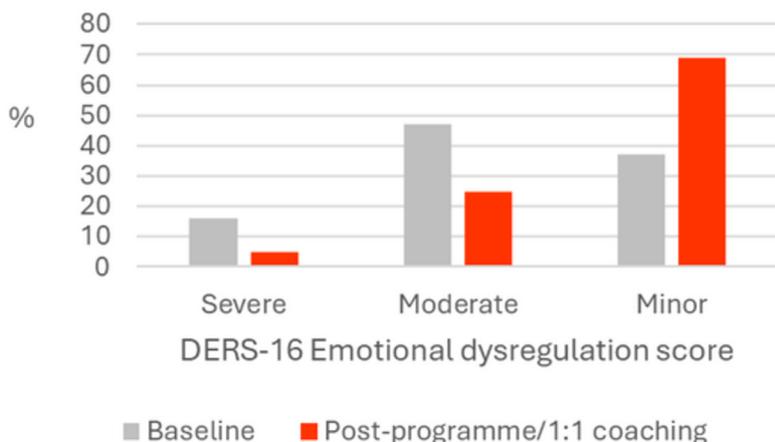
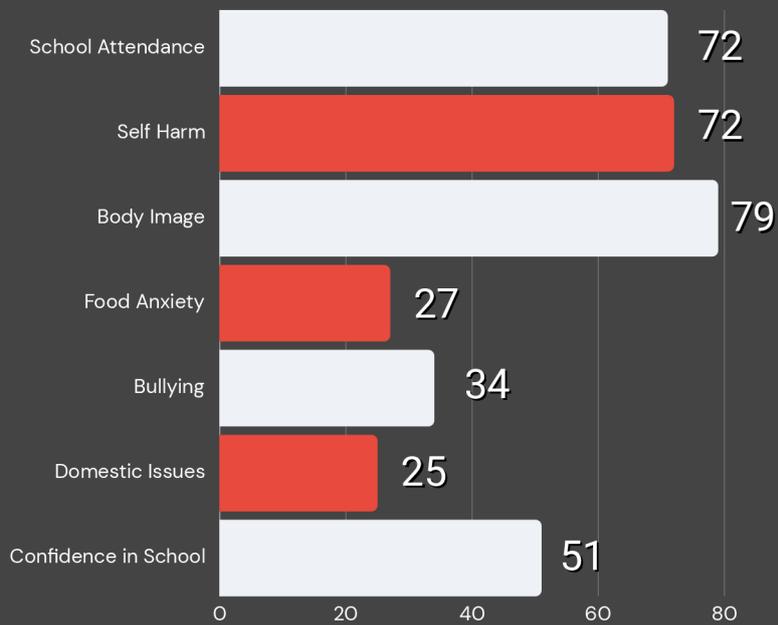


The Difficulties in Emotional Regulation Scale, **DERS-16**, helps us understand the impact of our programmes. Introduced part-way through 2025, **150** young people completed pre and post-service questionnaires which show us that:

- **85%** improved in their ability to manage emotions
- **68%** achieved a **meaningful** improvement (a change in DERS-16 of 10% or more)

While the DERS captures how young people manage emotions, GRIT also tracks other key wellbeing indicators that shape everyday life, from school engagement to relationships and confidence. These highlight the broader impact of our early intervention work.

% Positive change



Behind every number is a young person with their own story of growth and change.

The data shows the measurable outcomes of GRIT's approach but the real impact is found in the moments of breakthrough when a young person chooses to show up and begins to believe that change is possible.



“A special, heartfelt thank you to all the young people who show up, no matter how tough it gets. We see you, and we are in your corner.”

Dr Louise Randall, GRIT Founder and Chair



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With thanks to our partners:



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