

ART in Iceland

Introduction

The South Iceland ART training team trained 27 children and their families in the spring term of 2014. The families have attended Family-TIES training and most of the children have simultaneously had ART training in their school. The ART training team has trained and guided the school staff, who is in charge of the children's training in school, regardless of whether they are part of the family group in sessions we usually referred to as class-ART. In class-ART students get ART training three times a week for a twelve week period. Those that participate in the Family-TIES group attend an additional weekly training session.

ART (Aggression Replacement Training) is a cognitive behavioral therapy method and includes three major components: social skills, anger management and moral reasoning training. It is imperative that trainers work on all three focuses simultaneously. Today ART is used as a training model: as a preventive approach, class-ART, and also supports Family TIES. The class-ART sessions not only support children with behavioural problems, they also strengthen all the children's social skills, self-control and moral reasoning skills. ART training supports both the five key-competences and the basic elements of the Icelandic national curriculum for kindergarten, elementary and secondary school levels.

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of ART training has two major goals. Firstly the goal is to enable children to live a richer life – to strengthen their social skills, their self-esteem, their communication skills and adjustment in their social surroundings. Not all children have the same needs and therefore each child has individual goals. The Family TIES training helps families who are having trouble dealing with their children's upbringing as well as communication with others regarding their children. The

Family TIES training strengthens the parents' abilities to deal with difficult behaviour and to improve communication, both within the family and with others outside the family.

Methods

Children who receive training from the ART training team attend Family-TIES twelve times over a period of four and a half months. After the first session, a ten week programme commences, where the parents come for the first four weeks without the children and learn the ideology and methods. The following six weeks the children come along and work with their parents and siblings both in the sessions and at home. The parents then continue to work with their children under the guidance of the ART training team and the family attends two additional sessions, with a one month interval each time, to exchange experiences with the other families from the Family TIES group. In most cases the school runs class-ART sessions simultaneously. The children who have been attending Family TIES with the ART training team in the spring term of 2014 were born 1998 to 2008 and attended class-ART as well as attending Family-TIES sessions. The children have all been diagnosed with some of the following disorders:

- ❖ ADHD
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- ❖ Substantial Differences in Intellectual Ability
- ❖ Language Development/Speech Disorder
- ❖ Autism
- ❖ Children with social skills problems but without having some kind of social disorder.

The work itself

For families to receive Family TIES training the family needs to apply for admission. The applications go before an admission council which decides which applications are accepted. The admission council consists of a pediatrician and a child psychologist from the local health care unit and the ART training team's project manager. The admission council came together on December 13th 2013 and discussed the 33 applications received. 27 were accepted and work with the families in question started in January 2014.

The ART training team gave two ART training courses, for future ART trainers, in the spring term. Eight courses are booked for the autumn term 2014 for kindergarten and elementary school (children 4 – 16 years old).

The team is constantly working on various developmental projects. ART training has been adjusted to different age groups in kindergarten and elementary school and now the team is working on a developmental project in cooperation with Neskaupstaður's College and Vocational School. The school has been developing ART training as a school subject for the past three years. The training has served students in risk of dropping out of school and has considerably reduced the number of drop-outs.

The ART training team in the South of Iceland has now trained 570 people. These trainees include students, teachers who are able to train students in kindergarten, elementary school and colleges/vocational schools, school support staff, as well as social and health service practitioners all around the country. To be able to reach to all these ART trainers that are working around the country we have created a social organization named IS-ART. Currently 130 individuals have registered. The role of this organization is to be a forum for everyone who has an interest in ART training in Iceland. The goal is to give the members an opportunity to observe new things and be in contact with other ART trainers and their work.

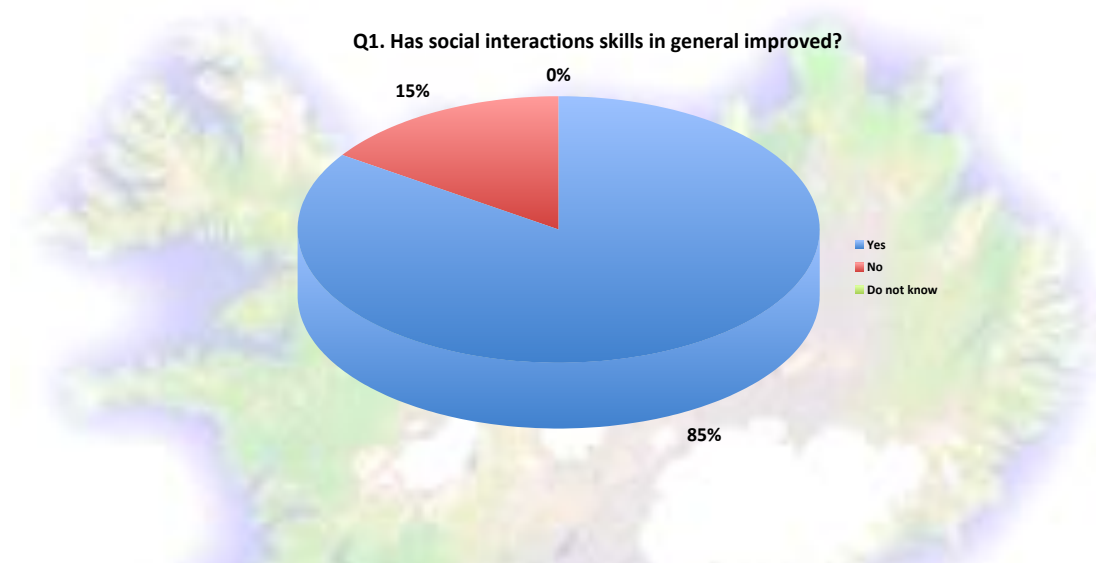
The ART project in the South of Iceland is one of the projects in the *Regional Strategies for the South of Iceland 2020*. The Ministry of Welfare agreed to sponsor the project for the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 but expects in return that the services of

the team be offered outside of the South of Iceland and the team to work nationwide. The result has been that demand for the services of the ART training team all around the country in educating, guiding and supporting local school staff and others working with children has increased considerably.

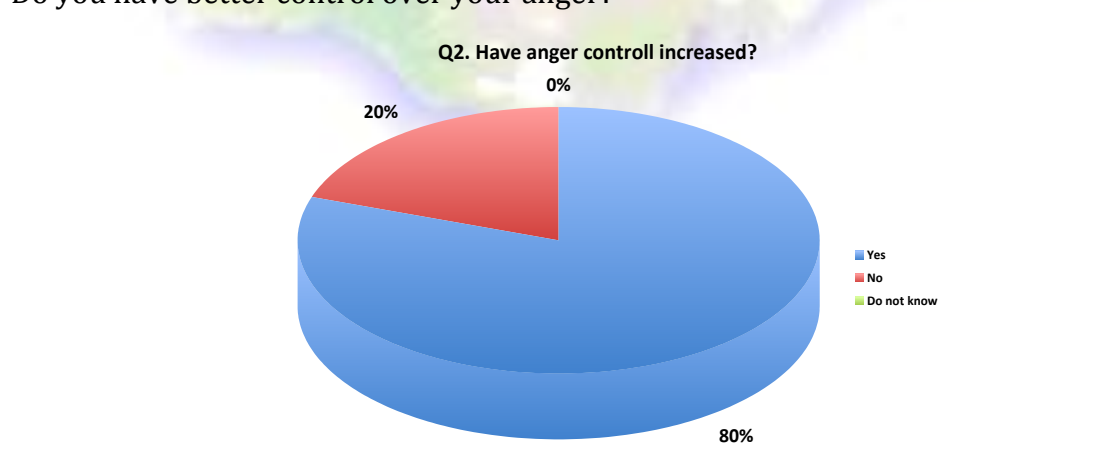
The following graphs show the total result of the questions asked to the children, the parents and the teachers by the end of the Family TIES:

The overall percentage where parents, teachers and children respond

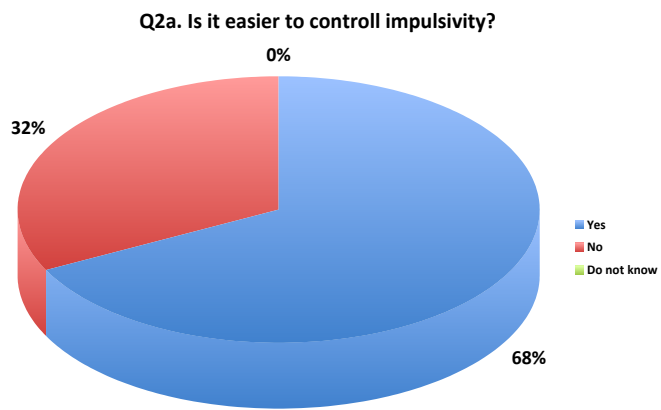
Have social interaction skills improved in general?



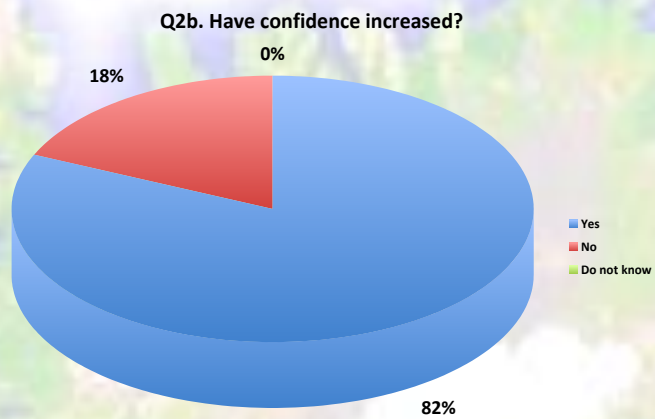
Do you have better control over your anger?



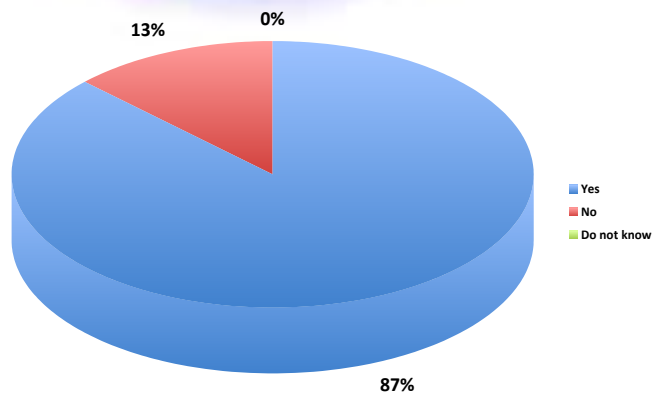
Is it easier to control impulsivity?

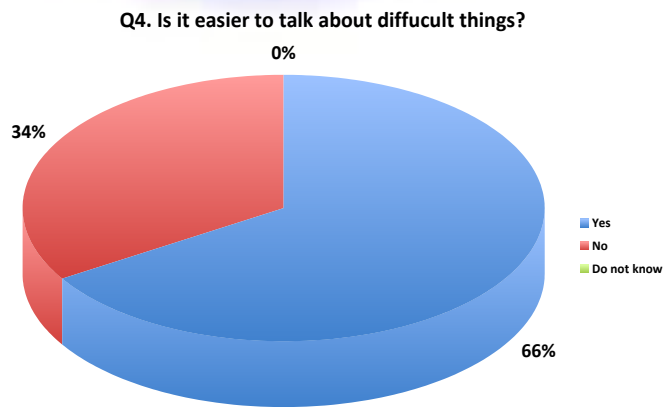
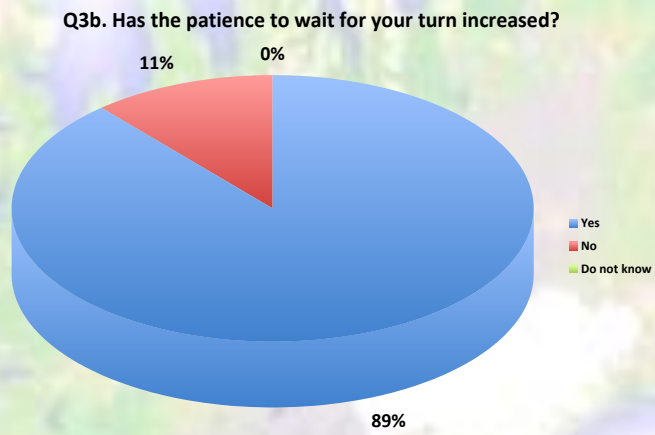
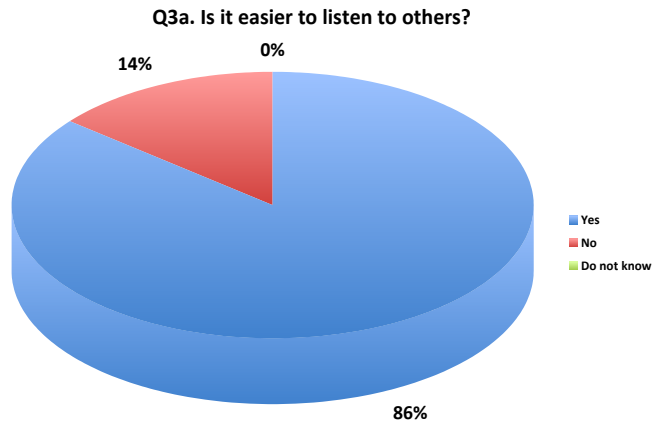


Has your self-confidence increased?



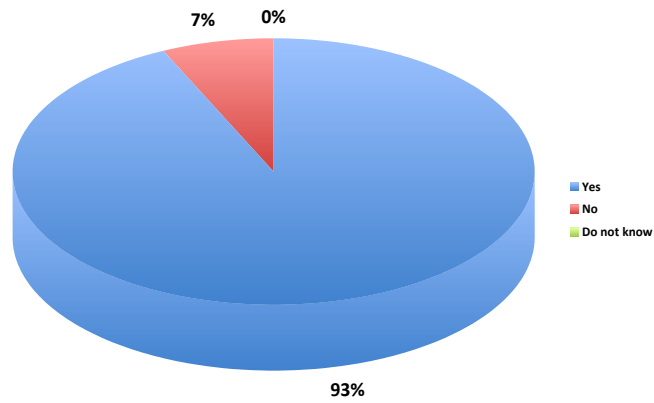
Q3. Has the patience in interaktion with others increased?





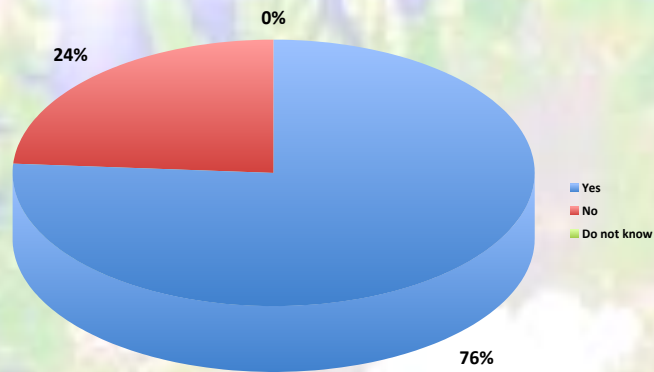
Do you think Family TIES has helped?

Q5. Do you thing that Family therapy has helped?



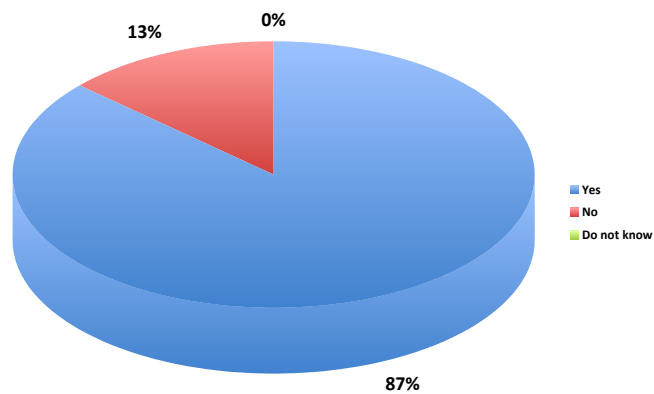
Are social interactions in class or with your family easier?

Q6. Is social interacktions in the class or in the family easier?



This question was only answered by parents and teachers

Q7. Do you think you will continue to use ART?



Summary

The team's staff members see great improvement in parents' parental abilities where they make use of the new tools they receive in Family TIES training, not only in raising and controlling their children but also in communicating with school staff. Where there have been communication problems between parents and school staff ART therapy improves communication considerably.

There is a notable difference in childrens' improvement where their teachers are active ART trainers and the children receive ART training in school along side the training provided in the Family-TIES . The cooperation of all the parties working with the child is a key factor in the success of the training programme.