

JAMI TREATMENT AND SUPPORT SERVICES

FOCUS GROUPS REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgina Anstey

Harriet Pearce Willis

May 2024



1. About the focus groups

Jami’s treatment and support services provide professional, person-centred support for young people and adults with mental health needs, as well as their families and carers. Jami intends that people with mental health needs that it directly supports will have a measurably richer quality of life, feel effectively supported and part of mutually supportive peer communities.

In spring 2024, Jami commissioned NCVO to run focus groups with users of its adult treatment and support services to inform Jami’s 2024 self-evaluation. NCVO ran six focus groups with Jami service users in March and April 2024 as follows:

Jami service	Number of attendees ¹
1. Hubs Online	12
2. Compeer befriending	6
3. Adult core services	3
4. Vocational support	7
5. Carer and family support service	6
6. Hubs (attendees from one Hub)	11

2. Effectiveness and impact

There was good evidence that Jami’s intended outcomes – that users will have a measurably richer quality of life, feel effectively supported and part of mutually supportive peer communities – had occurred for users involved in our focus groups.

- In terms of quality of life, many had experienced improvements in their emotional or internal experience of life, their social connections or their external circumstances.
- Users felt effectively supported by Jami staff, volunteers and other service users. Several talked about feeling safe or as if they were in a ‘safe space’ when accessing Jami services.
- There was very good evidence that users felt part of mutually supportive peer communities through Jami’s Hubs and Hubs Online. Many had made good friendships with other Jami users.

Other reported outcomes included users accessing other services that were important to them and being better able to undertake some life management and administrative tasks.

¹ A small number of users attended two focus groups.

Users of the carer and family support service felt they had been brought together, as parents, when living with the effects of their child's mental health challenge.

Of those users for whom we had data, many were not accessing support other than from Jami; we infer, therefore, that their outcomes were substantially contributed to by Jami. Of users who had support from elsewhere, some felt that other helpful services had contributed to some of their outcomes; others had had less positive experiences of external support and considered their outcomes to be more clearly attributable to Jami.

Users often saw Jami as being very important in their lives, describing its services as 'vital' and 'a lifeline'. In a few cases, Jami support had been lifesaving for users.

3. Success factors and areas for improvement

Satisfaction with Jami services was high, in part for reasons specific to individual services outlined in our full report. There were also some critical success factors across services that contributed to high satisfaction and the achievement of outcomes. In particular, the staff and volunteer approach to working with users – creating a welcoming atmosphere, understanding users as individuals, helping users feel that they can be themselves and be independent, being non-judgemental and 'human', and helping users work through things calmly – was important. Users also appreciated staff being responsive and contactable, being able to access support from a Jewish organisation where staff could understand their experiences, and accessing free support.

Many users couldn't think of ways in which Jami services could be improved. Among those who had suggestions, there were requests for:

- Better communication between Jami staff and users, including consultation with users – some users felt strongly about this.
- More transparency about plans for Jami's merger with Jewish Care, which was of significant concern for some users.
- More consideration of how staff resource levels are affecting frontline service delivery.
- More consistency in services' contact with users.
- A few changes to the service offer, in terms of types of support provided and group timings.
- Better initial needs assessment, with signposting to other Jami services if appropriate.