



IMPACT 2021

Love Your Body

Live Your Life



Dare Yourself



self-compassion



positive body image



confidence

Ldn Dares is a **social enterprise** that believes **no-one** should be held back from achieving what they want out of life because they are worried about their body image or looks.

We help people learn how to be confident in their own skin, develop **self-compassion** and nurture a positive body image through the performing arts and '**dares**' in workshops, training sessions and coaching.

Our model of working **gives back** social, educational and health benefits to individuals and communities. We do this to create **community value** - making a positive social impact is our central purpose.

Working **creatively and sensitively**, Ldn Dares uses our programmes to serve a vast audience including those suffering with their **mental health**, those who require support with increasing their self-esteem and confidence, and those questioning their self-worth, to name but a few.

We deliver our original 'Dare Sessions' course; our coveted '**LGBTQIA+ Dare Sessions**' course for those that identify as part of this community; training for teams; and one-to-one body confidence coaching.

URSULA JOY

Founder & Artistic Director

The **Dare Sessions** are 36-hours of workshops (over 12 weeks) that provide:

- ❖ Confidence development and **improved** relationships.
- ❖ Improved **love and respect** for your body.
- ❖ Ability to **make change** happen and maintain it.
- ❖ Arousal of **curiosity** and social interaction.
- ❖ **Empowerment** to living your life as your **authentic self**.
- ❖ **Clarity**, focus and direction and increased energy levels.
- ❖ Creative, team, and **performance skills**.
- ❖ Ways to switch up your mood and **lose yourself** in the moment.
- ❖ Ability to **self-reflect** and to take action.
- ❖ An **education** in the topics of body image and confidence.
- ❖ Discovery of your **strengths** and what makes you unique.



The course includes the chance to **perform on stage** to an audience. **Darers** are supported to create their own piece of solo work – an ‘act’ – giving them creative freedom, self-expression and autonomy.

Darers tell the story they want to tell which ultimately gives validation on stage for **who they are** in the place they are right now. Being their **authentic self**, without any changes e.g. they don’t need to lose weight, or change their hair, or think differently, they can accept themselves in the moment and enjoy being in the skin they are in. It also helps with artistic and performance skills and cultural identity – **a massive celebration of YOU!**

Dare always dare

High Lights

This report highlights the **impact** we have achieved for **Darers**.



WHAT WAS MEASURED

Impact was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Appearance Anxiety Inventory and Body Image Scale with Darers (participants on our courses) before and after the course.

Feedback was also captured from Dare courses and one-off sessions.

The project data was independently analysed by



28% increase in **self-esteem** on average

DARERS EXPERIENCING AN INCREASE IN SELF-ESTEEM

95%

38% reduction in **appearance anxiety** on average

DARERS HAD REDUCED APPEARANCE ANXIETY

100%

31% improvement in positive **self-perception** of own body image

DARERS HAD A MORE POSITIVE SELF-PERCEPTION OF THEIR BODY IMAGE BY THE END OF THE PROGRAMME

78%

Our **Dare sessions** create **positive change** through increased body confidence; improved mental health and well-being.

We emphasise **education** on body image; togetherness and camaraderie; and provide tools Darers can continue to use in their daily lives through the development of a **locus of control**.

Identified **LGBTQIA+** Dare sessions explore LGBTQIA+ body image concerns that are **unique** to this community.

Achievements

Developing **Self-Esteem** and Reducing **Appearance Anxiety**

- ❖ Pre-programme **self-esteem** average score: **18**
- ❖ Post-programme **self-esteem** average score: **26**
- ❖ Overall **28% increase** in self-esteem for Darers
- ❖ **100%** of Darers showed a reduction in their appearance anxiety, **with an average decrease of 38%**
- ❖ Average **appearance anxiety** pre-programme: **25**
- ❖ Average **appearance anxiety** post-programme: **16**

*Lower scores are better as they indicate less anxiety.
A score of 19 points or higher indicates the likely presence of BDD.*

Kayin

'It made me realise I'm stronger than I thought I was.'

I really wish that the course was longer because I really enjoyed it so much. It was just a **lot of fun** and I learnt stuff about myself as well.

Naturally, I'm really shy and I feel anxious in group situations. I found that playing the games really helped me to feel more **comfortable** being in a group, and it helped me to feel more confident as well.

Participating in the **Dare exercises** has helped me believe in myself because I overcame some of the fears. Like, the fear of acting and dancing in front of the group made me realise that I am ok at doing new things.

I can be good at **creative** things as well. I've taken notes from the course and reflecting on the notes makes me learn more things about myself.

I'm going to continue to do daring things.

Body Image

Confidence

Before the course

Darers worried about their body, appearance, and weight, and talked about the **shame** they felt because of their body or what they were wearing.

Darers were taught to refocus their thinking away from being hyperconscious of the **appearance** of their body, and more towards **appreciating** what their physical body does for them.

‘Worrying far less about what my body can do... My body can move in so many varied ways.’

7



31% SELF-
PERCEPTION

Average % improvement in Darers' who had a more positive self-perception after the programme.

78% POSITIVE
PERCEPTION

Darer % who had a more positive perception of their body image by the end of the programme.

LGBTQIA+

The **dedicated LGBTQIA+ Dare sessions course** is led by an all, or majority, **queer identifying facilitation team**.

This allows Darers a **judgement-free** safe space in which to express themselves creatively, and support to address head-on specific concerns that affect **LGBTQIA+ bodies**.

Within the **queer community** there can be immense pressure to look certain ways. The need to conform in a society dominated by social media and marketing where **binary bodies** are under the spotlight and **non-conformity** is monetised.

The course also provides education around **LGBTQIA+ culture** and **shared experience**.

*'I was proud to
be a part of
something
celebrating
LGBTQIA+
bodies.'*



Education

As well as building body confidence, the courses are **educational** with Darers learning about physicality, mind and emotions, including:

- ❖ Where **body confidence** problems emerge from.
- ❖ The role of media and cultural depictions of **beauty** standards unravelled .
- ❖ **Social rules** surrounding body image.
- ❖ How to make **positive calculated risks** — or 'dares' — to make change happen in their lives.
- ❖ Acting and applied drama **tips and techniques** that actors use for confidence.
- ❖ Coaching **curiosity** and inquiring minds for self-development.
- ❖ How to warm up the body and use the body for different types of **movement**.
- ❖ Learning about **personal strengths** and identity that wasn't known before the course .

'After the course I feel I understand where issues emerge from.'

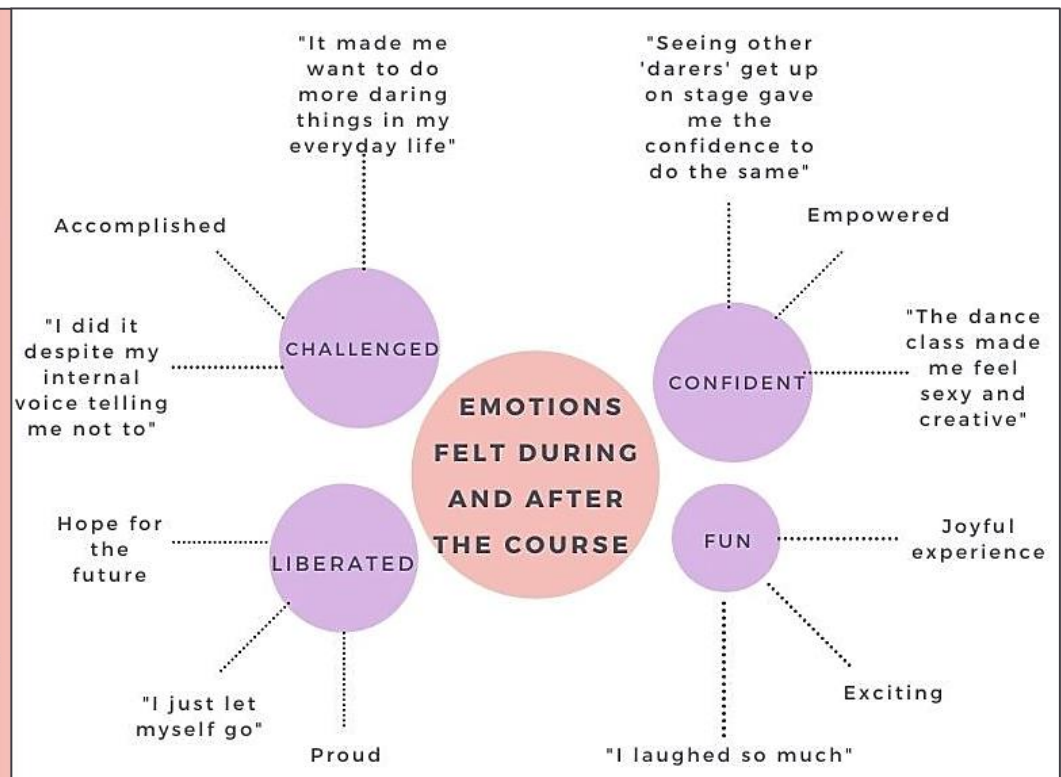


Emotions

As Darers develop a **locus of control** (belief they have control over situations and experiences that affect their lives) during the course, they feel a range of emotions:

Feedback from the darers

Comments in the feedback from the 'darers' (participants) was on the whole very positive. The darers described the course as challenging but as a result felt more confident and liberated by the end of the course - and they had fun whilst doing so.



'I also enjoyed group discussions which were insightful and interesting.'



'I need a place to share my experiences.'

Approach

Our caring and knowledgeable **facilitators** create a welcoming environment where Darers feel able to share **experiences** with others, 'so you feel like you are not alone.'

Darers commented on feeling **respected**, listened to, and completely safe during the course due to the fact there was **camaraderie** and implicit understanding of people with shared mental health experiences.

By being surrounded by other Darers, it **encouraged** Darers to look at themselves in different ways and it challenged their perceptions of what they could do. This included confidence gained and the chance to perform their own piece of solo work **on-stage** to an audience.

We believe **self-development** and learning about ourselves can be fun. No course is the same twice, but the activities include an **immersive** body confidence treasure hunt, and optional add-ons of cabaret characterisation, mask work, forum theatre, dance, and **collaborative performance** with other community groups such as Shakespeare's Globe.

The **alumni** of Dare sessions stay in touch with each other long after the course, and there are follow-on performance opportunities to **reconnect**, so people are supported beyond the end of the course.

'I want to heal.'



'I wish I could express exactly how much this workshop has given me.

*If I had known one existed before,
I definitely would come!*

I feel so much more positive and especially admire Ursula... I love her energy, passion and commitment.'

HELENA, DARER

Lasting Benefits

Specific exercises supported Darers to take away what they had learnt and use it in **everyday life**, so the benefits of the courses create a personal legacy.

'The exercises were really helpful.'



Some of the exercises included:

- ❖ The **ability and courage** to 'dare' yourself into action by taking positive calculated risks to improve well-being.
- ❖ Learning 'plot twists' through **improvisation** techniques so Darers can make a 'plot twist' change to their own lives'.
- ❖ Steps to challenge your '**body gremlin**' (inner critical) voice.
- ❖ Techniques for projecting your voice so those who were more softly spoken could **be heard**.
- ❖ Walking with a '**beam of light**' radiating from your chest for use in situations when you don't feel confident but want to give the impression you are confident which can then become reality.
- ❖ Tapping your body when you feel low and **thanking your body** for the **good things** it has done for you today.
- ❖ Experience a team behind you, supporting you, to give the vision and imagination of **community** holding you, and have those alumni of Darers to reach out to after the course is finished.

Theory of Change

Our **Theory of Change** summarises the long-term, lasting outcomes that are achieved by working with us, resulting in individuals leading more positive and fulfilling lives, without the need for on-going support.



Dare With Us

The Dare sessions are designed to **provide solutions** that reduce the need for health and mental health interventions now and in the future.

With **mental health** support costing on average £2,391, and support for anxiety and depression costing on average £1,063 per year/per person, our programmes can **save £1,000s** annually.

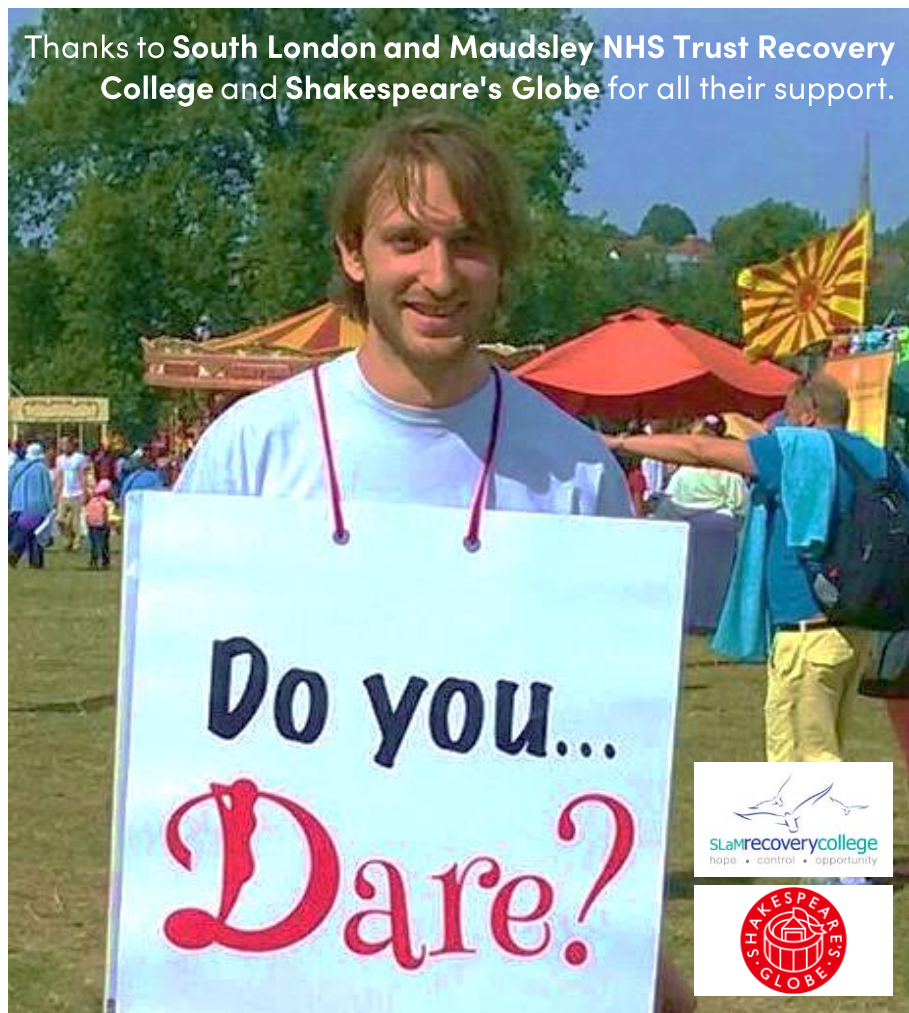
For **every £1 spent** on our Dare sessions, we generate **£6.91 of social value**.

We provide **Dare sessions** for third sector organisations, businesses, mental health services and more. These are provided online, in-person and through hybrid formats.

Find your best 'you'

Private sessions with a **Team Dare body confidence and well-being coach** are available... just reach out to us.

Thanks to **South London and Maudsley NHS Trust Recovery College** and **Shakespeare's Globe** for all their support.



If you'd like us to deliver Dare sessions or one-to-one coaching for you, please get in touch:
WWW.LDNDARES.CO.UK | +44 (0)7507 530929 | TEAM@LDNDARES.COM



Gaz

Hi, I'm Gaz, I'm part of the Ldn Dares alumni, and this is part of my story...

I took part in the course last year and, boy, did it have a prolific effect on my life.

In 2015 after a life time of difficulties and poor coping mechanisms with no professional support, things became too much. I burned out. It resulted in me and my mental health completely deteriorating.

With a combination of a hospital admission , clinical diagnosis, trying various medications, therapy and community mental health support, I am now on the road to recovery.

Now, recovery is an interesting word - returning to a normal state of health, mind or strength. Looking back, I can't actually recall a time where I've not been completely overwhelmed, anxious or comfortable in my own skin, so what was I returning to?

**I'm thankful to the NHS for the interventions, treatments and support but I found myself surviving...
...just surviving, not thriving.**





Gaz

Cue the Ldn Dares course, 2019.

The complexities of identifying as LGBTQ+ as well as having a mental illness, for me, means there has never been a more important time for a course like this.

Ldn Dares created a safe space for me to cultivate authenticity through the activities and the creative process. It wasn't easy. In fact, it took courage, and it was there I rediscovered bravery, and I allowed myself to be proud of that bravery.

Also it's not just performance based activities, there's theory and conversation and unique ways of building confidence. Those tools I began to implement on a day-to-day basis in everyday life. They worked, and they worked because I was taught in a way that was relevant and real to me.

**I can't stress this enough
– the importance and effectiveness
of an LGBTQ+ specific course.**





Gaz

It's incredibly important to note that it's consistent and substantial. It runs for a number of hours and weeks. That amount of time is imperative and allowed me to commit, and also experience a sense of achievement.

I rediscovered my passion for dance; I remembered that dance was in fact the only time I've ever felt free, totally myself and unshackled from heteronormative societal pressures.

As a direct result of Ldn Dares, I was then able to join the Gay Men's Dance Company despite all my anxieties. It was at the Gay Men's Dance Company that I realised just what was missing in my life and that I could, in fact, thrive doing something I loved.

By doing something I loved, it ignited something inside of me and created a domino effect of positive thoughts and feelings.





Gaz

So I was invited back to Ldn Dares to teach a dance workshop.

Then – wait for it – I was asked if I would choreograph a dance piece to perform at the Globe Theatre’s Annual Community Christmas Show. I am now a Ldn Dares Choreographer... it still doesn’t feel real!

Despite all my nerves and anxiety, Ldn Dares supported me through this process, and we smashed it. An incredible group of LGBTQ+ people with mental health struggles got up on an iconic world-renowned stage to represent our community.

The premise of the course is to be brave, to have the courage to try and dare ourselves to confidence, and it works. I have spent years with my headphones on listening to music, dancing, and choreographing but in my head, to suddenly, because of Dare, calling out 5, 6, 7, 8 in a studio and then on stage.



It literally made my dreams come true.