

Who we are and what we do?

The 'A Better Ü' Coaching Team is working across a number of practices in South Tyneside, supporting a shift in care towards a bio-psycho-social approach. We have worked with over 250 individuals so far, encouraging them to access community assets, improve their health and wellbeing, and to make healthier lifestyle choices. The Patient Activation Measure (PAM) is used to identify client needs for intervention and to measure success, with an increase in PAM linked to a decrease in health and social care costs.

The News



People seen in our Initial Contact Clinics



Average change in PAM for our most inactivated clients



Goals achieved this month:

Weight loss, increased activity, reduction in alcohol and smoking.

The People



The Background

When "Cate" first came to see us she was a current smoker looking to lose weight. She had tried exercise in the past but had been quite sedentary over the recent winter months. She was regularly attending a local slimming group but often found there was no difference on the scales and she was told to eat more.

The Support

Through one-to-one support we discussed ways in which Cate could measure success without using scales and after a short while, Cate started to notice when her clothes were fitting more loosely. Seeing positive results gave Cate a new found confidence and she began exploring options for introducing exercise into her daily routine. Still nervous in groups, Cate decided to use her Wii Fit console to do some gentle exercise in the comfort of her own home.

The Achievements

Despite Cate being unwell for a long period of time, she still exercises 5 times each week, for at least 30 minutes and continues to measure her success buying clothes in smaller sizes – she's now 3 dress sizes smaller than she was when we met her. Cate's initial PAM score was 51, Level 2 and she is now at 65.5, Level 3. Her current goals include joining a local exercise group and being supported through smoking cessation.



This month we look at building confidence.

For many of our clients, confidence – or lack of it – is a barrier to making healthy changes. Making a change requires motivation, and motivation requires confidence in your belief to succeed. All members of our team are trained in numerous evidenced-based behaviour change techniques which allow us to draw on the most suitable tool for the person we're working with. Asset-focused approaches such as setting small goals and having appreciative conversations can help to build confidence in a short space of time. For one client, we used pictures of stick people in a one-to-one session. The client was asked to think about how they would describe themselves and draw these words around one figure. On the other figure, the Link Worker wrote words they felt might describe the client. Words such as *disappointment*, *worthless* and *ashamed* were written on the client's page. This was a stark comparison to the *resilient*, *knowledgeable* and *successful* words that were written on the other sheet. The exercise wasn't simply a case of comparing the two but encouraging the client to consider why those positive words described them. The process of saying aloud some of these affirming phrases reminded the client they had been successful in the past and showed them the positive qualities that are often getting left in the dark. A short, simple exercise that had a big, lasting impression.

Mutual Aid Group



This month we welcome 3 of our group as newly trained facilitators! The volunteers will start to run the group in the New Year and are really looking forward to their new roles. With a lived experience of one or more Long Term Conditions, our volunteers are keen to share their knowledge and experiences to support others.

The group held a Christmas morning recently, where they each took responsibility for something to help the party run smoothly – the tables were covered in food and the team turned up dressed in their Christmas best! Over the last few months, members of the group have been bringing in weekly donations of food, toiletries and snacks to build hampers. These hampers were raffled off amongst the group with spare supplies being donated to local charities to support the community during the festive period.

