



Who we are and what we do?

The 'A Better U' 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 400 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 who've engaged with our service



Average change in PAM for our most inactivated clients



Feedback from Practitioners

"Thank you so much for your input and support. You have done more than I expected."

The People



The Background

"Gary" came to us at a pivotal moment in his life. He had been living with COPD for a number of years, exacerbated by his repetitive smoking during a period of extreme mental stress. Gary had previously seen a counsellor to control his OCD and anxiety and was working towards personal goals in the gym. However, he continued to spend all night awake, slept apart from his wife and napped in the day time.

The Support

Gary didn't feel he needed to return to counselling services and wished to work with us on ways to manage his evening anxiety and routine. Initially we started using the 5-areas model to help Gary understand the cycle of thoughts and behaviours he was experiencing. Although this had some positive results, it wasn't the solution for Gary. After watching a television programme one night, Gary became interested in mindfulness so we used the sessions together to explore different mindful activities he could incorporate into his daily routine. The use of mindfulness induced sleep and allowed a distraction to the persistent thoughts Gary was experiencing.

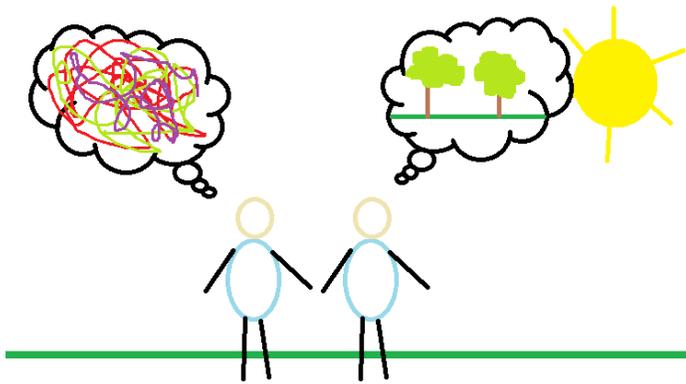
The Achievements

Gary's initial PAM was 45.3 (Level 1), despite his motivation for other aspects of health and wellbeing. After trying CBT-based techniques, his PAM rose to Level 3 and after introducing Mindfulness, Gary now sits at 58.1 (Level 3). Gary now has ~6 hours sleep a night, in bed with his partner and has reduced his need for daytime naps.



This month we look at Mindfulness

Working in a person-centred way is important and as practitioners, we need to recognise when to change things with our clients. Gary is a great example - the introduction of a simple mindfulness-based exercise gave results he hadn't thought he would see. Mindfulness is the practice of being present and is widely accepted as a technique which could help to reduce anxiety and stress. Time to be mindful can be found in a number of ways: through tailored, muscle-relaxing exercises to well-known practices such as yoga and tai-chi. We often use a voice-led meditation or muscle "tense and relax" exercises. There are some great resources locally and on the internet – we recommend the [NHS](#) or [Wellbeing Info](#) for those in South Tyneside.



Mind full or mindful?

This is Mental Health Awareness Week (14-18 May) - why not give yourself some time to be mindful? It could make a huge difference and support

Mutual Aid Group



Discussion in mutual aid is frequently led by the people in it: if there's something you'd like to share or talk about, this is the perfect place to be.

This month, we've covered a range of topics including:

What's the best way to manage on Champix for smoking cessation?

What can I do to keep my upper body active when I don't go to the gym?

I don't think my inhalers are working, what should I do?

Our group facilitators have been working hard to create a friendly, open environment where everyone feels able to share, learn and advise. If you'd like to join a session, please come along to **Centre for Change, every Tuesday, between 9.30 am – 11.30 am.**

