

Case Study - Realising Potential' Programme **Delivered by Blue Horizon Associates on behalf of Home-Start Amber Valley**

The 'Realising Potential' programme aims to develop confidence and emotional wellbeing for people of all ages and backgrounds, helping them to recognise their strengths and skills. Using life coaching techniques and group work sessions, the programme gives participants tools and techniques to empower themselves to make wise and healthy choices for their lifestyles. The aim is to give insight and enhanced self-belief, to identify and take steps to a healthier future for themselves and their families.

The programme is funded by NHS Derbyshire County and facilitated by life coach, Carole Appleby from Blue Horizon Associates Ltd, on behalf of Home-Start Amber Valley. It comprises three workshops and one-to-one coaching sessions for each participant.

Background

Through ongoing monitoring with Home-Start, parents often identify that they want to make changes with regard to their personal development outside the home but feel they lack the necessary skills and confidence to do so. Their expressed wish is to explore these new horizons and with appropriate support, progress to meet their aspirations.

The criteria for accessing the programme is based primarily on parents who had all reached a point of no longer requiring support from Home-Start Amber Valley and who wished to widen their horizons. Referrals were also taken via the Children's Centres in Amber Valley.

Evaluation methodology

To measure experience, each delegate was asked to complete questionnaires to self-score the distance they felt that they had travelled as a result of the programmes. These views were sought before each programme to provide baseline data, and again afterwards.

Evaluation - summary

- All delegates reported **enhanced self-confidence**.
- After the programme delegates said that they felt **clearer about their skills and strengths**.
- All delegates felt that they had **greater self-awareness and understanding**.
- After the programme delegates felt **more confident in their ability to make wise and healthy choices** for themselves and their family.
- All delegates felt that they had **greater clarity about their future direction in life**.

Goals set by individuals during the programmes focussed on:

- confidence building and self-belief
- assertiveness

- self-management of emotions
- exercise and healthy lifestyle / motivation
- life direction
- seeking employment, retraining/returning to work
- trust-building within relationships
- sorting out child care arrangements to free up time to train
- feeling stronger and happier
- setting up a Father's networking support groups in the surrounding areas/engaging with local Dads
- achieving a formal qualification / achieving a work placement

Individual success stories from the 'Realising Potential' programme

Now in its third year, here are some success stories from people on the programme:

"I have learned that I need to believe in myself. I am a nice person, I make people laugh – people do enjoy my company."

"I'm going to enquire about being a volunteer. I am also going to look for a college course and enquire about yoga. I am also going to re-start my driving lessons. Thank you."

"I have learned that I have more willpower than I thought. I can be assertive and take control of my life. I have learned to believe in myself."

"I thought the programme was brilliant and as a result I quit smoking and have been stopped a year now. I'm currently at Derby University studying an 'Access to social work' course and have just been accepted to take my degree in applied social work there, so things are looking up for us"

"I took the course in 2008, initially because I was curious to see what it was about and if it could help me focus my energy on achieving my weight and fitness goals."

I hadn't realised how gloomy my outlook was, I had struggled on for years without significant help, through horrendously bad times, just "getting on with it!" Looking back I realise what a toll this had taken on me mentally and physically, I don't think I could have gone on like that for very much longer. The course taught me the techniques to visualise what is truly important in life and the ability to plan steps to ensure the important things receive the attention, time and energy they require.

As a direct result of the course I feel like a "relevant person" again. I have asserted myself and focussed my energy and have lost 3 stone in weight and now walk most days. I am confident I can lose the other 6 stone I need to lose. I feel fitter and have already gone down 7 dress sizes! My family's diet has improved and they have had the benefit of a much more calm, relaxed and confident mum.

The course allowed me to identify my personal priorities and correctly decide where my focus should lie. It gave me inspiration, validation and hope - and empowered me with techniques to manage the negative external forces and say "no" to things that may have placed unreasonable demands on my time and energy. I feel that my life is once again under my control as far as it can be and that's a wonderful feeling."

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Date: June 2010