



## 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 300 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. We are delighted to be expanding to additional practices this month.

## The News



People who've engaged with our service



Average change in PAM for our most inactivated clients



Feedback from Practice

The Service helps our patients increase their knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively self-care. The practice has already started to see the benefits with reduced exacerbations of COPD.

## The People



### The Background

"Frances" was not coping well with her symptoms when she came to us. She often forgot to take her inhaler with her when she went out and being breathless had knocked her confidence. She wanted to do more exercise but Frances didn't think she could manage with her condition. She had been an active line dancer but stopped attending the group as she felt her breathlessness was embarrassing.

### The Support

We talked through the feelings Frances associated with being breathless and worked on acceptance. We collaborated on a plan to make taking inhalers with her a habit rather than something to remember. The new BLF Keep Active Keep Well pilot had begun and Frances was eligible for the service so a referral was made and Frances saw the benefits in starting some gentle, specifically-designed exercise.

### The Achievements

Frances completed the BLF KAKW course and loved it - she has continued with the exercises she has learned. Frances was particularly impressed with learning how to tackle everyday exercise, such as climbing the stairs; something she hadn't considered as 'exercise' before going. She isn't using inhalers at the moment, but has carried them with her as a precaution and now has inhalers at key touch points, including her handbag. Frances is more confident and she has started line dancing again, which she notes has made her **"happier than I've been in months"** because she's back with her social group. Frances' PAM was initially 51 (Level 2) and is now 67.8 (Level 3).



## *This month we look at developing discrepancy.*

We often find that clients are striving towards a goal and behaving in a way that doesn't move them closer to it. It's hard for us to see that our own behaviours are widening the gap between where we are and where we want to be and harder still when these gaps are pointed out by a Healthcare Professional. We know the arguments put forward by a client for change are more powerful than the arguments offered by others. Developing discrepancy is a technique rooted in Motivational Interviewing and helps us to avoid the righting reflex. A great example of when this technique works well comes from a recent client living with Diabetes. Their main goal was to lose weight and manage their symptoms well. However in conversation, some conflict was heard:

*"I really want to lose weight and get my Diabetes under control. I want to be healthy."*

*"I only have a few takeaway meals a week, it's my treat when I've done well."*

Developing discrepancy helped the client to see that takeaways weren't supporting their goal to lose weight and control their condition. The client's end goal stayed the same; we were able to work towards smaller goals to change some immediate behaviours – the takeaways – and find alternatives which helped move them closer to a healthy weight and a well-managed condition. Used well, developing discrepancy is a great way to generate pro-change talk that is vital in a good quality change conversation.

## *Mutual Aid Group*



This month our Tuesday Group enjoyed a "Food and Mood" session with Washington Mind, understanding more about how what we eat affects how we feel and some tips for quick, healthy meals. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the visit and have been trying out recipes to share with one another.

We've also been learning from one another about inhaler technique – it's easier than we all thought to use your inhaler incorrectly. One of our members in particular has been stunned by the difference a spacer made!

If you'd like to join a session, please come along to Centre for Change, every Tuesday, between 9.30 – 11.30 am.