
Project Overview

“Arts at the HeART of Wellbeing” is a project based in Erewash, Derbyshire; an area with county’s fastest growing ageing population.

Responding to the challenges of the ageing population, it is a programme of arts intervention for older people with or at risk of developing a mental health issues, including dementia; in particular the need for early intervention and non-clinical treatments of cognitive/memory loss, as opposed to often ineffective & expensive long-term medication.

The programme works to improve and maintain wellbeing by increasing social interaction, meaningful activity, cognitive function, sense of purpose and learning new skills; Professional artists work alongside service users in a number of different settings; residential/nursing homes, day care centres, hospitals, supporting housing settings and alongside people with limited mobility on a 1:1 basis; enabling participants to create a range of visual art work in a range of mediums of their choice.

The project also facilitates strong aspects of sustainability by working in partnership with agencies and organisations whose staff are committed to learning arts skills and techniques from the professional artists alongside their service users.

We also deliver training & mentoring programmes for staff and volunteers across Adult Health & Social Care, enabling activity and its benefits to continue beyond the project.

The need for the project, which started 5 years ago, was identified by working closely with the then-PCT (which has funded the project since 2007) and by carrying out a borough wide audit of arts participation; identifying gaps in provision and barriers to participation.

Project Outcome

Over an average 15 week annual programme, approx 3 immobile people, 10 residential home users and 15 day centre/hospital patients; plus 10 staff and volunteers within these settings; take part. Approx 15 care staff and 10 artists also receive training.

Participants are identified due to their isolation and the project therefore focuses on quality of the outcomes rather than quantity of participants; working on sustainable measures which enable the intervention to reach more people beyond the project.

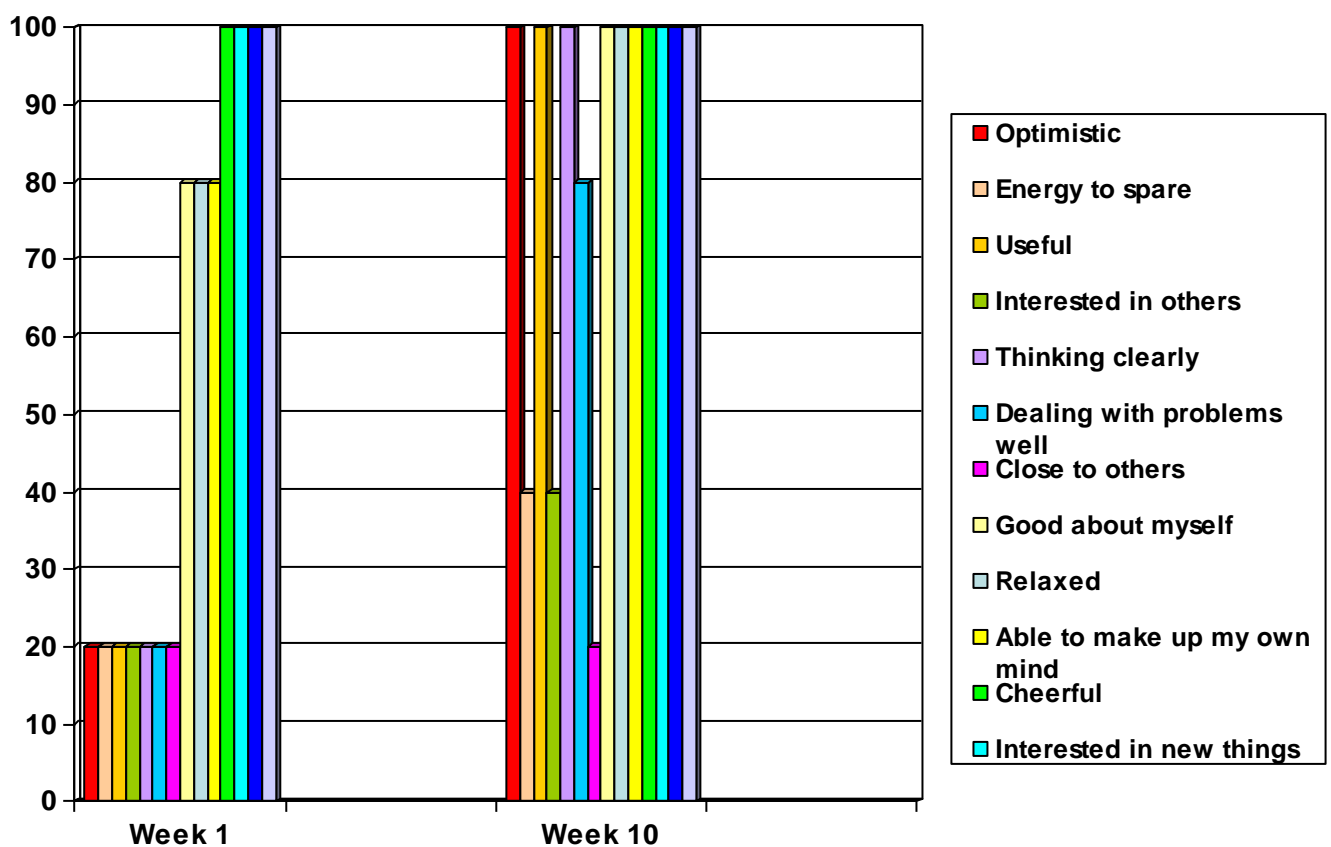
The project is measured using the [Warwick-Edinburgh Scale of Mental Wellbeing](#) (NHS approved), within a wider contextual framework, enabling us to monitor factors outside of the project which may influence the result. The WE scale is not suitable for dementia patients, but since the projects inception in 2007, results with non-dementia patients indicate consistently across all settings that the project significantly impacts positive wellbeing.

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Qualitative data indicates significant improvements in dementia patients' wellbeing also; i.e. non-verbal dementia patients speak again during sessions, greater willingness by participants to socially interact within the sessions than they are outside of the sessions, noticeable reduction in confusion and anxiety etc.

Evaluation of all the training courses evidences that trainees feel equipped to establish and manage Arts & Health projects within their own service areas; i.e. British Red Cross, psychiatric care, Community Mental Health Teams, Occupational Therapists, Age UK, and approx 15 care homes.

Below provides a typical 'before-and-after' example of a participants wellbeing assessed using the WE result.



Contact details for further information

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