

Happiness Habits Café

Eyemouth TEDDA volunteering centre



Where: TEDDA Volunteering Centre, Wellbraes,
Eyemouth, TD14 5ET

When: Thursday 29th September 2016 12.30-2pm

Background

Happiness Habits Cafes have been developed by Outside the Box. The sessions in Borders are part of the Flourishing Borders project, which aims to increase awareness among older people about how they can look after their mental health and wellbeing.

Eyemouth Health in Mind organisation, and partner organisations had planned a “Wellbeing Week” of activities in September 2016. Jo Hight from Health in Mind contacted Lindsey from Flourishing Borders after she read about the Happiness Habits cafés in a local bulletin.

We agreed to run a Happiness Habits café in the Eyemouth volunteering hub, which is also the base for the Men’s Shed in Eyemouth.

Partners for the Happiness Café included Flourishing Borders, Health in Mind and the Community Capacity Building Team worker. The café was advertised with posters and invitations that the local partners put around the town and flagged up with people they knew. It was also advertised as part of the wellbeing week on their publicity.

The Café

We decided to have the café midweek from 12.30-2pm, and to provide soup and sandwiches from a local café to be served to people who came to the café. Tables were to be set out with paper tablecloths for people to write on, and table signs were put on the tables.

30 people attended the café and helped themselves to soup and sandwiches. A short introduction was given by the Flourishing Borders project worker, and those who were there in a work capacity joined tables if appropriate, to facilitate conversation. There was a great sense of “feeling welcome and relaxed”. Those who attended joined in with table conversations with minimal prompting, and left feedback on all the topics. Conversations were open and

honest, with people sharing tips, experiences and ways of coping with life when they feel down. Lots of laughs were had, as well as serious moments. People seemed to find it easy to write their comments, and then to talk about them.

The main themes that help when we feel down are:

Attitude/mood – Get out the house at least once a day, I have found it is good to touch base with folks with similar problems as it reminds me I'm not the only one, I phone my brother he's always been able to get me laughing.

Sense of purpose – I joined a rehab group- physical exercise twice a week in the gym, teaching people to knit – I felt appreciated, knitting for charity, I volunteer at East Fortune Museum & Men's shed.

Hobbies/activities – Walking, bird watching, crochet, knitting, sailing, drumming, chanting, reading, cycling, gardening, applique, making things, playing bridge, crosswords – challenge the mind, board games, holidays, music, listening to trees, origami is very soothing, watching tv & dressmaking

Connection to others – Family, friends & my dog, local history, a good chat with someone, interaction is important, walking groups, chatting to and being with friends not seen in a while, having a laugh with friends & sharing food.

What are your top tips for coping with life – Smile- Trust the Lord commit my ways unto him, fishing, sailing, my campervan, enjoy yourself, keep breathing, follow orders, walking, be happy, garden, just keep going, talk to people, live life to the full, sequence dancing & Men's shed



Sadly at the peak of my illness I came across a kids programme (lazy town) I ended up watching it from start to finish, it was so upbeat I tended to feel better after, I still watch it occasionally if feeling low

I've had severe depression, I was wandering around - I met Johnny, he got me involved in things. I feel so much better, that's since September

Men's shed attracts people who've been through hard times, they find it hard to communicate – maybe been bereaved or lost a partner

A story about how connections are made: One lady, Kathleen, talked about how she felt envious of the Men's Shed. It meets often, and there are lots of men there. Kathleen's husband Tommy is involved in the Men's Shed, and Kathleen said she could see how much he got out of it.

I asked Kathleen what she would like to do, and she talked about knitting and sewing, and meeting up with others.

One other lady joined the café later, and at the "Tips for coping" table talked about how she carries her knitting everywhere with her, and brings it out as doing knitting calms her anxieties.

We introduced Kathleen and this lady, and they talked about things, and agreed they would meet the following week to talk about setting up a knitting group.

A story about how feedback can encourage people: Johnny who organises the Men's shed was at the cafe. During the café he got feedback from several others who were at the café about how much his organising of the shed has helped them manage their mental health. Johnny felt very encouraged to hear that the work he does as a volunteer had helped so many people to get connected to something that had led to them feeling better and more resilient.

Arts and crafts help with stress! We had brought some art and craft materials including adult colouring in books, card making and origami. The café seemed too "busy" for there to be time with arts and crafts, but during one table conversation about tips for coping, one man shared how making origami shapes had helped him. I gave him the origami set, and he then spent the rest of the café teaching others how to do origami!

Effective relationships help conversation. During the café many participants at the event talked about how welcome and supported they feel by Jo (Health in Mind) and Juliana (Capacity Building Team, SBC). It was evident that we were running this café as part of a community that trusts its workers, and people talked positively about the services and support that is available to them locally.

As our session was part of Wellbeing week in Eyemouth Jo Highet from Health in Mind collated the feedback forms which were printed and used as part of Eyemouth Wellbeing Week:

Eyemouth Wellbeing Week

Name of activity: HAPPINESS HABITS CAFÉ

Date: 29/9/16

1) How did you feel about this activity?

Awful x 0 Not very good x 0 Good x 2 Really Good x 4 Brilliant x 5
(one blank)

Any comments e.g. what did you enjoy or what could have been improved?

It would have been good to have a discussion about all the habits
General conversation, interesting learning about others
Enjoyed talking to fellow members and social staff
Communication could be better, meeting new people and chatting
Company and chat

Advertising

Enjoyed the company I would be on my own if at home

Open more than one day

Writing on the tablecloth and meeting new friends. Talking about wool was awesome

Enjoyed talking to different people

I enjoyed the interaction with people the table artistry and the chance to show off origami skill

2) Would you be interested in attending an activity like this on a regular basis (if not already offered locally)

No x1

Yes x 2

Any Comments

Do not attend every week often away on holiday

Great to see people coming together

This would be great for the wellbeing about getting out

3) Do you think Wellbeing Week should be offered every year?

No x 0

Yes x 12

4) Is there anything else to support wellbeing you would like to see offered in Eyemouth?

Maybe a citizen scientist project

I think a list of local clubs and societies should be collated and distributed

Just a continued networking of all local organisations to provide a concise larger event

More people coming to Men's Shed women included

Senior companions

More things going on everything closed down except here

Wellbeing for young adults is worth thinking about

5) How did you hear about Wellbeing Week?

Poster/flyer x 2 Press-Newspaper/Radio x 1 Word of mouth x 10

Social Media-Facebook/Twitter x Other x 3 (1-Jobclub, 1-through Jo)
(some highlighted more than one source)

Feedback from the partners:

Jo from Health in Mind gave some feedback about a participant at the café who has now started coming to the Men's Shed:

"I wanted to share one of the positive outcomes I have heard about in the last couple of days re one of the participants of the Cafe. He had never been in TEDDA before (I had mentioned the Cafe when I saw him in the local library) is now attending Men's Shed."

Juliana from the CCBT said: **"I really think the event was very positive not only for the participants but also for the Berwickshire Community Capacity Building project. Although not specifically mentioned, I think participants' feedback really touched on relevant points to our service with regards to isolation and activities to improve the well-being of older people such as physical activities (Gentle Exercise and Walking football), food as a way to bring people together (community lunch clubs), sense of meaning and purpose (Men's sheds) and social activities (music and dance) which is a good guidance for us when working with community groups."**

While there, I had the chance to meet people and chat about what kind of activities people would like to see happening in Eyemouth. I had had conversations about a tea dance group which I suggested to people while there and the response was quite positive. Since then, I have spoken to volunteers and managed to build a partnership with NHS Borders to start a tea dance group where people can come for a healthy bowl of soup and have some singing and, hopefully some dancing as a way to tackle social isolation and improve well-being (please see poster attached) which again, was one of the things that has been pointed out during the cafe. Kathleen, mentioned in your evaluation, is contributing with the selection of songs and has volunteered to decorate the hall with her garden flowers.

I strongly believe the session was extremely positive and had an impact on the well-being of those attending. It prompted people to talk about what makes them feel well which also contributed to an overview of what people want to see happening in their communities. Working with you and Jo was a pleasure and in my opinion, a good example of collaborative work."

Contacts for Happiness Habits Cafes:

Christine Ryder, Communications & Resource Worker with Outside the Box. christine@otbds.org. Mobile: 07921 265515

Lindsey Gray, Associate Worker with Outside the Box
lindsey@spinningfish.net Mobile: 07865 081369

Outside the Box

Unit F10, 150 Brand Street, Glasgow, G51 1DH

Office: 0141 419 0451

Website: <http://otbds.org>



The Flourishing Borders project is funded by:

