



Mental Health: Networker Scheme

Summary

The Networker scheme provides one-to-one support for individuals who have become isolated, and identifies ways in which to help rebuild their confidence and link them back in to their community.

We receive an average of 24 referrals a month to the Networker scheme, from 23 different agencies, as well as self referrals and those from family and friends.

After 6-8 visits with a client we discharge them to continue to attend activities on their own, and also refer them onto other statutory and community agencies and activities as well as our own Befriending scheme.

We also provide specialist advice and networking on activities relating to post-natal depression, breastfeeding or family support, and work to improve clients knowledge of healthy eating.

Our impact

We regularly update GPs on the service, which has significantly raised our profile. As a result 80% of people who have self-referred have been given information and contact details about the scheme through their GP.

We have recently employed a bilingual Networker who is able to speak a community language, and another who is experienced in the area of occupational therapy and learning disabilities, to help us to be more responsive to clients with these specialist needs.

We continue to broaden Networkers knowledge of mental health needs and the services available, and have worked with a number of organisations including Mind, Seniors Show The Way, Project 6 (substance misuse) and Carers Connection to offer training and information sessions.

13 people have received one-to-one Cook & Eat sessions to improve their knowledge and confidence about cooking and also to look at the importance of nutrition in overall health and emotional wellbeing. These have been found to be invaluable by clients receiving this support and as a result four clients proceeded to attend Networker Cook & Eat group on a regular basis.

We have engaged 71 clients in new activities, and distribute 'What's On' directories to all Networker clients which contain details of activities in their local area.

Meetings regularly take place with HALE's Community Development workers to discuss gaps in activities. A gap for social support group was identified in the Bolton Woods/Windhill area. This has been addressed by the development of Chatterboxes an open group which is now being delivered on a weekly basis at an independent living older peoples accommodation. A gap has recently been identified around groups for men aged 30-50 and interest amongst our clients in this age group centred around vintage cars, trams and railways, therefore activities are currently being explored which would reflect these

- 68% of people stated they had more information about local activities and felt more confident to approach new services and activities
- Over 80% of clients have continued to attend activities and built up confidence to attend independently or with a relative or friends that they have made there
- 75% of clients felt that they were happier, more self-confident, more calm and relaxed as a result of Networker involvement
- 45% feel they are more active or mobile as a result of Networker intervention



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interests. In addition, Networkers identified gaps in ongoing reminiscence activities for older people. We have applied for funding to initiate an Older Peoples Reminiscence Theatre group which is anticipated to be an intergenerational exercise working with Health & Social Care students at Shipley College.

Comments from participants

"Finally I am more relaxed and I am most relaxed when I'm at the luncheon club on Tuesday. I like your Carol – she's marvellous. I feel a real person since she's been coming not just a grumpy old woman. I was only half alive before! I'm taking more control of my life. If I don't want to do something I say so."

"Networkers helped to get my relative a visual door chime and improved telephone. This has improved the security and quality of life. They also introduced her to services that she did not know about. A very committed Networker! Thank You!"

"The Networker scheme made me more confident, in terms of getting out and making myself do things. I am finally enjoying life as a mum!"

"It (Networker service) is of great help to someone feeling isolated and low in spirits. Thank you!"

"The Networker service is such a good service. Many people would benefit from this service. A Networker got me going with new ideas and encouraged me to get out. What a friendly person!"
(Elderly, male client)

"HALE has given mum social independence/interactivity with people alike which in return had made her happy and helped build up her confidence again. Activities at Cardigan House help keep mums brain stimulated. All this is due to being with people that care and safe boundaries in place. We have benefited so much from the information on what was available for mum, knowing she was in the hands of someone who genuinely cared for my mums health and wellbeing. The activities and actions put in place have taken a lot of worry away. Knowing she is getting what she needs to keep her safe and she is getting what she needs to keep her safe and happy whilst I'm unavailable. Mum loves going to Cardigan House and has made her happy which is and who she's with takes a big worry off my shoulders. I would definitely recommend HALE to anyone in need – Chrissie you have done a wonderful job with care and compassion. I thank you for that..."

Case Study:

Client A was referred to HALE by her GP who conducted home visits over a period of time due to the agrophobic tendencies of the client. She was severely depressed and low because of this and had no social contact other than her husband, who had an enduring terminal illness. Through her Networker visits, the client slowly built her confidence to discuss her anxieties and agreed to take one small step which was to allow a mobile hairdresser to attend her home for hair styling. This client had not been near a pair of scissor for over 4 years! Her confidence went from strength to strength after this... She rediscovered her passion for dance and now independently attends Zumba and Salsa classes at the ISIS Centre and Windhill Community Centre. Though her confidence to engage in conversation with other people is still low, she reports to be happier and even plans to enroll onto a college course. The Networker addressed the couples anxieties about her needs and was able to introduce them to Carers Resource. Emergency care planning was conducted and they now feel much more comfortable about the arrangements of their care should they face loss due to the husbands illness. Both Client A and her husband valued the involvement of the Networker and now pursue activities independently in their community.