

“A Way Forward” Pilot Project

Helping women in Tower Hamlets, suffering from chronic pain and illness, who have exhausted available NHS treatment options.

Analysis & Presentation of Monitoring Data

June to September 2023

Stage 1 of program:

- 1:1 discovery call to assess suitability for program
- 1:1 visioning and triage/assessment sessions
- 5 x 1:1 Complementary health treatments
- 5 x group health coaching sessions

Funded by NHS Social Prescribers Community Chest and
Canary Wharf Community Grants Programme



Cranbrook

Our participants

11 women suffering from chronic pain and illness engaged with the program. Ages ranged from 24 to 69 years.

7/11	recruited via social prescribers/community connectors.
6/11	Disabled
7/11	unpaid carers
7/11	reported suicidal ideation
11/11	reported suffering from associated mental health issues.

Ethnicity

Bangladeshi	4
White	3
African	1
Vietnamese	1
Caribbean	1
Polish	1

The data in this report shows changes in:

- **physical wellbeing**
- **mental wellbeing**
- **confidence in meeting goals set in the initial 1:1 visioning/coaching session.**

Attendance and retention

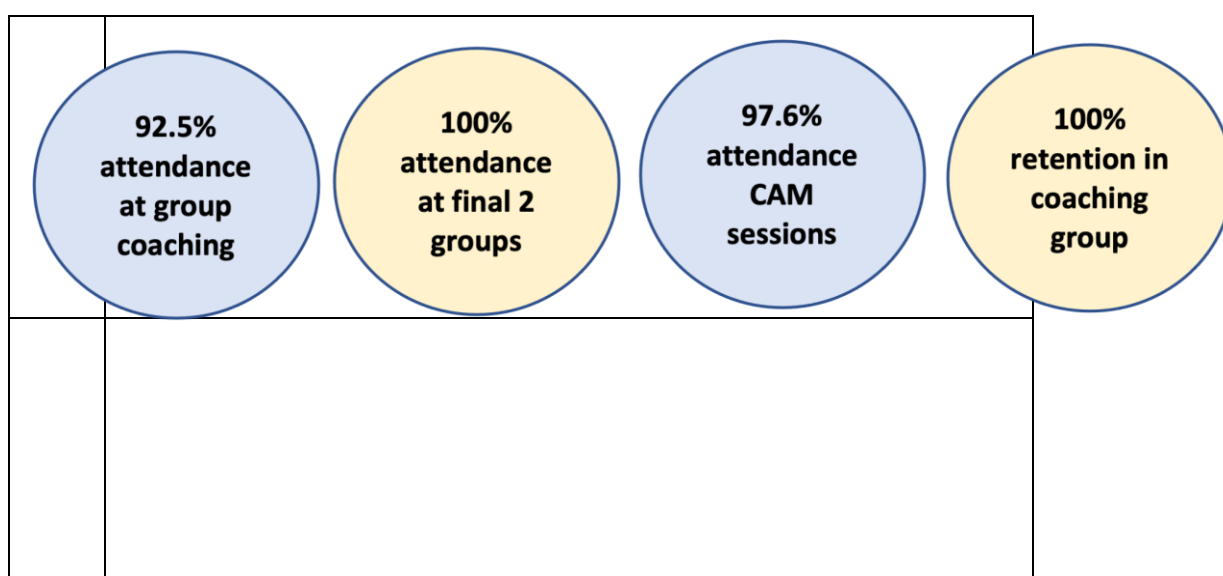
- Despite finding the discovery call and visioning 1:1 coaching session helpful, 1 person dropped out due to emergency caring responsibilities. She was recruited as a reserve, not a full participant, ie. she would only have received 1 complementary therapy session plus the 5 x group coaching sessions.

We used a reserve system so that if a participant dropped out of the program, someone was ready to take up the complementary therapy sessions.

- 1 person began the program as a full participant but was unable to fully attend. We signposted her in her assessment/triage session to the “First Love Foundation” and she subsequently left the program due to hospitalisation and receiving domestic abuse respite care. One of our initial reserves took her place.
- 1 person was on the waiting list and was recruited as a new reserve. She attended 2 sessions of complementary therapy and an assessment session but not coaching sessions

To give a fair understanding of the impact of the programme, these 3 individuals were not included in the analysis, leaving a sample of 8 people.

Of the 8 women who received the full program, there was:



Impact Measures

In line with the measures required by our funders, we asked participants at baseline and after the intervention to rate themselves from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) across three statements:

“I play an active part in my community”

“I have a good level of happiness”

“I have a good level of physical wellbeing”

We found that that:

- 6/8 people felt more engaged with their community.
- 8/8 people felt happier.
- 5/8 people felt their physical wellbeing had improved.

The average (median) scores for each question at both time-points are presented in the bar graphs below.



Feedback

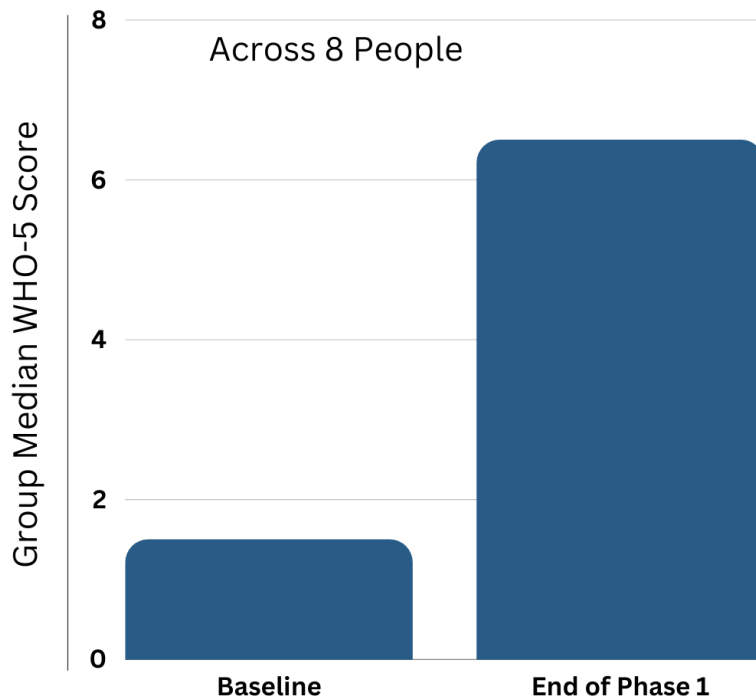
8/8 participants would recommend the programme to a friend.

Quality of Life

We used the WHO-5 Wellbeing Index to measure self-reported quality of life. The WHO-5 Scale presents five statements and asks participants to respond from 0 (at no time) to 5 (all of the time), reflecting how they have felt in the last two weeks. Possible total scores range from 0-25, with scores less than 13 reflecting a clinically low level of wellbeing.

- The median (average) score for the group after the intervention (6.5) was higher than before the intervention (1.5).
- 7/8 people experienced an increase in wellbeing, and 1 person stayed the same.
- Before the programme, all 8 people had clinically low levels of wellbeing. By the end of the programme, 1 person had moved to a clinically healthy score. This person experienced what scientists call a 'clinically significant' improvement in wellbeing.
- Because baseline scores were particularly low for wellbeing, it may be that more sessions are needed before we see clinically significant improvements for the rest of the group.

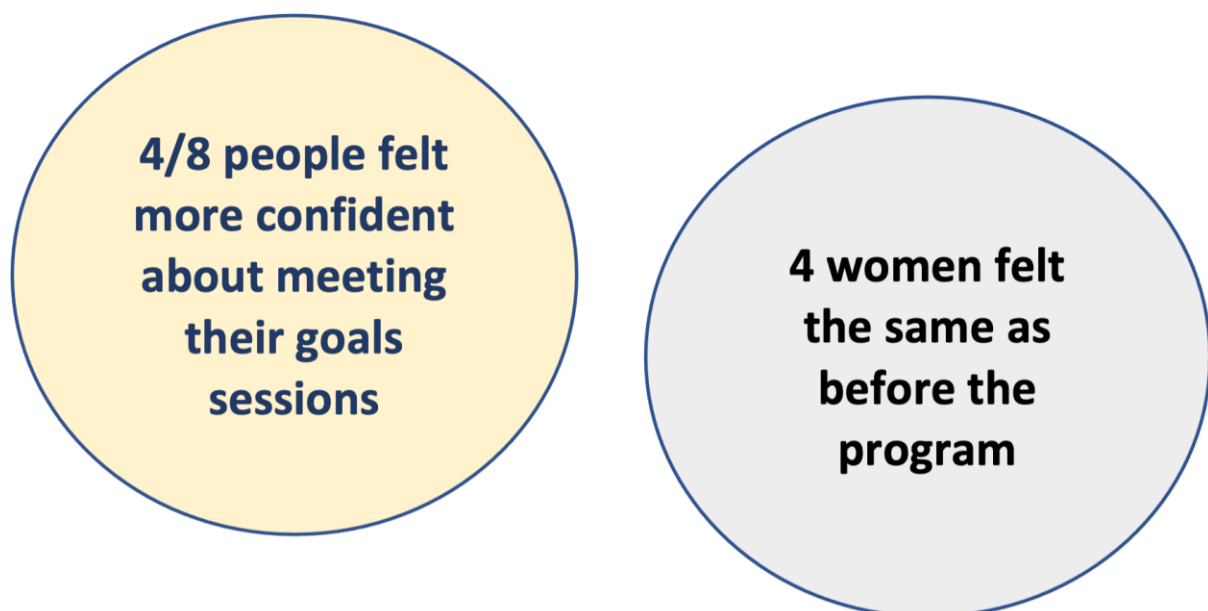
Stage 2 of our pilot program will provide more sessions to help women reach clinically healthy wellbeing levels.



Confidence in Meeting Health & Wellbeing Goals

We asked participants to rate how confident they felt in meeting the health & wellbeing goals they set in their initial visioning session. We used the same scale as the WHO-5 for simplicity, from 0 (at no time) to 5 (all of the time).

After the end of phase 1 of the programme:



We envisage that at the end of Stage 2 of our pilot, more women will be confident to meet their wellbeing and health goals.

Improvements in Physical Symptoms

We asked participants to rate their change in physical health symptoms on a scale ranging from 100% worse to 100% better. No change (0%) was located in the middle.

- 1 person did not give a numerical answer for this as stated her pain comes and goes.
- Of the remaining 7 people, 5 people reported an improvement in physical symptoms and 2 people stayed the same. No one got worse.
- The median (average) improvement in physical symptoms was 50% better. The minimum was 0% (no change) and the maximum was 80% better.

We predict that symptoms will improve in stage 2 of the project, where women are offered additional sessions/treatments.

Participant quotes

This is the best pain program I have been on. I've done one at the hospital and another one. They really get you involved and discussing your problems with others. It's great!

(AH – after 2nd coaching session)

I felt really ill today. I wasn't going to come! But I pushed myself because I always enjoy it and always feel better after it.

(AH – after 2nd coaching session)

My pain went from 8 out of 10 at the beginning of the cranio - sacral and acupuncture session to 3 out of 10 at the end.

(SA – after 2nd complementary therapy session)

Treatment is going so well. I'm doing very well with my goals. I really want to better myself.

I need to do this for my health. I'm take this seriously.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

I feel so grateful. I really appreciate it. I can't thank you enough. Have a lovely week. See you, next Monday."

(Text from Participant SAM - after 5 treatments and 3 group health coaching

Tramadol doesn't take pain away but with acupuncture I'm aware of different sensations.

Case Study 1

MB is a 55 year old single mother living in Bow. She is an unpaid carer for her eldest son who suffers from psychosis, with episodes of schizophrenia. When she first presented to the program she said she was in agony, with severe pain in her leg, bottom and hip. She was prescribed strong medication, codeine, by her GP. She says:

"After the first box i didn't want any more but I took it sometimes because the pain was so bad and i didn't want it to come back and I had to get on with life. I took it sparingly. I took it only if I needed to do something in my life, like take my son to the doctor or going shopping, getting the laundry, helping my mum etc. The medicine gave me energy to think clearly and focus on everyday normal stuff. I wasn't locked in that constant pain but I was worried because I felt it was masking the pain but not getting rid of it. I was also worried about living on tablets. I don't want to do that.

When I saw the program flyer, I was interested in reflexology but I'm so glad I got cranial osteopathy because I haven't had it before. At first I was really sceptical but I noticed change slowly but surely. After my first treatment I decided to stop the codeine altogether. I felt less pain after each treatment. On my 3rd treatment my constant niggling pain was gone. It was like my life turned around. Because I was pain free I started to look forward to loads of things. Even things like cleaning the house and cooking. I could function again. I couldn't believe it.

The group sessions are really good. It's really good to know that you are not the only one going through stuff. Your mindset reigns it in to realise that pain is not great or comfortable but we can try and help ourselves with different things, like exercise, eating healthily . It all came back to me about healthy food from my childhood. My mum used to give us loads of vegetables and dahl and lentils, lady fingers and spinach and I remembered how much I enjoyed healthy food - I miss it in fact.

Now that I'm not in pain - I'm interested to learn more and take back my life. I want to get back on track. I want to learn more. I want to deal with my pain and at the same time look after myself and my son. I couldn't do that when my pain was so bad. This program is getting me to focus on myself. In the past I always focussed on getting help for my son. I really want to keep going and learn more and keep myself pain free."

Case Study 2

LB is a 49 year old Vietnamese single mother and unpaid carer. She lives near Tower Hamlets Cemetery park and cares for her mother, who suffers from schizophrenia, and 3 daughters with mental health issues. She presented at her assessment sessions feeling very upset and disheartened.

She described the difficulty of her life and her subsequent depression. She said she was finding it difficult to cope with her life and did not feel she could go on the way she was living.

At the end of the program LB started wearing brightly coloured clothes. She looked visibly happier and brighter and voiced this openly. During the 4th group coaching session, she reported:

"I feel great!. I can't do proper exercise so walking is really good for my mental health. When I'm really stressed I now go for a walk in the park. I hear the birds singing. Sometimes I do 2 or 3 laps of the park, sometimes I just do 1. This program has very much helped with my life and mental health. I'm getting out every day and breathing and looking at the sky. Clearly the treatment is helping me - plus iron tablets.

When I walked into the first coaching group, I wasn't sure this would help, but after doing the acupuncture and craniosacral therapy you feel you can see the change in your body. My knee pain is still there but It really helps when I have the treatment and the pain goes away but after 2 or 3 days it comes back - There is an enormous improvement and I wonder if I had more treatment what might happen?

I also feel like I'm not alone. I like the groups and being with other people who share my problems. I used to think "Why me? Why me?. You feel isolated like no one is going to get you. Coming to the group you see there are more of us - maybe even millions of people with the same problems and it helps. It helps to know you are not alone and to meet with other women who understand."