

Later Life Matters (South)

Case Study April 2016

Background

Betty (name changed) is a 78 year old woman who lives on her own within a sheltered housing complex. She moved to the complex in 2014 following a lower leg amputation as a result of diabetes. Betty now uses a wheelchair to get around. In addition to her mobility challenges, Betty has macular degeneration and is registered blind.

Betty has raised a family and was married for over 30 years. Sadly, her husband and sons have all passed away and her relationship with her brother, who lives in Glasgow, has broken down. Betty said she felt very connected to the community when she was in her own house however, since 2014, when she had to move, Betty has been feeling increasingly isolated and in need of some social support.

Overcoming barriers

Following a referral from a colleague within GAMH, Betty indicated that she would like to attend the Mindfulness Course but was unable to make her way to the venue. To overcome this barrier staff at the project organised for one of our volunteers to meet Betty at her home and support her via a taxi to the Mindfulness course. The volunteer was also happy to stay for the duration of the course and support Betty with any hand-outs and written work that needed to be done as she was unable to complete this due to her visual impairment.

Outcomes



Using the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory, Cathy's scored herself as 32 in the beginning which rose to 36 following the course. She commented that she found the course:

“emotionally helpful. I feel calmer and more relaxed.”

As a result of the support that Betty had received from the volunteer during the course, it was thought that perhaps she would enjoy continuing this link by embarking on a befriending relationship with the volunteer. Betty was delighted and she began to meet with the volunteer weekly. During the assessment process, she set herself the following 3 goals:

- 1) Go up and down Albert Drive to see how it has changed
- 2) Go out for an Indian meal in the local area
- 3) Visit friends who run a local business

With the support of the befriender, Betty was able to achieve all 3 goals within a two month period. When asked what she liked best about the service, Betty said; “Going out with Amy is what I like best, she's always nice to me.”

The future

Due to a waiting list for therapies last year, Betty has had to wait some months but is now about to start receiving complimentary therapies . She has received massage therapy only once in the past but found it to be very beneficial. She said she is “very excited” about being able to have these at home and that it is “such a treat!” as getting out and about is so difficult for her.

In addition, Betty enjoyed the CD given out at the end of the Mindfulness Course which has some guided mediations. After using this, Betty had the idea that she would like to access some audio books as she finds it very difficult to read now. Following a referral to Visibility Scotland, Betty has been able to access some audio books and they have supplied her with an easy to use device for listening to them.

With an increase in her confidence Betty has bought herself a laptop and wants to learn how to use it. We have sourced a class, through Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living, which is accessible for people with visual impairments. They are also able to provide transport. The volunteer and Betty have discussed attending the first class together.