

Vignette Four

One of the groups I was involved in was a physical activity group. In this group I had eight people involved. Everything from the participants/service users initially planned all the content for this particular programme so they set their group goals and I worked alongside them in terms of having personal goals. That could have been anything from weight loss and obviously into resource acquisition, getting familiar with resources in the community etc, so goals were set by them; I worked beside them to actually fulfil them. There was one lady who had a problem – I asked them how we could measure our success over the next twelve weeks – and so, as a group, as a whole, everybody agreed that we'd measure it by two things – weight and the number of laps people were going to do, laps in a swimming pool, because everyone agreed that we'd do this in a pool environment. So, there were some doing it by laps and some doing it by weight loss. I had one lady in this group who from the first session (with anxiety disorders) who had trouble with just having her feet in the pool and so that was the starting point I had with her. Over the twelve week programme I worked with her on a weekly basis, we went from just having her foot in the pool and just gradually progressing. By the ninth/tenth week she was able to submerge herself up to her neck and do a lap of the pool, because obviously the pool got deeper. It was waist high and then as she got to the end it was getting quite high and her anxieties were starting to take over but we broke through some of those barriers. I made her stop and stay in one place for ten minutes and get used to it and then make our way back. By the ninth week I had her doing two or three laps. She got into doing laps but the major barrier was just getting over that initial anxiety of having that water coming up to her neck. Yes, she was a different kettle of fish and I had to support her in that way and yet, it was the whole group doing it because those guys who were doing their laps all had weight loss by the end of the twelve weeks. Now, when we celebrated at the end of the twelve weeks, celebrated the achievement of goals that was the moment that it was all worthwhile for me - the expressions and the self-esteem and the confidence that they had got from it and the pride and the motivation to continue. So now if there's an opportunity to go to the pool be it with a group or a friend, she's there. Along with that whole group everyone achieved their goals in that semester.