

Mental Health Charter

Case study

September 2016

- 1. Project name:**
Get Set to Go - canoeing
- 2. Organisation name:**
**Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind
in partnership with British Canoeing**
- 3. Target group:**
**People who experience mental health
issues**
- 4. Aims of project:**



British Canoeing funded 6 weeks of canoeing sessions for participants from Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind's 'Get Set to Go' project.

8 people took part in 6 canoe sessions during July and August 2016. Each session was 2 hours. The 7 male and 1 female participants were aged between 19 and 51.

Sessions took place at Tees Barrage International White Water Centre with support from Tees Active instructors and included activities such as sit on kayaks, canoes and stand up paddle boards.

5. Impact of project

Participants completed a questionnaire at the end of sessions. Their responses included:

Are you new to Canoeing, have you done it before?

- 'I have never had the opportunity to do anything like this'
- 'I have tried canoeing but a long time ago'
- 'We did some in the army cadets'
- 'I canoed when I was in the army 30 years ago'

What challenges did you experience in terms of the canoe sessions?

- 'Trying to stay in a straight line'
- 'My confidence was low at the first session, I had a bad experience in the army when I capsized and was wedged against a rock'
- 'I wanted to improve at each session'
- 'I found it hard to balance and to paddle on the opposite side to the direction I wanted to go; I kept crashing into the bank at first'



What have you enjoyed about the sessions and how has the canoeing helped you?

'I have enjoyed getting out in the fresh air, the nature and an escape from the world on the water'

'Motivation, relaxing and my fitness in general'

'I have looked forward to the sessions; it has helped to get my mojo back and improve my fitness'

'It has motivated me to get out and do something. I would only have been sitting at home'

'It helps me concentrate on something else and provides a relaxing distraction'

What has been the main positive for you?

'I have had the opportunity to take part in something I enjoy and to meet new people'

'I have had lots of fun, especially falling in'

'Meeting other people and team building'

'Being part of a group and doing activity with others maybe have an opportunity to take it further'

'Meeting new people and the support from the instructors'

What does canoeing offer that is different from other sports?

'It offers the chance to be on the river which I enjoy and provides a different form of exercise'

'Gives you confidence, if you fall in you can just get straight back on'

'Something completely different'

'It's fun, not too serious'

'Upper body fitness and strength'

Was anything particularly helpful in supporting your canoeing sessions?

'All the instructors have been brilliant'

'The other participants have supported me'

'Great instructors helped to build my confidence'

Why would you recommend canoeing to people with mental health issues?

'It helps your mental health, confidence and fitness; I have learned new skills and improved every week'

'It's a relaxing feeling; it can be as easy or hard as you want to make it and its good fun'

'It helps improve confidence, motivation and you feel part of a group, it helps people feel included'

'It's tranquil on the water; it's a different feeling, a good feeling'

'It gets you out of the house and helps you meet people'

'Its fantastic medicine for people, you can take it at your own pace with no pressure'

6. Further information

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