



Sport For Confidence & Love to Move Case Study

Sport for Confidence Occupational Therapists and Coaches in Essex are transforming the lives of those living with dementia through their Love to Move sessions at Basildon Sporting Village.



Background

Sport for Confidence staff first trained as Love to Move deliverers during lockdown back in November 2020. Both health professionals and specialist coaches attended the online training with the British Gymnastics Foundation and went on to quickly pass their final assessments enabling them to set up Love to Move sessions in Leisure Centres across Essex and London.

Their highly skilled and enthusiastic deliverers have shown how Love to Move can benefit a wide range of people with differing needs, and I went to visit one of their sessions specifically for people living with dementia and older adults with learning disabilities. The session has been running for 6-8 months now and many of the participants are bussed in from an activity centre called Peaceful Place, which aims to give people living with dementia, often diagnosed with young-onset dementia, sport, and exercise at least twice per week.

Impact/Outcomes – Key success factors

There are 24 participants in the session ranging in age from 35 up to 90 years old and most of them are up on their feet dancing by the end of the session. Since coming to the Love to Move session, Liz, a staff member at Peaceful Place said, “it’s given them their independence back, it’s given them their lives back”. When asked, what changes she has seen in the participants, she said “they have increased confidence, self-assurance, mental recall, and they are more emotionally positive”. “Their finger co-ordination is growing” which means it is having a knock-on effect on “their art, and their creativity” as a result. “People are joining in with things in general more because their self-esteem is growing”

Liz explained that when her group return to Peaceful Place after a Love to Move session, they chat more and socialise more with each other, the mood is “upbeat” but also calmer in general. She said, “it’s not just uplifting for them [the participants], it lifts the staff up as well – we’ve seen the journey they have made”.

Megan, an Occupational Therapist, and the lead deliverer for the session today, said “I’ve noticed a difference in their physical ability and cognition, they have the ability to follow along better and do more movements”. Pat has been coming to the session with her carer for 4 weeks and has progressed from, refusing to come into the room in her wheelchair on week one, to taking part for some of the session in her wheelchair in week two, to now walking through the door without a wheelchair and fully participating.

Jo has young onset dementia and Huntingdon’s disease and has been coming to the sessions for 6 months. Before, she was struggling to keep her arms and legs still, but now she has more control over them. Her confidence has grown so much, she participates fully in the whole session and even gets up to dance in the centre of the circle.



After the session, Jo came over to me because she wanted to tell me “I love it here, I love coming here!”. When asked how Love to Move makes her feel, she said “happy!” with a massive beaming smile.

Future developments

Sport for Confidence hope to set up more Love to Move sessions over the coming months and have now trained the majority of their staff to deliver the programme.

Contact Details:

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