Mental Health Charter Case study







March 2019

1. Project name: Safe, Fit & Well

2. Organisation name: Tyne Metropolitan College

- 3. Target group: At Tyne Metropolitan College we've developed our capacity to support learners around their mental wellbeing over the last couple of years through educating staff and creating a programme to provide physical activity as an intervention to increase mental wellbeing at the College.
- 4. Aim of project: Our Sport Development team completed the Youth Mental Health First Aid training in May 2018 and have recently delivered awareness sessions for curriculum staff to help educate them around signs, symptoms and the support system in place at the College.
- **5. Project overview:** The project enables tutors to refer students at risk of anxiety, depression or mental wellbeing issues into our team. We follow this up with a brief discussion around the individual to ensure the project is suitable for them and what support would work best.

Following the discussion, we take them through a gym induction and their 3-month membership is activated. Once a week during the initial month they get access to a 1-1 gym session with an instructor who can advise around exercises tailored to that individual. At 3 and 6 months we review progress with the individual and use a physical activity questionnaire as well as a mental wellbeing questionnaire to measure how effective the project is.

We are currently looking at ways to improve this project to ensure the College can offer the best support possible to our learners.

6. Impact and testimonials: Prior to getting involved in the activities offered by Tyne Metropolitan College Matthew would exercise once per week as he found it boring and hard work. He was completing his Level 3 National Diploma in Engineering and was referred into the enrichment opportunities at the college by his tutor who noticed that his workload was building up which was impacting on his stress levels.

Matthew described himself as out of shape and the cost of a gym membership made it difficult to be active, but he wanted to lose weight and improve his running. "I found it motivating and I now love doing exercise because you can see the results" as Matthew discussed his weight loss throughout his time being involved in the project. He had noticed a plateau with his weight loss prior to the project, but with the boost of being involved with the college through gym sessions he lost two stone which made him feel more confident, happier and closer to achieving his dream



job of going into the Royal Navy. He had previously been rejected a year ago due to being overweight, but they set him a target to reduce his BMI to under 30.

The project helped his physical health as previously Matthew was 21 stone and struggled to do 10 minutes of exercise, but now he is losing weight and can manage activity for three to four hours per day. The project has also benefited his mental wellbeing as he feels less self-conscious, which previously led to increased stress levels, but his tutor has noticed an improvement with his academic studies as he is now able to get assignments in on time.

Before taking part, in an attempt to join the Navy, his 1.5 mile running time was 26 minutes, but he has reduced this to 12 minutes and is now able to do pull ups and press ups. Due to the massive improvement in his fitness he is close to reaching his target which will enable him to join the Royal Navy. Matthew is also using this opportunity to inspire friends and family to become more active and enjoying the additional benefits of spending time with them going on bike rides which he was previously unable to do. He is also feeling more inspired to take part in more physical activity rather than spending his free time playing video games.

His advice to those unsure if physical activity is for them "Go for it as there is nothing you can lose and once you start to see the results you won't feel as if you hate it anymore. Always make it fun – like a sport you enjoy or can do with friends or family."

Matthew finished by saying "I have found the project at Tyne Metropolitan College has made me love sport and exercise, but also who I am. It has helped me to achieve my goal physically, but also into my desired employment."

"To see the progress Matthew has made since taking part in the gym sessions at the College has been an inspiration not only to other students, but to staff as well. With his goal in mind and initially having an abundance of stress on him in and outside of college, the impact of the project has been massive as we looked to support him to reach his goals with increasing physical activity and moving into his dream job." Craig, Sport Development Manager.

7. Outcomes:

- 10 staff have completed Youth Mental Health First Aid:
- 10 learners currently engaged in the project;
- 2 learners have recently completed their 3-month reviews for this academic year;
- Both learners have went from 0 hours of activity per week to completing around 4 – 5 hours per week of physical activity;
- One learner has recently reduced their level of smoking due to their involvement in the project.



