



Abergavenny Town Council Partnering Agreement Monitoring Information

Mind Monmouthshire Wellbeing Services October 2020 – March 2021 for Postcode NP7

1.0 Overview

Our full-time worker left at the end of August. This has meant that we have not been able to deliver our wellbeing courses for a short time however we have supported people via our Information and Advice services, Active Monitoring and via wellbeing calls. These services have been enhanced temporarily to ensure that individuals received the support that they required.

We recruited the staff member funded by Abergavenny Town Council and the worker started work mid-November. She was joined by another new full-time worker at the same time who will co deliver and support the work in Abergavenny and Monmouthshire.

The two new staff members have been busy redesigning / re writing our core courses so that they are compatible with zoom, designing new course content (for example; Life After Lockdown Course that we started in April) and upskilling in the use of zoom and new technology. Tried and trusted methods of obtaining feedback face to face has moved to online forms and the use of a texting system. There have obviously been challenges along the way, including a remote induction for new staff!

Some of the challenges that we have been working with in terms of delivery (of the outcomes that we agreed pre covid19) are as follows:

- Remodelling an entire face to face service to a remote/ Zoom service.
- Engaging people (who may / may not have used our services before).

We have increased our social media presence however are aware that many people will not be linked to us or indeed use social media. With organisations operating remotely our traditional methods of promotion are reduced i.e. posters, presence in venues, word of mouth. We are looking at ways to promote our services other than via social media in the first instance.

- Providing services that are not reliant on access to wifi or mobile data. We know that many people have limited digital access or the facilities/ finance to access. Anecdotally we also know that some people do not want to use Zoom at all. Our Active Monitoring service has been able to meet the gap of some of this group as this takes place on the phone.
- Many individuals who have joined us on Zoom for our wellbeing sessions have needed initial support to set themselves up on Zoom and learn how to use it. We have done this via the 'phone, email and text. We are also supporting people to engage with external services to assist with this. Once in the Zoom sessions we have spent time with the group learning how to use it whilst also managing the dynamics of a remote

group. Following the sessions, staff were available immediately afterwards for wellbeing calls or additional support.

- Zoom delivery and group readiness, preparation and support in its entirety takes more time than face to face group sessions.

2.0 Weekly Wellbeing Calls:

We have continued to offer our wellbeing calls. These wellbeing calls offer a supportive and friendly voice, checking in with people who were isolated, alone and whose mental health was being impacted on by the Covid restrictions.

Each wellbeing phone call was responsive and person centred and covered subjects such as accessing essential services, keeping fit, activities to do at home, self-care, relaxation, challenging negative thoughts, goal setting, daily routine and safety planning in regards to mental health.

In total we made 57 wellbeing calls to Abergavenny residents between October – March 2021.

3.0 Zoom Wellbeing Courses

From October - March we have delivered the following groups and courses:

- Stress Busting x 2 sessions
- 5 Ways to Wellbeing x 2 sessions
- Understanding Anxiety 8 weekly sessions over 8 weeks
- Understanding Depression 8 weekly sessions over 8 weeks
- My Generation 16 weekly sessions over 8 weeks
- Fortnightly Peer Support and Quiz Groups

In addition to the group work we have also provided support when need to participants outside of the group sessions, linking them into additional services and / or listening and supporting.

3.1 Feedback received from these groups:

- 87.5% of participants say that the course has improved their ability to manage their own mental health.
- 87.5% felt that they could put to use the skills and techniques learnt on the course to good use Most Days. 12.5% said they could Every Day.

- 100% of attendees felt that they had learned new techniques for managing their mental health.
- 100% felt they had learned to engage with and challenge negative thoughts.
- 90% of attendees now feel their ability to restart the things that make them feel happy (such as a hobby or seeing friends) had either Greatly or Slightly Improved. 1 person felt that had stayed the same.

These courses (depression and Anxiety included) have enabled me to find a level of assertiveness, that I have never had before and I am making plans to leave my toxic relationship.

"I enjoyed the course. I learnt to be honest with myself and others, since attending the session I have proved it does help to tell others the truth on how I am feeling and not pretend to be fine all the time, It helps to own up to feeling down, that it is ok not to be ok, it's somehow like a freedom to admit honestly... I learnt how to recognize and change thought patterns to help myself." "[this course helps you] meet and talk to others with issues without fear of criticism, judgement or ridicule, Inspires new thought process's which are helpful and enlightening, and gives you hope" (Abergavenny participant)

3.2 My Generation Activity and Wellbeing Group for the over 50 years:

This group is a smaller group allowing for connection, depth of exploration of the subject content, friendships to develop and hopefully encourage participants to take up a new activity after trying activities in the session.

There are two sessions delivered each week, one session being a wellbeing topic and the other a group wellbeing activity. Wellbeing topics have included: feelings, loss, grief and renewal, relaxation and mindfulness, helpful and unhelpful thinking patterns.

As the group got to know each other we realised that they needed more time before the session to socialise and to share. As a solution to support their needs we opened the Zoom room 30 minutes before the actual course starting time to check in with them all and to catch up on their weekends and their news.

Wellbeing Activities have been provided by external facilitators including creative writing, yoga, mindful movement, art and two guest speakers(Kieran Gethin a local boxer and Dipti Tate a Grief practitioner. These activities have all been delivered on zoom.

Feedback from My Generation

I liked the second half doing creative writing

I never knew I could do this!

*Nice to do and try something different, I'll try to write more often,
I liked the bubble visualisation, I will use that again, thank you
Its nice to be part of something, this group and to trust people
I was comforting to talk about those people that we have lost and to share our
memories and to bring a photograph to share with you all*

3.3 Peer Support Group:

This is a more informal group meeting on zoom and is led by a wellbeing worker. There is a set topic for each session but the group is very much about mental health conversations, mutual support and shared interest. Topics have included ; 5 Ways to stay positive during lockdown, Learning to accept uncertainty, Low Mood, Wildlife for Wellbeing(involving Gwent Wildlife). We open the doors to the meeting earlier, people can chat and have a laugh and the sessions tend to start more organically, when the time feels right. One of the highlights has been the 'Get Active' section of the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' were everyone talked so positively and passionately about their favourite walks, jogs, nature spots etc.

Many thanks,, I am benefiting so much from the groups.(Abergavenny Participant)

3.4 Fortnightly Quiz:

This is a small group of regular attenders who enjoy the interaction and fun, especially useful during the lockdown period.

Insight below from Andrew our wellbeing worker: (Confidential)

The quiz has been marvellous fun for all those who attend. Learning, connecting with people, being present, having a laugh and so much more. Those who attend generally taken turns to host, although there is no obligation to do that. Ian Thomas a wellbeing worker from Gwent Wildlife Trust has guest hosted before and his Nature and Wildlife course went down a storm. One participant who is on the quiz and the other courses, let's call him ST, is generally quite quiet on sessions – friendly and content, just not a talker – he hosted a week and really came alive in asking questions on topics that he was passionate about. The joy he got from hosting was palpable and the praise he got from everyone else you could see was a real boost to his confidence, his self-esteem etc. Zoom is a really good platform for this type of activity.

4.0 Performance Measures Statistics October – March 2021 Abergavenny

Number of individuals supported via the resilience and wellbeing project: **Total 32**

Number of attendances within the resilience and wellbeing project: **Total 242**

Number of resilience and wellbeing sessions delivered: zoom groups **Total 56**

Age of individuals who attend:

18 - 24 yrs	0
25 - 34 yrs	6
35 - 49 yrs	12
50 - 64 yrs	9
65 - 79 yrs	5
80 yrs	0

Number of referrals to the resilience and wellbeing project: **Total 58**

5.0 New Partnerships Created:

A staff member from Gwent Wildlife Trust joined in two of our zoom sessions to co facilitate a session on nature and wellbeing.

6.0 Additional Funding Secured:

- Active Monitoring Funding for an extended service till March 2022. Service managed by the Wellbeing and Resilience Project Lead.
- Funding received for a marketing role within the wider organization

7.0 Added Value from Wider Wellbeing Team:

Abergavenny Statistics October – March 2021.

- Active Monitoring Project: 35 referrals and 25 individuals have received the service
- Counselling: 22 individuals are engaged with our subsidised counselling service
- Information, Advice and Assistance 123 individuals contacted the service.

IAA service maintained regular contact with local churches over Christmas 2020 who provided 14 families with Christmas meals in Abergavenny area and 4 family cook your own packs delivered by support workers. In addition, we liaised with the Salvation Army who provided an Aldi voucher for 28 families at Christmas and 20 children who each also had a £15 Argos Voucher to spend on toys. During Easter through liaison with the Salvation Army they provided an Easter egg voucher for 27 families. All vouchers were posted to recipients.

Steph Thomas Recovery and Wellbeing Lead 06/05/ 2021