

Background

Beacon Counselling Trust & Trek Therapy - Parachute Regiment Association (PRA) Programme 2020

The PRA National Lottery funded initiative will involve active members of the association in a structured mutually designed bespoke programme. The programme and its content is underpinned by the NHS evidence-based public mental health messages campaign The 5 Ways to Wellbeing. The focus of The 5 Ways to Wellbeing philosophy aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population through mental health education and was developed by NEF (the new economics foundation) following a commission by the UK Government. BCT in consultation with the PRA will co-design a programme that stimulates and engages its members in relevant mental health and wellbeing improving activities over a 12 month period.

Programme overview:

- Programme design and development phase in consultation with PRA members - 3 month period (January - March 2020).
- Delivery of programme over a 6 month period including weekly activities engaging 2 separate cohorts involving an under 65 years of age group and a 65 to 80 years of age group (April - September 2020).
- Residential activity included as part of the delivery period in Anglesey, North Wales.
- Evaluation and review stage on conclusion of the programme over a 3 month period (October - December 2020).
- The programme includes a “test and learn” approach and evaluation and monitoring are essential to capture learning and evidence that could be used to develop a future programme that would cover a larger geographical area.

Programme content elements:

The elements of the PRA programme design will feature the 5 Ways to Wellbeing messages as its core operating values and objectives. These elements will consist of the following, delivered through accredited mental health education

1. **Connect** - connecting the PRA member's community and others to encourage socialisation, reduce isolation whilst stimulating the spirit of community cohesion.
2. **Be Creative** - developing creativeness and imaginative activities that are enjoyable and meaningful to members.
3. **Keep Learning** - encouraging lifelong learning and new experiential opportunities that increase confidence, further opportunity and access to sustainable skill development.
4. **Take Notice** - developing self- awareness and mindfulness invoking an understanding of one's own thoughts, emotions and feelings.
5. **Be Active** - maintaining good health and wellbeing through enjoyable physical activities that are fun, achievable, makes users feel good about themselves and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Progress to Date

An initial planning meeting took place on 24th January 2020 at Beacon Counselling Trust and this was attended by 14 people, mainly representatives from the PRA and its committee. Neil Platt explained the funding that has been received and the idea behind the programme, including a focus on the “test and learn” approach and why this is needed. Ian Whiteside, from Trek Therapy and Beacon, provided an overview on how the programme would focus on improving emotional wellbeing and physical health and that these go hand in hand. Ian also explained the focus of linking in with the nationally recognised “5 Ways to Wellbeing” and the likely benefits to participants.



There was a strong interest in helping to develop the programme and plenty of good ideas came from the conversations. It was clear that the range of ages and capabilities would need to be a key consideration, as inclusivity and accessibility is crucial to the success of the project.

There was recognition that, as well as improving emotional wellbeing and health, one of the most important outcomes will be a reduction in social isolation. Many members of the PRA live alone, have disabilities, becoming elderly etc. and we should capture the profiles of the people interested so that the programme can be tailored to meet such outcomes and needs.

There was a strong interest in capturing people stories, memories and photographs and it was suggested that these could also be used in education and inter-generational work with cadets, schools etc. Neil mentioned a project carried out by Mersey Sport called “Bowl for Health”, that uses crown green bowling and social activities to engage people of all ages and abilities. This could potentially be replicated and offered as an activity and this was well received. There was also some discussion about the good work that St Helens Rugby Club does in the community around mental health and wellbeing, as well as Everton in the Community, who also have a veteran’s programme that could be linked in some way. It was agreed that Ian, and possibly Patrick, would attend the next PRA meeting (4th February) and present some feedback from today’s meeting and also collect some information from the wider membership on ideas, profiles, suggested activities etc.

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Consultation with membership – 4th February 2020

Age:

Gender:

Marital Status:

Do you live alone:

Do you have a disability? -

Do you currently take part in any social or physical activities? -

Please provide details:

Are you willing to be considered as a participant for this new programme? -

Do you have any skills or experiences that would enable you to assist with delivery of any particular sessions?

Please provide details:

Areas of interest: (please tick and provide further details and ideas)

1. General social activities –

2. Creative/artistic activities –

3. Educational activities/capturing memories etc -

4. Recreational/sporting activities (indoor)-

5. Recreational/sporting activities (outdoor) -