



INNOVATION AGENCY

Academic Health Science Network
for the North West Coast

HEALTH COACHING

Summary

A Lancashire man whose health suffered through weight gain and high blood pressure made changes with help from a health coach – and is now enjoying an active lifestyle for the first time in years.

Stephen Evans is one of hundreds of people to have benefited from health coaching in Lancashire and South Cumbria, after a 'train the trainer' programme was funded by the Innovation Agency.

The challenge

Lancashire and South Cumbria is home to a growing population of 1.7 million people and people are getting older and experiencing long-term health problems. Some of this disease could be avoided or the ill-effects slowed down, if positive action was taken to prevent it.

According to NHS research, 3,500 deaths across Lancashire and South Cumbria are considered preventable. In Lancashire and South Cumbria, cardiovascular disease, heart failure, hypertension (high blood pressure), asthma, dementia and depression are more common than the national average.

Actions taken

The Innovation Agency provided funding to spread the use of health coaching through a 'train the trainer' approach to cascade the learning throughout Lancashire and South Cumbria. This followed a successful application by system leaders to our Transformation Through Innovation Fund in 2017. In the first year, more than 100 people were trained in health coaching.

Support was also provided to NHS Innovation Accelerator Fellow Dr Penny Newman for the launch of a 'Better conversations' website with case studies and information about health coaching. The Innovation Agency organised a launch event and promoted the health coach training which was then delivered in Lancashire and South Cumbria as well as other parts of the country.



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Patient story

Stephen Evans weighed 20 stone, had breathing problems and suffered several mini strokes before he was referred to the Local Specialist Obesity Service. There, he attended an eat-well course and joined an Engaging Activities programme in which he was helped to think through choices and set goals.

Stephen said: "It was not like being talked down to, they got you involved. They helped me set parameters that worked for me and find my own way – it wasn't about points and numbers but finding what worked for me."

His health coach was occupational therapist Suzanne Grady of Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Her team had introduced the patient activation measure (PAM) to understand individuals' levels of knowledge, skills and confidence and this was used to measure improvements in patients' health and wellbeing.

"After Eat Well I moved on to the meaningful activity group, which was a four week programme. I began to get involved in circuit training which I still do every week. I also had 1:1 sessions with Suzanne who gave me time to review how I was doing and discuss any challenges.

"The first time I completed a PAM I was told it was level 2. Now I understand what that is about it makes sense. I knew I had a life changing decision to make but was reluctant to. The last PAM was a level 4.

I now know how to maintain the right diet and it is second nature. I also know what to do if I fall off the wagon.

"It is like I walked into the programme blind and I have left with my eyes open. I have now lost four stone and feel confident that I can maintain the changes to my life."

Suzanne Grady said: "I used my health and wellbeing coaching skills to help Stephen explore his levels of knowledge, skills and confidence. We spent time discussing what was working and not working and finding solutions together. Using a health coaching approach is incredibly empowering for patients and can help to overcome deep seated barriers that would otherwise prevent recovery."

For more information about health coaching, visit www.betterconversation.co.uk

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