

ACTIVE MIND NETWORK CASE STUDY ACTIVE SURREY

South East Active Mind Network



AS ACTIVE SURREY

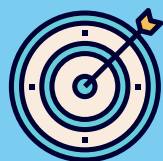
Shifa is a local, voluntary-sector organisation that provides **information, support, advice** and **advocacy** services to **Asian women** in a supportive environment.



Shifa prioritises services to Asian Women who are **marginalised, experiencing disadvantage** or having difficulty in **accessing services** elsewhere.



THE PROJECT



Active Surrey formed a partnership with **Shifa**. The objective was to increase Asian women's **physical activity levels** and improve their **mental and emotional well-being**.



Thanks to the partnership with Active Surrey, **Shifa received £2,640** of Sport England **'Tackling Inequalities'** funding.



The funding supported Shifa to provide **virtual yoga classes** to meet the demand from its members and started a **local weekly walk**.

COMMUNITY NEED



Many people felt isolated and disconnected when Covid-19 started and there was increasing anxiety in the community.



The increased pressure on family life created a need for parents to have time for themselves to manage their mental health.



The project provided the emotional and behaviour change support to be socially active, boosting their physical and mental wellbeing.

BARRIERS



A big barrier to overcome was **digital exclusion** and providing support accessing online platforms for the class.



Participants spoke a range of **different languages**, requiring additional support when promoting and delivering classes.



The complexity of some mental health problems and **lack of confidence** required more support to get started.

“ Clear understanding of the community and its issues and needs. ”

“ Providing 1:1 support and having regular contact with participants. ”

“ Creating a community so the participants feel connected and supported. ”

“ Being adaptable to the barriers of language and digital exclusion. ”

What was key to making it a success?



Participants supported each other to take part and maintain motivation. They used their own experiences to help others overcome barriers and cope with their individual issues.

How was lived experience involved in your project?

The participants shared their experience with family and friends, so they could also receive the benefits to their physical and mental health. This led to Shifa organising a new seated yoga class for adults with additional needs and a children's yoga class.

Understanding the needs of the participants and providing support. Shifa had regular contact with the participants so the sessions were adaptable to their needs, both for fitness/ability level and their mental health problems.

Yoga class members requested an additional coffee morning session where they could chat and share their experiences, worries and thoughts and this session helped encourage others to join the yoga sessions.

PARTNERSHIPS



Providing continued support for the project and access to 'Tackling Inequalities' funding.



Sport England's 'Tackling Inequalities' fund provided vital delivery money for the project to take place and opportunities for under-represented groups to increase activity levels during Covid-19.



Signposting and promoting the Shifa walking groups to community residents that could benefit.



Shifa delivered the project and provided the support to overcome barriers as well as the motivation to take part.

PARTICIPANTS' STORIES

Shu is in her late 60s with long term mental health problems. She used to be a regular attendee at Shifa's Thursday and Friday drop in. Before the project she was feeling very isolated and down as she was unable to attend her regular drop in group or do any physical exercise or activities.

Shu attended the project to re-engage with the other women that she knew from the drop in pre Covid. This was important to her because it was familiar to her and she was within her comfort zone. The virtual yoga allowed Shu to engage with other women and to take up regular physical exercise.

Shu's son said, *"these sessions are a blessing for my mum, she was feeling very alone and isolated without the ability to exercise on her own."*



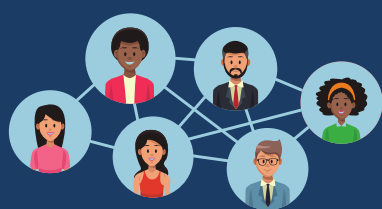
'Z' was referred to Shifa from Adult Social Care. She had been suffering from various problems; personal, mental and emotional health.

Before the project she was living in a hostel feeling very isolated and depressed, as she was away from her family and children. She was encouraged by her social worker to engage with Shifa. Regularly attending the virtual yoga allowed her to engage with other women from a similar background and community group, whilst exercising at the same time.

The support has made a profound difference to her life, not only has she learnt how to use Zoom software but has used her newly discovered skill to engage with her children again. This experience has made her feel calm and positive about the future.

As a result of her newly acquired digital skills 'Z' has also enrolled on another course in her area. She has been so motivated by the yoga sessions that she has expressed her desire to join Shifa's weekly walks. 'Z' says; *"when I am taking part in the yoga classes I forget my worries."*

WHAT DIFFERENCE HAS YOUR PROJECT MADE...?



Created a safe, sociable & connected community



Helped individuals overcome barriers to be more active.



Reduced isolation



Improved physical & mental health

BEST PRACTICE

1

Provide an accessible service that can overcome barriers, such as language, anxiety and/or fitness levels.

2

Have a holistic approach that takes into account all the social and emotional needs of participants.

3

Participants sometimes need a lot of support, regular contact and motivation to keep attending.

4

Digital exclusion is an important factor. This can add to people's anxiety so give time to offer support.

CONTACT INFO

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