

Holding Space supports families who are struggling with their **mental health**.

In partnership with **Active Sussex**, this project **supported parents** who are struggling with their **mental health**.



THE PROJECT

Weekly yoga classes

Mindfulness & breathing techniques

Talking / sharing feelings & concerns



“ Using Sport England's **Tackling Inequalities Fund** to **reduce anxiety** during the **Covid-19** crisis. ”



“ Yoga is an effective way to **treat anxiety**, incorporating **physical exercise, mindfulness** and **breathing techniques**. ”

COMMUNITY NEED

The number of people reporting **high levels of anxiety** has sharply elevated during the **coronavirus (COVID-19)** pandemic.

Levels of **stress, depression** and **anxiety** among parents and carers have increased with the **pressures of the lockdowns**.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Provide a **safe space** for **parents** who are struggling with their mental health.

Promote the benefits of regular exercise for **physical and mental health**.

Create a **connected group** with **shared objectives** and a **safe environment** to share their concerns/feelings.

WHAT WAS KEY TO MAKING THE PROJECT A SUCCESS?

- Access to funding and support from Active Sussex.
- Utilising client group with lived experience for feedback and signposting, including parent support groups.
- Great cross sector partnership working, both for delivery and promotion.
- Having a great instructor who can engage with the participants and be adaptable to their needs.



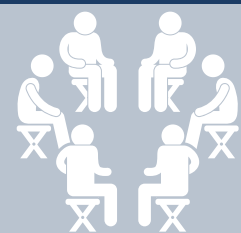
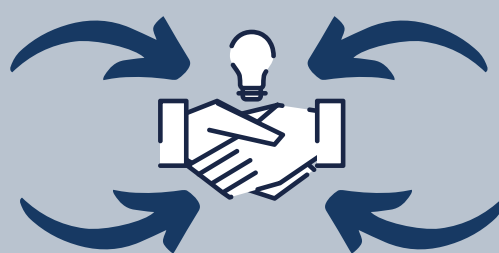
Primary & secondary care - social prescribers



Active Sussex and Holding Space



PARTNERSHIPS



Parent support groups



Local schools

LIVED EXPERIENCE INVOLVED THROUGH:



Parent voice using schools & support groups.



Feedback from families already supported.



Being a client led service, responding to what they need...

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Weekly sessions provided a **focal point, built structure** back into people's lives, **reduced isolation** and provided **strong friendships** and **connections** in the group.

Improved physical fitness

Behaviour change

Created a safe space to share feelings

Improved wellbeing and MH

USER FEEDBACK

'Monday morning yoga gets the week started off right.'

'I know I can get through the school rush on Monday morning because I get to go to yoga afterwards and have some time for me.'

'I didn't expect yoga to be like this. Everyone was so nice.'

'Definitely want to sign up again for after Christmas. It makes a big difference to me.'

'I do want to do yoga even if it's online as I really miss it and you and the girls.'

TIPS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

1 Quality of teacher

Make sure you have a skilled and personal instructor to provide empathy for the participants and be adaptable to their needs. E.g. Fitness and ability.

2 Trust / safe space

Create an environment where the participants feel safe, confident and have trust in the instructor.

3 Structure

Keep the structure consistent to ease anxiety and so the participants are aware what to expect each time.

4 Make it social

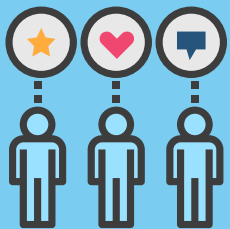
The tea & chat created a social element with a connected group that supported each other.



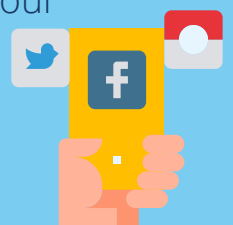
Collaborations and **building relationships** are vital.

WHAT BEST PRACTICE CAN YOU SHARE?

Gain feedback from those with **lived experience** and make it **adaptable to their needs**.



Get your **design and promotion** right and representative of your **target audience**.



Create an **unpressurised, easy** and **accessible** environment to encourage people to attend and ease concerns.



Hansa Raja-Jones, Founder Holding Space:

To make this project a success we worked with and listened to our own client group to identify what was needed. We did this through our social media channels and by asking the parents we support.

It was important that we provided a safe space for people to be able to connect and share their feelings; this is what was different from any other yoga class.

Working in partnership with Active Sussex and having their support was really important as well.

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