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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Activity Buddies: Quality of Life for Older People's Project was to enable the Wellbeing, Health and Occupation for Older People (WHOOP) Research Group, based in the Clinical Research Centre for Health Professions at the University of Brighton, to take the first steps in identifying how the University of Brighton, local voluntary community organisation and the local older people community could build partnerships to address health and wellbeing issues. This included challenging the age-related issues and stereotypes often experienced by older people and which often prevent them from participating in local community activities.

The study afforded staff from across the University of Brighton, in conjunction with Age Concern Eastbourne, Brighton, Hove and Portslade, the opportunity to engage with people from the Eastbourne, Brighton and Hove locality. The opportunity enabled community organisations to collaborate with the university academic community and the local older people's community in establishing three pilot programmes which could build on existing relationships in order to share knowledge, expertise and skills and begin the process of building a transferable 'activity buddies model' which could address the overall health and wellbeing of older people locally, regionally and nationally.

The project identified and influenced some attitudinal views relating to intergenerational stereotypes. Using research tools such as focus groups, researchers were able to engage with participants from within the local community. The study has provided opportunities for discussions regarding the opportunities interfacing with students and staff from across the University of Brighton. This method allowed older people to express their thoughts on the successes and failures of the three pilot programmes from: School of Health Professions - *Fitness for Health programme*, School of Service Management - *A Secret History of Holidays* and School of Science and Biomolecular Sciences - *Dispensing with the Mystery programme*.

The study highlighted how participants from the local community, students and staff at the University of Brighton and local voluntary organisations can better interact with one another to develop agendas and activities which focus upon addressing health and wellbeing and 'quality of life' for older people.

- Students' experiences increased confidence in expressing their subject knowledge and communicating with older people.
- Older participants experienced improved understanding of issues relating to health and wellbeing which also improved confidence in participating in exercise activities, and taking prescribed medications.
- Through intergenerational learning students and older people were more able to understand issues, and challenge negative stereotypes, from both ends of the age spectrum.
- Older participants identified that they would welcome more opportunities to interface with the university and its students and staff. Focus groups reported that this engagement with older people and the University of Brighton would enable older people to experience a variety of activities which promoted health and wellbeing.

Introduction

In today's society it has become apparent that, largely due to advances in medicine and technology, people's life expectancy has changed and as a nation we are living longer. These changing demographics have led to a shift in the perception of what it means to be old. Traditionally the term 'old' used to mean frail, vulnerable, and dependent. However, there are changes in the use of the term, largely due to older people themselves. The image of the older person is slowly changing to include independent, active, individual choice and healthy ageing (Joseph Rowntree Foundation: 2004)

There is now a growing awareness within the health and social care professions of the need to ensure that all older people have the opportunity to experience greater life satisfaction and wellbeing in their later years. For most people, retirement from full-time employment is a major life-changing event and requires a paradigm shift. The central issue in retirement is replacing the time spent in work with other activities. Several studies have reported a positive relationship between the number of performed activities and life satisfaction in retirement (Oakley & Pratt, 1997). The trend towards earlier retirement and an increase in life expectancy means that individuals could spend up to a third of their lifetime in retirement.

Background

The distribution of the population demonstrates that there is a higher proportion of people over the age of 60 living in rural and coastal areas where isolation and exclusion from services and society are key issues. East and West Sussex have the highest population of state pension age and East Sussex has over twice the population of over 75 year olds, 22.8% than the general population in England 16% (Census 2001).

This notion of growing old under a negative cloud is slowly changing with regards to how older people see themselves and how the rest of society views this group. Older people and society are beginning to challenge these preconceived ideas of ageing and there have been recent shifts in the awareness of what it means "to grow old". An increase in the ageing population is not only localised to the UK, it is a growing concern globally and there is growing momentum among older people as they begin to overturn the traditional stereotypes of ageing.

The Activity Buddies: Quality of Life for Older People's project is a Brighton and Sussex Funded Project (BSCKE) which builds upon previous and existing work carried out by the WHOOP research group and begins to address these traditional stereotypes of ageing.

WHOOP is a research group which can largely be defined by the multidisciplinary contributions of researchers from across the University of Brighton and contributions made by the voluntary and community agencies involved in the research group. Since the group was formed over four years ago it has encouraged and nurtured a number of inter-disciplinary collaborations which have emanated from WHOOP group discussions.

This research carried out by WHOOP in previous projects has highlighted some important concerns as to why many older people do not pursue or persevere with leisure activities. Social influences such as cost, access, issues of safety and poor health contributed greatly to many older people being unable to participate in activities and their local community.

The WHOOP research group recognises that contributions made by older people and voluntary and community agencies provide a valuable opportunity to develop projects which enable the University of Brighton and the local community to work cohesively. The partnership has increased our knowledge of local older people's concerns of health and wellbeing, as well as the nature of the expertise and activities in relation to improving health and wellbeing of older people. Older people and voluntary agencies like Age Concern, WRVS and Help the Aged have developed knowledge of research and university activities.

The WHOOP *Activity Buddies: Quality for life for older people's* project begins to address the identified concerns by older people in the local community. The project is part of an ongoing development to continually address these issues and to promote collaborations and partnerships between the University of Brighton, community agencies and the local older people community.

The activity buddies project

The activity buddies project enabled Age Concern Eastbourne, local older people and staff and students of the University of Brighton to come together to develop three pilot projects. The Buddies project was a unique opportunity enabling staff and students to collaborate across different faculties to develop a project which promoted quality of life in a diverse group of older people, which encouraged inter-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, cross-sector learning and which provided a platform on which to begin to share skills, expertise and knowledge.

The project provided an opportunity for students and older people to engage together in activities related to the student's subject area. This buddy relationship could involve engaging mental abilities and skills as well as health-related physical activities, which will ultimately add purpose and meaning to the individuals or groups participating.

Evidence shows that a healthy balance of any activities in older age is related to perceived and actual health and wellbeing (Carlson, Clark and Young, 1998; Clark et al. 1997) and if used appropriately, an array of physical and mental activities can have therapeutic potential (Peloquin 2000). The original CUPP pilot study highlighted that many older people can experience a decline in the level of engagement with activities in post retirement years which can often lead to a decline in self-esteem, confidence and belief in their own abilities and skills. This descent into social exclusion and isolation after retirement for many older people can in turn affect participation levels in activities, especially if they have not been encouraged to participate, have no knowledge of existing activities in their local areas or have had negative experiences of community interaction. The meaning of many activities may vary across the generations and change over the course of the lifespan (Moore and Hodgson: 2006). Through partnership working, the WHOOP research group continues to address the issue of decline in activities among the local older people's population.

In the lifespan of many older people skills and knowledge are developed and built up during an individual's careers, home management experiences, leisure pursuits and experiences encountered on a daily basis. Through life experiences many older people may be skilled in a particular activity or occupation and may enjoy passing on these skills to students. Equally students may be able to assist older people to regain interest, skills and confidence in a familiar occupation or help them to develop a new interest or skill (Moore and Hodgson; 2006). Therefore, the activity buddies project has benefited both older and younger people from the inter-generational experience of participating in activities where they work collaboratively to exchange skills, knowledge and companionship. Also, older people, challenge their fear of younger people and increase their understanding of younger generations.

The three buddy strands included pilot projects from: School of Health Professions - *Fitness for Health (Physiotherapy Students)*; School of pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences - *Dispensing with the Mystery (Pharmacy Students)* and School of Service Management - *A Secret History of Holidays (Tourism Students)*. Each of the strands began to develop a transferable model which could be used and developed across other University of Brighton faculties, community organisations and other academic institutions.

The model created has enabled each of the faculties to adapt and mould each project allowing students, staff and older people to obtain maximum benefit from interaction within the individual projects. Although the overall project aims were to bring together students and older people, the individual project strands each had individual purposes and aims. These will be explored in the individual project strands reported in the document.

The promotion of quality of life in older age is attracting increasing policy interest. Whilst, for some people, old age will be a time of increasing dependency and loss of control, for many it will be a time in their life for personal fulfilment. Old age contains many opportunities for positive change and productive functioning (Bowling *et al.*: 2003; Joseph Rowntree Foundation: 1999). The *activity buddies project* encourages and promotes positive approaches to health and wellbeing.

Aim

This project aims to demonstrate how different activities might benefit an individual's quality of life, by improving general fitness, knowledge of medications, self-esteem and confidence in their abilities and skills.

Project Outcomes

- Enable older people and the University of Brighton student community to benefit from each other's expertise and knowledge.
- Improve the self-esteem, confidence and health of older people by encouraging their safe and regular participation in physical activities; by helping older people feel less isolated and more mobile; and by assisting older people to understand their prescribed medication.
- Improve students' awareness of the issues faced daily by older people within the community. This will contribute to developing students' professional interpersonal skills when working in community and clinical environments, particularly when working with older people.
- Increase understanding of fundamental barriers to older people participating in activities within the community.
- Develop the programme strands and embed them into schools' taught modules and for some student cohorts will contribute to informing research activities for undergraduate and post-graduate students.
- Enable the project team, older people and students to gain an improved understanding of intergenerational issues.
- Create a transferable model of practice for other departments within the University of Brighton, community agencies and local authorities and other areas within Sussex e.g. Brighton and Hove, Worthing and Hastings.

Methodology

The methods adopted in all three of the activity buddies pilot strands were based on generating qualitative data related to identifying the individual successes and failures of each of the programmes, identifying if the programmes had begun to address the image of ageing and whether they had begun to challenge stereotypical ideas among the participants. The methods also sought to establish whether intergenerational activities could impact and progress individuals learning on a particular subject, thus affecting personal or professional expertise, knowledge or skills.

Focus group interviews were utilised to enable researchers and participants to come together to discuss and explore participants' perspectives, experiences, views and opinions relating to the individual activity buddy strand. The use of focus group interviews is well established within social sciences. Originally the method was employed as a market research tool. Focus groups have commonly been used since the 1980's within 'social action research', particularly within health related research (Wilkinson: 2004). Focus groups are largely based on a small group of individuals having an informal discussion in response to a series of questions. The researcher acts as the facilitator, posing questions to the group of participants.

Researchers had the opportunity within the focus groups to draw upon a number of participants' responses, feelings and beliefs about a particular topic or issue concerning their participation in one of the three activity buddy projects, which would not necessarily be possible in a one-to-one interview, observation or questionnaire survey. This is because focus group interviews afford the opportunity to collect diverse views and opinions. This method also allows researchers to obtain larger amounts of information in a shorter period of time (Wilkinson: 2004). Typically focus groups are tape recorded and the data transcribed, then

analysed using qualitative techniques. Recording focus groups allows researchers to ensure that they use participants' comments accurately (Polgar and Thomas: 1995)

Focus groups are an effective tool to use within research, particularly for this study, as they can be used at the exploratory stages of a study or programme to ascertain and evaluate the benefits and experiences of the programme. There are, however, disadvantages to using focus groups, for example, the findings cannot be generalised to the whole population, mainly because of the small number of participants, therefore findings can only be applied to those who participated (Kreuger: 1988).

This method allowed researchers to present a broad wealth of experiences, views, attitudes and opinions (Morgan and Kreuger, 1993) and has allowed the researchers to identify key results arising from each of the activity buddies pilot programmes. Identifying success, failures and possible future developments.

Recruiting volunteers for the study

Older participants were recruited through the activity buddies community partners, Age Concern Eastbourne. Posters advertising the WHOOP project were displayed and circulated among the organisations' members (Appendix One).

Physiotherapy, tourism and pharmacy students were recruited for the individual 'themed projects' via the individual project leads. First year through to final year student volunteered to participate in the projects.

The methods chosen to recruit volunteers were aimed at attracting participants who were diverse in culture and backgrounds, and who had different interests, experiences, were disengaged from any physical or social activity, or experienced feelings of isolation and poor health.

Ethical consideration

The research proposal for the study was submitted for ethical approval to the University of Brighton Ethics and Governance Committee; approval was granted in March 2007.

Confidentiality was observed throughout this study and every precaution was taken to ensure that the identities of participants were protected throughout the study. Participants' information was stored in a secure environment to which only the researchers involved in the study had access. Confidentiality within the focus groups were strictly observed, and transcripts and tapes were encoded to ensure anonymity.

How the study was conducted

Participants who were being recruited through voluntary organisations were encouraged to get in contact with the research officer to discuss the project and to raise any questions they might have. Participants were also given an information sheet which gave further information about the projects in which they were involved (See Appendix Two). If participants were still willing to pursue their interest in their chosen activity buddies programme, they were invited to attend an initial introduction session which involved meetings with students and staff. This was an opportunity to allow participants to get to know one another, ask questions, develop an understanding of the background to the project and to receive information about the planned six-week programme. After each of the six-week programmes, students and older participants were invited to a focus group. Focus group interviews were conducted separately, one older people's focus group and one student focus group. Focus group interviews were carried out at the University of Brighton- Eastbourne and Moulsecoomb campuses. In total six focus groups were held.

In order to minimise the influences of researchers over the questions asked and over the participants, a steering group was established from the start of the project to ensure that any research material produced was objective and enabled all older people to participate at a level with which they were comfortable. Additionally, the methods used were discussed in the steering group meeting to ensure that the research tools used did not inhibit participants and minimised the researchers' influences. The focus groups were an opportunity to allow participants to come together to discuss openly their views of the programme they participated in.

The focus group interviews each lasted up to one hour. In order to ensure accuracy each focus group was (tape) recorded to document participants' responses. Facilitators used the following questions as a guide to further explore participants' opinions and perceptions regarding the university's interface with older people.

Participants interview schedule

Older participants focus group interview schedule

1. What were your expectations prior to commencing on the programme?
2. What motivated you to come on the programme?
3. What did you learn from your relationship with the students?
4. What do you feel you gained/learn from your experiences?
5. What do you think is a particular success of the programme?
6. What do you think is a particular failure of the programme?
7. What might you change?

Student participants focus group interview schedule

1. What was your expectation prior to commencing on the programme?
2. What motivated you to come on the programme?
3. What do you feel you gained/learn from your experiences?
4. What views and opinions did you have of older people, if any?
5. What did you learn from your relationship with older people?
6. What do you think is a particular success of the programme?
7. What do you think is a particular failure of the programme?
8. What might you change?

Development of categories and themes

Once each focus group interview had been completed, the digital recording of the interviews was transcribed by a member of staff who was independent of the study. Once all interview recordings had been transcribed, transcripts were reviewed by members of the research team. Transcripts were examined line by line for reoccurring themes. The data was analysed by employing a constant analysis method, which allows the researchers to constantly compare each piece of data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This method of data analysis has originated through a grounded theory approach, which allows researchers to ensure reliability of the data collected (Burnard: 1991). Researchers were able to individually develop themes and categories from the transcripts.



Project strand 1: Fitness for Health, School of Health Professions, Physiotherapy division.

Levels of physical activity can often decrease as individuals age particularly as they approach or enter the post-retirement years. The aim of the Fitness for Health project, partially, was to build confidence and self esteem through physical activities, and to increase awareness of the benefits of exercise on the health and wellbeing and the importance of remaining active. In addition the programme enabled physiotherapy students to engage with older people and increase their understanding of the factors or influences which prevent older people participating in fitness and exercise activities.

It is an often repeated fact that older people live sedentary lifestyles and do not engage in physical activities after retirement. Some of the reasons are feelings of isolation, non-availability of suitable and safe locations or loneliness. It is also a well-known fact that physical activity can reduce the onset of many chronic diseases in both healthy and chronically ill older people. The World Health Organisation's Active Ageing Framework in 2002, The American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association (2007), (www.circ.ahajournals.org) together with national and local bodies have recommended the development of appropriate physical activities for older men and women by providing accessible, pleasant and affordable opportunities to be active. The emphasis on staying active by understanding suitably challenging exercises and physical activities, designed according to the participants' preferences, will reduce sedentary behaviour and risk of common chronic conditions.

Participants

The Fitness for Health programme created an opportunity for physiotherapy students to take part in running physical activities with older people. All activity sessions were supervised by a fully qualified physiotherapist. The programme attracted students who were in their first year of study and students in the final stages of their course. This interaction proved to be beneficial, allowing students from the two different years to share their experiences of clinical placements and practical taught sessions. Six physiotherapy students participated in the programme.

The older volunteers that participated in the programme were recruited from the local Age Concern centre and via advertisements placed in local community facilities. The programme aimed to attract people over the age 50 years. Government strategies outlined by the Department of Health, focus particularly on encouraging any type of activity that is beneficial to health and wellbeing, with the recommendation of a minimum of 30 minutes a day for people aged 50 years and over (Department of Health 2006). Seven older volunteers participated in the programme and ranged from 61 to 86 years of age. The physical abilities and expectations of participants varied greatly. Many wanted to re-engage with activities because they had not exercised in many years, some participants came along to the programme with a specific aim of obtaining information and help with a certain injury. Participants wanted to gain an understanding of how to maintain their health and what activities or information could help them achieve this.

The programme

The Fitness for Health programme was carried out over six-weeks. Students and older volunteers would meet for two to three hours every week. Prior to any activities commencing, students and older volunteers were involved in a briefing sessions which provided opportunities for participants to get to know one another, opportunities to discuss any queries, concerns and to discuss the commitments individuals would need to make. Although the programme was voluntary, participants were keen to understand their involvement and overall commitment over the six-week programme. In the initial session, students and older volunteers were able to discuss the reasons why they had become involved. Through facilitated discussions with the project supervisor, students and older volunteers began to devise an activity programme which incorporated the older volunteer's choices of activities. The choice of activities which were organised consisted of Boules, Tai-Chi, croquet, strengthening exercises, and an osteoporosis seminar.

The collaboration that took place between students, older people and staff ensured that sessions delivered relevant information and advice in a less formal setting. Instead each session was designed to deliver the information and advice through practical interactive sessions. Providing participants with the opportunity to fully interact with one another and the students. This enabled students, staff and older participants to quickly disperse any feelings of concern or worry. The empowering approach taken by the programme encouraged older participants to become active participants. The structure contributed significantly towards dispersing with participant's fear of not having any control over what happens to them. It adopted an approach which was sensitive to this and encouraged participants to become actively involved.

Activities were carried out at the University of Brighton, Eastbourne campus, Darley Road. Students had an active role in helping to organise and arrange individual sessions. Activities were led by instructors, both internal and external, to the University of Brighton. Inviting instructors from outside of the University of Brighton enabled students, staff and community partners to promote an awareness of the additional activities which take place regularly outside of the University of Brighton in a local voluntary organisation. This was to encourage further participation in physical activities beyond the six-week programme.

The findings

The programme appeared to offer benefits to both students and older participants involved in the fitness for health programme. There were a number of aims which the programme and the overall activity buddies programme wanted to achieve; which included creating opportunities to share knowledge, develop understanding of issues which affect participation in activities contributing towards health and wellbeing; encourage a partnership working approach to address health and wellbeing among the older people's community.

The focus group interviews carried out with the older participants and students highlighted many positive aspects of the programme. These included recognition that the programme had increased confidence and self-esteem and had motivated individuals to carry on with a degree of physical activity beyond the Fitness for Health programme. In the students focus groups it was identified that the programme had influenced personal attributes such as confidence, belief in their professional skills and had challenged stereotypes.

Older people's feedback

Confidence

Participants highlighted the effect the programme had on their overall confidence. Many noted, in the initial stages of the programme, the factors which had inhibited them from participating in activities. Concerns of not understanding which activities would be beneficial or safe appeared to be a factor in older participant's reason for decreasing physical activity in post-retirement years. Some participants had highlighted this since moving into a new area meant they were not as familiar with the types of activities and exercise programmes that were available in their local area.

"After our first session...which I enjoyed so much it made me feel like I was being actively involved...I actually felt comfortable to say something which you know I would never have done before because I would not have the confidence to say anything" FG1.1 OP

"I feel confident again, I've had so much fun and I feel like this has helped me, I feel my interest in boules has been renewed again and I have started to look for a club that I can join. I want to start this summer." FG1.2 OP

Level of activities & Motivation

Participation in the programme appeared to develop confidence in most to continue with activities. Motivation appeared to be a reason why older participants failed to remain active and had taken up a more sedentary lifestyle. Many participants felt that living alone could be demotivating. But it was also stressed that poor health can be a reason why a number of older people don't take part in activities, in particular for the group that participated in the Fitness for Health programme.

"I hurt myself running a few years back and it had prevented me from taking part in any physical activity for a while, I love exercise and this was difficult to go from active to inactive." FG1.3 OP

"When you are on your own you don't always get on and do exercise like we all know we should...I need someone to come along and say this is good for you and we do this for that. Before I did not know what I should do or what was good or beneficial for me. Now I have spent time with the students I feel like I know more." FG.1.4 OP

"I was unwell for a long time and I did no exercise because of my poor health." FG1.1 OP

"My hips make it difficult for me to take long walks which I miss doing frequently." FG1 OP

In the Fitness for Health programme, it was noted by some participants that it had improved confidence in carrying out exercises at home. It was difficult to ascertain if the programme had impacted greatly upon older people's attitudes and views towards exercise after the programme had ended. It is known from the feedback session that level of confidence and motivation were some of the bigger inhibitors to participating in exercise regularly. Older participants believed that in order to maintain any level of activity there should be a continual rolling activity programme developed and that this would encourage older people to take up physical activity. Developing a programme which is ongoing and had regular involvement from students, was believed to be a positive step towards improving quality of life.

"I do the odd bit of walking but nothing like this and this is fun it makes you feel young again and what fun it was to come here [University of Brighton]" FG1.5 OP

"I know I should do more but on your own it is boring and it is lonely. It is good for you to get out and do something. It keeps you moving?" FG1.1 OP

"I will come back; we all would if it was run again...it would be much better doing it with a group than on your own." FG1.2 OP

Intergenerational learning and understanding of others

Student's involvement proved to be a significant factor in older participant's experiences. Participants highlighted the professionalism and friendliness of the students that were involved in the programme.

"I liked being able to speak with the students at the start, I felt comfortable as they were so friendly....I was a little concerned at the start as I did not know anyone and I was not sure what was going to happen to me during the six-weeks...it was really unknown until we arrived. It was a little worry not knowing and you're not sure what to expect when working with younger people." FG1.5 OP

"As soon as I walked into the room the girls [students] said hello to me...and they chatted to me while I waited for the others [participants] to turn up. I instantly felt at ease with them" FG1.1 OP

The older participants felt that the opportunity to work with students provided an opportunity to socialise with younger people. It was highlighted that this opportunity or occasion to do this is often difficult because of socio-economic influences, which can often force families to live further apart. This affected time spent with younger people.

"It was fun working with the students and they were so lovely and friendly to us, it um...it meant I enjoyed it a lot. I was surprised it was that easy." FG1.4 OP

"They were good students, helped us a lot and made us feel comfortable with them. I learnt a lot from them and you know what I realised that they had learnt a lot and experiences many things too...interesting things." FG1.1 OP

"It is not always easy to do activities with younger people, either because health or because grandchildren don't live nearby so this was a great opportunity and great fun." FG1.2 OP

The programme provided a number of opportunities for all participants to engage with one another in an informal setting. The time spent doing activities such as Tai-Chi, boules and croquet gave older participants time to learn about what student experiences were like. This interaction meant older people were beginning to understand some of the important issues faced by students. In particular, student's experiences of clinical placements, and the skills they had learnt, in and outside, of the classroom.

"We had a lecture on osteoporosis which was interesting...we were all women and we wanted a lecture on this and they did a proper presentation." FG1.3 OP

"I did not know too much about it [osteoporosis], but my friend suffers from it and I can now understand it more than I did before." FG1.1 OP

"We learnt about how to get up after falling, which I thought was great because I worry about that, we were given some practical advice to follow." FG1.5 OP

Older participants also began to understand the level of difficulty newly-qualified physiotherapist have in gaining employment after student undergraduate programmes ended. During the activity sessions, students often spoke of the difficulties or the competitive nature of attaining employment opportunities in their field.

"It is a shame that they [students] will find it hard to get a job at the end." FG1.3 OP

"One girl spoke about moving abroad to do her job." FG1.2 OP

*"Who would have thought it would be so difficult for them to get work afterwards."
FG1.1 OP*

Older participants experienced opportunities which developed their understanding of exercise and the health benefits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Participants experienced enjoyment and pleasure from the opportunity to interact with students and to contribute towards student's personal and professional learning.

"I enjoyed helping the students, they were keen to listen to what I had to say and it was a lovely opportunity to talk to them about stuff, you know tell them about what I have difficulties with or why I don't exercise." FG1.1 OP

"I think everyone had a great time and I feel privileged to have contributed to their learning...very honoured to have helped them in that way." FG1.3 OP

"I want to help more as I enjoyed coming to the university and spending time with the students and staff. It was fun for me and I liked it up here." FG1.1 OP

Students Feedback

Structure of the programme

Students noted the highly competitive field which newly-qualified physiotherapists will face once they leave university. Students were very aware of the benefits of participating in the programme as the programme provided an opportunity to develop and apply their knowledge.

"I enjoyed the style of the programme. The way we were able to interact with staff and older participants was beneficial for us I think. You felt like an equal in the organisation of it...as we had a say...we helped organise activities. We were able to put in as much work as everyone else...it made the experience all the more fun and worthwhile I think." FG 1.1S

The participating students enjoyed the level at which they involved themselves. The programme was structured to allow both students and older people the opportunity to collaborate together to develop a health and exercise programme. Students therefore had the opportunity to be involved in assisting with organising the programme and running activities under the supervision of a qualified physiotherapist.

"I liked having the chance to get things organised for the group, it made it feel like we were doing it for them and it was rewarding, so I think this is an important part for us to do as we will have to do it when we go out to work." FG 1.3S

"It was nice to organise the Tai-Chi in structure for one of the Wednesday sessions I enjoyed getting out there and doing something for someone else. Afterwards I felt so pleased about it because I knew people had enjoyed themselves" FG1.2S

Many participants felt that the structure of the programme lent itself to many opportunities for engaging with the local older people's community, noting that it was both rewarding and worthwhile to carry it out. It was also highlighted that the structure and style of the programme suited many of the student participants study and work commitments. As student participants was based on a continual student rolling involvement, which enabled student to commit to a minimum of two sessions during the six-weeks. However, a small number of students committed to the full six sessions. Many students liked the flexible style of the programme, noting it did not put too much pressure on their time. This made it more enjoyable for them.

“it was nice that there were different students coming in, a rolling scheme worked I think as it allowed everyone not to feel too committed and worry about taking on too much whilst studying.” FG 1.1S

Student participants also noted that the programme was successful by holding activities at the university, but felt that there could be some benefit in developing activities at other campuses or in different locations in the community.

“it was nice to have the activities up at the university as it made it easy for us, but I think from talking to the older participants it was a little trek for them, although they liked seeing the place...somewhere nearer might be easier.” FG 1.2S

“I think there were a couple of ladies on the programme who were from sheltered or warden-supported homes and they said that there were areas in their building that could be used for activities like we were doing.” FG 1.3S

Students reflected on discussions which had taken place during a number of activities over the six-week programme. It was noted that older people had concerns about the level of difficulty which might be experienced by some participants in accessing many of the activities offered by the programme. It was suggested that accessing many of the activities at the university could be difficult, due to the locality of the university's facilities. From the students' opinions, it appeared that offering additional programmes outside the university might also be beneficial. The external programmes might access people that fall into the more vulnerable and isolated groups.

Intergenerational learning and understanding of ageing

The activity buddies project aimed to enable older people and students to challenge stereotypes and images of ageing. The fitness for health programme supported and facilitated this opportunity, allowing students and older people to explore their attitudes together. The programme demonstrates that students and older people were equally delighted and surprised by the level of interaction experienced between the two groups. Participants appeared to genuinely enjoy this aspect of the programme, noting the insight they experience of those of an older age group.

“Working with older people was interesting, um, I mean it's enjoyable and I was not sure how it was really going to work being of a different age. I was worried I might say something wrong. It was the opposite I was relaxed with them. It was definitely fun spending time with them doing the activities.” FG 1.1S

“I liked working together, I learnt a great deal from my time with them like what it is like to find things [activities] harder.” FG 1.2S

“It is useful taking part in this I was able to better understand what it is like for older people carrying out daily activities which, I ...or we take for granted. Exercise is so important, yet difficult for many older people, this programme helped me to really understand why this is and most of all what it meant to the older person not being able to take part in activities that they have enjoyed for many years.” FG 1.4S

“ It is sad in some ways to listen to them say how difficult it is, but I think having that time chatting to them as a physiotherapist about to go out to work after studying for three years, it made me appreciate the person and the bigger picture. FG 1.3S

"I think you get to see them as a person and not necessary as someone who has a condition. I liked that aspect of it."FG 1.1S

Participants had noted that the Fitness for Health programme had provided an opportunity to understand further what it is 'like for an older person to live with or cope with a condition' such as arthritis, hip and leg injuries. The programme provided an opportunity to further understand how older participants dealt with life changes.

"I think we were able to see how some older people cope better with ageing than others, they were all fun, but, you could see how some are more active than others." FG 1.1S

"You started to understand why it might be difficult to stay fit or understand the fear behind why they don't take part in any exercise. I think it gives you a chance to really understand their point of view...very interesting to hear them all talk about their experiences." FG1.2S

"You learn why some are not so active. I think I will remember that and I think it will always be in the back of my mind when I see an elderly patient when I qualify. I think it is an important aspect for me now as I'm more mindful of it." FG 1.1S

Personal and professional learning

Students stated that participating in the programme affected their personal attitudes towards older people. This was noted to be an important aspect to this programme. Student's discussions highlighted how this contact can influence individuals views and opinions towards a certain group. It was believed the project enabled this to happen as it exposed individuals to these different views and lived experiences. This exposure may not necessarily happen in daily routine. Therefore, a direct result of participating meant that students found a greater understanding of the concerns of older people in relation to exercise.

"I have a deeper understanding of older people...in a way it can make you think about yourself and when your old. You start to think about what it would be like for you and how you would feel...I think that helped me to see there view more and listening to them helped you to empathises with what they are feeling or living?"FG1.3S

"I believe that this programme has made me think harder about the patients I work with,hearing there stories makes you view them in a very different way...you get a fuller picture-insight into what it is like." FG 1.2S

"It has helped me to better relate to this age group, I now realise that there are many real issues and concerns which can affect older people...um...which can have a impact upon their lifestyles."FG1.1S

" I understand that many older people have genuine fears and concerns, um, they worry about things that can change their life drastically...like falling, they worry about this, joints getting older and stiffer...before this programme I don't think I fully understood how this impacted them. It is a real concern, something to be taken seriously which I know I will." FG 1.2S

In addition, students noted significant differences in their professional learning and personal development. In particular, prior to students joining the fitness for health programme, students noted a lack of confidence in practicing their subject knowledge. However, on reflection, students had believed the programme had changed their confidence levels.

"...before taking part I think I was quiet and not really that confident within myself." FG1.1S

"I was unsure about myself when I started the programme, I sometimes doubted my knowledge especially when I had to apply it...I felt I needed reassurance from someone more experienced than me." FG1.3S

Students had commented that the programme provided an atmosphere which was "informal" and "challenging" enabling individuals to "grow" and "develop" and to build relationships which made their learning experiences positive.

"I found taking part incredibly sociable, which made me more relaxed as the participants were really friendly and fun to be with." FG1.2S

"The group got on so well, everyone was having a great time." FG1.1S

"I looked forward to Wednesday's, planning, preparing and doing the activities." FG 1.3S

Students noted that taking part enabled them to develop and practice their skills in a safe, friendly setting outside the usual clinical environment. Student's discussion highlighted that they enjoyed applying their skills within a different context and environment. This opportunity enabled them to have additional time. Many had noted it was a particular benefit to them and possibly would be beneficial to the wider student body if made a part of the main teaching structure.

"I liked it because it was a different way to learn... I think it challenged you in different ways." FG1.1S

"For me it was an ideal way to gain additional practice... I need to push myself further as I often feel shy around patients, so this gave me plenty of opportunity to develop myself in that way. It did help a lot, especially as we were helping with organising the activity which I think made more confident about the task as I felt involved in what we were doing. I identified greatly with how much fun it was and working with different people." FG1.3S

"working in this way was different which I really liked ...it suited me I think to work this way and it was relaxed... it was nice to have an option which allowed us to learn in a different way...it is a positive thing to do something alternative it think for everyone...everyone learns in different way don't they." FG1.2S

"I think everyone should get to do this...perhaps it could be made an option on the course?" FG 1.1S

Voluntary experiences

Students were asked to reflect on their voluntary experience. This promoted much discussion on whether the programme should become a compulsory element in the students' degree programme or remain a voluntary exercise. It was viewed by some students that the fitness for health programme should become a compulsory module. It was felt that by integrating the programme into the structure of student's degree courses it would ensure that all students experienced the opportunity to practice professional skills outside the clinical setting. Students felt if the programme offered credit towards their degree courses it could encourage more student involvement. It was noted that if more students were involved, further numbers of older people could be involved in the programme.

Structuring the programme to remain as a voluntary exercise would continue to contribute greatly to students learning. This meant for some students it did not necessary have to

become a compulsory element of a programme to ensure students gained something from the programme. In addition, it was noted that the structure of the rolling programme for student involvement would ensure that any student could gain from the experience. It was a concern for some students that moving away from the voluntary model would devalue the experience, commenting that a voluntary experience will make it a more rewarding exercise than a compulsory one. It was believed that volunteering for the programme encourages feelings of doing 'something good for someone else'.

"I think making it a part of the course would give everyone the opportunity of taking part and gaining from it. There were not that many that took part so it could be opened it up to making it more part of the programme." FG 1.1S

"Everyone had the opportunity to take part didn't they?... I think making it compulsory is not always going to be a good idea as I don't think people would like being made to do this. Some people like to take part voluntarily as it means more, and possibly means more to those we are volunteering for [older people]...not sure that should be taken away from those taking part." FG 1.2S

Moving forward: Student and older participants

During the group discussion with students and older participants, there were several points noting participant's expectations. It appeared that, largely, many participants were unsure what to expect from the Fitness for Health programme. Although, this was not considered to be a negative aspect or drawback to the programme, it was considered to have added to anxiety and it was believed that this could be addressed if the programme was to be developed further.

"I was not sure what to expect before I came to the uni...I had no idea, which I was slightly concerned about." FG 1.10P

The Fitness for Health programme ensured that all participants had the opportunity to share ideas which influenced the style and format the programme took. This appeared to demonstrate that older people had a 'real' say on the activities that they took part in. The format of the programme encouraged and facilitated opportunities for all participants to communicate; many believed that this led to a positive experience.

"We were able to take part in saying what we wanted, which was nice." FG1.3 OP

"The students were helpful and it was lovely to be talking to them about this." FG1.1 OP

"I enjoyed being able to share my ideas with the older participants and talking to them about what we could do...lots of ideas." FG 1.2S

Participants discussed the benefits of holding the programme at the University of Brighton but believed extending the activities to include some other local facilities would be equally beneficial to other older people in the community.

"It's a marvellous programme I wish it was in crown house [local sheltered accommodation]" FG1.1 OP

"..Or a local hall, lots of people would go I'm sure if it is nearby." FG1.2 OP

Providing alternative venues in which to hold the Fitness for Health programme might encourage individuals from isolated or vulnerable categories to become involved in the programme. Older participants also discussed that the numbers taking part were lower than they had expected. This was felt to be due possibly to the location of the activity being out of

the town centre vicinity, making it harder for people to reach. Although the numbers did not affect the types of activities which were run during the programme, there were some revelations among the group regarding how such a programme could be beneficial amongst the older people's community and therefore it was considered that the level of participation might have been higher if activities were held in a central location.

"I was surprised how there were only 7 of us involved in the programme. I thought it would have been more." FG1.1 OP

"It is a long way to come up to here from town [the meads]. You can't walk it and the buses are not that regular." FG 1.2 OP

It was viewed by both students and older participants that there were obvious benefits to holding such activities on the University of Brighton campus. Providing an occasion to visit the campus appeared to have a positive affect on the older participants as it widened their understanding of the University of Brighton and the various activities which took place in a higher education environment. Participants reported that they enjoyed seeing the different types of teaching areas that were available to students, such as Occupational Therapist training rooms.

"I had no idea that students did pottery, it's a wonderful area...lovely campus. They are very lucky." FG1.1 OP

"I had no idea it was so big and they did things like physiotherapy, occupational therapy...cooking as well...absolutely wonderful." FG2.1 OP

"I knew of the leaf hospital...but had no idea about the rest of the university." FG 1.3OP

Conclusion

The activity buddies Fitness for Health programme enabled older and student participants to come together to focus on health-related exercises. Older participants highlighted that, by increasing their knowledge of the physical benefits of exercise, it had increased their confidence to seek out and take up further physical-related activities after the programme.

"I'm walking more along the downs... to the shops." FG1.2OP

"I dance to the music on my radio and do the stretches and exercises that the students teach us...I'm also joining a local gym and i will go swimming again."FG1.1OP

Although no direct comparisons could be made towards the improved level of physical fitness on individuals who took part, a degree of overall wellbeing could be drawn from the discussions held with the students and older participants. It was stated that some of the most enjoyable aspects of the programme were the opportunities to interact with students. If further activities are to be developed, the interaction with students would be a pivotal part of the older person's experiences. The key elements to draw from this particular activity buddies programme are the continual encouragement of promoting working together, partnership and social relationship building, which allowed opportunities for all participants to feel valued. Creating the opportunity for students and older participants to input ideas, and express concerns throughout the programme, ensured that older participants were empowered to centre activities on what they needed and enjoyed. This has enabled all participants to begin to challenge their individual views and experiences and begin to address stereotyping of older and younger people.



Strand 2: Dispensing with the Mystery, School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences

Dispensing with the Mystery was a partnership project between the University of Brighton's School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences (PABS) and The Seniors' Project, a voluntary organisation working with older people in Brighton. @ctive Student, a project which links current University of Brighton students with volunteering opportunities in the local community, also played a key role in the project. The original project took place between 2005 and 2006 and was very successful, project bringing together both older and student participants.

The activity buddies Dispensing with the Mystery project focused on older people, aged 60 years and over, living in the deprived neighbourhoods of east and central Brighton. Older people living in these areas have a number of unmet needs, which include, improved access to better income, accommodation, health and social contact, transport and safety. They are more likely to have poorer standards of living, leading to lower levels of physical and mental health and greater degrees of social isolation.

This project had the aim of addressing the health needs of individuals in relations to their medications in particular focusing on issues connected with older people's lack of understanding of medication. This can often lead to high rates of non-adherence among the older people's population (Gray and Celino; 2008). In the UK, the over 60's account for 18% of the population, but nearly half of all prescription drug use. Of the 779 million prescription items produced in the United Kingdom in 2007 (Health Care; 2008, community pharmacists dispensed approximately 93 % and almost 60% were for people over 60. Of these items, it has been estimated that around 75% are 'repeat prescriptions' (Dowell J et al 1998), that is, medications for which prescriptions may be obtained without the need for an appointment with the prescriber. Pharmacists are a key factor in helping patients understand their medication and it is important for pharmacy students to understand this at an early stage.

At the same time, pharmacy students have little opportunity to interact with medicine users to understand social contexts of medicine use.

Participants

Students involved in the activity buddies Dispensing with the Mystery project were part of the original project carried out in 2005/2006 at the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular sciences. The original project ran during the second year of their pharmacy programme. The students in this strand had the advantage of drawing from previous experiences. Therefore having existing understanding of some of the concerns of older people and their medication. The project saw the return of 8 students from the original project.

Older participants were recruited through Age Concern Brighton, Hove and Portslade. Participants involved in the project were involved in a number of current physical and non-

physical activities that are currently available to older people at the local Age Concern centre. Participants ranged from a number of differing backgrounds and areas of Brighton and Hove. Participant's ages ranged from 60 to 78 years of age.

The programme

The programme was carried out over a six-week period with students working with two groups of older participants. Thus the programme was carried out twice during the course of the six-weeks. This strand has been structured to ensure that students have more contact with different groups of older people from different areas in Brighton and Hove.

Students and older participants met once a week for three weeks, each session a maximum of two hours. The initial meeting was to discuss the project, introduce staff, students and older participants to one another and to discuss the plan for the three-week programme. It also enabled students and older participants to get to know one another and enabled students to take an in-depth drug history. This was an opportunity, for the older and student participants to discuss concerns relating to the older participants medication. Many older people taking part were taking multiple types of medication for one or more conditions or symptoms.

Once the initial drug history was taken, students and older participants reconvened in the same venue the following week to discuss the information that the students had gathered on the participants behalf. This enabled students to feed back the information to older participants and answer any questions raised. Students were unable to provide advice about changing medications. However, the programme aimed to expand participant's knowledge about their medications by providing information concerning how the drug contributes towards treating their health complaint.

The final session was held in the University of Brighton, Moulsecoomb campus. This was an opportunity to allow older participants to visit the university and to experience a pharmacy lecture and observe experiments. This was an opportunity to demonstrate how pharmacy students learn and develop their knowledge during the course.

On completion of the programme, students and older participants took part in a focus group discussion to expand and discuss their experiences of taking part in the Dispensing with the Mystery programme.

The findings

Unlike the 'Fitness for Health' programme and 'A Secret History of Holidays', Dispensing with the Mystery programme had the added opportunity of being able to draw upon students' experiences of taking part in the original project and, comparing the different students experiences.

Older participant's feedback

The involvement of older people in this project enabled participants to share their experiences of taking medications and to better understand their prescribed medications.

Confidence

One of the impacts of the programme was an increased sense of confidence. After participants' one-to-one sessions with their student partner, many reported an increased awareness of their medications. It was highlighted that possessing this knowledge enabled them to feel confident about the medications they were taking, something they did not necessary feel prior to their involvement in the project.

"I feel more informed about what it does for my condition." FG2.1 OP

"I did not understand before what it was doing for me...never really told but to take the pills as it would help...sometimes you really just want to know why though." FG2.3 OP

Many reported that there were a number of inhibitors which prevented them from asking their G.Ps for the information

"I did not want to seem stupid in front of the doctor...he seemed to think I might know about it." FG2.1 OP

"Doctors are too busy to explain everything I understand that so you have to trust what you are given." FG2.1 OP

"It's explained to me but I don't understand it all really..." FG2.3 OP

In some instances the time involved in the programme had prompted participants to investigate more about their own medications and medical conditions, believing that they 'should know' about what they are taking.

"After talking to the students, I wanted to know more about my conditions, so I actually did some research into it myself. It's interesting to know what the medication is treating. I found it so useful talking to the students." FG2.4 OP

"I think taking part in this makes you realise you can find the information out. The student I was with mentioned what they study and it made me think that I could still go out and find out for myself and there was nothing wrong with wanting to be informed." FG2.2 OP

Intergenerational learning and understanding of others

The Dispensing with the Mystery project enabled students and older participants to come together in a relatively 'neutral' environment such as the Age Concern day centre in Brighton. The structure of the session allowed the opportunity to discuss medications but it also enabled wider discussion such as how pharmacists were trained.

"We had a session in the university, it's amazing how big the place was and there is so much there that you can do. The labs where we had our lecture were amazing." FG2.1 OP

"It reminded me of being in a science lesson at school..in fact it had not changed that much, it was great to see what happens in the lectures. It's all so very interesting. I can see how they find it a challenging course though, is a very science based course." FG2.2 OP

"I think I now understand the challenges that pharmacist face when learning, there is so much information they have to absorb. I think I will look at my pharmacist with new eyes." FG2.4 OP

Participants also highlighted that prior to the project they had never been on any University of Brighton campuses. The project aim had been to encourage participants to possibly come to the university outside of the three-week programme. Although, at the start of the project, it could not be anticipated if this would occur. It had however, resulted in some participants exploring University of Brighton campus.

"I went online the other day to look at the university of Brighton website. My grand-daughter helped me. I was interested to see what the place was about. I've also come in to use the library here and I found it a very lively

place, very different from my usual places, I've seen some of the exhibitions in the University of Brighton town centre [grand parade]..I've become quite a fan..." FG2.3 OP

For some of the participants they have seen the value of participating in the project from a personal perspective and in some cases have provoked a review of personal views and opinions about younger people and students in general.

"Spending time with the students has made me think about how I saw younger people. I came along to the programme thinking it would be useful but was not sure how it was going to be that useful working with students. This changed quickly for me as I realised that maybe at the start I thought perhaps they would not have much to offer." FG2.3 OP

"I think it has made me think I should be more patient with younger people. I'm sure they can get frustrated with me as an older person, seeing how much they have to learn I admire their motivations and commitment...I kind of thought that maybe younger people did not necessary have those characteristics...talking to them and listening what they had to say showed me otherwise...so maybe you can teach an old dog new tricks." FG2.1 OP

Experiences learnt on the programme also encouraged participants to alter some of their attitudes towards pharmacists.

"I started talking to my pharmacist as I was telling him about my time with the students. I had a wonderful chat with him about his training and from that I felt I had something in common with him and now I feel very happy about asking him questions...its quite strange really how that has happened, but has been most beneficial for me I think." FG2.2 OP

"I think I can appreciate the difficulties of the professions. I'm sure it has its difficulties and red tape like any other. Listening to the tutor and the students I think you get to understand it from a different perspective. I can see that they too might be frustrated with the way things are." FG2.4 OP

Although participants felt they were learning mainly about medications and possibly student culture, many enjoyed the opportunity to socialise. It facilitated new friendships with fellow Age Concern members which ordinarily they would not have met within their existing social or life routines and has built up friendships which have surpassed their time on the programme.

"When I came to the first session I thought I would know people, apart from one lady who goes to the same club I did not know the other folks. I was surprised but found it to be a good thing too." FG2.1 OP

"I've made friends with another member that I did not know before, we meet up for coffee every Wednesday now and sometimes we might see the others which is nice because we all say hello and occasionally have a little chat...it's all very pleasant you know." FG2.4 OP

"it's just nice to meet someone new...that why I did the programme you to meet new people young and old" FG2.2 OP

Students Feedback

Structure of the programme

Comparisons made by students were notably centred on the difference between the original project and the activity buddies project. When students we asked to discuss the difference of the programmes, they did not favour one method of working with older people over another. Students were able to understand and express the merits of both the programmes.

Students highlighted the benefits of taking part in the two programmes. It appeared that both experiences were able to stretch and challenge their professional and personal skills. Although students had taken part in the original programme, it was believed that a programme like the activity buddies project and the original Dispensing with the Mystery programme developed confidence levels in students.

"The original project pushed us to do things on our own...like um making contact with the person we had been paired up with. We had to do this, no one else." FG2.1S

"I think this worked for me at this time as it meant I pushed myself and I was not that confident about doing it." FG2.1S

"We were on our own a lot...so when we did this other programme [activity buddies] it was nice to be all together. You know it was more social that way I think." FG2.3S

"It was good to have the opportunity to take part in the project again." FG2.2S

These student group discussions highlighted the benefits of the timing of the programme. It appeared students preferred the idea of the programme being introduced in the early part of the course. It was reported that it helped to build skills and confidence at a time when many students might be struggling to develop those skills and knowledge.

"Doing the course in the second year was a good time and it helped me...I was rather shy and nervous about doing it but I found I was able to use the information I was learning and also the experiences of taking part in the project meant I could also identify and apply it to my course." FG2.1S

"It was nice to take part in the project again but it can often be difficult doing it in your final year and fitting it in with your workload." FG2.3S

Personal and professional learning

The project demonstrated that providing the opportunity for students to participate in additional activities outside their 'normal' study allowed some participants to develop their personal attributes, some reporting that it made them more 'talkative', 'less timid' and gave them a sense of wanting to do more for themselves.

"I found that I needed to push myself out of a rut...I was comfortable so did not always make an effort because I was sort of quiet...I'm in a room sitting next to this person and they are in front of me, which you know means I have to talk to them I have to push myself to talk. This was good for me as afterwards as I did not dread situations like that as much afterwards." FG2.2S

"I have changed because of this [dispensing with the mystery] I find myself not worrying as much as I have more belief in myself" FG2.1S

The project demonstrated that many of the students participating in the programme were aware of the strengths and weaknesses with regards to their skills. It was reported that this awareness, for many, was a key motivator in participating in the programme.

"I realised that I was not very good at standing up and talking to people as I'm always worried about making mistakes this was hard for me. It is something I don't like doing but I now know how to deal with it better...for me it was about being able to practice." FG2.1S

"I sometimes don't trust what I know and being able to take part in this and talk to people on a one to one level I knew I had to improve this." FG2.3S

"I was looking to improve what I do and was learning." FG2.2S

"I think I have a tendency to rush through things, which has been noticed by a lot of people." FG2.3S

"I needed to be more confident..." FG2.1S

Undoubtedly, one reason for students taking part in one of the Dispensing with the Mystery programmes was to help provide solutions to their identified concerns. However, it should also be noted that, for most, this was not the sole or even primary motivator for being involved in the programme. Many students were driven by being able to help others.

"I heard about the programme and I thought it was a good project with a good message for everyone that is why I wanted to be involved, it was something be a part of something wider than university." FG2.1S

It was highlighted that the students valued the opportunity to practice their skills which, for many, had improved. These experiences enabled some of the student participants to transfer the experiences and lessons learnt into their lectures, seminars and tutorials, either by demonstrating increased confidence, command of their knowledge or sharing their experiences with fellow students.

"I'm far more confident about what I know. I talk to the others about what I'm doing here, I'm confident talking to people about their medications. My friends have really noticed a change in me and I feel the change in me." FG2.1S

"I was also not that confident and find now because of the Dispensing with the mystery programme I'm able to cope better and my knowledge has grown as I find myself remembering a lot of the experiences on the programme and applying them when I'm in my lectures and with my study groups. I'm glad I took part now." FG2.3S

The overall experiences of the students appeared to have been positive and there were few reports of a negative buddy experience. Although some student's reflections had noted how some of the older participants had been more challenging than first anticipated.

"I thought I could give a very simple answer when I first started but I quickly realised the lady I was sitting with wanted to know more...she was very interested to know about pharmacy and she was not afraid to put forward her thoughts about pharmacy. I think she used to be a nurse so I had to be sure about what I was telling her...but you know she kept me on my toes which is not necessary a bad thing is it." FG2.1S

Intergenerational learning and understanding of ageing

Participants felt that the programme could change their professional skills, many had realised, prior to the programme, the impact it would have on their understanding and attitudes towards the older generation and the issues regarding medication and information.

"I don't think I really understood the types of the people we were going to see...I know we had a briefing, which you know helped...but it is the reality when you sit with them that you understand what actually goes on...up to this point I think I was rather removed from all of that and that is a training pharmacist..Afterwards I thought it was something I should be far more aware of as a professional. I think I understand the greater issues of gaining access to healthcare, receiving good

understandable advice. This is something that sticks in my head; I don't want to be that naïve again." FG2.2S

"I think this opportunity really puts into perspective the issues faced by older people and their medications. This is a really good exercise for me...or any pharmacist..to take part in as I think it can really inform your practice as a pharmacist in the future. I know I will be more aware and be ensuring the people that come to me understand. I want to take that time to make sure they know. FG2.1S

"The gentleman I was with he had a specific condition which he was taking medication for. It was really interesting listening to him as he was telling me about what he has done in life...there were some common interest between us which made me think about the life he has now. His life had changed so much...it makes you more aware of the problems people can face on a day to day basis. It can't be easy." FG2.3S

Voluntary experience

The project was an opportunity for students to engage with the community at a grass roots level, prior to embarking on their chosen professional careers. Students believed that the Dispensing with the Mystery project was a unique opportunity which they believed not many students in their position had the opportunity to necessary engage in. It was an opportunity which enabled information to be shared.

"It was a nice opportunity to talk to people about what we do, and for us to understand the concerns. I did not realise before starting the impact the programme could have on us and on the older volunteers." FG2.1S

"The person I was with was rather grateful, they would keep saying thank you...you know like I had given them a Christmas present. I think I really underestimated what information can mean to some people. I take it for granted because I know about it...and that is easy, but not necessary what we should be taking for granted as a professional." FG2.2S

"It was really nice telling people about their medications...my partner appeared to have a better idea about her medication and that was a great feeling. It really is simple things information and it can do so much. She said to me afterwards that she is not so in the dark about what she is taking. She was taking notes so she could keep it with her medications, which I think a few others did so to." FG2.3S

When students were asked about the act of volunteering it highlighted the possibilities of the programme becoming a part of the course teaching structure. Students believed that this could always be a possibility; making it a part of a module and gaining credits for their participation. However, the students preferred that the programme remained a voluntary act. It was reported that moving the programme within the realms of 'normal' academia could possibly restrict the freedom and flexibility the programme had developed since it started. The strongest argument, noting that students would see the programme as 'something they had to do'. Due to the nature of the student's pharmacy course and heavy studying commitments the course requires. It was strongly felt that for many participants the enjoyment of the programme was due to it not being directly related to course work or assessment-related tasks. The programme was an opportunity to do something for them which provided some relief from everyday study.

"I liked the fact it was not course work or a lecture...it was practical and I know in a way we were learning and developing...it just felt different like were weren't there to do that and that is what was fun about it wasn't it." FG2.1S

"It was a different way of learning for me...very subtle and really rewarding too." FG2.3S

Moving forward – student and older peoples feedback

Students and older participants felt this was a rewarding experience and that other students and older people would benefit from the same opportunities in the future. Students noted that it has an opportunity for continual learning.

“It was an interesting opportunity and helpful for my study.” FG2.3S

“It gives you a better sense of how you might behave and act in your professions and you know what you might do differently.” FG2.2S

“I would like to see this run again.” FG2.1S

It was suggested that the project could be run in a number of ways. Although, as discussed earlier, students did not favour one style of programme over another. Students were able to favour elements from each of the programmes which they believed to fit in to student learning and fit around student commitments.

“In the first programme we were pushed to do more arranging I think this is better for me as it makes you do something for yourself.” FG2.1S

“The length of the second project was better as it was less time commitment and very manageable for us. I liked being able to show them what happens at the university.” FG2.2S

“I think the Age Concern centre was nice to go to it was central, but I liked going out to, but probably for convenience the centre was easiest. Maybe we could organise a session or first meeting, that would be nice to be involved in that way to.” FG2.3S

“What about a drop in at the centre that could be useful you know....say once a month or something or every other week.” FG2.4S

Older participants believed that the location of the activities made it accessible for them to join. It was noted that many more would find it accessible if more people knew about the opportunity. In group discussions, older participants had noted that they were surprised that the project did not recruit large numbers of older people.

“I was surprised there were not more of us, I know some people that would like to do this, and help students...They are like that you know.” FG2.1S

“I expect this is needed by a lot of people you know, not everyone can use the computer to find information you know and don't want to they want people to speak to.” FG2.2S

Older participants enjoyed the opportunity to meet with students and to visit the University of Brighton facilities.

“I liked going to the university to see the students and the lecture was fun so I think a lot of people would enjoy those sorts of things because it is interesting and everyone is nice to you.” FG2.1S

Although participants liked the location of the activities, there were some discussion which highlighted the need to possibly offer a drop-in facility within the community on a regular.

“My friend lives much further out of the town and sometimes like in winter finds it difficult to make it to the centre and I think there is a lot of people like that you see. I think going to the local community hall could be very useful as I’m sure some people would like something that is just a little nearer.” FG2.1S

“Those who are not as mobile find it hard to get to places so it could be easier if it was in other places to...” FG2.3S

Conclusion

The Dispensing with the Mystery programme successfully facilitated the opportunity for students and older participants to learn from one another. Although the topic was mostly restricted to discussions on medication, among the participants involved in the project attitudes had begun to be challenged. The project challenged generational attitudes and encouraged intergenerational learning. It was very evident in this project that this learning took place on a number of levels, from personal to professional. The project enhanced individuals’ knowledge of medications, which appeared to impact greatly on some participants and encouraged a change in the approach they took towards the management of their medication.

Participants felt encouraged to learn more about medical conditions, either through further discussions with health professionals or through further reading about their medication. The key factors in this programme also appeared to be the opportunity to build relationships that surpassed the initial programme. The impact on the students has appeared to be the greater of the two. The act of volunteering appeared to be the experience which left an impression on the student participants, and it was strongly felt that it expanded their knowledge and shaped their understanding and views of the older generation. Students professional thinking appeared to have been altered because of this interaction or opportunity. There was some evidence to suggest that students would possibly adapt their behaviours when they embark upon their careers. It was noted by students that how they interact with older people can help to improve their understanding of their medication. Thus, impacting individuals health and wellbeing, and therefore students realised communication, can be a key element within their profession. It was believed it could help empower older people to take more control over their management of their health.



Strand 3: A Secret History of Holidays, School of Service Management

The Secret History of Holidays project centred on bringing together students and older volunteers from the local community in order to capture the lived experiences of the first generation of mass tourists, using an ethno-historical technique known as photo-elicitation. This method, rooted in visual sociology, has the potential to create insights into mid 20th century leisure/ touristic behaviours, through unlocking memories via photographs and holiday albums kept as souvenirs of past holidays. These ephemeral fragments of social history also have the potential to identify new insights into the broader aspects (including cherished memories) of wellbeing in older people (Steinberg 1996).

“The photograph not only acts as an aide memoire for producing ethnographic accounts, but presents opportunities for exploring multiple perspectives, information and interpretations contained therein and subsequently triggered and facilitated in the viewers. These representations therefore require critical reading and unpacking, but in doing so, can open up socio-cultural meanings and patterns, from the perspectives of image makers, subjects and image viewers, hitherto invisible and ignored” (Parker 2005:3).

Participants

Six second-year students from the School of Service Managements tourism BA (Hons) course were recruited for the project.

Older participants were recruited from the local community near the University of Brighton, Meads campus. Older participants ranged from 67 to 80 years of age.

The programme

The programme was an opportunity for students and older people to come together over a six-week period to discuss holiday experiences. In an initial meeting, students and older participants were briefed and introduced to the project. This was an opportunity to explore the nature of what holidays meant to both older people and students. The initial open discussion allowed for students and older participants to get to know one another by exploring a mutual topic. The following five sessions were designed to allow students, staff and older participants the opportunity to discuss those experiences in-depth. The final session was held on Eastbourne seafront and involved taking digital images of the seafront which were later compiled, with the participants' holiday photos, into an album.

The Findings

A Secret History of Holidays project had a different focus compared to the two other pilot programmes. This project did not have a particular focus upon health. However it did highlight some apparent wellbeing gains from participating in the project such as social interaction, friendships and the opportunity to reminisce.

Older Participants' feedback

Memories and Experiences

Older participants involved in the programme had varied experiences of holidays. This was noted by participants to have been an 'exciting' aspect of the programme. It was an opportunity to hear about other people's holidays and how they varied from their own childhood memories and experiences

"It was interesting for me to hear about the holidays when they went abroad...as a child I did not have that chance, so it was nice to know what it was like for someone else. In summer I always wished our parents would take us abroad like some of our school friends. It would have been nice."FG3.1OP

The opportunity to reminisce about memories with like-minded individuals evidently appealed to some of the participants.

"I have not thought about my childhood or holidays for a long time and being asked to take part I just thought wow what a great opportunity to show some of my photos. That is what I like being able to share that with someone...and to inform research, what better reason to take part." FG3.1OP

"It was great to relive some of those experience and hear about the old times." FG3.3OP

"They were forgotten memories, which, when I saw the pictures and was asked to talk about it, I found I was smiling and at times I laughed to myself." FG3.2OP

"It's not always you get a chance to bore people with what you did!" FG3.4OP

Participants believed prior to the programme, that they would have little to talk about or share any common interests. Older participants believed that some of the students might not want to either know about what they used to do on holiday or sit through an album illustrating it. However, on reflection, participants found the experience to be the opposite of their initial expectations. The actual experience proved that they actually had lengthy, informative and interesting discussions with both students and other older participants. Many noted it was enjoyable to participate and to discuss those lived experiences with people that were interested in listening to them.

"I was unsure before I started the project. I thought...well I did not know what to think. I was not sure how interested people would be." FG3.1OP

"I thought I would bore them when I was being interviewed, but you know they seemed really interested as I was asked a lot of questions and they liked the pictures I had with me. I had a lot of stories to tell them." FG3.2OP

Intergenerational learning and understanding of others

Older participants reported that it was interesting spending time with the students. Although some had reported that they would have enjoyed more time with them, they did learn a lot about the courses they were undertaking, travel they had experienced, places they had lived and the types of careers they were undertaking or planning.

"I had a lovely conversation with one of the girls, she was from Zimbabwe and she was telling me about what it was like living abroad, it was very interesting to hear." FG3.2OP

"On reflection I guess it would have been nice to have seen the students more, I think we only saw them three times in the end." FG3.1OP

Participants noted that the opportunity to talk to students had sparked many comparisons between their own experiences and the students. It was believed that this added to their voluntary experiences and enriched the time that they were on the project.

"I think it would have been interesting to have heard more from the students, I had a in-depth conversation with a student on the seafront walk and she was telling me about her family and the places they went on holiday. They were similar places I had been to and in some cases places I had been to. It was a lovely conversation and I think it did make me compare my experiences." FG3.4OP

"I could have spent a long time chatting about computers, cameras and holidays once I got going. It was very easy to talk to the students." FG3.3OP

The six-week programme provided opportunities to better understand students learning. It appeared that many participants were surprised by the level of opportunities tourism students have available to them on their programmes in comparison to their experiences of university.

"It was interesting to hear from the students what they learn. Its more in-depth than I had first imagined." FG3.2OP

"The students have many opportunities while they are at university I had no idea they could do so much up here. I was told about the other courses they do in Eastbourne It was so interesting." FG3.4OP

"The students can go abroad for a year and work, that was never like that when I went to university. Many could only go abroad if they were wealthy or if they had a job that took them there...like the army" FG3.3OP

Some participants had noted that taking part had influenced their opinions and attitudes towards the university. In this strand, altering their views from negative to more positive views.

"I was not sure about coming here to do this project...I had not a very good opinion of the university before I started and had thought students were a nuisance to the area. I found after talking to them and spending time on the campus I have come to realise that there is a lot that goes on here...good stuff and positive." FG3.2OP

It was also reported that projects such as the activity buddies, and A secret History of Holidays were a positive way to interact with the local community; one which provided interest, and common ground to bring people together that would not normally socialise together. It was suggested by developing further activity buddies projects it could begin to build strong relationships with the local older people's community in Eastbourne.

"I think this project does something for the relationship between the community and the university. There should definitely be more projects like this. It is something that can challenge your mind, give an opportunity to share what you know." FG3.10P

Students' feedback

Structure of the programme

Students enjoyed participating in the programme working with a mentor and older participants. However it was noted by participants that the expectation of the students involvement altered once they commenced on the programme.

"I expected when we were told the programme was six-weeks long I thought it was an opportunity to get stuck in, you know and really do some research with our tutor." FG3.2S

Student participants believed that they would have liked more of an involvement in the planning and designing of the six-week programme. Although they highlighted that they enjoyed the time with fellow students and older participants, they expected more from the programme.

"I enjoyed what I did but at the same time I wanted more of what it was offering. We were only involved in the initial session and then one interview and then the final session." FG3.1S

After the initial first session, students were required to participate in one interview. Students highlighted that they found the nature of the topic interesting and wanted to be involved more to explore the topic in further detail.

"I was interested to find out more after my interview it was a shame that I only was in one interview. I would have liked to have been in more if possible." FG3.1S

Some participants expressed disappointment at not being able to develop their relationships with the older participants further. It was highlighted that there was little opportunity to explore this further.

"in some way it would have been nice to have done a big group project so we could get to know the older participants more and hear more about what they said." FG3.4S

Intergenerational learning and understanding of ageing

Group discussions highlighted a missed opportunity to get to know older participants better. Students noted that the time spent with participants was valuable as they believed they had furthered and bettered their understanding of early tourism. Discussions were informative and added to their knowledge of tourism and believed that to hear the lived accounts of tourism made the experience far more valuable and enjoyable.

"We did not have a long time with them, but the time we spent with them was very informative. I learnt a lot about what it was like to go abroad, how people travelled and what that was like." FG3.3S

"I even found out about relationships which developed between people which might have been frowned upon by members of society." I think I was beginning to understand what life and attitudes were like then...did not expect that really." FG3.1S

Some participants highlighted that since participating in the programme, they had felt a deeper sense of respect for older people. It was also noted that it has challenged their own perceptions of older people.

"I think it has changed the way I look or think about an older person...I have more respect as I think I thought before they were old and they won't understand what we do." FG3.1S

"I understand where they are coming from a lot more now from the time I spent with them. I definitely have a deeper sense of respect for them after I saw them with the cameras. I don't think I will naturally assume they won't be able to use technology like that again. Silly really as I always thought I was an open minded person guess stereotypes can get hold of you with out realising it...but I guess even those are made to be broken." FG3.2S

Personal and professional development

The opportunity and motivation to participate in the project for some participants stemmed from informing their own final-year projects.

"I was very interested to learn about the tourism then...and the photographs are amazing...I'm thinking about doing my dissertation based on the use of photography." FG3.4S

For some participants, the information that they had accumulated from their participation in the project could have been useful for some projects or lectures, due to the specific nature of the Secret History of Holidays project. Students' participation was mostly due to wanting to learn more about the research method and the proposed topic. However, it was noted that the project gave them a 'wonderful' opportunity to understand tourism from a 'now' and 'then' perspective.

"I think it gives you a more holistic view of tourism and can imprint on your knowledge as to how that has changed. It's important I think to know more about where it has come from." FG3.1S

Students also began to understand how the nature of holidays for the individual older participants had changed during the course of their life. In particular noting the frequency of holidays and locations.

"The lady I was speaking to tends to spend a lot of time holidaying in the UK, she seemed to do this a lot as a child. She appears not be that interested about travelling abroad. This surprised me as I thought that with retirement she might take the time to see other countries." FG3.2S

The programme also appeared to challenge students' attitudes regarding older people. The attitudes towards older people by younger people can often centre on the negative stereotypes, often labelling older people 'slow', 'not fun' or not 'interested in anything to do with young people' (Moore and Hodgson: 2006). Through discussions, students began to review their attitudes and reflected on changes in their personal views.

"I was surprised as to how technologically aware they were. I thought that when we were asked to go down to Eastbourne seafront with digital cameras. I

honestly thought we would be a long time. I was very surprised as to how well they knew how to use the cameras.” FG3.1S

“I had to be shown how to use my camera and it was by the older participant...I did not expect that.” FG3.4S

“Participating in the programme has given me a deeper sense of respect for older people. I think I realise more so now that they are not just an older person, they are a person to and someone probably with lots of very interesting things to say too.” FG3.2S

“It was fun spending time with the older participants, and I think they surprised us all when we got back to the editing suite...they were uploaded and playing with the images so quickly and playing with all these different themes...which I did know what they did because had never used it before.” FG3.1S

The project did open up the opportunity for students to develop knowledge, although some students reported that they felt the project did not really offer the opportunity to develop any skills. However, this was noted as possibly being related to the type of course they were undertaking.

“I found out lots, but did not really learn any new skills, which you know looking back would have been nice I guess. Although it is hard to tell what that might be. I guess having more opportunity to interview might have been really useful.” FG3.1S

Voluntary experience

During group discussions students discussed the prospects of making the programme a part of the teaching structure or for such an activity to remain as a voluntary exercise.

Students reported that their main motivation for volunteering on the programme was the prospect of being able to work alongside their tutor.

“Working with the lecturer on real research project has a certain appeal. It can be a good experience.” FG3.1S

For some participants, it was reported that it was about taking part and not gaining the experience.

“I wanted to take part because it sounded fun and you know it was different from what I had done before.” FG3.4S

Students considered the prospects of making such a programme a part of their BA (Hons) programme. However, students believed that no real gain could be had by creating this opportunity in the programme, this was felt mostly due to the nature of their course. Students believed they already have the opportunity of gaining a number of experiences on the programme which would be directly related to their chosen careers. It was, however, noted that if the Secret History of Holiday programme was to be incorporated into the teaching structure, students would like the opportunity to participate in the design of the project further.

Moving forward: Student and older participants

Students and older participants believed that if the project were to move forward then it should offer the opportunity for students and older participants to spend more time together.

“It would be nice to spend more time with the students. To learn more about them and what they do for holidays.” FG3.3S

"I would have liked to have gotten to know the other participants better"
FG3.4S

Some students noted that if the programme were to run again it would be their preference to be involved in interviewing. Some consideration and opportunity to be involved in the preparation and planning of the project was expressed by participants.

"I would like to be more involved in interviewing...I don't know maybe have a list of questions that we could ask. I felt I was being to quiet and needed to be involved more." FG3.1S

"I would want to see the next project involve us in the planning of the project, that would be really good and I think I would understand more about how research is carried out." FG3.2S

In addition, it was noted that some participation in the analysis would have been an opportunity to develop further skills in research. Some participants did note that due to the possible careers they would be pursuing that this aspect might not be necessary for many of the students.

"I think I would have enjoyed taking part after the interviews and seeing what happens to the data." FG3.2S

Conclusion

Students and older participants noted that the project had provided some positive aspects in enabling older people and students to come together and discuss a topic which was of interest to both age groups. It facilitated learning from both ends of the age spectrums. The project also appeared to have impacted positively on many of the members and has provided an opportunity to further build upon community relationships. It appears that participants would have preferred more interaction with each age group and further involvement in the planning and implementing of the programme. However, due to the nature of the research design it was not necessary possible to involve students at the early stages of the project design.

Discussion

The Activity Buddies projects focus group discussions reiterated the enjoyment older people experienced when remaining active and independent. There were many comments made regarding the positive experiences for older people that had occurred when attending the activities on the three different activity buddy programmes. It was explained that the opportunity to interact with students encouraged positive views of younger people, as well as younger people gaining positive views of older people and understanding of age-related concerns; stereotyping, image of ageing and a lack of understanding of either age group. These issues were highlighted as barriers to participation in activities. This was uncovered in earlier WHOOP research during June – October 2005, which investigated how the University of Brighton, local community organisations and the local older people's community could build partnerships. Participants in this original, CUPP funded project, vocalised on many occasions that the University of Brighton could be in a unique position to add to provision within the community (Moore and Hodgson;2006). It has appeared from the evaluation undertaken in the activity buddies project that by building partnerships it can incite intergenerational learning, by better understanding individuals concerns and barriers to participating in any activities. The activities promoted personal and professional learning in both student and older participants.

The research indicated a strong consensus in the focus groups, which recognised the potential for older people and students to learn side-by-side. Learning was achieved on a number of different levels and was not only evident in what students learnt. The findings also showed that older people were seen to increase their understanding of the issues relating to health and wellbeing. In many situations students and older volunteers could see the potential in rolling out the activity buddies model to include other courses within the University of Brighton. In the case of older people, they saw the value of ensuring the relevant programme was available to reach more older people, in particular, noting those in the 'hard to reach category'. It was suggested that allowing students and staff to attend local voluntary facilities could possibly encourage more involvement by older people in the programme. This approach might involve those who are less mobile or who may benefit from a programme like Fitness for Health.

The activity buddies project also highlighted that much of the older people's community could benefit from obtaining access to the vast educational facilities on offer within the university. In particular, participants recognised that their time spent on the individual programmes had enabled them to learn more about the University of Brighton and the students' learning environment. It was believed that this enabled older people to feel more informed about younger people and the challenges that they face as they begin to enter the working environment, as well as allowing them to better understand the different professional careers. The interface with the individual pilot projects also enabled some skills development, e.g. knowing how to cope with falls and manage medications. It was reported that older people would welcome the opportunity to further their participation in future activity buddy programmes or to be further involved in students' learning. Many agreed that in some situations it made them feel honoured to be able to contribute to someone else's development and learning. The retired and the very elderly have a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills which they have built up through their personal interests and career experiences. Opportunities to share these experiences with their own peers and younger people would allow them to contribute and to add to other people's experiences in a positive, proactive way, as they could perhaps further their knowledge of other age groups.

It was viewed by older participants and student participants that the activities offered on the different programmes were interesting and varied. It was believed that if the programme was to be repeated, the projects should continue to offer the opportunity for students and older people to input ideas and opinions, as to how the programme runs. It was viewed that this made individuals feel valued and involved in the programme beyond being 'just' a participant. Remaining flexible would afford the activity buddies project the opportunity to continually cater

for a diverse group of people with wide-ranging interests, experiences and skills. Participants reported that by offering a range of seminars and activity sessions, the university would effectively meet the needs of a diverse group. It would also enable older people to interact with the university's educational facilities on different levels, which would create flexible opportunities for older people to further their personal interests and knowledge.

The need for further learning opportunities was echoed throughout the study. It was believed that the three pilot projects offered many attributes, like being able to enjoy activities in an informal and relaxed environment. It was believed it was a different way of learning and could really impact upon older people's health and wellbeing in the future. If the activity buddies project could be run on a rolling basis, older people would be more inclined to continue to remain active. Older people would be better informed about the appropriate measures that are required in order to remain mentally and physically healthy.

A loss of independence or quality of life in later life had been reported by participants, mostly connected to age-related health and mobility issues. The activity buddies project was viewed by some participants to be an opportunity to slow the decline of independence and quality of life, if the different programmes or similar styles programmes were to be developed or continued. It was reported that many older people would like the opportunity to seek advice regarding ways to maintain a healthy lifestyles in later years and to remain active for longer.

Students participating in the programme believed, on the whole, that the programme should largely remain a voluntary experience. It was viewed that there were some merits in courses taking a different approach and incorporating it into a teaching framework, such as physiotherapy. It could prove to be an added learning experience which could potentially help to promote continual personal development. This activity buddies experience was believed to have been, on the whole, a valued and positive experience. It was expressed by students that this opportunity challenged their attitudes towards older people, and many felt that after hearing 'their stories' it developed an understanding of an older person's point of view. In light of such reflections, students felt that this experience would stay with them and enable them to draw on those experiences when they entered their chosen professions.

Older people have typically been viewed as frail and vulnerable (Joseph Rowntree Foundation: 2004). Participants wanted to see a change in this view with opportunities such as being able to talk about and promote ageing in a positive way. It was identified that older people's participation could be as equally valuable as staff offering their experiences. It was recognised that older people could challenge stereotypes and promote a positive approach to ageing by working with students. Taking part in planning, formulating ideas and carrying out research would allow older people to input their own ideas into research activities, something which might influence a change in current practice or strategies.

Summary

The key points to have emanated from the project have provided an insight into how the activity buddies programme has begun to affect change and challenge attitudes relating to the image of ageing. This has been encouraged through the intergenerational aspect of all three programmes which have, in turn, enabled older and student participants to informally discuss their views and experiences of ageing, studying, health, learning, careers, wellbeing, holidays, families and technology.

In some situations the programme has begun to tackle older people's perceptions of how the University of Brighton can contribute in a positive way to the local older people's community and build upon these relationships.

Firstly, the project has begun to demonstrate how it can successfully bring together older people and students to work together, to share expertise, and contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of older people. The three different programmes highlighted many significant aspects which were of relevance to the individual disciplines, like benefits to their individual professional learning.

The activity buddies programme additionally demonstrated that it successfully promoted the benefits of physical fitness for health exercise. This enabled older people to enjoy exercise without feeling fearful, it equipped them with the necessary skills and began to demonstrate how to build upon their knowledge and demonstrate ways to continue to exercise. Dispensing with the Mystery demonstrated how additional information could be provided about prescribed medications in an informal, relaxed and social atmosphere.

Older people's involvement in working with students and staff has contributed to, and enhanced, the opportunity for older people to contribute to students learning experiences in a positive way. It has created opportunities to provide a knowledge exchange between older people and students, which has successfully encouraged both age groups to learn greatly from one another.

The different activity buddy programmes have enabled an element of continual personal and professional learning. Students were able to build upon their confidence in relation to their individual courses. The opportunity to exercise their knowledge and to practice skills proved to be a valuable aspect of the individual programmes; whether it was to practice talking to older people, building upon knowledge, learning from others or trying out new research techniques like photo-elicitation. Students valued the opportunity to exercise this in a non-pressured environment which afforded them the luxury of learning in a 'different way' compared to their 'normal' realms of studying.

Older people experienced a degree of increased confidence in taking medications and in the understanding of their prescribed medication. This had promoted a willingness to go and find further information out for themselves. Confidence to develop new friendships was also gained by some participants, as well as having the confidence to carry on or to take up physical activities. It was also claimed that all three pilot programmes could benefit older people and should be encouraged to develop further. To continue to develop health programmes using university staff, students and voluntary organisations expertise would be a way of advising older people in ways of maintaining health, mental development, physical fitness, and prevention of mobility and balance problems. Continually exploring opportunities with older people, local community agencies and the university to develop these programmes would be an effective way to reduce admissions of older people into hospitals and help to prevent a decline in health problems in later life.

Lastly, it was viewed that building relationships between the university and local voluntary organisations was a positive step to reinforcing positive ageing attitudes among older people. The project was viewed as a way to enable older people to continue their personal

development through interaction with their own peers, students and staff. It was reported that keeping the programme as a voluntary exercise appeared to be a rewarding exercise due to the different nature and demands of students' study commitments.

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University of Brighton
School of Service Management

A Secret History of Holidays

**Do you still have your holiday
photos from the 1950s - 1960s?**

**Would you be willing to talk about them
and share your holidays experiences
for a small research project?**

**Want to help our tourism students
understand more about the history of
holidays in the post-war era?**

**If you are interested in taking part and you
want to find out more about how to sign
up please contact**

**Professor Peter Burns
01273 643897**

**P.M.Burns@Brighton.ac.uk
OR**

**Miss Lisa Hodgson
01273 643457**

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University of Brighton

School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences

Dispensing With The Mystery

Do you feel confused by the types of medication you are taking?

Wonder what your medication does?

How they help you?

Do you want to contribute to pharmacy students training?

Do you want to share your experiences with Pharmacy students?

Teach students the true meaning of what it is like to take different medications and to understand how this can impact individual's lives?

Why not Dispense With the Mystery and come along to our workshops to find out what our trainee pharmacy students can share with you to help shed light on your medication.



PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION SHEET

University of Brighton School of Health Professions

Activity Buddies

Fitness for Health

Purpose of Study

There is abundant evidence indicating that moderate regular physical activity enhances health, wellbeing and quality of life and reduces risk of many degenerative and chronic diseases. There are also several studies showing that when people retire there is sometimes a concern about how to use the free time previously spent in work with other activities. It is noted that over 65's are the most frequent users of health care services and are the great portion of patients treated by physiotherapists, who might seek treatment for conditions and problems which may be aggravated by lack of exercise and physical activities. One of the key areas in physiotherapy is to promote regular exercises and other physical activities to maintain and improve health related fitness.

The purpose of this Activity Buddies programme overall aim to provide opportunities for participants (University of Brighton students and the older people's community) to engage in activities related to their own interest with students.

What will I have to do?

The fitness for health programme will run for six-weeks which will involve meeting with students and fellow participants on a weekly basis for a maximum of two hours. You will have an opportunity at the initial session to learn more about the project and its purpose. This induction workshop will be an opportunity for you to get to know the students you will be working with. In the first session students will enable you to discuss some of your expectations and goals you wish to achieve through your participation in the programme. It will be an opportunity to discuss some of the activities which you might like to do and plan them as a group with the students. At the end of this first session you will have designed with students a group of activities for the six-week programme. These activities will have a number of benefits to health and fitness for individuals.

Weeks 2 to 6 will involve meeting students to carry out your planned activities. Activities and location might vary from week to week depending on the activities you have chosen. Activities might be held at the University of Brighton or within the local area, such as the seafront. In the initial session locations times and activities will be decided.

It is hoped that you will enjoy engaging with our students and sharing your experiences and knowledge of exercise and fitness as well as meeting new people and forming friendships which might be sustained beyond the six-weeks. It is envisaged that students will be able to learn from you what it is like undertaking physical activity in later years. Sharing your experiences of how easy or difficult it is to engage in activities as a group or individually in the community. It would be an opportunity for students to share

their learnt knowledge of exercise and fitness with you as well as share their experiences of studying at the University of Brighton.

After the six-week programme you will be invited back to participate in focus group discussion. This focus group will have a maximum of 8-10 people from activity group. This is an opportunity for you to discuss the benefits of participating in such a programme, what you have gained from the experience, what were your likes and dislikes, opinions on the structure of the programme. The focus group will be an opportunity for you to evaluate the programme and put across what you felt worked well or did not work well. Information from this focus group will be used to inform the next steps of the programme and to develop and modify it further. Your responses will be recorded and transcribed verbatim.

If you are travelling to attend any of the activities or the focus group session by car, bus or rail you can apply to have your travelling costs reimbursed. To enquire about this further please contact the Project worker (Miss Lisa Hodgson).

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Participation in the six-week programme and the focus group is entirely voluntary. You are able to remove yourself from the programme at any point without any explanation. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form at the beginning of the focus group interview. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part in the focus group interview?

You will be asked to attend one session at the University of Brighton, Eastbourne campus to discuss your experience of the buddy project fitness for health activity scheme. The discussion will take approximately an hour and will be facilitated by the strand supervisor (Dr Raija Kuisma) or the project worker (Miss Lisa Hodgson). The facilitator will pose some topics related to the activity scheme for discussion and you are free to discuss the issues with the other group members as you wish. You do not have to discuss any topics you do feel comfortable with.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Activities

There are no real disadvantages or risks in taking part in the six-week programme or focus groups. You are free to withdraw from the activities at any time.

Focus groups

If you feel that any of the topics under discussion in the focus group will cause you any distress, you are free to withdraw from the focus group. Participants will be able to withdraw from the conversation or leave the room at any time or terminate your participation in the discussion if this occurs. The moderator will be available to discuss your concerns and take any further action as deemed necessary.

Taking part?

Taking part in the planned activities might improve fitness which will enable you to get a better general understanding of the benefits of taking up exercise to improve your health, mobility and balance. It is also an opportunity to share your experiences and

teach students some of the issues surrounding fitness and exercise in post retirement years.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the programme or focus groups you may discuss it first with the supervisor Dr. Raija Kuisma or the leader of this project Professor Ann Moore whose details are below.

Confidentiality?

Information you provide about yourself will be kept private and will only be available to the study investigators. Data will be stored on a password-protected computer and any raw data will be stored in a locked, restricted access drawer. Tapes will be wiped clean after the write up of all data has been completed. Your identity will be protected at all times. The results of the focus group interviews will be used anonymously, and you will not be identified when the results are analysed. You will not be identifiable in the write up of the study or any future publications that arise from this study. Quotes from the discussions may be used in the report and publications of the study but participants will not be identifiable from these quotes.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of this study will be included in the report to the funding body and disseminated in appropriate academic literature and conferences. Participant's anonymity will always be maintained in any written or verbal reporting of this project.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been approved by the University of Brighton's Faculty of Health Research Ethics and Governance Committee.

The study has been funded by the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange (BSCKE)

Contact for Further Information

Dr Raija Kuisma (Senior Lecturer), Fitness for Health project supervisor, and focus group moderator

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Participants Information Sheet

University of Brighton School of Service Management

Activity Buddies

A Secret History of Holidays: An Investigation into the lived experiences of post-war holidays through photo-elicitation

Purpose of the project

Tourism, especially seaside tourism, figures richly in England's cultural heritage and the opportunity to purposefully explore film archives is hugely important. Among the tangible remains of holiday memories are photographs, postcards, stories, diary entries, advertisements, posters, brochures, travel books and guides, and promotional and amateur films. Within that list, photos and the like form a particular focus for this project as these images are able to provide a perspective and insight into social history, which will be explored through discussion of your chosen images. The project aims to capture the lived experiences of the first generation of mass tourists through an ethno-historical technique known as photo-elicitation.

What will I have to do?

The proposed research will invite you to bring a selection of your personal collection of holiday images e.g. photographs, postcards, stories, diary entries, advertisements, posters, brochures, travel books and guides, and promotional and amateur films. In an initial session it will be an opportunity for you to share your past experiences and provide an insight into mid 20th century leisure/ tourism behaviours through unlocking memories via photographs and holiday albums kept as souvenirs of past holidays.

Your involvement in the project?

This overall project will run for six-weeks which will involve a maximum of 10 participants from the local community and 5 University of Brighton, Service Management students. In the six-weeks you will be required to attend four sessions. Firstly, a small group session, secondly, a one-to-one interview, thirdly, a group walk along the seafront and lastly a final focus group interview.

First session

The project has been designed to allow you to explore and share your experiences of early tourism initially in a small group with fellow participants from the community, University of Brighton students and the project supervisor. In this first session participants will discuss some of their holiday material, images which you have specially selected to show the group. This will also be an opportunity to get to know other members of the community taking part in the project and learn about their experiences as well as sharing your own experiences of early 1950's/1960's holidays. This session will probably last for a maximum of two hours.

The material which you select to show the group will represent your own constructions of a 'holiday' and of identity either as individuals or as family, hence the project title –'A Secret History of Holidays' – secret, but with meaning to all of us who have experienced holidays by the sea

Second Session

At the end of the first session participants will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview with Professor Peter Burns (the project supervisor) and one student observer. Times will be organised at your convenience at the end of the first session. In the individual interview session participants in the project will have an opportunity to explore these experiences in greater depth with the project supervisor. Interviews will be tape recorded and possibly with your permission interviews will be video recorded by the student.

Third Session

In the sixth week after all individual interviews have been completed with all participants. You will be invited to take a walk along the seafront, which will be hosted by students to take digital pictures of Eastbourne. The purpose of this session is to enable you to share with students what you like about Eastbourne. After the walk is completed all participants will be invited back to the School of Service Management editing suite (Eastbourne, Darley Road campus) to print their photos. Each participant will receive a souvenir photo album which will document their experience of early tourism and their walk along the seafront.

With your permission we would like the opportunity to display some of your personal images which will describe your experiences of holidays. At the end of the overall Activity Buddies project a feedback conference will be held which will invite all participants, students and staff. This will be an opportunity to share your experiences of taking part in the project with other participants from other themed strands in the Activity Buddies project. You will have the opportunity to develop an exhibit of your photos for the conference.

After the project ends?

This is the **final fourth session** which you will be invited to attend (participation in this session is voluntary). After the six-week programme is completed participants will be invited back to take part in a focus group discussion which is designed to provide an insight into your experiences of taking part in the project, what it was like sharing your holiday experiences with students and staff. The fundamental purpose of this discussion is to evaluate the project. It will be an opportunity to give and share your views on the success and failures of the project, what you liked most or did not like about your experience in the project.

If you are travelling to attend any of the one-to-one interviews or the focus group session by car, bus or rail you can apply to have your travelling costs reimbursed. To enquire about this further please contact the project worker (Miss Lisa Hodgson). Contact details are below.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the one-to-one and focus group interviews is entirely voluntary. If you feel that any time you are unable to continue participation in the project or interviews you can withdraw at anytime without explanation.

What will happen to me if I take part in the focus group interview?

You will be asked to attend one session at the University of Brighton, Eastbourne campus to discuss your experience of the Activity Buddies, 'A Secret History of Holidays' project. The discussion will take approximately an hour and will be facilitated by the strand supervisor (Professor Peter Burns) or the project worker (Miss Lisa Hodgson). The facilitator will pose some topics related to the activity scheme for discussion and you are free to discuss the issues with the other group members. You do not have to discuss any topics your not comfortable with.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Walk along the seafront

There are no real disadvantages or risks in taking part in the programme or the focus groups. You are free to withdraw from the activity at any time.

One-to-one interviews and focus group interviews

If you feel that any of the topics under discussion in the individual interviews or the focus group will cause you any distress, you are free to withdraw from the individual or focus group interview. You will be able to withdraw from the conversation or leave the room at any time or terminate your participation in the discussion if this occurs. The supervisor will be available to discuss your concerns and take any further action as deemed necessary.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the programme, one-to-one interview, walk along the seafront or focus group interviews you may discuss it first with the supervisor Professor Peter Burns or the project manager Professor Ann Moore whose details are on the last page of the participants' information sheet.

Evaluation of the project?

Individual interviews and focus group interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis and evaluation purposes. Tapes will be wiped clean after the write up of all data has been completed. Your identity will be protected at all times. The results of the individual and focus group interviews will be used anonymously, and you will not be identified when the results are analysed. All results will be securely held on university password-controlled computers.

Confidentiality?

Everything you discuss with the student or supervisor will be strictly confidential, and no personal information will be shared with anyone outside of the project team.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results will be included in the report to the funding body and dissemination to all participants in the project as well appropriate academic literature and conferences. At the very end of the project a feedback conference will be held for all participants and students involved in the project to meet other participants from other themed strands

from the Activity Buddies project. This is an opportunity to hear back on the experiences of other participants, students and staff experiences of taking part in the project. Participant's anonymity will always be maintained in any future written or verbal reporting of this project.

Contact Information

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PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION SHEET

University of Brighton School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences

Activity Buddies

'Dispensing with the Mystery'

Purpose of the project

This scheme which we see as an important part of helping pharmacy students understand more about how medicines affect people.

When they are studying pharmacy, our students learn a great deal about medicines and how they work. They don't, however, have many chances to meet 'real' people with real questions about their medication.

This project is designed to give you and students the opportunity to meet in voluntary day centres to help both sides understand more about medicines.

You will have been invited to take part by the University of Brighton or a representative from Age Concern or the Seniors project in Brighton.

What will I have to do?

The overall Dispensing with the Mystery programme will run for six-weeks. During the six-weeks students and staff will be involved two short three week programmes which will run between October and November.

Your involvement in the project?

You will be invited to take part in one of these three week programmes either on Age Concern or the Seniors Community Project premises. A small group of pharmacy students (maximum 5 students) will meet with you at one of these centres. If you decide to take part in the project it will involve discussing some of your experiences of taking medications with students. The meetings you have with students will also be for you to elicit further information about your medications from the students, and to seek answers to some of your questions.

First session (Age Concern or Seniors Community Project premises)

In the initial meeting staff and students will give you a brief introduction which will introduce the purpose and aim of the Activity Buddies project 'Dispensing with the Mystery' programme. The first session will be an opportunity for you to meet and socialise with each other while beginning to discuss your experiences of taking prescribed medications. After you have had a chance to get to know students and other participants in the programme. A student in a private one-to-one session with you, will discuss and record a drug history. This will be an opportunity for you to ask particular questions about your medication to develop a better understanding of the type of medication you

are using. A brief questionnaire might be used to evaluate how well you get on with your medicines.

Once the questionnaire is completed, we hope you will want to find out more about students and your fellow participants. You will have the opportunity to ask students questions about your medicines. We particularly hope you will feel able to share any difficulties you have in sticking to your treatment with the student.

The student may be able to help you straightaway, or they may need to make a note of the problem and talk it over with their lecturer at the university (who is a registered pharmacist).

Second Session (Age Concern or Seniors Community Project premises)

The second meeting will be an opportunity for students to feed back the information that you specifically might have asked for. This will be done in private one-to-one sessions with the same student you had your first meeting with.

Students are not allowed to suggest changes in your treatment in any way, since this must only be done by your doctor or nurse. They may, though, come up with some suggestions which could help you in practical sense e.g. helpful tips on how to manage your medications, and understand what their purpose is.

Third Session (University of Brighton Moulsecoomb Campus)

Students will be hosting the last session which will be inviting you to the University of Brighton, Moulsecoomb campus. This might include an opportunity for students to share some of their experiences as a pharmacy student with you and show you the kind of environment which they learn in. At your last visit under the scheme, students will again have a brief questionnaire to go through with you to try to find out if the visits have helped you in your understanding of the medicines you take.

If you are travelling to attend any of the activities or the focus group session by car, bus or rail you can apply to have your travelling costs reimbursed. To enquire about this further please contact the Project worker (Miss Lisa Hodgson).

After the programme has finished?

After the three week programme has ended, you will be invited back to attend a focus group evaluation session which will be a small group discussion, which is designed to engage with participant's opinions, views of the 'Dispensing with the Mystery' project. Focus groups discussion will be asking you as a group to evaluate the project to find out what you most liked or disliked about the programme. Participation in the focus group interview is voluntary and you can opt out of participating in the interviews at anytime without explanation. Focus group interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. Tapes will be wiped clean after the write up of all data has been completed. Your identity will be protected at all times. Confidentiality within

the group will be strictly observed, and transcripts and tapes will be encoded to assure anonymity

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the three week programme and focus group interviews is entirely voluntary. If you feel that any time you are unable to continue participation in the project or interviews you can withdraw at anytime without explanation.

Confidentiality?

Everything you discuss will be strictly confidential, and no personal information will be shared with anyone other than 'your' student. All results will be securely held on university password-controlled computers

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Meetings with students

There are no real disadvantages or risks in taking part in the programme or the focus groups. You are free to withdraw from the activity at any time.

Focus group interviews

If you feel that any of the topics under discussion in the focus group will cause you any distress, you are free to withdraw from the focus group. You will be able to withdraw from the conversation or leave the room at any time or terminate your participation in the discussion if this occurs. The supervisor and project worker will be available to discuss your concerns and take any further action as deemed necessary.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the programme or focus groups you may discuss it first with the supervisor Mr Mike Ellis-Martin or the project manager, Professor Ann Moore. Contact details are below.

Participation in the project and focus group interviews are entirely voluntary. If you feel that any time you are unable to continue participation in the project or interviews you can withdraw at any time without explanation.

Evaluation of the project

Focus group interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. Tapes will be wiped clean after the write up of all data has been completed. Your identity will be protected at all times. Confidentiality within the group will be strictly observed, and transcripts and tapes will be encoded to assure anonymity. The results of the focus group interviews will be used anonymously, and you will not be identified when the results are analysed. All results will be securely held on university password-controlled computers.

What can I ask the student to do?

As a student of the University of Brighton, your information buddy is only permitted, as part of the scheme, to talk with you about drug medication. They can share information with you, but cannot make recommendations about changing your current medication programme. If you feel that you need to

change your medications you should talk to a fully qualified pharmacist. We have to ask you to comply with these conditions as a requirement of the scheme, and the student will have to refuse if asked to do anything inappropriate.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results from the focus group interviews and your questionnaires will be used anonymously, and you will not be identified when the results are analysed. The results will be included in the report to the funding body and dissemination to all participants in the project as well as appropriate academic literature and conferences. At the very end of the project a feedback conference will be held for all participants involved in the project to meet other participants from other themed strands from the Activity Buddies project. Participant's anonymity will always be maintained in any future written or verbal reporting of this project.

If you have any questions, complaints or comments, please feel free to contact us

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