

Successful Ageing is a C.I.C. is aimed at enriching the well-being of adults/senior adults in the BAME and local community in Sutton Coldfield.

‘Successful Ageing’ came to life after researching and concluding a gap in the wellbeing of senior adults in the local community of Sutton Coldfield in 2021. We found an escalating sense of isolation and loneliness largely in the ageing population leading to poor mental well-being and chronic illness and strongly felt it is high time to recognise that **preventive wellness care** for senior adults in BAME and the local community is crucial and should be a key element in healthcare provision.

We drafted a model and ran the sessions voluntarily for few months in a local community group (Dosti/Senior Punjabi Group)

COVID hit before we could start but we still managed to launch in March 2021 via Zoom followed by in person workshops until 2022.

We were granted approx. £27,000 of funding to run this project provided by SCCT, Sutton Coldfield and later very kindly supported with gap funding which ended in January 2024.

It took us 3 years to build this group from 5 participants to 62, shifting their clogged mindset of unexpressed emotions into a mindset that self-care is not selfish.

The core of the project is a preventative measure towards physical/mental/emotional wellbeing of adults/senior adults in Sutton Coldfield.

Another objective of this program is to help seniors to progress into coming years with **more awareness and cultivating habits of self-care/ self -development, to maintain sound emotional and mental health** and also maintaining cognitive skills which start decreasing with ageing.

We have managed to knit and unite a beautiful BAME senior adults community who are committed not only to their own self-care but also to the surrounding area and environment as well. Participants are also referred from GP surgeries and social prescribing and mental health professionals.

Dementia is at the top as a health concern. Successful Ageing is providing a space and services for 65 plus citizens to be aware of such ailments and educating them with practical, doable tools and strategies as a preventative measure. Bringing changes in lifestyle is the foundation of each workshop.

Who is involved?

Experts from the fields of education with a neuro-bioscience background, leadership, psychiatrist (clinical and non-clinical), nutritionist and entrepreneurs.

Who are the participants?

Residents of Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham:.. There were nearly 35-70 participants; men and women aged 45–80 years (regular attendees are between 30-35).

The attendees are resident within Sutton Coldfield with mostly residing in Four Oaks (60%), Streetly (10%), Mere Green (10%), Walmley (10%), Falcon Lodge (10%).

Core of Successful Ageing workshops

Self-care: Putting all strategies, tools and talks to put the onus on individuals to ensure that it's the time now to be devoted to their own health and making sure their well-being is prioritised

Structure of each workshop:

Each workshop covered 4 segments:

1. Physical:

- Various styles of exercises with experts, joint health, muscle health, hyperbolic stretches
- Talks on diet, supplements and introducing clean diet (with the help of clinical and non-clinical experts)

2. Mental stimulation:

- New skill learning, games, brain teasers, memory games, poetry, food for thought
- Enhancing ability to think and reason – mainly shifting mindset

3. Emotional:

- Developing meaningful connections, songs, dance, story-telling and laughter yoga
- Diet to detox thoughts, music quiz -Bollywood melodies

4. Spiritual:

- The art and science of mindfulness, meditation techniques, reflection and gratitude

Successful Ageing has made a difference since it started

Highlights of the progress:

The Four Oaks Friday group just look forward to their Friday mornings to make them feel less isolated and alone in this world and at the same time get a good dose of exercise and important self-care advice.

- Members look forward to Monday (Falcon Lodge) and Friday (Four Oaks) sessions; the sense of belonging is visible
- Members are encouraged to express their feelings on mental awareness and made aware how sharing feelings plays a big role in healing sentiments
- Male members slowly started opening up and realising that the community is critical for them to thrive, providing all elements to support well-being
- Over the last year we provided members with an opportunity to bring their innate talents and skills to the surface which was magical
- Different members started filling roles with their expertise (cooking, sowing, gardening, song writing and playing instruments)
- Members shared identity and solidarity and felt valued by fellow members.
- To stimulate their brain activities like Sudoku, art work, salsa Self-defence, bhangra dance, tap dance, financial wisdom. Will making, sleep management, technology
- Kundalini yoga expert Satpal was invited for various sessions
- Mindfulness and guided relaxation finally started making sense to seniors
- Members started contributing by sharing their unique skill set
- Expert guest speakers/instructors invited each month to train/inform participants
- Members feeling comfortable talking about their worries
- Members developing bonds with each other and keeping a check on each other's well-being. It is like they provide each other a little light through the darkness to help others find their way back to their own self

- Confidence level in ladies went high to the extent that they took a small initiative and organised community cultural programs and went on stage to perform
- Participants organising outdoor trips and visiting each other's houses for lunches etc

Falcon Lodge members

- Suicidal thoughts shifted to sharing and finding solutions
- The penny dropped that self-care is not selfish
- Never missing any sessions showing diligence and commitment
- Psychological bonding between members weaved a thread supporting each other through respective challenges
- Some members are back to work after over 15 years

Out of these numbers, 35-38 are committed towards their physical and mental health. Improvement in both, in the long term helps reduce the burden on health and social services.

The confidence levels moved leaps and bounds. Group members now go on stage to perform (i.e. Commonwealth Games). They are going on **day trips** and organising coffees and lunches to each other's houses to stay connected after a Friday session.

How we measure progress and outcomes:

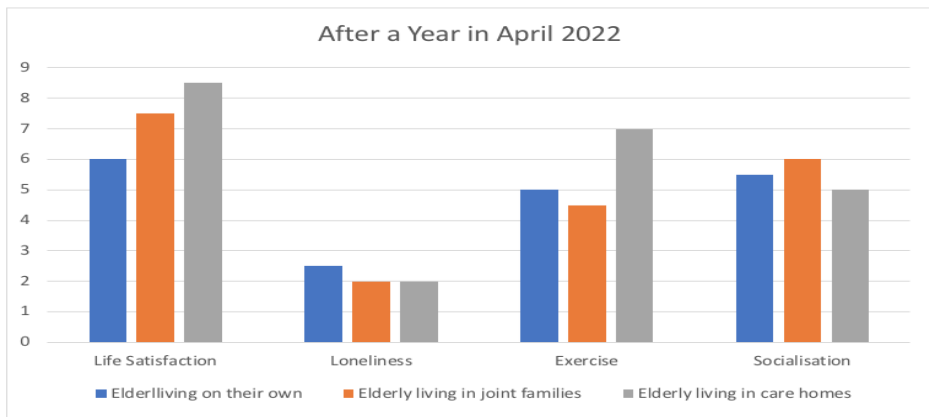
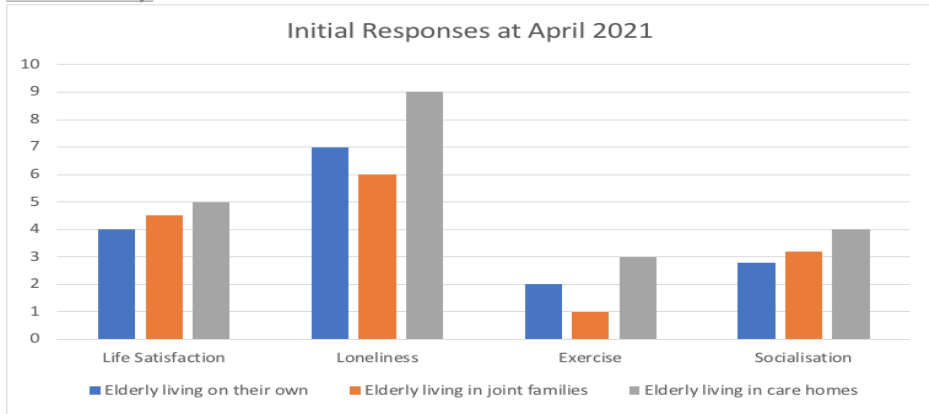
Evaluation:

Please see below the outcomes which are based on our survey, data collection and analysis of last 3 years.

The outcomes of the evaluation measured are soft outcomes, which are based on changing mind-set, attitudes or behaviours towards lifestyle and in general. The qualitative element of the evaluation is based on 4 variables life satisfaction, loneliness, exercise, socialisation which helped to identify these outcomes, (most of the questionnaires prepared were used verbally and answers were noted for data collection, as we realised not all were equipped with the English reading and writing skills). We consider that collecting and analysing this data very important as they provide detail on the difference the project has made to the people who attended on a regular basis.

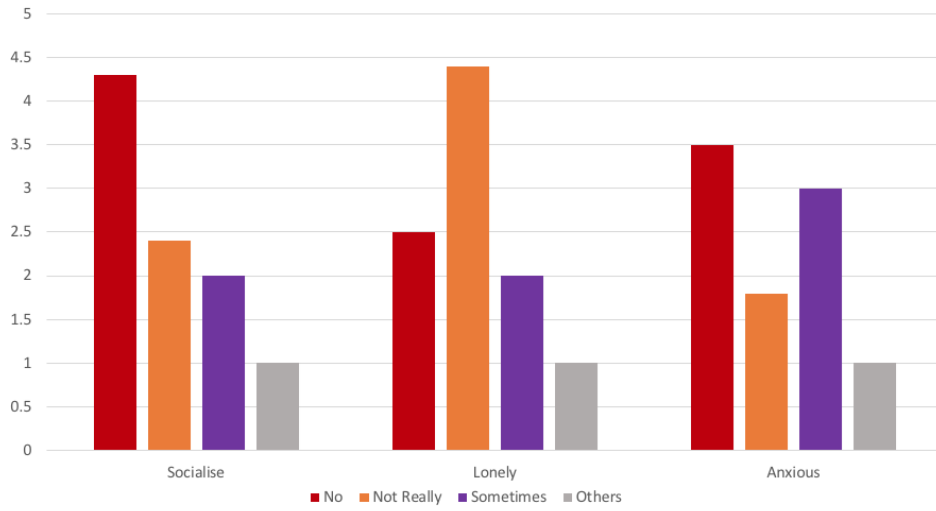
You will note that the graphs clearly show an improvement in scores for life satisfaction, exercise and socialisation. They also demonstrate a marked reduction in loneliness. Loneliness, we all know is a key area that has been highlighted by the World Health Organisation (WHO). A large body of research shows that social isolation and loneliness have a serious impact on older people's physical and mental health, quality of life, and their longevity. The effect of social isolation and loneliness on mortality is comparable to that of other well-established risk factors such as smoking, obesity, and physical inactivity. We are proud of the difference this project has made to in the lives of all the participants.

Graphs displaying BAME/English participants' initial responses and responses after a year to a questionnaire based on 4 variables (life satisfaction, loneliness, exercise, socialisation).

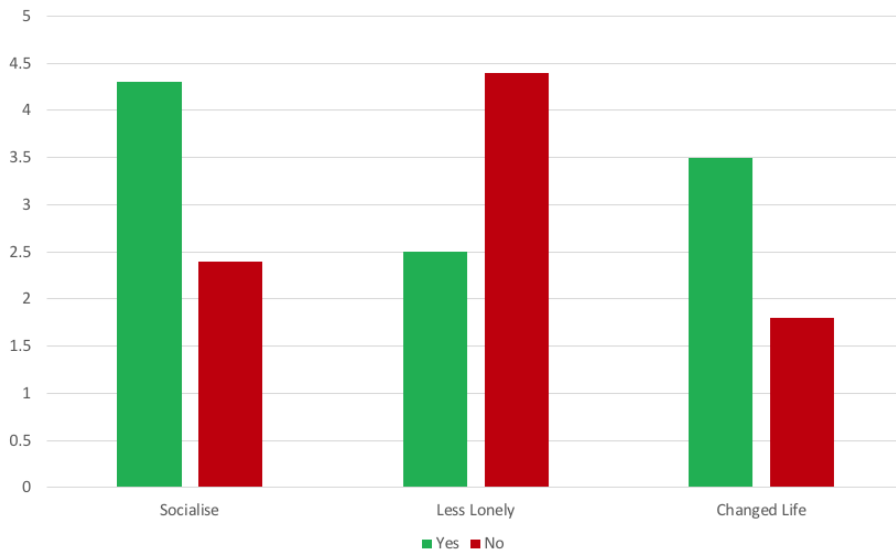


Falcon Lodge :

(Falcon Lodge members before joining the group)



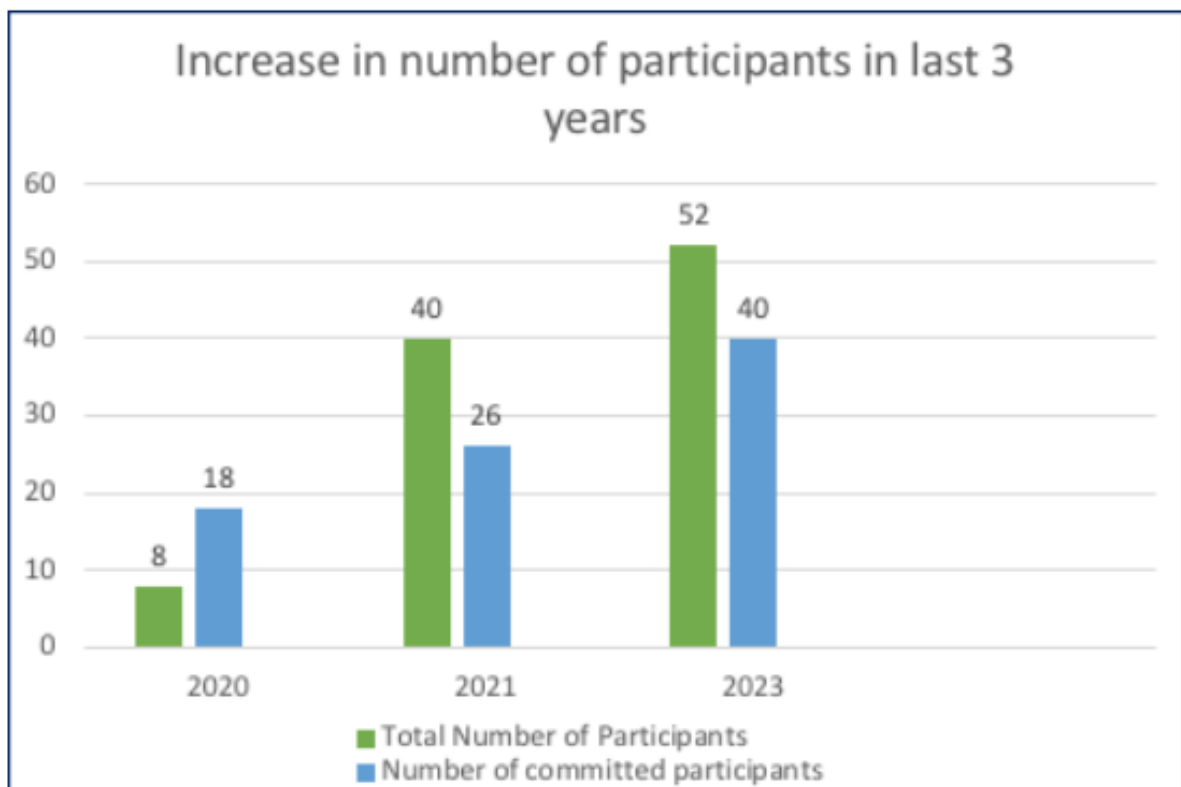
After 6 Months



Year 2022-2023

1. Continuous and increasing engagement

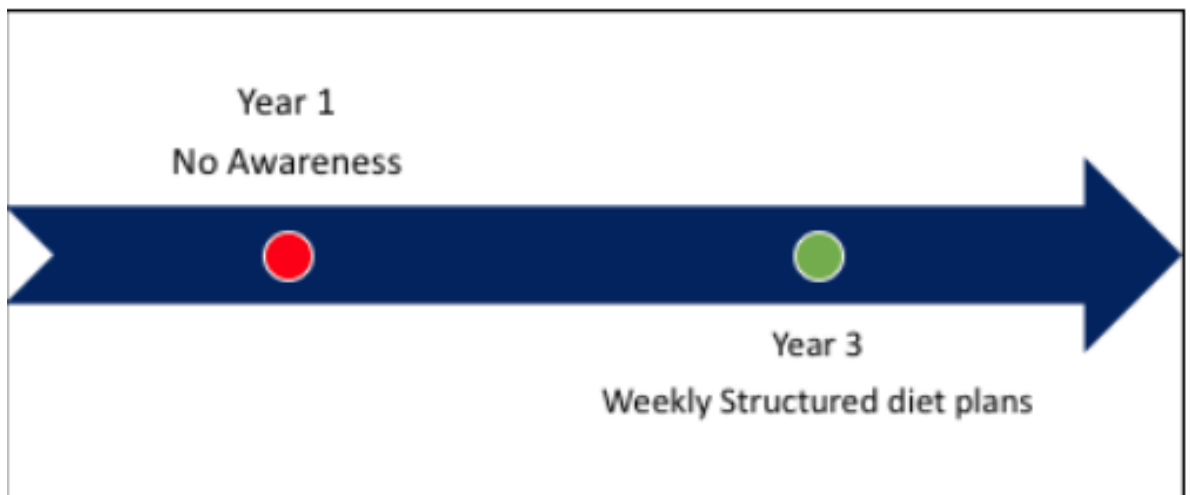
- Number of participants have increased from 8 to 52 in the last 3 years
- The age range of participants is 48-75 yrs old with about 43 female participants and male participants varying from 5-8 in numbers
- Number of committed participants have increased year on year in last 3 years



2) Increase in mobility and flexibility with positive mindset



3) Improvement in diet routine 69% of participants have added fresh salad 4 times a week in their routine and on top exercising nearly on a daily basis from 15 minutes to 45 minutes



Please see the attached case study and testimonials.

What new activities we are introducing?

All the participants seem very keen learning digital literacy so we have invited a group of 5 tutors to help teach usage of phone especially to monitor wellbeing

Seniors can further learn to monitor their well-being by:

1. Health Apps: Introduce them to user-friendly health apps for tracking vital signs, medications, and fitness.
2. Educational online workshops: workshops on understanding and monitoring common health indicators.
3. Wearable Devices: Explore simple wearables for tracking steps, heart rate, and sleep patterns.
4. Regular Check-Ins: Encourage regular check-ins with healthcare professionals and teach them to interpret the results.

Alongside, activities have been arranged i.e Line dance, jewellery making and quilt patch work.

Successful Ageing Feedback/testimonials

Observing and listening to all participants has helped us to assist them in their wellbeing journey. We found that only changes in lifestyle can help them immensely and they themselves can deal with the challenge if their physical, mental wellbeing is taken care of.

We have many case studies, video testimonials which I am happy to share a few of them with this application.

Below are a few examples how the participants benefitted after coming to these groups.

Name of participant -Alan Husted

Age- 58 yrs old

Referred by -Social prescriber

I am a 58-year-old male. In November of last year, I fell ill due, to a physical disability and poor mental wellbeing, and have been unable to attend work since. My GP referred me to Social Prescriber with COMPASS whom I saw at the surgery. She provided direct support and also suggested engaging with groups run by COMPASS at Falcon Lodge and The Sanctuary. It was a challenge for me to attend but the

Monday Mindfulness-emotional wellbeing Group at Falcon Lodge was highly recommended by my social prescriber and I have attended all sessions, since joining in November 2021

There is a group of core attendees with others dropping in and out from time to time. This means there is time for us to have a weekly 'check-in' as part of the session. We all listen to and support one another with the challenges we are facing; this is done in a non-judgemental way, led by the group leader, Baljeet. It feels a 'safe place' and I always feel uplifted after the session.

Baljeet arranges various activities including -Mind health, lifestyle change, mindful meditation, gentle stretching and exercise; we also engage with yoga. She sends us recordings of guided mediations and even brought along different experts/speakers like last week it was a (Buddhist) friend, Aruna, to develop our chanting skills; Aruna arranges Zoom meetings for attendees to engage in further Buddhist pursuits, as desired.

We also have educational sessions; we are currently learning about food that harms and heals. Baljeet brings different perspective into learning. I was amazed to learn my mind-body type which helped me understand why I behave certain ways and what I can do about it. Ayurvedic Doshas which relate to the physical, emotional and mental aspects of one's being. We have learned about our individual characteristics (mine is Kapha) and are exploring dietary needs associated with our individual Doshas. It was an eye opener for me as I have been struggling with depression and even suicidal thoughts.

After a few weeks of new learning I made changes in my lifestyle, accepted who I am which was a game changer. I feel much stronger

emotionally and so much so I started my hobbies of sewing which Baljeet supported throughout these months.

Attending the group served as an introduction to other activities, knowing I could attend other sessions and be sure of seeing a friendly place. That said, Monday mornings at the group are sacrosanct as far as I am concerned. Out of the sessions I attend, this is my favourite group. Baljeet is always welcoming and very giving of her time; although the session should run for 1 hour, she always has extra time for us whenever we need it. She is only a phone call away regardless of weekends.

I am ever so grateful to you.

Thank you Baljeet

Sharon Purton

Hello I would like to say that I was feeling down depressed and very lonely but since I've been coming to your sessions, I've been feeling way better I get some days when I feel no go but talking to you Baljeet helps me a lot you are kind to me and you care and make me feel relaxed and before I know it I'm smiling again I hate big groups and crowds and coming to your group I feel relaxed and calm. You have turned this group into such a supporting network for me x

Sukhdev Singh

I moved to Sutton Coldfield only 3 years ago and was at the lowest of low despite of my children who don't live far from me.

Coming to successful Ageing session turned out to be a life saviour

Before I was feeling isolated, lonely and just sitting in a pub by myself wasn't my cup of tea

My physical health was going down and so was my mental health.

Since I started coming to the Successful ageing sessions under the leadership of Baljeet Baba my life really changed for good.

I missed yoga from my previous place and Baljeet's session starts with 45 minute yoga by an expert.

My joints are more flexible than ever and it happened under the focused observation of baljeet who keep a track of each member's health of successful Ageing.

My food habits changed as Baljeet put so much emphasis on diet, can't believe I am eating salads.

Big thank you to Baljeet.

Manju Chadda

I lost my sister during covid and my life was all dark as my sister was my pillar and started Baljeet's session via zoom as I didn't want to face the world.

Baljeet encouraged me to come to in person session. I found yoga by Satpal and mindfulness by Baljeet very useful to wrap up grieving. I

started coming every Friday and before I knew it I was able to restore my strength back.

Baljeet's session reignited confidence in me to the extent that she pushed me to arrange meetings outside Friday groups and with her help I managed to plan outdoor trips, so far 5 trips in 2023.

It is just not me who got benefit from the sessions but Baljeet recognized each members strength acknowledged and announced in the group and gave us a platform to show off our skills and share with other community members.

For example-singing, sewing, patch work, cooking etc.

Baljeet even visit us home to keep a check on our wellbeing.

Kuldeep Bassan.

I had a very busy life but after retirement I tried to pursue my hobbies which was great but Successful Ageing gave me that fresh breeze to connect with my age people and there is beautiful network of people who became life time friends now.

We visit each other houses, support each other

Baljeet keeps challenging us by giving us opportunity to keep our body and mind very active and never in my life I would see myself learning self- defence classes and activities like Sudouko. So much hard work goes behind the scenes as each session is packed with activities, surprises and lots of fun.

Balvinder Atwal

I am a grandmother who moved to Sutton Coldfield from North Lincolnshire, just over twelve years ago on the birth of my first grandchild. My life has been enriched by providing childcare support to my daughter and son in law as well as providing health and social care for my very elderly, frail mother who lives in Sandwell.

My husband and I also support our younger daughter and her family living in Bristol whenever they need help.

As the grandchildren are getting older, I felt I needed time for pursuing my interests with people of my age. My objectives were to make friends, develop my poetry skills and have some knowledge and understanding of traditional herbal /spice Indian medicine.

I heard of 'Successful Ageing' from a colleague and decided to attend for the first time approximately a year ago and I haven't looked back.

I love the structured programme each week starting with physical and mental exercise in the form of cardio-vascular, strength, stretching and ending with meditation. Following a tea-break with delicious herbal tea and protein balls there is opportunity for networking. The community is treated to a wealth of new experiences such as laughter, health talks, bhangra, salsa, Diwali celebration card making and celebrating important dates in the calendar such as Christmas.

I have been taken back by how talented community members are in so many areas for example needlework, arts and crafts, food nutrition, cookery, singing etc.

Following discussions with Baljeet Baba, Lead for Successful Ageing, for capturing social history, I felt it was important to document the life journeys of individual group members who wanted to talk about their life conversation and to have their portrait taken by myself with the aim of producing a book. I wanted to take this project forward which was fully supported by Baljeet.

During this project, one of the conversations led me to start writing poetry. In addition, I have also had a brief conversation with one of the

community members whose passion is nutrition, maintaining and improving health as we age and how we can work together.

Successful Ageing Community is inclusive, listening and supportive group and for some reducing loneliness and isolation. The community aims to meet the needs of its members. I feel this is a valuable community resource which meets the physical and mental health needs of its members. 'Successful Ageing' deserves to go from strength to strength.

Rajinder Khela

I would like to express how much successful ageing has helped me with health and wellbeing. .

I feel the session is really important for mental health reasons for all ages of people, the group is well organised and is good for health and wellness for everyone. The session contains a mixture of different activities which we all really enjoy and are very grateful for.

I work full-time as residential support worker; I work a three-week rota which includes working Friday mornings therefore it is not possible to attend the yoga class. I really appreciate successful ageing it has been good for me and friends, who I have met in class so thankful to have met through successful ageing.

I will carry on attending successful ageing when I am not working, I feel it keeps me fit also meet friends get to socialise with people.

Anita Patel

My name is Anita age 49 yrs old. I joined Successful Ageing through a dear friend who introduced me to this class.

Never regretted joining this class, why because everyone who attends are friendly, kind, wealth of wisdom and skills I can learn from.

Before joining my mental health was rock bottom and my relationship at home with husband was near to divorce.

Also, I am an intensive care nurse the role itself entails huge psychological and emotional turmoil.

Attending this class has hugely benefitted my mental health well-being, my responsiveness to highly stressful situations and my perspective to life.

Yoga, meditation, breathing exercises, nutrition menopause and sleeping and many more exercises have enabled me to adapt to my personal and work life and has had a huge impact on my positivity and outlook to daily tasks.

I am always everyday working on myself mentally and physically my ultimate goal is to be at peace and calm.

Successful Ageing really helps me to focus from within.



f





