

A NURSE'S REFLECTION



Time Together was delighted to welcome Sarah Brown. Sarah shares with us the report she wrote as part of her training:

As a student nursing associate (SNA) approaching my final year, I have taken the opportunity to explore how social prescribing benefits in practise. I was delighted to therefore spend some time with "Time Together", a group that meets at St Petroc's Church in Bodmin every week.

People attending are a mix of non-church goers as well as regular church members, which emphasizes the versatile diverse space of St Petroc's Church.

As I wander around, I have some wonderfully engaging conversations and from the outset, you are made to feel welcome. The common theme running through conversations is the social isolation so many people experience, and the opportunity Time Together provides to make new friends, meet old ones, join the craft group or volunteer. This a lifeline for many.

As an SNA within a district nursing team, it is intriguing to note how the people attending (often forcing themselves to get out the house) emphasise the importance of keeping their mind active and eating healthily to maintain health and independence. Each has their own reason for being there, but all are similarly passionate, with many being ex-health professionals themselves. "I hope I never have to see you!" were the words laughed at me.

While here I met a gentleman who has set up a peer support group for those diagnosed with cancer. He explains how he experienced isolation during ill health and how educating himself and offering support to others has helped him. He offers a safe space where people can come along, have a coffee and a chat, escape the realities, or share tips. He explains how much he has learnt during his journey and how the time out really helps foster a healthier mind. He recognises the good in healthy eating and is currently working towards an open university degree. A study reported by the Kingsfund (2016) identified that, similarly, stroke sufferers accessing peer support groups highlighted the positive effects it had on them.

The programme of events for Time together is also very well thought out. After the warm welcome and mid-morning coffee served alongside live piano music, prior to lunch. During the afternoon a seated dance and exercise class takes place followed by a short stroll in the park for everyone who can and wants to walk. Subtly promoting exercise for all abilities, within the safety and support of trained volunteers and professionals promotes a sense of belonging, reducing the feeling of loneliness. In more recent weeks the group has collaborated with a dance group where children join in the stroll and plan to stage a little performance. Intergenerational activities can greatly improve happiness and build self-esteem and wellbeing in our older generation and the youngest, enhancing communication and mental wellbeing (Ashurst, 2018) which is arguably more important now than ever, following 18 months of Covid 19 restrictions.



TIME TOGETHER

C A F E / D A Y C E N T R E

W E D N E S D A Y S

1 0 . 3 0 - 2 . 3 0

S T P E T R O C ' S C H U R C H

B O D M I N