

THE DIFFERENCE WE'RE MAKING: BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVATION FOR LOW MOOD IN YOUNG PEOPLE

AT A GLANCE

- Activate is a ten-week programme based on behavioural activation, to support young people between the ages of 14 and 17 experiencing low mood
- 29 young people have attended the ACTIVATE group to date.

FILLING A THERAPY GAP

Activate was set up by a group of NHFT Occupational Therapists, driven by the lack of group therapeutic options for young people suffering from low mood. The young people attend a ten-week course where they try out practical, creative and active experiences including rock climbing, cooking, animal handling, a visit to a pottery cafe, sports activities, group volunteering and more. These activities use the Occupational Therapy ethos of using meaningful occupation to positively influence mood and functionality, and give the young people an opportunity to develop their social and problem-solving skills, as well as to reflect on their experiences and plan for the future.

The group has been supported by a range of Occupational Therapists and CAMHS clinicians, as well as student nurses and, more recently, two Occupational Therapy students from the University of Northampton - a great example of multidisciplinary team working.



LIVING OUR VALUES

PEOPLE
FIRST



At NHFT we put people first, working together for patients in everything we do. When our Occupational Therapists and CAMHS team felt that their patients would benefit from a therapeutic group, they put their service users first and set about making it a reality. This dedication to meeting the needs of our patients and service users can result in brilliant innovations, like Activate.

In order to run the Activate programme, the team have had to collaborate with local businesses and organisations in the county, This aligns with NHFT's organisational strategy, where we commit to developing in partnership. This helps us to strengthen our existing relationships, and build new ones, to deliver joined-up services to our

MAKING A
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IN THEIR OWN WORDS

I would really recommend this group to anyone who is considering going. It is honestly amazing!

At first you may be nervous about meeting new people and trying out new activities but as the weeks went on I found that I became less nervous so this is probably how you will feel too. Everybody makes you feel welcome and it's amazing how much you can relate to how other people in the group feel, which then makes you feel less alone.

Personally I found that the group gave me something to look forward to each week and this really helped my motivation to do things at other points in the week. After I did an activity, it lifted my mood and then I felt able to do things like take the bus, which I used to avoid doing.

The activities are really enjoyable and they are all so different which is good because everybody has different interests and if you don't like one activity then there will definitely be other ones that you do find fun to take part in. But being able to get out and take part (even if your mood is low) is a massive achievement because you still did it!

I think the most enjoyable activity for me was the escape room as I thought I would feel anxious but you don't really have enough time to feel anxious because you are so focused on trying to work out answers to clues or find objects.

The best advice I could give someone who is unsure about going to the ACTIVATE group is... just go for it! You won't know until you try.

It's hard when things are unknown but once you have gone there once then you will realise that it is a really awesome group to be a part of.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- The group have nearly completed an art project, which will be displayed in the CAMHS department
- Staff are in conversation with Pets at Home to consider how they could contribute to Activate - this collaboration fits well with Pets at Home's mental health drive
- The team is also collaborating with Climbing Minds, to refer young people who particularly enjoyed the rock climbing element into this group dedicated to climbing for mental health.



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