



Case Study

Being seen and heard in later years— Medical and Social models working together for wellbeing

Taking the time to listen

Rita*, an 81 year old lady, was referred to Social Prescribing for support with over-worrying. She had been diagnosed with depression more than 35 years' ago and has accessed support, self-learning and faith to support her own wellbeing.

Rita had no knowledge of the additional support available to help her health and wellbeing when she was first referred to the Social Prescriber.

She elected to receive Social Prescribing support via telephone: one telephone call each month for three months, each call lasting approximately 50 minutes.

What matters to you

Rita found that via the telephone she could openly talk about her feelings. At over 80 years old, sadly Rita has lost many relatives. She described her situation as hanging on to die and shared that she has had suicidal thoughts in the past. However, her Catholic faith had prevented her from acting on these.

Rita acknowledges her depression and would like more fulfilment in her life, but she is unsure how to get this.

Rita cares about people, faith, animals and literature.

Making connections

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People can be nice and if I let people into my life, I am the one who can benefit and I have never felt that before. I am getting more fulfilment doing things which I would have hesitated to do before. I am choosing to engage and be kind to others and it seems to be creating a shift. How wonderful to feel this now I'm getting older.

Rita enjoys reading, is computer literate and has the company of a close friend in the village. She is a bright and intelligent woman and we discussed accessing support from within the community and online.

Support services discussed included:

- Age UK
- Silverline
- Mindfulness
- Mental Health Services
- Strength and balance classes
- Library, book clubs and 'Borrow box'

This developed into Rita connecting in her own world with the community on a different level.

Rita shared in one conversation with her Social Prescriber the joy she had in the past for helping others. The Social Prescriber discussed with Rita how she could still do this in various ways, for example by volunteering for befriending calls. Rather than doing this in a structured formal way, Rita has adopted this approach in her personal interactions and has recently helped a delivery driver by giving him time to share his woes, and by offering insight from her own experiences.

Rita is now seeking more opportunities to easily engage with others in her life and is trying to re connect with estranged family.

Case Study (2)

Enabling you and reducing barriers

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I feel like I have been seen and heard, and it does me good to speak to someone with skills and knowledge who can really help

Rita is uncomfortable in many social situations. She prefers smaller groups and social interactions.

Rita shared that she felt her memory had recently got a lot worse, although she had had a memory assessment only last year, which was fine. The Social Prescriber discussed with Rita that memory can be affected by lots of different things and tasked Rita with requesting an appointment with her GP. The Social Prescriber also highlighted Rita's concerns with reception staff and requested an appointment was made.

At her GP appointment blood tests highlighted a lack of Vitamin B12. Rita is now receiving regular injections to address this deficiency. She has been amazed that some of the symptoms for deficiency were corresponding with a deterioration in her wellbeing, for example: depression, changes in the way she felt and behaved and a decline in mental abilities such as memory, understanding and judgement.

Rita was so grateful that the surgery staff and Social Prescriber have worked together to support her health and wellbeing and now feels more confident in seeking medical advice.

Rita feels she is still learning, changing and developing and can build new and mend old connections, as she re-discovers her value for being herself.

Empowering you to improve your health and wellbeing

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It's a wonderful feeling to know someone cares and has not written you off for aging. I now feel like I am on a hard surface, I'm not in a mud pool anymore and its all down to you!

- Rita is now attending a weekly Strength and Balance class in her village.
- Rita has made the personal observation that as she has got older, the opportunities to engage and interact with others has reduced. However, she can be more engaged and thoughtful in the ones which do occur, and she can seek these opportunities by making initial contact with friends and relatives.
- Rita is using mindfulness in daily life to observe the good and recognise her negativity bias as her mind trying to protect rather than disrupt her. This subtle shift has been transformative.
- Rita is attending surgery every other day to receive B12 injections. She is also managing her own health and wellbeing by incorporating food and supplements into her diet (with medical advice).



Herefordshire Primary Care Networks
SOCIAL PRESCRIBING


Providing NHS services

Working alongside GP Surgeries to offer patients access to non-medical support within their local community