

## Case Study

Healthcare: HIV Counselling and Wellbeing

### The client organisation and context: Living Well

Funded by the UK National Health Service in 2002, Living Well is an NHS funded organization that offers a wide range of health-related services aiming to increase confidence, improve decision-making abilities and enhance self-esteem for people living with long-term conditions. Living Well provides one-to-one and group support for individuals affected by sexual health related issues.

### Why and how Sophrology was used

Goals of the programme:

This programme was designed to introduce Sophrology as a new service, to offer a method that can help participants to better cope with everyday challenges and to manage a load of complex problems. Issues can be related to treatment and social life, such as self-esteem, stress and anxiety, depression, addiction. Detecting mental health issues is an important step towards strengthening patients' ability to understand, adapt and overcome life's problems and work effectively to facilitate change, improving health objectives.

High-level overview of the programme:

The course took place in the evenings at a venue in Islington, in the form of weekly 90-minute sessions, delivered over 8 weeks. Five people attended regularly until the end.

### Impact

Summary of evaluation feedback from participants, survey result highlights and observations:

#### *WHAT WAS IT THAT INTERESTED YOU TO SIGN-UP?*

Living Well offered the opportunity to take part in the sessions and because Sophrology was unknown, participants were driven by curiosity. They were interested by the proposition to try a body and mind therapy, something new and different to other things offered to HIV people and to learn new life skills and relaxation and ways of coping with anxious thoughts & feelings

#### *WHAT DID YOU GET FROM THE COURSE?*

Through relaxation, most of the participants reported a better quality of sleep, better thoughts, a sense of well-being and time for personal development. They learnt how to relax and be still plus to build inner strength and confidence.

It has helped to take a more 'zen-like' attitude towards events as they happen; less likely to get agitated, as a result. This has had a good impact on the ability to work with other people.

#### *HOW MUCH TIME SPENT PRACTICING BETWEEN SESSIONS:*

Most participants practiced between sessions on average around three times per week.



QUOTES:

*I really enjoyed the sessions despite feeling nervous before each session I always left feeling relaxed and confident – I am interested in learning more about it.*

*Was a very good course, and well presented by Lucile who was kind and well informed, thank you for the opportunity.*

*The course was a very enjoyable introduction to Sophrology. It was interesting to learn some of the history as well as how popular the therapy is in France. I liked the guided visualisations and the physical movements as well. My sleeping improved during and after the 8-week course. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you, Lucile, for providing me with some wonderful “me time” and for taking us on a wonderful introductory journey into the world of Sophrology. The techniques have proved very beneficial to my sense of well-being as well as being fun and enjoyable. I wish you all the best for the future and look forward to perhaps taking part in another course sometime soon.*

As a result of this pilot programme, Living Well is now offering Sophrology as an ongoing service to clients.

## Learning and recommendations for the future

During the process of this case study, the need to pay attention to group dynamics and the stages of group development over an 8-week programme became clear. Good facilitation skills and techniques to increase confidence, impact & success for delivery is important.

Ultimately, the best quality to develop is being a real listener, which entails:

- Staying present, bringing attention back when distracted and maintaining it
- Identifying how someone feels
- Non judgement
- Reframing any negative statements, giving them a more positive meaning

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