



Alan's Story

Grief and it's impact on health and wellbeing

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Alan, a 68-year-old from West Cornwall, was referred to our Step into Wellness program by the Social Prescribing Network. His Social Prescriber identified that he struggled with low mood and episodes of depression. Sadly, Alan lost his wife four years ago, which caused profound emotional, physical, and social disruption. **He has found it increasingly challenging to enjoy life and make time for himself, often experiencing days when he preferred not to see or talk to anyone.**

After discussing the potential benefits of our Step into Wellness program with him, Alan agreed to participate. He expressed feeling heavily dependent upon by his adult children and admitted to having difficulty asking for help. Alan described himself as a 'giver,' consistently prioritising the needs of others, which can leave his own needs neglected.

By joining Step into Wellness, Alan hoped to secure dedicated time each week to concentrate on his wellbeing and explore small changes that could enhance his mental and physical health.

Joining a local Step into Wellness group

During our first group session, we focused on the theme of 'connections' and their significance for our wellbeing. Alan recognized that his social connections had diminished since his wife's passing, and he felt the absence of 'real' friendships and relationships beyond his immediate family.

Additionally, during our mindfulness session, Alan revealed that photography was a passion he once enjoyed frequently, as it helped him relax while walking in nature and capturing images of wildlife. He was able to identify hobbies he had previously loved that had taken a backseat due to family responsibilities.



"I have noticed an impact from the Wellbeing programme, it has made me more aware of taking time and not jumping into a place that is damaging to my mental and physical health. My outlook is brighter and I hope to get back to doing my hobbies." Alan

Through our weekly discussions, Alan's enthusiasm for making positive changes grew as he shared tools and techniques to enhance wellbeing and boost motivation. He particularly found the topic of mindfulness enlightening, stating, ***"It was very helpful; it helped me realize that I need to take time and be aware of my own mental health. I also enjoyed learning about the breathing exercises to use when I feel anxious."***

Recognising that social isolation was a crucial issue for Alan, we explored community activities that matched his interests, leading him to enroll in a photography course! The weekly goal-setting sessions also proved beneficial as they helped him stay motivated and allocate time for himself.

By engaging with others, Alan felt heard and valued. He expressed, ***"Meeting Rachael and the other participants was enjoyable. By sharing our feelings, I learned from each other and exchanged different strategies for handling tough situations. I felt safe and secure at all times."***

The Journey Continues

The wonderful news is that Alan's journey didn't conclude with the end of the group sessions. He formed a bond with several participants, and they have continued to gather in the community since the program wrapped up. **Alan mentioned that they established a 'Wellbeing' WhatsApp group to keep sharing information and support one another.**

In addition to rekindling his passion for photography, discovering new relaxation techniques, and fostering new friendships, Alan also enrolled in a mental health course to deepen his understanding of coping with depression and self-support. **He shared that he attends sessions with one of the friends he made at Step into Wellness, and their friendship continues to thrive.**

**To find out more about Step into Wellness please contact:
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