


Q-Step Internship: Evidencing and testing promising approaches at AgeUK National

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 AgeUK is the largest charity working with older people in the UK. Its vision is for a world where everyone can love later life

Objectives

The primary aim of Evidencing & Testing Promising Approaches is to deliver models that reaches older people, provides them with appropriate tailored support based on an understanding of their underlying reasons for being lonely and provides help to access this identified support.

The central aim to my work was to create a database that could be easier up dated so further data could be added with ease.

To find out the characteristics of people using the services provided by local Ageuk's and are they helping to combat loneliness.

Method

To create this data base excel was used throughout the 8 weeks. Much time was spent cleaning the data using recoding and formula.

Loneliness is being measured by the use of the 3-item loneliness scale. The three questions in the scale are asked before the intervention begins (stage 1) and again after the completion of the intervention (stage 2) as defined by the local Age UK.

To calculate whether someone was lonely or not, each individual had been asked three questions called ELSA questions,

How often do you feel that you lack companionship?

How often do you feel left out?

How often do you feel isolated from others?

They could respond Hardly, somewhat or often. These were coding either, 1, 2, 3. Hardly = 1, somewhat = 2 and often= 3

Once added together a score of 3 or 4 = (not lonely) 5, 6, 7 = (somewhat lonely) 8, 9 = (lonely)

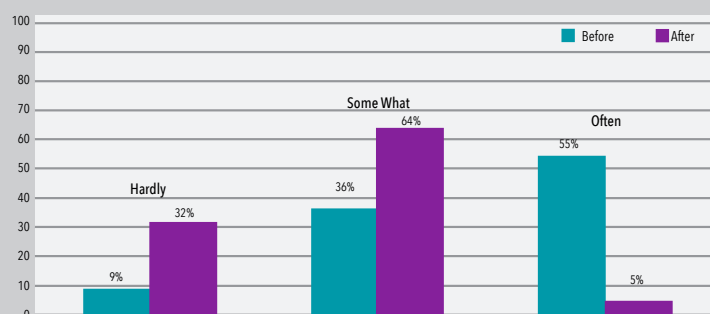
Key Findings

Almost three-fifths (63%) of older people were supported through an at home befriending service; one-fifth (17%) of older people were supported to participate in social activities; and 12% of older people were provided with tailored support. Only 2% were supported through telephone befriending and 5% were supported through an at home befriending service that progressed to social activities.

Feeling lonely

Almost all older people (before being) supported were lonely, with half (56%) feeling often lonely, two fifths (36%) feeling somewhat lonely and a tenth (8%) feeling hardly lonely.

After being supported feelings of loneliness fell with almost no older people feeling often lonely (8%) and a third (28%) feeling hardly lonely



Loneliness levels graph

Conclusion

From the findings it would appear the services provided do have a positive effect on older people's loneliness levels.

As the sample size was relatively small more data is needed to fully support the positive impacts.

Befriending at home can be argued to be the best service in combating loneliness