

Healthy Parent Carers Project - Meeting 7

3rd June 2015 UEMS, St. Luke's

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Overview

- We discussed the idea of using CLANGERS and agreed that it is a useful way to structure the content of the Healthy Parent Carers programme. We also brainstormed ideas of what actions parent carers could take to do CLANGERS.
- We identified the content (e.g. motivation, information, support) and strategies (e.g. setting a task/goal, keeping a reflective journal, finding resources) that should be included in the programme to help parent carers take action.
- We agreed that the programme should not be prescriptive; rather it should inspire parent carers to choose actions that are important, achievable and relevant to them, and that they should not feel guilty for not being able to do all CLANGERS.

What next?

- Over the next month use CLANGERS and the 'Taking steps towards living well' guide to try to improve your health & wellbeing. In the next meeting we will discuss how helpful this was.
- The next meeting to discuss the delivery of the programme will be on **8th July 2015**.
- If you have any comments or come across any information or resources relevant to the programme, please email PenCRU@exeter.ac.uk or a.borek@exeter.ac.uk.

Introduction

In the previous meeting we agreed that the aims (intended outcomes) of the Healthy Parent Carers (HPCs) programme should include improved perceptions of health and wellbeing. We found that a number of different and interrelated aspects of health and wellbeing are important to people, including positive feelings and self-perceptions, fewer negative emotions, positive relationships, healthy diet and physical activity, better sleep, and feeling physically well. Since different people found different aspects of health and wellbeing important, we agreed that the HPCs programme should address all of them and allow people to decide what changes they could make and which would have the most positive impact on their lives.

In this meeting we focused on the content of the HPCs programme; in other words, what messages and strategies would it need to include to help parent carers improve their health and wellbeing. We discussed an idea of using 'CLANGERS' and the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' as a framework for the content of the programme.

What are CLANGERS and the Five Ways to Wellbeing?

CLANGERS (Connect, Learn, be Active, Notice, Give, Eat well, Rest, and Sleep – see also below) are based on the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' (<http://www.fivewaystowellbeing.org/>), which are a set of actions that can promote wellbeing. They are also described by Dr Phil Hammond in his book 'Staying Alive'. The evidence from research on wellbeing suggests that these simple things that people can easily do in their everyday lives are helpful in maintaining wellbeing through life. Many programmes delivered to a range of people (e.g. community groups, minority groups, older people, disabled people) used them to successfully promote health and wellbeing.

Discussion 1. CLANGERS: What actions can parent carers take?

Firstly, we discussed whether CLANGERS can be a useful way of promoting health and wellbeing in the HPCs programme. Secondly, in small groups we discussed what specific actions could parent carers take using CLANGERS. All the 'brainstormed' actions are presented at the end.

- It is useful to build on something that is already designed rather than reinventing it.
- It might sound like a daunting list so perhaps we should make sure that our message is that even just doing a couple of those actions is enough and that it is about taking small steps so that people don't feel overwhelmed.
- Many people do these actions anyway but sometimes just realising that they are doing them and recognising them might be helpful.
- It is important to do take actions to take care of ourselves, to look outside of the role of a parent carer, and to give yourself permission to do that.
- The aspects that might be more problematic are Rest and Sleep as the ability to sleep and rest is often affected by things beyond parent carers' control and thus more difficult to change.
- Eating well might be also problematic as there seems to be a lot of conflicting dietary advice and parent carers might also find it difficult to keep a healthy diet when they feel particularly stressed or tired. Therefore, the programme should focus more on the relationship with food (e.g. bringing attention to food, having a healthy relationship with food, understanding one's emotional response to food, sharing food/meal times) rather than being prescriptive about what you should and shouldn't eat.
- The programme should focus on small and individual goals (e.g. one person might pick just one action, someone else might be able to do more) and support people in achieving everyone's individual goals.
- Most elements of CLANGERS are interlinked and could be fulfilled in one activity, for example, going for a walk and setting yourself a task (e.g. spotting birds) would fulfil 'being active', 'noticing' and 'learning'.
- Useful strategies to do CLANGERS could be, for example, setting yourself a task of noticing different things or keeping a journal to reflect on your day.

Discussion 2. 'Recipe for change': What is needed to change?

What strategies can be used? What barriers might get in the way and how could they be solved? Please see below.

Your health & wellbeing:

The parents were asked to rate how happy they were with each aspect of CLANGERS on the sheet 'Your health & wellbeing' and to identify what they would like to change. They also received a copy of a guide to the Five Ways to Wellbeing 'Taking steps towards living well' to read and reflect on. They were invited to think about and use CLANGERS over the next month and to feed back how helpful this exercise was in the next meeting.

Small group discussions

CLANGERS

Connect... with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, works, school or in your local community. This of these as the cornerstones of your lives and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Keep Learning: Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Be Active: Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Notice: Take notice. Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Give: Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

Eat Well: Connect with local food producers. Learn how to grow, prepare and cook food. Notice the different sights, smells, textures and tastes of the ingredients and give back a meal to your friends and family.

Relax: Housekeep your brain, write down any task for the following day so you don't forget them and then just rest and reflect on the day you've had. Reliving and re-savouring the good memories and feeling grateful.

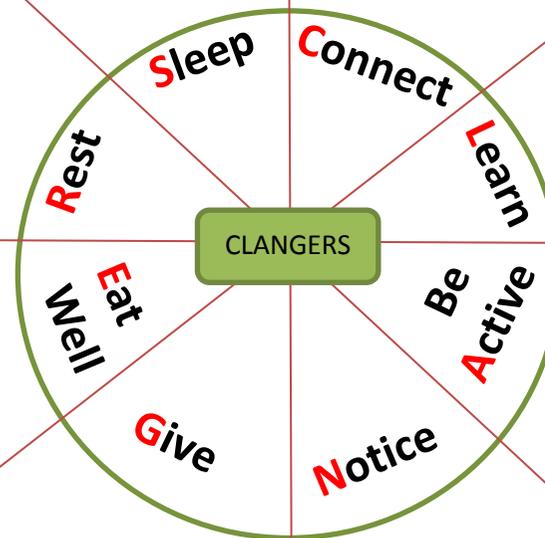
Sleep: Essential for mental and physical health. The brain is very active during the sleep, clearing out all the clutter from the previous day.

- Make time for yourself
- Take up a hobby you enjoy
- Have a bath
- Do a quiz
- Go for a coffee with a friend
- Listen to music or radio
- Watch TV
- Read a book
- Try meditation
- Listen to music
- Read
- Exercise
- Play games
- Laugh
- Try hypnotherapy
- Have a glass of wine
- Do a day trip
- Take a few days away
- Go on holiday

- Find/use advice to improve your sleep
- Find/use advice to improve your child's sleep
- Prepare the space (e.g. keep the room dark)
- Go to bed at the same time / early
- Relax before bed (e.g. read a book, listen to music /audiobook, do a word-search)
- Don't use electronics
- Minimise white noise
- Do a breathing exercise

- Join carers forums
- Join family support groups
- Join common interest groups
- Start a group
- Connect through online forums
- Have a family get together
- Have a night out with a partner
- Meet / go out with friends
- Go to a quiz (and meet people)
- Volunteer
- Make the first move, break a silence
- Call or text a friend
- Contact old friend
- Smile, laugh

- Join groups that you are interested
- Talk and listen to others
- Read
- Take part in a quiz
- Sign up to a course (online, retrain)
- Join online networks (e.g. Facebook)
- Plan in advance
- Try creative learning strategies



- Use healthier cooking methods
- Cook more and freeze it for later
- Plan your dinners in advance
- Don't eat too much
- Share food with others
- Plan who and where you eat
- Eat at a table
- Talk with your family during the dinner
- Take time to eat and appreciate food
- Enjoy what you eat
- Take notice of what you eat
- Listen to yourself and what makes you feel good
- Don't feel guilty for having treats

- Offer your help
- Give advice
- Give your time to things you believe in
- Give your time to your friends
- Volunteer or do charity work
- Fund raise
- Donate food to Food Bank
- Smile
- Say 'Good Morning'
- Make contact
- Laugh

- Pay attention to the world
- Be kind
- Notice the weather
- Ask how someone is
- Take photos
- Look at people and things
- Turn off the phone
- Turn off the TV
- Walk with your head up
- Walk slower
- Set a task to notice things

- Go for a walk
- Walk whenever you can
- Go for a swim
- Do gardening
- Go out with your friends and dance
- Try an exercise class
- Join an active group (e.g. walking group)
- Do some charity work
- Do a sponsored walk or run

Discussion 2: Recipe for Change

What can help parent carers with CLANGERS?

Ingredients: What do parent carers need to make lifestyle changes?

- Motivation
 - Energy
 - Ability to sustain it
 - 'Is this worth investing my time?'
- Knowledge & information
 - E.g. about CLANGERS
 - Advice from authorities (e.g. about services)
 - Information about the evidence
- Skills
 - How to help oneself
- Support
 - Support groups
 - Practical support / help
 - Someone to step in as a carer
 - Company
 - Connections (family, friends, peer support, online support)
- Identification
 - Similarity
 - Sharing
 - Being heard
 - Understanding
 - Recognition
- Time
- Structure
 - Structure to build on
- Accessibility
 - Accessible location
 - Space to fit the needs
 - Flexibility (online groups, 'drop in/out', Skype)
 - Transport
- Finances



Methods: How do you do it? What strategies can be used to make changes?

- Setting tasks
- Setting goals
- Making lists
- Starting small
- SMART: Small / Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-managed / Time-bound
- Reflection journal



- Photos, videos
- Family book
- Resources for future reference
- Online forum / social media

Programme:

- Structured but flexible
 - Small groups (friendly and not as off putting as large groups)
 - Not a lecture style
 - Responsive to where people are at different times
 - Allowing to fail and still be able to succeed later
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Potential barriers: what might get in the way of making and maintaining changes?

- Lack of information
 - Lack of finances
 - Lack of time
 - Lack of transport
 - Stress
 - Ill health (long or short term)
 - Bad weather
 - People wanting different things
 - Feeling overwhelmed
 - Sometimes even smiling can be too much to ask
 - One who is responsible for everyone and everything
 - Internet crashing (social networking, work)
 - Food / diet – conflicting messages
 - Rest / relaxation - might be hard as it is difficult to switch off
 - Sleep – cooperation of children
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Possible solutions: how can the barriers be overcome?

- Relaxation techniques
- Mindfulness
- Recognising limitations
- Reassuring people that if they cannot face the whole lot
- Setting small tasks
- Rewarding yourself
- Using humour to help with both engaging with the programme and with the obstacles faced
- Looking after yourself
- Face2Face meeting (support)
- Planning ahead
- Having an agreed action plan (e.g. eating at the table)
- Taking turns if people want different things
- Finding out if not having the information