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Why “Someone Like Me” ?

It is recognized that whilst older people recognize the importance and authority of their GP in providing health information and advising on the benefits of physical activity, Senior Peer Mentoring is also built around the opportunities for older people to advise other older people. Older people are most likely to listen to “*Someone Like Me*” who can display empathy, recognize barriers to activity as well as provide a positive and realistic active role model.

What do Senior Peer Activity Motivators do ?

Many participants (and local programmes) expect Senior Peer Activity Motivators to lead physical activity and exercise groups for older people. Some programmes are very successful in doing this, but the Someone Like Me programme sees Senior Peer Activity Motivators as agents of change in helping and motivating older people to motivate themselves to become more active. In fact, as a result of these courses, many Senior Peer Activity Motivators do go on to other forms of training to teach and lead walking groups and exercise classes.

Is this a course for professionals ?

Whilst health and other professionals are interested in motivating older people to become physically active, this training is designed for work involving volunteers

How many Senior Peer Activity Motivators do I need ?

Experience suggests that most programmes train between 10 and 15 mentors each year, although some programmes have worked with as few as 5 and some as many as 70. The key factor is that each Senior Peer Activity motivator you train will require support. Experience also suggests that once trained, most Senior Peer Activity Motivators remain loyal to programmes and only ill-health and moving house will diminish your numbers./

Where do you find potential Senior Peer Activity Motivators ?

During your training activities you will cover the recruitment of potential Senior Peer Activity Motivators. Recruitment can be hard work and is one of the priority activities for each local programme and a range of strategies are required.

Are Senior Peer Activity Motivators paid ?

Senior Peer Activity Motivators are not paid for their voluntary activities, but national guidelines do outline the principles that volunteers should not be out of pocket and consequently local programmes should plan and budget accordingly.

How long does it take to run a programme ?

Experience suggests that 12 months is the minimum time required to establish a local programme and ensure that you can capture the results of mentoring work. We would suggest that 18 – 24 months is the time required to establish real indicators of success ?

What resources do I need ?

Programme costs will depend upon

- the numbers of Senior Peer Activity Motivators recruited and the frequency of their activity
- In house resources e.g. printing and design of promotional materials
- Senior Peer Activity Motivator training costs
- Senior Peer Activity Motivator support costs
- Evaluation costs
- Staffing costs (co-ordination, training and support)
- Partner time and resource contributions

Experience to date suggests that

- most local programmes are ***under-resourced***
- such programmes are ***person resource*** intensive and not a cheap option
- Such programme require ***dedicated*** and clearly identified resources
- Senior Peer Activity motivators are entitled to ***quality training*** and ***promotional materials*** and an ongoing programme of support.

What is mentoring ?

“Mentoring is a ***one to one, non-judgemental*** relationship in which and individual mentor ***voluntarily*** gives time to ***support and encourage*** the other. This relationship is typically developed at a ***time of transition*** in the mentees life, and lasts for a ***significant and sustained period***”.

(Active Community Unit (Home Office 2000))

What's in a name ?

Senior Peer Health Mentoring are the terms we have applied to this work.

It is about Seniors – a term used (more often in North America) by the physical activity and exercise world to describe older people who take part in physical activity

It is about Peers - listening and talking to someone with similar life experiences, understanding and circumstances and of the same generation.

It is about Health - although there is ample evidence that older people perceive good health as **wellness** which has a variety of inter-related dimensions. (see below)

Mentoring is the role but:-

Motivating and supporting other older people is *what they do*

Buddies, companions and friends is *what they become*

In this programme we use the term Senior Peer Activity Motivator

We don't mind if you want to give your participants and programmes other names. Many have, call it what you will.