Fit For Work and Life

Findings from a Community-Based Health and Wellbeing Programme

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Irish Cancer Society
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Irish Cancer Society Strategy 2013 -17

• **Our Vision:** A future without cancer
• **Our Mission:** To eliminate cancer

Our work is directed by four strategic goals:
• **Goal One:** *Reduce the risk of cancer*
• **Goal Two:** *Improve the lives of those affected by cancer*
• **Goal Three:** *Lead excellent collaborative research*
• **Goal Four:** *Inform and influence public policy*
Cancer Prevention Dept.
Community Programmes
The North Wall CDP

• Recognised a gap in the employability skills programmes - life skills to enable people to make sound decisions to protect their health and sustain themselves in employment

• Identified a need for an education module on health and staying well.
Northwall CDP Local Training Initiative 2013
Purpose of the Fit for Work and Life Programme

• Spread the message that we can reduce our risk of cancer by 50%
• To increase skills and competence to live a healthy life in the context of their family and their working life.
• To encourage participants to share this knowledge with people in their community.
The Approach

1. Programme tested – 2013

2. Recruitment of participants to be trained as Community Facilitators – 2014

3. Interested members of the Northwall Community were interviewed & a panel was formed
The Approach

1. Community Facilitators Trained
   – 7 weeks FFWL training
   – 5 weeks Facilitation/ Adult Learner FETAC Level 6

2. Community Facilitators
   – 3 programme (20 weeks) co-delivery to 36 community participants

3. Mentoring and support sessions
   – Supervision, mentoring & buddy up
The Approach

- Flexibility
- Non judgemental
- Community Facilitators were part of the process of developing the programme
  - Feedback and refinement of the materials and training throughout
- More than understanding content
  - Believing the messages
  - Buying into the programme
  - Being motivated to share
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Some Results

- 34 Respondents
- Gender: 50/50
- Age range: 16 years - 56 years
- Average age: 27 years
- High satisfaction levels
  - 76% said community trainer was excellent
  - 20% said they were good
Most Common Take Home Messages from FFWL

For Themselves
“Give up the smokes”
“Get fit”
“Cut down on alcohol”
“More brown rice and whole wheat foods”
“Cut down on top shelf as much as possible”

For Family and Friends
Sunscreen
Food Labels
Portion Sizes
Food Marketing and Alcohol marketing
Social Costs of Alcohol
Dangers of Tobacco
Olivia’s Story

- A passion for physical activity
- QQI level 5 in nutrition & fitness
- In transitional housing

8 weeks – “we are after buying up cancer for ourselves”

- At 12 weeks stopped smoking and using sunbeds
- In last 8 months - new home, new job, new qualification
- €45 euro better off each week
Celebrating Achievements

North Wall locals take part in health initiative

A NEW initiative that aims to empower communities to reduce the risk of cancer is currently taking place in the north inner city.

Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Christy Burke, recently attended the Irish Cancer Society's Fight to Live and Live Well Programme in the North Wall area.

The pilot programme, which is being offered in partnership with the North Wall Community Development Project and locally supported by Local 4 Life, aims to empower individuals and communities to make small, lifestyle changes which can reduce their risk of cancer by 2% to 30%

Over the past 12 months, 12 locals have been participating in the programme of 50 people and the Northside 4Life Club and the Healthy Co-operative.

This programme aims to educate participants around cancer awareness and prevention, covering topics such as physical activity, smoking, healthy eating, smoking and alcohol in the area.

The messages are further enhanced by the provision of practical, skill-based activities in physical activity, mindfulness, relaxation techniques, healthy eating, smoking and alcohol.

Participants can also avail of smoking cessation support which is provided by the Irish Cancer Society.

Following completion of the programme, the new community trainers will be qualified to deliver community based programmes to groups and organisations to generate awareness around the risk of cancer and the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle programmes and the services of the Irish Cancer Society. They will act as community representatives by recruiting local groups on Healthy Eating and directing them towards other locally based health and welfare services in the community.

The community trainers are volunteers who have positively engaged in further education and training with the North Wall Community Development Project's Education and Training Service.

Judy Halford, education and training co-ordinator at Northside 4Life, and they were delighted to work in partnership with the Irish Cancer Society on this innovative project which “provided an excellent opportunity to support our community members in developing their community links”.

This sector outcome, to deliver with the potential to share the vital messages of the programme with the community of North Wall, creates a very strong foundation for the model of best practice of community development/education going forward,” said Judy Halford.

The Lord Mayor acknowledged the ongoing work of North Wall 4Life and its commitment to empowering individuals and communities to achieve their best.

“Through its partnership with the Irish Cancer Society, they have highlighted the importance of community based health education in supporting individuals on their pathway to employment,” he said.

It is important to see the health wall community centre and support and educate around important lifestyle choices which can make a real difference to people’s lives.

“I would like to congratulate all the participants in this programme who will all become community trainers on their achievements to date.

They are now equipped with the tools and skills they need to go out and mobilise the community to reduce cancer prevention and the issue of smoking and alcohol.”

Johanne Varne, senior health promotion officer at the Irish Cancer Society said: “The Irish Cancer Society is working in the community to generate awareness around how simple lifestyle choices can greatly reduce the risk of cancer and improve our overall health.”

Acknowledging Partnership

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Learnings for the Future

- Strengthening partnerships
- Reaching out to other community agencies to build capacity
  - Retention rates low – personal development
- Research and evaluation framework
- Seeking accreditation for the Participant programme at QQI Level 4
  - No health promotion module
Thank You

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