



**CASE STUDIES FROM THE
MIDDLE-AGED MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT FROM
MAXIMUM EDGE CIC**

Funded by CHAMPS / St Helens Council / Halton & St Helens VCA



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2020 as part of the [CHAMPS](#) Public Health Collaborative, [St Helens Council](#) secured funding to develop and enhance community-led suicide prevention programmes.

On receiving our funding via [Halton and St Helens Voluntary Community Action](#), we started our Middle-Aged Mens' Mental Health Project.

Participants have been involved in one-to-one coaching and mentoring, via remote technology. Topics and outcomes were bespoke, following initial assessments with each individual. They included (but were not restricted to) Coping with Change, Dealing with Crisis, Changing Habits, Sleep Habits, and Increasing Resilience, Self-Esteem and Confidence.

They were also given access to relevant podcasts we have developed, resources including a guided journal, and a mental health webinar.

THE CASE STUDIES

Participants were asked to research photographs online and choose two which reflected themselves both before and coming towards the end of the project.

They were also asked to choose eight goals which they felt they wanted to improve upon. They then marked themselves against assessment criteria related to these goals. They marked themselves against the same criteria towards the end of the project, and a Star Impact Chart was created for each person.

This document provides the outcomes for seven of the individuals who we worked with, to indicate the changes which took place whilst they were participating in our project.

For more information about Maximum Edge, please visit our website:

www.maximumedge.org.uk

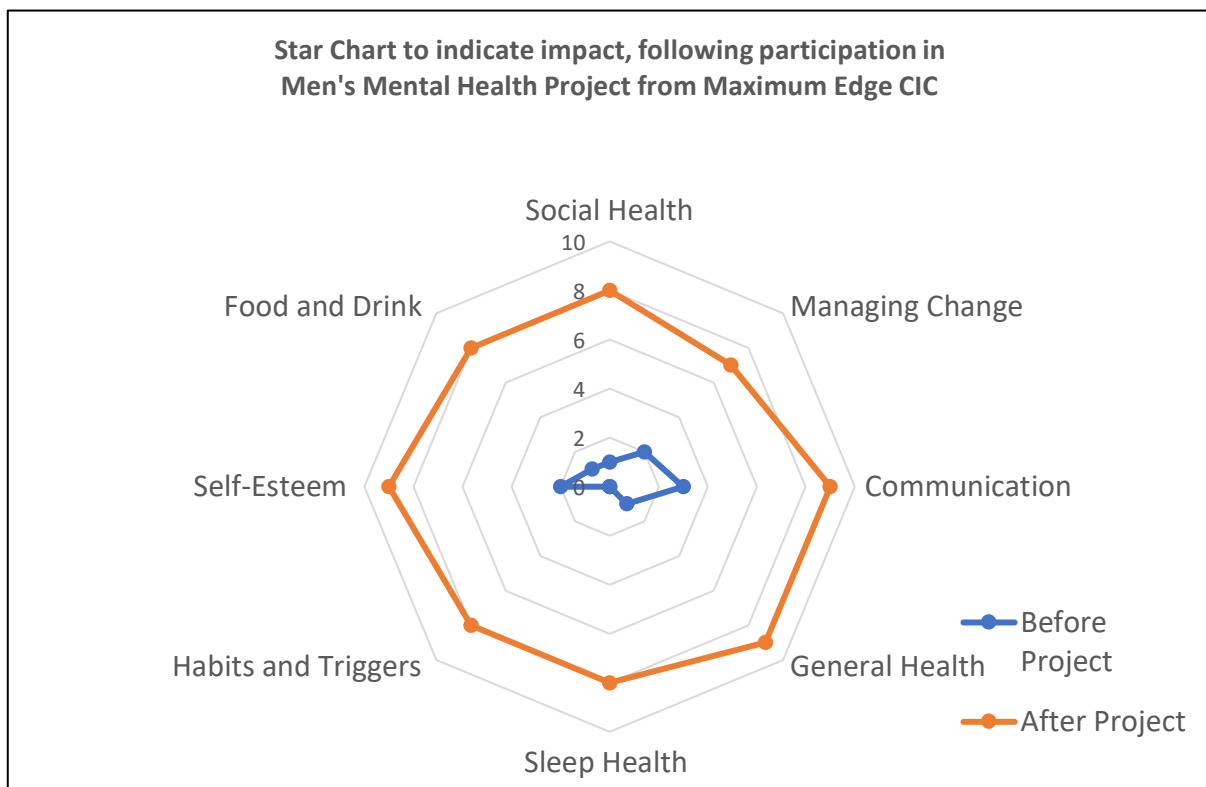
(Names have been changed when requested by the individual)

LEE (34)

I found this image during the start of the project due to me being isolated. I noticed no objects or scene in the background, which is how I felt. My head felt broken with personal issues and notice the crack moving down passed the neck and into the chest. The pain of my situation was spreading all over me. My scores on the first exercise gave me a clear picture of what I needed to do and accept support and talk. Sleep was never spoken about before this project. Terms like “triggers” and “managing change” are different tools I have never had.



This photo represents the new people, support and how I am feeling with lots of new tools by using the journal. I understand talking is very important to the ones you trust, not just organisations ticking boxes. Maximum Edge thank you so much for supporting me on this project and beyond.



MATTHEW (33)

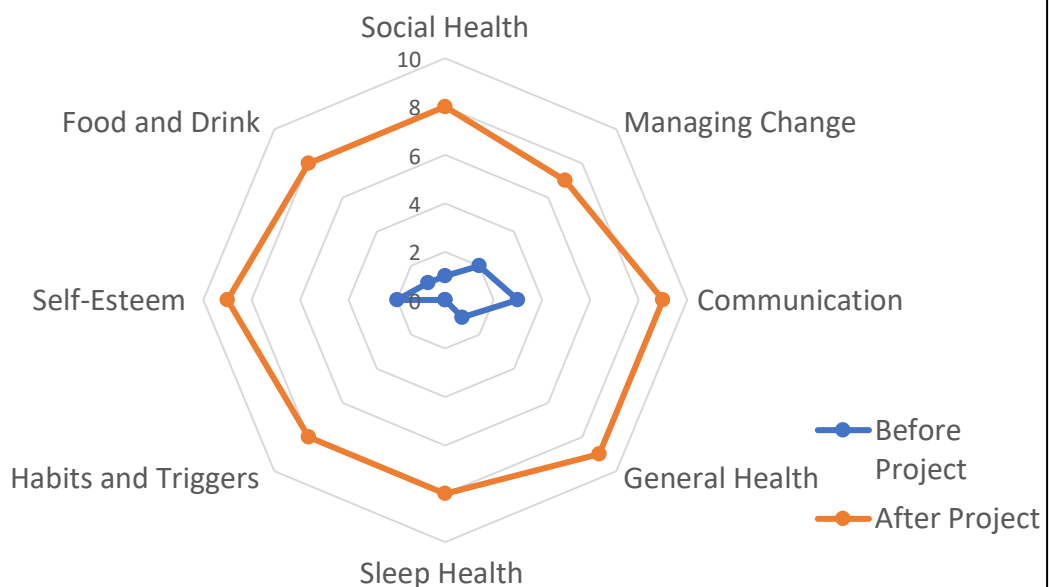


I remember doing this on my own so many times, firstly in my bedroom and the toilet where I was alone, to just in the street and in public places. These places people asked was I ok which always snapped me out of it and responded, "yes I am fine". I chose the image for this reason but also the darkness in the background, I felt I was losing my wife and kids to darkness.

Through the project I feel like I am more in the light, especially with my wife and kids. The podcasts helped me realise the areas I could improve on but also talking with Dave and the group about my feelings. I increased my exercise in the house and walks and also bike rides on weekends with the kids. Making more of an effort and cuddles got me to the image on the right.

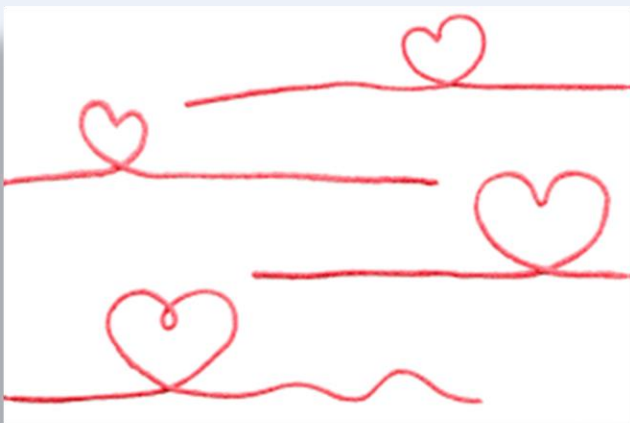


Star Chart to indicate impact, following participation in Men's Mental Health Project from Maximum Edge CIC

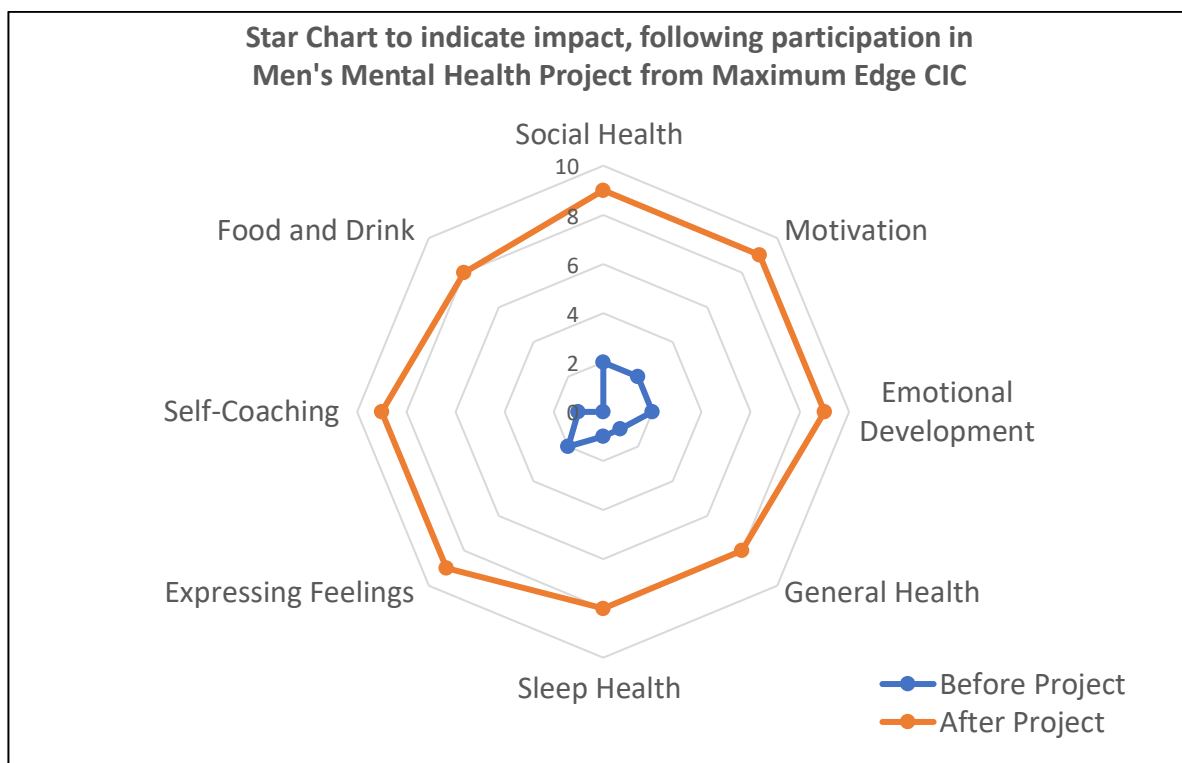


PAUL

I have a long room at home I work from sometimes and this picture represents the light that sometimes comes through but looks cold. Heating and lighting are one of the expensive areas of winter lockdown for me. Being at home and never being warm enough to have bare feet like the guy in the picture. It also represents my mood at different stages after arguments, being finished from work, not seeing anyone and all the financial pressures.



The project has really opened my head to how low I have been this year, just meeting people online who had had similar problems and sticking together. I created my own system thanks to Dave. A mixture of podcasts that I felt fitted me, learning handouts and topics in the groups, exercise, and about sleep. When we could the walks and banter were great - an enormously powerful experience for me. I chose this image to represent the support I have now around me and a great platform to talk honestly about our feelings and emotions hence the hearts.



MIKE (34)

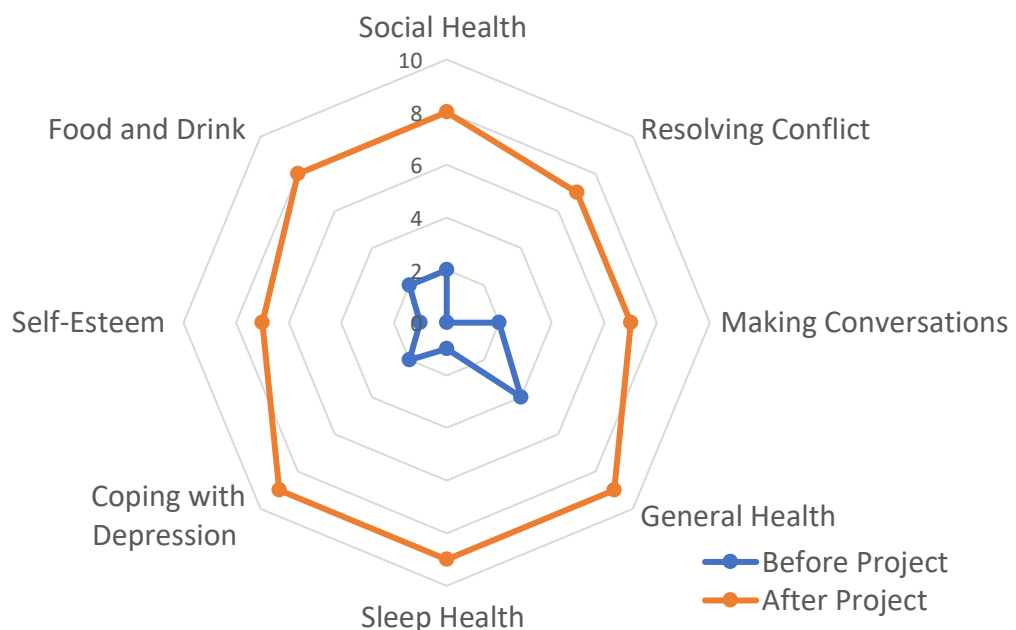


I picked this image as it represents my soul slowly leaking from me and everything I thought was positive leaving me. I have walked to the local shop so many times like this in lockdown in a negative grey road that really isn't going anywhere. The light represents ambition, some family, but the overall feeling there is a bad storm coming.

I picked this image because of the change of posture linked to how I feel now after support from the group, the handouts highlighted the exercise. The encouragement I had from the group has been life changing. The mental health webinar was so eye opening. I also picked a similar colour sky but brighter linked to my outlook and opportunities.



Star Chart to indicate impact, following participation in Men's Mental Health Project from Maximum Edge CIC

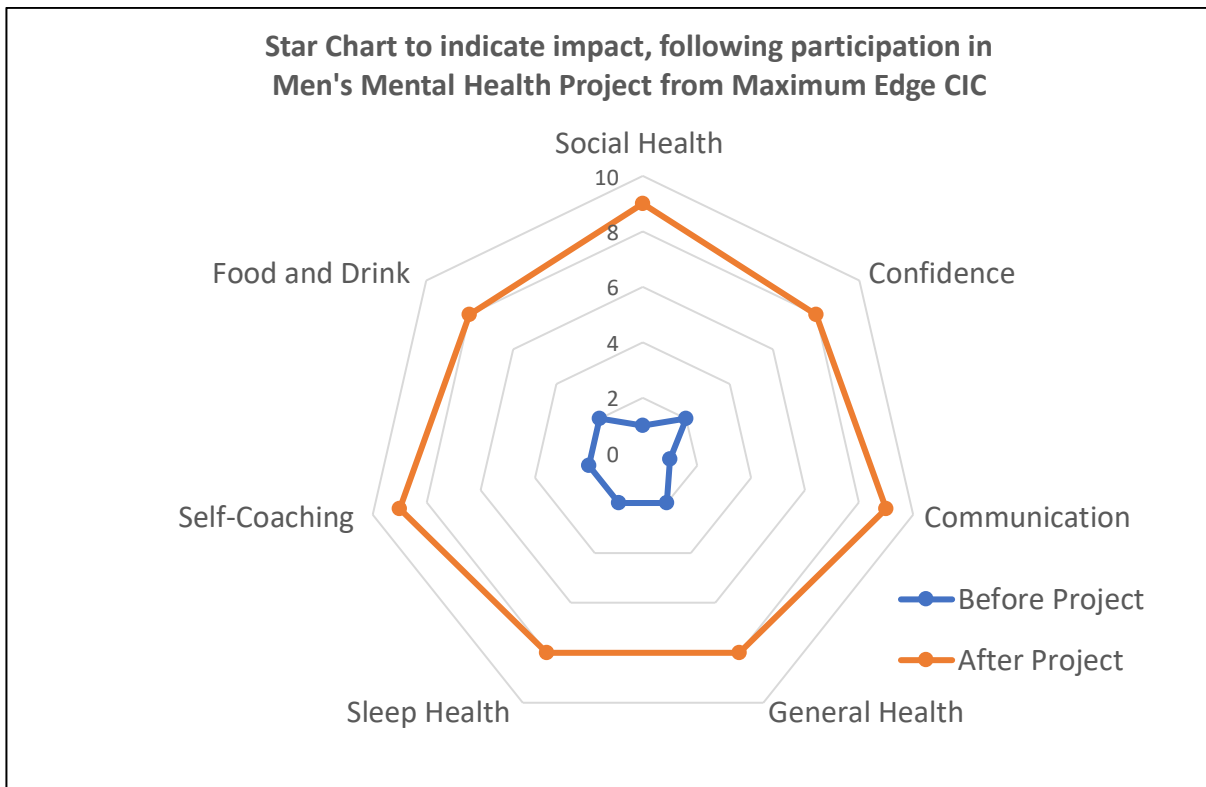


PAUL (34)

This photo represents me alone in my flat with all my issues dark and cold with no light, outside it looks ok but still not bright. I picked it because the line at the bottom of the photo almost seems like you are looking at it through a narrow lens or window, I have felt sometimes as if I am watching myself through a window at times and it isn't me but someone else.



I have chosen this photo to represent the group of people who have helped me along the way. I have never done anything like this before, I have used systems in my work before but never my life. The podcasts are so refreshing with the Journal structure, but the walk and talk has been life changing. Thank you so much Maximum Edge.

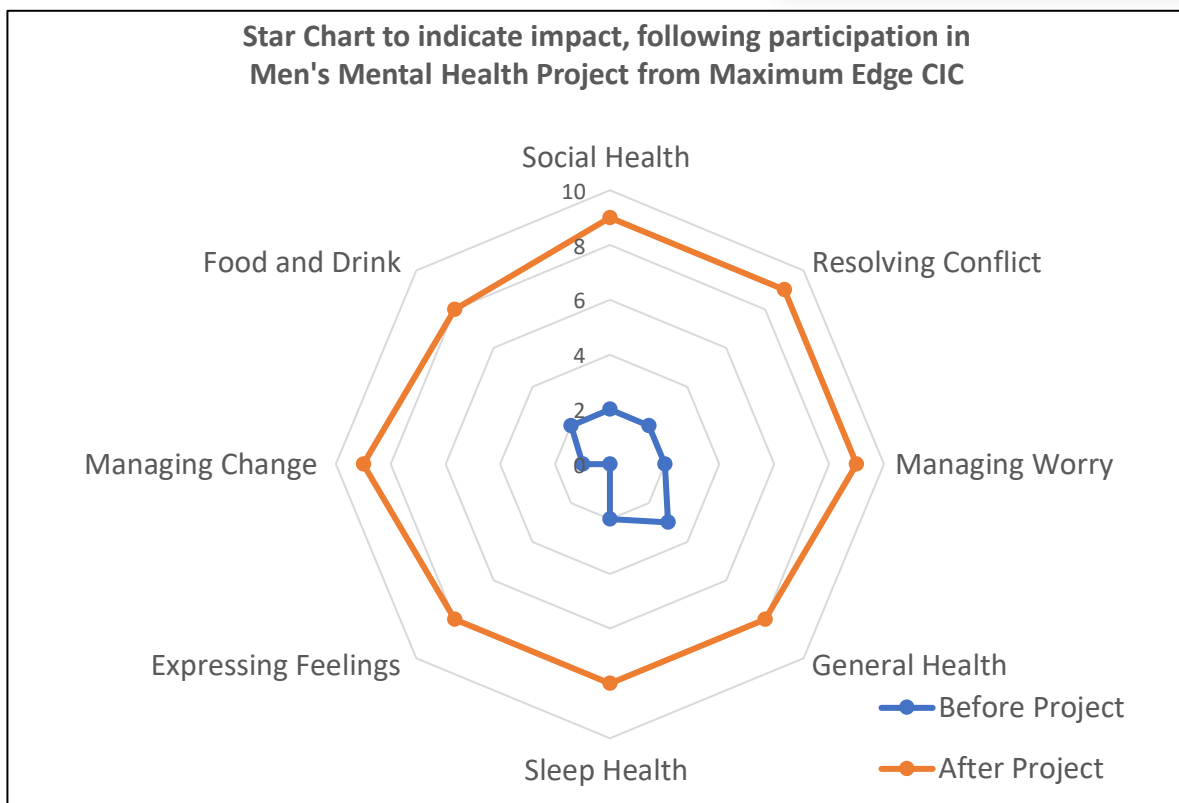


PETER P (47)



This picture means a lot to me. Since we started the project, notice all the black dense outline this I felt was my life. Very dark, finished work, couldn't see any good things around me, I was in debt. I can remember sitting in my chair drinking a can of lager watching daytime TV. My lowest point was sitting in the local park on my own and just started to cry. I cried for ten minutes, gathered myself, walked home then cried again. I did this for three days until I visited a food bank for food and help.

The project has made me feel valued and opened a door to new people. The online meetings were something to look forward to, but the learning and tools have been positive. Letting me arrange my own tools around me to help me was very new to me. A mixture of podcasts I felt I needed mixed with the journal and the one-to-one sessions really motivated me. The project has highlighted my lack of movement and exercise linked to sleep and managing my worry through self-talk. I selected the photo as its brighter now and I get it! I have a new system and also grew a beard in lockdown only shaving it off after I have had my COVID-19 jab.



PETER E (47)

Please see a regular scene in my house this year, this represents me when everything gets on top of me either leaning on the hall mirror, bathroom mirror or the wardrobe door. The pressure of providing for my family has been tough. Uncertainty in work, thoughts of losing everything, arguments around money and finance whilst trying to put a smile on my face for my wife and kids. I also think the reflection is someone, very sad with a similar ring on his finger to mine and a bit out of focus like me.



I feel this image represents my journey on this project. I am happier and doing more exercise and understand after going through the notes and keeping my journal, the benefits of talking with others in a safe non-threatening way. The zoom calls have been massive to meet people struggling like me, and the personal sessions have given me different tools including the podcasts and webinar. Thank you so much Dave and Maximum Edge.

