

CHAPS Men's Cooking 2019



T.E.D.

Ageing Better
in East Lindsey



CHAPS Men's Cooking

Started in October 2018 till November 2018 and then re-started in 2019. The first month was fairly quiet with generally between 2 or 3 people present.

In 2019 the numbers of men have steadily increased and now we are generally getting 6 or 7 men most sessions. Some are from the men's shed programme.

It has been encouraging to see the group itself start to develop and men chatting to each other. There has been good levels of banter in the group and laughter which is having a good effect on those attending.

Looking at the profile of the group many of those attending have spoken of their history of mental health problems and how they see this cooking group as part of their personal recovery.

I see the group as an important factor in helping to improve the men's mental wellbeing and the cooking is the vehicle to make this happen.

We put a large folding table in the middle of the kitchen so that all the men have access to it and then place the chopping boards and ingredients on the table. We then put some chairs around the room. I have found that this has been very helpful in terms of new members as they often like to sit and watch whilst they settle in to the group. There is no pressure on anyone to do any cooking but they are encouraged to have a go if they want to.



YMCA

YMCA LINCOLNSHIRE

TED is funded by The National Lottery
Community Fund and is managed by
YMCA Lincolnshire

The group is managed so that everyone has a chance of cutting, dicing, chopping, frying, whisking, etc. So in each session everyone is having a good input as well as having time to watch if they prefer.

We generally complete a 'main' dish in the first hour and in the second hour we do a starter, snack or dessert. I try to put a 'healthier' twist on the dishes and explain what I've done and why.

For example they asked one week if we could do a corned beef hash, I changed it round so that it had a healthier ingredient content and afterwards on trying it several of them commented that it was the best dish they had tried at the Monday session so far.



Quotes and stories

One of the men has described only a year ago he was in a bad way with regards his mental health and there was no way he could have attended this group. He also said he had to re-learn a lot of things due to the problem with losing a lot of memory. He commented on how he had enjoyed the session and he took part in many things and chatted with the others.

"I haven't been able to plan or look forward to anything for years it was just day to day survival, but I will be honest with you that I am really looking forward to come next week".

A chap with autism (recently diagnosed) has explained he finds the group really useful as it helps him learn how to communicate better, interact with people in a group session and not be judged by others.

One of those who comes has talked about a history of depression and anxiety and how he feels the benefit of coming to the group. He said, *"I really like the way this group is run, calm, no pressure and lots of encouragement. It is ideal for anyone but particularly people who are in a delicate place because of a mental health problem. I would recommend it to anyone."*

An individual who has attended has been signed off work due to stress and anxiety. The first few weeks he just sat quietly at the back watching. Nearer the end of the first session I asked if he wanted to have a go at the next bit and along with someone else he gave it a go and afterwards said he was really pleased with what he had done. His quote was.

"Really liked this calm and relaxed delivery, I felt happy to just watch for most of the time and then near the end had a go as I felt no one was judging me. It was a really good session and helped me switch off from my anxieties. Great how we were able to take a portion of the cooking home."

There is also a Chap who is clearly on a very low income and I can tell the food he takes home with him will likely be one of the few main nutritious meals he has in the week. We often have the odd bit of leftover food ingredients at the end too so I always try to make sure he gets some of this too.

