

## **Using the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach to write individual stories as testimonials**

The 'Most Significant Change' technique involves a person (e.g. day centre attender, volunteer) reporting, in their own words, the most significant change that has happened to them as a result of something (e.g. attending or volunteering at the day centre). The 'story' covers the most significant change they have experienced, what happened/where/what or who was involved/when, why it is significant for them/what difference it has made to the person's life, and why this difference it has made for the person is so important.

Detailed guidance and examples can be found in [The 'Most Significant Change' \(MSC\) Technique. A Guide to Its Use](#) (2005) by Rick Davies and Jess Dart

Examples appear in [Magic Moments in adult service provision \(numbers 1,6, 7, 20, 33 and 40 are about day services\)](#) developed by Swansea University and Swansea Council in 2016.

Below are two detailed examples of stories. Permission has been given for these to be used to training and development purposes.

### Background to my story

I am an older person who attend a 'knit and natter' group in a local library in South Pembrokeshire every Tuesday



### What changes have happened

- My confidence has increased
- I walk to the library instead of taking the car
- I really look forward to the weekly sessions, the chatter, tea and biscuits
- I love to share patterns, ideas and skills
- My knitting has improved
- I am helping others by knitting 'chip shop baby' sweaters and hats

### Which of these changes are most significant to me?

Regaining my confidence and courage. It took a lot of courage for me to join the group. I felt I may be seen as stupid if I couldn't knit what the group were all knitting. I hadn't knitted for 15 years as my children and grandchildren didn't need anything knitted. I was nervous – could I fit in?

### What it was like before

I have always relied on my husband's company since we retired. I think I was getting to feel that I couldn't do things on my own anymore. I was apprehensive about going out on my own. I didn't think people would have anything to say to me.

### What it is like now

The 'knit and natter' sessions allow me time for myself. They have increased my confidence and I love knitting once more. I have something to look forward to! I am also looking out for ideas to share with the group. I also share what I have been doing with my family. Last weekend, when my son called, we were watching a TV programme on Africa and as he moved closer to the TV, I asked him why? He said "I am looking for the 'chip shop baby' jumper you knitted" We all laughed!

### What happened to make the changes come about

The volunteer who leads the knitting sessions allows us to be ourselves and the sessions are very much about enjoying our time together. She suggests things for us to knit, so we can choose what to do. I have found my long-lost knitting skills and now really look forward to our Tuesday morning get-togethers over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

I have also shared my concerns about my recent bout of pneumonia. Before, I was worried that the doctor had said that my lungs had been affected by the condition, but my fellow knitters have reassured me. I am not so worried now.

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## My wife - big difference

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### Background:

Arthur and his family are involved in the work of ACE Ely Caerau, an asset-based community development organisation based in Cardiff. They co-ordinate a range of projects, one of which is a community shop. Arthur's wife became involved in the shop.



### What changed

"My life has completely changed. For 25 years I've been by myself even though I was in a partnership. My wife wouldn't go out. I was like a carer. I cooked and did the shopping, now she is able to come with me."

### What it was like before

"We used to go out at 2.00 in the morning, down to the Knap or to Porthcawl. She would run along the beach and into the sea. She would then get out, get dried and dressed and we would go home. If there was nobody around, then she was fine. We would go shopping at 2.00 in the morning, as soon as it started filling up she was gone. We went to Tesco one day at 1.00 in the morning, she sent me off for something, when I came back she had left the trolley and had gone. She had the money and everything. I had to get the assistant to help look for her, but she wasn't there. I headed home and found her there with my two daughters. I then had to go back to the shop and pay for the shopping. She couldn't even answer the door."

### What caused the change

"My daughter had the idea of the community shop and took mum along to see the room. It was a really small room. She needed someone to run it. Mum took to the idea straight away, she was in her element because it was like being in a cupboard. She wanted pictures up on the wall. One day a lady came in and asked to buy the pictures but she said "You can't, that's my window". She now runs the shop 4 days a week."

### What it was like after

"For me the most significant change was my wife, big difference, it's been hard. I'm from a big family, my niece got married but she couldn't come. My family were asking why. Fantastic, unbelievable, she is a different person. They run a knitting club now, they run the Retreat group on a Thursday, she goes out with the women, gets on a mini bus and goes, goes out for meals. It's unbelievable, I've got time for my garden and my dogs. I don't worry now. I still cook and shop but she can come with me now and we can go during the day, she isn't stuck in the house anymore. We get on like a house on fire. She is phenomenal."

### Why this is the most significant change:

"I got my relationship with my wife back."