

## Case studies: How can the arts and creativity support people who are shielding or vulnerable during Covid-19?

Project: Seeing with Fresh Eyes / My Severn / Reframe Your Now

Organisation: Look Again

Region: South West England

### Introduction

‘Seeing with Fresh Eyes’ is an 18-month project aimed at people in mid-life who are experiencing mental health challenges. We are working in partnership with Create Gloucestershire and four host non-profits: Nelson Trust (drugs and alcohol recovery), Headway Gloucestershire (head injuries), Maggie’s (Cancer Support) and Longfield (end of life care), who are all referring 10 service users onto four separate 4-8 week mindful photography courses. All participants have the opportunity to exhibit their photography at Gloucester Cathedral in early 2021. The University of Gloucestershire is carrying out research and evaluation of the whole project.

The course really has helped me see that I can constantly 're-frame' my present situation - see it differently, see it creatively, but also accept it. I hope to use mindful photography for my own mental health and wellbeing and to share professionally with others.

The ‘My Severn’ project is a partnership with ‘Unlocking the Severn’ - a project managed by the Canal & Rivers Trust. We are delivering 5 taster workshops, and two 6-week courses and



two exhibitions based at the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester. The project forms a key part of the ‘Unlocking the Severn’ outreach and wellbeing objectives, developing relationships specifically non-profits and the public sector involved with mental health, multi-faith, multi-generational and multi-cultural related work.

The ‘Reframe Your Now’ 7-day free taster and ‘Reframe Your Now’ 4-week online courses are projects initiated by Look Again. The free taster has benefited huge numbers of people through our networks with non-profits and the public sector. The 4-week online courses that are providing opportunities to develop our

work and share our methodology with much wider audience around the world as well as generate an income that is not reliant public or other funding.

Image credit: Self-Portrait during Covid, Helen Carey (Reframe Your Now)

## **Funders**

Seeing with Fresh Eyes: BUPA UK Foundation  
My Severn: National Lottery Heritage Fund

## ***Who is it for?***

Over the past few months we have reached people with on-going mental health challenges, people experiencing isolation and loneliness, domestic abuse, dementia, people who are shielding due to health-related challenges older people who are shielding, people from BAME communities. We have reached a combination of both staff and service users/clients from the public, non-profit and corporate sectors, as well as practitioners.

## ***What outcomes were/are you aiming for?***

- Supporting mental health and general wellbeing
- Developing a more positive mindset
- Combatting loneliness by connecting with new people online
- Learning new skills in photography, mindfulness and connecting with nature
- Building resilience
- Focusing on the now and what is right with one's life
- Telling a positive story through photography
- Staying calm and connected and getting creative at home

## ***Where is it happening?***

The 'Seeing with Fresh Eyes' and 'My Severn' projects have focused on people in Gloucestershire. The Reframe your Now online free taster programme and 4-week courses have been offered to people from around the UK and taken up by people far beyond (including USA, Canada and Spain).

## ***Are you working in partnership?***

'Seeing with Fresh Eyes' project is in partnership with Create Gloucestershire and hosted by Nelson Trust (drugs and alcohol recovery), Headway Gloucestershire (head injuries), Maggie's (Cancer Support) and Longfield (End of life care) and Gloucester Cathedral. Evaluated by the University of Gloucestershire and funded by BUPA UK Foundation.

'My Severn' project is in partnership with the 'Unlocking the Severn' a project managed by the Canal & River Trust, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with staff and service user referrals from Age UK, Artlift, GEM, NHS, GARAS (refugees and asylum seeker support), Gloucester Mosque, social prescribing link workers, Gloucestershire County Council...

Reframe Your Now 7-day free taster mindful photography programme endorsed by AHSW, Create Gloucestershire, University of Gloucestershire, Gloucester Cathedral and funded by Look Again, the Laura Kinsella Foundation and Lost and Found Creative. This has been used widely by staff and service users of four NHS trusts around the UK, lots of charities supporting vulnerable people and people who are shielding, social prescribing link workers etc, and has been used by people in the USA and Australia. Reframe Your Now 4-week online courses – individuals, practitioners and staff from organisations who are struggling themselves with mental health challenges or supporting others who are or have taken part in three courses.

### ***How many people took/are taking part?***

'Seeing with Fresh Eyes' - 40

'My Severn' Project - 40

'Reframe Your Now' 7-day free taster – 500+

'Reframe Your Now' 2 and 4-week online courses - 55

### ***For how long has it been happening?***

'Seeing with Fresh Eyes' – First and second course completed before lockdown. Now running third of four 6-week courses online. Fourth course will be run in September. Exhibition will be held in early Jan-Feb 2021 at Gloucester Cathedral.

'My Severn' Project – 6 online workshops have been completed. Two 4-6 week face to face courses will be run in September – November. Two exhibitions will be held at the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester; one late autumn and one early 2021.

'Reframe Your Now' 7-day free taster – this is still being distributed, as requested.

'Reframe Your Now' 2 and 4-week online courses – we have run four courses. The next 4-week will be in September and then run bi-monthly.

### **Evaluation:**

We are working with the Uni of Gloucestershire in the evaluation of Seeing with Fresh Eyes which is still on-going. The 'My Severn' project is on-going too.

### **Feedback:**

Feedback from two participants from Reframe Your Now 4-week courses:

"I have now got several tools I can use on a daily basis to help myself through times and moments of anxiety and change. I've learned that being able to really become present is a gift of self-healing. The course really has helped me see that I can constantly 're-frame' my present situation - see it differently, see it creatively, but also accept it. I hope to use mindful photography for my own mental health and wellbeing and to share professionally with others." Helen Carey

"I would advocate this activity as a grounding, life affirming process of reconnection with the fundamentals of life. The loveliest comment I heard yesterday on the course was that "I love everyone in the room already". That's a revealing indication of the positivity for others that this group exercise can create. It feels for me that this work helps people to suspend ego and be with the world as an equal. We are encouraged to be competitive in life and I think that has such negative impact on us all." Stephen Moore, Project Manager, Age UK Gloucestershire

### ***What have been the challenges and successes for you?***

Overall, the projects have been very positive. There are always things to learn and improve. It has been a very steep learning curve regarding now delivering online and this has been stressful at times. It has been both exiting and challenging as one-person' band delivering all this and I'm very grateful to the projects partners for their support, endorsements and encouragements along the way. I hope to be able to deliver again face to face soon and will continue to offer online courses to individuals and practitioners.

**Further information**

<https://www.look-again.org/reframeyournow>

Look Again helps people to slow down and see their life, work and world with fresh eyes. We use a tried and tested creative, accessible and low-tech methodology, to help people use a blend of photography, mindfulness and nature, to:

- reduce stress, anxiety and depression
- improve mindset, mental health and wellbeing
- build resilience in the face of uncertainty and change
- re-vision the future and create a new story

Our workshops, courses and training roughly fall into two programmes: 'Re-Frame Your Now' and 'Re-Vision Your Future'.

Our work is evidenced by The University of Gloucestershire.

We work with the charity, public, education and corporate sectors. Look again is run by a sole-trader, Ruth Davey.