

grounded



“It’s just calmed the whole house down.”

“...it is totally different to any other type of course.”

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“...I’M GROUNDED, I’M SAFE, I’M COMFORTABLE.”

*...it’s like...
like freedom.”*

A Qualitative Report on the Impact of Take Five in the Community

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The perspective of three parents who participated in a
Take Five in the Community programme
at Sparken Hill Academy, July - September 2016

About this report

This report shares the perspective of three adults who completed a Take Five in the Community programme. The programme was designed and delivered by Each Amazing Breath CIC at Sparken Hill Academy in Manton, Worksop, Nottinghamshire. Participants attended four sessions to learn Take Five techniques tailored to meet their personal needs. Two sessions took place in July 2016 and two took place after the school summer holiday in September 2016.

Three months after the programme had finished, three of the six parents agreed to a one to one in-depth interview. The interviews were all fascinating and insightful, and a huge amount of information and learning was very generously shared.

This report, although compact, aims to convey the high level essence of each interview. As such, it provides what the three interviewees considered the impact of Take Five to be.

The courage to share your story

We are confident that those who read this report will feel privileged to read the story of people who have been willing to share, in such an open and courageous way. Both Each Amazing Breath CIC, who commissioned the interviews, and Natalie Price, the professional consultant who conducted them, are very appreciative and we offer our sincere thanks to each of them.

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About Take Five

Take Five is a safe, universal, resilience and capacity building skill set focussed on breathing, grounding and awareness.

Take Five has been developed by Each Amazing Breath CIC and involves mindful resilience practices that take between thirty seconds and five minutes and can be practiced anywhere.

Each Amazing Breath CIC, and a range of organisations and Manton residents worked together in creative workshops and developed a range of ways that Take Five can be applied, these include:



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About Each Amazing Breath CIC

Each Amazing Breath CIC is a not for profit organisation founded in 2014 by Mark Lilly and Helen Whitney. We bring resilience and capacity building practices based on breathing, grounding and awareness into the everyday reach of nearly everyone.

We create patterns for people to use at work, at home and at school, over both immediate and long-term time-frames, and we encourage attentive, honest needs analysis and smart executive planning for both complicated, and very simple daily life events.

For more information on Take Five and Each Amazing Breath CIC please visit www.eachamazingbreath.org

About Take Five in the Community

The Take Five in the Community programme was designed by Each Amazing Breath CIC and local residents in Manton in the spring of 2015. The aim was to allow local people to have tailored access to some of the Take Five practices that were already happening in local schools.



The first task was to promote the opportunity in a way that might appeal to people who may never tried a mindful resilience building practice.

We are especially grateful to Clare Phillips, local resident, for her inspiration in helping to design the words for the promotional material. The impact report of the first take Five in the Community programme is available online on our website.

Following the success of this programme we were approached by Sparken Hill Academy to explore how we could co-design a programme for some of their parents. Once funding had been secured we were able to work with the Academy's Family Support team to promote the opportunity



Programme design and delivery

The Take Five in the Community programme was designed and tailored to personal needs by Each Amazing Breath trainers, Mark Lilly and Julie Christian.



*Mark Lilly, Each Amazing Breath
Training Director.*



*Julie Christian, Each Amazing Breath,
Lead trainer in Nottinghamshire.*

About the in-depth interviews

At the end of the third Take Five in the Community session the impact had been so powerful that Each Amazing Breath discussed whether participants would be interested in being involved in a more formal means to record impact. A variety of options, ranging from film testimony, written testimony, questionnaires, a focus group and in-depth interviews were discussed. Participants were unanimous that a one to one in depth interview was their preferred choice.

Who conducted the interviews?

Each Amazing Breath CIC commissioned Natalie Price as a Free-lance evaluator. Natalie is a highly experienced outcomes and impact evaluator who specializes in Participatory evaluation.

Aim of the interviews

It was agreed with the participants, that the interviews would have the following aims:

- To allow their individual perspective of the impact to be conveyed to potential funders and interested individuals
- To allow Each Amazing Breath to capture their ideas so they could be fed into future workshops

Who was interviewed?

There were six participants of Take Five in the Community. Three of them took part in a one to one in depth interview. Of the three participants who didn't take part two were keen to be involved but could make the day of the interviews.

Methodology

Data Collection methodology

The questions were devised in partnership with Each Amazing Breath who in turn based the key areas of questioning on agendas that both funders and participants had indicated as being important to probe. The questions were piloted and amended and the final semi-structured questions are set out in Appendix 1. The data was collected during group discussion and one to one interviews with Natalie Price. The interviews took place three months after the programme had finished and lasted between 25-40 minutes.

Volume of data collected

As previously mentioned in this booklet the volume of data captured was considerable. Given this, it was decided that the production of a high level testimony summary based on the words of each participant was the most expedient way to convey the data. These are produced as the summary testimonies that follow in this booklet. Each of the interviewees have confirmed that they are happy with their respective summary. The other data has been stored and recorded interviews held on record with Each Amazing Breath CIC.

Introduction from Karen Gardiner, Senior Family Support Worker at Sparken Hill Academy

Senior Family Support Worker

“My background and my personal interests are holistic, and I'm a Reiki practitioner and I bring that into work as well. Because I do believe that there are so many stresses in this world and there's got to be different ways to help parents who can ultimately help the children in totally different ways other than the standard things that get offered to them in this day and age like antidepressants and things like that.

Take Five has enabled me to take a step back, in a positive way, because you see the bigger picture. I'm not just there, tunnel vision. It broadens my vision and my concept, my viewpoint of whatever situation I'm in then and there, whether it's a one-on-one or I'm teaching 100 staff members safeguarding training. So that breathing, that consciousness, the grounding, has put me in a good place and then I've been able to do that with the children that I work with.

Our perspective and from parents perspective, myself and Claire, it's impacted us as a community team. It's really been beneficial, in both professional and personal.”

INTERVIEW 1 Anne Marie:

How many children do you have and how old are they?

"I've got three children that go to the school and my oldest daughter goes to high school up the road. Their ages are 12, 9, and 7"

How long have you been doing Take Five?

"Six weeks"

Why did you decide to attend Take Five?

"Well having three children, and I'm a lone parent... It's just the stresses and strife of everyday life and **I just needed a strategy really... to just bring myself down.** Just you know when everything's like... ahhhhhhh {faint shouting}... And there's nothing, not a tool you can use there's nothing."

How did you feel when you first learned Take Five?

"Well, I came to the first sessions, I was a bit like... this is a bit airy fairy, I don't know what to do with this. And then it was the first {practice} and Julie said sit down and relax your body and feel your feet and relax everything and breathe in and out then she went around and said how does everybody feel and I think I said **it's like... like freedom** because it was like all these things that have been weighing me down so much and I'm just like {breathes out}... It was just so nice."

How do you use Take Five now?

"I use it in lots of different ways because I drive to school so sometimes before I get out of the car **I'll just have a little breath. I use it a lot in bed** when I can't sleep. Last week, My 11 year old he was shouting and he was screaming. He was just going a bit and I sat and took a breath right then, and I turned around and said right I've asked you once, I'm asking you again do it, if you don't do it, go to bed. Rather than shouting 'I told you to do this!!'... I've asked you to do it, do it. **And the sense of getting back to me...** just like it's fine, it's alright".

Do your children use Take Five or do they know you do it?

"I generally do it when I'm getting quite stressed and quite upset and attempt to try to hide that from them so they don't see that in me. So I more do it myself. But right so I do say to them all **right calm down just breathe, just breathe it's fine...** I will tell that to them".

What do you see as the benefits or impact of Take Five in your own life?

"Like I said before it helps me sleep. I really do have troubles sleeping, so when I'm in bed and I can just and I can go to that place that I know some people can't, it does really help with my sleeping. And then I suffer from depression and sometimes and when I can feel myself going down I'm just like right because nothing in the world is that bad there can't be a solution to it. So I'm just like right, breathe, just don't panic, just don't worry about it. And then I do that and that **just makes everything a little bit clearer.**"

Do you feel like its helped the depression like since Take Five?

"**Yea I've got a place to go.** Before my head was just like wild, running away from itself. Now I'm just like right, relax relax, relax, relax your legs, relax your arms, relax your everywhere. Just breathe and then I'll just start again".

What does it feel like in your body when you do it?

"Because everyday you are quite tense. Just because you got to get kids to school, I've got to clean up, I've got to do this and your muscles are quite like always tense. And then like you've got to relax

your ankles and you got to relax your knees. And I found it quite easy to do. I just feel really relaxed and really serene. And especially when I'm in bed because when you're in bed trying to sleep you can't pretend. **So I just feel so calm and I'm like right, now I can sleep**".

What does grounding mean to you?

"The way Julie was explaining it It's like putting our feet on the floor, back in the chair so you feel supported. Its like bring your whole self down, and coming back down, and just relaxing and **I'm grounded, I'm safe, I'm comfortable.** I suppose that's what it means to me"

What types of changes will Take Five have on you in the future?

"My sleep, which will contribute to my family life because **I'm getting a better quality night's sleep,** and my parenting because I'm more calm rather than being stressed out and shouting... I will just be calmer."

Since your children have been doing Take Five at the school what changes have you noticed in your children?

"Well just concentrating better in school... and I have noticed that because we do have some behavioral issues with my 11 year old, and I have noticed that **he'll take himself away if things are getting quite bad.** He'll take himself away and come back 5 to 10 minutes later and he'll be calmed down and fine".

What impact have these sessions had on those around you?

"As a family as a whole we're just calmer with the children doing it at school and me experiencing it with family support **we've got strategies to use.** And I think that's really good. **It's just calmed the whole house down.**"

How useful do you think Take Five would be to other people?

"Very useful. I think it'll give other people the techniques, that some people may be in a similar situations as me, like my sleeping, like my mental health, with my children. It's just a nice way to nurture yourself and just **bring yourself down from the craziness of life.**"

How do you think Take Five is doing as a whole? Any improvements?

"I think with doing it at school and letting parents experience it, it's having a **massive impact on communities.** Because there's me and obviously other parents, and if it becomes a nationwide program, parents will be calmer and children will be more focused and concentrated in school. They're going to achieve better grades and parents will be calmer. I just see it having a massive positive impact on everybody."

Any other suggestions or last thoughts?

"I don't know, I just think its a fantastic, fantastic thing to do. And for children, without going into too much detail, the developmental issues that parental things have on children. If parents are going through this process, and children are going through the process, for lack of a better word they're going to be singing off the same hymn sheet. So, mom, dad, and grandma are going to know what the children are doing in school. If they can see the child, like my son has behavioral issues, and they can say all right do your breathing, do your rainbow breathing. Rather than a world full of shouting and children coming to school safeguarding and getting involved. Just brings it all down and makes it all calmer... In turn, teaching it from a such young age, **gives these children the opportunity to grow into positive, well-adapted adults.** Which can only be a good thing in my opinion."

INTERVIEW 2 Anne:

How many children do you have and how old are they?

"A son at this school who is 5, an older daughter who is 15, and an 11-month-old."

Why did you decide to attend Take Five?

*"Well initially, I got a text and it said relaxation classes so I didn't really know what to expect when I came into the session. I thought it might be like lying on mats on the floor, that kind of relaxation. But I was really sort of intrigued because it was something totally different to anything that I've done before. And I was really interested in it and it made sense to me that you kind of, you know, deep breathing sends a signal to your body and the brain that you're wanting to relax. You know that you can kind of, you can actually do that for yourself. So I decided to come back, and I kind of felt like my life was busy and I felt like I needed something to help me kind of de-stress and take control really rather than the situation taking control of me. **I wanted to have some tools that I could use that could you know keep myself from spiraling into whatever is happening out there.**"*

How did you feel when you first learned Take Five?

"...it has made me a lot more aware of how I'm reacting to situations and you know what's happening to me at that time. And also the kind of the mindfulness bit and being present, I do try to be conscious of taking notice of things and you know, trying to be mindful. Again, I know I need to keep working on that as well. I do some breathing in bed before I go to sleep and I think that has helped me calm myself down and just relax before I go to sleep."

How do you use Take Five now?

*"Sleep. And I think just the awareness and remembering my posture and to put my shoulders down. Because I know that I do that, you know tense my shoulders. And also something else that Julie said in one of the sessions as well and it was a quote **'you are the problem you are also the solution'**. I say that to myself quite a lot and I find that quite empowering for me to think, okay there's another way of doing this, you don't have to get stressed about it. You know, so stop being the problem and start being the solution."*

What do you see as the benefits of Take Five in your own life?

"I think definitely a greater awareness of how the external factors are affecting me. And when I have been at the point of yelling I've thought mmm okay, sometimes, not every time because sometimes you know it just takes over, but sometimes I have thought right okay just take a breath, is that actually going to help or is there another way. You know because I do find with my five year old, that getting ready in the morning is always a stressful time and I feel like I'm doing things to him. But I've thought more, since doing Take Five, how does this feel to him rather than me thinking I've got to get this this and this done to get you ready for school So I think that has come through the being more aware of how I'm reacting to the external surroundings but also thinking about how he reacts as well."

*"I think it's made me more aware of how other people are dealing with stress as well, and you know with my mum, if she had something like this when she was younger it could have made a real difference for her because you know she's in her eighties now. She still kind of has days when she goes to bed and she doesn't want to wake up again in the morning. You know because she's depressed basically and she's had that you know, definitely since I was a child. But I don't know about before that, but it does make me wonder if she would have been able to have this, would she have been able to manage that better. So, I just think that it's really important really to kind of spread the word and help people know that there is this thing that you don't have to spend money doing. **Its all kind of inside you, it just needs unlocking in a kind of way.**"*

What types of changes will Take Five have on you in the future?

*"I think you know if I can be disciplined with it, and start doing a daily practice, I think it will help my stress levels. You know reduce my stress levels and I'm hoping that I'm kind of at this transition point now where I've been off work for a year almost on maternity leave and I'll go back to work full time so I'm hoping that **it'll help with that transition** to be able to you know deal with the extra stresses that that's going to bring. I do want to use it more.*

What does it feel like in your body when you do these practices?

"Well sometimes I just do the breathing and I fall asleep. I suppose it depends on how tense I am when I actually go to bed. I do the kind of body scanning going through each kind of muscle and noticing how it is and kind of relaxing it. And I've noticed it's kind of like you know like your body is gets softer in a way because you don't you don't realize that you're tensing muscles up and then you realize that you actually are when you actually do that. And then when you do that each muscle kind of goes from being tense to kind of just relaxed and softer"

What does the word grounding mean to you?

*"It's connecting you know to the Earth and **the bigger picture**. You know rather than just thinking about what you gotta get done and the next you know half an hour or whatever. It's about thinking actually you know there is a bigger picture. And just sort of slow down for a minute and think about what's happening and what's important. You know what's going on around you and why you're doing this and here you're doing it for.*

How useful do you think take five would be to other people?

*"Very useful. I think, I feel that there's so many people out there who are stressed. And you know everybody's different and just by meeting someone and talking to them you don't really know what's going on in their lives. But I think that this is kind of universal really. It can help everybody really. I think you know if each person is kind of ready of take that leap of faith, I think it would be really useful. **I think it's great that they're doing it with kids** because it's kind of late getting there while they're young and hopefully it'll just be a natural thing that they do.*

How Take Five is doing as a whole?

*"I can't honestly think of anything or any way that I would improve it to be honest. I mean **it is totally different to any other type of course** or you know, because actually I've been looking for a while, and searching for something, and it's totally different from kind of anything like self-help books and relaxation CDs everything and that sort of thing. It's just a new thing for me that I've never seen anywhere else and I've never really heard of it outside of this context.*

How would you describe your training from Julie?

*"Just excellent really. She's very sort of down to earth because a lot of it, because it's so new it could be quite challenging, and almost a little bit threatening really, the way she delivered it was kind of, I can't really describe it, just really very matter-of-fact about it. She's just someone that you can relate to. So **it didn't really feel airy-fairy**.*

INTERVIEW 3 Claire: Parent Liaison Worker

Why did you decide to attend Take Five?

*"We put it together with Karen and Julie to help our parents find a way to de-stress. **I have suffered anxiety in my life as well and I've been using it every single day so I think it's amazing.** Its helped me a lot and now I can go on and help parents and pass on what I've learned".*

What kind of changes have you seen in the parents?

"Just calmer, especially (one parent). She's beginning to be a different person, stress wise. I'm happy she's taking it all on board and using it. It's not something she's learned then forgot about. She's doing really well".

What do you see the benefits of Take Five in your own life?

*"**It just taught me to be calmer and to think okay take a step back, let's think about this for a second.**"*

What types of changes do you think Take Five will have on you in the future?

*"Being calmer, taking a step back and thinking about things. We have many parents who suffer from stress and anxiety which their own upbringing has impacted on how they parent now. So I think if we can get this out there, like Julie says for everybody, **can you imagine what everything will look like if everybody used it**".*

What does it feel like in your body when you do Take Five?

*"Calming, just calming. Like once you get into it, **it just brings you to reality again.** To the here and now and with anxiety you can think all sorts of things, crazy things. So it's just nice and calming".*

What does grounding mean to you?

"Just here and now. In the moment. You accept and appreciate the here and now and think about what's happening rather than what's going to happen tonight or what happened yesterday".

Last thoughts

*I have no suggestions but I just think keep doing what you're doing. **Its working, it really is.** And I hope that Take Five is shared everywhere. You can start with the children young and get parents involved and if we keep trying to get that done It will be great!"*

Appendix

Semi-structured interviews – Format and questions

This interview should take between 25 and 40 minutes, the questions have been split into themes so we can cover a few different areas, but there will be a space at the end for you to share any other thoughts or experiences you'd like if there hasn't been the opportunity throughout. This is an informal conversation, so please don't feel at all nervous and just be honest-we want to know the real impact of this project in order to learn lessons of how we can improve the sessions and support.

The Questions:

- 1. Why did you decide to attend Take Five?**
- 2. How did you feel when you first learned Take Five?**
- 3. How do you use Take Five now?**
- 4. When do you find yourself using Take Five?**
- 5. What do you see as the benefits of Take Five in your own life?**
- 6. What types of changes will Take Five have on you in the future?**
- 7. Have others noticed a change in you? What types of things have they mentioned?**
- 8. What does it feel like in your body when you do these practices?**
- 9. What does the word grounding mean to you?**
- 10. How useful do you think Take Five would be to other people?**
- 11. How is Take Five doing as whole?**
- 12. How would you describe your training from Julie?**
- 13. Any other thoughts or comment?**

Gratitude

We offer our sincere thanks and appreciation to:

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Sparken Hill Academy

We are very grateful to the Principal of Sparken Hill Academy, **Richard Lilley**, and to the Academy's amazing **Family Support team**.

Parents

And especially to all participants of the programme, including: **Anne, Anne-Marie and Claire**. Without you this booklet would not have been possible. **Thank you.**

This report provides information on the impact of a Take Five in the Community programme in Manton Worksop, Nottinghamshire.

It portrays the testimonies of five people who attended an eight hour Take Five programme. June – September 2016.

It shares their stories of the impact of Take Five as parents, what they consider will be the benefits going forward.



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Take Five in the Community was designed and delivered by Each Amazing Breath CIC and funded by:



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