

# WHAT CAN A £1,300 INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY LIFTING ACHIEVE?

"I was struggling with my mental health and was off from work, and the training sessions were the only thing that I was motivated to take part in and allowed me to be around others in a safe environment. In turn this improved my self-esteem" - participant 50 y/o, He/Him

"I never saw myself as a person who had permission to be in exercise spaces because I don't fit a stereotypical body or mind type of someone who's really into exercise in an organised way. That's just not something I think about now, I tell everyone I'm into lifting and I love it! I don't feel the need to say anything to qualify this about how good I am at it or what weight I lift. I wish all exercise spaces made people feel this way" – participant 39 y/o, She/Her

"It has genuinely saved my life. This goal has given me something to look forward to and having a regular set routine at the Soma Space where I know I'm supported has brought me out of a really dark place.

Working with other people has really shown me that I am not alone at all in this" - participant 23 y/o, He/Him

"I struggle everyday with how I feel about myself, but when I'm in The Soma Space I feel accepted and don't feel judged. I can move my body and I'm getting expert training and advice, and being around like minded people has helped me in how I see myself" – participant 24 y/o, She/Her

Delivery of a carefully planned 10-week strength progression programme between April and June 2024 resulted in improvements in strength and mental health experienced by participants.

This case study provides a template for gyms, therapeutic practitioners and funders with an interest in utilising lifting for health benefits.

## £1,300

TOTAL INVESTMENT / £145 PER PERSON

## 10 WEEKS FOR 2 HRS PER WEEK

Coaching, facilitation, venue hire

Almost all participants experience mental health and / or neurological conditions.

## 89% COMPLETION RATE

8 out of 9 who signed up completed the program

## 78% CONTINUATION RATE

7 finishers signed up to a follow-up 4-week block as paid members

# “ THE PROJECT DEMONSTRATES THE COST - BENEFIT OF INVESTING IN WEIGHT LIFTING ”

## PURPOSE

The programme was delivered by The Soma Space using funding from British Weight Lifting. “Our rationale for this programme was to show what progression in terms of physical strength can be made by committing to a programme over time, plus to explore the mental health and social benefits of doing so.

At all times we strived to create an inclusive, welcoming and empathic space for participants to explore their capabilities and notice how they changed and grew over the programmes.

We continually reminded the participants that the aim was always to hit a personal best that was personal to them and best at that particular moment in time, based on the training they undertook” - Jo Hazell-Watkins, The Soma Space



## RESULTS

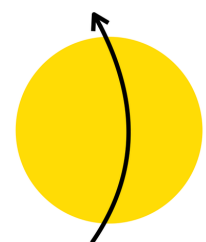
All participants that completed the programme experienced improvements in strength and mental health

- Improving physical strength is often matched by an improved sense of mental health which is often individually defined.
- The small group environment improved social health in terms of friendships, connections and mutual support mechanisms made and strengthened. This is especially important when it is well evidenced that struggles with mental illness/poor mental health often lead to social isolation.
- The personal value of overcoming adversity and committing to a programme contributed to greater self-esteem, sense of possibility, and a desire to do more.

The Soma Space combines strength training and exercise with mental health education

Group and individual movement sessions combine strength training and exercise with mental health education to assist individuals and groups in building, enhancing and maintaining all round mind-and-body wellbeing.

The Soma Space is founded by personal trainer Jo Hazell-Watkins and psychotherapist Kevin Braddock MBACP.



**The Soma Space**

Movement For Mental Health