



Coach's guide to delivering the SCENE intervention during Covid-19: update 26.01.2021

SCENE: Enhancing Social Networks, Improving Quality of Life

Why are we releasing this bulletin?

We wanted to check in, and we hope you are all keeping well and safe during this unsettling time. Thank you hugely for all of your hard work! It takes immense effort to deliver interventions under such difficult circumstances. We are both grateful and impressed by your creativity and determination to improve participants' quality of life.

As ever, we would urge you to KEEP GOING WITH SESSIONS. We realise that social activities may not be so easy to come by these days. Therefore, we have a little guidance around the following situations:

- i) new participants (see page 3)*
- ii) participants who have already begun the intervention, and set goals and activities which are difficult to put in place now (see page 4)*
- iii) participants who are coming to the end of their intervention, who have experienced a pause or have not have realised their initial activity goals. (see page 6)*

General Tips

- We sometimes jump to “rescue mode” where we repeatedly make suggestions, and are met with “yes but”. Where possible, continue to try and get suggestions from your participant ("elicit provide elicit") to deliver information. Or ask “What support would you like from me?” / “Do you want any suggestions, or is it better for me to just listen?”
- Sit with “stuckness”. Reflect how hard this situation is and how frustrating it is for you both. This might feel inactive, but it is actually a Motivational Interviewing technique. You could point out – frustration shows motivation, because the person **does** want to get out. How can they **use** this frustration when lockdown ends? It is ok not to have all the answers right now. You can say “I don’t know”.
- We encourage coaches to come to the SCENE surgery (Tuesdays 3.30pm-5pm on Microsoft Teams). It is a space to learn, reflect and get motivated – even if we don’t have all the answers! Ask your coach co-ordinator if you do not have the Teams link.
- Consider the value of taking a pause until perhaps circumstances change – particularly if you have the time left in the intervention period.

i) New Participants

Example: Jacob and Sujata

Jacob has recently been trained as a social contacts coach and has been allocated a participant, Sujata. Jacob has his first session with Sujata booked in this week, but is feeling unsure about delivering the intervention remotely and in the current climate of lockdown. How can he carry out the intervention for her to make social contacts and engage in activities? What if they can't find a suitable activity?

Jacob could consider the following:

- Carrying out the 8 steps and really take his time, giving plenty of time to pause on earlier steps with Sujata. This will allow Sujata to really tell her story and for them to unpick any difficulties/ barriers to motivation and also explore solutions she has used previously.
- Jacob could spend more time in the planning stage during uncertain times, where more formal "action" may not be as possible. They could slow the intervention right down, reminding themselves that they have a whole 6 months ahead that may see some loosening in restrictions.
- Jacob and Sujata could consider how to convert long term goals (and what has worked really well in the past) to short term goals? These can be worked towards, with an emphasis on motivation, barriers and practical issues.
- Jacob could consider the fact that working on motivation is an action in itself, and reinforcing a vision for the future can help hugely.

ii) Participants who have already begun the intervention and set goals and activities, which are difficult to put in place now.

Example: Jenny and Sophia

Jenny (Social Contacts Coach) and Sophia (participant) finished the 8 steps and came to the collaborative goal of Sophia volunteering to help with the tea and coffee after church once a month (including baking cakes occasionally). She has made contact with the people in charge, and had also arranged to come in and chat to them. However, with the new lockdown, her church will be closed and her initial plans may not go ahead. Jenny and Sophia are trying to creatively think of things that they can do together for the rest of the intervention.

- Are there other ways this goal and the values behind it can be achieved during the lockdown? (e.g. does Sophia want leadership, conversation, to “feel part of something”; to be able to get creative making cakes for the coffee morning?)
- Are there any steps they can make together towards the goal, that can be carried out during the lockdown. Are there any barriers? Any skills they need to learn before they can do this (e.g. money skills)? Any clothing or equipment she may need/ like to buy, such as baking utensils? Perhaps she could try and make cakes for her elderly neighbour in the interim to practice her skills?
- They could use Solution Focused Therapy to plan and maintain her current levels of motivation for the future and build a very clear vision of what it will look like and how it will feel to go there.
- Sophia could keep in touch with the lady in charge. She had seemed really nice and Sophia did not want her to forget her. She was a key member of the community and may be able to include Sophia in anything that may be going on in the future. Sophia has decided to text her every now and then to see what was going on.
- Sophia sees her social anxiety as a barrier to her actually realising this goal, and so she could practice making tea for her friends and family while they role play a member of the church. She could also practice the route because she realises it has been some time since she has attended church.

- Sophia could try and strike up conversation with the limited people she sees at the moment (shopkeepers) as a way of keeping her motivated. She could also call her sister once a week to stay in the habit of chatting to people who are not professionals.
- Sophia could ask the tea club if they need any help making posters in the meantime
- Sophia could explore ways to build her confidence
- Sophia believes that some days she will not feel up to going, and may decide to write herself a letter to motivate herself in those times
- Sophia may instead want to pick a different activity. That would be going back to steps 4-8 of SCENE (checking motivation, then looking at options for activities etc). She may want to stick with 'volunteering' but try something different to the church.

iii) Participants who are coming to the end of their time in the intervention who have experienced a pause and may not have realized their initial activity goals...

Example: Hazel and George

George was randomised to the intervention just before lockdown in March 2020. He did not have any sessions before the study was paused. When the study re-started in August, he had a slow start with Hazel (his coach) as he felt a little unsure and confused about what he could and could not do.

Hazel and George started off motivated and keen to spring to action, easily going through the 8 steps. George and Hazel got on well, even over the phone. George was very motivated to get back to football, as he loved being outside and thought it would be a great way to work on his health whilst meeting new friends. They laid out some detailed plans.

However, as the area in which George lived drifted in and out of restrictions, Hazel and George began to feel lost about the aim of the intervention. It seemed less and less likely that George was going to be able to achieve his initial goal of attending his football training. George began to feel distant to Hazel. He often quizzed her, asking what the point of the session was today? Hazel felt helpless at times, and spent a lot of time trying to break down the task into smaller, lockdown-friendly actions. George seemed unwilling to try these out.

Hazel did a great job at keeping in touch with her Social Contact Coach coordinator, and attending the SCENE surgery via Teams on a Tuesday at 3.30pm. Here, she was able to reflect with other coaches and the central study team. Hazel was unsure how to go about the ending session, as it had seemed as though they had not achieved their goals.

Hazel could consider the following:

- Hazel could offer lots of praise to George for their collaborative effort at breaking down the longer goal of attending football into smaller goals (such as trying out fitness workouts at home).
- Hazel and George could reflect together the frustration they have felt; and actually how this reflects his immense motivation to carry out the activity.
- Hazel could praise George for planning an activity after having not attended any activities for many years. Simply planning and holding motivation for this long was a huge achievement in itself!

- Hazel could act self-compassionately and praise herself for her determination and genuine care for George's wellbeing. She has put in so much effort over the last few months and really deserves it.