

Case study: group coaching

Our customer had been unemployed for two years, when he came to BEST. He had previously worked in a warehouse for 30 years. We identified the barriers that he was facing, including a lack of communication skills and self confidence, a health issue, limited IT skills and the familiar “No one would want to employ an old man like me” mind-set. We invited him, as part of his New Deal programme, to take part in a six week course run by a life coach from an external organisation Creative Pathway.

The focus of the course was to build self esteem and confidence. To achieve this, the group:

- undertook “mind mapping” which included identifying some of their many achievements in life as well as in work
- identified their transferable skills revealed by the mind mapping
- considered the advantages to an employer of taking on a more mature worker (reliability, experience, good social skills, conscientiousness for example).

The course also built assertiveness and rapport building communication skills and identified positive and negative ‘self talk’ and the effects of both. Participation in this course and in our own group sessions for more mature jobseekers helped our customer improve his communication skills and confidence, gain basic computer skills and work experience working as a retail assistant. The great news is that he then found work as a retail assistant in a shoe shop, where he continues to work.

We also noticed the benefits of the course on other members. The learners seemed more confident and became more sociable. They helped each other use computers and look for jobs. They supported and encouraged each other in other ways too, for example by accompanying fellow group members to work placements. We are confident that given the same support and guidance, many older jobseekers can be helped to find and stay in work.