

Centre helping duo to combat their MS

WRENTHAM: Pioneering BodyMind programme helps pair enjoy fuller lives

By Craig Robinson

Two years ago multiple sclerosis sufferers Sue Bryan and Jo Smith could not imagine living a normal life. They had spent years struggling with the disease – fighting a constant battle against its debilitating symptoms.

But after attending a groundbreaking programme at the Rowan Centre at Wrentham, near Southwold, they are both now enjoying full and active lives again.

They took part in a range of comprehensive rehabilitation sessions which included learning about neuroscience and then re-programming the brain and central nervous system by using a variety of proven techniques. The centre then provided ongoing support to teach how to integrate the skills into normal life.

Mrs Bryan, 62, a retired banker from Carlton Colville, near Lowestoft, was diagnosed with progressive MS in 2002 and needed help to walk further than 75 yards. She also experienced a variety of problems including extreme fatigue, pain, muscle weakness, leg spasms and difficulties with her balance.

Her symptoms started improving in just three days on the programme and after four months she could walk a whole mile unaided. Now, two years on, she is able to travel abroad, enjoy her passion for golf and leads a busy social life.

“I may occasionally feel tired or my legs sometimes less good”, she said. “But by using the techniques I am able to limit the impact and complete tasks that before I would have had to abandon.”

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‘CLIENTS WILLINGNESS IS CRUCIAL’: From left, Steve Fawdry, Sue Bryan, Jo Smith and Kate Simpson

Photograph: SIMON PARKER

Miss Smith, 33, an international groom from Sudbury, was diagnosed with relapsing remitting MS in 2003 and suffered many attacks – some severe enough to blind her or keep her on crutches for a year

She started the Rowan Centre Programme a year ago and has found a lot more energy, even taking part in a sponsored run for Sports Relief. She has also started a part-time job and is looking forward to relaunching her career with her beloved horses.

“After just a week on the programme I was able to get up at six in the morning to go to the supermarket,” she said.

The Rowan Centre is run by Kate Simpson and Steve Fawdry who have 20 clients with MS. During the last five years they have successfully worked with a variety of complex, chronic illnesses, including M.E and Fibromyalgia.

Ms Simpson said: “The most relevant factor seems to be the clients’ willingness to commit to using the techniques effectively. The earlier they start, the easier it is to get good results, but even people with severe symptoms have experienced improvements to function and well-being.” To find out more about the Rowan Centre contact 0845 900 5765 or visit www.therowancentre.com.

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