

Case Study 1.

Gemma is a 5ft 5, 14 stone 3, 40-year-old health professional from Derby. She has been obese for almost as long as she can remember and believes that she can never lose weight as all of her family are overweight so it is in her genes. Gemma works long hours in a stressful sedentary office job, so when she gets home, she generally eats a meal that is quick and easy to prepare or buys a takeaway or eats fish and chips on her way home. She finds a few glasses of wine help her to relax in the evening and as wine is too wet on its own she usually munches her way through some chocolate at the same time. This is occurring every day.

Gemma is married to Paul, and they have 3 children. Each member of the family is a little overweight, they each enjoy different foods and healthy eating is not something they generally think about, but they try to include at least a portion of fruit and/ or vegetables in their daily meals, but in reality, this only happens twice a week, if that. Gemma has tried to follow a diet plan on several occasions, but it has just left her feeling that dieting and counting calories are 'not for her' so she has given up. She says counting calories is too time consuming and complicated to fit into her busy lifestyle and she has no idea how to lose weight in any other way. Gemma has never taken recreational drugs and she doesn't smoke. She has been told that she has to lose weight and cut out salt as her blood pressure is 140/90, if she doesn't manage this then she will have to take medication to reduce her blood pressure, to cut the risk of stroke if it becomes any higher. Gemma has never exercised and does not want to go to a gym where she fears people will stare at her.

Last year Gemma's father died unexpectedly due to a heart attack. Gemma was devastated and this in turn increased her stress levels, but it made her realise that her weight might be leading to future health problems for her too. Since her father's death, Gemma hasn't slept well, (4-5 hrs a night) she is anxious and constantly thinking about her health and lifestyle, she worries about something happening to her and has a nagging fear of leaving her children behind. The shock, stress and anxiety has led Gemma to make the decision to try to lose weight and overcome the complacency that she had always felt in the past about her lifestyle choices. She is thinking about seeing a counsellor or therapist to help identify the core beliefs, attitudes and values that drive her behaviours. She believes that only once this way of thinking has been brought to the surface can she then focus on making positive changes.

For Gemma the fact that she has never succeeded in her attempts to lose weight in the past, the fact that counting calories, diet plans and healthy eating are alien to her lifestyle and that of the rest of her family, mean that these issues have to be confronted head on and specific plans to overcome such barriers need to be put in place. Building Gemma's confidence in the belief that she can lose weight, working to ensure her motivation is clear to her and sustainable, and identifying methods of overcoming difficulties are the key starting points. Developing specific goals and plans to achieve would then hopefully become the focus of attention.

Tasks

1. Design a lifestyle questionnaire with both opened and closed questions covering the 6 different lifestyle factors below:-
 - Diet/ Hydration
 - Exercise
 - Smoking
 - Alcohol
 - Exercise
 - Stress

For example: if I was asking questions about stress, I'd want to know, the causes, how often she felt this way, how much stress affects her family relationships, work life (you could use a scale here), does she do anything to help relieve her stress etc

2. Complete the questionnaire on behalf of Gemma using the information from the case study above. (Leave any areas blank that you cannot complete.
3. Identify her strengths in the case study.
4. Write a short paragraph stating why you believe they are strengths
5. Identify her areas for improvement in the case study
6. Write a short paragraph on why you believe these are areas for improvement
7. For task 5 and 6 can you find any evidence in books, journals or credible sources on the internet that strengthen your points
 - List the book , page number and a brief quote to support your arguments
 - List the web page and a brief quote of how it supports your arguments
8. What could happen if Gemma continues in this way or doesn't change her lifestyle?
9. What areas do you think she needs to prioritise first and why?

For example : Priority 1= stress explain why you have prioritised this, give good reasoned arguments

Priority 2=Weight

10. Research Government/ World Health Organisation/ NHS recommendations for the following
 - Alcohol consumption
 - Exercise
 - Healthy Diet
 - Sleep

NB: Please complete for the first day of term

Shanon

