

## **FIT and coping with redundancy**

Redundancy frequently brings with it a certain amount of stress, anxiety and, sometimes, depression. In this study FIT training was given to manual workers who had recently been made redundant. Blue collar workers are not normally able to access this type of training and yet it can have profound effects on their well-being at a stressful time.

This study sought to assist the redundant workers with personal development for their new situation and to minimise anxiety and depression. One aspect of FIT Training concentrates on Behavioural Flexibility which is particularly valuable in this respect. Behavioural Flexibility is an indicator of how well people cope with a wide variety of situations. The greater an individual's Behavioural Flexibility the easier they will find it to address life issues, both at an everyday level and when difficult circumstances arise. One of the aims of the study was to widen the range of participants' behaviours and therefore increase their behavioural flexibility. Analysis of data examined changes in Behavioural Flexibility and how this affected clients' anxiety and depression scores.

**Participants:** The 27 participants who undertook FIT Training had an average age of 47. Twenty-three were male and all participants were blue collar workers who had worked on an assembly line before being made redundant.

**Training:** Participants attended four FIT Training sessions in total, one per week for the first three weeks and a follow-up and final session four weeks later.

Over the first three weeks, participants:-

- Were introduced to The FIT Framework
- Completed The FIT Profiler – assessing their ability to deal with a variety of situations and how they felt (anxiety/depression scores)
- Received feedback on their FIT Profiler scores
- Undertook a FIT Behavioural Exercise
- Made choices and carried out “Do Something Different” exercises

- Identified a problem unique to them and applied the FIT approach to addressing it.

On the fourth week, participants:-

- Attended a group feedback session
- Discussed how they had used different strategies to address their individual problems
- Reported on the “Do Something Different” tasks
- Completed a final FIT Profiler to assess changes.

### **Outcomes:**

FIT scores, as measured on the FIT Profiler, increased as a result of the training (see Table 1), whilst, at the same time, General Anxiety and Depression scores decreased (Table 2). Statistically, all but Awareness, Conscience and Social Shaping, were significant changes. The lack of change in the social shaping score indicated that clients had been truthful when completing the FIT Profiler.

**Table 1: The effects of training on The FIT Profiler scores (n = 27)**

	<b>Pre-training</b>	<b>Post-training</b>
<b>Overall FIT score</b>	104	183
<b>FIT Integrity</b>	60.4	64
<b>Behavioural Flexibility</b>	16.5	28.5
<b>Self-responsibility</b>	6.6	7.3
<b>Awareness</b>	5.6	5.5
<b>Balance</b>	5.4	5.9
<b>Conscience</b>	8.3	8.2
<b>Fearlessness</b>	4.4	5.2
<b>Social shaping</b>	1.0	1.2

**Table 2: The effects of training on anxiety and depression scores**

	<b>Pre-training</b>	<b>Post-training</b>
<b>Anxiety</b>	9.8	8.9
<b>Depression</b>	7.8	7.2

Individual case studies of the problems addressed revealed that FIT Training had a beneficial effect and resulted in effective new strategies for long term problems. For example:-

- One of the men, aged 57, chose to attend a live sporting event as part of the “Do Something Different” intervention and ended up accompanying his previously estranged son to a football match. He is now getting on well with his son and has found re-employment.
- Another participant, a 42 year old woman who was suffering with clinical depression prior to the course, was aware that she had adopted habitual behaviours that were unhelpful, but felt unable to change them. Trying new behaviours as part of the FIT training gave her the confidence to address her poor habits and to approach her GP to ask about coming off medication.
- One 58 year old male participant was initially sceptical about the value of the course. At home there was a rift between him and his wife as he would continually row with her about their son. Furthermore he would argue with his son when he visited and be critical about the life his son was leading. After the second session of training he resolved to change his attitude and behaviour and, by the fourth session, found that this new behaviour had improved his relationship with both his wife and son. He stated that he would not have tried these strategies without the FIT training.

FIT Training increased both overall FIT Profiler scores on many of the FIT dimensions including behavioural flexibility scores. These improved scores suggest that the training resulted in participants being much developed personally, including having wider coping strategies and a more flexible approach to different situations. Moreover, the knowledge that they were able to cope more successfully (i.e. having greater confidence in their self-efficacy) reduced the stressful effects of redundancy and presented them with new, more effective, ways of behaving.