

Working with the Homeless

I am a part time volunteer with Cork Simon Community. Cork Simon works in solidarity with men and women who are homeless, offering housing and support in their journey back to independent or supported living. Every night Simon provides 115 beds for people in Cork who are homeless - 44 of these beds are in five high-support Houses, providing homes to men and women with physical and mental health issues. It is to the people in these five houses, that I minister daily.

Every afternoon I visit one of these houses. My role is to provide Reflexology and Indian head massage to the residents. I attend to about four people every afternoon. Once I had completed my first Capacitar training weekend in May 2010, I began to introduce some of the Capacitar techniques to the homeless women and men. From my daily contact with them I was very aware of their many and varied health issues – depression, insomnia, huge anxiety, panic attacks, flashbacks, headaches, backaches, stomach problems and constipation. Many are survivors of orphanages, industrial schools and street beatings. They have been victims of much physical abuse thereby carrying many trauma issues. Many have addictions to alcohol, drugs and gambling. I was confident that Capacitar had something to offer these people. I also knew that they had confidence in me and that they trusted me with my alternative approach to healing the body, mind and spirit.

Initially, I incorporated Capacitar into my Indian head massage, including the Head Holds, the Head Neck Shoulder Release and EFT. I introduced the Finger Holds separately and encouraged the residents to do these and the EFT for themselves. As the weeks went on I became aware that there was an increase in the demand for my Indian head massage (which now incorporated some Capacitar techniques) whilst previously, it was foot reflexology that was most in demand.

I introduced the acupressure points in a very informal way. In the process of doing a foot reflexology with a resident, when they shared with me a concern about insomnia, constipation, anxiety, depression or any other health issue, I would show them the acupressure point for the issue mentioned, work on it for a minute and encourage them to do it for themselves, whenever needed. This was my biggest challenge. Personally, one of the things that I like most about Capacitar is that it is an empowerment technique. Sadly, the Homeless have very very low self-esteem and very little self-motivation. Only one of them ever shared with me that he had treated himself when he needed to. Nevertheless, I don't give up and I continue to encourage them to trust themselves to treat themselves.

The majority of the homeless that I work with are men but I do see some women once a week. I am slow to introduce the Chakra Tai Chi to the men but I

have done it with the women and young girls (16-21 years). I work with them in a small group of four. Each time I meet with them I create a centrepiece with a large candle, some crystals, burning incense and angel cards scattered around. At the end of our trainings they each choose an angel message which they always look forward to. They enjoy the Tai Chi. They were a bit self-conscious and shy in the beginning but they got over that. The young girls are also very open to the Finger Hold Meditation which we do on a few occasions using the CD. They tell me that they find it very peaceful, relaxing and calming. I encourage them to do them in bed before going to sleep at night. The majority of them shared that they had done them and that they feel less anxiety and sleep better on the nights that they do them.

After completing my Capacitar training weekend in February 2011, I began introducing Polarity Bodywork, concentrating on the head and neck. Sometimes, I incorporate this into my Indian head massage. I also introduced some bodywork with the Ether Element. The men tell me that they find this bodywork so calming, peaceful and very very relaxing.

Since I started my Capacitar training, I have been attending the Cork Capacitar Support Group, which meets in Wilton on the last Wednesday of every month, 7-9 pm. It is a nourishing, energising and wholesome group. Attending this group keeps Capacitar alive for me. Each month, two people from the group take responsibility for leading the group. I shared the leadership of the group at the end of February. I led the group through a Polarity session, doing the energy points of the head and neck. There was a profound sense of peace and stillness in the room and people shared afterwards how they had experienced it as a deep healing session.

Personally, I find Capacitar a great source of healing, empowerment and integration. It has enhanced my work on all levels – physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual.