

Positive Spin

Enabling
people with dementia to cycle



It's a sunny Wednesday afternoon and a cheerful group of people are cycling around Finsbury Park in a colourful array of bikes. They are all here for the same reason; to have fun with 'Positive Spin' which gives people with dementia, as well as strokes and neurological conditions, the opportunity to cycle on regular and specially adapted bikes, with their friends and family.

Monty, who has come with his daughter Toni, talks happily about how the last time he went cycling with his wife of 66 years on a tandem bicycle; today is his first time back on a bike since his youth. Within the first session Monty had been on four different types of bike including a tricycle



and a two-person bike with his daughter, by 3pm he is cycling a regular bicycle on his own. Toni, his daughter, talks enthusiastically about the 'Red Crested Pochard', a type of duck, she saw with her father on their cycle ride, while Monty remarks that she has a lot of wildlife knowledge for someone from the city. It is clear to see their enjoyment of each other's company, and the chance to explore the area in an empowering manner.

Jane and Claire, an instructor, stop off on their cycle around the lake to meet Toni and Monty and quickly begin to discuss Positive Spin: **"It's fantastic for**

people” Monty comments, **“it means you can get out more”** Jane adds. For Jane cycling again is bringing back memories of when she used to cycle, her favourite bike is the two person one so that she can cycle with Jim who has only just started learning to cycle and is eager to spend time **“being in the moment”** with Jane. While Jim jokes around, Jane rolls her eyes and crosses her arms **“that’s a look I haven’t seen for a while”**: Jim seems over joyed at Jane’s playful exasperation.



A larger group of cyclists return from a ride along the disused railway line and are quick to sing the praises of ‘Positive Spin’ **“its good to get out the house”** remarks Roger who is with his daughter, while Ian, who is with his wife Marion, remarks that **“its so fun”, “its been a great thing”** Marion



adds, **“he has enjoyed it, I’ve really enjoyed it, its something he used to enjoy before...”** she trails off at the mention of Ian’s diagnosis of dementia. Swiftly, the groups conversation turns to plans for the future, they want to cycle on the roads next and are

looking forward to yoga sessions, and mindfulness workshops. It is clear that despite the difficulties dementia brings, diagnosis isn’t the end, there is lots of laughter, sunshine and fun left to be had.

Positive Spin takes place 1-3pm at Finsbury Park, Hackney, N4 1EE (by the basketball courts)

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www.cycletraining.co.uk/positive-spin.html