STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
	10	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
	25	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
	25	
4. Practical Application Skills		
	20	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		
	20	

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	**Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)**		**%**
	Up to 1 week late (40% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		

Report: Establish the motives for, and the barriers that prevent regular physical activity / exercise for an individual of your choice. In particular, you should consider any impact the Covid19 pandemic has had in relation to this. Evaluate your results in light of previous research and suggest approaches to encourage exercise behaviour for that particular individual and wider population group.

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A qualitative analysis of data from an interview conducted with a remote worker to explore exercise motivations and barriers since the imposition of Covid-19 restrictions.

A semi-structured interview was conducted with a 46 year old female who works remotely as a Sales Manager. She enjoys exercise when workload permits and previously practiced yoga twice a week and attended kettlebell classes. She enjoys a range of exercise activities and is competent in most. Since moving from Middlesex to Manchester immediately prior to the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, exercise has become sporadic and at times ceased completely. Work dominates her life, both alcohol and cigarette usage have increased. The interview explores motivations for and barriers to regular exercise. This document presents: a summary, analysis and output report for key interview themes. References will be made to existing literature and behaviour change theory. Strategies for behavioural changes and opportunities identified for future research are proposed.

A number of themes were repeated throughout the interview however much of the data is common across multiple themes, therefore, for reporting purposes, the focus is on the themes of barriers, motivations, and emotions. The full data coding can be seen in Appendix 4.

Barriers: work encroaching on personal time and lack of autonomy were repeatedly identified as the major barriers to exercise “if I was to put a set time in my working week every week I can guarantee you, somebody would put a call in and… I wouldn't have the opportunity to not accept it”. Customer demands make it difficult to commit to a regular exercise schedule: “when I try and with all best intentions go right, I'm gonna do that, something happens at work”. Preferences for comforting, unhealthy habits were also identified as reasons for not exercising “you finish work and your motivation's gone and you want to sit on the sofa with a glass of wine”, “and I smoke too much and obviously that didn't help me”. An overriding sense of apathy was apparent “but that push button to start it, I haven't found it for a number of years so I don't quite know what it is”.

Motivations:. The interviewee articulated their awareness of the importance of exercise on physical health in the context of her high alcohol and cigarette usage, strongly expressing her concerns about not undertaking exercise: “I think that if I don’t start doing it, I might not be around for that much longer”. Body shape and body image concerns were repeated throughout the interview with the interviewee recalling how they felt when they exercised previously “when I looked at myself in the mirror, I liked the shape of my body”.

Emotions: The strength of emotion and openness when discussing body shape revealed the impact on their self-esteem of no longer exercising to the extent that she used to “I liked the shape of my body”, “I would say I think now that my body shape isn't controlled”, “I don't look at myself in the mirror”, “I don't like myself in photos now at all”. The interviewee clearly perceives she has lost control of her life and as a result, unhealthy habits have increased since Covid restrictions began. She has the desire to recommence regular exercise for physical, emotional and psychological health but lack of motivation is holding her back.

Discussion

A significant body of literature exists relating to the key themes which are discussed in this section.

Barriers**:** Lack of time and the sense of despondency caused by the requirement to be ever present and online corresponds to the growing body of literature highlighting the blurring of boundaries between work and home since the increase in remote working due to Covid-19 restrictions. The literature supports the finding of negative impacts of this on physical and psychological health. A rapid review of employees regularly working at home between 2007 and 2020, by Oakman et al (2020), pointed to fatigue, exhaustion and “behavioural strain” (Oakman *et al.*, 2020) as symptoms of “technostress” (Brod, 1984; Chiappetta, 2017; Ingusci *et al.*, 2021). Constantly being at the behest of customers and peers manifests as low levels of autonomy which, according to research conducted by Fotiadis, Abdulrahman and Spyridou (2019), directly relates to negative psychological health and work-life balance (Fotiadis, Abdulrahman and Spyridou, 2019).

Motivations: The interviewee is acutely aware of her need to replace unhealthy habits with habits. beneficial to her overall health. Graybiel and Smith (2014) describe habits as “akin to addictions” when allowed to continue (Graybiel and Smith, 2014). This may provide an insight into why the interviewee experiences difficulty recovering her previous habits when faced with the barriers previously discussed. Her motivations to exercise are: as a mediator for stopping smoking; for reducing her alcohol intake and for recovering a body shape she is comfortable with.

Smoking: a systematic review by Ussher et al (2019) established that whilst exercise was effective in distracting smokers from cravings and withdrawal symptoms, it concluded that exercise was not an effective mediator in smoking cessation (Ussher

et al., 2019). This echoed findings of a previous review by Linke et al (2013) which concluded that previous systemic reviews supporting exercise as a mediator for smoking cessation may have confounded results due to the heterogeneity of data included (Linke *et al.*, 2013). Ussher et al (2019) findings were also supported by Jackson et al (2019) (Jackson *et al.*, 2019).

Alcohol: results from a study evaluating the efficacy of exercise in overall reduction in alcohol consumption concluded that as with smoking, exercise assisted with withdrawal symptoms and urges however benefits were short term and limited (Ussher *et al.*, 2004). The review of the literature relating to the failure of exercise as an aid to smoking cessation and reduced alcohol consumption may explain why these stated motivations have not yet proved successful for the interviewee.

Emotions: whilst captured outside of the motivations theme, strong emotions linked to self-esteem and body confidence were expressed as motivations to exercise. Acceptance of her body when exercising suggests she had achieved a level of body satisfaction sufficient to sustain motivation to continued exercising (Johnson *et al.*, 2013). This is contradictory to the findings of Tiggemann and Williamson (2000) who reported that body satisfaction was reduced in individuals who exercise to manage weight or maintain body tone (Tiggemann and Williamson, 2000). A 2121 review of 671 Chinese students confirmed an association between participation in exercise and positive self-esteem and body image (Shang, Xie and Yang, 2021). The interviewee's desire to improve body shape may be a more successful motivator than the desire to replace cigarettes and alcohol with exercise.

The themes of barriers, motivations and emotions can also be related to current behaviour change theories of the Health Belief Model (Becker, 1974), Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska and Velicer, 1997), Self Efficacy Theory (SET) (Bandura, 1997) and Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan and Deci, 2008).

Health Belief Model (HBM): the interviewee is aware of and motivated by the need to exercise for the benefit of her health and believes that replacing unhealthy habits with healthy behaviours. One limitation of the HBM in effecting the required changes is that it also requires a low level of perceived difficulty to act (Becker, 1974). In saying "I found that quite difficult when they were exercising and I couldn't because of work", the interviewee has clearly stated how her work makes it difficult for her to exercise when she may wish to.

Transtheoretical Model (TTM): analysis of the information gained from the interview would position the interviewee at the “preparation” stage of change within the TTM (Prochaska and Velicer, 1997). A study by Johnson et al (2013) of 1455 adult volunteers aged between 18 and 90 and making comparisons at all TTM stages of change found that body satisfaction was strongly associated with “action” and “maintenance” stages (Johnson *et al.*, 2013). This reinforces the interviewee’s comments relating to exercising to maintain her body shape.

Self-Efficacy Theory (SET): the interviewee states she is competent at exercising across a range of activities and enjoys exercise at all intensities. When asked what she would consider to be exercise, her response was “anything for me that gets your heart beat up umm a bit of, a bit of heat on, that is exercise”. Self-efficacy is predicated on success. Her “mastery” from previous exercise experience and her requirement for a “physiological/affective” state during exercise are suggestive of high self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Another basic premise of SET is the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997 p.3). Previous comments relating to work impeding her ability to exercise clearly demonstrate her lack of belief in her ability to execute the actions she knows she needs to take in order to meet her objectives. This will need to be addressed to mediate progress to the next stage. That the interviewee was able to sustain exercise during a period when she wasn’t working confirms this theory is relevant to this individual.

Self Determination Theory (SDT): By assessing the extent to which basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) (Ryan and Deci, 2008) are met, SDT offers the clearest explanation for the interviewee’s lack of motivation to exercise. Autonomy is low (work demands) and resultant psychological symptoms are indicative of burnout (Fernet *et al.*, 2013), exercise competence is high (mastery experiences) whereas relatedness is low (isolation due to Covid-19). Technology has the potential to enhance relatedness by enabling connections (Pancani *et al.*, 2021) however for the interviewee technology is both controlling and limiting autonomy and relatedness. In this context, is unsurprising that the interviewee expresses apathy and amotivation.

Strategies for Behaviour Change

The interview objective was to identify and explore barriers to regular exercise and elicit information to identify motivations, behaviours and attitudes which can be utilised to create a framework for sustained physical activity.

The first barrier to overcome is the time the interviewee has available for exercise. Work has become her primary focus to the detriment of her daily structure with no defined boundary between work and personal time. Social interaction, physical activity and mental health have all declined as have her self-esteem and body satisfaction. At the same time, dependence on cigarettes and alcohol for relaxation has increased. With no requirement to travel to visit customers or the office, both "primary" and "secondary" routines (Hou *et al.*, 2020) have been neglected with work being the only structured element in her day. Establishing routines will provide a structure that is lacking in her day and may help to identify and set aside time for exercise. Routines also foster self-discipline and control, behaviours essential to a positive outcomes and success in creating new exercise habits (Gillebaart and Adriaanse, 2017; Wang *et al.*, 2021).

To integrate physical activity in her daily routine, the interviewee needs to adopt a strategy which won't overwhelm her initially and from which she will perceive greatest psychological benefit. The strategy also needs to draw on motivations other than her stated desire to use exercise to replace bad habits which the literature review has shown to be ineffective. TTM points to body satisfaction as a strong motivator for action and continued exercise (Johnson *et al.*, 2013). The interviewee previously practiced and enjoyed yoga at an advanced level and stated that at that time she was happy with her body shape. In addition to greater body appreciation, participating in yoga classes satisfy all three basic psychological resulting intrinsic motivation (Cox *et al.*, 2019). Drawing on her previous "mastery" (SET) (Bandura, 1986) of yoga, the interviewee should set aside time every day for this activity either in a class or at home if time is limited.

The benefits of exercising in green space are universally accepted (Mytton *et al.*, 2012; Richardson *et al.*, 2013; Day, 2020). The interviewee enjoys being outdoors in nature and has immediate access to green space. She doesn't consider walking to be physically challenging therefore intrinsic motivation for walking outdoors is relatively high. Walking 30 minutes, five times has been shown to improve physical health in women (Serwe *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, walking for mental health benefits (Barton, Hine and Pretty, 2009) should

be implemented as a mediator for self-discipline (taking a break), physical activity and stress management.

Introducing low impact, highly valued activities serves the purpose of taking the interviewee away from her computer; moving her body in a purposeful way; improving physical fitness; improving body shape and approval; increasing self-esteem and reducing stress. Starting low and slow will ensure that the interviewee doesn't feel overwhelmed by the recommended changes.

Areas for Future Research

Prior to Covid-19 lockdown and restrictions the interviewee was field based which offered a lot more flexibility and autonomy in her working day. Customers and peers would be aware that she would be driving and therefore didn't expect her to respond to them immediately. Whilst much focus has been on the beneficial impact of home working for office-based employees, no literature exists specifically looking at the adverse physical and psychological health impact of enforced home working on field-based employees. Detailed research is needed to establish personality and behavioural changes especially stress, anxiety, isolation, productivity and job satisfaction.

Word Count: 2191

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APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – October 2021

Participant name: [redacted]

Title of Project: Motivation and Barriers to Exercise and Physical Activity

Name of Researcher: Wendy Scott

Participant to complete this section: **Please initial each box.**

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered [redacted]

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. [redacted]

I agree to take part in the above study. [redacted]

I agree to the interview being audio recorded [redacted]

I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications [redacted]

[redacted] 19/12/21

Signature of Participant Date

WENDY SCOTT 19/12/21

Name of person taking consent Date

1

APPENDIX 2 – SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONS

Interview Schedule

Motivation and Barriers to Exercise and Physical Activity.

Name : _____

Participant # : _____

Age: _____

Occupation: _____

Contact Address or Phone Number: _____

_____

Interview Date: _____

Start Time: _____

Finish Time: _____

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. As part of this study I am talking to individuals about their experiences of exercise and physical activity.

The interview contains several parts that will discuss your experiences of exercise and physical activity. The results from this study will be used as part of a piece of coursework for a psychology module within my degree programme. Please remember that all the information you provide is completely anonymous and your name will not be linked to your responses. When writing up this work I may select quotes from this interview to illustrate important points, but your identity will be protected. In order to ensure a complete and accurate account of your responses, a voice recorder will be used.

As a participant you have certain distinct rights:
This interview is about your experiences of participating in exercise and physical activity, and as such if you feel uncomfortable about answering any of the questions, then you are free to decline to answer or ask for the interview to be stopped. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your experiences of exercise and physical activity, and as such, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions within the interview. I hope therefore, that you will respond in a clear and straightforward way. If there are any questions you do not feel comfortable answering or if something is not clear, please let me know. If you do not want to enter into discussion about a particular topic any further, just say “no comment” and we can move on. If you have questions, please feel free to ask them at any point.

Important: During the interview I will be asking about your experiences of exercise and physical activity which may go back many years. I will also be asking about your motivation and barriers to exercise since that time. Please feel free to take your time when recalling any aspect of these experiences; and do not hesitate to include anything that you believe to be important. This may include things such as relationships, family or work. If you are unable to recall an event, please let me know rather than guess.

Before we progress on to the interview do you have any questions?

Thank you once again for your participation.

The purposes of this interview are firstly to establish what physical activity you are currently doing (if any) and how you feel about exercise. I would also like to discuss your experiences of exercise and physical activity and to cover the following topics:

1. Current exercise levels and attitude to exercise and physical activity
2. Barriers to exercise
3. Motivation to exercise
4. The impact of Covid 19 on the above

To assist memory recall for each of the sections of the interview, this guide has been sent to you in advance, so that you can think about the questions and make any notes that you feel are relevant / important to the interview.

Current physical activity levels

1. **Do you exercise regularly?**

*If so,

Frequency?

Intensity?

Time?

Type? (*to check they are suitable for interview – not meeting guidelines)

2. **When would you be most likely to exercise?**

3. **Where would you be most likely to exercise?**

4. **Are you aware of the current recommended exercise guidelines?**

If so, do you think these are achievable?

Attitudes to heath and exercise

5. **What does exercise/physical activity mean to you?**

Do you feel that it is part of your life?

6. **(If you have exercised) How does exercise make you feel?**
7. **Have you noticed any changes following exercise participation?**

Probes: Physical? Mental? Social?

8. **What would motivate you to participate in physical activity?**

9. **Do you think enjoyment is an important part of exercise/physical activity?**
   Is there a type of exercise that you enjoy? Have you enjoyed any type of exercise in the past?
   How do you feel about the idea of exercising outdoors / or indoors?

10. **If you had a choice, would you prefer to exercise in a group or alone?**

Probe: Why is this?

11. **Do you believe that there are any health benefits to exercising?**
12. **Do you think that exercising could have an impact on your physical health in any way?**

Barriers to exercise and physical activity

13. Is there anything that prevents you from exercising?

Probe: Are there any others? Which would you say is most important from what you have mentioned? Why is this?

14. Are any of the following relevant to you?

Family commitments?
Affordability?
Accessibility?
Health issues?
Time constraints?

The impact of Covid 19 on the above

15. Has lockdown impacted your ability (practically) to do physical activity or exercise in any way?

If so: In what way? Can you give me an example of this?

16. Did / do you have access to local green space areas to exercise during lockdown?

How do you feel about this? What type of areas do /did you have access to?

17. Do you feel that lockdown has impacted your motivation to exercise in any way?

If so: In what way?

18. Did you did manage to exercise during lockdown, do you feel that this had any If effect (this could be positive, negative or neutral) on how you felt psychologically during lockdown?

In what way? Can you give an example of this?

19. Have you tried any new physical activities during lockdown?

How do you feel about this? If not, why not? If yes, have you continued these activities?

Verification questions (to ensure that you have had the opportunity to discuss everything that you have wanted to).

1. How do you feel the interview went?
2. Did you feel that you were able to tell all that you wanted to?
3. Were you unhappy with any of the questions that I asked?
4. Did you think that I led or influenced your answers in any way?

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX 3 – INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Motivation and Barriers to Exercise and Physical Activity.

Said prior to recording.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. As part of this study, I am talking to individuals about their experiences of exercise and physical activity.

The interview contains several parts that will discuss your experiences of exercise and physical activity. The results from this study will be used as part of a piece of coursework for a psychology module within my degree programme. Please remember that all the information you provide is completely anonymous and your name will not be linked to your responses. When writing up this work I may select quotes from this interview to illustrate important points, but your identity will be protected. In order to ensure a complete and accurate account of your responses, a voice recorder will be used.

As a participant you have certain distinct rights:

This interview is about your experiences of participating in exercise and physical activity, and as such if you feel uncomfortable about answering any of the questions, then you are free to decline to answer or ask for the interview to be stopped. The purpose of this interview is to learn about your experiences of exercise and physical activity, and as such, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions within the interview. I hope therefore, that you will respond in a clear and straightforward way. If there are any questions you do not feel comfortable answering or if something is not clear, please let me know. If you do not want to enter into discussion about a particular topic any further, just say "no comment" and we can move on. If you have questions, please feel free to ask them at any point.

Important: *During the interview I will be asking about your experiences of exercise and physical activity which may go back many years. I will also be asking about your motivation and barriers to exercise since that time. Please feel free to take your time when recalling any aspect of these experiences; and do not hesitate to include anything that you believe to be important. This may include things such as relationships, family or work. If you are unable to recall an event, please let me know rather than guess.*

Before we progress on to the interview do you have any questions?

Thank you once again for your participation.

Throughout this transcription the text in *italics* will be the interviewer speaking, therefore the participant will be presented in plain text.

Recording starts.

Current physical activity levels

1. Do you exercise regularly?

No unfortunately.

And you say unfortunately, when you do exercise how often would you say that is?

Umm well I do do badminton once a week umm work permitting and whether or not I need to go in to isolation but that's sort of only once a week.

Ok and is that just a knock around or is it fairly competitive?

Competitive, so it is with friends but we either do pairs or singles ...

And how long do you tend to do that for?

It's 45 mintues.

Ok, lovely. I remember playing badminton and it really hurt afterwards.

It's so much fun but it's not enough, 45 minutes is not enough (laughs).

What? It's not enough ... you think it's not enough for exercise-wise or it's not enough, you could carry on playing longer?

I could carry on playing longer but also very aware of the fact that that's not enough exercise to be fit and healthy.

So at the moment, badminton is the only thing that you are doing?

[Nods]

Ok.

2. And when would you be most likely to exercise?

Err it would be in the evening but thats's, that is what I used to do it's either evenings or before I went out at the weekend but now it's evenings.

3. Where are you most likely to exercise?

At home.

Other than badminton obviously.

Yep.

4. Are you aware of the current recommended exercise guidelines?

Not, not exactly, I'd be guessing if I said what they were.

So if I just... until I think it was about June of last year so June 2020 the WHO recommended exercise was 75-150 minutes per week 75 combined moderate to intense exercise per week but now they doubled it so it's now, it's gone up to 150-300 minutes of per week, Of exercise per week. So a question here, a follow on question here is: now that you are aware of those, do you think they are achievable?

Ummm.

Not necessarily for you but generally.

I think not necessarily, no. I think depending on your circumstance, work, etc I think that's quite unachievable umm unless you include sort of walking around the house and I appreciate that's moderate but for me that seems quite significant.

Yeah, it is. I mean I've been able to do as much ex... go out and do whatever I want and it's a stretch for me so.

Yeah.

Yeah it is quite...

An interesting...

Also they're setting people up to fail by putting it up like that, I think that's quite alarming, that it's you know, all the exercise that you do is surely better than nothing but actually, that being your baseline, I would imagine that that would lead people to either become quite unhealthily fanatical about it or feel like well if I'm not going to hit that target there's not much point bothering.

Yeah and where would you think you'd fit on that scale?

I think I'd be on the "I'm never going to hit that target" but it wouldn't make me not bother. For me obviously the reason that I kind of want to come on this because I want to start exercising more but what I need to do is start to form that habit again which is something that I've hugely got out of over the last however many years so that wouldn't put me off, I just think as a generic baseline to aspire to, that's not very helpful

5. ***So I'm just going to throw in an extra question here because this questionnaire doesn't really talk about your previous exercise***

Ok

history and I know that you've done quite a lot or that you had a regular pattern of exercise in the past so could you talk me through what you used to do?

So...

and how often?

Yes, so I used to do uh yoga twice a week, uhh I would probably do kettlebells two or three times a week umm but I did go through a period interestingly when I wasn't working, where I exercised every day and did either kind of cardio, yoga, umm cycling and kind of did exercise every day and actually almost kind of felt quite disappointed in myself if I didn't umm even if I did a 20 minute HIIT I felt like well I've done, I've done something to kind of get it going and actually during that period I saw my body shape change and my fitness increase umm and that was really, really satisfying umm but I think there's a, for me, a fine line between balance of work, life and exercise where technically exercise should be part of your life not the work bit.

Yes.

Yep.

And... yes, I understand. But it's balancing challenges of work when knowing that you've got a stressful work situation, work environment and you know I can fully... having been there myself, fully understand that you can't just stop and say "I've got to go and exercise now" when you have a customer screaming down the phone to you.

Yes.

So yeah, it's, it's a ...

And I think people kind of go yeah but if you set that structure you could do that and you can go back to work but actually I think it's very easy, yes you could, but I think it's very easy to go no,I just need to get this bit done and then you finish work and your motivation's gone and you want to sit on the sofa with a glass of wine.

Or it's 11 o'clock at night.

Yeah, exactly and you're not going to exercise then and I'm not a morning person as you know [laughs] so you know, I think that all power to people who can get up at seven o'clock six o'clock in the morning and go and do their workout before the start of their working day but I've never done that and I never will be a morning person .

Okey dokey.

... and I don't particularly want to be [laughs].

And that's fine because you can't force somebody if you are looking at a way to motivate someone to do something, telling them to do it at the time of day when they absolutely hate even speaking or looking at anybody umm is not going to be a particular motivator is it?

No.

Ok, so... thank you. Umm so what does physical... what does exercise or physical activity mean to you?

Umm I think physical activity {unable to hear recording clearly] even if you go you know for a fast walk, you know, anything that kind of for me I could be wrong, anything for me that gets your heart beat up umm a bit of, a bit of heat on, that is exercise so I would class a walk as exercise but not enough to change your body shape or so that's really good for like mental wellbeing, a walk, but it's not going to change your body shape, tone you up, that kind of thing where I suppose for me true exercise in my head is where your body shape changes, you build muscle or you become leaner or you notice a dramatic difference or umm even if it's a small difference but you notice a difference in how you look where I think walking which I know is a moderate exercise thats more about how you feel rather than what you, it doesn;t add to kind of changing your body shape.

Yeah, it's quite good for creating the habit though, in a... In a ...

That's true.

... in a gentle way so for people that are still, they're not that familiar, they're not used to exercising or it's been a long time since they've exercised. It's a great way of getting them into just doing some activity on a regular basis and just building that habit.

Mmm that's true.

It's quite underrated, walking.

Yeah It's lovely though.

It is lovely!

[Pause... someone at the door]

Back in the room!

So previously, when you exercised previously, would you say that exercise was part of your life then?

Yeah!

And was it an important part of your life?

Nodded

Why would you say it was important to you?

Because I could see that the effort that I was putting in was changing my body shape to a way that I really liked it I mean it wasn't a six pack, hugely toned umm but I was kind of pleased with how I looked sort of naked, it wasnt for anyone else, it was actually how I looked when I looked at myself in the mirror, I liked the shape of my body. Yes I had flabby bits , yes it wasnt all toned but I also liked how it made me not so much feel at the time but it's actually the, I suppose it's actually in some ways I kind of controlled my diet and calories based on what I... how I exercised I suppose as well so if I wanted to go out for a meal at the weekend or go and have loads of glasses of wine I was like well I've exercised all week and I've done my like little 20 minute one before I've gone out so

actually I'm feeling like I can do that and maintain my body weight without kind of sort of just spiralling down so it was like a sort of rewarding myself and how I looked but balancing my social life because I knew I was keeping up my fitness aswell.

Yeah, yeah!

6. ***And how did it used to make you feel? The... using it as a mechanism for umm I suppose just doing that calories in/calories out balance, in terms of how it made you feel? Can you remember?***

Uhhm I think I just felt a lot better about myself. I felt umm it was, it definitely wasn't... it felt like i was rewarding myself it was like ok well I'm doing all of this, I can see my body shape, I'm comfortable in my own skin, it made me feel happy.

And... to me it sounds like it gave you a certain degree of confidence as well.

Yeah, I would, yeah, I would say I think now that my body shape isn't controlled, weirdly I'm more happy about everything else in my life but I don't look at myself in the mirror and think... and I don't like myself in photos now at all so I know that I need to get that back but it's finding that balance to introduce it back into my life that is actually umm sustainable. So I think I told you the other day, I went to the ... a couple of weeks back I went ... It's about a month ago now, I went with umm a friend to the gym who's an absolute I mean she's a slip of a thing umm but she can bench press 60kg, I couldn't even lift the bar umm but actually I didn't like that environment, I've never been somebody that's gone to the gym unless I've done classes and actually that made me feel more like well I'm never going to get there rather than being inspiring if that makes sense or making me want to do it again. I loved the feeling of my muscles aching the day after, not the next day but the day ... I love that feeling because it feels like it's working but I didnt' rush to go back there and I won't be.

No... so it sounds to me like you ... you are quite happy... the... you enjoy the exercise, you didn't enjoy the environment so if you could find a way to do the exercise outside of that environment it might suit you better.

Yeah I've always exercised either at home umm or when I went to yoga or say I went to a yoga studio or when i did kettlebells I went to a kettlebell class.

Yeah

So I prefer classes or compe... sort of competitive sport or doing it at home

Ok so just scanning down the.. the questions because there are, I think we've probably just covered a few of the questions

Is that because I've waffled or....?

7. ***No, no, no it's because you are telling me how you felt about it so one of, one of them is have you noticed any changes following exercise participation so umm so mental, physical, social... So we've covered how you felt physically. Ummm you're not... the social side of it isn't that important to you ... particularly?***

I think the badminton's great cos actually we all you know, that is a social but actually the, the other exercise wasn't about social, you know, obviously it's nice to say hi to people but it's not, not the bit that I get out of it that's... I don't go to a yoga class to make friends.

Yeah and gym's not a team sport is it really [laughs]

I think gyms are very for me very repetitive. I don't... I don't... I'd rather do a kettlebell class than go and push weights around. For me that doesn't kind of get me going, I'd rather be doing even though weights is short reps of things, I'd rather sort of be moving and be doing lots more of lots of different things and maybe it's just... yeah weights don't interest me, gyms don't interest me.

So its more of the circuit kind of activity that you prefer

Yeah

Ok

8. ***Umm so then the next question was what would motivate you to part.. I can't speak... to participate in physical activity? I think you've covered that in terms of how it makes you feel and the confidence it gives you.***

Yeah I think what would make me now is I don't know is the honest answer and I suppose that's all part of what I'm hoping there will be something here. I know what it was previously but I'm in a different space and time now so if someone was to say to me now what was it clearly I know what the benefits would be of what the output could be but that push button to start it, I haven't found it for a number of years so I don't quite know what it is.

And the interesting thing about what we're doing in Psychology is how we're looking at all the different theories of motivation...

Uhumm

And so in my mind now just as we're talking I'm thinking right ok so there's this theory and these stages of motivation and then there's what's called self-determination theory and that, that.. It takes you very much from being not, not motivated at all, all the way through to having what's called intrinsic motivation which is you do something just because you love doing it.

And do you know what? I've never had that and I look at people who do work out and are really kind of like healthy and they've got a healthy balance a bit and I think fuck pardon my french, that must be amazing to have that when you are actually that ummm controlled I guess and it's that much a natural thing.

But it's not necessarily...

It's part of your life, where I've never had that.

Yeah ... see again on the scale of motivations having to control something isn't necessarily a positive motivation.

True

Cos it's a control and so there's, it's it's really interesting when you start looking at all of the different theories and what they call introjects so you know when you, the little voices start talking to you about ooh well I'm going to the gym and I'm doing really well but you're not doing as well as them over there...

Mmm

Or...

Yeah, I like know a number of people like that I would say are fanatical, I'd actually say it wasn't healthy.

Yeah or yeah you're goign to the gym but you should be at home doing this or you should be looking after your mum, you know, these kind of introjects that pop into your head so its really interesting when you start looking at the whole psychology of motivation, the whole motivational piece is quite good and I'll be writing about that as part of this.

[cough]

9. Ummm so do you think enjoyment is an important part of physical excer... sorry exercise or physical activity?

I think it helps, yes, I think if you enjoy something you naturally do it more, it's all part of the like endorphins and this is great, I feel great at the time, I feel I'm beginning to look better after. I think, I think if you don't enjoy something or you don't see the benefit of it, which you don't initially, I think when you first start exercising back again you think bloody hell this is hard work but yeah I think if you don't enjoy something personally I wouldn't keep doing it.

Yeah, yeah why would you? Because it's hard work then isn't it?

Yeah, yeah

Unless you....

It's like running, I started to run with the girls in Covid and I smoke too much and obviously that didn't help me but I don't enjoy running, mentally I don't, I think running is a very mentally minded umm very you know I think it's a very mentally focussed sport. I'm not built that way so for me it wasn't that my body wouldn't take me, it's that my mind went.

Yeah I'm the same, I just get bored

Mmmm, I do.

Why am I doing this, it's boring.

And I cant bear going on the same route. One week we were doing it, it was only couch to 5k but it was like I felt like a... rat on a wheel just going around the same things and they're like are you not getting the buzz that we went that bit further and I'm like no because it's the same journey, there's nothing else going on, I'm bored.

[Me Laughs] "can I go home now...."

So one of the follow on questions on here is how do you feel about the idea of exercising outdoors or indoors? Well obviously yoga can be outdoors

Yes.

Ummm and badminton obviously tends to be indoors but because [laughs} with your shuttlecock but it's a beach sport as well and a garden sport as well

So I would say indoors and outdoors is brilliant, outdoors can be great so a few months back in the summer I actually opened up ... you don't need to write this down... but I opened up the bifolds and had some of the girls down and we got our yoga mats out in the back garden and the sun was setting and it was amazing to be outside, it was very healing it was beautiful umm so I think yeah actually in lockdown I did go through a period of time which was great and we all did kind of work out weights, cardio, bit of HIIT workouts really in the ginnel and that was great as well. So yeah I think there is something to be said for inside or outside because the weather's not always great.

No, no exactly.

10. So if you had a choice, I think we've covered this anyway... well maybe not. If you had a choice would you prefer to exercise in a group or alone?

[Long pause] I don't know.

Horses for courses?

Yeah cos I think it's, yeah, I think umm it's quite nice to have other people spur you on so what we were doing with the HIIT work outs, we were all puffing and moaning and sighing together it was actually really good fun, it was motivational umm but obviously you can't do that all of the time and I can't be or I don't feel I could be all that structured when I do exercise so I found that quite difficult when they were exercising and I couldn't because of work. So I suppose it's a mixture of both, yes horses for courses.

Ummm so I was just thinking then, obviously kettlebells would have been within a group, gym you went along with a friend but it tends to be a soloish sport doesn't it.

Kettlebells for years though when I did it umm was always at home and so was aerobics.

Oh ok.

Yeah so that was just me, one on one with the DVD or a routine.

I was going to say because there are all the streaming services now where on YouTube and the rest of it, there is around the ... Because you are not particularly fussed about not being live in a class there is alway sthat option of digging out a DVD or finding something you YouTube and getting out a rebounder or skipping rope.

Yes totally, and I know they're all there and I've downloaded them all, it's that execution to turn it on...

Yeah, at the end of the day when your brain's...

I mean I walk past my kettlebells every day, I don't pick them up.

Do you talk to them? Do you say hello?

No I ignore them.

[Laughs] just don't make any eye contact.

If I don't look at you, you can't see me.

[Laughs] brilliant.

11. Right ok, where are we? We've done that one, we've done that one. Do you believe there are any health benefits to exercising?

Yes, 100%.

And is that because you have felt them yourself?

Yes.

Ok, okey dokey.

12. And do you think exercise will have any impact on your physical health?

Yes

And that's because...

That's because I've felt different before and also, we all know that I drink far too much umm but I believe now I've got back in to the thought process of exercise and that was my habit. I genuinely really think it would help me with the excessive drinking and cutting down smoking so I think there's

a huge benefit for me to start doing exercise because it's not just actually now about bodyshape, it's about umm replacing one habit, it's about replacing some very bad habits with a positive habit.

It sounds like you're looking for a kickstart to set off all the... to kind of, it's like the domino effect, so if I start...

Totally.

... so if I trigger this one domino the others will all fall.

Totally because actually when you work out you feel great, you don't wan tto open a bottle of wine so I think for me it's, it's this is going to sound really dramatic but I think that if I don't start doing it I might not be around for that much longer.

And that in itself is quite a strong motivation. If you...

It's just not motivating me yet.

Yeah, yeah.

And that's the problem, I know it's there, I think about it every day, it is in my head, it's there, I keep going right well I'll give up smoking when I 've got my wieght down a bit because I put on weight when I give up smoking and it's not because I eat any more, it's just the way my metabolism is. Everything is riding on me starting having more physical activity yet for some reason there's something in me that's not triggering that start.

And do you feel that, is it because you feel overwhelmed by ummm... it's not, it's not cos, I mean ... You, you're fairly capable...

Yeah I know how to do it...

You're capable, yes exactly.

I know how to do it, I get, even when other people were exercising or I was exercising in a group or when I was doing yoga with people in the ginnel I was correcting how they were standing, I was saying you know push your hips forward, hold your core in, some fo the yoga poses oooh you just need to stretch that out a bit more ummm so I know how to do it, it's pushing... It's, it's me actually at the end of the day, there's something in my head that's not pushing that start button because I know once i start it, that becomes my new positive, helpful habit not a negative one.

Barriers to exercise and physical activity

13. ***Ok... So just to expand on that, what we touched on, work, what do you think it is... Is it your mental block, mental state, can't be bothered?***

It's that I can't be bothered, I know that I need to do it, it's that I feel knackered by not exercising, that makes you feel knackered and then I suppose I get frustrated with myself because I know I should be doing it and then obviously you know I suffer from depression, I'm just in this thing where I am fully aware that that would be the most positive thing for me to do but I think work is very difficult because I can't switch off from work and then I have to .. I don't have to I chose to speak, well I do have to speak to my Mum every night and actually by the time you've done all of that you can't... I know I can fit it all in because it's in my gift to fit it but I can't see where it fits and actually when I try and with all best intentions go right, I'm gonna do that, something happens at work, something happens with mum so that takes a back seat so basically my personal wellbeing and health takes a back seat for everybody else.

Yeah... ok... I think we've covered.... the follow on questions were: (list per interview schedule)

So I think we've rprobably covered those and obviously we've talked about your mum as well, we've touched on that as well so the final questions are just around Covid and the lockdowns.

The impact of Covid-19 on the above

14. ***So has lockdown impacted your ability to do physical activity or exercise in any way? If you'd want to do it [jokingly]***

Pre-lockdown I was runing around backwards and forwards trying to get the house sorted and then lockdown happened and I probably did all be it spoadic more exercise in lockdown than I had just before lockdown. I got a bike, went out for walks, you know, did ginnel workouts so no!

15. ***Ok and do you have, I know the answer to this but I'm going to ask you the question, do you have access to local green space areas to exercise in during lockdown, or did you?***

Yes

And how did you feel about that?

I think that's great, I think that I'm a dick that I didn't use it.

But you could use it now, more?

[Long pause] Yes... I'm fully aware [sarcasm]

[both laugh]

So...

Don't put that quote in [laughs]

16. ***Do you feel that lockdown, we've answered this, do you think lockdown has impacted your motivation to exercise in any way and actually your answer previously was that you think you've exercised more...***

I think I've evercised more through uuhhh camaraderie, I think the only thing that I'd say about Covid and I know this is about exercise, I think that Covid has mmmm made me shut myself aware more umm and I think mentally it's impacted me. But no, it hasn't stopped me exercising but I think it's contributed to why work's has ramped up, need to call my Mum, you know, all of this, all of they are contributing factors so maybe there is an element of it.

And i think from, just from having done the same job that you do, I haven't worked through the Covid period but it seems to me that, we used to spend a lot of time in the car and it seems to me that the time we used to spend in the car has just been completely absorbed by online meetings and that need to be present constantly.

Yep and I think that has made a huge impact in the sense of when you are out in the car you weren't expected... If got in at 5, you'd skim your emails but actually you don't get any down time now, umm and I don't get, if I was to try, no not try, if I was to put a set time in my working week every week I can guarantee you, somebody would put a call in and I would say 70% of the time I wouldn't have the opportunity to not accept it.

Yeah I understand, cos you hear the "oh well you're in control of your own diary" but it's not like that because when a customer wants a call at a certain time

Yep..

... you're not going to decline that call.

No, even throughout Covid it was interesting that a lot of companies played that crap ticking the box exercise of make sure you go out and walk daily. It was interesting that my MD went out and walked daily because she would phone me and be like ooh I'm out on my walk. I had back to back to back to back calls and actually if you took an hour out to go for a walk which would have been great, you've got to add that hour on to your... work didn't go away. So wrongly I chose not to take that time and I don't quite know how to get it back.

17. So from what you were saying before, umm the whole lockdown piece, you were, you spent more time in the house and your psychological health was impacted negatively?

Yes, definitely.

Ok, and so then if you went out and went for a walk or on the bike or did yoga or you did exercise in the ginnel, did that help you?

Yeah, I just didn't do enough of it. So I'd be like that's amazing, that's great, yep I'm definitely doing it the day after next, yes I'm definitely coming out on this bike ride, yes, yes yes to all of it, loved doing it all and then it would get to 10 minutes before the next workout and some poop storm out kick off at work and I was too stressed to even think about it.

18. Yeah... so did you try any new activities during lockdown.

Umm cycling to more of a degree yeah because obviously I'd cycled as a kid and on holiday but yeah getting a bike but yes cycling was a new one you know in adult life.

Yeah and do you think it's something that you'll carry on doing?

I would love to say yes, the bike is there, it's not been out for a while, ummm. Last time I went on a bike ride was with you.

Ok... and a very nice bike ride it was too?

It was, but what does that say?

Just it is what it is isn't it?

I think as well the weather doens;t help because you don't want to go out obviously around where I am there are very slushy leaves.

Yeah, slippery.

Which is why I think I need a broader spectrum of exercise so it's like weather doesn't stop it.

Yeah you can just switch it out to something different.

Well that, apart from the verification questions, is the end of the, the questions that I had for you.

Did I answer them ok?

There isn't a right ....

I know it's not a test...

There isn't a right or wrong.

Did I give you what, did I give you enough to work with?

Absolutely, absolutely! So I'll just ask you these final four.

19. How do you feel the interview went?

I think it went really well. It's making me feel .... a bit dis, largely, hugely disappointed with myself.

Oh I don't want you to feel like that

No, no but that's not down to you, that's down to me, does that make sense? That's not you, I think, you know I said to you as soon as you came on the screen it's like you look open and ready to talk and it;s lovely, its a very nice safe environment, that's about me being replaying back what I have chosen not to do so it's a disappointment in me myself, not you at all.

Yes, no khow you are feeling about the whole situation at the moment and that's why we're talking isn't it?

Yes, exactly.

20. So do you feel you were able to tell me all that you wanted to?

Yes

21. Were you unhappy with any of the qustions that I asked?

No, not at all.

22. And do you think I led or influenced your answers in any way?

No

Ok, thank you for your time

Pleasure

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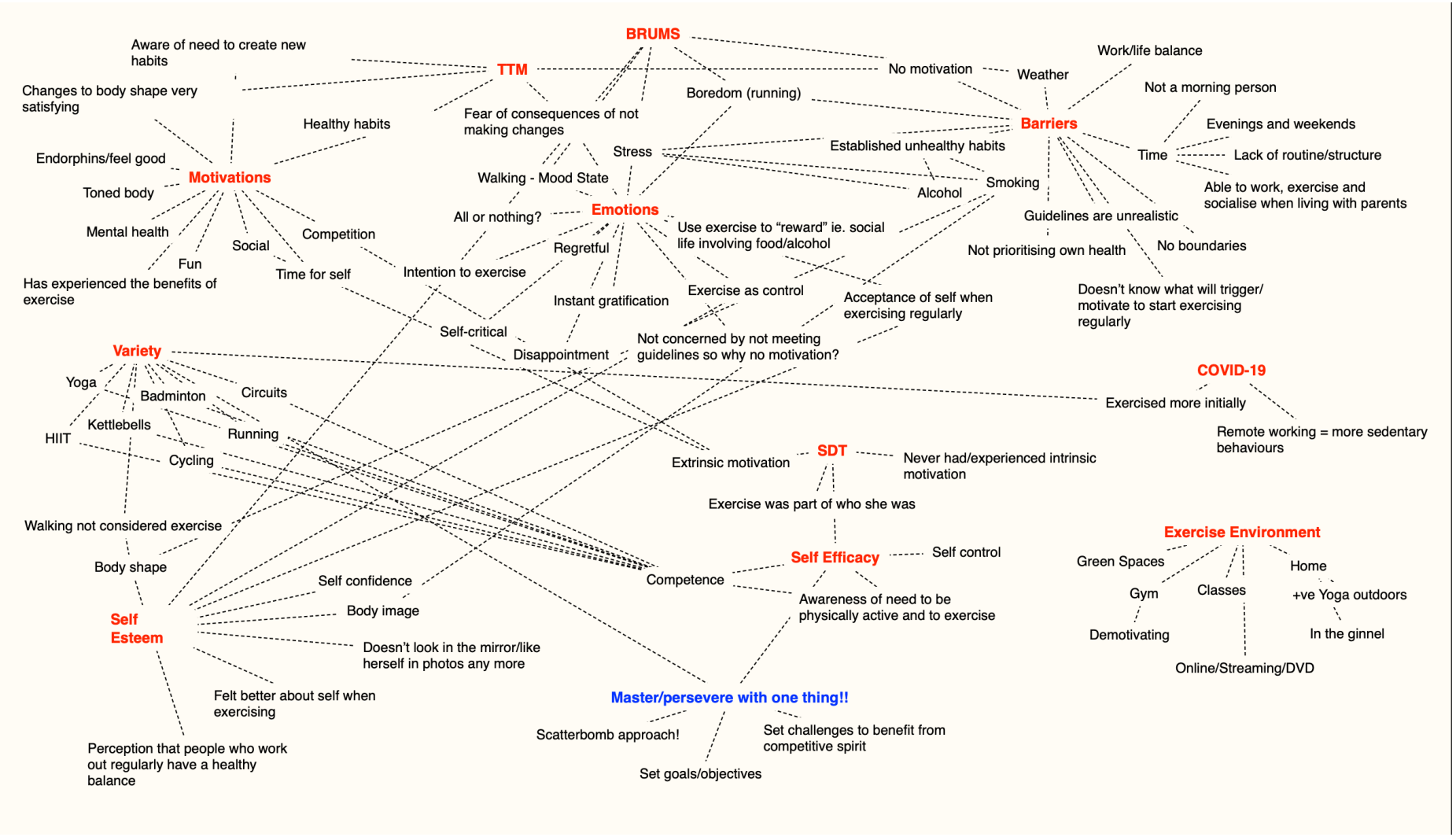
APPENDIX 4 – KEY THEMES FROM INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT