

Exploring how physical activity can be better utilised within NHS Talking Therapies services to improve mental health outcomes

Case Study – Livingwell Consortium, Birmingham

What is the service?

The Livingwell Consortium delivers a number of physical activity offers, as part of routine treatment for mental health conditions. These include:

- A treatment approach which combines **personal training and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)** delivered by a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner's (PWP), who is also a fully qualified personal trainer
- **Walking therapy** delivered by therapists in the local park
- **Online classes** in adjunct to therapy including fitness and yoga
- **Sport for life activity sessions** for those under 25 in adjunct to therapy
- **Chair-based classes** alongside PWP group course at local retirement villages

Community Outreach work

- Sponsor the local football club, Solihull Moors and provide fitness and training sessions with the coaches and players
- **School workshops** for teenagers and school staff including physical activity and wellbeing sessions



How do you identify and engage service users in physical activity?

We have initially focused on any one age 18 and above but are we are now working with school staff and over 65s. For over 65s we offer chair-based exercise and for school staff we deliver the sessions at the school after the children have left.

Have you measured the impact and if so, what have you found?

Feedback has been incredible, and we have found that clients are more committed to the therapy. Recovery rates have been high and average session attendance are higher too. We have collected the standard NHS Talking Therapies MDS and quantitative data through survey monkey.

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What challenges have you faced and how did you overcome them?

Getting the word out there and delivering in the right setting have been challenging - the office events room is not the best place for a physical activity session. Local parks are a great setting for wellbeing but they require additional risk assessed, taking into considerations such level ground, toilets and good lighting. For fitness sessions we also need to ensure it is safe for service users to partake in the sessions, we opt for a PARQ form alongside standard NHS Talking Therapies MDS. It can be a lot of questionnaires for a service user to fill in when they first start the sessions. A lone working policy also needs to be in place and with an appropriate



How could a similar approach be rolled out at other NHS Talking Therapies service?

We encourage exploring and utilise local open space and parks near your setting. One benefit is it is good for the therapist to get out of the office too as well as the client. A new initiative can take time to set up, there are risk assessments, insurance and safeguarding considerations but it is well worth it!

What is next for your service?

We are aiming to increase our promotion, so more service users can get involved. We are also developing ideas around group therapy walks, mindful walks and a couch to 5k PWP course via Silver Cloud.