

Let's Get Physical!

A guide for mental health services on how to promote physical health for service users and carers



*dros adferiad
o afiechyd
meddwl difrifol*

hafal

*for recovery
from serious
mental illness*

*in collaboration
with:*



Background

People with a serious mental illness and their carers face many inequalities when it comes to their physical health. People with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder can have a life expectancy between 15 to 20 years lower than the general population (Wahlbeck et al, 2011); over 8 in 10 carers have seen a negative impact on their physical health as a result of their caring responsibilities (Carers UK, 2013).

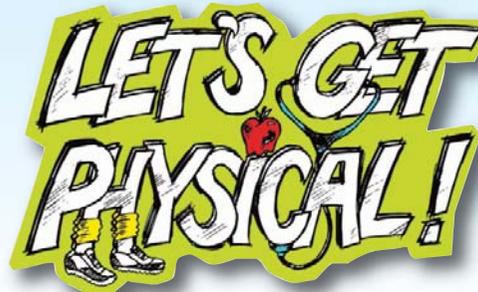
Recent Welsh legislation and policy aims to tackle this inequality. For example, the **Mental Health Measure** (2010) prescribes a holistic Care and Treatment Plan for people using secondary mental health services which includes a section for setting "Personal Care and Physical Well Being" goals. "**Together for Mental Health: A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales**" (2012) states that "People who experience mental health problems should be assisted to enjoy the same life expectancy and quality of physical health as the general population" and advocates "tackling less healthy lifestyles, smoking and poor diets, and increasing opportunities for physical exercise, including in inpatient settings".

Let's Get Physical! campaign

In 2014 service users and carers in Wales decided to tackle the physical health inequalities by running their own national campaign, **Let's Get Physical!** The campaign set a challenge – both to service users and carers, and to service providers – to radically improve the physical health of people with a serious mental health and their carers in Wales. It included the launch of an information website with a wealth of links and best practice examples: lgp.hafal.org

The campaign called for a number of actions from mental health services including the following:

- All aspects of physical health are systematically addressed as part of clients' Care and Treatment Plans including actions to address diet and physical activity
- The Care and Treatment Plan specifically and routinely takes into account the management of the side effects of medication
- The opportunity for physical exercise using gym equipment, walking, etc., is routinely offered to all inpatients as well as those being treated in the community
- Services provide accessible, comprehensive information on improving physical health.



Using this guide

In this guide we provide a simple overview of how mental health services can support users and carers to improve their physical health. This information is based on the feedback of hundreds of service users and carers who have taken steps to improve their physical health.

You can use this guide to talk service users and carers through the various options they have when working to become more physically healthy. The information is broken down into the following sections:

- Physical activity
- Diet & nutrition
- Getting support.

Each section provides the following information:



Goals which can be set in service users' Care and Treatment Plans / needs which can be identified in Carer's Assessments



People/services who can provide support



Useful online resources and information



Best practice examples from the Let's Get Physical! campaign

On the final page you'll find information on further resources which support this brief guide.



physical activity



In support of their recovery, people with a mental illness and their carers can find ways to become more active.

Care and Treatment Plan / Carer's Assessment



Goals which service users and carers can set themselves include:-

- Getting advice and information on physical activity
- Contacting the local council to see what exercise activities or facilities are on offer in the area (e.g. swimming pool, aerobics classes, yoga sessions)
- Writing an exercise plan
- Joining a local gym
- Walking whenever they can (and using a pedometer)
- Using stairs rather than lifts
- Joining a dance class or activity club
- Getting together with other people to exercise: e.g. they can play badminton, motivate each other to go for a walk or to the gym, or take part in team exercise such as football
- Using a bike
- Joining a local walking group or team activity.

The NHS recommends that to stay healthy, adults aged 19-64 should try to be active daily and should do:

At least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity such as cycling or fast walking every week

and

Muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week that work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms).*

This is general exercise advice for adults. The kind of physical activity that is right for the individual will depend on their level of physical ability. For example, if a person is in a wheelchair then swimming or wheelchair sprinting may be the most suitable aerobic exercises. If the person has a physical disability they can discuss what type of exercise is best for them with their doctor.



Supporters could include:-

- GP and Practice Nurse
- Gym instructor
- Health promotion service
- Local council
- Local clubs
- Family member and/or other carer
- Care Coordinator.



Useful sources of information include:-

- www.nhs.uk/change4life
NHS information on getting more active
- www.nhs.uk/Livewell
Advice on becoming more active from NHS Choices
- www.healthchallengewales.org/fitness
Health Challenge Wales advice on getting fit
- www.sustrans.org.uk
Cycle routes throughout the country
- www.mentalhealthwales.net
Advice on the physical health goals which can be included in a Care and Treatment Plan



Best practice examples in mental health services:-

- Service users and carers in Blaenau Gwent set up a weekly tai chi club in their local mental health project
- Carers and service users in Ynys Môn started a "Walk a Mile" club
- A service user in Bridgend did a Sports Leadership course and designed sports sessions for his fellow service users
- A carer in Ceredigion used a pedometer to monitor her progress as she walked 5,000+ steps every day.



diet & nutrition



In support of their recovery, people with a mental illness and their carers can source and prepare healthy, high-quality, good-value food.

Care and Treatment Plan / Carer's Assessment



Goals which service users and carers can set themselves include:-

- Having at least five servings of fresh fruit or vegetables every day
- Setting aside time to eat regular meals – and making sure they have breakfast
- Getting advice and information on healthy eating
- Writing a diet plan
- Joining a food co-op
- Setting up or joining a healthy eating club
- Growing their own fruit and vegetables
- Eating more portions of oily fish such as mackerel or sardines
- Reducing the amount of 'trans' fat in their diet – this is found in foods such as pies and factory-made pastry, cakes and biscuits
- Switching to wholegrain rice, pasta and bread
- Making time to try out new recipes and enjoy cooking
- Making sure they drink enough fluid (3.5 pints or 6-8 glasses a day – water, milk, and hot drinks

count but alcohol doesn't)

- Cutting down on caffeine, salt and sugar
- Varying their diet and trying new foods
- Carrying healthy snacks when they are out and about
- Sourcing the best-value food by shopping around or changing supermarkets.



Supporters could include:-

- GP and Practice Nurse
- Dietician/nutritionist
- Health promotion service
- Local food co-op and "allotmenteer" groups
- Local college
- Family member and/or other carer
- Care Coordinator.



Useful sources of information include:-

- www.nhs.uk/change4life
NHS information and advice on a healthy diet
- www.nhs.uk/Livewell
Information about a healthy diet from NHS Choices
- www.healthchallengewales.org/food
Health Challenge Wales information on diet

- www.mentalhealthwales.net

Advice on the physical health goals which can be included in a Care and Treatment Plan

- www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping
'Tools and tricks' to slash food bills



Best practice examples in mental health services:-

- Carers in Flintshire published their own recipe book which included a range of easy-to-follow and healthy recipes
- Service users in Denbighshire created their own vegetable plot at the local mental health project
- Service users in Newport set up a food co-op, pooling their buying power and ordering healthy food direct from local suppliers
- Service users in Conwy set up a monthly 'Around the World' event to encourage each other to experiment with their cooking.



getting support



In support of their recovery, people with a mental illness and their carers can access support from health professionals to maintain and improve their physical health.

- Joining a stop-smoking support group
- Getting support to reduce alcohol/drug intake
- Getting advice on sexual health.

- www.mentalhealthwales.net
Advice on the physical health goals to include in the Care and Treatment Plan

Care and Treatment Plan / Carer's Assessment



Goals which service users and carers can set themselves include:-

- Registering with a GP
- Making an appointment with their GP to discuss their physical health
- Preparing for their GP appointment by making a list of the things they want to discuss such as stopping smoking, exercise and the management of physical conditions
- Discussing the effectiveness, side-effects and management issues of medications for mental illness with their doctor or pharmacist and exercising choice in the decision about their medication
- Attending a Well Person clinic at their local GP surgery – this health 'MOT' will usually include key checks such as a weight check, blood pressure test, cholesterol test and a urine sample test to look for kidney disease or diabetes
- Registering to make an appointment with a dentist/optician



Supporters could include:-

- GP and Practice Nurse
- Dentist
- Optician
- Alcohol and drug (substance misuse) services
- Stop Smoking Wales
- Health promotion service
- Family member and/or other carer
- Care Coordinator.



Useful sources of information include:-

- www.wales.nhs.uk/ourservices/directory
Points people to their nearest GP, dentist, optician or pharmacist
- www.diversecymru.org.uk
A straight-forward guide from Diverse Cymru to getting the most out of a GP appointment
- www.alcoholconcern.org.uk
Advice on cutting down alcohol intake
- dan247.org.uk
Drug and alcohol advice and support helpline



Best practice examples in mental health services:-

- A mental health project in Conwy invited a local optician to visit the project and provide eye checks
- A service in Newport worked with local GP surgeries to arrange for service users and carers to attend well man and well woman clinics
- Service users in Colwyn Bay invited a smoking cessation officer to a local project to provide information and advice
- A mental health project in Carmarthenshire invited a pharmacist to talk to service users and carers about the physical health side-effects of anti-psychotic medications.

resources



lgp.hafal.org

A bilingual website which provides information on how service users and carers can improve their physical health – and key resources for mental health services.



Care and Treatment Planning

A bilingual guide providing tips for service users on how to set goals in all areas of the Care and Treatment Plan including “Personal Care and Physical Well Being”. Download @ hafal.org



How to Get a Great Care and Treatment Plan

An Agored-accredited course which trains service users to set goals in the “Personal Care and Physical Well Being” and other areas of their Care and Treatment Plan. Read more @ hafal.org



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Hafal is a registered charity, number 1093747, and a registered company, number 4504443



Hafal is Wales' leading charity for people with serious mental illness and their carers. Providing services in all 22 counties of Wales, Hafal is an organisation managed by the people it supports: individuals whose lives have been affected by serious mental illness. Underpinning our services to clients is our own unique **Recovery Programme**. Based on modern principles of self-management and empowerment, the programme offers clients a methodical way of achieving recovery by setting goals in all areas of life. Find out more @ hafal.org