



HEALTH & WELLBEING CASEWORKERS

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Can exercise improve your wellbeing?

Exercise releases chemicals like endorphins and serotonin, these chemicals are known to positively affect wellbeing.

Serotonin is often known as the 'happy neurotransmitter' it can help with a variety of bodily functions: producing melatonin that helps regulate sleep, balances appetite, controls body temperature, motor activity, cognitive functions and stabilizers your mood.

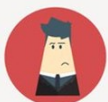
Endorphins are the body's natural opiates that can: improve mood and relaxation, reduces anxiety, tension, anger, confusion, boredom and promotes growth of new nerve cells and blood vessels.

Exercise can improve mental health by helping the brain cope better with stress. A regular exercise routine may leave you feeling better about yourself, this can impact your relationships and enable you to be more sociable. This can have benefits for mental health disorders, such as, Depression and Anxiety.

“Exercise not only changes your body, it changes your mind, your attitude and your mood”

If you would like support in obtaining a gym membership, swimming lessons or yoga classes, please contact a caseworker to complete an INC under the Trauma Focused Physical Activity Framework.

What are the benefits of exercise on mental health?



Reduce stress levels

Exercise can help to reduce your cortisol levels



Improves social well being

Whilst exercising you might meet new people and develop more friendships



Reduced anxiety

When you exercise your brain releases endorphins which can help to calm you down



Increased self esteem

As you become faster, fitter and stronger you start to improve your self confidence



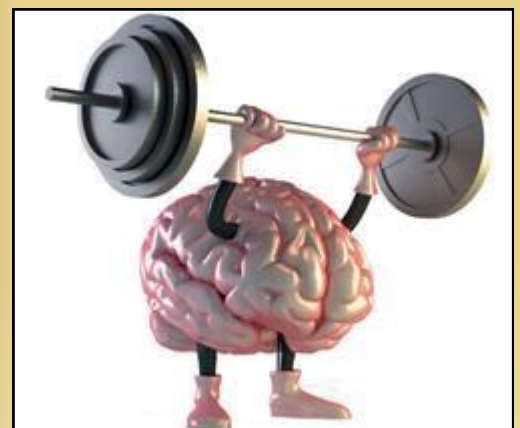
Reduced risk of depression

Exercise can help to improve your mood



Boost Brainpower

Exercise can help to improve cognitive functioning including decision making and learning



HOW CAN WE HELP?

Over the next number of months the Health & Wellbeing Caseworkers hope to make direct contact with all members of SEFF to go over what forms of support are available within the new Individual Needs Programme. If you are eligible under the new frameworks, you will be invited to meet with the Caseworker on a one to one to complete an INC - Individual Needs Consultation form. This programme started in July 2017 and is available in total for 4 years. It is important to us in SEFF that those who are eligible receive all the support that has been made available to them.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS PROGRAMME FOR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS (INC)

The Health & Wellbeing service has been put in place by VSS, to further support those whose health has been impacted through the time known as 'The Troubles'. SEFF have 3 Health and Wellbeing caseworkers based in various parts of the UK & R.O.I, who can arrange to connect with you and discuss your needs. Our aim being to help improve your overall wellbeing and support you in living your life to the fullest. We can do this by signposting you towards existing services that may be available to you, referring you into Counselling, Complementary Therapies, Befriending, Social activities, and also by accessing support through the VSS Additional Needs Frameworks as listed below. Contact a Health and Wellbeing caseworker to discuss, details above.

Listed below are examples of some of the support already awarded through the VSS.

Disability Aids - Hearing aids, rollators, perching stools, wheel chairs. (Recommended by NHS but not covered by NHS.)

Education & Training - Degrees, training courses, One to One tuition in numeracy/literacy. (Education impacted by Troubles.)

Trauma Focused Physical Activity - Gym membership, swimming pool access, yoga. (Recommended by practitioner)

Persistent Pain Management - Physiotherapy, therapies to support pain within NISCC guidelines (Recommended by GP.)

Volunteering - Wellies, Safety gear, coats, tools. (Supported by an agency the individual volunteers with.)

Psychological Therapies - Counselling. (May need recommendation through GP or other practitioner.)

Social Isolation - Recreational classes such as Flower Arranging, Woodwork etc. (Individual is lonely and isolated.)

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month - The 10th September was **World Suicide Prevention Day**. Suicide affects all of us. Many people will either know someone who has taken their own life or perhaps know somebody who has lost a loved one due to suicide. It is hard to write out statistics because behind every number is a personal story, journey, and a family and community that have been devastated by the loss of someone they love. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that every 40 seconds someone takes their own life, that's around 800,000 every year worldwide. Official reporting states that Northern Ireland has the highest rate of suicide within the UK. We know from these numbers that suicide is more prominent with males in Northern Ireland. Suicide is often the result of a coming together of several factors including psychological, social, cultural, sometimes combined with experiences of trauma and loss. We can all make a difference in preventing suicide by raising awareness about the issue, educating ourselves and others about the causes of suicide and warning signs for suicide, showing compassion and care for those who are in distress in our community, challenging the stigma associated with suicide and mental health problems, and sharing our own experiences. Everyone can contribute to preventing suicide. See 'Step Closer', a World Suicide Prevention Day short awareness film with a positive message encouraging connections and that we all have a role to play in working together to prevent suicide: <https://youtu.be/ndjcJAaOVdg>. Samaritans have launched a self-help App to keep track of how you're feeling, and get recommendations for things you can do to help yourself cope, feel better and stay safe in a crisis:

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/self-help/>

In a crisis please call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000 or Samaritans on 116 123. If you have any queries or need additional advice/support please contact a Health & Wellbeing Case Worker.

