

Enablers and barriers to inpatient mental health physical activity: Staff's perspective

Physical activity and mental health through social prescribing:
Why you should be excited by it
RCPsych webinar, 23 September 2021

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Staff Survey MDT

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- Dr Samantha Nunns (FY1 trainee)
- Dr Ketan Dhital (FY2 trainee)
- Dr Robert Verity (Consultant Psychiatrist)
- Andy Barnett (Occupational Therapist)
- Gargi Srivastava (Physiotherapist)
- Kim Bannister (trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner)

Outline

- Staff survey - Physical activity on acute mental health wards
- What are staff's perceptions and attitudes?
- Suggestions

Physical Activity on Acute Mental Health Wards Staff Survey

- Anonymous questionnaire
- Two acute general adult wards
- 85 staff members (nurses, doctors, support workers, allied health professionals)
- 54 replied, 63% response rate

What our staff tell us...

Q1. Exercise is beneficial to physical health:

- **100%** agreed or strongly agreed

Q2. Exercise is beneficial to mental health:

- **100%** agreed or strongly agreed



Q3. It is easy to do physical activities with service users during my shift

72% disagreed or strongly disagreed

- Staff shortages reduce time available to encourage physical activity
- Limited equipment availability on the ward
- Off ward equipment not being accessible to all service users e.g., leave issues
- Not being part of the job role
- Other jobs taking priority
- Confidence of staff in their skills to be able to offer on ward physical activities
- Service user barriers - violence, aggression, high turnover and not having leave

Q4. I encourage and/or accompany service users to physical activity sessions during my shift

A very common response:

- Staff can encourage physical activity, but they are unable to accompany service users to sessions



Q5. I exercise regularly myself

70% exercise regularly.

But also said:

- ‘...work commitments reduce my out-of-work availability to do exercise...’
- ‘...I wish I did much more. I don't exercise more because of lack of time and exhaustion because of my workload.’
- ‘My intention is to do so but work stress and lack of motivation is hindering my attempts to exercise.’



Q6. What stops you from helping service users do more exercise?



- “Where to begin.....
- Not enough time to engage, encourage and support the patients.
- Many of the staff are unmotivated and overwhelmed with ward tasks, routines.
- Finding activities that detained patients can do and achieve in the ward environment is very difficult.”

Q7. What would help you promote physical activity/exercise with service users on the ward?



- Time dedicated to physical activity
- Resources on the ward
- Access to the gym and gardens
- Staff dedicated to physical activity
- Staff trained in use of the gym and other physical activities to facilitate

Q7. What would help you promote physical activity/exercise with service users on the ward?

- “A more relaxed environment, less high turnover, less aggression and violence, fewer incidents, less paperwork, more focus on the benefits of physical activity as part of treatment.
- A change in culture - If physical activity was valued and promoted as much as medication, talking therapies etc and if SUs were encouraged daily by all (not just OTs) then they might engage more.”



Q8. What physical activities/exercise have you done with service users in the past week?



- **None - 75.5%**
- Walking
- Gym
- Football
- Swimming
- Sprint/jogging
- Physiotherapy
- Dancing
- Aerobics
- Tai chi
- Box fit
- Stretching
- Table tennis

Q10. What physical activity would you want to see introduced onto the ward?

- More walking/running
- More yoga
- More gym
- More swimming
- Time put aside for daily sessions
- Dancing/music and exercise
- More access to outdoor facilities
- Daily stretches
- Portable gym equipment
- More pilates
- Zumba
- More access to external facilities
- Group exercise

Suggestions

- A change in ward culture, valuing and promoting physical activity
- Daily patient encouragement by all MDT members instead of only occupational therapists
- Physical activity promotion as part of mental health treatment and as physical health strategy

Suggestions

- Role for social prescribing: Continuing physical activity after discharge
- Need for social prescribing referral pathways!

Thank you for listening!

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