Angling for well-being

The emotional, psychological, social and physical health benefits of angling

1. Theory

Positive mental health and well-being

Mental health can be conceptualised as existing on a continuum: at one end is flourishing (low levels of subjective well-being and a lack of vitality), and at the other end is flourishing (high levels of vitality combined with full emotional, psychological, social and physical well-being) (Keyes, 2002, 2007; Westerhof and Keyes, 2010).

2. Angling as therapy

The benefits of angling for well-being

I. It involves a therapeutic engagement with nature and green-blue spaces, which can have a positive effect on a person’s subjective happiness, satisfaction, relaxation levels and overall emotional well-being. See evidence Table 2.

II. It can support personal development, including new resilience and coping skills. It can increase self-confidence, help form positive friendships, and lead to new positive behaviors and life experiences.

III. It provides opportunities to join clubs, participate in social events, take on new responsibilities, and engage in volunteering or coaching. These roles are integral to social well-being. See evidence Table 4.

IV. It requires various levels of physical exertion - linked to walking, wading in the water, and from repetitively casting and retrieving - which can increase physical well-being. See evidence Table 4.

3. Evidence

Risks and benefits of angling for well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved mental health</td>
<td>Physical fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased physical activity</td>
<td>Injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social integration</td>
<td>Underwater hazards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hidden nature of angling

NHS-led mental health campaigns, such as the 5 ways to wellbeing (NHS, 2011), have championed a range of social prescriptions for wellbeing including: eco-therapy (adventure therapy, animal-assisted therapy, horticultural therapy); green-blue exercise (walking, running, cycling); and mindfulness (breathing exercises, yoga, tai-chi). However, the role of angling is often hidden in the debate on well-being, despite evidence that it could be therapeutic for a range of clinical indications.

Clinical indications for angling

- Depression, low mood and self-harm (Roberts, 2006; Griffiths et al. 2010; Brown et al. 2011)
- Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in veterans
- Dementia (Eden and Bear 2003; Djohari et al. 2018)
- Suicidal ideation in young people

Potential professional, legal and ethical considerations

Professional

- Accreditation (i.e., training, certification)
- Referral

Legal

- Occupational health (HSE regulations)
- Employment (statutory rights)
- Employment (contractual rights)

Ethical

- Informed consent
- Privacy
- Confidentiality

Risks

- Physical health, stress and mental health
- Legal
- Ethical

Funding

- Statutory public health
- Referral

5. Professional, legal and ethical considerations

The 'hidden' nature of angling

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1. Bibliography


Appendix

2 Angling Resources I.
Examples of successful angling programmes

Angling For Youth Development (AFYD): <http://www.afyd.co.uk/>

BAIT Project: <http://www.bait-project.co.uk/homepage.php>

Bordersline: <www.bordersline.org.uk>

CAST: <http://www.castangling.co.uk/about.html>

CAST North West: <http://www.castnw.net/latest-news>


Get Hooked on Fishing (GHOF) <http://ghof.org.uk>

Inclusion Through Angling (ITA): <www.inclusionthroughangling.co.uk>

Les Webber’s Angling Projects: <www.angling-projects.co.uk>

West Sussex Angling Academy <http://www.wsangling.com/newsite/>

3 Angling Resources II.
Useful angling organisations

Examples of successful angling programmes

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