

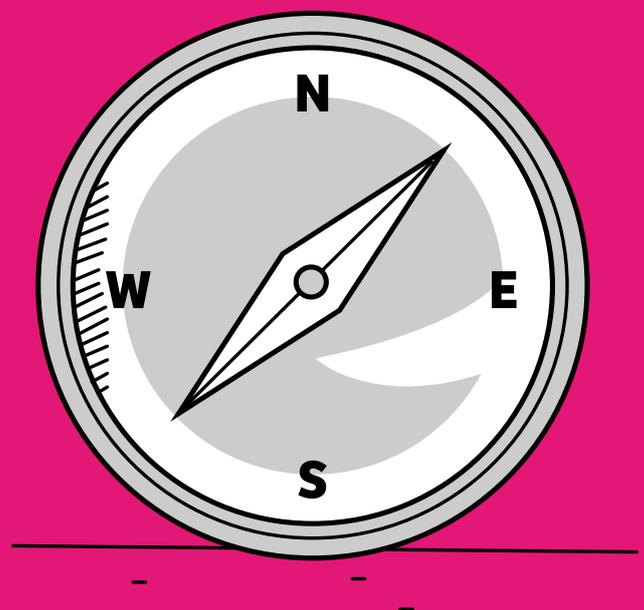
Walking for wellbeing and good mental health

Walking to improve our Mental Health and Wellbeing

We all know that walking is the perfect activity to keep you healthy, active and reduce your chances of becoming unwell. Getting out and about and taking part in physical activity is so important to supporting our mental health and wellbeing too. We know that walking can have a positive effect on our mood, our self-esteem, and can create opportunities to connect and learn from others.

We also know that the barriers to engaging and participating in physical activities include lack of openness around mental health, fear of judgment and stigma, anxiety and a lack of confidence.

Paths for All, SAMH and See Me are working in partnership to encourage people to look after their mental health and wellbeing by walking. We want to engage with a wide range of new and existing walkers to raise awareness of the mental health benefits of walking. The aim is to support local communities to create inclusive and inviting walks to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and break down barriers to participation.



Why do we want to promote and support these types of walks and embed it into our practice and health walks moving forward?

Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport

Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport aims to empower physical activity and sport communities to improve equality and reduce discrimination, ensuring mental health and wellbeing is not a barrier to **engaging, participating** and **achieving** in physical activity and sport. Through the Charter, the People Active for Change and Equality (PACE) steering group aims to increase the representation and participation of people with mental health problems in sport and physical activity.

As part of the work, a report was commissioned, looking at identifying the barriers faced by individuals **engaging, participating** and **achieving** in physical activity and sport that have experience of mental health problems. The report was published in June 2018 and recommends publicity of those places where people can expect appropriate, supportive, welcoming and inclusive provision.

In terms of Paths for All Health Walks, the promotion of mentally healthy walks and celebration of achievements via video, social media and case studies of lived experience stories to celebrate and highlight positive results will be a really powerful way to raise awareness, encourage participation and in turn tackle stigma and discrimination for those experiencing mental health problems.

The PACE report indicated that people with mental health problems are not well included in the sport and physical activity community. Findings found that barriers to participation included 'invisibility of mental health', fear of judgment and stigma, confidence, anxiety and fear.



Promotion:

To ensure all Health Walks are inclusive to those with mental illness and those who wish to improve their wellbeing it is important the walks are promoted in an inclusive way that encourages people who could benefit most to engage.

To ensure your Health Walk is inclusive and welcoming to everyone please see below some hints and tips and things to consider:



Tips

- Promote in a wide range of ways and places. For example, community centres, local LGBT groups, mental health organisations and services via posters, social media, newsletters and word of mouth
- Promote using good practice examples and link to research around walking and positive effects on mental health.
- Lived experience stories of how walking has improved on Mental Health and Wellbeing, connection to others, reduced social isolation etc. are really powerful in promoting inclusion

The Training:

Mental Health Awareness e-learning Training

Mental Health Awareness e-learning training has been provided for project coordinators and volunteers to build their capacity around mental health awareness and support them in leading the walk.

If you haven't already done so, please take the time to complete our online module on mental health. This is an e-learning course which takes about 45 minutes to complete.

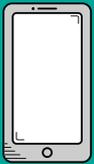


We are not all expected to be mental health experts to start the conversation and help someone. Often in starting the conversation we can further help by signposting people to the relevant supports that may be able to help them further.

Sources of support for mental health

The Samaritans

The Samaritans provides free confidential non-judgemental emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Call: 116 123

Visit: www.samaritans.org

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Breathing Space

Breathing Space is a free, confidential phone line service for any individual who is experiencing low mood and depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to.

Lines are open from 6pm – 2am Monday to Thursday and 6pm – 6am Friday to Monday AM

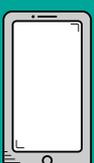


Call: 0800 83 85 87

Visit: www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

NHS 24

NHS 24 is a call centre operated by the NHS to provide patients with health advice and help over the phone when your usual GP services aren't available. Referrals can also be made over the phone to crisis support and other mental health professionals out-with normal GP practice working hours.



Call: 111 or if you think you need an emergency ambulance, call 999 and speak to the operator

Visit: www.nhs24.com

ChildLine Scotland

ChildLine is a counselling service for children and young people. You can contact ChildLine anytime and in these ways: You can phone, send an email, have a 1-2-1 chat, send a message to Ask Sam and you can post messages to the ChildLine message boards. Visit the website to find out more.

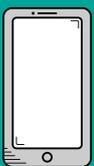


Call: 0800 1111

Visit: www.childline.org.uk

SAMH

Around since 1923, SAMH currently operates over 60 services in communities across Scotland providing mental health social care support, addictions and employment services, among others. These services together with national programme work in See Me, respectme, suicide prevention, physical activity and sport; inform SAMH's policy and campaign work to influence positive social change.'



Visit: samh.org.uk to download our helpful information leaflets about looking after your mental health, and getting help when you need it.