



# Engaging people with mental health problems in physical activity

# Today's webinar

By attending this webinar, you will:

- Have improved knowledge of co-designing and delivering physical activity programmes for people with mental health problems.
- Understand barriers people with mental health may face when accessing physical activity.
- Be aware of Mind's resources and information to support you.



# Lived experience engagement

“The development and promotion of opportunities in order that a diverse range of people, with lived experience of a mental health problem, influence and participate in our work.”

Guide 3: Involving people with lived experience of mental health problems in the design and delivery of your work.



# Lived experience ladder ([click here](#))

Increasing level of participation through to influence

	Level	Example
5	<b>Leading:</b> Leading projects and making decisions independently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sessions are designed, developed and run by people with lived experience on an ongoing basis.</li></ul>
4	<b>Deciding together:</b> Working as partners and contributing to decision making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Steering group comprised of key stakeholders, which includes people with lived experience. All members have equal responsibility to make decisions about what happens with the project.</li></ul>
3	<b>Doing together:</b> Working together towards as common objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advisory groups or meetings with service users to understand what they need and want from the service. Decision making is shared as much as possible, though overall responsibility remains with the lead organisation.</li></ul>
2	<b>Working together:</b> Contributing within fixed roles and boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting the delivery of specific parts of a session</li><li>• Service user meetings - feedback is given to make improvements to groups.</li></ul>
1	<b>Consultation:</b> Giving feedback within fixed boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short feedback questionnaires after sessions.</li><li>• Online surveys.</li></ul>

# Types of involvement

## Short term:

- ✓ Questionnaires
- ✓ Discussions and focus groups
- ✓ Reviewing resources

## Longer term:

- ✓ Setting strategic objectives
- ✓ Event planning or delivery
- ✓ Steering or advisory groups





**What are the benefits of involving people with lived experience?**

# Benefits for organisations

1. Clearer understanding of audience's needs.
2. Better understanding of mental health.
3. Services meet the needs of a wide range of people.
4. Credibility with the public and funders.
5. Staff/volunteers more connected to the experiences of people experiencing a mental health problem.
6. Your target audience are likely to attend your services.



# Benefits for people with lived experience

1. People feel more connected.
2. They feel valued and respected.
3. Meet other people with similar experiences.
4. They develop skills and confidence.
5. Possible future employment opportunities.
6. More motivated to take part in activities that meet their needs.







**Being part of the group motivated me to be more active. I do more walking and running now. It has also given me more confidence to speak in a group setting and share my ideas and opinions.**



# Case Study: Box to Beat It

## Social Prescribing Pilot:

Young people 10-16 with mild to moderate mental health problems.

## Co-design:

Recruitment of 8 young people who:

- ✓ Named the project.
- ✓ Designed the activities.
- ✓ Time, place and setting.
- ✓ Reviewed proposed workbook.



# Organisations who can support

**Local Minds:** A network of over 100 organisations across England and Wales

**Hub of Hope:** A website which can help you identify local services

**Rethink Mental Illness support groups:** 140 support groups offering different services.





**How do you engage people  
in the design of physical  
activity programmes?**

# Engaging people in your programmes

Opportunity to watch your activity before their first session and meet some of the participants.

**EAST: making your physical activity offer more attractive**


**E – Easy** for me to attend.

**A – Attractive** to people like me.

**S – Social** and comfortable.

**T – Timely.** At a time of day that suits me.





**What barriers do people  
with mental health  
problems face in sport  
and physical activity?**

# Barriers to physical activity

**Physical  
barriers**

**Psychological  
barriers**

**Technical  
barriers**

**Social  
barriers**

Guide 5: Engaging people in physical activity to support their mental health.

# Physical barriers

- Accessibility of activities and venues
- Appropriate support at the activity
- Effects of medication – weight gain, problems regulating temperature, sweating
- Tiredness or lethargy due to medication, anxious thoughts or difficulty sleeping
- Increases or decreases in appetite, which may affect energy levels
- Other long term health conditions or impairments



# Psychological barriers

- Anxious in new situations or surroundings
- Difficulties with decision making
- Negative body image issues
- Fear of judgement or being the focus of attention, paranoia
- Feelings that they're not be good enough to take part
- Fears that benefits and personal budgets will be cut if seen to be active

# Technical barriers

- Lack understanding of rules or how to play
- Lack of inclusive or adaptive equipment
- Coaches and officials not understanding the person's needs
- There is a shortage of mental health/disability aware/friendly coaches and officials
- Lack of trusted information and access points



# Social barriers

- Find it difficult to make new friends
- Nobody to go with
- Attending a session can be intimidating
- Find group sessions difficult
- Cost
- Stigma and discrimination





**Supporting  
people with mental health  
problems to be active**

# Key active 'ingredients'

- Lived experience of mental health and peer support is key
- Help people to overcome barriers, especially at the start
- Same place, same time, same coach
- Include family and friends
- Focus on autonomous motivation
- Send personalised messages
- Promote walking as an achievable activity
- Develop links between the mental health and sport sector

[Guide 4: Making physical activity inclusive to people experiencing mental health problems](#)



# Case Study: Supporting young people during physical activity sessions

Working with young people and coaches, we've co-produced resources on how to support young people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, a mental health problem.

- [Young People's lived experience video](#)
- [Young People's top tips](#)
- [Coaching handbook](#)

[Young People Physical Activity resources webpage](#)



# Supporting young people's wellbeing during physical activity

Young people co-produced the following top tips to help you support them during a physical activity session.

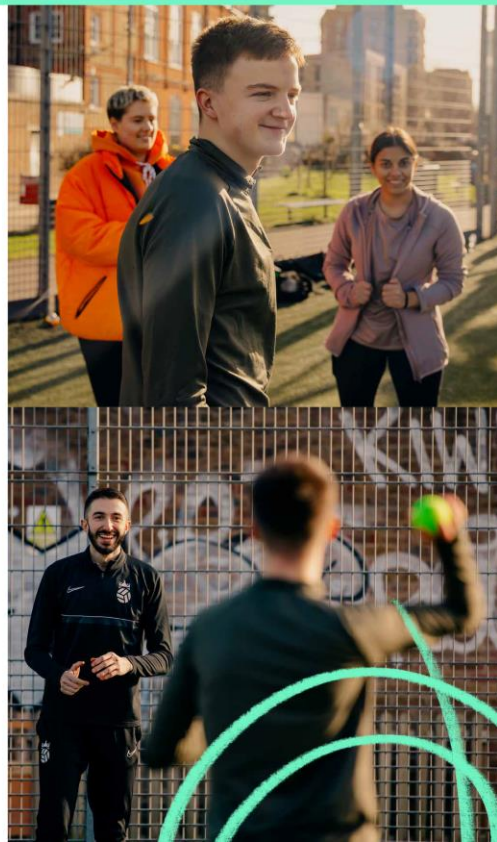
**Y**oung person focused: Find out what each young person wants to get out of a session. Allow them time to set achievable goals and review regularly so they can reflect on their progress and personal achievements.

**O**bserve: Observe and listen, before during and after a session, to spot changes in a young person's behaviour. Focus on their thoughts and feelings.

**U**nderstand: Aim to better understand mental health problems that affect young people. Learn more about key issues young people face, such as discrimination, body image or the impact of social media.

**N**on-judgemental questions: When checking-in, avoid closed or intrusive questions. Instead use open, non-judgemental language. For example, "Is there anything you'd like support with, or is there anything I can do to help?"

**G**ive encouragement: Don't force or suggest a particular course of action. Empower the young person to make their own decision by signposting them to a range of options they can choose from. For example, "Would you like some more support or can I point you in the direction of some options?"



**P**ersonalise: Everyone is different and has different experiences of mental health. Put young people first by tailoring and personalising your sessions to meet their individual needs.

**E**ngage: Follow up with young people you have offered signposting guidance to. You may not have all the answers but checking-in reminds a young person you're there.

**O**penness: Normalise talking about mental health. Make time to warm up and cool down mentally, in the same way we do physically. For example, get young people thinking about how they're feeling by asking them to describe their feelings in one word or an emoji. Make this optional so they don't feel pressured.

**P**raise: Focus on positive progress. Avoid shaming or comparing young people. Instead celebrate wins however small they may be. A young person may have missed a catch but you could praise their positioning, or how they judged where the ball was going.

**L**earn: Get feedback. Ask how you can make sessions more welcoming and wellbeing focused. Check how young people would like to be supported. Invite a group to help create or adapt a session plan.

**E**njoyment: Make sessions fun and adapt activities so every young person can experience the positive impact of physical activity. Focus on enjoyment and how each individual feels.



To find out more:  
[mind.org.uk/sport](https://mind.org.uk/sport)

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# Mind's support



## **Mental Health Awareness for Sport & Physical Activity+ eLearning**

Increases knowledge and confidence to support people with mental health problems through physical activity.

## **Physical activity & mental health newsletter**

Our newsletter includes all things mental health and physical activity related. **Sign up at [bit.ly/mindpanewsletter](https://bit.ly/mindpanewsletter).**

## **Self-care library**

Access our free of activities to support your mental wellbeing. **Visit [bit.ly/SelfCareLibrary](https://bit.ly/SelfCareLibrary).**



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