

8 WAYS SOCIAL PRESCRIBING CAN IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH

With up to 20% of GPs time estimated to be spent on dealing with social issues such as debt, housing and unemployment, social prescribing represents a way to manage mental health by taking a holistic, person-centred approach to wellbeing and addressing the wider determinants.

1. TACKLE THE ROOT CAUSE

For people who are suffering from anxiety, are depressed or have other long-term health problems, social prescribing helps to tackle the root cause of the problem, not just the symptoms. By taking a preventative approach, social prescribing helps people stay healthy through lifestyle changes instead of turning to medication.



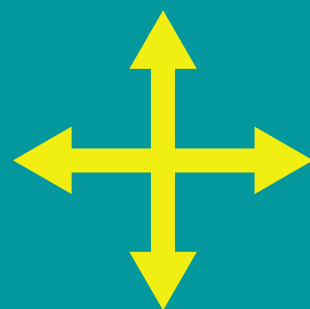
2. CONNECTING TO NON CLINICAL SERVICES

Social prescribing supports people with mental health to access non clinical services as part of a package of care. As a result, individuals are connected to multiple sources of support for social issues related to their mental health which contributes to improved psychological and social wellbeing.



3. APPROPRIATE SIGNPOSTING

In comparison to clinical prescriptions, social prescribing is a low cost, low complexity intervention which helps people to identify issues impacting on their mental health as well as signposting them to appropriate programmes and services which suit their needs and help them stay well.



4. CO-CREATE SOCIAL PRESCRIPTIONS

Social prescribing creates a shared ownership between the Link/Social Worker and the individual, in which they can co-create a suitable social prescription, giving the individual responsibility and accountability of their mental health.



5. REDUCING SOCIAL ISOLATION

Social prescribing programmes and services such as Men's Sheds and community gardening groups reduce social isolation as they provide opportunities for people to engage with their community, leading to increased inclusion, belonging and maximised social contact.



6. INCREASED PREVENTION METHODS

For vulnerable individuals or at-risk groups, taking part in community-based programmes and services enables them to manage their own health and wellbeing through increased prevention methods and supported self-care.



7. SPACE TO DEVELOP NEW SKILLS

Social prescribing also presents the opportunity for individuals to learn new skills such as cooking, painting and mindfulness, with evidence showing that continuing to learn throughout life can improve and maintain our mental wellbeing.



8. A SENSE OF PURPOSE

Referring people into community programmes and non-clinical support can boost self-confidence and self-esteem, helping build a sense of purpose, and connecting with others.



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