

Scotland's Mental Health Charter Toolkit

PACE

People Active for
Change and Equality





About SAMH

SAMH (Scottish Action for Mental Health) is Scotland's largest mental health charity and we believe there is no health without mental health.

Around since 1923, SAMH is Scotland's national mental health charity.

Today, we operate over 70 services in communities across Scotland, providing mental health social care support, addictions and employment services, among others. Together with national programme work in See Me, respectme, suicide prevention, and physical activity and sport, these services inform SAMH's policy and campaign work to influence positive social change.

We have been here for Scotland's mental health for a century. For more information about SAMH, visit our [website](#).

Physical activity and mental health

Physical activity through sport or recreation has been proven to have a positive impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing¹. Research suggests the less physical activity a person does, the more likely they are to experience low mood, depression, tension and worry. Despite this 36% of Scots don't meet physical activity recommendations*². It is believed people with mental health problems face stigma about their illness which may prevent them from engaging in physical activity and sport. Furthermore it has been highlighted that elite sportspeople face unique pressure in their day to day lives due to the nature of their employment which can cause a negative impact on mental health.

The purpose of [Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport](#) is to use the collective power of physical activity and sport to create positive lasting change for people's mental health and wellbeing. The Charter encourages participation in physical activity and sport as a way to maintain and improve mental health and wellbeing. The Charter supports anyone involved in physical activity and sport, from grassroots to elite level, to talk about mental health and wellbeing, and to know where to go to get help.

* Physical activity recommendations: 150 mins/week of moderate physical activity, 75 mins vigorous physical activity or an equivalent combination of these.

¹ Mental Health Foundation, Let's Get Physical, 2013

² Scottish Government, The Scottish Health Survey, 2016 Edition, October 2017



What are mental health problems?

Mental health problems can affect the way we think, feel and behave. Some mental health problems are described using words that are in everyday use, for example 'depression' or 'anxiety'. This can make them seem easier to understand, but can also mean people underestimate how serious they can be.

A mental health problem feels just as bad, or worse, than any other illness – only you cannot see it.

Although mental health problems are very common – affecting around one in four people in Scotland – there is still stigma and discrimination towards people with mental health problems. There are also many myths about what different diagnoses mean.

Mental health problems can be hard for anyone to cope with but can be made worse by having to deal with stigma and discrimination from others. Many people do not participate in activities due to the stigma they expect to face and self-stigma (feeling a burden or not worthy of being involved).

No one should ever be made to feel ashamed or embarrassed to tell anyone that they experience mental health problems. No one should be excluded from participating due to their mental health.

For further information on reducing stigma and discrimination, and how to challenge them, visit [See Me's website](#). See Me is Scotland's national anti-stigma and discrimination programme.

For more information on bullying visit [respectme](#), Scotland's anti-bullying service.

It is possible to recover from a mental health problem and live a productive and fulfilling life, and many of us do. It is important to remember that, if you have a mental health problem, it is not a sign of weakness.



SAMH resources

Whether you are living with a mental health problem or supporting someone who is – having access to the right information is vital. SAMH has developed a series of information resources that might be useful.

Understanding mental health problems

This booklet is an introduction to the most common mental health problems, explaining what they are, their possible causes and what help is available. It is written for people who have a mental health problem, and their friends, family or someone supporting them. It is available to download [here](#).

Understanding depression

Those of us who are depressed may feel that nothing can help. But this is untrue. Most people recover from bouts of depression, and some even look back on it as a useful experience, which forced them to take stock of their lives and make changes in their lifestyle.

Depression varies very much from person to person and can happen for one or more reasons (loss, childhood experiences, anger or life events are just a few examples). It may also appear for no obvious reason. This booklet explains the symptoms of depression and details the treatments available. It is available to download [here](#).

Understanding anxiety and panic attacks

Anxiety is something we all experience from time to time. However, if anxiety stays at a high level for a long time, it may become difficult to deal with everyday life. Anxiety can become severe and sometimes, if the feelings overwhelm us, this can turn into a panic attack. This booklet is aimed at anyone who experiences anxiety. Friends and relatives of people who experience anxiety may also find it useful. It is available to download [here](#).

Wellbeing assessment

We can all expect to feel under the weather sometimes, perhaps pick up a cold or sore throat. But when it comes to the way we feel emotionally, it can be hard to recognise or admit that we're not feeling good. This wellbeing assessment tool uses the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) to measure wellbeing. You can use the tool [here](#).

www.samh.org.uk



Five Ways to Better Wellbeing

We all have mental health, just as we have physical health, and it's important to look after it. There are lots of things we can do every day to support our wellbeing. The New Economic Foundation suggests the following five ways to better wellbeing.

- **Connect:** staying in touch with loved ones can make us feel happier and more secure.
- **Be active:** being active isn't just good for our physical health; it's also proven to have a positive effect on our mental health and wellbeing.
- **Take notice:** whether you're spending time with friends or taking a moment for yourself, try to stop to take notice and be aware of the present.
- **Learn:** learning enhances your self-esteem and confidence, and can be a great way to meet new people.
- **Give:** giving can be very rewarding – in fact those who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Please click here to download the ['Five Ways To Better Mental Health' guide](#) in full.

Starting the conversation on social media

There are simple steps we can take to signal accessibility for people with mental health problems. By improving awareness of opportunities and being visible supporters of mental health, it will help breakdown stigma, promote conversations around mental health and improve confidence for people accessing services.

Why not show your support for the charter on social media? You can find examples of posts, with images included, [here](#).

For Twitter:

We support Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity & Sport from @SAMHTweets

Let's ensure there is no barrier for anyone to **engage, participate** and **achieve** in physical activity and sport. Find out more ➔ www.samh.org.uk/get-involved/mental-health-charter

For Facebook:

We are supporting Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity & Sport from @SAMHmentalhealth. Let's ensure that a mental health problem is never a barrier to **engaging, participating** and **achieving** in physical activity and sport. Find out more ➔ www.samh.org.uk/get-involved/mental-health-charter

Online training

SAMH's 'Mental Health Awareness' training is a 45-50 minute online training course which illustrates the role that physical activity plays in prevention and support to people with mental health problems. It aims to build confidence and raise awareness of common mental health problems and ensure that our physical activity environments are more inclusive.

To access the training:

1. [Click here and register to create an account.](#)
2. Then head to www.enetlearn.com/alba to access the course.

Once completed you will receive a SAMH 'Mental Health Awareness' certificate, which is endorsed by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity.

For more information about the Charter please contact: mhc@samh.org.uk



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