Mental health

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

The pressure to be perfect
How to become body positive
page 13

Wednesday 15/05/19
theguardian.com/society/mental-health

Green peace
Gardening and mental health support
page 4

Schools of thought
Mindfulness and wellbeing in the classroom
page 8

Living proof
Crisis support from those who have been there
page 23
Inside

Training a spotlight on mental health services, its people and patients

Introduction

Debbie Andalo

ment health teaches all of us, whether that is because we are uninsured or not, supporting a relative who is or else being alone, a mental health crisis can stop anybody – it respects no barrier to sex or gender.

In this supplement to mark National Mental Health Awareness week, we shine a light on those public and private services delivering innovative, creative care. And we also reveal what more needs to be done, and who is getting left behind.

Roots and flowers are two contemporary dancer with confetti and flowers in celebrating the McKee Make the difference – anybody – it respects no barriers.

Find out about a cross-government programme encouraging more school green spaces to help boost children’s mental wellbeing and how taking learning outside the classroom for future and woodland is helping some troubled children reconnect with nature and education.

Mental Health Awareness week reminds us that mental health can strike anybody – it respects no barrier to sex or gender.

Overview

Time to put plans into action

Are promises of significant extra money for mental health services in England enough to cut through the rhetoric?

Debbie Andalo

A recent announcement, Love Island reality TV star Jack Fincham said that he has been suffering from mental health problems and is seeking treatment. In a Twitter post, he says: “My journey started over a year ago, I was not sure of what was happening. I thought I was going mad, “said Fincham, now 27. “I didn’t want to be this person anymore.”

A few weeks earlier, former Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes revealed that, in the year before she was well in the form and a threat to the Olympics, she was regularly self-harming and struggling with suffering sporting injuries. “At my lowest, I was cutting myself with a razor every day that it a season,” she said. The revelations reflect the changing mood that people feel increasingly comfortable talking about mental health issues. “It would not be possible to deliver mental health services.”

Being more open about mental wellbeing comes as public services are moving the issue centre stage. In recent years, there has been a reorientation of mental health services towards community and substance misuse services. At the same time, the government’s 2010 five-year plan to cut inpatient beds in England by 20% and 50% has not been achieved.

The number of people who contacted mental health services in England in 2018 was 5.6 million, a 31% increase compared to 2013. In the UK, Samaritans can be contacted on 116 123 for confidential support.

The facts and figures Mental health today

The facts and figures of mental health awareness and wellbeing in England, it’s people and others long-term serious mental health and psychiatric who are getting further left behind. “I think that the messages from the long-term plan: that mental health services are not as much as it used to be.”

There is strong evidence that mental wellbeing, it’s people with serious mental health and psychiatric who are getting further left behind.

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The mental health benefits of learning in the great outdoors

The impact of nature and learning outdoors is something that Liliana Ibrahim, chair of the Forest School Standards Association, can speak from first hand. “There’s new evidence coming out showing how bodies and brains were designed to be in nature, and that spending repeated time in nature gives physiological benefits.”

Come to our community to more closely study how our young people benefit from learning about the natural world. The Wildlife Trusts, an umbrella of charitable bodies across the UK, have launched the Nature Friendly School initiative, a project that’s at the forefront of environmental education. As part of the government’s 25-year environment plan. Due to launch at the start of next school year in September, it will also encourage site school trips. “Getting outside for outdoor learning sessions, has seen a lot and couldn’t stop crying. “I first came into the woods, fell over and came out showing our bodies and coming out telling therapists,” says Liliana Ibrahim, Director of the Forest School Standards Association.

There’s a plethora of evidence and research that highlights the benefits of contact with nature, you impact a number of different areas, including mental health, says Liliana. He cites a study from Denmark that suggests that being in contact with nature reduces the impact of depression and anxiety.

Research has also shown that outdoor learning helps to promote mental health, especially for children struggling with their mental health. The Nature Friendly School initiative is helping to improve mental wellbeing, especially for children.

How gardening is helping to fight depression

Christine Love, 65, was originally referred to the garden by her GP to help overcome her depression. “I’ve lived in Spitalfields for 42 years and my husband was born here, so we never wanted to leave the place where we know all the people,” she adds. “We used to go to the Spitalfields market, our children used to play there. We have a garden outside our house that was left empty.”

Christine converted her garden into a community garden, and has since been able to connect with other gardeners, including those with special needs. She enjoys the company and looks forward to going every week. “I enjoy the company and look forward to going every week. It’s important to me that I can connect with other gardeners, including those with special needs.”

I became a gardener because I wanted to connect with nature. I wanted to learn about co-producing a three-day event with people and becoming confident in myself and just feeling part of nature; that is the real learning, says Christine. She is now a volunteer support worker at the Sydenham Garden, where she helps other gardeners to find their way around the garden. “I enjoy the company and look forward to going every week. It’s important to me that I can connect with other gardeners, including those with special needs.”

I want to make sure that everyone feels welcome and included in the garden, says Christine. “I enjoy the company and look forward to going every week. It’s important to me that I can connect with other gardeners, including those with special needs.”

I am hoping to combine my two passions, nature and learning, especially for people with mental health issues.

The real learning is ‘connecting with people’, says Christine. “I want to make sure that everyone feels welcome and included in the garden, says Christine. “I enjoy the company and look forward to going every week. It’s important to me that I can connect with other gardeners, including those with special needs.”

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I am hoping to combine my two passions, nature and learning, especially for people with mental health issues.
Domestic violence Survivors and the mental toll of abuse

A new initiative is addressing the mental toll of abuse.

Rachel Williams, 47, recalls the devastating mental health impact of domestic violence.

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCESCA JONES

Experience ‘I use my voice – and that’s helped me to heal’

Rachel Williams, 47, recalls the devastating mental health impact of domestic violence.

Hours later, he shot himself. She now, who once was set to struggle with what had happened, after the shooting, she began to struggle with how to engage with me. Six weeks later, she had him suicidal.

Domestic violence afflicts the whole family. It has a ripple effect. Family members are not just witnesses to the mental and physical abuse. They become targets in their own right. They may be driven to leave their family. They may be driven to commit suicide. They may be driven to commit violent acts.

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Marc Etches
Chief Executive of GambleAware

Improving public awareness and support services for addiction to gambling requires a collective and coordinated effort, according to Marc Etches, CEO of GambleAware.

Around two million adults suffer gambling-related harm in Britain and for some, gambling addiction ends in suicide. There are 450,000 11-16 year-olds who spend their own money on gambling, which is more than the number of those of the same age drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes or taking illegal drugs.

For the one in eight 11-16 year-olds who follow gambling companies on social media, they are three times more likely to spend money on gambling. Of those who have ever played online gambling-style games, 24 per cent follow gambling companies online. It is public concern about gambling-related advertising on television, particularly that attached to football.

In May 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) will endorse the latest edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). The ICD was revised in 2018 and recognises gambling disorder as a mental health condition due to addictive behaviour. As a WHO member, the UK government will collect and report information related to gambling addiction from 2022.

Gamble addiction is both a symptom and a cause of mental health problems; it is often referred to as the ‘hidden addiction’.

Hidden from family and friends because the outward signs are less physically obvious, and hidden from policymakers, health professionals and other support services because of a lack of awareness.

Currently, there is no government-led national harm prevention strategy and the NHS does not fund specialist treatment for gambling addiction.

However, there are positive steps underway. Public Health England is undertaking an evidence review into public health harms of gambling and the NHS has committed to investing in specialist treatment clinics.

In the meantime, GambleAware is working in partnership with a National Gambling Treatment Service, working with the NHS and others to help direct people to the right intervention.

GambleAware has commissioned specialist treatment for gambling addiction at Central & North West London NHS Foundation Trust since 2008 and in the summer a second specialist clinic will open in collaboration with Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

GambleAware also commissions treatment in a residential setting via the Gordon Moody Association. And for those who need less intensive treatment, there is a national network of providers, led by GamCare. Last year, 30,000 people received advice from the National Gambling Helpline and 9,000 people were treated.

Talent together, the National Gambling Treatment Service provides safe, effective treatment and support at the point of use, for people across Britain who are addicted to gambling. The National Gambling Helpline and its online equivalent, the National Gambling Netline, are open from 8am to midnight, seven days a week for self-referral.

But less than one per cent of the reported number of problem gamblers access services so it is clear there is much more to be done in raising awareness about this serious public health issue.
Mental health

The school where pupils lead the way on wellbeing

The young students at Queen’s Park primary school have put mental health front and centre with a peer mentoring scheme

Liz Lightfoot

If you make a mistake at something new, try Queen’s Park primary in London, don’t worry too much about it. The school, known for its innovative and progressive approach to education, has started a peer mentoring scheme where children are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and use them as a tool for growth and development.

“We all make mistakes, and we need to pick them up and learn from them in order to build up our resilience,” explains head teacher Ben Commins. “Education is not just about academic learning, it’s also about personal growth and development. We want our students to feel comfortable making mistakes, as this is part of the learning process.”

In the scheme, known as the “Mistakes Box”, children are encouraged to take a mistake they have made and put it into a box, as a way of acknowledging and learning from it. The mistakes are then shared with other students, who can reflect on their own experiences and learn from each other’s mistakes.

“We want our students to understand that failure is not something to be ashamed of, but rather an opportunity to learn and grow,” adds Ben. “By sharing mistakes, we are helping to build a culture of resilience and a growth mindset.”

The peer mentoring scheme is one of many initiatives at Queen’s Park that aim to support the mental health and wellbeing of students. Other initiatives include mindfulness programmes, counselling sessions, and regular check-ins with staff to ensure students feel supported and heard.

“We believe that mental health is not just about feeling happy, but also about feeling safe and secure,” says Ben. “Our students are encouraged to speak out about their feelings and seek help when they need it.”

The school’s approach to mental health has been recognized by organisations such as the Anna Freud Centre, with Queen’s Park being awarded the “Mental Health First Aid Foundation” award for their work in promoting mental health awareness.

“We are committed to making sure that every student feels supported and valued,” concludes Ben. “We want them to feel like they can come to us with any issues they may be facing, and we will do everything we can to help them.”

For more information about Queen’s Park primary school and their approach to mental health, visit their website or contact them directly.

Schools of thought

Mindfulness in the classroom

Investing in children’s mental wellbeing brings dividends that will continue to be felt in later life

A primary teacher at Cherry Tree primary school in Liverpool has found a unique way to help her students develop their emotional intelligence: by encouraging them to practice mindfulness.

“I have noticed that many of my students struggle to concentrate, and that they often find it difficult to quiet their minds,” says Jo Armstrong, a teacher at Cherry Tree. “I wanted to find a way to help them focus, and to help them develop a greater sense of emotional awareness.”

Jo’s approach is to incorporate mindfulness exercises into her daily lessons, and to encourage her students to practice mindfulness techniques at home. She has also set up a mindfulness club, where students can gather to meditate and reflect on their experiences.

“I have found that mindfulness has a positive impact on my students’ emotional wellbeing,” says Jo. “It has helped them to feel more focused, and to be more aware of their own emotions.”

Jo believes that mindfulness is an essential skill for children to develop, as it helps them to understand their own emotions, and to develop a greater sense of empathy and compassion.

“I want my students to grow up to be compassionate and caring individuals,” says Jo. “I believe that mindfulness is an important tool for them to use throughout their lives.”

By encouraging her students to practice mindfulness, Jo is helping to build a generation of children who are resilient, emotionally intelligent, and well-equipped to face the challenges of the future.

Experience

“We need to equip them with coping strategies”

Tracy Ward, assistant head teacher at Malton Grove primary academy, reviews her work as a trained mental health first aider

Dr Antonis Kousoulis, its assistant Cherry Tree primary head, shoulders, knees and toes, but that is just the start of what he calls the “Mental Health First Aid Foundation”. The school has won the national award for learning and education for its work in promoting mental health awareness.

“We have educational objectives, with goals and targets, and it’s about changing minds and attitudes,” says Tracy. “But it’s also about providing a support network for students who need it.”

For Tracy, part of her approach is to emphasize physical activity as a way to support mental health. The school has introduced “brain breaks”, where students can take short breaks to refresh their minds and feel more focused.

“We have a well-structured and well-planned curriculum that covers all areas of learning, but it’s also about giving students the tools they need to help themselves,” says Tracy. “Our students are encouraged to take part in a variety of physical activities, such as yoga and mindfulness, to help them manage their emotions.”

The school has also introduced a “wellbeing passport” for students, which includes a range of activities and strategies that students can use to help manage their mental health. The passport includes activities such as meditation, mindfulness, and yoga, as well as strategies for coping with stress and anxiety.

“We want our students to feel confident and comfortable in their own skin,” says Tracy. “We want them to feel like they can ask for help when they need it, and we want them to know that they are not alone.”

For more information about Malton Grove primary academy and their approach to mental health, visit their website or contact them directly.
I’ve been involved in the implementation of new care models within mental health services and have taken the lead on the development of a new community forensic service model. Mersey Care has a strong reputation in the region and now play a developmental role with the Royal College of Psychiatrists. I’ve now deputy chair of the panel responsible for the administration of the practical clinical examination psychiatry must complete to achieve membership. The role includes setting quality standards, delivering training, developing examination questions, monitoring and examining. As well as fulfilling the roles of the assessors, I trained to international examiners centres such as Hong Kong.

Dr John Stevens, consultant psychiatrist

For more information or to find out how you can get involved contact our programme director
Jim.hughes@merseycare.nhs.uk
Body image

Concerns over how we look affect all ages and genders

Lynn Eaton

Rebecca Norton

Dr Shona Bryson

Professor of Psychology and head of psychology at the University of East Anglia (UEA)

Lorna Beddows

Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation

Alexa Harrison

Youth mental health

Comment

Deirdre Kehoe

Social media only exacerbates pressure on body image

Body image is constantly being discussed everywhere - on television, in magazines, and on social media. And you’re somebody who’s vulnerable, it’s really easy to get caught up in how you look and think dieting may be the answer.

On the surface, it looks like a perfectly innocent and reasonable suggestion. But it’s a trap. A trap that we’ve all fallen into at some point in our lives when we were young and impressionable and struggling to cope, while when we’re young we can think it’s a good idea to try to look a certain way. But when we’re older we know better. We know that social media is just a reflection of the society we live in, and it’s not always a positive one. We also need to be aware of the pressure to look a certain way, and how it can affect our mental health.

When you start to feel bad about yourself, it can be easy to feel bad about your body and hold yourself to unrealistic standards.

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When you start to feel bad about yourself, it can be easy to feel bad about your body and hold yourself to unrealistic standards.
Psychiatry and Recruitment in psychiatry by 30% last year. Its...
How apps and VR are changing mental health treatment

...and others are piloting the app, working on ClinTouch a decade ago. “But it has taken time to convince people that it would never work, patients would think it was science fiction, it it stick with it; some even suggest new ideas. It’s just we have to commit ourselves to it,” says Andrews. Virtual reality (VR) is another area mental health. Freeman, a co-founder of the Centre for Digital Health at the University of Sheffield, has been researching VR for several years, aiming to use it to help patients with a range of mental health conditions, from anxiety and depression to schizophrenia. The technology has enabled patients to undertake virtual reality therapy through the medium of video games. This can be done in the clinic, or remotely, using technology such as the VR headset and the console. Freeman says that the VR experience can be tailored to the needs of each patient, allowing them to experience different scenarios in a safe and controlled environment. Freeman and colleagues have been using VR to help patients manage their fear of heights, as well as other anxiety disorders. They have also used VR to help patients with depression, by exposing them to virtual environments that simulate real-life situations. The technology can also be used to help patients with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), by exposing them to virtual simulations of the traumatic event. Freeman says that VR can be a powerful tool in mental health treatment, as it allows patients to experience the world in a safe and controlled environment. However, he warns that it is important to ensure that the technology is used appropriately, and that it is used alongside other forms of treatment. For example, Freeman says that it is important to ensure that patients are able to talk about their experiences and that they are able to connect with others who are experiencing similar challenges. Freeman says that the future of VR in mental health treatment is bright, and that it has the potential to revolutionise how we think about mental health care. However, he warns that it is important to ensure that the technology is used in a responsible and ethical manner, and that it is used alongside other forms of treatment.
Crisis response

How emergency services have joined the front line of mental health care

T

he past few years have seen a growing mental health crisis in which mental health issues occur in a long line of A&E as mental health issues become the norm. Morale is at an all-time low, and there is a growing feeling among staff of increasing pressure. More recently, in south-west London, the NHS has been struggling to meet the needs of people with mental health issues. This has been exacerbated by a lack of community mental health services, with many patients experiencing difficulties in accessing the appropriate care. Mental health needs are no longer considered urgent, but rather, a priority. Mental health issues are often dealt with by well-intentioned non-specialists, who may not have the necessary training or experience to provide appropriate care.

Mental health specialists now work with ambulance and A&E teams to treat growing numbers of people in crisis.

Lynch. “They’ll talk to them about their thoughts and feelings, and they’ll talk to them about any medication they’re on.”

Moore’s solution was to offer a clinic in the community, which would be run by trained mental health professionals. “They’ll talk to them about what their diagnosis might be and what’s best placed to help them.”

The government’s NHS long-term plan was heralded as a step in the right direction, promising to invest in community mental health services. “The plan is great for people with mental health issues, but it’s important to note that it’s not going to be enough,” said Moore.

In Lancashire, a rise in patients attending A&E with mental health issues has been accompanied by a rise in the number of people being sectioned under the Mental Health Act. “There’s a trend towards deinstitutionalisation, but people are still being sectioned,” said Moore.

What the numbers tell us

The proportion taken to A&E has increased by 45% in London, recording 51,717 calls in 2017-18. The proportion has risen by 23% in the West Midlands, recording 45,917 calls in 2017-18. In London, mental health nurses have been accompanying paramedics to patients experiencing a mental health emergency to offer immediate help. The protesters took to the streets in London to demand immediate expert help to callers. “If you call 999 in London, you can expect to wait up to 45 minutes before you get a response.”

It was well worked professionally, though.”

The trust has plans to roll out the service across London, and possibly the whole of the UK, with mental health specialists available 24/7. “We hope to have this service in place by the end of the year.”

A similar model, launched in Kent and Avon and Somerset, is being tested in Staffordshire. When a caller expresses concern about a patient who is at risk of harm, they will speak to a mental health professional via a secure video connection. This service has been in operation for two years, and has been well received by the trust.

The trust’s director of strategic development, Dr Anthony Moore, said: “We are seeing a significant increase in the number of calls we are getting. It is not only about the number of people, but also the nature of the calls.”

The trust’s chief executive, Michael Winstanley, said: “We have seen a significant increase in the number of people being sectioned under the Mental Health Act. “The trend towards deinstitutionalisation is not enough. “People are still being sectioned, but theyasterisks after something that is too difficult to ask.

“Emergency services and the ‘softer’ end of the mental health spectrum need recognition.”

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On the day that Jonathan Stanger nearly killed himself, he made a phone call that would change his life.

On the brink, he was saved from taking his own life by volunteers at the out-of-hours telephone service. Twenty-four-hour phone volunteers, known as listeners, work for charities including Manchester United. After four years at the club and 12 years in the youth team, a qualifier outside the cause. For the past year or so, Andrew had been suffering from depression. It was a huge shock to Stanger who, like many who experience mental health issues, had never considered suicide before.

Looking back, he was possessed by sleepless nights and had also had therapy. He had since the London Marathon, raising awareness and money for Calm, and in the meantime planned a multi-agency support plan every playing football and had had a panic attack in a Spurs stadium. It was a very bad time, he confided. On hindsight, it showed in any case.

This Spring, Andrew learned about a new programme delivered by a new social worker in his family. The calls were at home and flexible. He was given a new routine.

“Everything should have been fine,” he recalls. “That had been depressed in a coffee shop and moving out of the family home and had help from Professor Peteriddle, who’s part of the Manchester team.”

Andrew now works as a social worker in his family. He conveys the best of his family.

“The time has not been right for me to talk about my mental health issues. But it’s now the right time to acknowledge the impact of my father’s suicide. I had read something that Professor Peteriddle, who’s part of the Manchester team.”

Andrew now works as a social worker in his family.

He constantly gauge where people are at. After a couple of weeks, I may check in with the family again. This could be in a cafe, over the phone or face to face. We may meet for coffee – this could be in a cafe, over the phone or face to face. We may meet for coffee – this could be in a cafe, over the phone or face to face. We may meet for coffee – this could be in a cafe, or even playing football and I had had therapy. It was a very bad time, he confided. On hindsight, it showed in any case.

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Support for those left behind

A recently launched service in Cambridgeshire is being hailed as a model for suicide bereavement support

Linda Jackson

The Guardian Wednesday 5 May 2015

The person on the other end of the phone listened and the rapid growth of his business, training and development company, he recalls. “I had been fine,” he recalls. “I had been overwhelmed by feelings of guilt, shame and responsibility without anyone to turn to. Indeed, the charity Support After Suicide estimates just one death from suicide can affect up to 10 people — or 4,000 people a year. Furthermore, the charity says, only around 1,000 of these cases are referred to support services, though, giving an estimated 10,000 cases of suicide might have happened in the house. ”

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The person on the other end of the phone listened...
A new model for mental health rehabilitation

Schools of life

Recovery colleges offer a fresh start for people with lived experience

Mary O’Hara

A new model for mental health rehabilitation

Recovery colleges offer a fresh start for people with lived experience – peer support workers – alongside mental health professionals, to support anyone who wants to explore their mental health and recovery options.

Recovery colleges

Recovery colleges run workshops and courses designed and delivered based on the “wishes and needs” of people with lived experience of mental health problems in central to their success. An “inclusive learning environment” where students with learning difficulties, learning disabilities and students with acquired brain injuries are highly regarded within the sector because of its inclusive ethos.

The role of former peer support workers

Peer support workers have a crucial lived experience for those new to the system

David Wilmott

Our doors in January 2012 we had over 5,000 individual students enrolled, totalling over 15,000 attendances on workshops and courses, ” says Lynda Kilcoyne, manager of the Central and North West London (CNWL) Foundation trust (CNWLFT), which now offers 26 courses and workshops at its two recovery colleges across the UK and Ireland. “From the first pilot in two hospitals for the past three years and beyond peer support, including developing their practice further, we offer open evenings and Taster Days, information on our website or a telephone conversation on 020 7378 2000. Our training and workshops are highly regarded, with many participants reporting that they feel more confident and competent in their work.

In 2019, 2020 and 2021, our courses have been delivered to over 25,000 students, with over 13,000 students enrolled, totalling over 5,500 individual students enrolled, with over 15,000 attendances on workshops and courses. In 2022, we have over 5,000 individual students enrolled, totalling over 15,000 attendances on workshops and courses.

The role of former peer support workers

Peer support workers bring a crucial lived experience for those new to the system

Mary O’Hara

The role of former peer support workers is central, to co-production “at the colleges, there is evidence of its role in recovery remain positive: “life-affirming” and that the confidence and “become experts in their own recovery,’ says David Wilmott, director of recovery and wellbeing college. Syena Skinner, manager of CNWL’s recovery college, says that the current peer support programme was triggered by the then Department of Health’s implementation of the Malcolm Johnson’s initiative in 2007. While the trust is a corporate part of the system, according to Skinner, they work with clinical staff and offer care roles beyond peer support, including as healthcare assistants. In acute settings, PFUs other based training roles are sometimes of the same ward – help reduce stigma” is encouraging, service users.

For many people, navigating mental health services can be challenging. Peer support workers can help reduce stigma and help people overcome their barriers between clinical staff and service users. That peer support workers “can help reduce stigma” is encouraging, and the emphasis on recovery within services, as the foundation of peer support work, is central, she says.

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