

## Reading Well for mental health

### Background information

As part of the successful Reading Well scheme, The Reading Agency and Society of Chief Librarians are launching a new **Reading Well for mental health** booklist. The scheme is part of the Society of Chief Librarians' Public Library Health Offer and has been developed with leading health organisations and people with lived experience and their carers.

It will be available in English public libraries from **June 2018**.

#### Reading Well

Reading Well provides accredited and helpful reading to support health and wellbeing. It is delivered by The Reading Agency working in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians, with funding from Arts Council England and Wellcome. The scheme is endorsed by leading health partners and delivered in public libraries.

The first Reading Well booklist for adult common mental health conditions was launched in June 2013 as the first national Books on Prescription scheme for England. A second scheme for people with dementia and their carers was launched in January 2015, followed by Reading Well for young people in 2016 and Reading Well for long term conditions in 2017. The Reading Well programme is available in 98% of English public library authorities.

Since its launch, the scheme has reached 778,000 people. It has been endorsed by the public as well as by GPs, mental health professionals and government ministers as a helpful community-based health service. It has also delivered significant patient benefit.

In a recent survey, 90% of those who have borrowed a book from 2013 adult mental health booklist said it had been helpful. You can read the [full evaluation from 2016-2017 here](#).

#### Reading Well for mental health

##### The need

There is enormous need for quality-assured health information and advice that supports people in understanding and managing their mental health and wellbeing:

- Approximately **one in four people** in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year<sup>1</sup>
- Mental health problems represent the **largest single cause of disability in the UK**<sup>2</sup>
- **26 percent of adults** reported having been diagnosed with at least one mental health problem<sup>3</sup>
- By 2030, it is estimated that there will be approximately **two million more adults in the UK** with mental health problems than there were in 2013<sup>4</sup>
- The total cost of mental health problems in England in 2009/10 was **£105.2 billion**. This figure includes the costs of health and social care for people with mental health problems, lost output in the economy, and the human costs of reduced quality of life<sup>5</sup>
- People with severe and prolonged mental illness are at risk of dying on average **15 to 20 years earlier** than other people<sup>6</sup>
- Every year in the UK **70 million workdays** are lost due to mental illness, including anxiety, depression and stress related conditions. This means mental illness is the leading cause of sickness and absence from work<sup>7</sup>
- **9 out of 10 people** with mental health problems experience stigma and discrimination<sup>8</sup>
- **Women are more likely than men** to report ever having been diagnosed with a mental health problem (33 percent compared with 19 percent)<sup>9</sup>
- **Poverty increases the risk of mental health problems**, and can be both a causal factor and a consequence of mental ill health<sup>10</sup>
- Mixed anxiety and depression is the **most common mental disorder in Britain**, with 7.8% of people meeting criteria for diagnosis<sup>11</sup>

Reading Well is a cost-effective way of delivering community-based help and support for people living with mental health needs. The national cost average of the scheme works out at around **£1 per person**.

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<sup>1</sup> *Adult psychiatric morbidity in England, 2007: results of a household survey*, The NHS Information Centre for health and social care (2009)

<sup>2</sup> *The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health*, Mental Health Taskforce (2016)

<sup>3</sup> *Health survey for England 2014*, Health & Social Care Information Centre (2015)

<sup>4</sup> *Starting today: The future of mental health services*, The Mental Health Foundation (2013)

<sup>5</sup> *The economic and social costs of mental health problems in 2009/10*, Centre for Mental Health (2010)

<sup>6</sup> *The Five Year Forward View for mental Health*, Mental health Taskforce (2016)

<sup>7</sup> *'Statistics about key mental health problems'*, Counselling directory website (2016) [accessed July 2017]

<sup>8</sup> *'Mental Health Statistics and Facts'*, Time to Change website [accessed July 2017]

<sup>9</sup> *Health survey for England 2014*, Health & Social Care Information Centre (2015)

<sup>10</sup> *Psychological perspectives on poverty*, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2015)

<sup>11</sup> *'Common mental health problems: identification and pathways to care [CG123]'*, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2011) [accessed July 2017]

## **Booklist**

The booklist of 37 titles provides adults living with mental health needs with advice, information and support including self-help, psycho-education and memoir. The list covers:

Introductions to therapies and approaches including:

- Mindfulness
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

Common feelings and experiences including:

- Anger
- Bereavement and loss
- Low self-esteem
- Social anxiety and shyness
- Sleep problems
- Stress

Self-help books recommended to support psychological therapy including:

- General wellbeing titles
- Depression
- Anxiety and panic
- Obsessions and compulsions

Support for other common conditions including:

- Binge eating and bulimia nervosa
- Body image and body dysmorphic disorder
- Mood swings
- Depression and relationships
- Postnatal depression

Personal stories from people who are living with or caring for someone with mental health needs.

## How it works

Health professionals offering support to people with mental health needs can use the scheme to recommend helpful reading. The scheme can also be used on a self-referral basis. The books will be available on the open shelves of the local public library for anyone to borrow.

## Evidence-based practice

Reading Well follows clinical guidelines for the treatment and support of mental health and wellbeing. Specific self-help interventions are included when recommended within NICE guidelines.

The books were selected by health professionals following a rigorous and evidence-based approach. Some of the titles have been specifically endorsed by the NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme as suitable for supporting treatment. The scheme has been co-produced with people with lived experience of mental health needs.

## Resources

The Reading Well for mental health titles will be available from all English library authorities subscribing to the scheme. Leaflets containing the booklist, which can be used by health professionals to recommend titles, are also available from local library services.

## About us

**The Reading Agency** is the leading charity inspiring people of all ages and all backgrounds to read for pleasure and empowerment. Working with our partners, our aim is to make reading accessible to everyone. The Reading Agency is funded by Arts Council England. [www.readingagency.org.uk](http://www.readingagency.org.uk)

**The Society of Chief Librarians (SCL)** is a local government association made up of the chief librarian of each library authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCL takes a leading role in the development of public libraries, through sharing best practices, advocating for continuous improvement on behalf of local people, and leading the debate on the future of the public library service. Visit [www.goscl.com](http://www.goscl.com)

**Arts Council England** is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**Wellcome** exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. We're a global charitable foundation, both politically and financially independent. We support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations and spark debate. [www.wellcome.ac.uk](http://www.wellcome.ac.uk)

### **Contact us**

For more information about the scheme, visit the Reading Well website at [www.reading-well.org.uk](http://www.reading-well.org.uk) or email [readingwell@readingagency.org.uk](mailto:readingwell@readingagency.org.uk).