On the 2nd April 2020 Active Oxfordshire together with Oxfordshire Mind held a Tweet Chat to discuss the barriers, challenges & opportunities to using physical activity to maintain Mental Health during physical isolation.

The Tweet Chat consisted of 5 key questions, that were posted via the @activeoxon twitter page between 2-3pm and amassed a recorded social media reach of 32,000+

THE 5 QUESTIONS

1. What are your top tips for staying active at home?
2. What are your biggest challenges in encouraging people to be active and what support would help?
3. Have you found that CV is affecting the mental health of the people your organisation works with?
4. What are you offering now and how have you adapted your services for the current situation?
5. How do we make sure we reach everyone, especially those in most need?

Mental Health & Physical Activity Tweet Chat Summary

INTRODUCTION
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DESCRIPTION
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WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS FOR STAYING ACTIVE AT HOME?

ADVICE
- Stick to a routine and set aside specific time for exercising
- Keep all exercise varied so you don’t lose interest
- This is a good time to form positive habits, standing and stretching where possible is one
- Gardening is a great form of exercise
- Dancing to music is another great way to keep active, especially for younger kids
- Utilising local parks/fields for running, walking and cycling can be great fun!
- Finding an activity that is fun for YOU is key
- When time is a struggle, working in 10 minute ‘activity bursts’ throughout the day is a great technique
- Setting fitness goals and sharing progress with friends is a good idea too!

RESOURCES
- Havant and East Hants Mind have a couple videos on their youtube devoted to the topic of wellbeing at home. www.Youtube.com - Havant and East Hants Mind
- Scouts UK provide the great indoors resources on their website, outlining 100+ indoor activities for children https://www.scouts.org.uk/
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MENTAL HEALTH & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO BE ACTIVE AND WHAT SUPPORT WOULD HELP?

CHALLENGES
- Mental Health related struggles/issues
- Lack of access and awareness to mainstream opportunities
- No access to online resources
- Too many resources being offered can become stressful

HELPFUL SUPPORT
- Need to emphasise what people can control during these times and support them in doing so.
- Need for better communication of local opportunities and a wider variety of these activities

CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE...
There is a much wider need for positive communication of currently available resources:
- For those who aren’t online, it is important that their relatives, friends and neighbours are given the right tools to help out

- Organisations need to focus on what they do well, to avoid just contributing to the 'noise'
- Need for a better model of sharing local opportunities, as these are more likely to relate to each individual and better capture their attention
- However, it is important to only promote the useful and unique resources to avoid overcrowding

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HAVE YOU FOUND THAT CV IS AFFECTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE YOUR ORGANISATION WORKS WITH?

THE EFFECTS OF CV

- CV doesn’t necessarily effect everyone directly, but the fallout certainly does
- There is now a big focus on friends and family and staying healthy, so it is important not to overload anyone with work
- There is a new pressure to redesign services and projects
- There is pressure for new support pathways and fundraising schemes
- There is also potential for added pressure on women which Women in Sport UK write about here: https://www.womeninsport.org/opinion/covid-19/
- There is an increased pressure on certain vulnerable individuals and how to get the support to them
- People are missing regular group based and ‘face-to-face’ support

However, there is also the possibility to develop stronger co-working relationships
- There are also many new innovative ideas dealing with the situation
- Some people are enjoying more connection time with family and loved ones
- Some of the challenges of going out are reduced, so it can be slightly easier to run, walk or cycle.

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What are you offering now and how have you adapted your services for the current situation?

Services Available

• Havant and East Hants Mind have changed their wellbeing service delivery, now mostly communicating by text, phone calls and email. They have regular updates here: https://www.easthantsmind.org/news/

• Other wellbeing providers now provide support in short vlog forms and live virtual sessions

• Oxfordshire Mind are offering a weekly ‘virtual walk’ newsletter that features advice and video encouragement to keep people active

• You can sign up to the Oxfordshire Mind mailing list for virtual walks via their website: https://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/

• Both Gypsy Travellers and London Gypsy Travel have been sharing useful info for GRT groups: https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/

• Aspire Oxfordshire have posted a virtual HIIT session with their boxercise coaches

• Age UK Oxfordshire and Generation Games are recording their strength and balance classes

• Helping those without access to the internet is also vital

• Oxfordshire All In and Oxford Together supply resources and information that neighbours and family members can pass on to those without access to resources directly

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Mental Health & Physical Activity

How do we make sure we reach everyone, especially those in most need?

Advice

Oxfordshire All In is a collaboration of organisations to support communities and vulnerable people during this time of need: https://www.oxfordshireallin.org/

- A shift towards smaller, more local networks is important during this time.
- Using resources from trusted sources such as Oxfordshire All In means everyone can help each other at the local level, regardless of online accessibility.

- Eden Project Communities is a great source for community events and connections, helping people connect even down to the street level.

Community Action Response: COVID-19

- Things you can do to make a positive difference in your community.

Wycombe Wanderers Sport and Education Trust are now calling all of their keep moving forward members weekly as a form of support, helping to reach out to those without online access.

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