

Social Prescribing in England: an Investigation of Its Impact on Health, Well-Being, and Social Welfare



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Introduction

- As part of England's National Health Service's (NHS's) mission to reduce health inequalities and improve health, social prescribing is being introduced in communities so that people feel less isolated and lonely, and so that overall health is improved
- Social prescribing in England is a critical component of Universal Personalized Care, which connects people to social groups, activities, and services in their community that meet their practical, emotional, and psychological needs.

Objective of Internship

Get a better understanding of social prescribing in the UK in terms of improving health and wellbeing for its residents, learn what efforts are being made to address health inequalities in Sunderland, and engage with a support system dedicated to delivering social prescribing interventions to eliminate health inequalities and improve the well-being of families in underserved areas.

Work Profile

- Collaborated with Helen McArdle Institute Research Associates to study the impact of social prescribing
- Supported the Sunderland city council's social prescribing initiatives through meetings and agenda reviews
- Worked with community-based services across the city to improve the health and wellbeing of the UK population

Results

- Through this internship I found that by offering Sunderland residents the opportunity to learn new skills, to express themselves creatively, and to reflect on their heritage with their peers, they may have a greater sense of belonging and improved well-being.



Helping with the arts and crafts workshop at the Salvation Army After School Club

- As a result of my participation and observation, I came to understand the many ways in which the arts can enhance social inclusion, boost recovery, and improve the quality of life for communities and families that have often been affected by difficult circumstances.



In the office at the University of Sunderland, answering incoming calls and planning future social prescribing initiatives

- The Sunderland community reaps the benefits of collective creativity by bringing together people with diverse backgrounds and improving the health and well-being of its residents.
- I learned that partnerships and participatory action research are essential when it comes to delivering a holistic approach to health care through social prescribing.



Goals to Goals (a school education program teaching children about Sunderland's history) with Olympic athlete Alyson Dixon brainstorming fun and interactive ways to bring local heritage to life

Discussion

I was able to gain exposure to a wide variety of approaches to medicine as a result of taking part in this internship. This experience led me to realize that as a future healthcare professional, the wellness of a community or a certain age group can be addressed holistically and supported through programs such as social prescribing and arts-based interventions.

Questions

- Why do we still lack quantitative information about social prescribing? If social prescribing is positively impacting the health of its residents, how can we prove the fact statistically?
- Is there a way for the United States and other countries to implement social prescribing into their health care systems in order to adopt a holistic approach to health and wellbeing?

Conclusions

Our healthcare system must be open-minded when it comes to addressing healthcare inequalities. It is imperative that we continue the research and support for communities to make healthcare interventions and social prescribing initiatives more accessible to a wider population. Taking a holistic approach to healthcare is crucial for the future of healthcare. It is possible to bring about long-term positive changes in our healthcare systems by integrating social prescribing models.

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