

Community First Coaching

*Promoting Personal, Community & Workplace
Mental Health & Wellbeing*



Fit for Life

Recovery Coaching: Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Life trauma

Workplace Coaching: Employee Support programmes

Coaching for Life: Community Empowerment Courses

Schools & Youth courses

One to one Coaching

Seminars, Motivational speaking

Community First has brought together a unique team of coaches with diverse expertise, knowledge and skills to bring the benefits of professional and specialist coaching to the heart of peoples lives and community - where we believe it is needed most - and can do the most good.

From: Catherine Mc Hugh, Founder of Community First Coaching (Based in Belfast)

What we are doing: Piloting Fit for Life (With support from UNLtd & The Millennium Trust)

Fit for Life - Promoting Personal, Community & Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing

Fit for Life is a unique initiative developed by Community First Coaching to support the growing number of people whose personal or working lives are affected by stress, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, poverty, unemployment and life trauma with the aim of:

- Reducing the high level of long term and sporadic anti-depressant use
- Reducing the number of repeated GP visits
- Reduce the huge financial cost in terms of services/resources
- Provide an additional resource which responds to the needs of both the client/patient and referring service
- Provide a positive, time bound, solution focused service without negative stigma
- Promotion of measureable and validated results
- Promote self- help within their own community – supporting people to ‘deal’ with life adversity
- Support people affected by work related stress to return to work faster and healthier
- People are empowered to take personal responsibility for their own recovery

The initiative was recently piloted to specific GP surgeries in Belfast. As specialist coaches, we are aware that Northern Ireland people have a 25% higher rate of mental ill health problems compared to England and Scotland which is evidenced by the increase over the last three years of people coming to us whose lives had been seriously affected by high levels of stress, anxiety, depression, addiction and trauma.

Fit for Life was developed as a direct response to the expressed and sometimes un-met needs of people with the aim of providing a positive and pro-active resource offering one to one (private) coaching to patients, clients or employees as well as a six week self -help group programme to support and empower people to get their life, health and career back on track.

This project will inject a new measureable approach to support those affected by life stress and trauma and will also provide a much needed additional support service to GPs, social services, health and welfare providers as well as assisting employees or the unemployed back to work. We have already received a contract from Social Services (Family Intervention) in Belfast and Bangor to work with their clients, supporting and empowering them to overcome life adversity and move their life forward.

We have amassed specialist knowledge, experience and skills, having designed and delivered a wide range of courses to thousands of people from all walks of life over the last nine years. It was evident that many were suffering from poor and often neglected mental health, caused in part by the legacy of the ‘troubles’ personal life trauma, and workplace stress. On an almost daily basis people were telling us of their battles with stress and depression, many reporting that they suffered in silence, while others regularly visited their GPs for treatment (usually anti-depressant medication) A number told us of having received counselling to help them ‘cope’ and what we noted over and over again - was that many people would tell us that they still felt as bad if not worse.

Coaching works because it is very much a ‘solution focused’ and action based intervention as opposed to a ‘problem centred’ process through which people discover new ways of dealing with negative life /work situations and achieve powerful change through their own actions.

Community First has acquired the support we needed to bring this unique initiative to life.

That support has come from UNltd (UK social enterprise awarding body) in conjunction with the Millennium Foundation and Dr George O'Neill, a General Practitioner in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board for 32 years, who agreed to pilot the project within his multidisciplinary practice. Dr O' Neil is a strong advocate for improving Mental Health Services, addressing health inequalities and social need, and developing a wellness service within his practice

Launch

We are formally launching this unique initiative on Thursday 25th of November in Parliament Buildings, Stormont with the Health Minister, Micheal Mc Gimpsey and will be inviting representatives from Health and Social Services, MLAs, Community and Voluntary sector and service users.

Fit For Life..... Sample of testimonies:

"This new service has proved an integral part of the GP Practice and a valuable resource for our patients. It has shown to be very effective for those attending and we continue to receive positive feedback from this group of patients. This innovative approach is proving to be hugely successful. We hope to continue into the future and show the lasting benefits for both the patients the Practice. (Teresa Claxton, Practice Manager)

"We have seen very positive changes in those who took part in the Fit for Life course. One woman came off anti-depressants after 14 yrs and is planning to return to work. Another made major progress in improving her relationship with her son who has ADHD and a young mother who had literally not left the house in two years due to severe depression, is now attending our centre daily and has experienced a significant improvement in her mental health" The health service alone can't address the wider issues which affect peoples lives, in this respect, this programme can fill a huge gap and motivates groups to make progress that they have so far been unable to do" (Liz Wilson Family Co-ordinator, St Lukes Family Centre)

"An exceptional course which did more for me in 8 weeks than any other service has done in years. I'm really getting my life together and can deal with things much better" Nuala, Course participant

End note; We would be happy to discuss any aspect of this service.

Kind regards, Catherine Mc Hugh

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