

CONCLUSION:

For many out of work, either receiving Job Seeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance, there is little pro-active assistance to encourage and motivate them to improve themselves, and therefore their future opportunities.

As detailed in this booklet, there is unquestionable evidence to link unemployment with low confidence and self-esteem, low energy levels, increasing health problems, social isolation, economic worries, higher crime, and increasing levels of stress and/or anxiety, which can lead to depression.

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods will target anyone unemployed - working closely with the Job Centres and other organisations. We will inspire Clients to promote a positive mindset, to improve their daily physical activities, concentrate on boosting health, raising their energy levels and lifting self-confidence.

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods will promote the benefits of a healthier lifestyle, so that those receiving benefit can climb out of the welfare system and back to work quicker, happier, fitter, stronger, and healthier.

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods

c/o Basement Flat
33a Kelross Road
Highbury
London
N5 2QS

07964 430456
hmhb2016@outlook.com



Company Limited by Guarantee: 6912711
UK Register of Learning Providers: 10027607

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods operates an Equal Opportunities Policy

www.hmhb2016.org.uk

HEALTHY MINDS, HEALTHY BODS

How we can make a difference

ISLINGTON



- Health and Unemployment
- How Physical Activity raises Self Confidence
- Links between Physical Activity and Health
- Supercharging Energy Levels through Exercise
- Walking and Health
- Islington Health Statistics
- Unemployment and Smoking
- Unemployment and Nutrition, Diet and Obesity
- Unemployment and Alcohol
- Unemployment and Mental Health
- Unemployment and Illegal Drug Use
- Training the Unemployed
- Unemployment and Volunteering

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INSPIRING, ENCOURAGING, MOTIVATING

Health and Unemployment

“Unemployment is never a price worth paying and we need to take very big, bold and radical steps to help unemployed people back to work.” *David Cameron, Wall Street Journal Online*

In the 2004 Journal of Community Health, research stated that unemployment increases rates of depression, stress, and anxiety.

The American Journal of Public Health revealed that the unemployed made significantly more visits to doctors, took more medications, and spent more days in bed sick than employed individuals.

The Black Report (1980) established a link between poverty and ill health. The report showed the unemployed suffer worse mental and physical health than those in work. Unemployment can lead to poverty, debt, ill health and premature death.

The British Regional Health Study indicates a greater use of tranquilisers and more prevalence of smoking and drinking among the unemployed, leading to increased rates of poor health, which is known to increase with the length of unemployment.

Unemployment causes a great deal of psychological distress as shown by increased rates of suicide, particularly in young men. The unemployed suffer higher levels of depression, as do their partners.

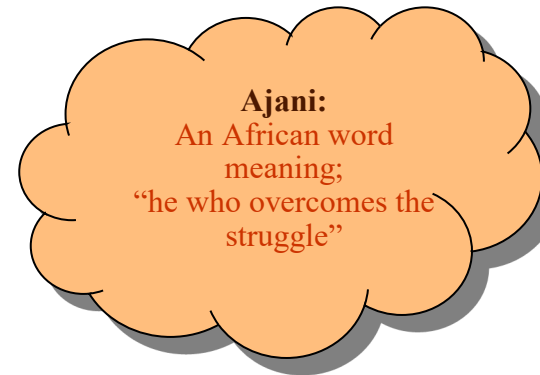
The University of Kent reported that being unemployed for more than a couple of months may sap the morale, saying it is natural to lose confidence and feel down. You get into debt, face rejection whilst job hunting, lose routines and structure.

The London Health Authority testified the ways that unemployment lead to poorer health include:

- * Effects of increased poverty and material deprivation
- * Social Exclusion, isolation and stigma
- * Changes in health related behaviour, becoming apathetic
- * Disruption to longer term careers

It is clear that it is imperative to raise energy levels, improve physical activity, increase morale, and promote a healthy lifestyle as we support individuals back to work.

AJANI



HMHB will:

1. Put emphasis on Client
2. Provide Early Intervention to avoid future issues
3. Stress Client chooses whether to participate
4. Treat clients as individuals,
5. Push onus on improvement and encouragement
6. Offer appropriate Health Advice
7. Give FREE Fitness Advice and Course
8. Offer relevant Budget Advice
9. Promote benefits of good routine
10. Endorse the advantages of a healthy lifestyle
11. Specify awareness of unemployment issues
12. Work closely with local companies
13. Work closely with Council and PCT

This booklet has been researched and created by
Lawrence Curtis

Unemployment and Volunteering (www.cvtips.com)

Volunteering while being unemployed may seem like a waste of valuable time and energy. But volunteering during a jobless spell does provide advantages to the job search. How does volunteering help?

- Provides a wider network of contacts
- Provides a wider range of opportunities for employment
- Makes use of skills while gaining knowledge and more skills
- Shows a self-motivated attitude which is a positive asset

Other advantages of volunteering include:

- The opportunity to improve upon skills which may have been dormant. This may lead to other options not considered in one's job search
- The chance to experience different jobs - which can lead to new career openings
- Takes your mind off being jobless. This effectively gives you a break from the constant stress of needing to find paid employment.
- Provides a positive outlet for built up energy. There can be a certain build up of negative emotions and feelings, including frustration, stress, anxiety and a feeling of being needed. Doing volunteer work, and the positive feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence this can bring, allows an outlet for the negative emotions.
- Gives you something to look forward to. When unemployed, most people find it difficult to find positive points in their life. It can also produce feelings of isolation and lethargy. Volunteering work can provide a positive moment during the day or week, and this itself can lift spirits of the unemployed.
- Gives you a reality check. It is accepted that when you are unemployed people tend to think that life cannot get worse. It takes circumstances such as volunteer work to show someone how fortunate they may really be.

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods has met with Voluntary Action Islington (VAI) and we have agreed to offer suitable and relevant volunteer opportunities to all our clients.

How physical activity raises self-confidence

Physical activity programs are among the most common interventions for increasing overall self-esteem. A study by the University of Alberta determined that male and female exercisers had a better image of themselves than non-exercisers. Results indicated increases in a variety of subjects (mental state, alcoholics, unemployed, all ages, etc.) and for a variety of activities (muscular, sports, dance, etc.).

Physical activity provides challenges to the body. These are opportunities for feeling successful and capable. Setting and then achieving both short and long-term goals related to these challenges promotes feelings of competence.

Self esteem is a product of social interaction. Physical activity will therefore influence self-esteem even more when it becomes highly valued at the social and personal levels. Promoting the benefits of physical activity can enhance its social value. At the personal level, its value will increase as individuals experience feelings of ability from the practice of an activity.

Regular physical activity improves mood, helps relieve depression, and increases feelings of well-being. A survey by the charity MIND found that 83% of people with mental health problems looked to physical activity to help lift their mood.



Dept. of Health : “regular physical activity reduces the risk of depression and has positive benefits including reduced anxiety, and enhanced mood and self-esteem.”

Dept. of Health : “physical activity can reduce physiological reactions to stress, improve sleep, reduce anxiety.”

Links between physical activity and health

Dept. of Health :

- Physically active people have a 20-30% reduced risk of premature death.
- Inactive and unfit people have almost double the risk of dying from Coronary Heart Disease than more active and fit people.
- “People who are physically active tend to have a lower risk of cancer...the higher the level of activity or fitness, the lower the overall risk of cancer.”
- Physical activity can have an indirect effect through its role in the prevention of obesity; obesity “doubles the risk of all-cause mortality, stroke, and type 2 diabetes, and increases the risk of some cancers, musculoskeletal problems and loss of function, and carries negative psychological consequences.”
- “Physical activity that can be incorporated into everyday life, such as walking and cycling, appears to be as effective for weight loss as supervised exercise programs.”
- “Physically active people have a 33-50% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to inactive people.”
- “The majority of studies report that those who do regular to light to moderate activity have a lower incidence of stroke compared to those who are inactive.” *Stroke is the third most common cause of death in England and Wales after heart disease and cancer - Stroke Association.*
- “High blood pressure can be both prevented and treated by physical activity.” *People with high blood pressure have almost twice the risk of a heart attack compared to those with no history of blood pressure - British Heart Foundation (2007)*
- Health Scotland: “physical activity can help prevent osteoporosis; daily physical activity, especially walking, may be associated with a lower risk of subsequent osteoarthritis, especially among women.”

Training the Unemployed (European Commission - Community Research)

Bringing the unemployed, especially those who are long-termed, back into employment through training is an ongoing policy of many governments. Little is known on the effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the unemployed.

The European Commission report followed trainees, and the results of the project were;

- * 44% of trainees found employment during their course
- * 29% stayed on with the employer following work experience
- * 82% felt more positive looking for further employment

The main reason trainees enrolled on courses was to increase their chances in the labour market. Another reason given was the content of the various courses available.

It is important to stress that although training for the unemployed should be encouraged, any proposals must be relevant to the individual, and that all choices are made by that person. Pressing anyone into inappropriate training is pointless.

It is recognized that some find the thought of training discouraging. This can be for several reasons;

- * Psychological barriers
- * Fear of failure
- * Negative self-image
- * Fatalism

Good training can promote a growth in self-esteem and self-confidence. New skills can instill a higher positivity and belief. Qualifications can open up new opportunities.

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods is already forging excellent relationships with organisations within the London Borough of Islington, and beyond.

We want to be able to channel our clients to the most appropriate and relevant courses and assistance that are around. It is important to listen to the client and point them in the right direction, as that builds confidence and self-belief.

Unemployment and Illegal Drug Use (British Medical Journal)

- ◇ After research, the BMJ concluded that illegal drug use is associated with unemployment. In fact, it has increased sharply and in a striking manner during recent years.
- ◇ A British Crime Survey in the eighties showed that self reported cannabis use among unemployed respondents in Britain as a whole was significantly higher than that among other respondents.
- ◇ A report commissioned by the Department of Health in the eighties indicated that the subgroup of respondents at the highest risk of exposure to drugs was characterized by, among other factors, above average unemployment.
- ◇ Becoming a drug user was especially attractive to young people with little stake in the working world. More contact with illicit drugs is particularly common among people of low status or who were unemployed. It was also concluded that regular users of cannabis were especially likely to be unemployed or to indulge in frequent job changing (*Health Education Council*). Studies in the Wirral indicated that the use of illicit drugs is, at least in part, a symptom of urban deprivation and unemployment.
- ◇ A report in a publication called “Addictive Diseases” on the subject of heroin abuse said: “the sense of belonging to a group, the feeling of purpose and accomplishment and the sense of prestige are all important needs which this life appears to fulfil for the user. In the conventional world these needs are much harder to satisfy for the under-educated individual who has difficulty maintaining even a menial job. The lifestyle seems to be so important that some individuals feign addiction.”
- ◇ A considerable body of evidence connects unemployment with morbidity and mortality. It is often difficult to disentangle the influence of unemployment from that of a host of other social and economic factors that operate simultaneously and may also have an impact on health. Illegal drug use is influenced by economic factors. One possible reason for increased drug use is that the price of illegal drugs, compared with that of alcohol and tobacco, has declined. This may have enhanced the relative appeal of illegal drugs, especially to those on low incomes (especially unemployed).

How to supercharge your energy levels through exercise

- Your energy levels will depend on several factors, including genetics, nutrition, sleep habits, confidence, and emotional stress. Some of these you have no control over. However, there is one very important factor that you do have control over and that is your ability to take part in physical exercise and activity.
- The link between physical fitness and energy is so strong, that doctors have lately been prescribing exercise as treatment for chronic fatigue, depression, seasonal affective disorder (SAD), obesity, and insomnia, amongst others. (GP Referral / Exercise on Referral)
- Your brain thrives on oxygen. Blood transports oxygen to the brain, so the greater blood flow to the brain, the greater the oxygen supply the brain has. As you increase your heartbeat with a higher level of activity, more oxygen gets absorbed by your brain cells, and you feel more mentally alert.
- Regular exercise keeps capillaries clear and circulation healthy by preventing atherosclerosis (buildup of plaque), and can reverse atherosclerosis when combined with a healthy nutrition plan.
- Resistance exercise builds muscle, pure and simple. The more muscle you have, the higher your metabolism, and the more calories you burn even at rest.
- Being sick drains us of energy, and exercise, by boosting immunity, helps to stave off illness. Exercise increases the activity of natural killer cells in the bloodstream
- Recent studies have concluded that moderate amounts of exercise - including walking, jogging or using a treadmill for one hour, four to five times a week - can turn back the aging clock 30 years for middle aged men.
- Studies show that both factors of mental stimulation and exercise were contributing to the increase of the brain’s learning centres in different ways. Exercise increases the number of capillaries in the cerebellum and cerebral cortex; two areas of the brain crucial to intelligence.

If sufferers of the most stubborn kind of fatigue can be energized with exercise, imagine what it can do for those experiencing ordinary every-day frustration and fatigue, such as unemployment.

Walking and health (taken from BUPA healthy living health information)

Walking is an excellent form of exercise and physical activity, helping you reach the recommended minimum of at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. It is convenient, free, good for the environment, and you can go at your own speed. Brisk walking, that raises your heart rate and makes you warm and a bit breathless, is a great example of aerobic exercise.

A good walk can:

- a. Make you feel happier: exercise releases endorphins and serotonin which improves your mood, reducing stress, depression and anxiety.
- b. Improve your brain power: exercise improves learning, concentration, abstract reasoning, memory, organisation, planning, and ability to multitask. It even stimulates brain cell regeneration.
- c. Help you sleep better; regular activity promotes better sleep, although strenuous exercise just before going to bed is not advised.

As well as keeping you fit and in good shape, staying active will help you prevent a whole range of health problems in the future. Meeting recommended physical activity targets by walking reduces risk of;

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Coronary heart disease (could lead to angina, stroke, heart attack)
- Type 2 diabetes
- Certain types of cancer (esp. Colon, Breast, and Lung)
- Osteoporosis (weight-bearing exercise can strengthen bones)

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods proposes to introduce several different walks in the Borough, enabling free access to all unemployed people.

We are looking at Highbury Fields, Clissold Park, Finsbury Park, Upper Holloway, and Kings Cross

Unemployment and Mental Health (NI. Dept. Health, Social Services, and Public Safety)

Unemployed people were more likely to have a potential psychological illness (30%) than those who were either economically inactive (25%) or employed (16%). - ref; NI Health and Social Wellbeing Survey 2001.

Unemployment and economic activity are associated with increased risks of developing mental health problems. Unemployment, particularly long term unemployment, is associated with other related factors such as social exclusion, poverty, poor housing conditions, low educational attainment, and risk taking behaviours (e.g. Alcohol and drug misuse).

Unemployment can be both a cause and a consequence of mental health problems.

Economic or financial disadvantage increases stress and anxiety, including everyday pressures to pay bills or to purchase food and clothing. It limits access to activities which enhance independence and wellbeing. There is evidence to suggest that people who are socially or economically disadvantaged may be somewhat reluctant to report mental health complaints to health care workers.



This is where Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods can make a difference. The frustration, annoyance, and pain of unemployment, or just not working, can lead to serious mental health problems, and subjects relying on NHS assistance for months.

Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods, through their Ajani programme, are promoting increased physical activity and a healthier lifestyle, and aim to pre-empt many mental health problems, by raising self-confidence and self-esteem, and being a buddy or mentor to those on Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, or out of work for any reason.

Unemployment and Alcohol

The [European Journal of Public Health](#) completed a study on Substance Abuse in 1998, and reported that subjects “who had experienced unemployment were more likely to drink heavily and have a drink problem. It discussed that “the risk of high alcohol consumption increased with the accumulation of employment. One explanation for that is that people with a drink problem find it harder to obtain and keep a job because of the drinking problem itself. Exposure to unemployment may also cause or exacerbate a drinking problem.”

Alcohol damps down activity in the central nervous system, promoting relaxation, easing anxiety, and reducing inhibitions. It acts as a social lubricant, and as such plays a central role in many cultures.

Moderate drinkers actually live longer than both excessive drinkers and complete abstainers. Because it helps flush away the bad type of cholesterol that clogs arteries, alcohol may reduce the risk of heart disease by up to 20%. However, this moderate consumption is only beneficial to subjects over 40 - younger individuals can not justify drinking on medical grounds.

Unemployment itself can lead to higher anxiety, stress, and heighten risks of depression and low-self esteem. The risks of excessive drinking also include;

- a. Weight-gain (a pint of beer contains over 200 calories)
- b. Heart problems (reduced efficiency and increased risk of disease)
- c. Nerve damage
- d. Depression (two-thirds of suicide attempts are alcohol related)
- e. Impotence and infertility
- f. Cancer (esp. Liver, mouth, tongue and throat)
- g. Liver disease (hepatitis and cirrhosis)
- h. Digestive problems (ulcers, gastritis and pancreatitis)

Alcohol is frequently a factor of contributing to violence (including a quarter of all murders) and accidents (including half of all traffic related deaths). One in four male hospital admissions is related to alcohol.

Unemployed, when asked why they drank, said that it helped to relieve boredom and blank out the pressure of not working.

Physical activity, coupled with an awareness of the dangers of excessive drinking, can make a considerable difference to people's lives.

Health in Islington: Facts

(figures supplied by Islington PCT Public Health Information Team)

1. Islington, London's smallest Borough, was recently ranked the 8th most deprived in England, and the 4th most deprived in London.
2. 74.8% of the Islington population are of working age; of these 7.2% are unemployed (this has now risen to 8.1% according to www.londoncouncils.gov.uk).
3. Only 11% of adult men and 9% of adult women take regular exercise (this is less than the national average).
4. 27.5% of the adult population are expected to be smokers.



1. About 15% of adults are expected to drink more than the recommended weekly limit of alcohol. The directly standardised mortality rate for specific alcohol related illnesses is similar to the rate for London.
2. The rate for drug misuse for Islington is 35 per 1000 15-64 year olds. It is the highest drug misuse prevalence nationally.
3. The age adjusted standardised percentage of people with a long term limiting illness in Islington was 23.5% higher than for England and Wales. In February 2008 about 12,100 people were in receipt of incapacity benefit. Compared to the London percentage of working age population this is considerably high.
4. Directly standardised mortality rates from all circulatory diseases for all ages in Islington (248) is significantly higher than the rate for England and Wales (205). Stroke and coronary heart disease accounted for over one quarter of all deaths in Islington in 2006.
5. Approximately 7,446 people in Islington aged 15 years and over are estimated to have diabetes.
6. In 2006/2007 there were approximately 115 admissions per 100,000 population to hospital for common mental health problems compared to 58 admissions per 100,000 for London.
7. The suicide rate is 60% higher than that of England and Wales.

Unemployment and Smoking (University College of London - reported in Tobacco Control)

Numerous studies have shown that unemployment is associated with smoking.

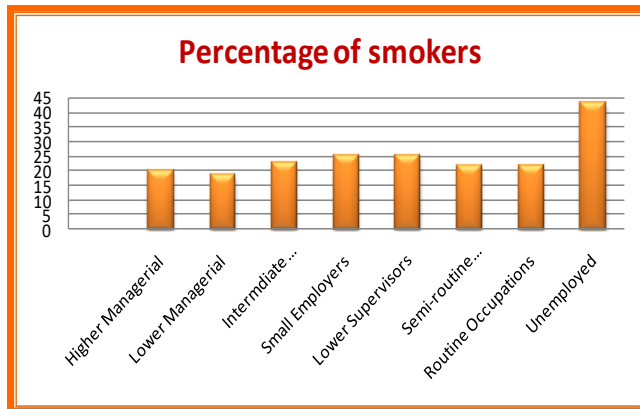
Cigarette smoking is considered one of the most serious risk factors for chronic diseases worldwide. It increases risk for many cancers, stroke, heart disease, chronic respiratory, and a number of other medical conditions.

The scientific debate is still open to why smoking and unemployment are linked. Promising mediators that may explain the behavioural modulating effect of unemployment are psychosocial factors.

According to the hypothesis, smoking is affected by

feelings of stress, low control, and social isolation affecting lower occupational classes that are disproportionately exposed to adverse social and economic stressors (for example, financial strain, stigma, loss of social roles) compared to other occupational classes. Smoking is seen as a way of coping with stressful and uncontrollable social and economic problems in order to get them short term stress relief.

The [European Journal of Public Health](#) reported that “men who experienced unemployment were more likely to smoke. Unemployment has been associated with a deterioration in health behaviours, including smoking.” In their study, subjects “who had accumulated more unemployment were less likely to give up cigarette smoking and slightly more likely to have taken it up.” It concluded that the study “provides evidence that unemployment may play a significant part in establishing life-long patterns of hazardous behaviour in terms of cigarette smoking.



Unemployment and Nutrition, Diet, and Obesity

The [Men's Health Forum](#) reported that unemployment makes it “easier to eat too much and, because you are counting the cash, this might well mean more junk food with the inevitable results for weight and health.”

Eating too much, coupled with low energy levels, and a drop in physical activity, will inevitably lead to weight gain, an increase in a person's BMI, and possible overweight/obesity problems.

Obesity is defined as the accumulation of excess fat in the body, and this arises as a result of an imbalance between energy expenditure and energy intake. According to the [Department of Work and Pensions \(2008\)](#) 3 in 5 adults are overweight. 23% of adults are obese.

The [BBC News Channel](#) testified that a recent “Which?” Report stated that during the recession 24% of UK adults feel healthier eating is now less important. It said that although most of us want to eat healthily, the current economic climate is a barrier to our good intentions.

A [Cabinet Office Report](#) estimated that food-related ill health cost the NHS £6 billion each year.

The short term benefits of a healthier diet are that it:

- ◆ Helps you stay in good shape
- ◆ Maintains healthy skin, hair, eyes, and nails
- ◆ Gives you the energy for day to day living
- ◆ Encourages you to exercise
- ◆ Helps concentration, memory and mood
- ◆ Supports your immune system, keeping infections at bay and allow you to recover more quickly from illness
- ◆ Promotes a healthy and regular bowel

The long term benefits of a healthier diet are that it:

- ◆ Reduces your risk of health problems such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, various cancers, high blood pressure, stroke, cataracts and osteoporosis
- ◆ Helps you stay fitter and healthier as you age