National Academy for Social Prescribing

Five Core learnings from the social prescribing link worker webinar series

Mental health Part Two: World Mental Health Day

The evidence shows that social prescribing makes a measurable difference to mental health and wellbeing

There’s a growing evidence base showing that social prescribing can improve mental wellbeing, life satisfaction, resilience and social connectedness. Mental health and wellbeing is the most common reason for referral to social prescribing, and research shows a wide range of positive outcomes for people accessing support, including those accessing green social prescribing and young people waiting for specialist mental health services. Social prescribing complements clinical care by addressing the wider factors that affect mental health.

1.



Link workers bring a holistic, person-centred approach to mental health support

Social prescribing creates space to understand a person's circumstances, relationships, identity and strengths, looking beyond symptoms and diagnoses. Social prescribing link workers are uniquely placed and trained to explore these wider aspects of peoples' lives through personalised conversations that focus on the whole person. They take time to understand an individual and what gives their life meaning, working collaboratively to identify solutions that reflect what matters most.

2.



Relationships, trust and connection are often the intervention

The quality of the relationship between a link worker and the person they support is central to successful outcomes. Building trust, listening without judgement, creating psychological safety and simply being present can be as important as making referrals. Taking time to get to know someone, having regular follow-ups and providing consistent support can help people rebuild confidence and reconnect with their community.

3.



Social prescribing works best as part of a multidisciplinary team

No single professional or service can meet all of a person's mental health needs. Effective support comes from collaboration between link workers, GPs, mental health practitioners, voluntary organisations and community groups. Social prescribing is most impactful when it sits within a joined-up system, helping people access the right support at the right time while complementing specialist mental health care.

4.



Community connection can create lasting change

The speaker's stories illustrated how social prescribing can help people move from isolation and fear towards confidence, belonging and participation in community life. By connecting people to welcoming local groups and activities, social prescribing helps build supportive networks that can outlast the intervention itself. Many people continue to draw on these skills, increased confidence and goal-setting approaches developed through social prescribing long since the support has ended.

5.

