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# Case Study for Healthy Ireland Fund



**An Roinn Sláinte**  
Department of Health



## Case Study – Positive Mental Health

Healthy Louth 'Mental Health Matters' in partnership with Louth Local Development Company (LLDC)

### Section 1: Organisation Overview

LLDC is a registered charity funded by the Irish Government. The company delivers a range of social inclusion programmes whose aim is to support individuals and groups to make a positive difference in their lives.

### Section 2: Summary of the Action

**The goals of the implementation our 'Mental Health Matters' Programme were to:**

To create a learning platform to promote the benefits of fostering a growth mind set among our marginalised target groups not only to promote positive mental health but to empower individuals to prevent chronic diseases. The benefits of adopting a growth mindset is already proven in wider healthcare and continues to attract wide attention in academic circles. The research results are widely applied in education and health and exert a profound impact on society. Dweck, 2016; Alvarado et al., 2019; Yeager et al., 2019; Kaya and Karakoc, 2022.

**Our *Mental Health Matters* initiative was divided into four main strands. These are:**

1. The creation and implementation of the Family Matters Programme;
2. The creation and implementation of the Positive Mental Health Workshops;
3. The creation and implementation of Craft Making/ Horticultural/ Cooking/ Sensory Sound Workshops;
4. The provision of physical activities for ALL to promote positive mental health.

**The goals of the implementation of the *Family Matters* Programme were to:**

- Promote awareness of the influence of a parent's mindset on a child's development.
- Improve family unity and interpersonal relationships.
- Understand how a parent can shape and change a child's mindset.
- Reduce individual and family stress.
- Educate families to know the impact of nutrition on mental health and prevention of chronic diseases.
- Instill greater awareness of the dangers of obesity.
- Increase family physical activity, fitness and energy.
- Improve mood.
- Promote gradual change to a growth mind set through:
  - Embracing challenges.
  - Working through obstacles.
  - Valuing effort.
  - Learning from criticism.
  - Finding inspiration.

**How we implemented our *Mental Health Matters* initiative:**

We implemented this initiative by firstly adopting a passionate, determined attitude under strong leadership. Coupled with this team spirit we formed a strong implementation team of tutors who were all trained in the programme aims and objectives before commencement. All of the ***Mental Health Matters*** tutors signed up to the programme's core beliefs. A client-centered approach underpinned our delivery. The tutoring team signed contracts for services. Induction sessions were held on the training delivery protocols in terms of group sign in sheets, attendance sheets and evaluation sheets. Adopting an action-research model we held regular focused team workshops to review completed evaluations. Programme delivery changes were made were deemed necessary.

In addition, we adopted various focused buy-in strategies to encourage maximum buy-in by the public. We were fortunate that some community-based relationships were already formed but as our ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative was a completely different concept, we understood that some community based-organisations were fearful of this “new” initiative and were hesitant to incorporate it into their already formed annual curriculum. To address these understandable concerns the co-ordinator used a gentle but targeted approach using the following strategies:

- We made direct contact with all the targeted community-based organisations to set up one-to-one meetings with management.
- We held information briefings in each community-based organisation.
- We provided additional support for any programme participant who required same and signposted them to appropriate service providers where necessary.
- We created training materials, aids and handouts which participants could take home.
- We created information flyers and distributed them across the county advertising the ***Mental Health Matters*** workshops and activities.
- We advertised our ***Mental Health Matters*** Initiative on our:
  - Facebook page.
  - In our local free paper which is distributed widely.
  - In our church in the free bulletin.
- We continually got into our cars and drove to personally visit community-based organisations who remained hesitant to become involved in order to encourage participation.
- We implemented continuous evaluations for all workshops. We studied the comments from participants and made immediate changes to the programme delivery were required.
- We highlighted positive feedback from workshop participants to community-based organisations and their service users to also encourage their participation.
- We incorporated the initiative into our other LLDC programmes of learning as many of these workshop participants were not members of any community-based organisations and had not heard about the ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative.
- We offered others measures in our LLDC programme the opportunity for their client groups to avail of the ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative e.g. Traveler project and organised our workshops for them free of charge.
- We never give up and are continuously promoting this important initiative.

### **Section 3: Impact of the Action and Key Learning**

There are many benefits that the ***Mental Health Matters*** initiative brought and continues to bring to the community. I have outlined these benefits for two out of the four strands:

#### **1. Positive Mental Health Family Matters Programme; The benefits of these were:**

- More educated families.
- Happier healthier families.
- Changed behavior within the individuals and the family unit.
- Improved communication.
- Improved self-esteem.
- Increased self-efficacy.
- Aligned increased knowledge with improved confidence.
- Reduced stress.
- Raised awareness of personal and family resilience.
- Improved problem solving.
- Anticipated improved pathology – lower blood sugars, improved blood pressure, healthier heart.

#### **2. Positive Mental Health Workshops: The benefits of these were:**

- Planting the seed for the development of a growth mind-set.
- Small improvements in behaviour routines which will lead to a more fulfilled life.
- Improved personal awareness and self-reflection.

- Greater satisfaction with life.
- Exploration of life purpose.
- Improved awareness of the importance of gratitude and self-compassion.
- Greater awareness of the importance of giving back.
- Acceptance of how poor diet negatively impacts well-being, mood and pathology.
- Increased confidence to seek help-support when required.
- Increased ability to recognize early signs and risks of mental illness.
- Learning new strategies to cope with mental and emotional roadblocks.
- Reduction of the stigma of mental illness.
- Increased problem-solving skills.

#### Section 4: Quotes / Testimonials

Sample of comments received on these workshop evaluations:

*"I learnt I am a lot stronger than I thought and I am now clearer on what I want for me and my child..."*  
Family Matters participant

*"The tutor was fantastic in helping us talk and learn about ourselves. I would not change one thing. It made me think of some changes I needed to make."* Positive Mental Health workshops participant

*"I am enjoying the Tiny Habits Great Change workshops, the talks do not interfere with my counselling in any way, if anything the talks have helped me to accept and understand that I am me and how to look after myself and better myself. This in turn has had a positive effect on my family environment."*  
Tiny Habits Great Change programme participant

*"I did the cooking healthy meals and really enjoyed it. It was wonderful to make these new healthy meals and then eat the food."* Healthy Eating for Positive Mental Health participant

*"I loved being outside doing the exercises, I can't believe how unfit I am.....The instructor showed me new exercises that will help me lose weight and ones that I even can do from my chair at home..."* Aging well with Positive Mental Health programme participant

#### Section 5: Photo's

