

Title: Re-viewing physical health guidelines through a mental health lens

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Introduction: Growing recognition of the physical health inequities faced by people living with mental ill-health prompted a review of the Physical Health Guidelines at Mind Australia. The review aimed to ensure that the guidelines were fit for purpose, within staff members' scope of practice, and aligned with recovery oriented and trauma-informed approaches to care.

Method: The guidelines were reviewed by advisors from the Practice Development and Participation teams over six-months, using an iterative and collaborative process. We began with a workshop with Mind's Lived Experience Advisory Team (LEAT) to understand their experiences and preferences followed by an audit of current policy and practice, and a workshop with Mind staff from across Australia. The findings from the workshops were collated and used to revise the Physical Health checklist and guidelines, with further input from the LEAT and staff to develop practice resources.

Results: The initial workshop with LEAT members highlighted that physical health is important for clients and challenged assumptions that people with mental ill-health lack motivation or knowledge to act on their health. Instead, clients reported numerous barriers including living costs, medication side effects, and difficulties accessing health professionals with appropriate training. In general, staff felt comfortable talking about physical health with clients but were mindful of sensitivities related to age, gender, culture and health conditions such as eating disorders. Staff felt it was important to normalise conversations about physical health but wanted further training to contextualise the relevance of physical health for clients as well as support to integrate physical health guidelines within existing systems and models of practice.

Conclusion: The revised Physical Health Guidelines include resources to start conversations and help with goal setting. Input from people with lived experience and staff was essential to creating guidelines and tools that promote physical health, give hope, and address relevant social determinants of health.