

The Sibley Report

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... the place to find valuable information to help make your job – and your life easier! If you have a topic idea or any other suggestions, please give Angie Catenaro, our Editor a call. Sibley & Associates is a national disability management firm with a decade of experience, nearly 300 consultants and state-of-the-art technology.

Exercise for Mental Health!

With summer almost here, most people look forward to enjoying the outdoors, but dread the thought of donning their bathing suits! However, there are more reasons to get active than just improving your physical appearance. The effects of exercise on physical wellbeing are well understood by health practitioners. Although studied since the early 1980s, the positive effects that exercise has on mental wellbeing, such as anxiety and depression, is only now coming to the attention of mental health practitioners.

A consistent finding of early research examining the effects of weight training as well as aerobic training was that regular exercisers exhibited less depression, anger, confusion and tension than non-exercisers. Most recently Hassmen et al examined exercise habits and mental wellbeing of 3,403 Finnish adults. Many of the Finnish population suffer from a depressive disorder known as SAD or Seasonal Affect Disorder brought about by the low number of sunlight hours over winter months. Hassmen found that individuals who exercised

2-3 times per week reported significantly less depression, stress and anger than non-exercisers.

Given that exercise is as effective as psychotherapeutic interventions in treating depression and anxiety, it seems illogical not to include it in clinical treatment protocols. Why isn't exercise used as an adjunct to traditional treatment by psychologists/psychiatrists? Several reasons are offered:

- genuine lack of knowledge of exercise research and its effects on mental health.
- bias towards traditional treatments.
- reluctance to believe that exercise could be as effective as medication and other psychotherapeutic techniques. So spread the word, because research is proving the saying, "a healthy mind is a healthy body".

Please see the attached photograph and information about how physical activity benefited two of our consultants – providing them with the energy, skill and confidence to realize their dreams as world-class athletes! References available upon request.

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