Researcher - Mental Health Project



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| **Location** | The work is home based - meetings are held in central London |
| **Where the role is based** | Mainly at own home |
| **Travel limit** | No travel limit - although living in London will make it easier to attend meetings |
| **Opportunity type** | Ongoing role |

Opportunity description

There's a lot we can do to reduce the risk of physical illness. What can we can do to reduce the risk of mental illness? That's the question we're seeking answers to.

The role

Help us review published research to identify what can be done to reduce the risk of different forms of mental illness - including anorexia, bipolar disorder, depression, phobias, psychosis and schizophrenia.

In particular to explore the following, for each specific type of mental illness:

1. Who is most at risk and why?

2. What are the symptoms and when are they most likely to become apparent?

3. Are there critical points in the brain's development or in life experience when the risk is increased or reduced?

4. As with physical illnesses, what are the respective importance of genetic, environmental, social, psychological and lifestyle factors?

5. As with physical illness is there any evidence that factors such as diet, exercise, sleep, alcohol consumption, drugs, status and relationships might influence the risk of mental illness?

6. What other factors may make a difference?

7. What therefore (if anything) can be done to reduce the risk of mental illness - and who needs to take action to help achieve this?

 Person description

* Proven research skills, experience and an enquiring mind
* An interest in mental health and wellbeing
* A good command of English
* Good written communication skills
* Able and willing to respond constructively to feedback

Experience as a health professional (in particular in mental health, public health or general practice) or of postgraduate research in neuroscience or neurodevelopment would be particularly welcome.

What impact the opportunity will have

Each year 1 in 4 people in the UK experience a mental health problem. That's according to the NHS Information Centre on health and social care.

There are big implications for themselves, their families, their employers, the NHS and society - particularly as Mental Health tends to be a Cinderella service within the NHS, meaning the support needed may not always be readily available.

Most people know what they can do to reduce the risk of **physical** illness - like not smoking, limiting their alcohol consumption, eating healthy food and getting enough exercise (even if they don't always act on what they know).

However, how many people know what they can do to reduce the risk of **mental** illness?

That's a gap you can help us fill, by assisting with this research project.

What’s in it for the volunteer?

* The chance to help make a real difference to people's mental health (and thereby help the NHS remain financially sustainable).
* A genuine intellectual challenge. How can we help reduce the risk of mental illness?
* This is also a very flexible volunteering opportunity. You can research from wherever is convenient for you, whenever suits you - while having the opportunity to meet other team members at meetings in central London.

Time commitment

Either in or out of office hours

We are used to people fitting their volunteering for us around work, family or study commitments - so can be very flexible