

Health Promotion Newsletter



Newsletter of the Health Promotion Group

Autumn/Winter 2007

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THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

FOOD FOR THE BRAIN



The University of Edinburgh has just achieved the exclusive title of officially being the first University in the United Kingdom to have achieved a "Food For the Brain" Award.

Food for the Brain is very new to the Further and Higher education sector having started its roots in Schools and The University of Edinburgh is the first in Scotland and in the UK to achieve the award against very strict criteria. This is a non-profit educational campaign, created by a group of nutritionists, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers and scientists to promote the link between nutrition and mental health. Its specific mission is to:

Promote awareness of the link between learning, behaviour, mental health and nutrition. To educate and provide educational material to children, parents, teachers, schools, universities, the public, health professionals, caterers and the government thereby promoting mental health through optimum nutrition. To develop independently evaluated, effective and adoptable 'models' of how society can act to promote mental health through nutrition.

The University already has achieved the Scottish Government initiative Healthy Living Award in 8 of its 12 catering units, which is a sign of healthier food when eating out in Scotland, whether in a workplace canteen, local sandwich shop, café or restaurant. However, whilst the Healthy Living Award rewards good

practice and highlights businesses that are making it easier for their customers to eat healthily when eating out, Food For the Brain is a more focused approach with the specific aim to improve mental ability and performance.

Good nutrition plays a crucial role in learning, by improving energy levels and concentration, as well as helping to boost memory and brain function. Educational institutions and businesses are now recognising the need to make nutritious meals and snacks available on-site in order to improve students' and employees' academic and professional performance.

The award was confirmed in September 2007 and in the words of the Assessor; the university "achieved and in fact surpassed the standards required for accreditation upon inspection".

This has firmly put the University on the map of Healthy Eating as the First University in the UK to have taken issues of nutrition head on and under the scrutiny of external assessment.

Well done to Accommodation services and all who contributed to this award.

Healthy Working Lives



The Healthy Working Lives Group continue to meet on a regular basis with the next meeting being at the beginning of November, we are still looking for representatives from two areas namely Science and Engineering and Humanities and Social Sciences, if anyone feels they might be able to contribute or participate please get in touch or check out the website at Health.Safety@ed.ac.uk or contact Janet Craig (651 4302)

Walk Yourself Fit – Update!



Following an initial training course the University now has some walking groups up and walking! It suits those people who want to get out at lunch time but don't want to jog. Kathryn Dunne has started the central walking group and has a few words about the new walking group;

Despite working in an office that backs on to the Meadows, I am the world's worst for spending my lunch breaks eating a hurried sandwich while flicking through the BBC News website.

Every year I make a New Year's Resolution to go out for a walk at lunchtime, but never seem to do anything about it.

So when I saw an advertisement for a Walk Leader's Training Course, I thought that might be just what I needed to persuade

me to abandon my desk for half an hour, once or twice a week.

Having completed the course, I am thoroughly convinced of the benefits of getting out for a walk at lunchtime and am now leading a twice weekly walking group on a 25 minute walk around the Meadows. The group has been meeting for about 6 weeks now and I'm sure that regular attendees will agree with me that we all feel better for our lunchtime outings.

We all know that regular physical activity has proven health benefits. NHS Health Scotland recommends doing 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week.

Being physically active reduces the risk of developing coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, type II diabetes and dementia and has also been shown to promote overall

mental wellbeing.

In common with most other people I know who work at the University, I usually feel that I have more to do than I can fit into the hours that I work. Building activity into the working day is a simple way to increase overall activity levels, but what if getting out for a walk at lunchtime actually made us more productive so that we could achieve more in the time we spend at our desk? Well, that's my theory anyway and if you would like to help us test it out, you are most welcome to join us on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We meet at 12.30pm at the University end of Townswomen's Guild Walk on the Meadows (behind the library).

Kathryn Dunne k.dunne@ed.ac.uk
at www.safety.ed.ac.uk/health/pathstohealth.shtm



Look Inside AS

Some readers may already be aware of the new publication from Accommodation Services. This is edited by Lee-Anne Goodbrand of HR and contains information about what has been going on in this area of the University. This summer's edition was a bumper issue and their third edition highlighting social events, staff survey results, health matters and general information. Well worth a read and an inspiration to us all.

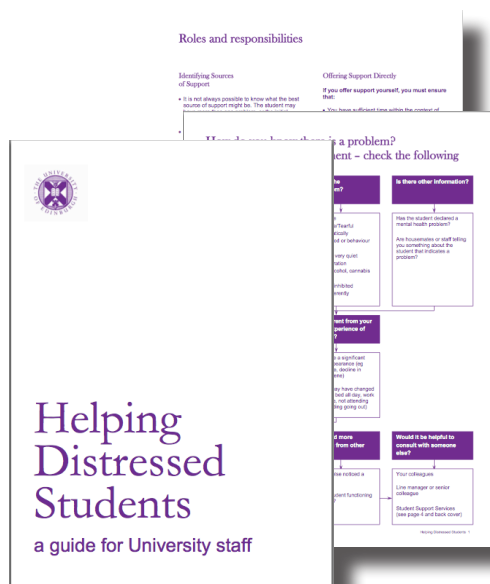
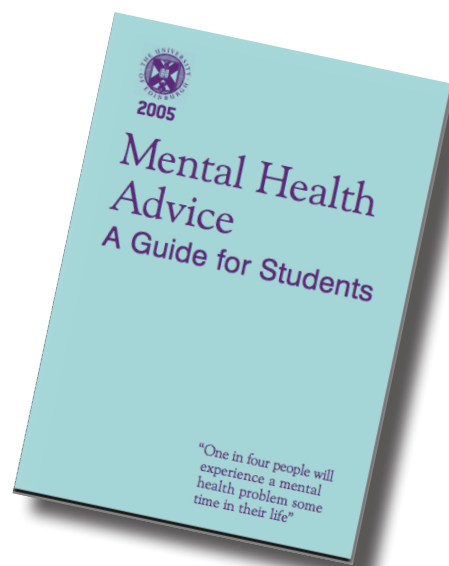
Health Matters

Mental Health - Guidelines for Staff and Students at the University of Edinburgh.

The Mental Health Sub group of the Disability Committee at the University of Edinburgh have produced 2 documents which aim to guide both staff and students in ways of helping students with mental health problems.

Mental Health Advice - A Guide for Students at the University of Edinburgh

http://www.healthmatters.ed.ac.uk/documents/student_leaflet.pdf



Helping Distressed Students - A Guide for University Staff

http://www.disability-office.ed.ac.uk/guidelines/documents/helping_distressed_students.pdf

Health Matters at the University of Edinburgh

The Mental Health sub group of the Disability committee set up a website called Health Matters which aims to raise health awareness and to offer guidance and advice on a range of health issues to students.

<http://www.healthmatters.ed.ac.uk>

Winter blues

"Feeling Down? Depressed? Exercise can Help"

Did you know that The University of Edinburgh provides 1- to-1 support and guidance to help students exercise to combat depression. The Student Counselling Service also refers students to staff in the Centre for Sport and Exercise.

<http://www.student-counselling.ed.ac.uk/selfhelp/Exerciseleaflet.htm>

Research suggests that regular exercise can be very effective in helping people overcome feelings of depression. Often students only need to meet once with advice on how to get started whilst others need more help in the form of a tailored exercise programme.

Centre for Sport and Exercise

In addition to the 'What's On' leaflet, classes/courses hatha yoga workshop, hatha yoga drop-in (Wed), mind and body (thurs) and the website (www.sport.ed.ac.uk) CSE also promote physical activity/health and well being through:

- 1) open day events. We attended one recently at Pollock for Accommodation Services staff.
- 2) personal training service - designed specifically to reach individual goals
- 3) NEW in Sept 2007 - Look good, feel GREAT! Workshop - group PT session giving advice on nutrition and training
- 4) Health for life initiative - university based course to help employees make healthy lifestyle changes. We offer a 3 month membership for the price of 1 month staff member to those enrolled on HFL course.

Check out the website or locate a 'What's On' leaflet for more details of the services provided.



The Sea of Tranquility - Complementary Therapies

Complementary Therapy Offer!



This information was too late for the last newsletter but not for this one! The Sea of Tranquility is a company which offers a range of complementary therapies such as holistic massage, Indian head massage, reflexology and Reiki .

They attended a recent 'Learning at Work' Day organised by Accommodation Services (last newsletter) and offered free taster sessions to staff which were very well received. As a result they are coming to Pollock once a month commencing at the end of October. AS staff will be able to book a 15 or 30 minute hand/foot reflexology session or a 15 or 30 minute Indian Head Massage (head, back and shoulders) at a great price - £7.50 for a 15 minute session or £15 for 30 minutes.

The Sea of Tranquility team are offering staff a discount of £5.00 off a one hour or £2.50 off a half hour private treatment booked with either Elaine or Carol. To receive this offer contact The Sea of Tranquility and mention the "learn at work day offer".

They can be contacted at www.theseaoftranquility.co.uk or by telephone - Carol 539 2006 and Elaine 669 6772.

A fond Farewell!

The HWL group have to say farewell to one of its members and would like to thank Pat Squires for his contribution to date. Pat asked that we let staff know of an initiative he intends to continue following his retiral.

He asks:

Do you want to become more active but are not sure how to go about it?

Would you like someone to advise you as to ways you might become more active?

Would like a specifically tailored exercise / activity plan?

Would you like some one to accompany / supervise you whilst you exercise?

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes", then a new consultancy service being established by a former University member of staff that might be of interest to you. Pat(rick) Squire retired from his full time post as Senior Lecturer (Exercise and Health) in October. He has a wealth of experience and knowledge in exercise and activity principles and programming for individuals and groups and is now offering this experience via a new consultancy service. This venture, entitled "Physical Activity Support Services", aims to encourage and support people wishing to become more active and wanting to maintain that lifestyle.

A range of supportive services are being offered which can provide:

- knowledge and information regarding physical activity, exercise and health
- advice as to appropriate forms of activity
- assessment and monitoring of fitness and activity levels
- preparation of action plans specifically tailored to individuals and their particular circumstances
- supervision of activity and exercise sessions eg walking / jogging / stretching / body conditioning / circuit training and resistance training with groups and individuals

The first stage will normally be to establish basic information about goals objectives and resources available. This might be "face to face" or via a telephone or e-mail conversation. On this basis an action plan can be prepared which will set out various options as to how the objectives might be attained.

This service is initially being offered on a FREE basis until January 2008 to members of the University and their family and friends.

So whether you want to find out where to buy suitable running shoes or you would like your own "personal trainer" just get in touch by phoning or texting :07740072484 or sending an e-mail to patsquire@yahoo.co.uk

Stressssssed Out - Update

Guidance on how to assess your own stress, tips on reducing stress and advice on how to assess the workplace for stressors is now available on the university website at www.safety.ed.ac.uk/resources/health/stress.shtm

Self Defence

The popular self defence course (as highlighted in a previous issue) is being run again....interested in 45 minute lunchtime sessions for a 6 week course at a cost of £30 then please contact Janet Philp at jphilp@staffmail.ed.ac.uk

The Health and Safety Department also publishes news on a range of health issues on an ongoing basis, in the News section of their Website.

Health News

Other health related information and advice is available from the Health Promotion pages of the Health and Safety Department Website at <http://www.safety.ed.ac.uk/health>

If you have any items for inclusion in the Health Promotion newsletter or the Health News, please contact Health.Safety@ed.ac.uk

Smoothie & Juice Days



Janet Philp of the HWL group let us know that The Centre for Integrative Physiology started up their smoothie and juice days again and managed to raise a record amount of money. One of their staff was taking part in the Barnados Cairngorm challenge so the Centre donated all the takings from its smoothie day towards this. They managed to raise funds as well as awareness of the 5-a-day Fruit and Veg.

If anyone in MVM wants to run a smoothie day then please get in touch with j.philp@ed.ac.uk for ideas.

Also on the 28th of September the HRB held a cake competition to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Relief. A total of 8 entries feed all the staff at tea break and there was even a tie for first place between the chocolate brownies and the pecan apple crumble muffin. Maybe not the healthiest options but they also managed to raise £70 towards the work of Macmillan.

One example is pictured, it does look healthy with all that fruit on it!



Dates for Your Diary!

Date for your diaries (or potential for organising activity in your individual areas);

- 5th-11th November Road Safety week www.roadsafetyweek.org.uk
- 1st-30th November Global lung Cancer Awareness Month
www.macmillan.org.uk/lung www.roycastle.org/patient/cam
- 11th-17th November Mouth Cancer Awareness Week
www.dentalhealth.org.uk
- 3rd December International Day of Disabled Persons UN www.un.org

For more dates for next year contact your representative on the HWL group or Janet Craig at janet.craig@ed.ac.uk

Happy, Safe and Healthy Festive season to all!

Access to Resources

Anyone without access to the www can obtain details on any of the above information from the Health & Safety Department.

Janet Craig (51 4302), or one of the Health Promotion Group until Karen Darling returns from maternity leave in the spring (next edition).

Acknowledgements

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