Why use Reading Well Books on Prescription?

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines recommend CBT-based self-help books as a first step in the treatment of a variety of conditions, including depression, anxiety, phobias and some eating disorders.

Books on Prescription is an early intervention treatment and part of ‘watchful waiting’ at step one in the Stepped Care Model for mental health and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) provision. It can be used as a stand-alone treatment, as complementary to a pharmacological and/or a psychological approach and as a key element in a supported programme.

Books on Prescription increases the range of treatment options available and for many patients may be preferable to medication.

Working in partnership

Reading Well Books on Prescription has been developed by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians. Health partners supporting the scheme include:

- Department of Health (IAPT)
- Royal College of General Practitioners
- Royal College of Psychiatrists
- Royal College of Nursing
- British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies
- The British Psychological Society
- Mind

Reading Well Books on Prescription provides:

- A consistent approach delivered through all English public libraries
- Quality-assured resources, including a national, expert-endorsed self-help booklist and user guide
- The signposting of Reading Well Mood-boosting Books and social reading activity such as reading groups

Other reading and well-being schemes

Reading Well Mood-boosting Books

Reading Well Mood-boosting Books, the other strand of the Reading Well programme, is signposted in the Reading Well Books on Prescription user guide.

Reading Well Mood-boosting Books is a national promotion of uplifting titles, including novels, poetry and non-fiction. The books have been recommended by readers. For more information, visit www.readingagency.org.uk/readingwell

Reading groups in libraries

Reading groups can be a good way of bringing people together, promoting well-being and reducing isolation. For more information, visit www.readinggroups.org

Evaluation

We would like to contact you in the future regarding evaluation of the scheme. Please register your details by emailing readingwell@readingagency.org.uk

NICE guidelines: Depression, CG90 (2012); Anxiety, CG113 (2011); Eating Disorders, CG9 (2004)
Who is Reading Well Books on Prescription for?

Reading Well Books on Prescription is aimed at adults experiencing common conditions, including depression and anxiety. The scheme is primarily suitable for competent adult readers who can read the material and follow the suggested activities.

For people with more severe mental health conditions, referral to local IAPT services or other supported therapeutic interventions will be more appropriate than using self-help materials without guidance.

Some people may use library book collections independently as a first step in seeking help.

The Reading Well Books on Prescription user guide includes appropriate referral advice for people not currently receiving support.

Who can recommend books?

GPs may recommend self-help reading to people they might not yet refer to IAPT services or for them to use while waiting for treatment.

Other mental health professionals, such as psychological well-being practitioners, counsellors or therapists, may also recommend books.

How does it work?

Books can be recommended using the form attached to the user guide. This can also be downloaded from www.readingagency.org.uk/readingwell

Individuals then take their book recommendation to the library, where the book can be borrowed for free. If the book is not available, it can be reserved. Free reservations are available in most libraries.

Books can also be borrowed without submitting the form.

Joining the library

It is easy to join the library. In most libraries the book recommendation form will act as suitable ID if it has been signed by a health professional. Library book loans and borrower details are treated as strictly confidential.

Available resources

As well as the guide for health professionals, resources to support the scheme include a user guide (A5 leaflets) and posters (A4 and A3). These are available from your local library service or you can email readingwell@readingagency.org.uk