

OUTSIDE: Outdoor Swimming as a nature-based Intervention for Depression

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET

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Equality & Diversity Statement

We want our research materials to be as accessible and inclusive as possible regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. If you have any individual needs concerning this information sheet e.g. larger print or printed on yellow paper for instance, please speak to Heather Massey (spnt.outside@nhs.net) tel. 02392 843545.

Dear Participant,

We would like to invite you to participate in our research study, which is sponsored by the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. So you can decide whether to participate, we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. You can talk to others about the study if you wish.

Please don't hesitate to ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

In this leaflet:

- *Part 1* explains the purpose of this study and what will happen to you if you take part.
- *Part 2* gives you more detailed information about the conduct of the study.

Part 1: Background

a. What is the purpose of the study?

There is emerging evidence to suggest that outdoor swimming could have a positive impact on depression and other mental health difficulties:

- Many people describe benefits to their mental wellbeing as a result of regular open water bathing.
- People have found getting into cold water gradually reduces stress levels in everyday life and generates a greater sense of wellbeing.
- Research suggests exercise is as effective as medication and talking therapies in the treatment of depression.
- Ecotherapy - offering therapeutic intervention in nature – also benefits mood and mental wellbeing.

To find out if outdoor swimming does have an impact on depression, we want to undertake a research study called a randomised control trial (RCT). During an RCT participants who are receiving the intervention, in this case a swimming course, are compared to people who are receiving their usual care, called the control group.

- In our study, everyone will have the opportunity to attend a swimming course. However, some participants, the intervention group, will be offered the course [dates to be inserted], and some, the control group, will be offered the course after the study has finished [dates to be inserted].
- The first aim of this study is to see if people will sign up to take part and also whether they remain engaged in the study to the end.
- The second aim is to determine if people with mild to moderate depression benefit from an outdoor swimming course and explore reasons why any changes occur.

b. Can you take part?

We are looking for participants who are:

- Able to give informed written consent
- Age 18 and above
- Experiencing symptoms of low mood or depression (you don't need to have received a diagnosis of depression to take part)

There are no restrictions placed on previous experience of swimming. We welcome people who are not able to swim as well as people who can.

Unfortunately, you will not be able to take part in the study if you:

- Do not understand spoken English sufficiently to easily understand instructions from the swim teacher, as the course will be conducted in English.
- Are unable to give informed consent.
- Have any physical health problems that would make cold-water immersion a risk including significant heart problems, and untreated high blood pressure. Some accessibility and mobility needs can be supported at the London pool. Please contact Heather Massey to discuss your needs and how we could support you.
- Are currently under the care of a secondary mental health NHS service.
- Have experienced severe mental health problems such as psychosis in the past, where these problems are still present or are at moderate to high risk or recurring.
- Are currently engaging in significant self-harm or at risk of acting on thoughts to harm yourself.

c. Do you *have* to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do wish to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you choose not to participate it would be helpful if you could complete a short anonymous survey as we are keen to find ways to reduce barriers to participation.

d. What will happen to me when I agree to participate in this study?

Once you have signed up to participate, you will be randomly allocated to one of two groups by chance, so you will have a 50% chance of being in either group. During the study, one group will receive their usual care and the other group will receive an 8 session outdoor swimming course [dates to be inserted] as well as their usual care.

If you are in the group receiving usual care we will continue to keep in touch with you during the study period and you will be able to come to a swimming course [dates to be inserted], at the end of the study. This course will be slightly shorter, depending on conditions e.g. air temperature. As the swim courses will be held at different points in the year, it is useful to know that the water temperatures in October are higher than those in June and July. Many people think that because it is Autumn that the water will be colder. This is not the case, many people wanting to swim outdoors carry on into Winter.

Before the start of your swimming course, there will be an introductory Zoom session. This session will be led by your swim coach and allow you to meet the coaching team and to meet the other

members of your swim group. The coaches will be able to tell you about the course and you will have the opportunity to ask the swim coaches any questions you have.

The courses will take place at Parliament Hill Lido, Parliament Hill Fields, Gordon House Rd, London NW5 1LT. Before each session you will be met in the car park by your swimming coaches (What 3 words location **///offer.twist.cubes**). From there you will be shown to the changing facilities where you can change, once you are changed into your swimwear you will be shown how to get to the water. If you have a wetsuit and would like to wear it you can. Wetsuits will not be provided.

Please bring lots of layers of warm clothes that are easy to put on afterwards. Please also bring some suitable flip flops/ sandals to use walking to and from the water.

You will walk to the water and have 5 minutes of gentle stretching, followed by a small walk/jog. You will then go into the water, and can choose to participate in some of the following activities:

- Learning about the location
- Improving your swimming
- Floating, treading water, blowing bubbles
- Going for a short swim, if you want to
- The option of spending some time without a wetsuit at the end of the session
- Games

The time in the water will be no more than 30 minutes, for the first few sessions you will be in the water for less. After exiting the water, you will get changed into your warm easy to put on layers. Unfortunately, we will not be able to provide a hot drink due to the COVID-19 restrictions, however we encourage you to bring a hot drink in a thermos.

The course will have 8 sessions, further details will be provided by the swim coach during the Zoom session.

Please ensure you have read this information leaflet in detail. If you would like to ask any questions either complete the short contact-us form or contact Heather Massey (spnt.outside@nhs.net , 02392 843545).

If you would like to know more we will arrange a time with one of the researchers to call on the phone or via Zoom to ensure you are eligible to take part. You will need to complete the consent and health history forms.

Once you have given consent you will be asked to complete some mental health questionnaires and surveys before the start of the study. These give a score for depression, anxiety and wellbeing, we will also ask about your feelings of nature connectedness, loneliness, mindfulness and self-compassion. These will be sent to you and take no more than 45 minutes to complete and will be sent to you by email. If you have any difficulties accessing or completing the forms, please get in touch with the researchers, they can support you with the forms.

At the end of the intervention and at a follow up 8 weeks later, you will be asked to complete the same questionnaires again along with evaluation questionnaires about your experience of being a participant. The research team will support you if you need help. We will also ask for your opinions in focus groups and possibly interviews and may ask if you would like to be interviewed for a short film and podcast.

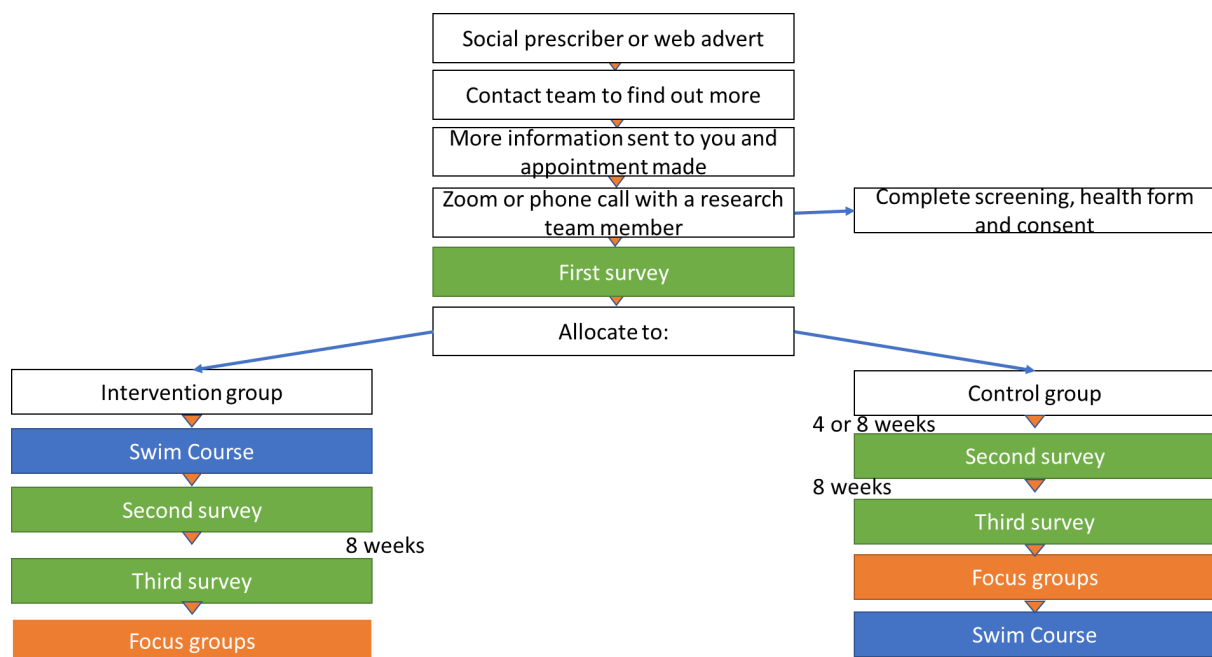


Diagram of the processes involved in the study

e. What are the side effects of any treatment received when taking part?

The water is cold, some people find this unpleasant whilst many report increased feelings of wellbeing. If you have a wetsuit you are welcome to wear this. You will be encouraged to get out of

the water before you become cold. You will be given information about what to bring with you, how to warm up after swimming and it is encouraged that you bring a hot drink in a flask to have at the end.

f. What are the possible benefits of taking part in the study?

Possible advantages may include:

- Being outside (in the sun hopefully)!
- An improvement in your mental health and wellbeing.
- An improvement in your physical health.
- You may also find being around people beneficial.

g. What are the other possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The mental health questionnaires include sensitive questions around suicide, which you may find upsetting. You will be supported by the team and signposted to further support as necessary. The team includes mental health professionals and researchers trained in mental health first aid.

People with a lot of experience of running outdoor swimming courses have designed the course in such a way that we don't anticipate any adverse consequences but, if any unforeseen complications were to occur, the instructors, lifeguards and research team will be available to deal with them accordingly.

h. Support from the research team:

If you do feel that you are experiencing a deterioration in your mental health, then it is important that you inform your swim coach. The swim coach will encourage /support you to speak to your GP or our research team clinician and so that we can offer you any extra support you may require.

i. What if there is a problem?

Any feedback or complaints about your experiences during the study or any possible harm you might suffer will be addressed. The detailed information on this is given in Part 2.

j. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. All the information about your participation in this study will be kept confidential. If you choose to participate in the short film we are producing about the research we will not be able to keep your participation confidential. Further details are included in Part 2.

Part 2: Additional Information about participation

If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please read the additional information in Part 2 before making your final decision.

a. Withdrawing from the study

You may decide at any point that you no longer want to take part in the study. . Once the data are anonymised it will not be possible to remove your data from the study. However, we will seek your permission to retain any data that is not anonymised , and if you give your consent it will be used in the study. No further data will be collected.

b. How will we ensure your safety during the COVID-19 pandemic?

If during the course, you test positive for COVID-19, we would ask you to contact the swim coach and not attend the session. We will be adopting government guidance to keep you all safe. However once you are well again and no longer COVID-19 positive we will welcome you back to the course.

c. Safety and wellbeing

Our aim is to ensure your safety and wellbeing and ensure that any untoward events will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. If you feel unwell at any point during or after your swims, please tell your swim coach. They will be able to give you advice and recommendations and will also let the study team know.

d. Complaints

If you have concerns about any aspect of this study please ask to speak with the researchers who will be happy to answer your questions (Email: spnt.outside@nhs.net, or you can contact the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust directly by contacting the:

Research Manager, 01273 242034 researchmanager@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service, Swandean, Arundel Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN13 3EP, Tel: 0300 304 2198, Email: pals@spft.nhs.uk

e. Confidentiality

a. How will we use information about you?

- i. *We will need to use information from you for this research project.* The information we collect will include your name, contact details, GP contact details, data following completion of the mental health questionnaires, evaluation forms, focus groups and interviews. Researchers will use this information to do the research or to check your records to make sure that the research is being done properly.
- ii. We will only share your name and contact details with the people who need to have the information for the study, i.e. the course provider and researchers.
- iii. We will keep all information about you safe and secure. Your data will be stored on a secure survey server using a Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust account. We will also follow all privacy rules.
- iv. We will make sure no-one can work out who you are from the reports we write. Once we have finished the study, we will keep some of the data so we can check the results. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study. When the report is finished, we will destroy information which could be used to identify you.
- v. We will inform your GP that you are taking part in the study and therefore we ask you to provide their details on the health history form. We will also ask your GP to inform us if they have any concerns regarding your participation or if any adverse events occur. Furthermore, if the health history questionnaire reveals any concerns then we will discuss this with you and inform the GP of the result.
- vi. Confidentiality may also be broken if we have concerns that you could be a risk to yourself or others. We will discuss this with you and we may ask you to withdraw from the study and course.

- vii. Otherwise all information collected during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. We will not share any data that allows you to be identified, unless you give written permission to be filmed or interviewed as part of the short film and podcast we are producing.
- viii. Data will only be accessed by members of the research team and the Trust's Research and Development Department for monitoring purposes.

b. What are your choices about how your information is used?

- i. *You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will seek your permission to keep information about you that we already have.* Once the data are anonymised it will not be possible to remove your data from the study. Any identifiable data collected will be destroyed and not analysed unless we have your permission to include these data.
- ii. We need to manage your records in specific ways for the research to be reliable. This means that we won't be able to let you see or change data we hold about you.

c. Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

- i. You can find out more about how we use your information
 - by asking one of the research team (contact details below)
 - at www.hra.nhs.uk/information-about-patients/
 - [our leaflet available from: www.hra.nhs.uk/patientdataandresearch](http://www.hra.nhs.uk/patientdataandresearch)
 - information available from: www.hra.nhs.uk/patientdataandresearch
 - by emailing the study sponsor on:
researchmanager@sussexpartnership.nhs.uk or pals@spft.nhs.uk
 - [by ringing us on 02392 843545](tel:02392843545)

f. Results

We aim to write up the results of the study and submit for publication in an open access medical or scientific journal so that we can share our findings. We would also be happy to discuss these results with you. The aim is for this study to inform future studies. We will also contact you with the study

findings and short film once we have completed the research. If you wish to have a copy of the results then you can request this from the researchers (contact details below). You will not be identified in any report.

g. Organisers

The study is being sponsored by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The course provider is CHILL CIC, with courses overseen by Mike Morris. Mike is a qualified Coastguard, Beach Lifeguard and has completed Level One Coaching for The Surf Life Saving Club. He has also completed the Open Water Swimming Safety Course run in conjunction with Triathlon England.

h. Do I have to pay?

The study is funded by the National Institute for Health Research. You will not be asked for any money towards the course, and you can claim for your travel costs to be reimbursed. Details of this can be found on the website (<https://sites.google.com/port.ac.uk/outside-website/>).

Thank you for your time.

Should you have any further questions or would like to take part you can contact the researchers:
spnt.outside@nhs.net

Anmol Jhans, *Study Research Assistant* Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Heather Massey, *Researcher*, Extreme Environments Laboratory, University of Portsmouth

Ms Hannah Denton *Counselling Psychologist* Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Amy Burlingham *Specialist Registrar in Psychiatry*, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust

Scan me for more information



If you have any concerns about your mental health, please contact:

- Your usual mental health team if you are already supported by services
- If you are not currently in contact with any mental health services, or you need help outside core hours, a weekend or bank holiday, you can phone the mental health helpline for urgent advice 0800 917 3333.
- The crisis team will offer advice, support and, if required, an assessment to understand how you are feeling. When calling the number, you can expect to speak to Mental Health Advisors and/or trained Mental Health Clinicians who will be able to listen to your concerns and help make appropriate plans with you to support you.

If you are unsure what to do, staff on this number will be able to guide you to the appropriate choice.

Other options:

- Use the NHS111 online help service or phone NHS111 if you need urgent help for your mental health, but it's not an emergency.
- Search for an urgent mental health helpline in your area.
- **Call 999 or go to A&E now if:**
 - **Yours or someone's life is at risk – for example, they have seriously injured themselves or taken an overdose.**
 - **You do not feel you can keep yourself or someone else safe.**

Mental Health Crisis additional support:

If you just need to talk, any time of day or night these services offer confidential advice from trained volunteers. You can talk about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult:

- **Call 116 123 to talk to Samaritans, or email: jo@samaritans.org for a reply within 24 hours**
- **Text "SHOUT" to 85258 to contact the Shout Crisis Text Line**