

1. What is the lifestyle support service (Bipolar & Fit)?

The lifestyle support service Bipolar & Fit is a specialized supportive intervention for patients with low levels of physical activity and excess body weight who have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder or recurrent depression. The service aims to advise and assist each individual to develop skills that will help them change their unhealthy lifestyle, as evidence suggests that such a lifestyle often leads to obesity and chronic metabolic diseases. This is an important and usually neglected problem that often becomes an additional burden to the already difficult lives of patients with bipolar disorder and recurrent depression.

2. What does it offer?

- Proposes a personalised plan of physical activity and nutritional health
- Sets realistic goals for the reduction of body weight
- Supports fitness and wellness improvement
- Aims to reduce overeating and eating disorders
- Educates patients and their family on how to implement a healthy physical activity regime and a proper nutrition plan
- Helps to improve self image and improves eating patterns and eating related stress
- Indirectly improves chronic mood difficulties
- Provides additional support in order to facilitate further engagement with exercise activities in the open field (nordic walking, trekking, jogging, swimming, sailing) as well as in the gym (aerobic and strengthening exercises)

3. What it cannot do?

The Bipolar & Fit programme cannot replace medical services. Also, it cannot involve patients who have already developed a major chronic physical illness as a result of their unhealthy lifestyle and mood disorder.

4. How it works?

Every patient who wants to take part in the Bipolar & Fit programme makes a first consultation appointment with a mental health professional who assesses their present mental condition and history. This appointment is then followed by a second consultation with a specialist exercise scientist/nutritionist who assesses their present physical health condition, lifestyle and nutritional habits. If the patient is suitable then future appointments are arranged with the exercise scientist/nutritionist who will develop an individualised treatment plan of nutritional health and

physical activity. Depending on the needs of the patient and the programme future appointments take place on a regular basis.

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