

Laughter Therapy Special Newsletter

A good laugh is great for your health... its official!

The Edinburgh based Centre of Health and Wellbeing (CHWB) has just run a series of laughter workshops which not only proved very popular, but also confirmed the health promoting properties of laughter –

Mood is improved, with **90%** of participants saying they were in a good or very good mood after the workshop, compared with **51%** before the sessions – an increase of **39%**. The effect lasted the remainder of the day on which the workshop took place.

Participants reported increased levels of happiness as a result of taking part in workshops, an average of **2.3** points per person.

These improved happiness levels could also contribute to reduced anxiety and depression in **62%** of cases, stable or increased mental wellbeing in **64%** of cases and reduced scores on the Work and Social Adjustment scale for **73%** of participants.

86% enjoyed taking part in the workshops saying they were good fun and a chance to “let go”.

95% of those who took part felt good or very good as a result of the workshops and **88%** said their mood was either improved or very improved as a result.

There are currently four forms of laughter therapy practiced in Scotland out with the work of the clown doctors in various hospitals: The Caring Clown, Laughter Yoga, Joyworks workshops, and Universal Comedy’s comedy writing workshops.

Watching comedy can also have a therapeutic effect.



Having a laugh during Joyworks workshop

Here’s what people said:

“A great atmosphere and people smiling from ear to ear”

“Fantastic, really inspiring and fun! Great for improving mood”

“Great fun, what a great idea, feels great after this. Thank you”

The CHWB is a social enterprise dedicated to developing innovative ways of improving health and wellbeing for everyone.

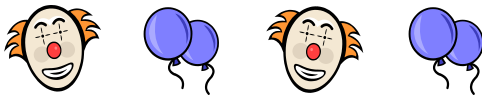


Laughter as a medicine for mind and body has been around for a long time...

Laughter has long been recognised as a strong medicine for both mind and body. As early as the 14th century

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French surgeon, Henri de Mondeville, used humour therapy to aid recovery. Parsons, sociologists and philosophers have all recommended laughter therapy in the course of their work to restore balance and release stress.



Clowns were first introduced into children's hospital in the US in the 1930's to cheer up children recovering from illness.

This practice which continues today and which has been taken up by Dr Hunter "Patch" Adams in his "Gesundheit Institute" provides a free hospital based on fun, friendship and joy in healthcare.

Laughter yoga was developed by Dr Madan Kataria and his wife in India, in the mid 1990's, and is now practiced by people in over 6,000 laughter yoga clubs, in 55 countries throughout the world.

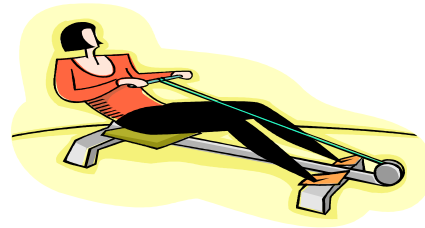
Your body will benefit from laughter whether it is real or pretend – it can't tell the difference!

The benefits of laughter are supported by scientific research...

Psychiatrist Dr William Fry of Stanford University coined the term Gelotology (the science of laughter) and demonstrated that most of the body's major physiological systems are stimulated by mirthful laughter.

He proved that mirthful laughter provides good physical exercise and can decrease your likelihood of developing

respiratory infections. It can also encourage our bodies to produce endorphins – natural painkillers. 20 seconds of belly laughing is equal to three minutes on the rowing machine.



Dr Lee Berk of Loma Linda University Medical Centre found that watching humorous videos for thirty minutes a day over the period of a year reduced blood pressure, lowered stress hormones, resulted in fewer arrhythmias (irregular heart beats) and required lower doses of medication.

In summary-

- Increased endorphin levels by **27%** (elevating mood).
- Increased human growth hormone levels by **87%** (optimizing immunity).
- Decreased cortisol by **39%**, adrenaline by **70%** and DOPAC by **38%** (reducing stress).

So if you feel in the need of a good laugh or think your staff could benefit from some de-stressing and would like to try laughter therapy then contact Dr Lubna Kerr for more information.

For more information on laughter workshops or this research project please contact...Dr Lubna Kerr on lubna@chwb.org.uk.