Mental health counselling sessions are offered in public libraries

Mental health services are a necessity to citizens of every community. Paradoxically, they can also be difficult to find or access. In Regina, SK, Canada, service providers are breaking down the barriers by partnering with public libraries. Since October of last year, free sessions have been available in two of the city's public library branches on a walk-in basis through the Thrive program. Patients sign up outside the private room for sessions lasting up to one hour.

"Libraries seemed ideal places to hold counselling sessions because they are places where people are welcomed," stated Kirk Englot of Family Services in Regina. "[Libraries] really stood out to us as a space that was non-stigmatizing so a person could talk to a counsellor about a personal challenge without anyone knowing that they're there to do that."

In public library sessions, counsellors help with stress, depression, anxiety, and family conflict. They also screen for emergencies like suicide risk. "We...provide immediate support and intervention when that is a concern or a challenge," said Englot. Since launch, the program has reached operating capacity of 80%. Read the full story (http://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/mental-health-counselling-on-offer-for-free-at-two-regina-libraries).

World Book Night promotes mental health

In its seventh year, readers in Ireland and the United Kingdom will celebrate World Book Night (http://worldbooknight.org/books) on April 23, 2018, by reading books selected to boost mental health. To support the program, publishers donate thousands of books in a variety of genres including fiction, poetry, self-help, nonfiction, and young adult. The books are distributed among vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations by volunteers and library affiliates to promote reading for pleasure, which in itself has been linked to positive changes in mental health.
“Our aim with World Book Night has always been to reach and develop new readers and we can’t wait to work again with all of the wonderful public libraries, prisons, colleges, and others who do such a terrific job of getting our brilliant books into the hands of people who don’t think reading is for them,” says Sue Wilkinson, chief executive of the Reading Agency. Read the full story (http://www.cilip.org.uk/default.asp?page=World_Book_Night_18).

World Cancer Day was observed globally
On February 4, 2018, nations around the world demonstrated their commitment to fighting cancer in their celebrations of World Cancer Day.

- In the United Kingdom, a hula hoopathon was organized to raise funds for the local cancer charity, the Living Tree. For the cost of a donation, participants came together to hula hoop for twelve hours to raise awareness. “Hula hooping is the perfect way for the community to come together and have fun whilst doing it,” says Debbie Jones, the event organizer. Read the full story (http://www.bridportnews.co.uk/news/15896389.A_massive_hula_hoopathon_is_happening_and_it_s_all_for_a_good_cause/).
- In Penang, Malaysia, a Fit-a-Thon was held to raise funds and spread awareness about cancer prevention, detection, and treatment. Activities available to participants included body combat, Zumba, tabata, and more. About 100,000 Malaysians are afflicted with cancer each year. Read the full story (https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2018/01/11/unfilled-event-to-mark-world-cancer-day/).
- In Gibraltar, all local cancer charities came together in a town square to distribute helpful information and answer questions from the public. Read the full story (http://chronicle.gi/2018/02/local-charities-mark-world-cancer-day/).

Australia invests in the future with Storytime pledge
Alan Finkel, Australia’s chief scientist, encouraged every adult to take a holiday pledge of reading to a child in their life. In addition to promoting familial bonding, the ritual enables broader societal impacts. “You can’t have a successful STEM agenda without having children who can read and write. Basic literacy is the essential building block,” said Sue McKerracher, chief executive officer of the Australian Library and Information Association.


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