

Guide for establishment, management and quality of Healthy Life Centres (HLC)

THE NORWEGIAN DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH

NFSK, Aalborg 2017

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Vi ønsker muntlig presentasjon, evt. poster.

Keywords

Healthy Life Centre, guide for establishment, health prevention, health promotion, health problems, coping, support, motivation, behavior change, cooperation, interdisciplinary, reducing social differences in health

A Healthy Life Centre (HLC) is an interdisciplinary primary health care service which offers effective, knowledge-based programs for health behavior change, and coping with health problems and chronic diseases. The HLC addresses people with disease, or in high risk of disease, who need support for behavior change. The Norwegian directorate of health has published a guide for the establishment, management and quality of the HLC.

Basic services

The HLC is part of the public health care service. HLC programs have a patient-oriented approach and aim at strengthening the individual's control of his or her own health (empowerment). HLCs offer various exercise groups, and individually or group based counselling or courses for increased physical activity, healthy diet and tobacco cessation. Many HLCs also offer counselling, support and education on issues related to mental health, sleep and alcohol. Counselling is based on Motivational Interviewing (MI). The participants get a consultation to examine their needs and motivations, and are then enrolled in a 12 week program. The duration of the program may be prolonged if needed.

Cooperation

Cooperation with other health care services, NGOs, private and public organizations and local authorities is of vital importance in order to provide continuous and integrated health care and help people to establish independent and lasting health enhancing habits. A key task for the HLC is to guide the participants into suitable and feasible local activities that they can continue with on their own after participation in the HLC. The HLCs should provide a good overview of such programs.

Results

Evaluations have shown that HLCs recruit people who do not on their own seek or participate in other services. The HLCs therefore play an important role in reducing social differences in health behavior and health. Participants need help to find appropriate services, build motivation and to create strategies for maintaining sustainable coping and behavior change. Studies of HLCs in Norway indicate that participation in the programs can lead to improved physical fitness, weight loss and improved self-perceived health and quality of life, as well as maintaining health behavior change one year after the follow-up.