ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCE SOCIETY

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RSCDS.ORG

7 steps to create a SCD* health campaign.

This document is a guide on how to create a Scottish Country Dance health campaign in 7 steps.

*SCD - Scottish Country Dance/Scottish Country Dancing

Introduction

This is a simple guide or "How to..." document which will help your organisation conceive, create and launch a campaign that can inform the general public and/or healthcare organisations and professionals about one or more of the health benefits of Scottish country dance (SCD). We all instinctively know that SCD is beneficial to our physical health and keeps us fit. However, the benefits extend beyond the physical to include psychological wellbeing, the maintenance of cognitive function and the social value of involvement in a community of dancers.

We can use information about these health benefits to promote SCD and attract new dancers to our branches and clubs. At the same time, we are in competition with a wide variety of other types of physical activity which are also beneficial to health. This guide should also assist you in making the case for SCD in particular, based on its unique attributes.

This guidance is intended to be used in conjunction with the other materials in the Health and Wellbeing Toolkit. Links are provided to these materials wherever relevant.

Here to help!

The RSCDS Health Strategy Working Group would be pleased to support branches and clubs in the creation and development of their own health campaigns, and to provide any additional information or guidance that may be helpful.

For further information or support, please contact Sebastian Wanless at: **chairelect@rscds.org**

Step 1: Choose your audience

The specific sector, health topic and age should all be considered when choosing your target audience:

- RSCDS members
- General public
- Healthcare professionals

RSCDS Members

You might decide you just want to inform your existing members about the benefits of SCD. This can be a means of retaining their interest and enthusiasm for continuing to dance. This could, for example, motivate older dancers to keep dancing, understanding that it will help them to remain fit and healthy, especially if other forms of exercise become too challenging. Publicity for young dancers can demonstrate to them how SCD helps to improve mood and develop their social network.

Find the easiest way to inform your existing members among the ways you currently best communicate with them (e.g. branch newsletter). This can be a relatively simple initiative, which will not necessarily incur all the subsequent steps details below.

General Public

You may decide that you want to attract new dancers from among the general public. You should further define "general public" in terms of geography and the realistic outreach of your organisation.

For example, if you are an RSCDS branch, you could target all the geographic areas for which you have easily accessible classes.

Choose your health topic in order to focus the campaign and its methodology. The health topic will then be closely related to the age group you should target. Note that health issues are not confined to the elderly. Young people can suffer disproportionately from psychological distress and mental health problems. Similarly, the elderly not only experience physical disability but are especially liable to social isolation. Different materials in this toolkit may be considered for use depending on the topic and age of the target audience.

Healthcare professionals

There could be some overarching benefit attained through informing healthcare professionals in your area. This linked document has been prepared especially for that purpose: Go to Resource. The correct forum or dissemination avenue would then be key. That said, informing healthcare professionals would be more impactful if combined with other initiatives described in

Step 2: Choose your health topic and objectives

Health topic

There are a number of specific topics you can choose from. You might want simply to highlight many or all of these benefits, in which case this resource could be useful: Go to Poster on Mental Health benefits Go to Poster on Physical Health benefits. However, you could get more mileage by choosing one topic at a time and publicising that topic with the appropriate audience. Each topic could contribute to "bursts" of publicity, spaced over time, thus augmenting the overall impact of your campaign.

Topics and related information

- Overall fitness Go to Poster on Mental Health benefits Go to Poster on Physical Health benefits
- Heart health Go to Leaflet
- Bone health (prevention of osteoporosis) Go to Leaflet
- Menopause Go to Leaflet
- Psychological benefits Go to Leaflet

Editible leaflets for Branches and latest resources can be found on the RSCDS Resource Library. Go to Resource Library

Objectives and Outcomes

In addition to choosing the topic, define the specific objectives of your campaign or initiative.
And it is a good idea to decide on some expected outcomes.

Possible Objectives

- Create a campaign to highlight the psychological benefits of SCD
- Create a campaign to demonstrate how SCD is good for bone health
- Educate your teachers about how to manage dancers with dementia
- Identify local newspapers and community magazines for article publication
- Educate local GP practices on the health benefits of SCD
- Provide clear pathways for clients to access your activities

Possible Outcomes

- Distribution of "X" materials to specific people or places
- Education of "X" healthcare professionals
- No. of partners identified
- Increasing number of people attending classes
- Number of teachers educated about a health topic
- Number of articles published in newspapers

Step 3: Determine the best timing

One approach has been mentioned above: "bursts" of publicity on different topics spaced over time. The timing for any individual topic could be linked to national or regional health campaigns or with the activities of partners. Alternatively, choose a time which corresponds best to your organisation's regular activities, such as the start of a new term of classes.

Step 4: Scope out local or national partners

The impact of your campaign can be significantly enhanced by partnering with aligned organisations or even individuals.

Possible partners

- Local community groups
- GP practices (GPs themselves, nurse practitioners and link workers)
- Local offices of health-related charities
- Local businesses with interests in health-related services or products
- Citizens Advice Bureau and other local government services
- Health clubs
- Libraries

GP practices

In the UK, involving GP practices would appear to be a logical approach. However, keep in mind that GPs themselves often seem to be overworked. Nurse practitioners may be more accessible. Most GPs also have personnel, who address the social needs of patients. They have different titles in different parts of the UK. For example, in Glasgow they are called link workers. Basically, they receive referrals from the GPs to handle a wide range of patients' social issues. Of particular relevance, they can "socially prescribe" physical activities, such as SCD. Find out more

Step 5: Determine methodology

Spend time deciding which routes of publicity could best serve the campaign you have in mind. As examples, please consider the following:

- Social media or other online platforms
- Hard copy leaflets or flyers for targeted distribution
- Articles in local newspapers or community magazines (see links below)
- Presentations to healthcare professionals, local charities, health clubs, etc.
- Distribution of materials from this toolkit to your organisation's members, teachers or event attendees
- Invitations to the general public to your activities (e.g. classes)

This toolkit includes several draft articles which you can use or adapt for submission to local newspapers or community magazines.
Go to Article on SCD and Menopause
Go to Article on SCD and Heart Health
Go to Article on SCD and Bone Health
Go to Article on SCD and Social Connection
Go to Article on benefits of SCD across the lifespan
A suite of small flyers highlighting the benefits of dance for specific conditions Go to Small Leaflet on Bone Health / Menopause / Social Connection. These are ideal for distribution to the general public.

Step 6: Ensure an appropriate offering

All of the above detailed steps are important, but they will not succeed if they are not followed up by appropriate offerings from your organisation. Depending on the target audience, the chosen health topic, the timing and identified partners, the publicity used should clearly direct the audience to specific activities offered by your organisation. And these activities should be carefully designed to meet the particular needs of invited individuals. The points listed below are worthy of consideration.

The offering

- Welcoming, friendly and inclusive SCD classes or dances
- Taster events targeting specific groups
- Accommodation of health issues or disabilities at events
- Education and support for teachers on how to manage dancers with health issues
- Assisting your existing members in how to best publicise the benefits of dance
- Providing appropriate materials and support to partners
- Providing clear pathways that will help partners, such as link workers direct their clients to your activities
- Providing easy to read and understand materials for newspapers or local community magazines

Step 7: Launch and evaluate outcomes

Having considered all of the above, you will be ready to launch your campaign or other health-related initiative.

- Make use of enthusiastic and educated people from among your members and partners
- Brief them thoroughly on the objectives of your initiative
- Provide them with materials needed for their own education
- Provide them with materials for publicity purposes
- Detail the timing and content of each type of activity or publicity for your helpers
- Define which information or data should be collected to evaluate the success of your initiative
- Analyse the results to determine what was successful and what could be improved for future initiatives.

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