

Emma Anderson (00:00)

Hello and welcome to this episode of Movement in Conversation, the Movement for Health podcast. We are on series two, talking to our member organisations and finding out how they support people to move more, people living with long-term health conditions across Scotland. I am delighted to welcome my guest today, Robert Nesbitt. Hello, Robert, how are you?

Robert Nesbitt (00:23)

Very well, thanks very much and it's lovely to be here.

Emma Anderson (00:25)

lovely to have you here. Thank you, Robert. Now Robert works for Scottish Action for Mental Health and Robert, you are the lead for physical activity and sport at the organisation. Is that right?

Robert Nesbitt (00:35)

Yes I am, the head of the programmes across sport and physical activity and movement.

Emma Anderson (00:40)

Excellent. Well, let's start there. Tell us a little bit Robert about SAMH as an organisation and what it is that you provide in this space across Scotland. Just tell us a little bit about the organisation first, please.

Robert Nesbitt (00:56)

So I think the really important thing to talk about the organisation is that in 2023 we celebrated 100 years.

So, SAMH has been going for 100 years, continuing to do the same thing that it's always done. It's about the rights of individuals and ensuring that people who experience mental health problems, illnesses, are supported in the right way across our communities. So we've been going about for a very long time. We have done huge amounts of work over that period, from the delivery of services to campaigns to policy to influencing

both local government and national government, local authorities, all those kind of things that we do. So there's lots that we do right across the country.

Emma Anderson (01:42)

And I would say you're very much a real partnership organisation as well.

Robert Nesbitt (01:46)

Yeah, I mean,

we always say that

The biggest impact that we have is because we're very fortunate to work with like-minded organisations at a whole variety of different levels from local to national levels who have the same values and commitment to us. So we don't do everything in isolation, we do it in partnership and collaboration. And then particularly with the people that we support, that voice, the voice of lived experience is a huge part of the work that we do. And without that, we would not be achieving things.

that we achieve. Do you support throughout the life cycle for people? We do, we do. have a whole variety of different areas across our organisation. So from children and young people right through to older adults. We have a variety of services and programmes and activities that we do.

Emma Anderson (02:17)

and you support throughout the life cycle for people.

Robert Nesbitt (02:38)

that targets those particular audiences to make sure that we are reaching in and supporting people in the way that they have identified their needs are.

Emma Anderson (02:46)

Tell us more about the area of your work that you look after. The physical activity in sport, what does that encompass? What programmes are we talking about here?

Robert Nesbitt (02:55)

think it's really important to recognise that our Chief Exec Billy Watson, when he joined SAMH, really recognised the influence and impact that sport and physical activity could have across our communities and actually didn't think we were doing enough and really wanted us to concentrate on this area. So for the last 15 years, SAMH have been in the physical activity and sports world.

working across, looking at programmes and really getting people to think about the role that physical activity and sport and having active life plays in our physical, mental and social health.

Hence why the work that I'm involved in and been doing for a number of years now within SAMH. And with that there's a variety of different areas that we have. We have programmes that are designed from physical activities to referral programmes that actually focuses on getting people more active.

for their mental health but also really looks at behaviours and how we can break down barriers, reduce the challenges that people are experiencing and help build people's skills and qualities, you and further enhance those to support them in their

day to day life. But we also do other things like research that actually we put out there into the community really influence system change

influence communities and support communities to think about the way that they do things. We also have a national charter which is funded through Scottish Government which is around breaking down barriers so that people can participate and engage and achieve.

across our sporting sector and that's about giving people the tools both in terms of workers but also people who are using services and trying to create spaces and cultures that really recognise the importance that it has on people's mental health and today we have over 800

organisations at community levels to national levels who have signed up to those commitments, who are taking action right across the country. They're not just signing up to something to say we believe in this. They're actually demonstrating that day to day about the work that they do to support people and reduce those barriers. And we also we also do work in the men's health space and the female space as well from our leadership programme, which

is a fully embedded mental health and leadership programme for young women that we do. Again, you were talking earlier about partnership. We do that in partnership with Scottish Women in Sport and work that we do with Movember around our men's health space. So those are some examples.

Emma Anderson (05:19)

Lovely.

Those are some examples. Let's touch back on the mental health charter because I know obviously through my experience with Paths for All that exceptional piece of work. Can you let our audience know a little bit more about it and what it is that people are signing up to and how they could perhaps get involved?

Robert Nesbitt (05:37)

The charter was designed to encourage sporting and physical activity communities across Scotland to sign up to a series of commitments. And those commitments were all based around how we collaborate, how we include, how we can get involved in the promotion.

Emma Anderson (05:48)

Thank

Robert Nesbitt (05:57)

and really the evidence behind showing the importance of physical activity in people's lives, in particular to reduce barriers. So it's a very simple process. You can go onto our website [www.samh.org](http://www.samh.org), look at the charter and then there's pages there that will show you how you can sign up. And by signing up, you are saying we are looking to commit to that.

So as part of that commitment and to support those individuals across organisations like Paths for All or local sporting clubs that are grassroots clubs in the heart of communities, we also give a toolkit and it shows ways that you can promote mental health through sport or physical activity.

but we also give an educational module that's there as well because we really believe that we want to build capacity so we've given toolkits and mechanisms that people can get involved and what's really important about it is free so it doesn't cost anything other than your time to sign up to it and then become part of that network right across the country which ranges from the border right up to the islands.

Emma Anderson (07:05)

Excellent. We'll put links on this recording as well so people can find that if they want to know more information and get signed up as well and join those 800 organisations in Scotland that are committing to the charter, which is wonderful. Now you touched on men's health space there and I was delighted to be invited to your lecture at the end of last year with Edinburgh University.

and there was an amazing chap that came along and spoke about some of his experiences there. I wondered if you could touch on a little bit about those programmes that are supporting men specifically and their mental health.

Robert Nesbitt (07:40)

There's massive issues, massive challenges that are happening for men across the country, particularly if you look at suicide rates, higher suicide rates than females and that has continued to be a massive issue across in an area that we want to really address. Loneliness, isolation are all part. So for the past eight or so years, we have been working with organisations like Movember who have helped to fund and share knowledge

Emma Anderson (08:04)

you

Robert Nesbitt (08:06)

alongside us in order to look at how can we target men's health and really look at what we can do within that space.

One of the programmes that we have was a programme that we started called The Changing Room and it was done across football clubs and it was a mental health literacy programme. We recognised that it was really important to look at how we empowered men to actually with the language and knowledge and understanding that could help them to be more open and look at ways that they could support themselves. So across football clubs we've now worked with over 23

football clubs across the country who run our programmes, run our Changing Room programme with us and it's a 12 week programme that is as I say is a mental health literacy programme that enables and empowers men to you know be open up and talk. What's really interesting Emma and this is really significant we used to talk about how men don't talk.

Actually, we've completely changed that view because what we now say is, they do talk, you have to just provide the right spaces that empower and enable them to speak about the challenges that they experience. And actually on Friday night, a View From a Terrace, there was a spotlight done on Changing Room up in Aberdeen. And I would encourage anybody, and I can share the link with you.

Emma Anderson (09:26)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah,

I do.

Robert Nesbitt (09:31)

But you listen to the four men and Brian who delivers the programme that we trained up to deliver the programme up there with Aberdeen Trust, the football club's trust. It's just amazing to see what they say and this is about men who are talking about those challenges and what they've experienced. But we've taken that a step further as well because we've now got Changing Room extra time.

Emma Anderson (09:37)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (09:57)

and we're doing that across a number of clubs and we're expanding that again. But again, what that's about is about real behaviour trends, really looking at the issues that men are experiencing. And I can say today that we've just got some results back from the evaluation that we've been working with with Movember. And actually, if we just take life satisfaction, there's an increase of 49%.

Emma Anderson (10:10)

Cool.

Robert Nesbitt (10:20)

for men that went through the programme. That's significant and again it's just providing the right spaces and gives men the real strength to share their experiences which are so important.

Emma Anderson (10:32)

And I love that change of narrative around the fact that men do speak and they do share, but it's about providing the right environments for that to happen and making sure that safe space exists for them.

Robert Nesbitt (10:44)

It's a big part of who we are and what we're about.

Emma Anderson (10:47)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (10:47)

We want to support communities right across Scotland to actually really help create spaces where people can participate and engage in and it really changes the culture so that we're creating spaces that are much more focused on what does a mentally healthy space look like? What can be done there? There's some fantastic work that's happening across the country, across a variety of different organisations working together that is really playing their

Emma Anderson (10:51)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (11:15)

part in that space.

Emma Anderson (11:16)

And how can, I'm envisaging that these participants on the 12 week programme, the literacy programme, do you find that they, once they come to the end of their journey of that 12 weeks, do they want to do other stuff? Do they want to be involved in SAMH further?

Robert Nesbitt (11:32)

that actually they want to not only be involved in SAMH but they also give back because a big part of that programme. So we know that people who engage and adhere to a 12 week programme

there's information, there's stats that's out there that shows that it's got a significant chance of bringing around real change for that individual. So beyond the programme, we were really clear that we were designing a programme that wasn't creating a dependency on us, that it was actually working with individuals to empower them to see the skills and qualities that existed within them.

Emma Anderson (12:08)

Okay.

Robert Nesbitt (12:08)

and for them to then look at and say, what do I want to do next? What's remarkable about it is the sense of give, one of the five ways to better well-being and what we've seen consistently across the Changing Room programme across the majority of the men that are there is that they want to give back. So they'll continue to support work, other work that maybe SAMH is doing and they will connect to that. But actually, they're also within their local communities.

So in the clubs that are there who do some amazing work around people's health at all different levels, they are connected to that.

Some of the guys are also became peer support within the programme and are giving back and coming along to support other men to not only come into the programme but be there and share their experiences. So that element of peer to peer support is significant. So for us that was part of the design. It wasn't just a byproduct. We really thought about how can we support not to become dependent on us, actually recognise their skills

their qualities to move forward.

Emma Anderson (13:13)

Yeah, it makes it much more sustainable all round for the individual and the organisation. What about then, that would you say that's a very male specific programme?

Robert Nesbitt (13:21)

Well.

We've actually done a couple of things, we've been expanding it. So we're expanding it into some other sporting environments and we're developing that. We've actually

over the last six, six to eight months now been testing out for young men as well. But we've also been doing some work looking at it for other groups, for females and other individuals who from different walks, diversity, all those kinds of things to see what it could look like.

Emma Anderson (13:25)  
Right.

Mm-hmm.

Thanks.

Mm-hmm, of course.

Robert Nesbitt (13:47)  
them. The really important thing is that you can't just do like for like, you have to look at those individual needs and that's what we continue to do. But what's also important is that all of our programmes are designed by the

particular group that we're engaging with so they're designed by and for people within those communities as well and that's really really important for us so absolutely it's about recognising those different elements and that's what we've been testing out and that's going well as well.

Emma Anderson (14:17)  
And

That's the power spot for programmes is that ownership is, it's a joint ownership then from the participants, the organisation, you know, the community in which you're trying to engage and support through this work. It's a power point which is really, it's really powerful, it's lovely.

Robert Nesbitt (14:34)  
It goes back to the tradition about SAMH that has always been there and it's about that lived experience voice and it's about programmes that are shaped by individuals who have lived experience, who have a knowledge and experience and we want to bring that into the design of our programmes because it's not about that we think this is a good idea.

Emma Anderson (14:36)  
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Okay.



Robert Nesbitt (14:53)

It's research, it's that voice that has helped shape the programmes that we design and develop with them in order to make the biggest difference in people's lives.

Emma Anderson (14:59)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

And what programmes then look specifically at female spaces or for women? What programmes do you look at there?

Robert Nesbitt (15:09)

There's a number of spaces within that. So a number of years ago, not last year but the year before.

Emma Anderson (15:16)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (15:16)

We had

been working with the University of Edinburgh around menopause and looking at the influence that menopause has on people who experience menopause, their mental health and also the role that physical activity can play in that. So the reason I mention that is that that research when we launched it has had an impact across groups. They've taken that information and they're looking at how they shape programmes. So it's not just about us designing programmes.

It's about can we support and influence the sector as a whole to start to think about things that they could be doing that might help particular groups who have particular barriers. So that was a big programme that we worked on and we worked with Professor Ailsa Niven and others within that team.

Claire Fassimans as well, all to really help shape and influence the community. And I'm still hearing today of examples where people are talking about that, they're showing work that's been done. Jog Scotland have continued to look at the role that they're playing in that space, building capacity and getting people to think about female friendly environments, but with particular focus on what does a menopause friendly space look like.

So we're seeing those kind of things. But also for a number of years ago, we looked at the impact of Scottish Women in Sport done this amazing piece of research that showed that the men and females in sports leadership was widening, it was growing.

and working alongside them we really wanted to see what can we do to tackle that and one of the things that we thought about was a leadership programme that was fully embedding mental health and leadership together. Not, here's a leadership programme we'll add some mental health but actually really think about it.

Emma Anderson (16:55)

Bye.

Robert Nesbitt (17:05)

And we started by surveying and we found very clearly from those survey results that self-confidence, self-belief, self-worth were really factors that were influencing really talented young women and women.

Emma Anderson (17:07)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (17:18)

from going into positions where their skill set could really make a massive difference in that space. So all that information and a group of young women working with both our organisations helped to design our leadership programme that is in its second year.

And we saw some amazing things that have come through that. Young women getting into positions, the voice of young women within their work life really standing up because that confidence has grown. They value that voice. They can see that voice. They're reducing barriers and playing their part. So those things are really significant for us and we want to continue to grow those spaces.

Emma Anderson (17:57)

Amazing. What about the, when we talk about mental health, just wonder if there's any

type of mental health or mental illness that is... obviously, SAMH supports all mental health. Are there bigger challenges within that though? I'm thinking about, you know, I don't like the term hard to reach at all, but there's potentially pockets that, you know, would maybe still feel that this isn't for them or that maybe they need something

different? I don't know, what's your experience with within that?

Robert Nesbitt (18:30)

It's a really good question and it's a really important area to consider. So we know that people who have lifelong mental health illnesses, you know, the health stats, the

Audit Scotland Adult Mental Health 2023 showed that people who are living with lifelong mental health illnesses are likely to die

Emma Anderson (18:39)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (18:53)

10 to 15 years younger than others who aren't experiencing that. That still remains a stat that is really significant for us and we really have to consider what does that mean and what can we do in that space. Now, we also know that the reason for that is around physical health problems.

Emma Anderson (18:56)

sure.

Robert Nesbitt (19:12)

But we also recognise that inactivity plays a huge part within that space. So the importance of really focusing on mental health illness, particularly lifelong, is an area that we continue to look to see what we can do within that space. We are currently in our organisation really focused on that in terms of how we can build capacity across our workforce within those spaces.

Emma Anderson (19:25)

That's right.

Robert Nesbitt (19:39)

Using physical activity and creating the right culture within that space. So that's a real target area and that's never changed for us but we do need to put more of a lens on that lifelong so that we'll see more work within that space and SAMH are committed to that right across our programmes not just in physical activity but other parts of the work that we do.

Emma Anderson (19:41)

Mm-hmm.

Thank

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (20:04)

You spoke about inequalities as well there and we know that individuals who are in some of the most deprived areas are an area that is really significant for us. So if we take a number of programmes, so you spoke about men's health there and you also

spoke about the work that we're doing in terms of females and the work that we, the other one would be the work that we're doing in physical activity referral space.

Emma Anderson (20:29)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (20:30)

We spent a huge amount of time really looking to target areas of deprivation and we are having some real success there because what it's about for us is reaching out, going to where people are, not expecting them to come to us.

Emma Anderson (20:41)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Robert Nesbitt (20:43)

And by doing that, building those relationships, working with community leaders, working in collaboration with other organisations, that has really made a significant difference. And we continue that practice today. If I take Achieving Active Lives Physical Activity Referral programme that we do, working with people who have mental health challenges, problems, 70 % of referrals come from the most deprived areas.

Emma Anderson (20:59)

Mm-hmm.

70 % was that 70? Okay.

Robert Nesbitt (21:10)

70 %

but that's deliberate. We have deliberately targeted that. We have, as I say, working with different people. areas of deprivation and mental health illness are big areas that we have been focused on and looking at what we can do within those spaces because they're the most risk.

Emma Anderson (21:15)

Yep.

Robert Nesbitt (21:30)

You know, they're more at risk in terms of suicide, more at in terms of health issues. Stigma is significantly, CME's survey study that they did into stigma continues to

show the influence and impact that stigma is having in those communities. So we need to really focus on that space.

Emma Anderson (21:33)

Awesome.

Thank

I know I talk about it a lot in terms of how do we support those that need us most and that's really excellent examples of how SAMH is doing that. And I was also wondering about, you've touched on referral there and this sort of, what are the different referral routes in for people in the community? think a lot of people are maybe that are listening might obviously

think about their GP and that sort of primary care example of referral, but you and I know there's lots of other types of referral as well and linking in across. So maybe if we could just break that down a little bit as to what that could look like for an individual.

Robert Nesbitt (22:23)

So within our programmes we have ultimately looked to have a broad spectrum of ways people can come into our programmes. Sometimes people are referred through existing programmes that they're in.

because some people need some support to access them because of lack of confidence in that and I think there's some really good work there. Link workers across the country refer into a number of our programmes and that connection is there, is really important. But also we also like to ensure that there's the opportunity to self-refer into some of programmes we've

Emma Anderson (22:57)

I did wonder.

Robert Nesbitt (22:59)

because it's not always available. For someone who's worked in statutory services as well, obviously there can often be gatekeepers there and that means that certain individuals who are deemed at the most need will come through that space and there's lots of people that can't access services because they don't meet a threshold or whatever it would be. We wanted to make sure in our programmes that people could access our programmes in the simplest ways.

Emma Anderson (23:06)

Mm-hmm.

you

Robert Nesbitt (23:25)

And even if someone's referring in to us who's self-referral, we've deliberately done particular things that they can get a bit of support from us that will also help them to come into the programme because fear, stigma, all these things, high levels of anxiety joining programmes. So often, again, we like to call, we will reach...

Emma Anderson (23:37)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (23:45)

out to help people to reach in with us because that's significant. It's often not that people don't want to come to programmes, they just need that little bit of support that can help them to get over those first steps. So self-referral is really important to us. We work with a lot of organisations. We make sure that we promote across groups so that they know that they can refer and they know what the criteria is and what we're trying to do. Again, if you take, I'll give you a

Emma Anderson (23:48)

Hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (24:14)

good example and if we look at Achieving Active Lives referral programme that we've got in Glasgow and Edinburgh there's something that we've engaged with 120 organisations to let them know about the programme so that reach is out there so we are connecting and building those relationships so that people access our programmes in the right way.

Emma Anderson (24:17)

Thank

Does that ever cause a bottleneck at all in terms of people waiting to get on programmes? I've come across this in some of the other organisations. We get the networking really good, we get this that and the other really good and then actually there's a huge demand for the work. So can we deliver on what we're offering? If we're going out to say 120 organisations, what does that...

waiting time or triage time look like for people?

Robert Nesbitt (25:04)

It can. It can

often mean that sometimes people are on waiting lists. We try to do staggered approaches. Also, if we take for example Changing Room, we're working with a variety of organisations, we train them up to deliver Changing Room. So again, people have different ways that they can connect and engage. So we are trying as proactively as we can so that those bottlenecks don't happen.

Emma Anderson (25:11)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (25:31)

But yes, yes, at times waitlists can be. When that happens, it's also about how we continue to communicate with an individual so that they know what it means to them and when something will be available to them. So it does.

Emma Anderson (25:33)

Mm-hmm.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Robert Nesbitt (25:46)

But it's really important you have a waiting list, you still communicate, you still engage. Because often people will say, right that's me on a waiting list. One of our commitments within SAMH is we want to create spaces where when people ask for support and help, they can get it fast. And we try to look at a whole variety of different offers that are there to be able to do that. But actually, for...

Emma Anderson (25:48)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (26:08)

It is really important to recognise that sport and physical activity can make a huge difference for people's mental, physical and social health, but it's a great example of why we need more investment in those spaces so that people aren't on long waiting lists or don't access supports that could make a difference, that could support other areas of their journey around their health needs.

Emma Anderson (26:21)

Yeah.

Yeah, especially when you already touched on the stigma and the fear and anxiety about potentially joining a group or joining a new programme. If people have built that courage up and been able to make those first difficult steps potentially for them and then to be like, now I need to wait. So it's absolutely, it's a delicate handling of those conversations with those individuals and managing that expectation.

Robert Nesbitt (26:54)

It really is Emma

So there's sensitivity around that. But one of the things that we focus in on our teams is about making sure that we spend time listening to what someone's experience has been. Because again, that experience can really influence how someone engages with you. So by taking time and listening and the importance of empathy within those spaces can make a big difference in helping people move forward.

Emma Anderson (26:58)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Okay.

Listen. Listen.

Robert Nesbitt (27:23)

move on within it but but it is you can't just take that for granted you really have to think about how you engage in that space.

Emma Anderson (27:25)

Hmm.

Absolutely. Just to touch back on the stigma that we picked up on a couple of times in that conversation, something I spoke about with Change Mental Health when I spoke to them on this podcast series as well, we were talking about the difference between the health and wellbeing space and good mental health and people living with mental illness and how

the job is not done. By any stretch of the imagination, the stigma is still absolutely rife. It's okay to not be okay, actually is it? What does that look like for people in mental illness crisis? And it's really understanding the depth of thought and empathy that these programmes have to go into to really make sure they're delivering for people.



Robert Nesbitt (27:54)

not filming.

Emma Anderson (28:17)

for people's needs at that moment.

Robert Nesbitt (28:20)

It really is,

but I think it's also really important to recognise that whole space because for someone who worked with people who required 24-hour support or supported accommodations in those kind of areas, people have experienced that.

Emma Anderson (28:26)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (28:39)

often feel stigmatised, don't feel necessarily understood. That's why it's important that we create spaces that actually people feel welcomed, they can feel part of. And not all spaces need to be about the person's mental health or engaging in their illness, but spaces where they can feel that they can come to and there's not going to be the stigma, there's not going to be the judgement and actually they're coming to spaces to protect

Emma Anderson (28:55)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (29:06)

participate in whatever that space is offering. We also, so there are real distinctions between them. So how do we create spaces where there's real choice and involvement and people engage? Because I know a number of individuals who have lifelong mental health conditions, illnesses, and they go to particular spaces and they like going to that space because it's not

Emma Anderson (29:09)

Thank

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (29:32)

about their illness. It's about social connectedness, it's about taking part and they feel that they can be open within that space and they participate and engage to spaces where people don't see that they can be part of because they're so worried about the stigma and the judgement.

Emma Anderson (29:49)

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (29:50)

So we do need to look at how we do different things, how we understand those spaces. We spend quite a bit of time with a number of partners around giving advice, guidance, knowledge and understanding with them.

Emma Anderson (30:05)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (30:05)

So

if we take the work we do with Sports Scotland, for example, Sportscotland have worked really closely with us in that partnership to build capacity through learning and development that has meant that active schools, staff and managers across the country have went through mental health training, which is meaning that conversations are taking place when people are struggling and actually knowing their role.

Emma Anderson (30:08)

Mm-hmm.

you

Robert Nesbitt (30:30)

and what part they can play in that, when to signpost, when they can connect. there's a real opportunity within this space to do things right across and people can have different parts of that journey that really helps. But you're absolutely right, there's lots of things we need to celebrate.

Emma Anderson (30:49)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (30:50)

But there's also things that we need to say, actually let's take a step back and really look and see what can we do next that's going to make a real difference.

Emma Anderson (30:58)

Yeah, and having that focus on sport and physical activity, historically I think has always been born out of community and tribes and finding your community and finding your tribe and this culture of belonging which is so important for people that potentially feel so isolated whilst living with their mental health.

illnesses and conditions.

Robert Nesbitt (31:24)

Completely, if we actually just look at us all as individuals, there are certain things that we really like. We often like to have a sense of structure in our lives and we also like to have a sense of purpose.

Emma Anderson (31:33)

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (31:36)

And if we've got those kind of things, it can often give us a real sense of we're belonging to something, we're playing our part, we're doing something. I'm really fortunate, you know, I've been spending quite a bit of time up in Orkney doing work across that.

community with my team and it's about building capacity, it's about development resources and we're working across a variety of organisations, mental health organisations that's up there, community learning, active school sports development clubs and what is absolutely wonderful about any time I'm up there is this real openness to actually play their part. What can we do? How can we do it together?

And again, it's all about wanting to make a real difference. And the question that we get asked a lot is, what can I do that's going to help me to be more open or be able to respond better to those needs? And the very fact that people are coming to the table and actually saying, what can we do together, I think makes the big difference that's here.

Emma Anderson (32:39)

Yeah,

they already recognise the power of that space which is wonderful. So what else can we expect from SAMH this year? We're March 2025. What does this year look like for yourself? Anything in the pipeline you want to share?

Robert Nesbitt (32:51)

Already.

Oh goodness, what a great question to ask. Let me answer this in two ways. I think you can expect the continuation of areas that we've been doing because we continue to see the importance of working in partnership. We're going to continue to do more of that. We are also, we'll be doing some further research and looking at...

children and young people, young women, in relation to mental health and physical activity, active lives and the menstrual cycle because we know the barriers that are there and we're going to be doing that in partnership. that will be done over the next year and again it will just add to that other life stage part which is really exciting. You'll see more and more collaboration work.

as we continue to, we see the value of it. We're really lucky to have some amazing partners out there that work in the Movement for Health Coalition. There's some fantastic organisations that are really playing their part there. We want to continue to play our part and share knowledge, share learning, work together so you'll see more of that. I spoke about Orkney.

We are continuing to look at that whole island approach and work with some amazing organisations up there and amazing individuals. I've actually got a meeting today that's going to focus more on that. So we're going to be doing that leading up to the island games and beyond. that's going to build on the fantastic work and experience of the World Athletics Indoor Championships.

working with volunteers so we want to see more of that happening across our communities and we want to see more capacity building. We want to continue to raise the importance of the importance of active lives across our health. But actually, you know, we will soon be launching our direction

of travel as an organisation so watch this space, watch this month because there's a teaser that will give you a real sense of where some of our focus is going to be as an organisation going forward building on the really good stuff that's already happened so more of that and there's just lots of different areas that we continue to focus on

Emma Anderson (35:03)

Mm-hmm.

you

Robert Nesbitt (35:23)

I would also say that I spoke about earlier, we are still going to really target where the greatest need is and where a big area is definitely about reducing those barriers and about the inequalities that we're seeing across

Emma Anderson (35:29)

Good.

Robert Nesbitt (35:38)

communities. So that whole approach to local people, local communities is going to be a key element of what we do. And I'm excited because we've also going to be doing some work again with Camanachd Association, so Shinty and the sports hubs that are up in Lochaber and Skye and doing some work up there around young people's mental health and the power of

Emma Anderson (35:43)

Okay.

Mm-hmm.

Robert Nesbitt (36:02)

physical activity in that space. So there's a few.

Emma Anderson (36:05)

Fantastic,

well you'll be busy. You'll be busy and I can't wait to potentially see you play Shinty, Robert. Looking forward to that.

Robert Nesbitt (36:12)

I've

already tried that and it was fantastic. There's such a sense of community across that. Those generations is just fabulous. But I would be amiss. Listen, one of the things that I love more than anything is the team that I've got. And I've got an amazing team here who work.

Emma Anderson (36:17)

Excellent.

Robert Nesbitt (36:35)

really hard who are out there being really visible, connecting with people. So you're going to see more of that team out there and the talent that they have. So I'd be a really amiss if I was to not recognise or see the fantastic stuff that they do.

Emma Anderson (36:51)

Thank you, Robert. Thank you to you and your team who are working so hard in this space and thank you for your continued support for the Movement for Health work, the coalition and the work programme. SAMH is such a valued asset to Scotland's landscape and our sector. So thank you to you and your colleagues.

Robert Nesbitt (37:10)

It's really nice to hear. Again, we're very passionate about what we do. I've worked for SAMH for over 28 years now and one of the reasons that I continue to be with SAMH is because of that continued commitment and the wonderful people that are doing great work that's making a real difference in individuals lives.

Emma Anderson (37:15)

Mm-hmm.

Great. Well, thank you, Robert, and thank you for listening to today's podcast with Robert Nesbitt from SAMH, Scottish Action for Mental Health. We are very lucky to have you. And as we've mentioned quite a few programmes and things on today's episodes, we'll make sure to put the links in the blurb that accompanies the episode on our channels.

So thank you for listening. If you've enjoyed listening to Robert from SAMH today, please make sure you tune in and listen to our other member conversations so you can hear how our member organisations are supporting more people living with long-term health conditions in Scotland to move in fun, accessible, safe ways. Thank you for listening and we'll see you next time. Bye bye.

Robert Nesbitt (38:15)

Take care.