

## Improving Mental Wellbeing – Lyndsey’s Story

*Theme: mental wellbeing, individual development, women and girls*

### Defining the Issue

Nearly one in four young women has a mental illness, with young women aged 17-19 being twice as likely as young men to experience mental health issues. Sport and physical activity can have significant impact on people’s mental wellbeing, as Lyndsey from Blackpool discovered in table tennis.

### Background Information

Lyndsey became interested in table tennis through her brother at Blackpool Table Tennis Club, but stopped playing aged 11 due to other commitments. Aged 16, Lyndsey missed the sport so started playing again, quickly picking up where she left off and helping to coach at beginner sessions.

Having battled with mental health issues since the age of 12, at 16 years old Lyndsey had a mental breakdown and was diagnosed with OCD shortly after returning to Blackpool Table Tennis Club. During this time, Lyndsey would only leave the house to play table tennis, resulting in her club providing a sense of belonging when she felt she didn’t belong anywhere else.

### The Impact

In the time after her breakdown, Lyndsey would only leave the house to play table tennis, resulting in her club providing a sense of belonging when she felt she didn’t belong anywhere else.

Brian Jackson, who is a prominent figure at the club, quickly became a role model for Lyndsey and encouraged her to explore other areas of table tennis aside from just playing. This led to Lyndsey gaining her Level 1 Umpire badge and passing her Level 1 Coaching course

*“I will never be able to give back as much as table tennis has given to me. It’s a community that is so loving and allows you to be yourself. When no one else understood me and when I most needed a place to belong, table tennis gave me that. I don’t know where I would be now without table tennis”*

Lyndsey plays in her local league, captaining the team and volunteering at local tournaments. She plans to attain her Level 2 coaching qualification and continue to give back to table tennis.

