

Better Mental Health Toolkit



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	INTRODUCTION
05	THE 5 WAYS TO WELLBEING
12	CONVERSATION STARTERS
14	WELLBEING ACTION PLANS
20	RESOURCES
27	GETTING HELP AND SUPPORT

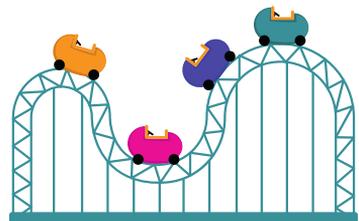
Our wellbeing and mental health

We all have mental health in the same way we have physical health. So sometimes you're in tip-top health and sometimes your body gets ill or gets hurt. In the same way your mental health can change, sometimes:

- You're feeling great!
- You're just about OK
- You can be a bit down in the dumps
- Sometimes your mental health can get to the point where it's not OK at all and it's important to get some extra support.



But it doesn't happen in a straight line. Our wellbeing can change depending on what's happening to us and around us. Sometimes it can feel a bit like being on a roller coaster!



Factors that affect mental health

We all go through difficult times and have to deal with life's challenges, it can be a normal healthy reaction to feel negative emotions as a result.

It is important to remember that we are all different, there is no "right way" to react to events or challenges, as this can be different for us all.

There are a variety of factors that affect our mental health and wellbeing, influencing how we think and respond to situations, for example;



- Our genes
- Life experiences
- Upbringing
- Environment



It can also depend on how well other parts of our life are going such as personal relationships and health, or how supported we feel.

Being aware of these factors may make it easier to understand when we, or someone we care about, are struggling.

5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

The benefits of the 5 ways to well-being:

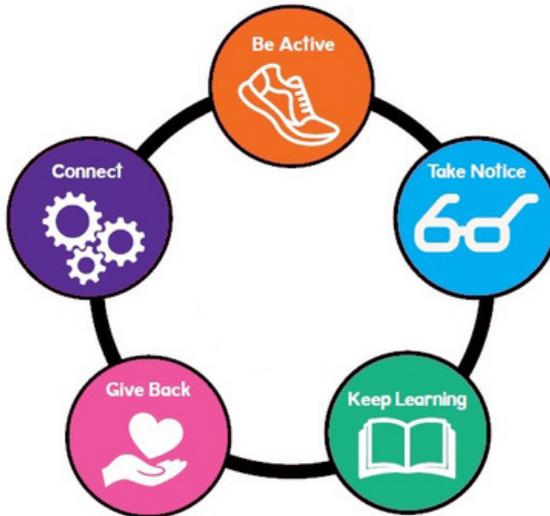
Connecting improves sense of belonging and self-worth

Being Active improves mood, increases energy and self-confidence

Noticing helps to calm the mind and understand ourselves better

Learning new skills can give a sense of achievement and boost confidence

Giving acts of kindness can increase sense of purpose and life satisfaction



Well-being is about feeling good and doing well in your day to day life. The biggest difference we can make is to develop awareness and skills to help us look after and think about our own well-being. Each of the 5 ways are actions we can all take to improve our well-being and make a positive difference about how we feel.



Be Active

in Sandwell

TOP TIPS TO BE ACTIVE:

- Take the stairs instead of the lift
- Park further away than you need to, so you have to walk a little further
- Get off the bus one stop earlier
- Go to an exercise class (there's lots going on locally)
- Put the TV remote in another room, so you have to get up and move around every time you want to change channel.





Take Notice

in Sandwell

TOP TIPS TO TAKE NOTICE :

- Turn off the TV when you are eating, and take time to focus on the food and how it tastes
- Take a deep breath and look around- what do you see?
- Visit a shop you've never been into before
- Walk to the local park, and take time to notice what's going on around you
- Think about one thing that made you feel happy over the last few days.





Keep Learning

in Sandwell

TOP TIPS TO KEEP LEARNING

- Try a new recipe and cook something different
- Do a puzzle from the paper
- Go along to a class or sign up to a course. There's loads going on in your local libraries and community centres
- Brush up on your IT skills from a friend or relative
- Learn a new word.





Give Back

in Sandwell

TOP TIPS TO GIVE BACK:

- Offer to make a cup of tea at work
- Give your unwanted clothes and bits to a charity shop
- Help someone with their bags on the train or bus
- Say thank you to someone who does something nice for you
- Become a blood donor
- Let another car pass in traffic
- Help out at a school or community event
- Volunteer.





Connect

in Sandwell

TOP TIPS TO CONNECT MORE:

- Show interest in a friend or colleague's life
- Have lunch with someone new
- Text someone you haven't contacted in a while
- Ask a neighbour how they are
- Make some time to spend with a friend or family member and do something fun together
- Look at what's going on in your local library or community centre
- Find out about groups you could join.



My Wellbeing

Pledge Card



Use this page to make your pledge, and to remind yourself of what you can do to help you feel good.

I WILL...

Connect: _____

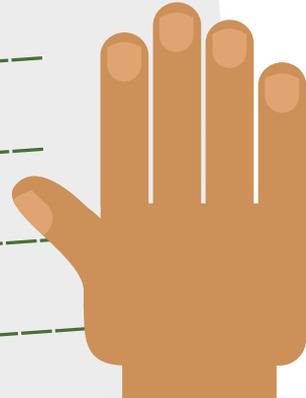
Move More: _____

Notice: _____

Learn: _____

Give: _____

Help: _____



How to start the conversation

Talking to people about their thoughts and feelings, what they want to achieve, and what's going on in their lives, is a really important thing to do.

Starting a conversation and showing you're willing to listen, will give the person an opportunity to talk, whenever they are ready.

Ask open questions, encourage them to talk and give them the time to talk



Ask what support network they feel they have access to



CONVERSATION
TOP TIPS

Open with statements like; you don't seem yourself today, are you ok, do you want to talk about it, is there anything I can do to help?

Ask about hobbies and interests, and link to positive feelings

Conversation top tips

Some people might not feel confident to talk about their wellbeing and how they are feeling. Here are some top tips to help and give alternative options;

TOP TIPS TO TALK MORE:

- Write down a list of things you want to discuss with someone before you meet them
- Ask someone you trust for advice and talk through your problems
- If you find it hard to speak to someone in person, email or text the information
- Make a list of three things that are important to you, and share these with friends and family.



Wellbeing Action Plans

Whats the WAP?

The Wellbeing Action Plan is for everyone wherever you're at. It's full of self-care ideas and great reminders about the things that help you to do well and keep you feeling OK!



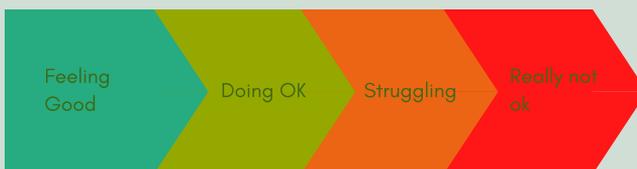
The WAP can give you tools to help you recognise when you need to get support and how to find it.

YOU are unique and your plan should be too.

Choose things to add to your plan that are going to be best for YOU.



It's a good idea to revisit and refresh your plan every so often as our mental health and wellbeing changes for all sorts of reasons... and it can be encouraging to check-in and see how well you're doing...





Things that support my wellbeing

Let's think about some things that can help support your wellbeing...



What makes you feel happy?



What has worked for you before?



What helps you relax or feel calm?



What new thing would you like to try?



What can act as a distraction from your worries?

What makes you happy?

What has worked for you before?

What new thing would you like to try?

What helps you relax or feel calm?

What can act as a distraction from your worries?



Things to avoid when I'm feeling low

Sometimes when we are feeling down we can make ourselves feel worse by some of the things we do...

Things that cause me to feel low.

Things I need to avoid because they make me feel bad or worse

Signs that I am becoming low

Specific triggers or challenging situations

Things that other people can do to help are

Things that cause me to feel low:

Signs that I am becoming low:

Things i need to avoid because they make me feel bad or worse:

Specific triggers or challenging situations:

Things that other people can do to help are:

Who do you think you could talk to if you need help and support?

Are there any websites / helplines you want to include in your plan?

Write a list of people who could help you and how to get hold of them.

Resources



Be mindful

Mindfulness is all about slowing down and paying attention to the present moment. When people are being 'mindful' they are taking active steps to reconnect with themselves.

Being more aware of the present can help our mental health and wellbeing as it lets us enjoy the world around us, as well as to understand ourselves and how we're feeling.



How to get started with mindfulness

- Reminding yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you is the first step to mindfulness.
- Notice the everyday sensations to switch off the autopilot mode we often operate in day to day.
- Try to pick a regular time each day to practice mindfulness.
- There are lots of apps to help guide mindfulness like [Calm](#) and [Headspace](#), as well as introductory courses.



Yoga Poses

Regular yoga poses can reduce levels of stress and make your heart healthier. Try the poses below to get started.



Sphinx



Butterfly



Tree



Cat



Child's Pose



Downward Dog



Warrior 1

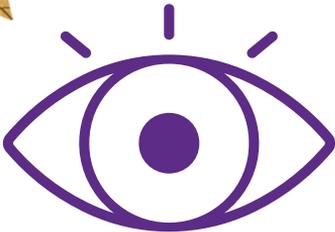


Extended Puppy

Eye Spy

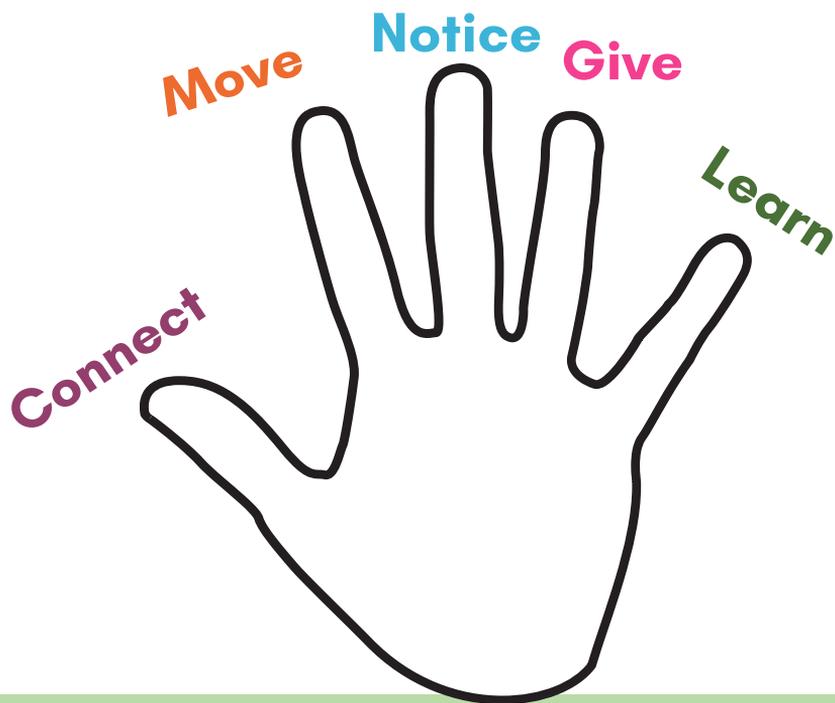
Before you start your day, take some time to become fully aware of yourself and with your environment. Just simply name 2 things you can hear, 2 things you can see and 2 thing you feel.







Handy checker



Think about and write down what you do in your life for each of the 5 ways to wellbeing

Do you have a good balance across all of the 5 ways to wellbeing?

Measuring wellbeing

How are you?

A question we are often asked but can be hard to answer honestly and accurately. This wellbeing tool is called the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) and measures wellbeing through the 14 statements below. It is designed for people to self-complete, but importantly, is not intended to replace a consultation with a GP or other health professional if you are struggling or are not OK;

- Read the 14 statements about your thoughts and feelings over the past 2 weeks
- Score each statement between 1 and 5 based on the scoring criteria
- Add up your scores

1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future.
2. I've been feeling useful.
3. I've been feeling relaxed.
4. I've been feeling interested in other people.
5. I've had energy to spare.
6. I've been dealing with problems well.
7. I've been thinking clearly.
8. I've been feeling good about myself.
9. I've been feeling close to other people.
10. I've been feeling confident.
11. I've been able to make up my own mind about things.
12. I've been feeling loved.
13. I've been interested in new things.
14. I've been feeling cheerful.



You may find that your mood goes both up and down, depending on what is happening in your life so try not to get hung-up on the scores. The tool is most useful to monitor how you are feeling over time. It's important to remember that if you score and are feeling low, then talk to somebody. This can be somebody you know and trust or a health professional, there is a list at the back of this booklet of useful contact numbers and links.

My wellbeing

Score:									
Date:									

- If you feel like this NONE of the time. Score 1 point.
- If you feel like this RARELY. Score 2 points.
- SOME of the time. Score 3 points.
- OFTEN: 4 points.
- All the time: 5 points.

Under 32 points: Your wellbeing is very low.

32-40 point: Your wellbeing score is below average.

40-59 points: You wellbeing score is average.

59-70 point: Your wellbeing is above average.



Getting help and Support

A full up to date list of services, helplines and websites is available at

www.healthysandwell.co.uk/talk



-  www.sandwellhealthyminds.nhs.uk
-  Black Country Mental Health Helpline - 0800 008 6516 (24/7 Helpline)
-  Papyrus (Crisis Line) - 0800 068 4141 (Hopeline UK 9am - Midnight)
-  Samaritans - 116 123
-  Kaleidoscope Sanctuary hub - 0800 008 6516
-  Cruse Bereavement Care - 0808 808 1677 (Helpline, Monday - Friday 9.30am - 5pm)
-  Tough Enough To Care (Local Men's support group) - 07398 933 134
- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) - 0300 111 5065 (National Helpline, Mon to Sun 9am - 9pm)

Find other health & wellbeing services near you;

 <https://route2wellbeing.info/>

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING, IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU GET SOME HELP.



