

Looking After Your Own Mental Health and Wellbeing

Information Sheet

What Is Wellbeing?

Being aware of our mental health and wellbeing helps us to recognise how we are feeling. This can be thought of as how comfortable and healthy we feel. This awareness can clarify positive emotions that make us feel good because they give us a sense of purpose and engagement. Our mental health and wellbeing can affect how we behave, how we act towards others and how we cope with what is going on around us.

Positive mental wellbeing can therefore support us in coping with difficult times. It means we are able to acknowledge and understand the different emotions we feel and have coping strategies for those which might make us uncomfortable.

How Can We Support Our Own Wellbeing?

When considering how to support positive mental health and wellbeing, there are five areas that can be useful.

- Stay connected – talk to others and make time for friends and family to share experiences and understanding.
- Get active – physical activity has benefits for both physical and mental wellbeing.
- Keep learning – invest time in a hobby or interest.
- Share kindness – being kind to those around us supports the wellbeing of others as well as our own.
- Be mindful – take time to focus on the present, settle and steady the mind and body and calm a racing mind.

By taking time to support our own mental health and wellbeing, this will in turn have a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children in our care.

Practical Ideas for Looking After Our Wellbeing at Home

Connect with Nature

- Getting outside has many benefits for our mental health and wellbeing. It can:
 - improve our mood;
 - help us feel more relaxed;
 - reduce stress or anger;
- improve physical health and help us to be more active;
- build confidence and self-esteem.



Embrace Hygge

Our home environment can have positive effects on our mental health and wellbeing. Hygge is a Danish concept that encourages cosy feelings of contentment. Simple ways to embrace hygge and make small tweaks to achieve benefits can include:

- spending time outside;
- bringing nature indoors;
- getting cosy with fluffy socks and a hot drink;
- lighting your home in a way that feels calm;
- focusing on the present and putting devices to one side.



Get Active with Exercise

The mental and physical benefits of exercise are well documented. Getting active releases feelgood chemicals and relieves stress. Finding time to build exercise into our day can support positive mental and physical health. This could include:

- online workout sessions;
- yoga;
- running;
- cycling;
- team sports.



Get Social

This can be achieved by finding time for a good catch up with friends or family which may be virtual or may be in person. By connecting with others, we often get the chance to discuss positive aspects of our own day and broaden our perspective by hearing about that of others. This may mean:

- coffee with friends;
- walks with family;
- joining local community groups.



Invest Time in a Hobby

Investing time in a hobby or craft can be very beneficial for mental health and wellbeing. Hobbies which involve a crafting element in particular can:

- boost our mood, by reducing worry and increasing happiness;
- ease stress as the focus and concentration on crafting can be a distraction from the thoughts that prompt feelings of worry or anxiety;
- create communities with shared interest promoting wellbeing and compassion for others;
- promote physical and psychological connections.

Happy Self-Talk

Sometimes, the person we speak most negatively to is ourselves. Self-talk can come in the form of harsh criticism or judgement about our work or behaviour. If we allow ourselves to listen to this chatter, it can have an impact on our self-esteem and confidence. We have the choice: whether to listen to this chatter or to try to encourage a positive view of ourselves. By talking to ourselves kindly and gently, we can improve our productivity and self-image. We can show ourselves kindness by:

- acknowledging thoughts and feelings but accepting that they do not dictate mood or behaviour;
- keeping it simple and looking for the good in each part of the day;
- accepting that we make mistakes and viewing our own with kindness and compassion;
- having a bank of positive affirmations to remind ourselves of how well we are doing at being the best we can be.

If you are concerned about your mental health and wellbeing, there are organisations which offer information, advice and support. You can visit www.mind.org.uk or contact your GP for further information.