

buzz

Manchester
Health & Wellbeing
Service



Five Ways to Wellbeing

A guide to improving
your mental wellbeing



Produced by buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service
in partnership with Manchester Primary Care Mental Health Team.
Further copies and enquiries available by contacting buzz on 0161 882 2583
Twitter @buzzmanc www.buzzmanchester.co.uk

© buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service. All rights reserved, not to be
reproduced in whole or in part without the permission of the copyright owner.

Designed by sunmythinking.com

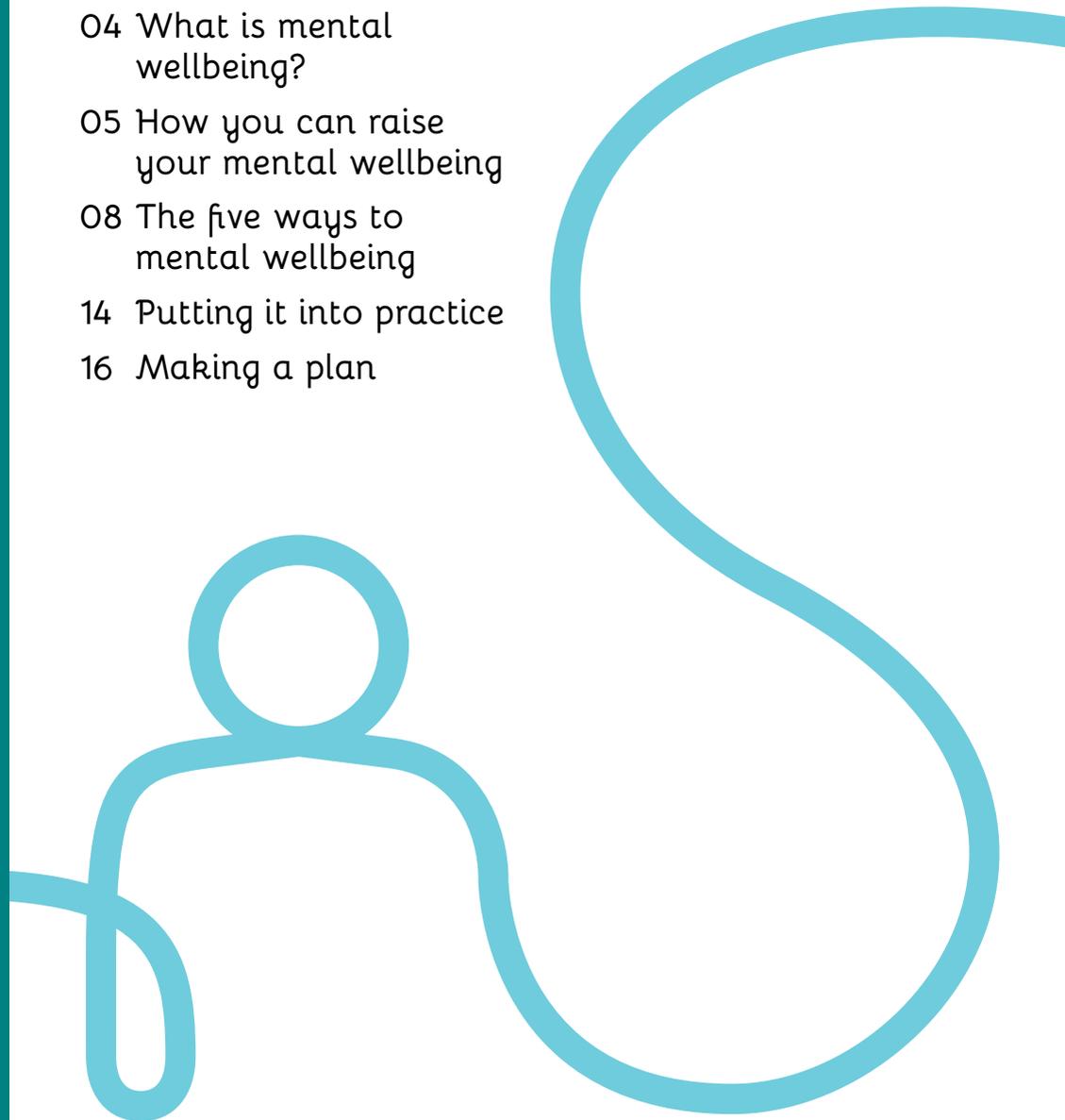
www.buzzmanchester.co.uk

This guide is one of a series about mental health and wellbeing by buzz Manchester Health & Wellbeing Service. You can find more guides at www.mhim.org.uk

'Five Ways to Wellbeing' are a set of evidence-based actions to help improve people's mental wellbeing drawn from Foresight's Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008).

Contents

- 04 What is mental wellbeing?
- 05 How you can raise your mental wellbeing
- 08 The five ways to mental wellbeing
- 14 Putting it into practice
- 16 Making a plan



What is mental wellbeing?

Feeling good and living well

Mental wellbeing means you feel good about yourself and the way you live your life. Most of the time you feel relaxed and useful, you can think clearly, solve problems well and make up your mind about things. You feel close to other people and look forward to the future. You're generally satisfied and content. You're ready to try new things too and don't just sit back and let life pass you by. It means that you can usually deal with bad times and changes, and know when you need support from others.

Resilience

Good mental wellbeing can help you to live a longer, happier and healthier life. When you face tough times you are able to cope. This is called having resilience. Building your mental wellbeing and being resilient can even reduce your risk of having poor mental health. Even if you are living with poor mental health or a diagnosed mental health problem, it is possible to have good mental wellbeing, to have strong resilience and to live well with the condition.

When times are bad

If you generally have good mental wellbeing, you can cope with changes and bad times, or with illness better. Big life events such as the death of a loved one, divorce or losing your job can be tough to deal with. Even pleasant ones, like having a baby, moving home or getting a new job, can be hard to handle. Good mental wellbeing helps you to cope better with life's ups and downs.

What if you haven't got it?

Don't blame yourself if you haven't got good mental wellbeing but do try to do something about it. Ask others for support to help you to improve your mental wellbeing and use the tips in this guide as a start.

This guide can help

This guide aims to help you to think about what's good for your mental wellbeing and what will help you to make it even better.

How you can raise your mental wellbeing

There is evidence to suggest that wellbeing is based on:

- Your situation in life
- Your relationships with others
- The things that you do
- The life skills you have
- The things that have happened to you
- How resilient you are

These things affect how well you feel, and how well you deal with what life throws at you. They are hard to control or change, especially if you try to do this on your own without support.

There are ways to improve your mental wellbeing and increase feelings of happiness and fulfilment so that you can get the best out of life.

Research has found that there are five ways which help people improve their mental wellbeing. There is evidence to suggest that people with good mental wellbeing do more of these five things.

The 'five ways to mental wellbeing' are simple activities anyone can do to help themselves to feel better. It's about small steps, to build on what you may already be doing.



“Good mental wellbeing helps you to cope better with life’s ups and downs.”



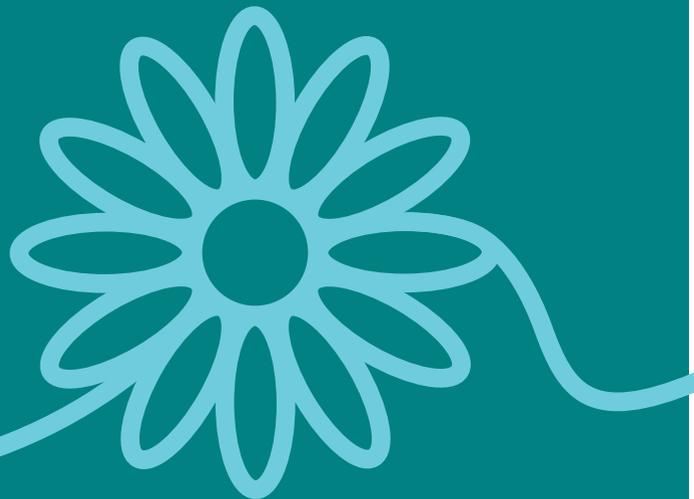
The five ways to mental wellbeing

Just as we aim to eat five pieces of fruit and vegetables each day to improve our physical health, there are also five things that we can do to improve our mental wellbeing.

These are:

1. Be active
2. Connect
3. Give
4. Keep learning
5. Take notice

Find out more on the next few pages and for each of the five ways, fill in the boxes with what you do already and what new things you would like to try.



1. Be active



Just ten or 15 minutes of physical activity a day can make a difference to your mental wellbeing.

Go for a walk, or run, or cycle. Play a game or sport. Gardening and dancing are good exercise too. Find something that you enjoy and suits your level of mobility and fitness. It doesn't mean you have to try to run a marathon or go to the gym every day.

What do I do already?

What would I like to do?

2. Connect



Connect with people around you like your family, friends, colleagues or neighbours.

If you've become a bit isolated, you may find it difficult to connect with people. You don't have to throw a big party. Try to build a better relationship with just a few people to start with. It is worth spending some time and effort to build up your connections.

What do I do already?

What would I like to do?

3. Give



Do something nice for someone, it could be a friend or a stranger.

Some people find giving easy and find it harder to receive – whether gifts or compliments. It makes you feel good to give, and makes the other person feel good too. Thanking someone or giving them a smile could make their day. If you aren't sure where to start, you could volunteer your time for an organisation or local group. Remember to give yourself some time and treats as well.

What do I do already?

What would I like to do?

4. Keep learning



Try something new or pick up an old interest.

Start a formal course to gain qualifications to help with a job or learn a new skill such as how to play a musical instrument. Learning can be hard if it feels like a chore. You may have had a poor experience of formal learning at school or college, so you could think about more informal ways of learning such as learning how to cook your favourite food or how to fix your bicycle. You can also learn from reading, listening to the radio or watching television.

What do I do already?

What would I like to do?

5. Take notice



Be curious about what's around you and about people.

To take notice is to be in the present, in the 'here and now'. It means being aware and mindful of your surroundings, and what is happening around you. It can mean pausing, even for a brief period, to spend some time in silence and notice the changing seasons, trees and plants. Be aware of your feelings and reflect on your experiences.

What do I do already?

What would I like to do?

Putting it into practice

When we decide to change our behaviour or learn new skills, we need to put them into practice and make conscious attempts to keep doing them regularly.

If we don't make the effort, it's easy to slip back into old unhealthy ways. So start with things which are easy for you to do.

The 'five ways to mental wellbeing' can be free and easy to do and you can link them together, such as going for a walk with a friend, helping an elderly neighbour to do their shopping, learning to ride a bicycle, going to the local museum or art gallery.

By being aware of all the small steps you are taking, you can build the 'five ways to mental wellbeing' into a healthier lifestyle for yourself.

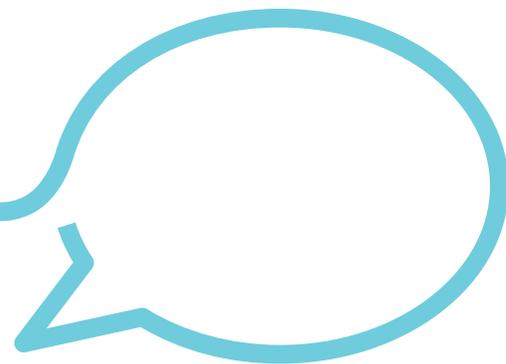
As you develop your strengths and resources you will also be more resilient and more able to deal with challenges when they arise.

Do a bit more of things you are doing already. Try things out that you enjoy, and notice the difference.

Then check which of the 'five ways to mental wellbeing' you're doing least of. That will help you to focus on what you can do more of to gain a better balance.

If you find some of the 'five ways' difficult, you might want to talk to a friend or health professional to get ideas of what you could do and how.

“It's about small steps, to build on what you may already be doing.”



Making a plan



Now that you have learnt about the 'five ways to mental wellbeing' its time to make your own plan. Fill out the questions below to help you think about where to start.

If you don't manage to do what you plan, don't be hard on yourself. Try something else, until you find what suits you.

1. What am I going to do first?

2. When will I do it?

3. What might stop me from doing it, and how will I overcome this?

4. Is what I plan to do:

Yes

No

Useful for understanding or changing what I do?

Measurable, so that I will know that I've done it?

Realistic, practical and achievable?

5. How could using the 'five ways' have a positive impact on my personal and professional life?

6. What will prompt me to use each of the 'five ways'?

7. Is there anyone I'd like to ask to support me in this or share this with?

