

## MEASURING MENTAL WELLBEING

### Using the *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale* (WEMWBS) to measure mental wellbeing as an outcome of your intervention

Improved mental wellbeing is a key national population outcome and a fundamental part of being a healthy and resilient individual. It is also a key outcome for and determinant of physical health, for example:

- Effectively managing long term conditions
- Reducing obesity, heart disease and other illness
- Making healthy life choices
- Recovery from illness

Mental wellbeing is about having control and influence, a sense of meaning, belonging and connection and the capability to manage problems and change. It is therefore central to family life and parenting, educational attainment, employment & work productivity, community participation, cohesion and safety and reducing crime.

**The ChaMPs Public Health network recommends the use of WEMWBS to measure mental wellbeing as an outcome of programme and service intervention, in line with the Public Health Outcomes Framework.**

### What is WEMWBS?

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)<sup>1</sup> is a validated measure of mental wellbeing that has been used nationally, regionally and locally and seen as an effective tool. There is a 14-item and a 7-item (sWEMWBS) questionnaire that produces a single score. It is self-completed (for people aged 13+) to record 'statements about their thoughts and feelings over the past two weeks'.

### Why use WEMWBS?

The findings can be used to establish whether a specific population has low, average or high mental wellbeing. This can be used to identify which groups are most in need and where to target investment. It can be used to measure changes over time or differences to other population groups. WEMWBS can also be used before and after an intervention (at least two weeks duration) to establish if mental wellbeing has improved. Having a control group would strengthen any findings of the impact that the intervention has had on mental wellbeing.

### How to use WEMWBS?

Individuals rate their feelings over the previous two weeks from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time) on all the seven or 14 questions. These are added up and averaged for all participants. If a follow-up questionnaire is used then it must be tagged to their first questionnaire so that the increase for each individual can be calculated.

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<sup>1</sup> Tennant R, Hiller L et al (2007) The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): development and UK validation in Health and Quality of

The user guide must be followed regarding data collection, analysis and interpretation of results into significant findings. For more information on Wemwbs and the user guide go to:

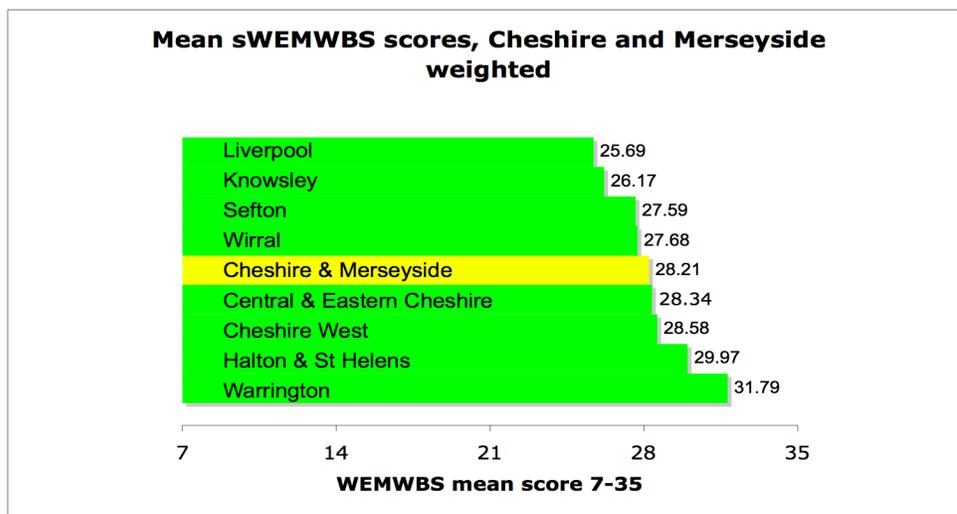
<http://www.healthscotland.com/understanding/population/Measuring-positive-mental-health.aspx>

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### Mental wellbeing population baseline

A population baseline for mental wellbeing already exists for each locality within Cheshire & Merseyside<sup>2</sup> as well as regionally<sup>3</sup> and nationally<sup>4&5</sup>. This means that there is a score for the population average that you can compare your intervention group with. It also allows improvements to be measured across the whole population over time.

<b>National sWEMWBS mean score</b>	<b>25.3</b>
<b>North West</b>	<b>27.7</b>
<b>Cheshire &amp; Merseyside</b>	<b>28.21</b>



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.champspublichealth.com/page.aspx?pageid=866&ParentID=0>

<sup>3</sup> Deacon et al (2010) The North West Mental Wellbeing Survey 2009, NWPHO  
<http://www.nwph.net/nwpho/publications/NorthWestMentalWellbeing%20SurveySummary.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> see the Health Survey for England 2010

[http://www.ic.nhs.uk/webfiles/publications/003\\_Health\\_Lifestyles/HSE2010\\_REPORT/HSE2010\\_Ch7\\_Well\\_being\\_health\\_and\\_work.pdf](http://www.ic.nhs.uk/webfiles/publications/003_Health_Lifestyles/HSE2010_REPORT/HSE2010_Ch7_Well_being_health_and_work.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Understanding Society, the UK's Household longitudinal study 2011 <http://research.understandingsociety.org.uk/files/research/findings/early->

## What interventions can be measured?

There are many examples of WEMWBS being used already with different intervention groups within Cheshire & Merseyside as well as nationally. For example:

Liverpool John Moore's University evaluated **Wellbeing Sefton**, a social prescribing range of programmes. A baseline questionnaire indicated 88% had lower wellbeing (20.83) than the Sefton average (27.59), showing the right people were accessing the service. Data was collected for 18 months with a post-intervention questionnaire after three to six months. The programmes all showed an improvement in wemwbs and shifted the mean wellbeing from low to moderate (25.14). The range of improvement was from 2.98 to 5.00 with a weighted average of 4.31.

**The Warrington Positive Thoughts** programme is a seven week therapeutic intervention to manage feelings. sWEMWBS is completed on weeks one and seven. A three month evaluation with 21 people showed an increase in mean sWEMWBS of 11%.

**Sefton Sanctuary** was set up to address the physical and mental health of women aged 40-60 in the more deprived South of Sefton. It was decided that the best way to do this was by going to community venues which women in this target group accessed. A 5-hour health and wellbeing event was carried out in 6 community venues in South Sefton. The intervention offered a health check, information around the 5 ways to wellbeing with individuals making pledges, complementary therapies, and representatives from other health agencies who were available on the day with specific information. Evaluation was conducted over 3 months and found that average mental wellbeing increased from 24.7 to 25.2, shifting the percentage of those with higher wellbeing from 3.5% to 6.1%.

WEMWBS could be used to measure improvements in wellbeing within services and interventions such as:

- Social prescribing
- Health Trainers
- Employment support
- Parenting support
- Workplace health
- Community involvement and development projects
- Volunteering
- Self-care/condition management
- Befriending

## What can I do?

In order to achieve a consistent and comparable approach and to understand and improve best practice ChaMPs recommends that WEMWBS is used across Cheshire and Merseyside, where appropriate, to measure improvements in mental wellbeing.

The **ChaMPS WEMWBS Challenge** is seeking 30 organisations in Cheshire and Merseyside to use sWEMWBS to monitor the impact of their service/ intervention.

Can you join the challenge? Go to:

[www.champspublichealth.com/page.aspx?pageid=866&ParentID=0](http://www.champspublichealth.com/page.aspx?pageid=866&ParentID=0)

**The Short Warwick-Edinburgh  
Mental Well-being Scale  
(SWEMWBS)**

**Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts.**

**Please tick the box that best describes your experience of  
each over the last 2 weeks.**

Statements	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5

“ Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)

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