

Discussing mental wellbeing during brief interventions

What is mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well. It includes feeling positive and in control, having a sense of purpose and belonging and being able to connect with others and manage problems and change.

Why is it relevant to brief interventions?

Mental wellbeing is central to making behaviour changes. Mental wellbeing is about having a sense of coherence about the behaviour and its affects, feeling motivated to make any changes, having confidence in our ability to make the change and control to sustain it and feeling optimistic that the change is worthwhile for our future.

There are various psychological and wellbeing models and approaches that are already part of behaviour change. E.g.:

- Motivational interviewing
- Self-efficacy
- Asset based approaches that build on people's strengths
- Solution-focussed questioning
- Addressing the social conditions of people's lives
- Goal setting and action planning

How can mental wellbeing issues be raised?

Staff may initially find it daunting to raise issues connected with mental wellbeing due to fears of:

- Starting up a long conversation
- Not having the specialist knowledge to deal with what's raised

These can be overcome by using positive tools focussed on solutions rather than problems.

Example 1: **Five Ways to Wellbeing**

Five Ways to Wellbeing is a set of evidence-based messages to improve mental wellbeing: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Give

These can be used to inform personal action planning. They will help anyone to feel better and make healthy choices. Individuals may explore and add other ways they find useful. See table below for a guide to action planning.

Five Ways to Wellbeing template

Use the grid to discuss and record current activity and personal plans for the *Five ways to wellbeing*. Activity may cut across a number of the five ways.

What am I doing on the five ways?	1 a good start	2 a bit more	3 a fair amount	4 quite a lot	5 loads
Connect	<i>Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.</i>				
Be Active	<i>Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.</i>				
Take Notice	<i>Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.</i>				
Keep Learning	<i>Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.</i>				
Give	<i>Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.</i>				

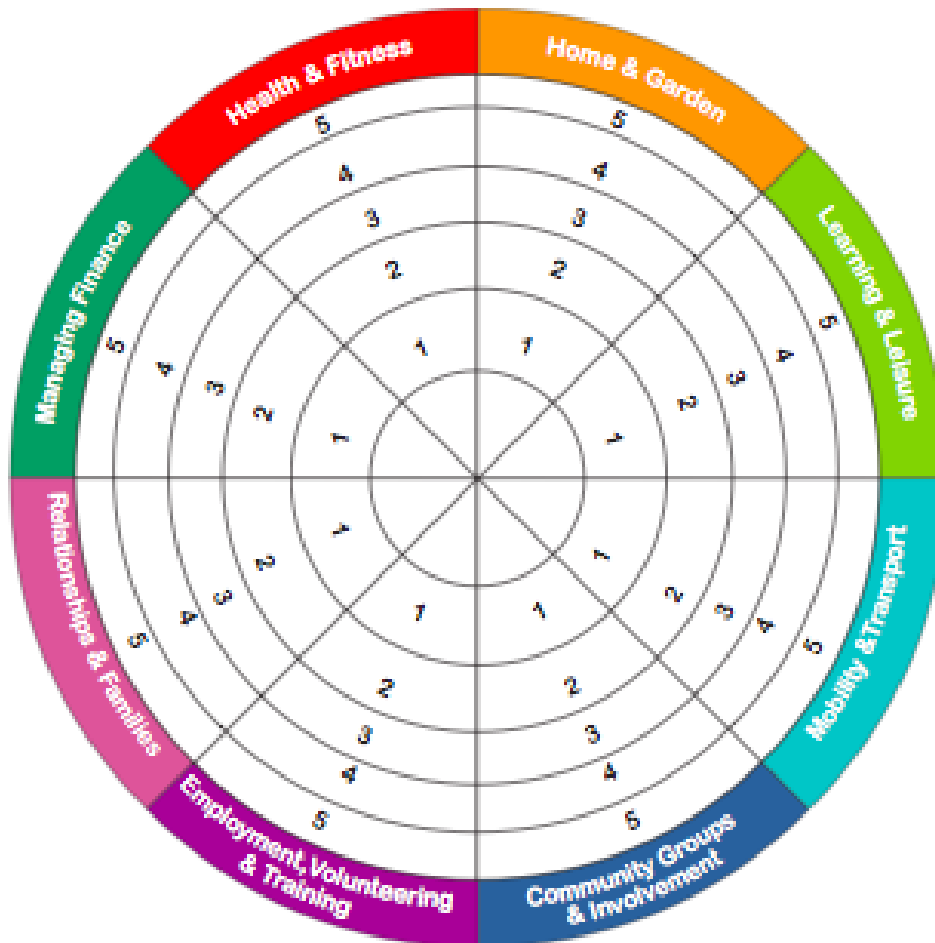
Example 2: Social prescribing and signposting

Mental wellbeing is hugely affected by social factors such as debt, unemployment, housing, relationships and isolation. There are lots of agencies that can provide support and many localities have a directory of these. Health agencies may also run a social prescribing scheme/ community referral to sources of support in the community such as arts, exercise, learning, books or debt advice. Being aware of the social conditions affecting someone’s ability to make healthy choices is crucial. Signposting information can easily be given during brief interventions.

The diagram below is taken from the Lancashire *Get the most out of life* tool and is used to understand and discuss the many factors affecting someone’s health and what can be done about it. It is used to support personal action planning within each of the life areas and to access services and support where needed through signposting and social prescribing.

1. *Based on how you have felt over the past two weeks give a rating and circle from 1 to 5 for each of these areas of your life.*
2. *Focus on an area you would like to make changes in:
What do you want to change? What can you do? What support do you need from others?*

1 = very unhappy 2= unhappy 3 = ok 4 = happy 5 = very happy



Examples of mental wellbeing brief intervention materials:

The NW Introduction to behaviour change e-learning course includes a section on mental health and wellbeing <http://walkgroveonline.com/healthchats/home.php>

Western Cheshire Making Every Contact Count training materials include a Mental health and wellbeing training guide, course programme, case studies, and powerpoint handout
<http://www.wcheshirepct.nhs.uk/default.asp?page=MECC/MECC.asp>

Healthy Sefton Positive Mental Wellbeing
http://www.healthysefton.nhs.uk/Positive_Mental_Wellbeing.htm

Liverpool Making Every Contact Count guide includes mental wellbeing as the first topic for discussion
<http://www.champspublichealth.com/writedir/a58fLCH%20booklet.pdf>

Wirral use the Five Ways to Wellbeing as a framework for mental wellbeing.
<http://www.champspublichealth.com/writedir/314bWirral%205%20ways%20Bookmarks.pdf>

This briefing is a result of a scoping study into wellbeing brief intervention undertaken by ChaMPs
<http://www.champspublichealth.com/page.aspx?pageid=989&ParentID=0> Further information on Wellbeing Brief Intervention can be found on this website.