

# Looking after yourself



Mental health is the way you think or feel about yourself and the world around you. It's related to how you cope with life's challenges and stresses. An event like the covid-19 pandemic could affect your mental health and ability to cope.

Mental health is important at every stage in life, from childhood through to adulthood

### What is Positive Wellbeing?

- It is a state of overall good health in both body and mind and can include:
- ✓ **Social Wellbeing** (building relationships and community support through friends and family and neighbours etc.)
  - ✓ **Physical Wellbeing** (Movement, whether in sports or walking, movement that brings joy.)

### Did you know?

*Looking after your mind is just as important as looking after your body and caring about your physical fitness.*

*When we're physically ill, we visit our GP or seek support and help but people are less likely to do the same when it comes to looking after emotional well-being.*

**“Sleep is the best— and least expensive— anxiety medicine.”**  
*Ellen Vora, MD*



**“Good mental health is when you can feel happy and positive about yourself and enjoy life and learn well. Good mental health helps you to have healthy relationships with family and friends and enables you to manage sad, worrying or angry feelings and you can bounce back from tough times.”**

Everyone has mental health. It's on a spectrum as such, everyone has good mental health days and bad mental health days with everything else in between as well. Emotional well-being is our coping and resilience in relation to situations that make impact our mental health and is therefore unique to the individual.

Being aware of our coping strategies and how certain situations affect us shows that individuals are in-tuned with their emotional wellbeing and therefore promoting and increasing improved mental health and visa versa when we use bad coping strategies showing negative emotional well-being and promoting bad mental health



## Reaching out for support.

It's important to have a community or someone to confide in that you trust with your thoughts and feelings. Nothing you think or feel should be used to bully you or belittle you. If you don't have anyone, there are free helplines you can call or chat lines to get support

## Tracing your thoughts

Trace your negative thoughts and feelings back to where they began. Was it something someone said? Was it a recent event or particular aspect in your life that is creating a negative response?

## Taking breaks from technology



It can create strain on the eyes, disrupt sleep, overstimulate your brain and normally, technology is linked to a lack of movement.

## Deep breathing exercises

Breathing in for four seconds, holding for four, releasing for four is one way of helping us deal with the physical effects of stress and helps to calm our nervous system and bring more oxygen into the body.

## Emotional resilience

This comes into play where we can't control the stress that is coming in from the outside. To gain a wider perspective, write a list of all the things that are going well and good in your life, what are you grateful for?

## Eating well

In recent years, the gut has been linked to depression, our emotions and behaviour. It has been nicknamed "our second brain". Eating fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grains, lean meats and health fats will help alleviate your body from digestive stress and feed your body with what it needs to be happier and healthy.

## Keep a diary of your days

Write down what went well each day, what didn't go well and you feel about it. Then write down what you plan to do differently tomorrow. Reading back on this will help you gain a clearer perspective on how things are going inside.

## Did you know?

*If you do something beneficial to your body your mind will appreciate it and release a hormone – such as releasing dopamine when we are exercising.*

*When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins. These endorphins interact with the receptors in your brain that reduce your perception of pain. Endorphins also trigger a positive feeling in the body, similar to that of morphine*

*These positive feelings from your endorphins release will make you talk positively to yourself for making a good choice that keeps you healthy, happy, safe or all 3! And Endorphin releases are a little bit addictive in a good way so it makes it easier to build exercise into your life more – I suggest a little every day or every other day*