

Looking after number 1



Guide for wellbeing champions and facilitators to deliver workshops

This guide has been put together to enable you to encourage individuals to discuss their mental health and wellbeing openly in a workshop setting. This guide has been developed alongside the looking after number 1 postcards. They have been developed by Homeless Link with the support of Dr Phil Timms from SLAM (South London and Maudsley NHS trust) and the City Bridge Trust.

Aim of the pack

- to increase open discussion about mental health and wellbeing
- to promote positive messages about wellbeing and looking after your own mental health
- to give people the tools to improve their own mental health and wellbeing
- to ensure clients know how to access support around mental health issues
- to reduce stigma around mental health issues
- to provide an opportunity for peer learning
- to support clients to cope with the stresses and strains of homelessness

Key information about the resource:

You can use the resources in a variety of ways; delivering workshops, holding wellbeing events, disseminating the resources by hand, in keywork sessions or client involvement meetings.

You can conduct one or a series of workshops depending on the groups and resources available.

In this guidance you will find 10 postcards each with a key message about wellbeing and 10 accompanying resource sheets with related workshop questions.

This guide can be used by peers or staff.

This guidance is to support you using the resources in a workshop setting, but may be useful for ideas and prompts if you choose to use them in a different setting.

In this kit you have:

- Posters to promote *Looking after number 1*
- This guide
- 1 x Looking after number 1 postcard packs for every resident at your project (more will be sent if there aren't enough)
- 1 x eye masks and ear plugs for every resident (supply limited)
- Evaluation forms for workshops

Using the toolkit in your hostel checklist

This checklist is for planning your workshop.

You may want to add more:

Planning for your workshop	✓ Tick when complete
✓ Ensure you have spoken to staff at your project about what you intend to do	
✓ Plan your event in advance	
✓ Promote the event via posters, word of mouth and contacts	
✓ Get your workshop on the residents meeting agenda	
✓ Try and ensure it isn't just the usual suspects that come along	
✓ Is there any money in your welfare budget to pay for refreshments	
✓ Invite external guests	

On the day	✓ Tick when complete
✓ If possible get refreshments (milk, biscuits)	
✓ Make sure you have all your materials and resources including postcards, posters, eye masks, ear plugs	
✓ Set up room	
✓ Make sure you have flip chart, paper and pens	

Extra ideas may include

- ✓ Getting a speaker along from a mental health service to support your workshop, for example a nurse, a social worker or someone from your local Mind service.
- ✓ Planning a whole wellbeing day, week or event where activities such as healthy eating, exercise and therapy are included.

Mental health and wellbeing

Before you start it is useful to have a bit of background about the key issues, here are some useful definitions and external resources:

The World Health Organisation describes health as:

A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease. It is related to the promotion of well-being, the prevention of mental disorders, and the treatment and rehabilitation of people affected by mental disorders.

A mental illness: *is a psychological or behavioral pattern that someone experiences which causes them distress or disability.*

The mental health foundation say:

Being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that you don't have a mental health problem. If you're in good mental health, you can:

- *Make the most of your potential*
- *Cope with life*
- *Play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends*
- *Some people call mental health 'emotional health' or 'well-being' and it's just as important as good physical health.*

MIND describe wellbeing as encompassing these factors:

"You care about yourself and you care for yourself. You love yourself, not hate yourself. You look after your physical health – eat well, sleep well, exercise and enjoy yourself.

You see yourself as being a valuable person in your own right. You don't have to earn the right to exist. You exist, so you have the right to exist.

You judge yourself on reasonable standards. You don't set yourself impossible goals, such as 'I have to be perfect in everything I do', and then punish yourself when you don't reach those goals"

Visit their websites for more information:

<http://www.who.int/en/>

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

<http://www.mind.org.uk/>

No health without mental health

The recent government policy document 'No health without mental health' published in February 2011 states that 1 in 4 people are likely to be affected by poor mental health at some point in their lives. Good mental health should be prioritised as much as good physical health and this policy document sets out to do just that, by encouraging agencies to work together to provide coordinated and holistic support for those in need. For more information visit this website:

<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/1833130>

Looking after number 1

Introduction

As the group facilitator you need to be familiar with the resources you are going to use, make sure you read all 10 postcards and that you are familiar with the messages. Make sure you are familiar with the information above and if you have time do a bit of research online so you feel confident delivering the materials.

Instructions for peer on how to introduce the workshop

- Explain what Looking after number 1 is about – for example start by saying:

“Looking after number one is a project aimed at improving our wellbeing and mental health, today we are going to have a discussion about wellbeing and mental health and see what we can learn from each other about looking after number one”
- Read out or print off and hand round some of the definitions on page 3 that explain what we mean by mental health and wellbeing.
- Hand out the postcards booklets and then read out the top 10 tips from the postcards – pin them up on a board as you go.
- Ask the group which topics they would like to talk about most then on flip chart paper write down which topics people think are most important or would like to talk about most. Then note the preferred topics and discuss them using the hand-outs provided as a guide. For example if people think *sleep* is the most important issue, then talk about sleep first and so on. Or depending on the group size, split them into groups and ask them to talk about more than one topic and then feedback what was talked about to the larger group.
- We'd advise around 15 minutes for each topic heading. However remember if there is any issues that people want to talk about in more depth you can be flexible. Use flip chart paper to record the discussion and leave them up in the hostel.

Remember

There are no right or wrong ways of doing this, the important thing is to have a discussion about wellbeing and mental health and promote positive messages.

You aren't expected to have all the answers and if there really is something you are stuck on maybe get an expert in to do a talk.

Your role is simply to promote discussion and the issues broadly and get people to talk openly and raise questions.

If you don't know the answer perhaps it could be client involvement project to do some research and come back to the group.

You could also ask other members of staff or an expert for more help and advice

1. Talk

Questions for workshop - topic 1

- Why does talking help?
- Who can you talk to?
- What barriers might there be around talking about our wellbeing?
- How can we overcome them?

Notes for wellbeing champion (group facilitator)

- Talking helps because it can make the problems seem not as bad, people can offer suggestions and advice, talking can allow us to think through a problem out loud which can help us feel better.
- People can talk to keyworkers, befrienders, friends, family as well as professionals such as GP's, counsellors and psychiatrists.
- People might not want to talk because they are embarrassed, hurt or upset, or people may have been rejected in the past when they have tried to talk.
- Talking about a problem might be a huge hurdle to overcome, even coming to this workshop might be a big achievement. Praise people in the group for their attendance and participation.

Additional preparation you may want to consider

- Do some research about local organisations including your local Mind, Rethink , Samaritans, GP services, counsellors and self-help groups.
- Ask the group what services they have found useful.

2. Eat

Questions for workshop - topic 2

- How does what we eat affect our mental health and wellbeing?
- What food makes us feel good/bad?
- What barriers might prevent us from eating well?
- How can we overcome them?
- What can the hostel/ service do to improve the way I eat?
- What can I do to improve the way I eat?

Notes for wellbeing champion

- Certain food can make us feel drowsy, irritable and uncomfortable and less alert
- Lack of money, cooking experience how close you are to the shops and markets may all make eating well more difficult
- Share ideas and recipes, get help from local community groups or your support worker
- Can you contribute to the menu via your resident or client involvement group? Could you get local organisations involved?
- Find out online what food is good and bad for you
- Use the **Working With Drug Use In Housing Settings V1.06** by Kevin Flemen from page 81 for more tips on food and mood.

Additional preparation you may want to consider:

Ask a specialist nutritionist or healthy eating expert to come and run a session at your project
Run group cooking sessions to share skills

*More information on food and mood can be found in the appendix.

3. Breathe

Questions for workshop - topic 3

- Do you ever notice yourself becoming short of breath, for example when you are angry, upset, stressed out or anxious?
- Do you know what to do if this happens?
- Try the exercise below to help relax
- What other ways can we relax?
- What impact might it have on my wellbeing?

Notes for wellbeing champion

Relaxation can help to relieve the symptoms of stress. It can help you calm down and take a step back from a stressful situation.

Although the cause of the anxiety won't disappear, you will probably feel more able to deal with it once you've released the tension in your body and cleared your thoughts.

All relaxation techniques combine breathing more deeply with relaxing the muscles.

Don't worry if you find it difficult to relax at first. It's a skill that needs to be learned and it will come with practice.

Relaxed breathing

Practise deep breathing at a regular time and in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Loosen or remove any tight clothes, such as shoes or jackets. Be completely comfortable.

Sit in a comfy chair which supports your head or lie on the floor or bed. Place your arms on the chair arms, or flat on the floor or bed, a little bit away from the side of your body with the palms up. If you're lying down, stretch out your legs, keeping them hip-width apart or slightly wider. If you're sitting in a chair, don't cross your legs.

Good relaxation always starts with focusing on your breathing. The way to do it is to breathe in and out slowly and in a regular rhythm as this will help you to calm down.

- Fill up the whole of your lungs with air, without forcing. Imagine you're filling up a bottle, so that your lungs fill from the bottom.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in slowly and regularly counting from one to five (don't worry if you can't reach five at first).
- Then let the breath escape slowly, counting from one to five.
- Keep doing this until you feel calm. Breathe without pausing or holding your breath.

Practise this relaxed breathing for three to five minutes, two to three times a day (or whenever you feel the need to calm down).

4. Move

Questions for workshop - topic 4

- What physical activity do you do (make a list of ideas)?
- What currently prevents you from doing more physical exercise?
- How can physical activity improve my mental health and wellbeing?
- How can I overcome these barriers?
- What support might I need from my keyworker and people around me?

Notes for wellbeing champion

- Ideas might include swimming, jogging, gardening, cycling, walking, dance, exercise DVD's and magazines
- Barriers may include money, equipment, self-consciousness and a lack of confidence
- Exercise can boost your mood, research suggests it can improve your confidence and quality of life
- Is there any funding available? Can you get support from your GP, how might your project be able to help? Could a competition help? One service is having a walking competition between staff and residents using pedometers provided by the council
- People often need support when they make changes in their lives. It's important to encourage and support our peers who start to exercise and reap the benefit, praise people who make the first initial steps to a healthier lifestyle, offer to go with someone to their first class

Recommended activity levels from NHS website

- Adults: 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five days a week.
- Children: 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each day.
- Targets can be achieved with 10-minute bursts of activity spread throughout the day.

Your age, general health and current activity levels will determine how far you can push yourself.

If you haven't been doing much for a while, don't worry. Evidence shows that inactive people achieve more immediate benefits from resuming activity than those who are already fit.

Other resources

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sports-resources>

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/getting-started-guides/pages/getting-started-guides.asp>

5. Quit

Questions for workshop - topic 5

- What drugs affect our mental health and wellbeing; remember tea/coffee, cigarettes and chocolate as they all contain mood altering substances (make a list)
- How can using drugs and alcohol affect mental health and wellbeing?
- What help do I need to reduce or quit my substance use?
- Where can I get help from – ask clients to talk about which services have been most useful to them and why?

Notes for wellbeing champion

This can be a really complex subject area to talk about with peers, but try not to be overwhelmed; the idea is just to have an open discussion about how substances can affect our wellbeing.

- Drugs and alcohol can make us high, low, sad, happy, on top of the world, depressed, full of love, isolated and alone. What is important is to become informed about the substances you use
- Substances can affect sleep, how we relate to people, how we eat and our motivation
- People use alcohol diaries to try and see how substances affect their mood and other aspects of their lives
- Discuss in groups what kind of treatment or services people have found useful

Additional preparation:

There many people with serious drug and alcohol issues that they may find it hard to talk about. Therefore for this discussion point it might be worth inviting a professional along from your local drug and alcohol service to do a discussion about substances and their effects on mental health and wellbeing.

Gather information on local CDAAT (community drug and alcohol action team) as well as local drug and alcohol charities, self-help groups and websites. Can someone from one of these organisations come in and do a talk?

6. Sleep

Questions for workshop- topic 6

- How does too much or too little sleep affect our mental health and well being?
- What currently prevents you from getting a good nights sleep?
- How could we overcome such barriers?

Notes for wellbeing Champion

- Getting too much or too little sleep can make us grumpy and irritable and unable to cope.
- Noise, stress, anxiety, depression, medication, substances
- Ear plugs, medication, having a hot bath or shower, not drinking tea or coffee before you go to sleep, wind down, find ways to distress before bed, don't eat too late, try complementary therapies such as yoga or meditation, talk to your GP.
- Use the **Working With Drug Use In Housing Settings V1.06** by Kevin Flemen from page 78 for more information on sleep.
- Check out the mental health foundation resources on sleep
- <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/mhaw/get-involved/?view=Standard>

7. Learn

Questions for workshop - topic 7

- How might learning benefit our mental health and wellbeing? What are the benefits of learning something?
- What would you like to learn about? List ideas in the group of things people wish they could know more about. Where might you be able to learn about new things?
- What barriers might there be around you going back to college or learning a new skill?
- How might you overcome these barriers?
- Where can you access support around learning opportunities?

Notes for wellbeing champion

- Learning can stimulate the mind, knowledge gives us confidence and this can help with our self-esteem. Learning can take our mind off ourselves and allow us to have a different focus. Reading a book or completing a course can give us a sense of achievement
- Learning can be about starting a college course or taking up a new hobby, it can also be about reading books, having discussion and debate. Could you pick a topic for your next residents meeting?
- People may have fears from school; they may struggle with reading and writing or lack the confidence to start something new.
- Order college prospectus online, get someone from the local college to come and talk to you about what is available, look into grants and funding that might be available, ask someone who is attending a course to do a presentation and share their learning. See what courses and learning opportunities local community groups offer. Skill share, many people have skills to offer, what skills and knowledge could you share between your staff and clients?

Additional preparation: have flyers about local colleges and in-house learning opportunities available. Is there a careers advisor who could come and speak to you about available options? Look into community opportunities, groups and classes. Remember learning doesn't have to be books and writing it can be drawing, cookery, yoga, dance or film

8. Join

Questions for workshop - topic 8

- What would be the benefit of going, list things you could get out of it; such as meeting new people, being part of something?
- What groups could you join? (make a list)

Notes for wellbeing champion

- Joining a group can make you feel part of something, it can help you meet new people, or increase opportunities for learning
- Client involvement groups, tenancy communities, political groups, community groups, volunteering, sports, arts, gardening groups and community groups.
- See additional resources on setting up a group
<http://www.homeless.org.uk/involving-clients-wider-community>

9. Help

Questions for workshop - topic 9

- How might helping others benefit our mental health and wellbeing?
- All list one small thing you could do today to help someone else?
- What longer term commitments could you make towards helping others? List ideas.

Notes for wellbeing champion:

- Helping and connecting with the community around you can have huge impacts on the way we feel about ourselves, people who volunteer get huge benefits included increased confidence and self-esteem, a sense of routine and increased work opportunities
- Do something nice for a stranger or a friend, thank someone, smile (and remember being nice is actually contagious!)
- Find out about volunteer opportunities at:
 - <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/>
 - <http://www.do-it.org.uk/>
 - <http://timebank.org.uk/>
 - Or ask at your local volunteer centre

10. Take control

Questions for workshop - topic 10

- What can make you feel out of control? (make a list)
- Ask the group to look at list and say which ones they can do anything about. Focus on this list.
- What might we do when we feel out of control?
- What might help us to feel more in control?

Notes for wellbeing champion

- Examples of what we might feel out of control about include; debt, housing, drugs and alcohol, children, partners, friends
- When we feel out of control we might use substances to avoid the issue. We might hide from facing the issue head on and bury our head in the sand.
- Asking for help when you need it might help us feel more in control. Trying to keep lists or using a diary may also help us feel more in control.
- Other things which might help include: Engaging with our keyworkers and setting personal action plans and goals, taking part in client involvement and having a say might also help.

After completing the workshop

It is important to collect feedback, overleaf is an example feedback form you can use with your peers after the session.

Homeless Link will be in touch to get your feedback and evaluation and to ask for ways to improve the resources.

Well done you thank you!

You have done a really positive thing for both yourself and your peers and you have done at least 5 of our top tips for looking after number one by: helping, learning, giving, joining and taking control!

Example evaluation form for wellbeing workshop

Name

Date

Workshop leader

Today's session has (please tick those that apply)

Improved my well-being	
Improved my self-esteem	
Helped me feel more confident	
Increased my motivation	
Being enjoyable	
Helped me feel less isolated	

Do you have any ideas and suggestions for the Looking after number one project?

Do you have any other comments?

I am happy to be contacted about how the workshop and the Looking after number one project

I am happy to be contacted by Homeless Link about other issues and events

If you ticked either of the above please include your email address below
