

LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING

A guide to what children and young people can do to look after their emotional and physical wellbeing.



SLEEP— Sleep has a huge part to play in how you feel throughout the day. Poor sleep can be linked to symptoms of depression such as feeling down, hopelessness and thoughts of suicide. Every now and then everyone has a bad night’s sleep but if it happens regularly it can become a problem.

Follow these simple steps to help yourself to try to get a good nights sleep. Don't worry if you can't manage them all, try just a couple to start off with.



Go to bed and get up at the same time every day—even at weekends! This will help you get into a sleep routine.



Don't nap during the day as this can effect your sleep routine.



Take exercise, such as walking, during the day. Most people should avoid strenuous exercise too close to bedtime.



Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine and energy drinks close to bedtime.



Turn off screens, such as your mobile phone or tablet device at least 30 minutes before sleep. The light that they give off can prevent your brain from producing the sleep chemical, Melatonin, keeping you awake.



Natural sleep cycles are based on your body clock which is mainly set by exposure to natural light so make sure you get at least 30 minutes outside or by a bright window each day.



Keep your bedroom and bed for sleeping. Doing activities such as watching TV, homework or on-line activities can make your brain link your bed space with being awake.

If your sleep issues persist contact your GP to discuss the issue with them.



Wellmind—free NHS mental health and wellbeing app designed to help with stress, anxiety and depression. It contains advice with tips and tools to improve your mental health and boost your wellbeing.

FIVE STEPS TO WELLBEING

Evidence suggests there are five steps to help improve your mental wellbeing.

If you try them they may help you feel happier, more positive and get more out of life.

CONNECT—

Feeling close to and valued by other people is a fundamental human need. Connect with the people around you, your family, friends, spend time developing these relationships.

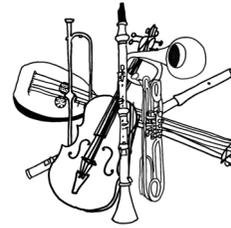


BE ACTIVE— Regular physical activity is linked to lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. You don't have to go to the gym. You could go for a walk, meet friends at the park for football or cycle to school.



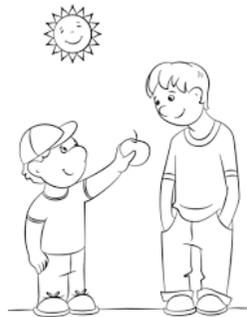
KEEP LEARNING—

Learning new things enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction. It can also give you self-confidence and a sense of achievement. You could take up cooking or learn a musical instrument.



GIVE TO OTHERS—

even the smallest act can count, just a smile as you walk past someone, a thank you or a kind word. One act of kindness a week can make you feel better about yourself and improve your over all wellbeing.



TAKE NOTICE (or Be mindful) —be more aware of the present moment. Pay attention and focus on the “right now”. Some people refer to this as “Mindfulness”. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach things. You can start by simply focusing on your breath, noticing the air moving in and out.



These 5 steps to wellbeing were produced for adults in 2008 by The New Economics Foundation (NEF).

A research project conducted by NEF and The Children's society concluded that creativity, imagination and play had an important role in the wellbeing of children.

If you struggle with mental health issues it might be worth creating a safety plan. Do this whilst you are well so that when a crisis occurs you can refer to it.

The following website shows how to do this and provides a template to simplify the process.

www.stayingsafe.net