

Rethink Mental Illness.

5 top tips for Mental Wellbeing

Looking after our mental health is important for all of us – whether we are living with a mental illness or not. Just like with physical health, there are things we can all do to help us look after our mental wellbeing and face the challenges life throws at us. Here are 5 easy tips on how to do this.

Communicate¹

Communication is important

for our wellbeing, so try to reach out, and have a chat about how you're feeling on a regular basis. It can be something as simple as:

- talking to a friend, partner or colleague;
- sending a text or email; or
- picking up the phone.

Our social network can also be our support network: having people who are there for you no matter what – to laugh at your jokes, or share the load when things aren't going so great - helps support our mental wellbeing.

Sho said

"Sometimes I forget that things which make me anxious or tense are often caused by a misunderstanding. Knowing there are people around me that I can call on for support makes it easier to deal with. Talking through the problem helps reduce any stress, and it improves my mood too."



¹ NHS Choices (2015) *Connect for mental wellbeing*

Make life better for others²

Louie said

"I volunteer at my synagogue when they have a refugee drop-in, playing games with the children. It's really fun, and the parents appreciate having time to themselves. I learn a lot from the children. One time,

one of the children began listing all the things that makes them happy, and asked me to join in. It was a great activity, and I now use this tip whenever my depression or OCD kicks in."



Supporting other people is both a worthwhile activity, and one that can contribute to our own wellbeing. Helping someone else feels good, as it gives us a sense of purpose and self-worth. Even small acts of kindness can make a big difference. Try helping out a neighbour, getting in touch with a friend or relative who may need some support, or volunteering for a local cause.



² NHS Choices (2016) *Give for mental wellbeing*

Feed your creative side³

Listening to your favourite music, picking up a paintbrush, or putting pen to paper – any activity that engages our creativity is an excellent way to support mental wellbeing. Creative activities can help manage stress, provide a way to relax, and be in the moment.

Creative hobbies can also boost our confidence. If you're trying out a new hobby, track your progress and you'll likely feel a sense of achievement as this new skill flourishes.



Tony said
“I find the process of creating something really calming as it focuses my mind. It's also a good way to express myself – writing a poem, or framing a photo to convey my feelings. It's really satisfying to see my efforts and ideas come together in a finished piece of work.”



4 Manchester City Council and Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust (2015) *The importance of creativity for health and wellbeing; evidence base for Start*

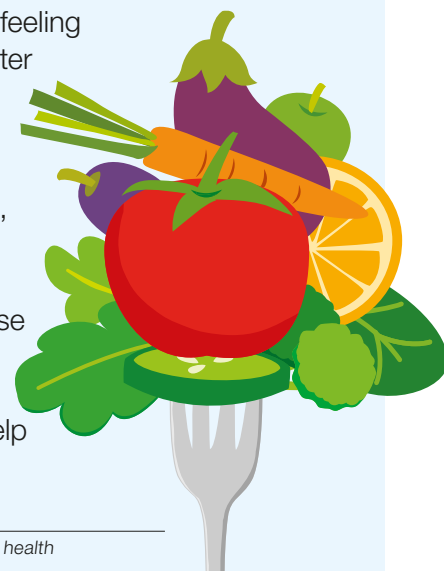
Balance your diet and maintain a healthy lifestyle⁴



Clare said
“Making positive changes to my diet – such as eating more fruit and veg, and having three proper meals a day – can have a positive impact on my anxiety. Eating too much sugar or drinking too much alcohol can mess with my energy and mood. I try not to deny myself things; I'd rather add things that I know will make me feel healthier, like fresh vegetables and fish.”

A varied diet can help both our physical and mental wellbeing. Eating regular meals can ward off dips in blood sugar that can leave us feeling irritable and tired, and drinking lots of water can improve concentration and help us think more clearly.

Lifestyle choices can bring us enjoyment, but moderation is key when it comes to things such as smoking and drinking alcohol and caffeine. Be mindful that these can have a negative impact on your wellbeing. Take appropriate steps where necessary to moderate your intake, to help maintain your overall health.



4 Royal College of Psychiatrists (2014) *Eating well and mental health*

Keep active⁵



Staying active can make a big difference to both our physical and mental wellbeing: brisk walks to clear your mind, yoga to calm your thoughts, or a boxing session to de-stress. Try and fit activities you enjoy into your routine, and if you need more motivation, plan an activity with a friend or colleague.

5 NHS Choices (2016) *Get active for mental wellbeing*

Emma said
“I took up running 5 years ago, after living with depression for about 30 years. Going for a run gives me space to think and time to process what is going on in my life. I've also met new friends, who provide support and encouragement.”



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