

Gaddum ... Carers

Hi, I'm Gaddum.

Let's talk about your health and wellbeing.

Health and wellbeing is now a common phrase in our modern lives, but how many of us know what it means and entails as well as practical ways to improve our own? Contrary to what many of us think, it's not just about going on a diet and exercising. We'll explore this now...

Health and wellbeing are linked together and if one deteriorates the other will too. But this works both ways... if one improves the other will too!

That is why it is important to address our health and wellbeing so we can live a happy life. We can support you if caring is affecting you and you would like support to create an action plan to improve your health and wellbeing.

Addressing Mental Wellness

Insight into our own mental health is the best way to monitor our wellbeing, as when we mentally suffer other areas of our life are impacted. Insight comes from self-inquiry, asking ourselves if we are OK and accepting when we are starting to struggle and need to ask for help. Being preventative rather than reactionary is important: it is better to identify that you are starting to struggle and address it then rather than wait until you are fully struggling. It may be as simple as saying 'no' to requests from others, taking some time out or doing something that you find soothing.

Connect with others

There is so much evidence out there that shows how connecting with others and forming good relationships - with family, friends and the wider community - are important for mental wellbeing. Building stronger, broader social connections in your life can increase your feelings of happiness and self-worth.

Bearing the above in mind, why not speak to someone on the phone or go and meet your favourite people for a walk (where local restrictions allow it). Other ways of connecting could be to join our monthly virtual coffee morning to meet new friends and share experiences.

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Be physically active with exercise or activity based fun

Being physically active doesn't necessarily mean busting out 3 hours in the gym or running the 10km! Improving your health can be as simple as going for a half-hour walk everyday, or doing a 'follow-along' workout at home, the main thing is that it is sustainable for you. It's better to do a smaller amount to start with and build up to doing more. It can also be great to start an activity/hobby/class like a martial art, sport or walking group as the focus won't be on the exercise it will be on learning a skill, the game or just meeting people.

Learn new skills

Learning a new skill can be amazing for us as it gives us a sense of accomplishment as we improve. The main thing is it is something you think you will enjoy and that you allocate some of your time to doing. This doesn't mean you have to go back to school and learn in classes it can be as simple as learning a new recipe, a video tutorial on a style of art you would like to draw or even DIY skills.

Be giving and have gratitude

These practices are very good for our mental health as they release the feel good chemicals in our brain, generally we like to make other humans happy, especially the ones we love. You can gift your time and skills to help others as well as gifting emotional help to name a few. Having gratitude really helps remind us of everything that we have and what others do for us, it can give us a greater sense of purpose and has been proven to make people live happier lives. A great practice is to write down or verbally speak out three things you are grateful for everyday from the tiny to the huge. In other words, we can give and be grateful for emotion - it doesn't need to cost anything!

Practice mindfulness

We live in such a quick and busy world these days and it can be very hard to switch our minds off from all the thoughts that are often racing round in our head. But, have you noticed that what we mainly think about is in the past or future? In reality all we have the present moment and it is the place we spend a little of mental time. Practicing mindfulness is about bringing your awareness into the present moment... it can be as simple as just focusing on what you are doing. Drinking a cup of tea or coffee for example, really focus on how it tastes, the sensation it gives you when you drink it, the smell and how it feels, engage all your senses and when your mind wanders (which it will) and you become aware of it just bring your awareness back to what you are focusing on. You might be surprised about how much of a difference it makes to your mood...

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Eat well and consider your nutrition

To have optimal health we need to consider what we put into our body, we really are what we eat!

[Click here](#) for the NHS guidelines on diet. There is not a one rule fits all, so you have to find what is right for you, but as a rule the more whole foods and less junk food you eat the happier your body and mind will be. Having a healthy weight is one of the best chances we give our body to live healthily and happily. A lot of people don't know where to start with help to getting to their ideal weight. Every person's ideal weight is different so we can use the Body Mass Index (BMI) online calculator to help us see where we are at, [click here](#) to find one.

Sleep and recovery

We are all told we need a solid 8 hours of sleep per night to function properly, whilst this may be true for many, one size does not fit all and different people need different amounts of sleep. However, it's important you get quality sleep... not all sleep is created equally! There are certain things we can do to maximise the quality of our sleep. Try to avoid looking at any screens one hour before you sleep as it tricks our brains into thinking it is daytime, switch it out for something relaxing you enjoy like yoga, art, reading or guided meditation. Checking how much caffeine you are consuming towards the end of the day could really help with winding down too...

Addictions

Whether we like to admit it or not most of us have addictions to something whether it be social media, caffeine or internet shopping. But some habits or addictions can be more destructive than others. When we think about addiction we mainly think about drugs and alcohol but there are other destructive addictions such as gambling and extreme hoarding that negatively affect peoples' lives.

Addiction manifests for lots of different reasons but generally people are looking for a connection to something that they feel they have control over. Identifying addiction and having insight into it can help us manage our wellbeing and whether we want to change that behaviour in ourselves, the only way to start beating addiction is the desire to change.

With anything that might be affecting you though, don't be afraid to ask for help from family, friends or professionals.