



FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

A practitioner's guide to support behaviour change using the 5 Ways to Wellbeing.



Thinking about some of the reasons why we have unhealthy habits & replacing them with Healthier Ones.

Connect

Why is Connecting important to Wellbeing?

Our relationships with those around us affect our wellbeing. Research has found that wellbeing is increased by life goals associated with family, friends and social life. Connecting with others can increase our sense of belonging and life satisfaction.

How does Connecting support Behaviour Change?

- Unhealthy lifestyle choices are often used as time fillers for people who are bored, restless, under-occupied, lonely or disconnected. Being connected to others creates personal resilience against these negative "time fillers".
- Not everyone has the skills to be "sociable", just signposting to social opportunities will not tackle this problem. Befriending can be a useful, short-term, method for helping us reengage or experience a social environment for the first time.
- When giving up an unhealthy behaviour, a replacement activity is often needed. For many of us mixing with others, finding like-minded people to spend our time with, who don't engage in the same unhealthy behaviours, helps us create new healthier identities.

The emphasis should be on establishing new contacts, not on the reasons why we have lost social or community connectivity.

This emphasis creates a positive dialogue about change rather than emphasising what we have lost.

- Sometimes what we need is the opportunity to share our behaviour change experience with people in the same situation as us. Support groups are an invaluable way for some people to maintain behaviour change.
- When looking at improving Personal Connectivity it can help to look at the other Ways to Wellbeing for help. Giving, for example, can be a great way to reconnect with other people, our Community and/or to give us a greater sense of purpose.

- Connecting with others does not have to be done face to face, for example; digital connections, talking over the phone, and/or writing to people are all effective methods to share our lives with others. It is important that these Connections are meaningful, enjoyable and ultimately using a media/method that works for us as individuals.
- Isolation cuts us off from support, reengaging with our Community opens up support opportunities.
- Loneliness and Isolation are not the same thing. Just because we are isolated it does not automatically mean that we want to be "social". Reconnecting with our Community could mean having access to transport to visit places we would like to go.

What can you do?

- Ask your LiveWell Coach or Advisor about local opportunities to Volunteer
- Take the time to talk to someone, instead of emailing or texting for ease!
- Find out about local Community Transport / Dial-a-ride schemes in your area
- Make a list of your interests, things you used to like to do, or would like to do and find out about what is available in your area (Libraries can help).
- Set aside some quality time with your family
- Go out for lunch with colleagues or friends
- Say hello to a neighbour
- Join a group or club



Call LiveWell Dorset (0800 8401628) or search for;

Befrienders, Community Cafes, Community Transport, Community Support Groups, Lunch Clubs, Social Clubs, Nature & Wildlife, Volunteering



Take Notice

Why is Taking Notice important to Wellbeing?

Research has shown that being aware of sensations, thoughts and feelings can improve both the knowledge we have about ourselves and our wellbeing as it gives us a chance to appreciate and evaluate our circumstances. Taking Notice of what is happening outside of us, e.g. in nature, can help people to feel a part of something bigger.

How does Taking Notice support Behaviour Change?

- Unhealthy lifestyle choices are often used as time fillers for people who are bored, restless, under-occupied, lonely or disconnected. Switching the focus to Noticing what is happening around us can help us to identify alternative ways of "time filling".
- Taking Notice of how we feel is not "new agey"! Listening to our bodies, for example; hearing our stomach rumble, is how we know our body needs something! Noticing what our body & mind needs is exactly how we were designed, if it was not important we would not be "self-aware".
- When giving up an unhealthy behaviour, a replacement activity is often needed. Having time to ourselves to relax, reflect and take notice of what we need is a great way to replace an unhealthy activity with a healthier one.

**Be curious, Catch sight of the beauty, stop and smell the roses. As lives become busier and more disconnected from our environment it becomes essential that we take the time to Notice what is around us.
STOP, LOOK & LISTEN...**

- Learning new ways to take care of ourselves may be important. Look up local Adult Education classes that teach meditation and relaxation. There are useful apps on our phones that can help us to take time for ourselves - or just set a timer as a reminder to take a break.
- Noticing the changes that happen around us help us to live our lives in a more healthy way. Change our habits to fit the seasons e.g.; make the most of seasonal vegetables and we should only close our curtains when it becomes dark outside not at set times as this changes from day to day.

- We should always include daylight in our everyday. Daylight helps trigger natural “awake” hormones, protects against SAD, provides a natural source of vitamin D and generally makes us feel good (there is always daylight, even when we can’t see the sun!!).
- There are lots of local Nature Walks that include Mindfulness as part of the experience. This can help us to make the most of outdoor experiences.
- Many unhealthy activities numb the body’s way of telling us how it feels (e.g. stressed, tired, bored). Be prepared to Take Notice of these changes, listen and find new ways to respond.

What can you do?

- Ask your LiveWell Coach or Advisor about local opportunities to Volunteer
- Visit a local tourist attraction (out of season it will be quieter & cheaper!)
- Find positive, life affirming quotes or sayings - put them on your wall, your phone, share them with others
- Make one positive statement a day about what is going on outside your front door
- Notice the changing seasons, change your diet/habits to match what is happening as the seasons change
- Enjoy Dorset’s open spaces - find new places to visit
- Meditation or yoga can help create a positive state of mind
- Take notice of your health



Call LiveWell Dorset (0800 8401628) or search for;

Mind, Body & Spirit, Dorset-Things to See & Do, Nature & Wildlife Groups, Volunteering, Yoga, Mindfulness Walks, Natural Choices, Conservation



Be Active

Why is Being Active important to Wellbeing?

Being physically and mentally active can increase mood and lower anxiety through feelings of stimulation, connection and achievement. Being active is crucial for all age groups: developing the cognitive skills of children and protecting against mental decline in older adults.

How does Being Active support Behaviour Change?

- Unhealthy lifestyle choices are often used as time fillers for people who are bored, restless, under-occupied, lonely or disconnected. Being Active can be a great way to offer an alternative "time filler".
- Physical Activity is not just for those who are fit already. There are lots of Physical Activities that do not have an obvious link to fitness eg; Gardening, Nature Walks. Just getting out of the house or even out of their chair can be a big deal for some of us.
- When giving up an unhealthy behaviour, a replacement activity is often needed. Being Active is probably the most incompatible replacement activity we can do. This incompatible with the behaviour being changed, makes slippage less likely.

- **Physical Activity is not just about "getting fit". Gardening, Nature Walks, Getting Out & About are all excellent ways to include physical activity into our life. Seeing Physical Activity as a chore limits its usefulness and its appeal. Link it to interests & fun activities.**

- If we can link other "5 Ways to Wellbeing" with Physical Activity then we are on to a winner! Getting out can also be social & improve Connections, or going outside can help us Take Notice of our surroundings and our state of mind.
- "Natural Choices" is an excellent way to link Physical Activity to the great outdoors. Local clubs, activities and events are a mere Referral away. Start small, go for a visit, even if just to the coffee shop at a place of interest - once we see nature in all its splendour we are normally keen to return. The 8 week course can come later - visit now!

- We can look at “empty” pockets of our day and ask ourselves - “If I moved around what could I do???” - This could mean leaving the building at lunchtime, visiting someone in the evening, it could mean putting on some music and having a dance! Moving can take us to places!
- Teaching children that Physical Activity (and the outdoors) are part of “everyday” is a great thing for parents to model for their children. Become a great role model.
- Making Connections can help break down barriers around attendance. Become a volunteer for others, or ask for support to attend for the first time. Ask activity organisers to greet us by name or partner us up with someone. We must not let our fear of being ignored by others put us off starting something new.

What can you do?

- Ask your LiveWell Coach or Advisor about local opportunities to Volunteer
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Walk to an appointment / use the stairs / park further away
- Do simple exercises at home
- Play or dance with your children
- Find a sport that you enjoy
- Take up an interest or hobby
- Check out Natural Choices



Call LiveWell Dorset (0800 8401628) or search for;

Conservation, Fitness & Exercise Classes, Gardening, Martial Arts, Nature & Wildlife Groups, Singing & Dance Classes, Sports, Walking Groups



Keep Learning

Why is Learning important to Wellbeing?

Learning encourages social interaction and increases self-esteem and feelings of competency. The setting of personal goals to achieve something new has been shown to increase life satisfaction.

How does Learning support Behaviour Change?

- Unhealthy lifestyle choices are often used as time fillers for people who are bored, restless, under-occupied, lonely or disconnected. Learning new things can be a great way to offer an alternative "time filler".
- Unhealthy lifestyle choices can often be used as a "personal confidence" boost. Learning something new makes us feel more competent and in turn can improve confidence.
- When giving up an unhealthy behaviour, a replacement activity is often needed. Learning is probably the most engrossing replacement activity we can do. Also, in most instances, it will be incompatible with the behaviour you are changing, which makes slippage less likely.

- **Learning does not have to be "academic". Learn to sew, sing, swim, how to shop online! Learning can also be things that stimulate the mind – puzzles, games and even colouring, engage parts of the brain that other activities don't reach!**

- Linking Learning to times when we feel at a disadvantage can also be useful. For example if we find it difficult to wait without engaging in an unhealthy behaviour - reaching for a crossword can be an excellent replacement/alternative reaction.
- Adult Education classes are often offered free to people who volunteer to "buddy" up with someone who has a learning disability. (Thereby linking Giving & Learning!).
- Learning is also about sharing what we know. Joining a group like The University of the Third Age can be a great way of sharing our experiences with others.

- YouTube can offer a whole new way of learning - from following cooking classes to repairing a computer. Remember that YouTube does contain content intended for adults. Maybe we might even be inspired to Vlog about our journey through behaviour change!
- Remember Learning can be physical too. Check out Wildlife Charities for educational walks and talks.
- Make a list of interests - If we are interested there will be others who are interested too... Libraries, The Internet, Friends & Family can all be useful in finding that "thing" we want to know more about.

What can you do?

- Ask your LiveWell Coach or Advisor about local opportunities to Volunteer
- Read a book, newspaper or magazine
- Sign up to a class or a course
- Join your local Library (it's not just about books!)
- Check out Internet Videos - learn a new skill
- Cook and host a meal with a friend (take it in turns Learn new recipes)
- Carry puzzles with you / download a puzzle app to your phone



Call LiveWell Dorset (0800 8401628) or search for;

Art & Craft Groups, Community Choirs, Singing & Dance Classes, Hobbies, University of the Third Age, Social Clubs, Writing, Film & Performance



Give

Why is Giving important to Wellbeing?

Individuals actively engaged in their communities report higher wellbeing. Studies have shown that doing something good for someone else increases brain activity that is associated with pleasure and reward, making us feel good about ourselves.

How does Giving support Behaviour Change?

- Unhealthy lifestyle choices are often used as time fillers for people who are bored, restless, under-occupied, lonely or disconnected. Volunteering can be a great way to offer an alternative "time filler".
- Unhealthy lifestyle choices can be used as a form of self-care for people with low self-esteem, poor social networks, negative feelings of self-worth and/ or poor self-image. Volunteering can be a great way of enhancing how we feel about ourselves and provides a more meaningful form of self-care - in that it "cares for our "Self".
- When giving up an unhealthy behaviour, a replacement activity is often needed. Giving is probably the most rewarding replacement activity you can do. Also, in most instances, it will be incompatible with the behaviour being changed, which makes slippage less likely.

- **Volunteering is not a 24/7 commitment. We can offer as little or as much time as we like. Start small, maybe once a week offering a couple of hours and see how it goes. There are people out there now, just waiting for someone to; give, Giving a go...**

- "Old" behaviours that we give up can often dominate our thoughts, and we need distractions and new pre-occupations to replace these thoughts. Volunteering is a great distraction as it is about someone or something else & it is "New or Different" - we are designed to focus on what is new, thereby creating a great distraction!
- We are more likely to do something for someone else's benefit than for our own "benefit". Getting out and about or physically exercising can be hard for some people - this can be easier if someone else benefits too. For example; we might be more likely to go swimming regularly if we

are supporting a disabled swimming group.

- Changing behaviour can be a struggle. But there are lots of people struggling. Volunteering is about focusing on the "positive" - what we are doing, not what we are not.
- Poor body image can stop us from taking part in group activities, especially physical ones. Doing physical activities with people who are disabled or elderly can take the emphasis off ourselves and allow us to feel more "body positive".

What can you do?

- Ask your LiveWell Coach or Advisor about local opportunities to Volunteer
- Contact the Volunteer Centre Dorset on - 01305 269214
- Look up local Charities on the internet
- Become a Befriender, Community Transport Driver
- Volunteer in your local community
- Help out a friend or neighbour
- Donate to charity
- Cook and share a meal with a friend



Call LiveWell Dorset (0800 8401628) or search for:

Community Support Groups, University of the Third Age, Conservation, Befrienders, Community Transport, Volunteering, Volunteer Centre Dorset



My 5 Ways to Wellbeing Action Plan;

5 Ways to Wellbeing	What do you need to do?	How are you going to do it?	What have you achieved?
Connect			
Take Notice			
Be Active			
Keep Learning			
Give			

“You are what you repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” Aristotle