

VCS Health and Wellbeing

Factsheet 3a: Five Ways to Wellbeing

After reading this you should understand the Five Ways to Wellbeing model and be able to use it to plan your work

What is it?

In 2008 the New Economics Foundation created a simple system of messages and actions that people could take to improve their mental wellbeing based on evidence of what works. The **Five Ways to Wellbeing** describes five 'ways' with everyday examples of how to achieve them.

1. Connect...

With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

2. Be active...

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

3. Take notice...

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a train, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

4. Keep Learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.

5. Give...

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

Describing your work

Local voluntary and community groups have found that using the Five Ways to describe how they contribute to wellbeing is very useful. For instance here are some suggestions about how certain activities can contribute to each of the Five Ways:

Connect, e.g. groupwork, social gatherings, befriending, reducing isolation

Be active e.g. sport, play, exercise, walking, anything that will make people move more

Take notice e.g. offering new and different experiences, helping people to think about how they are feeling

Keep learning e.g. classes and groups learning new skills

Give e.g. using volunteers, joining in, befriending, opportunities to donate

Case Studies (see more information)

Six local organisations have demonstrated their impact using Five Ways;

- Chestnut Nursery (horticulture)
- Faithworks (various services)
- Christchurch Angels (befriending)
- Diealog (end of life))
- Flourish at Holton Lee (the arts and environment)
- The Lantern Trust (drop ins and meals)



Planning your work

Using the framework of the 'Five Ways' can be a useful planning tool for those groups that want to produce health specific outcomes e.g. recovery from head injuries, but also for those whose main aim is not directly health related (e.g. benefits advice, arts or protection of the environment). As a suggestion you could identify an activity then describe how it contributes to each of the 'Five Ways'. Then giving it a numerical

score where 4 is 'a great deal of opportunity', 3 is 'a lot of opportunity', 2 is some opportunities, 1 is 'few opportunities' and 0 is 'no opportunities' Then perhaps you can think about how you could maximise your impact on health and wellbeing by growing existing activities or adding new ones, particularly where there might be a low cost.

For instance looking at a charity shop:

	How does it contribute	Score	What more could be done
Connect	Those working in the shop come from a wide range of backgrounds. Also a wide cross section of the public use the shop. Therefore people may meet who might not otherwise.	3	Organise social events for volunteers. Organise a few events that might bring in new members of the public
Be active	Volunteering in the shop requires some activity. Can also be a reason for some volunteers to get out of their home and travel to the shop.	1	Advertise local physical activities Organise a sponsored walk/skip/etc. for our supporters to take part in. Encourage our volunteers to walk/cycle to the shop (provide safe cycle parking)
Take notice	Staff/volunteers have to be aware of the shop environment	1	Organise mindfulness sessions for staff/volunteers Encourage staff/volunteers to look at other charity shops to improve how we run our own Ensure supervisors give staff/volunteers an opportunity to reflect on their work, etc.
Keep learning	Staff and volunteers are offered training. Information is available for the public about our cause so they better understand the issues.	2	Organise some talks for the public on our cause Undertake skills audit of our staff/volunteers and organise training
Give	Offering volunteering Public can donate items Public can buy for a good cause	4	Advertise how else the public can support our cause

More Information

- For more detail on New Economics Foundation see [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)
- [Five Ways to Wellbeing Toolkit](#) from Voluntary Arts, which although written for arts organisations is a useful publication to get you thinking about how you can improve the contribution of your work
- Dorset Community Action has written a simple guide to give to users about the Five Ways and what they can do to improve their behaviours. There is also a companion guide for practitioners. Available from Bournemouth CVS and website below.
- This Factsheet and Case Studies are available from Bournemouth CVS (01202 466120) or at www.bournemouthcvs.org.uk/healthandwellbeing.asp