

# VCS Health and Wellbeing

## Factsheet 5b: WEMWBS

After reading this you should be able to decide whether to use WEMWBS

### What is it?

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale is now universally recognised as a validated tool to measure mental wellbeing in adults (over 16). This tool is used by many health groups and organisations, including throughout the NHS.

The full version consists of 14 positive aspects of mental health:

1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future
2. I've been feeling useful
3. I've been feeling relaxed
4. I've been feeling interested in other people
5. I've had energy to spare
6. I've been dealing with problems well
7. I've been thinking clearly
8. I've been feeling good about myself
9. I've been feeling close to other people
10. I've been feeling confident
11. I've been able to make up my own mind about things
12. I've been feeling loved
13. I've been interested in new things
14. I've been feeling cheerful

Users are asked to tick a box that best describes their experience of the 14 statements over the past 2 weeks. The boxes are: 'none of the time', 'rarely', 'some of the time', 'often' and 'all of the time'. The tool has been designed for users to complete themselves. The answers are converted into a score with 1 given for 'none of the time' to 5 for 'all of time'. Therefore total scores will range from a minimum of 14 to a maximum of 70.

### Short WEMWBS

A shorter version with only 7 statements has also been developed. The statements relate more to functioning than feelings and

so offers a slightly different perspective on mental well-being. However it has been validated for populations over 13 years of age.

As with the 14 statement version users are asked to assess themselves against each statement with 5 options:

1. I've been feeling optimistic about the future
2. I've been feeling useful
3. I've been feeling relaxed
4. I've been dealing with problems well
5. I've been thinking clearly
6. I've been feeling close to other people
7. I've been able to make up my own mind about things

### Using it

The tool is designed to be used at least twice with individuals i.e. at the start and end of a programme but 3 times is considered better.

Although the change in individuals can be a good feedback tool for a user WEMWBS has been validated for groups. This is done by comparing the average scores for users at the beginning and end of a programme. A change of 3 to 8 in the average score is seen as meaningful (at an individual level a change of 3 or more in scores can also be seen as significant). The WEMWBS user guide (see below) also has median scores for different demographic groups to compare your groups score against. For instance the national median for all age groups and genders is 51.

DCA have developed an Excel spreadsheet so you can enter scores and then automatically calculates averages (see More Information overleaf).



## Children and young people

Although WEMWBS has been tested statistically for over 16 years olds a project has shown it works with 13-16 year olds. The Waves Project report (see More Information below) includes sample questionnaires, how to carry out and interpret.

WEMWBS do not recommend using their

scale for under 13s but to use the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale or the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

## Getting hold of it

The tool is free to use but you need to register with NHS Health Scotland and credit them. Their website below includes downloadable forms and user guides.

### More Information

- WEMBWS; [www.healthscotland.com/scotlands-health/population/Measuring-positive-mental-health.aspx](http://www.healthscotland.com/scotlands-health/population/Measuring-positive-mental-health.aspx)
- Waves Project Report [www.healthscotland.com/documents/4164.aspx](http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/4164.aspx)
- Stirling Wellbeing Scale [www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/faq/scwbs\\_children\\_report.pdf](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/faq/scwbs_children_report.pdf)
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire [www.sdqinfo.org](http://www.sdqinfo.org)
- This Factsheet and DCA spreadsheets are available from Bournemouth CVS (01202 466120) or at [www.bournemouthcvs.org.uk/healthandwellbeing.asp](http://www.bournemouthcvs.org.uk/healthandwellbeing.asp)