

Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Information for parents/ carers



We all have an important role to play in looking after our own mental health and wellbeing as well as promoting and supporting the mental wellbeing of the people we care for.

This leaflet aims to provide you with;

- An understanding of Mental Health and Wellbeing
- How to improve the mental wellbeing of the whole family
- Where to get support.

What is Mental Health and Wellbeing?

In the same way that we all have physical health, we all have mental health and we need to look after it.

Mental health and wellbeing is about how we think and feel. It is being able to enjoy life and cope well with life's challenges. Mental health and wellbeing can be affected by various life events e.g. work stress or relationship break-up, as well as mental illnesses such as depression or anxiety.

It is normal to have feelings of happiness when something good happens or feelings of anger or sadness if something bad happens, or to be scared or anxious if something is worrying you. Part of keeping good mental health is being aware of the differences between normal emotions and feelings that you may need extra support with, for example, major life events or mental illness.

Without good mental health, it is difficult to look after our physical health. What affects one will affect the other. We need to feel motivated to look after ourselves and do things like exercise or watch how much we drink, for example. Some people have more serious mental health problems such as bipolar disorder. However, it is important to remember that everyone has the ability to take steps to look after and improve their mental wellbeing. People can and do recover from even the most serious and long-term mental health problems.

[Health Scotland](#) has two definitions which are helpful in understanding what we mean by mental wellbeing and mental illness:

- **Mental wellbeing:** There are many different definitions of mental wellbeing but they generally include areas such as: life satisfaction, optimism, self esteem, mastery and feeling in control, having a purpose in life, and a sense of belonging and support.
- **Mental illness:** Mental illness refers to a diagnosable condition that significantly interferes with an individual's cognitive, emotional or social abilities e.g. depression, anxiety, schizophrenia.

<http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/MentalHealth>

Improving Our Mental Health and Wellbeing

Life can be stressful. Looking after your mental health can help with stress.

It is important to find positive ways to manage stress. There are many things we can do to feel positive and improve our relationships. Here are ten positive steps that may help you and your family to look after their mental health and wellbeing:

Ten Ways to Look After Your mental Health (www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

 Talk about your feelings	 Accept who you are
 Eat well	 Keep in touch
 Take a break	 Keep Active
 Drink sensibly	 Ask for help
 Do something you are good at	 Care for others

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These ten tips may be useful to you as an individual but you can also discuss them with children and encourage them to build them into their life. This will start good habits, helping them cope better not only just now but throughout life.

There are many things in your local area that offer opportunities to start taking some of these positive steps. **Vibrant Communities** offer opportunities to volunteer, join clubs and be physically active.

Contact telephone number: 01563 576705

Email: vibrantcommunities@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Support Available

There is lots of help available if you would like to talk to someone about your own mental health or get support to help a child.

Parentline

Provides a confidential helpline to give parents an opportunity to 'offload' and be pointed in the right direction for information and support.

Contact telephone number: 0808 028 22 33

Email: parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk

Website: <http://www.children1st.org.uk/>

Hands on Scotland

This website aims to help you make a difference to children and young people's lives. It gives practical information, tools and activities to respond helpfully to troubling behaviour and to help children and young people to flourish.

Website: <http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/>

Samaritans

Provides a 24 hour listening service to people in crisis or despair. You can also contact them anonymously by email: jo@samaritans.org

Contact telephone number: 08457 90 90 90

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

NHS Inform

If you are worried about your mental health or someone you care about and are unsure who to turn to, NHS inform may be able to help. NHS Inform provides information on mental health and wellbeing, accessing help and advice if you are worried about someone.

Website: <http://www.nhsinform.co.uk/MentalHealth>

NHS 24 Call free on 111 if you are ill and it can't wait until your regular NHS service reopens