

five ways to wellbeing



A toolkit for working with
young people in Hertfordshire

JANUARY 2015

connect > be active > take notice > keep learning > give

Summary of this toolkit

- This toolkit is for anyone working or engaging with young people in Hertfordshire; whether in a school, youth club or community setting.
- It introduces the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing Framework', which can be used to help improve wellbeing.
- It explains why improving young peoples' wellbeing is important and introduces practical ideas for using the Five Ways to Wellbeing when working with young people.

The main sections in the toolkit are:

- Working with individual young people
- Working with a group of young people
- Ideas Bank

Click on a section to go to that page



What is wellbeing?

The definition of wellbeing in Hertfordshire is both feeling good and functioning well.

Why does wellbeing matter for young people?

If you have chosen to work with young people, of course you want them to feel good and be able to function well in their lives.

Evidence suggests that wellbeing is also important in other aspects of young people's lives, for example:

- Young people with a good level of wellbeing are more likely to perform well at school and be physically healthy (Department of Health, 2011).
- Enabling young people to develop awareness about the importance of looking after their wellbeing could offer benefits for their mental health in the future because we know that 75% of adult mental health problems begin before the age of 18 (CMO, 2012).
- Emotional and mental wellbeing could be a protective factor in reducing the likelihood of young people using drugs or alcohol (Public Health England, 2013)

So if you work with young people, consider it as part of your role to support them to look after and improve their own wellbeing.

What are the Five Ways to Wellbeing?

The Five Ways to Wellbeing Framework was developed by the New Economics Foundation as a set of five evidence based actions that promote wellbeing. Based on the latest scientific evidence the simple actions, if taken regularly, can improve wellbeing and enhance quality of life.

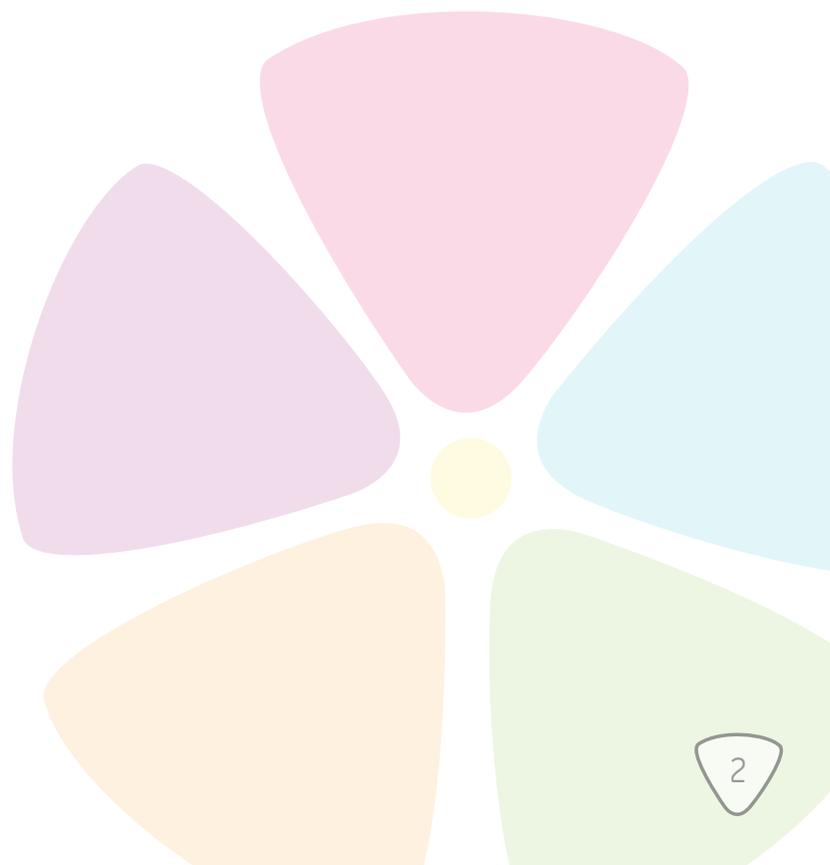
The Five Ways to Wellbeing are to:

- **Connect** – connecting with others
- **Give** – giving – looking outward as well as inward
- **Be active** – doing something active
- **Take Notice** – taking notice of the world around you
- **Keep Learning** – learning new things

Each action can be undertaken individually or collectively as part of everyday activity.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing may help young people:

- Make the most of opportunities and deal with stressful situations by taking time out and learning how to cope when things get tough.
- Increase their interpersonal skills, empathy and communication skills through giving and seeing themselves as part of the wider community.
- Increase their chances of employability and self-worth by taking notice of what they are good at and what they have to offer others.



Let's help young people to take responsibility for their own wellbeing

The best way to really improve wellbeing is through understanding that

'Wellbeing is important for me'

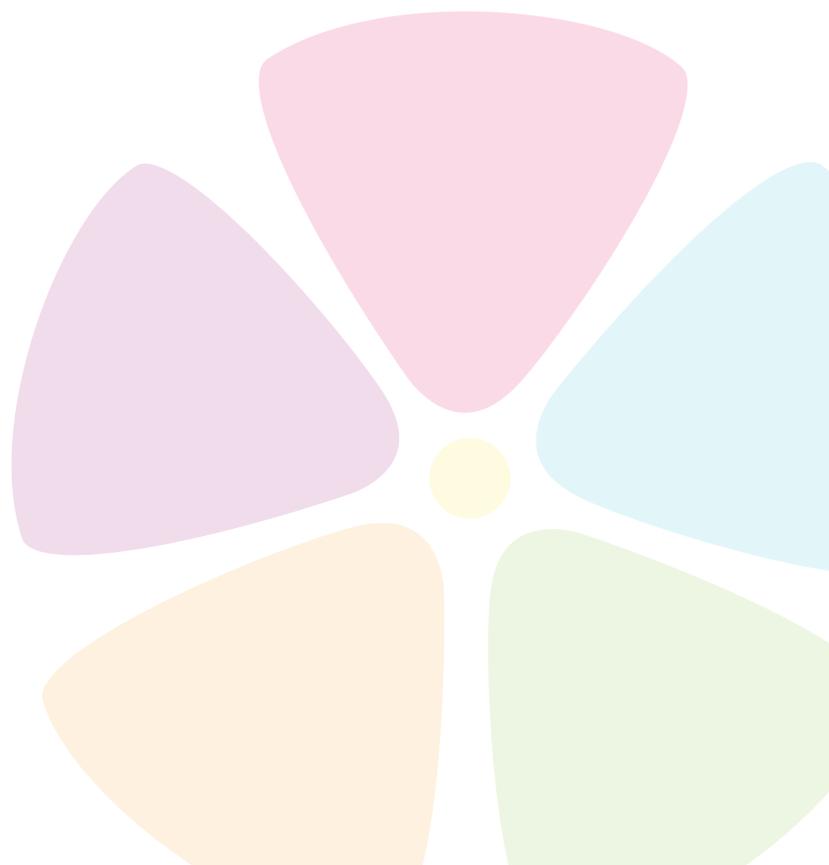
'There are things that I can do to improve my wellbeing'

Although we can support young people to be happy and healthy through the work we do, they have the best chance of being able to stay happy throughout their lives if they learn how to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

The biggest difference we can make is to give young people the awareness and skills to look after and think about their own wellbeing.

Many young people in Hertfordshire (particularly those aged between 11 and 15) may have been taught resilience lessons in school as part of the curriculum or be aware of the five ways to wellbeing. Resilience skills build self-efficacy and the ability to bounce back from setbacks. It's worth asking the group about their current understanding and whether they have had any lessons in school for example. For young people who suggest they have a good understanding it can be beneficial to explore the transferability of the skills with them and how they continue to develop their understanding as they grow up. We can always learn more about personal wellbeing and keep practising and building on what we know.

More information on the resilience lessons in school can be found here
<http://howtothrive.org/young-people/education/>



five ways to wellbeing



Connect

Connect with people around you. Spend time with your friends and family. Make new friends. Use different ways to communicate.



Be Active

Go for a walk or a run. Cycle, dance or play a game. Walk to school instead of getting the bus. Go to the park. Try a new activity.



Take Notice

Take time to be still, reflect, and become aware of your surroundings. Notice what you are thinking and be aware of what's going on in the world around you: the everyday and the unusual. Be curious. Savour your favourite food.



Keep Learning

Set yourself a goal. Learn something new. Research something you're interested in. Learn a new word or a random fact. Visit a museum.



Give

Do something nice for a friend. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Raise money for charity. Be a good role model. Take action to improve your neighbourhood.

Working with individual young people

The Five Ways to Wellbeing Framework was designed to help individuals take action to improve their wellbeing. The ideas offered here provide some practical ways in which you can encourage young people to value their wellbeing and understand that they can feel good and function well by taking regular actions. They can all easily be adapted to fit your own style and the needs of the young people you work with.

How to start the conversation

- Linking the Five Ways to Wellbeing to a young person's life is a great way to start the conversation.
- Ask the young person to focus on a time when they felt good. What were they doing, who were they with? You can then link this to one or more of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions.

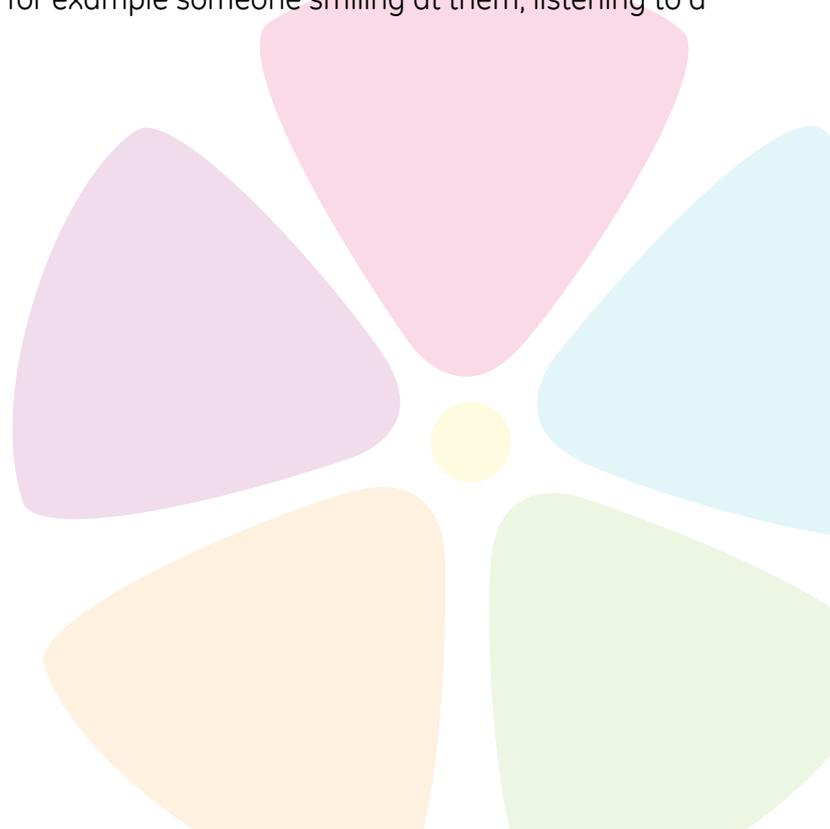
Sounds like you had a busy weekend helping your friend. I'm sure they appreciated it – did you know that helping people is really good for you too?

'So you like dancing – did you know that Being Active is one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing?'

So your team won at the weekend, can you describe the moment that goal went in? Did you know taking notice of a specific moment is one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing?

See the role plays on pages 7 & 8 for more tips...

It's important to remember that thinking of good things can be a lot harder to do than thinking of difficult things. If they are struggling to come up with anything good then explain that it's normal to find it hard. Generally we human beings have a tendency to focus on the negative more easily, it's in our nature! We have to work a lot harder to think of good things – think of it as how our brains are wired. We have to push our brains to pay attention to the good things, but when we do most people can find they think of things that have happened, however and despite how difficult life can be. Help prompt them using examples of small good things that happen; for example someone smiling at them, listening to a new song or laughing with friends.



How to encourage a young person to use the Five Ways to Wellbeing

- Explain the Five Ways to Wellbeing with the help of a visual image. Leaflets are available from www.hertsdirect.org/fiveways, Hertfordshire Health Promotion or by emailing fivewaystowellbeing@hertfordshire.gov.uk or you can use the diagram on page 4.
- **The important things to explain are:**
 - Wellbeing (feeling good and functioning well) is important for everyone.
 - Developing habits for wellbeing is best done when you are feeling ok rather than waiting until things are difficult.
 - Taking these five actions regularly will help improve wellbeing.
 - Finding ways to include the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions as part of everyday routines is the best way to improve your wellbeing.
- Explain that one way to improve wellbeing is to start to notice how many of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions they are doing already, and also to notice the ones they are not. Use the [Ideas Bank](#) at the end of this guide to get tips on different activities, local support organisations and contacts.
- Give them a simple worksheet to log which Five Ways to Wellbeing actions they do during the week (see the template at [appendix 1](#)). You can then ask them to show it to you next time you see them, and use it for a prompt to encourage them to try out more activities and make them part of their routine.
- Tell them about the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing app' – which can be downloaded for free from Google Play. The app provides a way to log, record, set reminders and suggest different Five Ways to Wellbeing activities.
- Find ways to help young people understand that wellbeing is something that has to be worked at. The actions are simple but remembering to do them regularly can be hard. Engage them in a conversation about how they can help themselves to remember.

For example taking notice of what you are grateful for in life can be hard when you are feeling down and even more so if it's something you are not used to doing. It has been proven that focusing on what you appreciate in life when you are having a bad day is helpful for moving forward. See the activity on appreciation described in 'role play 2' below.

Things to be aware of

Conversations about personal wellbeing can sometimes lead to thinking about difficult issues. Remember the Five Ways to Wellbeing is about everyone creating good habits that will help them look after their wellbeing – helping them to become mentally fit. The emphasis of this tool is to encourage ways for helping young people to think about the good things and develop healthy wellbeing, rather than dealing with the difficult things. It's important to have clear boundaries with the young people you are working with about this so they are clear about what the sessions can, and more importantly what they can't address. Make sure that you know where to point them for help if they say they need it.

- Make sure you have some information to hand so that you can signpost young people to services that are well placed to support them.
- Make sure you are aware of what to do if you become concerned about a young person's emotional wellbeing or mental health. Your organisation will have its own policy in place on how to deal with concerns and that is the guidance you should look to follow.

Role play 1- Talking about football

Some people will find it easy to start a conversation with a young person about wellbeing. These role plays are provided here for those who feel less confident in managing this sort of conversation. They're not intended as a script to follow word for word, but hopefully give some ideas and techniques to use.

Start the conversation by talking about something a young person is interested in - in this case football.

You: It's good that you like being active and football is a great way to meet up with friends. Did you know that that's two of your Five Ways to Wellbeing actions? **Be Active** and **Connect**?

Young person: What's that?

You: Five Ways to Wellbeing are five actions that can be taken to improve wellbeing. Looking after your wellbeing is as important as looking after your physical health. Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well and there are actions that you can take regularly to help you improve and look after your wellbeing. By playing football with others you have covered two out of the five actions that can help, being active and connecting with other people. Let me explain...

By **being active**, it is good for your wellbeing as it reduces stress and anxiety. Also while you are concentrating on playing football, you are not thinking about other things, such as the piece of homework that needs doing or the exam that's coming up.

You are **connecting** with others while you're playing, both your own team mates and those you are playing against. Feeling connected to other people is proven to help you feel good and function well.

The other 3 are:

Give – giving someone something, it could be a smile, your time or you could help someone with a problem they have. Can you remember a time when you have helped someone? What did you do? Did you notice how it made you feel at the time?

Take notice - stopping and paying attention. There is so much to be aware of, but usually we are in too much of a rush to really notice our surroundings. Stop and observe something closely. Look beyond what you normally see and look at it in a different way or from a different angle.

Keep learning – something new. What interests you? It can be something small or big? Think about this as different to the type of learning in school or college. For example you might be interested in a particular animal or a country – how can you find out more about it? TV, Internet, Google, family, neighbours, the library? You might want to find out about a chosen career. Who else does this job? How did they get there? What courses did they take? Learning offers real satisfaction and keeping your mind active is beneficial for your wellbeing.

Role play 2 – Talking to a young person about using the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions when they are having a bad day

Some people will find it easy to start a conversation with a young person about wellbeing. These role plays are provided here for those who feel less confident in managing this sort of conversation. They're not intended as a script to follow word for word, but hopefully give some ideas and techniques to use.

You: Using the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions can really help when things are not going so well, but it is good to practice using them on good days so they are familiar to you. Do you often stop and think about what you appreciate in life?

Young person's likely response: Not really no.

You: It's really simple, but it may feel odd to start off with particularly if you don't normally think about what you appreciate in life. Here's what you do

Before you go to bed tonight I want you to think of three things that you are grateful for and you appreciate in your life. It can be big or small things – it doesn't matter. The important thing is that you stop and **Take Notice** of three things. I want you to say them out loud (perhaps looking in a mirror as you say them) or write them down. I want you to do this every night for one week.

Young person: That is going to be weird!

You: It might feel a bit weird to start with, but you will be on your own and so it doesn't matter. The idea is that we (human beings) tend to spend more time thinking about what's bad or going wrong in life and not enough time thinking about the things we are grateful for. By thinking about three things each night it will allow you to create some balance in your thinking about what's good about your life. So when you are having a bad day you can remember the good things more easily because you have thought about them or look at what you wrote down as a reminder. It won't make the bad day go away completely, but it will help you think that not everything in your life is bad and that there are things you are grateful for and that will make you feel better. When you feel good you will be better at problem solving which may help you with dealing with the difficult day.

If this works for you, you can give your appreciation to someone else. This is another of your Five Ways to Wellbeing – **Give**. Choose someone who has done something for you that you are grateful for and take the time to tell them. Be sure to tell them what they did for you, be as detailed as possible and tell them why you are grateful to them. It will make you and them feel good.

Working with a group of young people

The Five Ways to Wellbeing can work as group work with young people. Here are some ideas for how you can introduce the concept to a group of young people in an interactive way. During the sessions, try to encourage young people to be aware of how the activities are affecting their wellbeing.

Five Ways Icebreaker

Use the Five Ways to Wellbeing as an icebreaker the first time you work with a group. Introduce the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions and show them a leaflet (available from www.hertsdirect.org/fiveways or Hertfordshire Health Promotion). Then ask each member of the group to think about one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions they have done recently and to share it with the group. If the group is less comfortable talking to the whole group, get them to work in groups of two or three. Ask them to think about:

- the emotion they felt when doing the activity.
- how often they do this sort of activity.
- whether they have thought about the activity as helping to improve their wellbeing.

Five Ways Picture and Word boards

Get the group to create their own picture or word board, where they select different images that reflect the things that make them feel happy and content in their every day lives. Give them labels with each of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions and get them to assign to the most relevant area of their board. Use this to discuss how many of the five actions they are taking already and what is missing. Have they thought about the activity before in terms of helping them improve their wellbeing?

'Five Ways Circuits'

Set up a circuit with five stations around the room that represent one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions. Split into small groups and each will spend 10 minutes at each station. This can be adapted to the group and can require preparation to support it, but could include the:

- Learn station: they must learn 5 facts about an unusual topic
- Notice station: give them all the same object (e.g. a piece of fruit, or a leaf) and get them to take notice of it's individual characteristics. Then ask them to share with the group how their item is different unique, unusual. Something that they wouldn't have noticed if they had not focused their attention on it.
- Connect station: they each share two facts about themselves.
- Give station: they must think about actions they could take to improve their local neighbourhood e.g. picking up litter or painting a fence.
- Active station: do as many keepy uppies in a row as they can.

Other activities with groups

- Using a flip chart or white board - list each of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions, and add a tick anytime they are mentioned as part of the session, e.g. if someone mentions being active in some way then add a tick to 'be active'.
- Give the group cards with interesting photos or pictures on and ask them to pick one that they connect with. Ask them to share what it is about the picture or photo that connects them to it.
- Set up a physical activity as a break from the rest of the session or programme. Any activity that will get them up on their feet and doing something different to the planned programme.
- Ask the group to come up with as many ideas for activities involving the Five Ways to Wellbeing as possible.
- Incorporate a creative activity into the group that involves learning something new.

'Malteser activity'

- Bring in a packet of sweets (like Maltesers) – so there are enough for each person.
- Place a Malteser in front of each person, but ask them not to touch it.
- Ask them to look carefully at it without touching it. Ask a few of them to say what they **notice** about it by focusing on it.
- Now ask them to pick it up carefully and to smell it. Ask them what it smells like.
- Get them to place the Malteser on their tongue without dropping it. Allow the Malteser to rest on the tongue for a few seconds.
- Now ask them to bring their tongue back into their mouth and roll the Malteser around in their mouth. Ask them to try and not swallow but to **notice** the taste, smell, texture and any other senses and get them to write down the words that come into their mind as the sweet rolls around in their mouth.
- Finally they can eat the Malteser.
- Ask the group to discuss what they noticed about the Malteser, and share the words they came up with.
- Encourage the group to think about the process they went through, what it was like, and how they could use **Take Notice** like this in other parts of their lives?

'1,2,3 activity'

Ask the group to get into pairs and stand facing each other.

It can be helpful to get a young person to help you model this for each stage. Once modelled get them to run through each stage a few times before you move them onto the next stage.

Model the first stage

- Say 1, 2, 3 – first person says 1, second person says 2 and first person says 1.

Model second stage

- Replace the 1 with a clap of the hands – so first person clap their hands, second person says 2 and the first person says 3.

Model third stage

- Replace the 2 with a click of the fingers – so first person claps their hands, second person clicks their fingers and the first person says 3.

Model final stage

- Replace the 3 with a (theatrical) slap of the thigh! So this time there should be no spoken sounds – The first person claps their hands, the second person clicks their fingers and the first person slaps their thigh!

Personal Challenges

- Have a competition within the group: ask the group to try to do all Five Ways to Wellbeing actions between now and the next session and report back on what they have done. You could either give out a worksheet for them to log their activities (see template at [appendix 1](#)), take photos, use the Five Ways to Wellbeing app (mentioned earlier), set up a hashtag and ask the group to tweet every time they do an activity, or set up a Facebook group to post the activities. Offer an incentive to whoever manages the most, and remember to go through what they have done at the next session so you can have a discussion about how to make these activities more routine.
- If you want to make this more challenging you can ask the group to take the Big Five Challenge, where they try to do all five actions at the same time or within 24 hours. They would need to find a way to provide evidence of their success.
- For some groups, instead of a competition you might want to try the Five Ways Pledge. Encourage the group to all pledge to regularly do as many of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions as possible during the lifetime of the programme, and ask them to encourage each other to stick to this pledge. See template at [appendix 2](#).

Remember to continually remind young people to reflect on how these group activities are improving their wellbeing. Encourage them to value their wellbeing and to understand that they can feel good and function well by taking regular actions.

Ideas Bank

How to advise young people on getting involved in each of the Five Ways to Wellbeing

In the Ideas Bank you will find a list of ideas for encouraging young people to get involved in each of the Five Ways to Wellbeing. They are just a starting point for inspiration and there are many many more. Often young people will come up with the best ideas themselves.

The Ideas Bank is designed to be used in conjunction with the rest of the toolkit, so please read the introductory sections first so that you understand how the Five Ways framework works and how to explain it to young people.

Connect

Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, and neighbours. At home, 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.

Key message:

Connect, build, broaden and strengthen relationships and social networks. Spend time with others, friends and family and make time for conversation or having that chat.

Ways to connect:

- With family – share your day and ask about theirs
- At school - speak to someone new. Smile and speak to someone as you pass them in the corridor
- Ask a friend about their weekend and pay attention and listen when they tell you
- Talk to someone in person or on the phone instead of messaging or social media
- Make contact with someone you used to hang out with
- Find an old photo of friends or family and share it with them
- Don't use your phone for a day (or at least for a few hours!)
- Take your headphones off when in a shop
- Ask your parents or carer about their childhood
- Don't use the self-checkout in a shop and talk to the shop assistant
- Write a letter or send a postcard to someone
- Smile at a person on the street and say hello
- Share a random or inspirational photo with your friends
- Set up a social network group with a new group of friends



Be active

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Evidence suggests that physical exercise changes your brain chemistry and releases happy hormones which in turn can make you feel more positive. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Key message:

Being active is for people of all ages and does not need to be intense physical activity. Being active, such as walking, can also encourage social interactions.

Ways to be active:

- Play your favourite song and dance to it
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Walk to school
- Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk the final part of your journey
- Go to your local park
- Stretch and move your limbs in the morning, midday and evening
- Join a new sports club or team
- Walk the dog
- Do some gardening
- Make bread – it's hard work!
- Climb a tree
- Go to PE – no excuses!
- Try out a new exercise class like yoga or zumba
- Learn how to swim or ride a bike
- Create a five a side football team
- Try crazy golf or bowling with your mates
- Walk to see friends instead of going in the car
- Have a Wii fit competition
- Learn to be a lifeguard
- Coach a kids football team

For more information on how to be active, visit Hertfordshire Sports Partnership www.sportinherts.org.uk



Take notice

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to school, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling; reflecting on your thoughts and feelings may help you to identify why you may be feeling a certain way.

Key message:

Take time to be still, reflect, become aware of your surroundings. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Ways to take notice:

- Take a different, more beautiful route to or from school
- Stop and really take in your surroundings
- Reflect on the positives, what can you be grateful for – there is always something
- Take notice of what you are thinking. Not to judge or be hard on yourself, but just to be more aware of what you are thinking
- Really savour every mouthful of your lunch, noticing the texture, flavour, how the food feels, tastes
- Consider your strengths and how you make the most of them.
- Think about who inspires you and why
- Notice your neighbours and people around you
- Notice wild flowers and where they grow
- Watch animals and birds outside
- Think about what your parents do for you
- Pretend you are someone else and reflect on what they would think about you
- Plan for the future and where you'd like to be in 5 years time
- Do some people watching in the middle of town or in the park
- Try a new food and then notice how different it tastes and feels



Keep learning

Try something new. Sign up for that course. Take on a responsibility at school. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food.

Key message:

Set a goal. Learn something new. Try something fun. Achieve a goal.

Learning can involve any manner of subjects, not just what you have to do in school. Learning can be social, you may make new friends as well as new skills. Many exciting learning opportunities exist in Hertfordshire covering a wide range of topics.

Ways to keep learning:

- Research something you've always wondered about
- Discover something new, find out more about something you're interested in
- Read the news or a book
- Use a conversation as a way to learn new things, be curious
- Sign up for a class or group outside of school
- Learn a new word
- Visit your local library
- Learn something new about yourself
- Go to a quiz or host one among your friends
- Learn an inspirational quote
- Download a random fact app
- Go to a museum
- Learn a new hobby or a new language
- Learn a new dance routine or the words to a new song
- Learn a new route home
- Find out more about something your friends or family are interested in
- Learn more about your family history
- If you hear something you don't understand, google it straight away
- Use a dictionary for words you don't know
- Learn how to drive
- Think about how others are feeling and work out why

For more information on how to keep learning, visit www.hertsdirect.org/services/libraries



Give

Do something nice for a friend, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, join a community group, look out, as well as in.

Key message:

Any acts of kindness, whether small or large can make you feel happier and more satisfied about life. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

Ways to give:

- Smile and be willing to give your time to a conversation
- Check up on a friend
- Say thank you to someone who has helped you. Send a text, or message or write them a letter to show how much it meant to you.
- Give unwanted items to a local charity shop
- Donate your time to do something for someone else; help out a neighbour; carry shopping or offer to baby-sit
- Offer to help your parents or people you live with round the house
- Bake a cake and give it to someone
- Do some volunteering
- Help out at a local fete or event
- Nominate someone for an award
- Give some food to a food bank
- Give someone a hug
- Be a mentor for someone
- Raise money for charity
- Help an elderly neighbour
- Be a good role model
- Learn how to put someone in the Recovery Position
- Give your pocket money to someone who needs it more than you
- Give yourself some time to relax
- Take action to improve your area e.g. suggest ideas for reducing crime, help to clean up graffiti or pick up litter in the park
- Volunteer for an extra responsibility at school or college

For more information on how to give, visit www.vinspired.com the website for young people doing good things.



Appendix 2

Five Ways to Wellbeing Pledge

I pledge to take ownership of my own wellbeing.

I will do this by regularly doing as many of the Five Ways to Wellbeing actions as I can, and helping my friends to do the same.

Name

.....

Signed

.....

Pledge partners

.....

.....

.....

Date

.....

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www.hertsdirect.org/fiveways
fivewaystowellbeing@hertfordshire.gov.uk

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