

## Mental Well-Being

Mental well-being is just as important for a healthy lifestyle as our physical well-being. This wiki explains what affects mental well-being and support.

### What is Mental Well-Being?

We use the term mental well-being to talk about a variety of different things including how we feel in the moment, how well we are coping with our daily life as well as anything that may be worrying us or making us anxious.

Someone who has good mental well-being isn't necessarily happy all the time, and they aren't capable of automatically shrugging off the negative things that happen to them, but they are able to deal with the things that happen to them. However, having poor mental well-being can make it tougher to deal with the things that are affecting us.



Our mental well-being can be affected by big things that happen in our lives, often big life events that it feels as though we have little to no control over, such as bereavement and illness. The impact that these big events have on our well-being usually depends on how well we respond to what happened, and this often has its roots in our behaviours and habits. Some behaviours that can help our mental well-being are reaching out for support rather than withdrawing from those who care about us and being open to new opportunities instead of simply assuming the worst.

## **What can affect our mental well-being?**

There are lots of things that may happen in our lives that may affect a person's mental well-being. Some things that may affect mental well-being include:

**Grief** : Losing someone that we care about is almost always a difficult experience and can cause overwhelming emotions such as sadness, shock and anger. Grief is something we experience differently over time, and people may find it affects them differently after a certain amount of days, weeks and months. There are lots of people that can support you through feelings of grief.

Grief is something that everybody struggles with, and it can be particularly difficult for young people to understand our Coping with Grief Journal can be used to help young people to reflect on their feelings as they grieve in a simple, daily session.

**Bullying** : Bullying can happen to anyone at any time, anywhere. It can make us feel lonely, sad and embarrassed. Talking to someone with authority like a teacher can help you to get support for your bullying.

### **Major Life Changes:**

Starting a new school, job or club can be really daunting. We may miss our old friends and be worried that you won't fit in at your new school which can cause us to feel anxious. Taking steps to look after our mental well-being can help to make these feelings a little less overwhelming and help us to tackle these changes head first.

## **How can we improve our mental well-being?**

We all know how important it is to look after our physical well-being by eating a balanced diet and keeping active, but not many people know about how to look after their mental well-being.

Everyone finds that different things help them to look after their mental well-being and stay stress-free, so when you are given suggestions it is okay to only try the things that you are comfortable doing, give yourself time to figure out what works best for you and attempt things at your own pace. Pick options that feel achievable so that you don't overwhelm yourself.

**Some things that people find help with their mental well-being include:**

- Spending time relaxing
- Learn new things and flex their creative muscles
- Spending time outside in nature
- Connect with your friends and family
- Look after your physical well-being
- Sleep well

## **Spending time relaxing**

There are lots of brilliant ways that you can relax including:

- Having a bath
- Going for a walk
- Taking a break - if you are faced with a situation that is making you feel stressed or overwhelmed being to take some time away, even if it's just for five minutes it can help you to clear your head and relieve you of feelings like stress. A short break can help you to face the situation head-on.
- Mindfulness activities. There are many ways that you can practice mindfulness, including mindfulness colouring, yoga and meditation. Mindfulness helps people to become more aware of their thoughts and feelings which helps with being able to manage them and avoid becoming overwhelmed by your feelings.
- Have some time away from technology. Often we spend large amounts of our day using technology, whether we're working at a computer or video calling friends, so much of our time revolves around technology. But this means that our laptops, phones and tablets can make us feel overwhelmed and remind us of all the tasks that we need to do. Whether your tech-free time is a walk around the park or the time it takes for you to make a cup of coffee, it can have positive effects on your mental well-being.

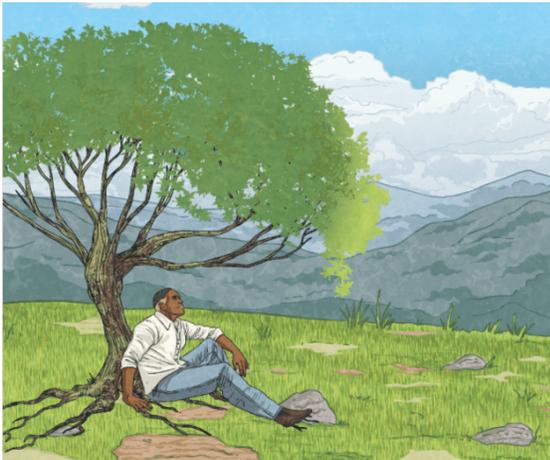
## **Learn new things and flexing our creative muscles:**

Lots of us have creative hobbies that we enjoy doing, but rarely find the time to do, this includes baking, drawing or playing a musical instrument. But doing things that we enjoy can have incredible benefits for our mental well-being. Often when we set out to do these creative tasks we want the final product to be perfect, which can make the hobby seem overwhelming, but if we remove these expectations then we can have much more fun.

Learning something new can also help us with our mental well-being, as well as making connections with new people. However, joining a new class can sometimes feel scary. If you want to learn something new but don't want to jump straight into classes, you can start online either by watching videos and reading articles or joining online groups. Then when you feel ready you can look into joining in-person classes and groups.

## **Spending time outside in nature:**

Spending time outside has been shown to improve our mood and reduce feelings of stress and anger as well as helping us to feel relaxed. Something as simple as going for a walk in the park can do wonders for your mental well-being. However, we don't always have the chance to go for a walk in the park, so why not bring nature to you? Having houseplants and flowers around you can have similar benefits to going outside to be around nature.



As well as plants, animals can also help to boost our moods, this is why people love their pets so much. If you don't or can't have pets, consider putting bird feed outside your window to encourage visitors.

## Connect with your friends and family

When we spend time with people we love and care about it can reduce our feelings of loneliness, which is excellent for our mental well-being. Talking to our friends about things that may be affecting our well-being can help us to feel supported, and they can talk us through negative feelings and help us find new coping mechanisms.



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## Look after your physical health:

Just like our mental health, there are lots of elements that go into helping us keep good physical health. These elements include:

- Exercising regularly
- Eating a healthy and balanced diet, and keep yourself well hydrated
- Having a happy and positive attitude
- Having a good sleep schedule

## **Sleep well:**

Establishing a consistent sleeping pattern is one of the most important things you can do to support your mental well-being. This includes having regular times you go to bed and wake up, as well as a routine that helps you prepare for going to bed.

Relaxing before bed can make going to sleep at a regular time easier. Ways to relax before bed include having a bath or meditating, as well as avoiding activities that may keep you up such as using technology and drinking caffeine. Keeping your bedroom a place that can relax is also important, avoiding working in your bedroom is a great way of ensuring that it is a place where you can relax.



## **Twinkl Resources:**

Here at Twinkl, we hope to support all children through their educational journey and part of this is teaching them how to look after their mental well-being. Some of our resources that can help with this are:

**Talking to Your Child about Their Mental Health** - Talking to children about mental health isn't always easy, but this guide is designed to support you with opening up this conversation. It covers advice and support and tells adults how to respond when children open up about their own mental health and struggles.

**Mental Well-Being Pupil Knowledge Sheet** - When our mental health becomes difficult to deal with we often struggle to know what we're meant to do. This can be particularly difficult for teenagers. Our Mental Well-Being Pupil Knowledge Sheet is designed to give teenager mental health tips that they may not have thought about.

**Anxiety and Stress Activity Pack** - If you're looking for some great resources to help your pupils learn how to manage anxiety and stress, then our fantastic pack of mental

health activities are here to help. This bumper pack of resources is designed to help children feel less anxious and support them in stressful situations.