



**Making life better,  
together**  
*Belfast Strategic Partnership*



# Take 5 steps to wellbeing



Connect



Keep learning



Be active



Take notice



Give



Public Health  
Agency

Project supported by the PHA

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# Foreword

Belfast Strategic Partnership (BSP) through its Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Thematic Group has worked diligently over the last 3 years developing and embedding the Take 5 steps to wellbeing approach into its work. Information sessions, activities and programmes have been delivered across the community, voluntary, statutory and business sectors throughout the city in order to promote the Take 5 concept and approach.

The Take 5 steps to wellbeing (Connect, Keep learning, Be active, Take notice and Give) approach contributes to improving wellbeing in its fullest sense, both physically and emotionally, where people feel good and function well.

However in Belfast wellbeing is not experienced equally by everyone. Across the city, inequalities experienced by those living in the most disadvantaged areas are clear to be seen, with a gap in male life expectancy of 9 years when compared with the most affluent areas. When we look to figures for healthy life expectancy regionally, the differential between the most and least deprived areas widens even further to 12 years for men and 14 years for women.

Tackling and addressing these very complex issues requires a collaborative approach and using our individual and collective resources to achieve better health for everyone is our primary goal.

And so we commend this Take 5 steps to wellbeing Toolkit. It outlines, demonstrates and provides resources based on evidence. It is designed to enable the community, voluntary, statutory and business sectors to increase awareness, knowledge and uptake of Take 5 steps to wellbeing. With this resource we want to broaden the range of people using Take 5 in their everyday life while at the same time contribute to increasing levels of wellbeing.

In addition to this Toolkit, resources for individuals and families are also available. All are accessible online at [www.makinglifebettertogether.com](http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com) or upon request on 028 9050 2073.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to preparing this resource. We believe it represents another valuable 'tool' in the box that practitioners can use as they continue their sterling work in supporting and empowering individuals, families and communities across this city and beyond.

**Irene Sherry**

*Chairperson*

*Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Thematic Group, Belfast Strategic Partnership*

# Belfast Strategic Partnership

## Vision

All people and communities in Belfast can confidently expect to have access to the opportunities and resources they need to live longer, healthier lives.

## Mission

To reduce life inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of people in Belfast by changing the way we work together. We do this by jointly harnessing the enthusiasm, efficiency and experience of our stakeholders to seek health and wellbeing gains in ways that we cannot do by working alone.

## Purpose

- To shape the future health and wellbeing priorities for Belfast
- To foster and take advantage of strategic opportunities to achieve better health outcomes
- To work together on areas where we can achieve the most impact
- To inform and influence future policy development
- To focus on the prevention of ill-health
- To develop and deliver an over-arching health and wellbeing action plan for the city

## Key Principles

To successfully reduce inequality and address the wider determinants of health we must:

- Maximise our combined impact by working better together
- Be accountable to others based on the results of our work
- Base our decisions and actions on evidence and learning from others
- Be open to innovative approaches and be prepared to work differently
- Encourage the active involvement of all stakeholders and strengthen relationships
- Build on the success of existing partnerships and programmes of work
- Engage with communities and seek to contribute to Community Planning
- Make effective use of our collective resources through better joint planning and priority setting
- Drive equity in health and wellbeing through all of our policies
- Share our learning to change the way the public sector works

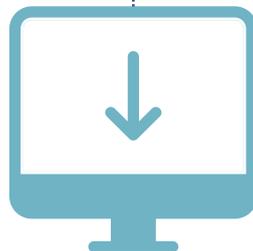
## Making Belfast a Resilient City

We will work to make Belfast an Emotionally Resilient City by:

- Building and strengthening existing work which has a positive impact on emotional resilience
- Undertaking pro-active and active work around prevention, promotion and education
- Developing and enhancing emotional resilience infrastructure and activity across the city
- Working with citizens to better understand and value emotional resilience as a concept and notion
- Promoting emotional resilience programmes as a means of support for individuals
- Better connecting emotional resilience work and activities across the city, with a focus on disadvantage and inequalities



**All resources are available  
to download or upon request**



[www.makinglifebettertogether.com](http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com)



**Call Belfast Health Development Unit on:  
Tel: 028 9050 2073**

# What is Take 5 steps to wellbeing?



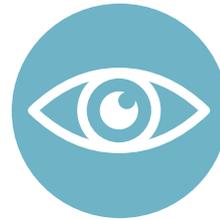
Connect



Keep learning



Be active



Take notice



Give

**Take 5 steps to wellbeing** is a set of evidence-based public health messages aimed at improving the wellbeing of the whole population. It is based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing developed by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) as the result of research undertaken as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing (2008)<sup>1</sup>. NEF states that if practised regularly the Five Ways to Wellbeing<sup>2</sup> will contribute to improving personal wellbeing.

These simple and effective messages are based on solid evidence and draw on a wealth of psychological and economic literature from inter-disciplinary work. **Take 5 steps to wellbeing** leads to a shared understanding that some actions are best supported by organisations or agencies and communities whilst some are best achieved by the individual.

Evidence indicates it is individuals who practise all '5 steps' who have the highest level of wellbeing regardless of circumstances. As a practitioner working in your community, you can use **Take 5 steps to wellbeing** to help identify opportunities to promote wellbeing. You can motivate and support people to 'have a go' and embrace the **Take 5 steps to wellbeing**, and you can also use this approach to support yourself.

**This is a preventative approach. It can be used to support interventions, but it is not an intervention in its own right to treat the challenges associated with mental ill health.**

<sup>1</sup> Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008). Final Project report. The Government Office for Science, London.

<sup>2</sup> New Economics Foundation (NEF). (2008). Five ways to wellbeing: The evidence. London. nef.



## Connect

**Connect with the people around you: 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.**

Social relationships are important to support wellbeing and to act as a buffer against mental ill health. People with low levels of social participation and small primary social networks are more likely to experience common mental health disorders. Having a broad social network, connecting and interacting with others can have a positive benefit on wellbeing. Also the strength of relationships is important, feeling close to someone and valued by them with the key message being that giving time and space to both *strengthen* and *broaden* social networks is important for wellbeing.



## Keep learning

**Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun to do.**

In childhood, learning plays an important role in our social and cognitive development. Learning throughout our life stages contributes to self-esteem, social interaction and active lives, competence and self-efficacy.

Goal setting in adult life, particularly when self-generated and aligned with personal values and motivation, has a positive impact on wellbeing. While not everyone may enjoy learning in some environments or see positive outcomes, it is the case that the activity of learning in itself has benefits and is important for wellbeing.



## Be active

**Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. More importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.**

Regular physical activity is associated with greater wellbeing and lower rates of anxiety and depression regardless of age. There is evidence that physical activity protects against cognitive decline in later life. There is general consensus that even a single bout of exercise or physical activity of less than ten minutes can improve mood and make people feel better. Activities can also have the benefit of strengthening interactions with other people e.g when walking.



## Take notice

Stop, pause, or take a moment to look around you. What can you see, feel, smell or even taste? Look for beautiful, new, unusual or extraordinary things in your everyday life and think about how that makes you feel.

Research has shown that being trained to be aware of senses, thoughts and feelings over 8-12 weeks has resulted in improved wellbeing for several years<sup>2</sup>. Being aware of what is taking place in the present leads to a more positive state of mind. Heightened awareness enhances an individual's self-understanding and allows an individual to make choices in alignment with his/her own values and intrinsic motivations. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, research into actions that aim to enhance wellbeing have similarly found that goals for behaviour change need to be aligned with personal values to be successful.



## Give

Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

Helping, giving and sharing are associated with increased self-worth and positive feelings. Giving stimulates the reward system in the brain, making a person feel good and it contributes to gains in cognitive and social functioning, particularly in earlier life, which is important to the development of mental capital and wellbeing. Research has shown that undertaking acts of kindness regularly and over time results in increased wellbeing<sup>2</sup>. Feelings of happiness and life satisfaction are associated with active participation in social and community life. For older people, volunteering is associated with more positive affect and meaning in life.

It is important to note that sometimes doing one activity will incorporate all of the Take 5 steps to wellbeing, e.g. a walk in the park links with Be Active but also:

**Connect** - meeting people in the park

**Keep learning** - about the range of plants, trees and wildlife in the park

**Take notice** - of the sights, sounds and smells in the park including animals and birds

**Give** - meeting people, sharing and giving of your time and experience to others

## Further Reading

The above information is based on the evidence for the 5 ways to wellbeing developed by the New Economics Foundation (NEF)<sup>2</sup>.

- Five ways to wellbeing: new applications, new ways of thinking
- Five ways to wellbeing: the evidence
- Wellbeing at work: a review of the literature



You can find the full reports at  
[www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)



<sup>2</sup>New Economics Foundation (NEF). (2008). Five ways to wellbeing: The evidence. London. nef.

# Take 5 steps to wellbeing

The concept of wellbeing comprises two main elements: feeling good and functioning well. Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone who has a positive experience of their life.

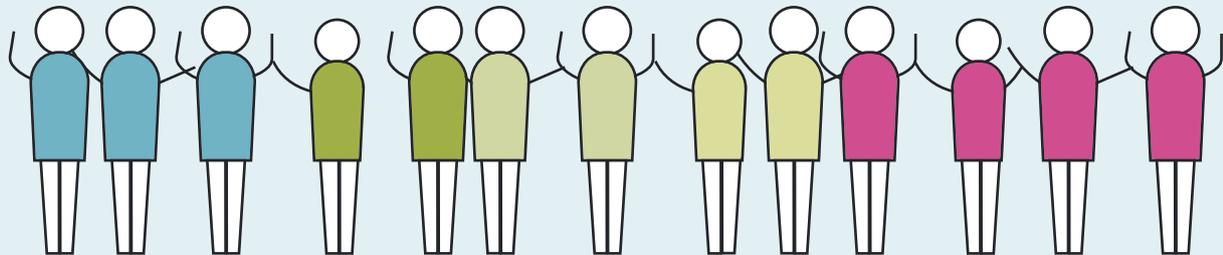
Equally important for wellbeing is our functioning in the world. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over one's life and having a sense of purpose are all important attributes of wellbeing.

## Emotional wellbeing

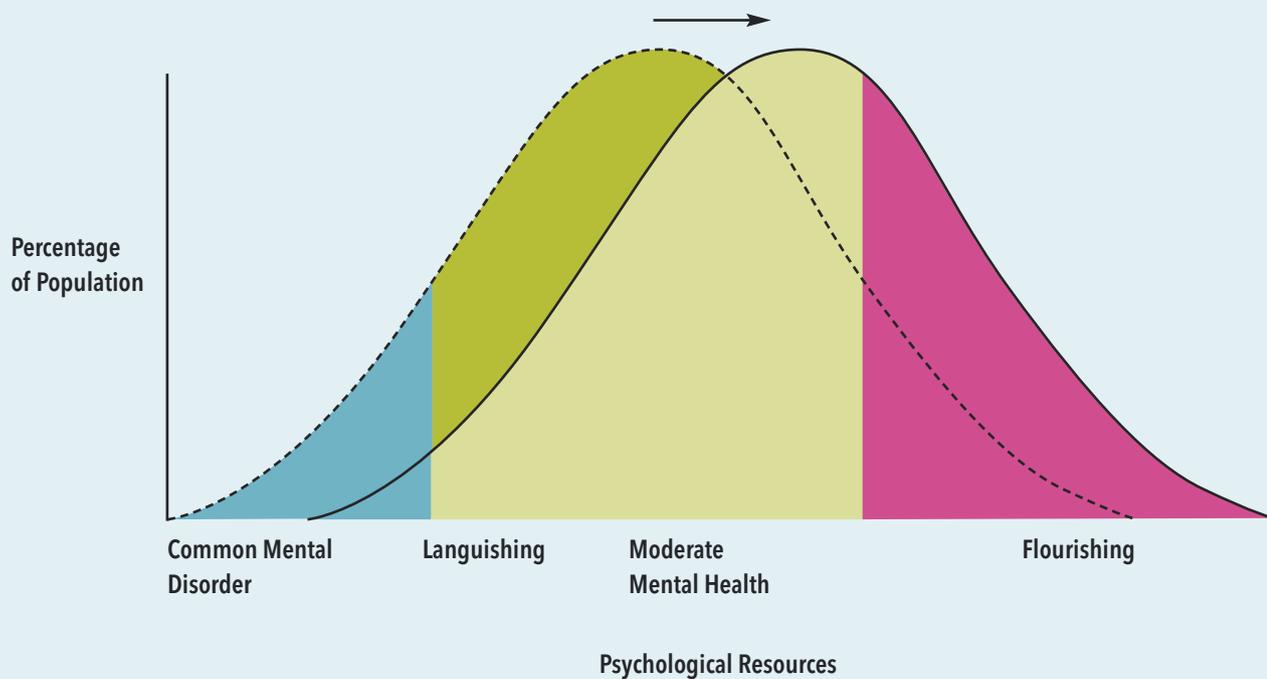


The premise of the **Take 5 steps to wellbeing** approach is that care and treatment to address mental health issues needs to be balanced with prevention and mental health promotion across the entire population and that this will result in benefits for the whole community as well as reduce the incidence of mental health disorders in the longer term.

# The hypothetical distribution of mental health across a population



## Moving the population to flourishing



Source: Felicia Huppert (2008)<sup>3</sup>, Cambridge Wellbeing Institute

The diagram above shows the hypothetical distribution of mental health across a population. On the left are those experiencing significant mental health difficulties. Those described as languishing are experiencing difficulties at a sub clinical level. Most of the population experience moderate mental health and the population at the right are described as flourishing.

*Huppert (2008)<sup>3</sup> suggests that a population wide model that succeeds in shifting the entire population will increase the number of people flourishing and reduce the number of those experiencing significant mental health difficulties.*

<sup>3</sup> Huppert F. (2008). Psychological well-being: evidence regarding its causes and its consequences. London: Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project 2008.

# Practical examples of Take 5 steps to wellbeing

## Shankill Women's Centre: Crochet Class

Community level

The Centre has incorporated **Take 5 steps to wellbeing** into a range of programmes for their beneficiaries, including a crochet class, aqua aerobics, armchair aerobics, sewing and beading. The crochet class was created in 2005 in response to feedback from women using the centre. They wanted to learn how to crochet and do something together. Many of the items they create are donated to raise money for the centre.

*"The women have reported that they enjoyed learning the new skills..... and that their confidence has grown as they never thought they would be able to make the things they are now making."*

Trish Boyd, Health and Wellbeing Project Manager

*"I never thought I would be able to learn to crochet but the tutor is so patient with me. My family can't believe what I can make. My family were worried about me because I didn't get out much but now I have my class and I have made new friends."* Group user

## East Belfast Community Development Agency: World Mental Health Day Event

Community level

A half-day wellbeing event was held to mark World Mental Health Day 2016 run in partnership with local homeless hostels and support providers to attract people with experience of homelessness.

Participants received the Take 5 flyer and had the opportunity to take part in free activities under **Take 5 steps to wellbeing**:

**Connect** - information stands provided the opportunity to meet local service providers

**Keep learning** - healthy cooking workshops and recipes to take home

**Be active** - yoga and salsa dance

**Take notice** - massage and relaxation workshops

**Give** - students offering free nail treatments collected donations for a homeless charity

*"I would like to see more events like this. I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I am now going to go to the salsa class and the relaxation class next week. It's broadened my horizons."* Event attendee

## Bridge of Hope: Take 5 Resilience Training

## Community level

Bridge of Hope, as a department of Ashton Community Trust, delivers holistic health and wellbeing services to support and encourage wellbeing, with over 18,000 individuals having accessed services. It developed and delivered this course in recent years to mirror the key themes involved in the Take 5 campaign.

***“Take 5 is a simple yet really useful framework for your health and life. The benefits of Take 5 are significant if people incorporate this straightforward philosophy into their lives.”***

Irene Sherry, ACT Head of Victims & Mental Health Services

The course involves learning how to use Take 5 at an individual level. It also encourages the development of maintenance strategies and how to effectively build a ‘5 steps to wellbeing toolkit’ for your life and circumstances. The training introduces local and practical ways people can use the 5 steps, sharing tips and ideas, promoting local services and opportunities that can help integrate Take 5 into their lives.

***“Brilliant workshop, thoroughly enjoyable. I have gained a greater awareness and developed skills to allow me to deal with life”***

Course Participant

## West Belfast Partnership Board: Take 5 in the West

## Community level

This was an initiative to localise Belfast Strategic Partnership’s Take 5 campaign in West Belfast and promote Take 5 to the community. All of the agencies who took part undertook to assertively publicise the work of other partners to those they were in contact with.

A key learning point was the ability to undertake a rapid building of collaboration across the sector at low/no cost. While the initial focus was on existing activity, a review of the final programme showed 30% new or bespoke activity had been generated.

***“The Take 5 in the West publication was extremely useful as it made it possible for me to navigate our clients towards community interventions in a non-stigmatizing way focusing on resilience rather than dependency.”*** Suzi Wilson, Mental Health Hub Co-ordinator.

***“A legacy has been the strategic focus in one of the core areas of Take 5, namely lifelong learning. I have established a core group of 12 agencies who are actively involved in using the same approach to highlight the current good work happening in the west of the city.”***

Dermot Glackin, WBPB Health and Wellbeing Coordinator

## **Belfast Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Team: Self-care workshop for drug and alcohol workers**

**Voluntary sector**

An event organised by the BDACT Connections Service, for workers addressing drug and alcohol concerns across statutory and voluntary services, to support their self-care.

The event was based on **Take 5 steps to wellbeing**. It began with an introduction to what Take 5 is and got the participants to think about what they did within each message and how that supported their wellbeing. There was a presentation on self-care and workshops with relaxation techniques including drumming and laughter therapy.

***“The work these practitioners do is stressful and it can take its toll on their health and emotional wellbeing. We wanted to get the message across that they can’t be at their best in supporting clients if they don’t support their own wellbeing. Take 5 steps to wellbeing was a great way to frame that message.”*** Diane McMullan, DACT Connections Service.

## **Belfast Health & Social Care Trust: Top Tips Programme**

**Statutory sector**

Top Tips for looking after yourself is a 3-hour training programme developed to enable individuals to become more aware of their emotional health and learn more about how to promote and protect it. The programme was recently revised to map the content to the **Take 5 steps to wellbeing** messages. It offers awareness, insights and skills development to recognise barriers that might inhibit or prevent the person from engaging as fully as possible with Take 5 steps. Workers across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors deliver the programme in local communities.

Participants discuss issues around resilience and emotional wellbeing and explore healthy coping strategies to combat stress, anxiety and low mood. They have reported a greater awareness of how to look after their emotional health, manage stress levels more effectively and recognise unhealthy ways of coping with the ups and downs of life that needed to change.

***“I really enjoyed this programme and was surprised to see how much new stuff I learned. I really feel I am in a better position to manage my stress in the future and really appreciated the exercise that has taught me how to deal with unhelpful thoughts!”*** Programme participant.

## **Tackling Awareness of Mental Health Issues (TAMHI): Football 4 Health St Patricks FC**

**Community level**

Football 4 Health is a programme that TAMHI developed with the club and their young people to bring **Take 5 steps to wellbeing** to life, to acknowledge the work being delivered at grassroots level and to explore and celebrate Take 5.

It was delivered the over summer months and its themes were:

- developing friends and positive relationships with peers (Connect)
- creating customised resources for young people and parents about looking after their wellbeing (Keep learning)
- football/activity (Be active)
- creating a positive fun environment (Take notice) and
- championing young volunteers (Give)

***“Young Leaders delivered the programme with experienced coaches and gained a wealth of experience and knowledge as well as creating positive peer to peer relationships which helped promote positive community leadership.”*** Joe Donnelly, TAMHI.

Take 5 has now been embedded into the day to day running of the club and health and wellbeing has become a key pillar of its future development.

***“Our club has moved from participation only, which was historically our focus, to a more holistic approach to developing health and wellbeing and resilience and Take 5 has been the driver.”***  
Patrick Downey St Patricks FC Academy Director.

## **Health Living Centres Alliance: World Mental Health Day**

**Community level**

During World Mental Health Day 2016, seventeen Healthy Living Centres delivered the **Take 5 steps to wellbeing** messages through specific events or by adapting their weekly programmes to introduce the themes. HLC staff attended a workshop where the implementation plan was discussed. The Alliance produced Statement Cards for people to state: “My mental health is better when...”, Pledge Cards for people to make a personal pledge as to how they could adopt a Take 5 message, large sheets to record how best they identify with any of the five aspects of Take 5 and a one page feedback sheet.

***“Our one page feedback sheet proved very useful in terms of providing people with a quick, no-nonsense method of recording their views on the events and how much they had learnt and benefited.”*** Tony Doherty, Regional Coordinator, Healthy Living Centres Alliance

Feedback data from the 17 centres showed 700 people attended. They provided very positive feedback on their understanding of Take 5 showing that it was now better and making pledges as to how they will incorporate Take 5 into their lives. The activity has embedded Take 5 into the mental health remit of the Health Living Centres and buoyed the role of the Mental Health Working Group.

***“It made me feel less isolated, both physically and mentally. I had an opportunity to connect with others who were there for the same reasons and hear their stories which made me realise my situation is not unique.”*** Event Participant.

# Take 5 steps to wellbeing tools

## The rest of this booklet is divided into the following sections:

- Take 5 steps to wellbeing - a guide for practitioners
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing in your community
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing in your organisation
- Evaluation
- Appendices

Each of the three sections - practitioners, communities and organisations - include a range of tools with an explanatory note on each one. These tools are to help you to promote Take 5 and to incorporate it into your work as well as to get people to start thinking about wellbeing.

Some of the tools can be used to complement discussions around ideas and to facilitate conversations with individuals or groups about how they might include Take 5 in their daily lives. They can also be used to set specific goals either for individuals, groups or organisations.

The Take 5 steps to wellbeing tools can be found in the Practitioners, Communities and Organisations sections on the following pages:

### Pages 26 to 33 - tools for practitioners

- Take 5 reminder card
- My Take 5 steps to wellbeing self-assessment - part 1
- My Take 5 steps to wellbeing self-assessment - part 2
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing star
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing readiness ruler
- My Take 5 steps to wellbeing pledge

### Pages 37 to 39 - tools for communities

- Take 5 steps to wellbeing community calendar
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing community mapping tool
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing community project planning tool

### Pages 46 to 48 - tools for organisations

- Take 5 steps to wellbeing organisational audit tool
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing organisational planning tool
- Take 5 steps to wellbeing organisational pledge

A plain copy of each of the Take 5 tools is available separately. These do not have the explanatory notes included on them and are, therefore, suitable for printing and sharing.

You can also download the tools from:



[www.makinglifebettertogether.com](http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com)