



Mental Health
Foundation

NHS
North West
Ambulance Service
NHS Trust



Looking after your mental wellbeing





At North West Ambulance Service, our Patient Transport Service is here to help you get to and from important healthcare appointments. Our **NHS 111 service** is available to give you health information and advice on the telephone, and our Paramedic Emergency Service is here for you if you ever have to dial **999 in an emergency**.

But we're also here to help you stay well and look after your mental health as well as your physical health. That's why we've teamed up with the Mental Health Foundation to share tips for looking after your mental wellbeing, as well as steps you can take if you think you need further support.



What is mental wellbeing?

Our mental wellbeing, sometimes referred to as mental health or emotional health, is about how we think and feel: our outlook on life and how we are able to cope with life's ups and downs. It's an essential part of our health. Feeling well is not just about being physically fit and healthy – it's equally important that you feel good mentally.

Eating well, getting a good night's sleep and staying active can all help to improve our mental and physical wellbeing, but there are other things we can do to boost our mental health.

Try as many of the following as possible and you may notice a lift in your mood:



1. Talking about problems or concerns

Managing problems, difficulties and worries becomes easier if we talk about our concerns. It's a good way to make sense of a situation, or how we feel.

Who you want to talk with depends on what's worrying you. You could try:

- Friends and family.
- Someone with specialist knowledge.
- An impartial person.
- A person who promises confidentiality, such as a counsellor.

Having a chat is never a one-way street. Sharing your thoughts can also help others find the courage to talk about their problems. If you don't want to talk about yourself, ask others how they feel. Hearing that others have similar worries and thoughts can make it easier to discuss something that's bothering you.



2. Do things that you enjoy

Doing things that we enjoy makes us feel good about ourselves and about life; plus, it can keep our mind and body active. Whatever we call them, interests, hobbies and pastimes can provide a chance to socialise, or to find time for ourselves.

Always make time for your own hobbies and interests. There are many things that keep us busy but you must still find time for your own interests in order to look after your own wellbeing.

Plan free time in your weekly routines for things you enjoy. For example, can you find half an hour each day to pick up a book or sit with a crossword?



3. Increase your sense of purpose

Social interaction is important for maintaining your wellbeing. Keep up friendships and try to develop new ones too with people of all ages.

If you're retired this could be a perfect opportunity to put your past experiences to good use. Take time to think about the skills you have, what you're good at and what types of organisations you might like to help.

Volunteering, career changes and returning to education are becoming more popular with people of all ages. You can search for volunteering opportunities in your area by visiting www.Do-it.org

Local councils and universities also run a range of education and learning opportunities, often at lower rates for older people.



4. Ask for help

If that leaky gutter needs fixing and has been playing on your mind, or if you're worried about managing your money, don't be afraid to ask for help. The following organisations can help you directly, or point you in the right direction:

- Age UK offers online and phone support on hundreds of topics from keeping active and learning to use the internet.
- The Citizens Advice service helps people with legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice. Visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk for more information.
- Local councils offer services ranging from adult education courses to housing grants and waste disposal.
- www.gov.uk provides information on a range of social and legal issues, such as local health services and help with benefits and pensions.

Admitting that times are emotionally tough isn't easy. Asking for help can be harder, but the following organisations can help:

- Your GP can help in practical ways, for instance they can recommend exercise therapy, counselling or support from another part of the health service.
- Counselling offers the opportunity to talk about issues in confidence and to create a structured plan to make a positive change to your life.
- Samaritans provide confidential, non-judgmental emotional support 24 hours a day.



5. Think ahead and have a plan

Setting goals and making plans gives our lives meaning and purpose. Try to plan for pleasurable things, such as spending time with family, developing new hobbies, and enjoying your leisure time.

A plan can also help you think through a problem or situation. By preparing a plan, you are likely to expose and deal with many of your worries in advance.

Allowing an issue to become a constant worry can be bad for our mental wellbeing. Having a plan to deal with it puts us back in charge and can help us improve how we feel.

Your plan should have a clear aim, such as staying active. A regular review of your plan helps to make sure you are still on track.



6. Care for others

As we get older we may find ourselves looking after grandchildren, elderly parents, partners, friends or neighbours. Caring for others can keep relationships strong and people close.

Helping others makes us feel needed and valued, as well as boosting our self-esteem. These things are good for our mental wellbeing.

Caring for others can be rewarding but try not to overburden yourself with care responsibilities. Hard though it may seem, it is alright to say 'no'. Making time for you is good for both you and the person you care for.



Further support and Information

Mental Health Foundation

The Mental Health Foundation provides information and support on mental health.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Age UK

Age UK offers information and advice on a wide range of issues for people in later life.

www.ageuk.org.uk Telephone: **0800 055 6112**

Carers UK

Carers UK is an organisation for carers that campaigns for recognition of the value of carers' contributions to society so that carers get the practical, financial and emotional support they need.

www.carersuk.org Telephone: **0808 808 7777**

Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse Bereavement Care offers a range of advice and local services.

www.cruse.org.uk Telephone: **0808 808 1677**

Independent Age

Independent Age is an advice service for older people, their families, and carers.

www.independentage.org Telephone: **0800 319 6789**

Samaritans

The Samaritans provides emotional support 24 hours a day.

www.samaritans.org Telephone: **116 123**

MAKE THE RIGHT CALL



If you're feeling unwell and you're not sure where to turn, remember to make the right call:

A&E OR 999

CHOKING.
CHEST PAINS.
BREATHING
PROBLEMS.

Visit A&E or call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.

NHS 111

UNWELL?
UNSURE?
NEED HELP?

Call NHS 111 if you urgently need medical advice or you're not sure which NHS service you need.

URGENT CARE

MINOR CUTS.
SPRAINS.
RASHES.

Get help at an urgent treatment centre if you have a minor illness or injury and can't wait to see your GP.

GP

FEELING ILL.
BACK PAINS.
EAR ACHES.

Make an appointment with your GP if you are feeling unwell and it is not an emergency.

PHARMACIST

HEADACHES.
TUMMY
TROUBLES.
COUGHS.

Ask your local pharmacist for advice on common minor illnesses.

SELF CARE

COLDS.
SORE
THROATS.
HANGOVERS.

Take care of minor ailments at home with a first aid kit and a well-stocked medicine cabinet.

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages upon request.

How to contact us:

☎ 0345 112 0 999

@ nwasenquiries@nwas.nhs.uk

🌐 www.nwas.nhs.uk



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