



# 5 Ways to Wellbeing

A training resource for Disabled People's Organisations' members and clients



This resource has been produced as part of Inclusion London's Making it Work project. Making it Work was a project which aimed to increase opportunities for young Disabled people to find employment and to remove barriers in the workplace.

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**Produced by Inclusion London, July 2022**

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- 1) **Connect** with other people
- 2) Be physically **active**
- 3) **Learn** new things and skills
- 4) **Give**
- 5) **Notice**: Be in the moment

DPOs can get copies of the PowerPoints and training notes to accompany this resource by contacting [ailsa.mcwilliam@inclusionlondon.org.uk](mailto:ailsa.mcwilliam@inclusionlondon.org.uk).

## About this resource

In the last two years we have faced unprecedented times. Many people have found emerging from the isolation of Covid-19 scary. They have found themselves socially anxious, lacking confidence in doing things they used to do easily and feeling uncertain about their skills and abilities generally. For young Disabled people this impact has been even more profound.

This resource is aimed at DPOs who are supporting their Disabled members to seek employment, although it will also be useful for any DPO doing empowerment work with Disabled people. It focuses on their wellbeing which is about building a mindset: an ability to feel positive, confident, focused and empowered.

How can we do this? One way is to focus on the '5 Ways to Wellbeing'. Why? Because it uses evidence-based research, combined with easy practical steps and simple and clear messages.<sup>1</sup> This is why many reputable organisations, such as the NHS, like it.

The activities, exercises, steps and goals help us to:

- build our skills and resilience
- live a happier life and enable us to contribute to other people's happiness too
- build our wellbeing and positivity

The '5 Ways to Wellbeing' will help our members learn that change isn't always scary. They will also break the goals down into manageable steps and show them ways to move forward that feel achievable and easy to do.

DPOs support members who face inequality, many throughout their lives. Research shows people from the lower socio-economic groups are less likely to:

- Be active
- Give
- Learn

Each of the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' has suggestions which might help members start to make changes. We want to encourage members to make their own list, their own steps, and to empower and encourage them to take ownership of their goals and journey. Let's get started!

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<sup>1</sup> <https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

## Guidelines for DPO staff using this resource with your members and clients

### What to do if someone is struggling or unhappy?

- Listen
- Validate their feelings
- Be there in the moment, without trying to fix it

### Concerned about their safety?

- Check your organisation's procedures
- Text the word 'Shout' to 85258 (a 24/7 service)
- Call the Samaritans 116 123
- Encourage / support them to contact their GP
- 999 in cases of suicide / serious personal injury, or take the person to A&E

### Concerned but not a crisis situation?

- Check your organisation's safety / risk assessment procedures
- Check if they have a support plan or a support person they can get help from

### Delivering the introduction to wellbeing and the '5 Ways to Wellbeing'

Each session starts with an emoji slide asking people how they feel and gets everyone to talk and say something. This helps you to see how they are. At the end we check in again to see how they feel afterwards in case they need support.



## Why ground rules are important for these sessions

Ground rules are important because they help to establish the boundaries for the session, set expectations of how we, as a group, should behave (timing / respect etc.) and help to form a safe space. It's your role to check that members are comfortable and if someone is oversharing or being inappropriate.

Before you start, have some ideas of how you can gently close down a conversation, while still being supportive. You know your members so maybe outline the boundaries more firmly, if you think it's needed, at the start. For example:

- You may say, 'Thank you so much for sharing XYZ - it sounds really hard. Maybe you'd like to speak to ABC so they can support you?' (ABC = a support person, a close friend or a family member, etc.)
- Or 'Maybe we can talk more afterwards, when we will have more time?'

## Why involving multiple participants is important

Having a minimum of 6-8 people helps with these kinds of workshops, as people bounce ideas off each other. It also gives participants more people to pair up with for activities, rather than with the same person all the time. This builds connections and their confidence in talking to people they might not usually talk to or mix with.

## Why involving a member of staff is important

Having a member of staff present is also important for many reasons:

- To increase safety
- To note the wellbeing and mood of members
- To encourage and move conversations in the right direction
- To support vulnerable people who need support to speak out or when they are struggling
- To end things at the right / appropriate time

## Concerned but not a crisis situation?

- Do talk to someone afterwards and get support for yourself
- Do something for your self-care

## The aim of this resource

The original aim of this resource was to check in on members and see how they were after the pandemic. However, this resource can be used after any period of absence like holidays or with new groups. The handouts are designed to be simple and easy to use. They encourage conversations.

The aim is to build up self-confidence, self-esteem and skills, using small manageable steps.

**Please note:** Any self-reflective activity needs to be done in a supportive encouraging way, with **the opportunity to opt out**. We don't know what's happening for our members and something traumatic may be going on, so we need to be mindful of this and not push them. It can be helpful to start with small things we know are safe to discuss and build on this.



## About PowerPoint 1:

# Introduction to wellbeing and the stress container

**Overview:** How and why we get stressed and the importance of self-care.

**Length:** We recommend 1 hour minimum - 2 hours. You can manage the time for each step, depending on your members' understanding and responses.

**Emoji slide:** How are you? Introductions. These are an opportunity for everyone to speak, so do give it time. If the participants already know each other, encourage them to share "something you might not know about me", for example, and give them the space to share safely (see notes on 'Ground rules' above).

This session will help us identify any potential barriers to job searching and working.

We can also see if advocacy or other support might be needed so that the member is able to take steps forward.

DPOs can get copies of the PowerPoints and training notes to accompany this resource by contacting [ailsa.mcwilliam@inclusionlondon.org.uk](mailto:ailsa.mcwilliam@inclusionlondon.org.uk).





## About PowerPoint 2:

# Introduction to the '5 Ways to Wellbeing'

**Overview:** The 5 steps look at connecting, being active, learning new things, giving and noticing.

**Length:** This PowerPoint is short and simple, so introduce each step, say why it is helpful and suggest a group activity. It can be done in 30 minutes or longer, including the activity, depending on the time your members need.

The initial idea behind this PowerPoint was to do 1 or 2 slides a week, depending on your organisation, the project, your group and their progress. If you are doing a week of workshops, it could be a daily event. It's designed to be flexible! You may want to do each step, then repeat it. It can be done as many times as you find helpful.

These steps have been identified as being good ways to build up self-confidence, self-esteem and develop new skills, using small manageable steps. They may not seem to connect directly to job searching but they are all valuable tools to make us feel happier, more confident and help us build resilience.

Start by checking in, introducing the topic and showing a slide:

1. Connect
2. Active
3. Learn
4. Give
5. Notice

Each slide has notes. You can print these off to use as a lesson plan and add your own notes, tips and reminders, etc.

Then do a **group activity**. One has been suggested for each step but use whatever activities you think are right for the topics 1-5 and your group. The training lends itself to versatility! Link it to special events, different themes, different ages and interests.

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## Ensuring equal access and support for everyone

Each slide has a list of steps that members can choose from. Some members may need a 1-1 to discuss, guide and encourage them to choose their steps. They may also need some support with achieving them.

Encourage your members to think about what support they need to achieve their steps. We are aiming for empowerment, building skills in working out how to achieve their goals, and the tools they need to do this.

Please note: The steps can be adapted, added to, or adjusted to suit your members / your project aims. Some are easy goals and quick wins, whereas others take more time and effort.

**Lastly,**

**please do relax**

**and focus on your members' journeys!**

**Enjoy!**

## **'Welcome' statement**

### **for your members and clients**

The last two years have been very isolating and different from anything we have known before, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of us have found coming out of it, and returning to our normal routine, scary.

Some people say they now feel socially anxious or lack confidence doing things they used to do easily. Some say they feel unsure about their skills and abilities now. Do you feel this way too? It's only natural.

How can we move forward? How can we feel more positive, confident, focused and empowered again?

One way is to build our wellbeing using easy steps called the '5 Ways to Wellbeing'. They are designed to help us move forward.

We are all different. We like and enjoy different things. So, things that make us feel anxious or good and well might not affect our friends in the same way. That's ok.

'Wellbeing' does not mean we will always feel well, good and happy. Sometimes things happen that make us feel sad, upset, afraid or angry (for example, if we argue with a friend or if someone breaks our favourite thing by accident).

Being happy or well isn't about ignoring these feelings but it is about learning different ways to respond to situations in ways that will help us move forward. We might need to work hard to deal with things. At first it might not be easy but later it will get easier and we will feel happier.



Sometimes we need to do things that are hard or challenging. We might need some support to do these things, especially if we feel anxious. Can you think who would be a good person to support you to do the steps? It might be a friend, a support worker or a family person. Who is the best person for you?

The '5 Ways to Wellbeing' provide:

- activities, exercises and goals to build up our wellbeing and positivity
- activities and steps that help us learn that change isn't always scary

By breaking goals down into manageable steps, we can see ways to move forward that feel achievable. Each of the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' has suggestions to help you to start. Have a look and choose an action: it might be an easy step or you might choose something harder. Or you could work your way through them all! Why not make your own list?

Plan your steps, your goals and your journey towards wellbeing!

**Let's get started!**

**The 5 handouts for your members and clients are on the following pages of this resource...**

# 1 Connect with other people

Feeling connected to other people is important for our happiness. This is why lockdown was very hard. People felt alone. However, we can learn skills to help us build good relationships to feel cared for and to show others that we care.

Good relationships with people who appreciate us are good for our wellbeing. They can help us:

- build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- share positive experiences together
- give emotional support and help us to support others

There are lots of things we can try to help build stronger and closer relationships.

**Here are a few ideas - can you think of some?**



Let's try:

- Look and smile at people in a friendly way
- Say something nice to someone
- Open the door for someone
- Talk to someone instead of sending an email or a text
- Speak to someone new. It can just be 'Hello, isn't it a lovely day?' Take small steps

- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you
- Put five minutes aside to find out how someone really is
- Make someone a drink
- Make a card for someone to show you care
- Why not meet up with friends you have not seen for a while?
- Give your friend a hug or a high five!
- Visit someone who needs support
- Volunteer to help at a local group, school, hospital or community group
- Use technology to stay in touch with friends and family. Video-chat apps like Skype and FaceTime are useful, especially if you live far apart
- Why not write a short note telling a person what they did that made you smile, feel good or happy?



**Be a good listener!**

**It shows people that you care  
and that you are interested in them**


## 2 Be physically active

Taking care of your body is important for a healthy mind! You can do this in small steps - moving more and sitting less, eating more fruit and veg and getting enough sleep!

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. It can also improve your wellbeing by:

- helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- causing chemical changes in your brain which help you feel and think more positively

### Find activities you enjoy!

- 
- If you are Disabled or have a long-term health condition, find out about getting active - some areas have free or subsidised activities for you!
  - Why not find some free activities to help you get fit - you could start with a walk in the park!
  - Take the stairs, not the lift, when you go somewhere
  - Go for a walk at lunchtime



- Walk to work or to where you volunteer - perhaps go with a friend, a family member or a colleague – so you also ‘connect’!
- Get off the bus one stop earlier than usual and walk the final part of your journey
- Organise a sporting activity with friends
- Have a kick-about in a local park
- Do some ‘easy exercise’, like stretching, before you go out in the morning
- If you play online games or do a lot of sitting down, try getting up and moving every 30 mins
- Why not get a friend to do something with you? Walk together? Dance? It can be fun!
- You could try hula hooping, skipping or trampolining
- You could find out how to start swimming, cycling or dancing
- Could you do a sponsored challenge? Maybe 10 different sports / activities in 10 days?

### 3 Learn new things and skills

Learning new things and new skills can improve our wellbeing. We can learn through hobbies, reading, exploring new places and things, playing games - by being curious and creative! Learning new things helps our wellbeing by:

- boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- helping us to build a sense of purpose
- helping us to connect with others

Even if you feel like you do not have enough time, or you may not need to learn new things, there are lots of different ways to bring learning into your life. Think about what you would like to do and what you need to learn to get there!

The practice of setting goals has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

#### Try something new!

Ask yourself what do you love to learn? What did you enjoy at school or college? On TV?

- Learn a new word
- Do a crossword or Sudoku
- Read the news or a book
- Research something you've always wondered about

- Join a book club
- Try new hobbies that challenge you, such as writing a blog, taking up a new sport or learning to paint
- Find out something about your friends
- Sign up for a new class
- Try learning to cook. Could a friend or family teach or support you?
- If you can cook, try to cook something new
- Maybe take responsibility for something new at home, such as learning how to operate the coffee machine, dishwasher or cleaning the windows
- Maybe take on a new responsibility at work or where you volunteer, such as learning how to operate the photocopier or shredder, or improving your IT skills
- Try a DIY project, such as learning how to fix a broken bike or garden gate, or making a bird box! Find a group, an adult or a friend who can guide you. There are lots of free video tutorials online too
- Maybe sign up for a course at a local college or do an online course. You could try learning a new language – libraries often have CDs you can borrow and play to learn something new
- Could you learn a skill you enjoy like DJing?

**Do you have any other ideas?**

## 4 Give


Giving to others and doing kind things for others is good for us!

Scientists have found that giving, helping and doing kind things for other people helps them feel happier. It also makes us feel happy too! Helping others can take our mind off things that make us sad or unhappy. It helps us by:

- creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- giving us a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- helping us connect with other people

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community.

### Try doing something kind for others

- 
- Smile at someone
  - Say a friendly 'Hello' to a stranger
  - Say thank you to someone for something they have done for you



- Draw or print a picture or card and give it to a friend
- If you know someone feels lonely, keep them company
- Offer to help someone - maybe go to the shop with them, if they are nervous
- Say 'thank you' to people who do things for you but aren't always thanked - your support worker? Mum or Dad? Your post person? The bus driver.... Anyone!
- Ask friends, family or colleagues how they are and really listen to their answers
- Spend time with friends or relatives who need support or company
- Offer to help someone you know with DIY or a work project
- Volunteer in your community, such as helping at a school, hospital or care home

5

Notice:


**Be in the moment**

It's easy to stop noticing the world around us. It's also easy to lose touch with how our body feels and to get caught up in our thoughts and worries, without stopping to notice how this affects our emotions and behaviour. Remind yourself to 'take notice' and this will strengthen and broaden your awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is happening in the present directly enhances your wellbeing and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities. Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you.

Some people call this awareness '**mindfulness**'. Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

## Try something new:

- 
- Go for a walk, maybe in your park or your garden. What can you see? Smell? Hear? Feel?
  - Close your eyes and try your food - think about its texture, how it feels, tastes...
  - Get a plant for your space
  - Look at your wardrobe - is there something you have forgotten about?
  - Have a 'clear the clutter' day
  - Take a different route on your journey to or from somewhere
  - As you walk, stop and look up. What can you see? Is anything new or different?
  - Take notice of how your friends, family and colleagues are feeling or acting
  - Visit a new place for lunch
  - Any other ideas?

**Inclusion London promotes equality and inclusion for Deaf and Disabled people by supporting the development of Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPOs) across London. Our 'Making it Work' programme aimed to improve young Disabled people's chances of finding employment and remove the barriers to getting into work.**

***[www.inclusionlondon.org.uk](http://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk)***

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