

# WELLBEING THROUGH SPORT.

## ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

*Developing positive mental  
and physical health*



# INTRODUCTION

At this difficult time, it's essential that we all act to protect our mental health as well as our physical health. To support the mental health and wellbeing of children and families across our communities, Team Mental Health and EdStart Sports Coaching have partnered to design and develop a range of fun Wellbeing Through Sport activities to do at home. These can also be adapted for use in the schools supporting children who remain in education at this time.



## **The Aim of the Wellbeing Through Sport Activity Programme:**

The aim of the Wellbeing Through Sport Activity Programme is to support children and families to have fun together whilst promoting positive mental and physical health.

It's important for us all to understand what 'mental health' is. The World Health Organisation describes mental health as 'a state of wellbeing' where a person realises their potential and ability, can cope with 'the normal stresses of life', is able to work productively, and contribute to their community. Our mental health is an integral component of our health. Like physical health, we all have mental health and at this time, it is essential to support children and families to look after and protect it. (World Health Organisation, 2018)

In 2008, the New Economics Foundation (NEF), as part of the 'Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project' published the '5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing'. This framework reflects the findings of research from around the world looking at how we can improve our mental health and wellbeing. In the main, this research evidence related to adults. However, in 2014, The Children's Society and NEF published the outcomes of further research which found that the '5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing' were also relevant in terms of children's everyday activities and their sense of wellbeing.

## **The '5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing' include:**

- **Connect**
- **Be Active**
- **Take Notice**
- **Keep Learning**
- **Give**

(New Economics Foundation, 2008 & The Children's Society, 2014)

# CONNECT

## **Definition:**

Connecting with family members, friends, neighbours or people who share the same interests.

## **Background:**

It's important for us all to feel as though we're part of something and that we are understood and accepted. This protects our mental health by boosting self-esteem, improving wellbeing, and protecting against loneliness. This is important because loneliness has been associated with poor mental and physical health. There are lots of different ways to connect and, whilst our physical connections are limited, it's important for us to think about different ways to do this. For children, having the opportunity to speak to family members about things that matter to them is significantly linked with positive wellbeing of young people.

## **Note:**

As parents and carers, it's vitally important to ensure that we understand the risks certain forms of connectivity present, and that we act to keep our children safe. More information about staying safe online can be found here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

## BE ACTIVE

### **Definition:**

Being physically active in a way that works for you and that you enjoy.

### **Background:**

Physical activity is not only good for our physical health, it's good for our mental health too. Exercise makes us feel good and even the smallest amount can make a positive difference. Being active outside in green space is also good for us and can help reduce stress levels. If there is the opportunity to do this safely, then try. However, it's important to ensure that you and your family stick to the social / physical distancing rules in place. If it's not possible to get outside, open a window to let in fresh air and natural light. You could also try finding some images of green space online and look at them before, after, or even whilst you're exercising. Not quite a walk in the countryside, but it can have a positive impact in terms of reducing stress.

## TAKE NOTICE

### **Definition:**

Being present in the moment and being aware of the world around you.

### **Background:**

Life can be challenging and overwhelming at times and we often forget to find time to focus on the positives. Taking the time to notice the world around us promotes good mental health by helping us to appreciate and feel grateful. It may also help us to recover better from the stress we experience. The more you practice, the easier it becomes. Mindfulness is a great way to help children be present in the moment, and to take notice. There is evidence that shows mindfulness can help children to feel calm, have greater compassion and improve their attention.

## KEEP LEARNING

### **Definition:**

Learning new things or helping our brain to stay active.

### **Background:**

Learning new things, rediscovering old hobbies or interests, and keeping ourselves mentally stimulated promotes good mental health. This doesn't have to be a major commitment and things like reading, singing, playing a game, cooking a meal, or brushing your teeth with the hand you wouldn't usually use, can all be beneficial and fun.

## GIVE

### **Definition:**

Being kind and doing something nice for someone.

### **Background:**

Giving to others makes us and others feel good. The smallest acts of kindness really can make a difference because they create positive feelings, and a sense of self-worth and value. They also help us connect with others which really promotes good mental health and wellbeing.

The Wellbeing Through Sport Activity Programme has been designed to help children and families incorporate the '5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing' into our daily lives. Now, more than ever, it is essential for us to promote good mental health and wellbeing.



# Using the Wellbeing Through Sport Activity Programme

The weekly activity sessions are designed to be fun and to help children and families protect their mental and physical health. Each session can be adjusted to make it age appropriate and it is designed to allow parents or carers to be flexible with their approach.

## **Each session will include:**

- An outline of the background information relevant to the session for parents or carers
- A pre-activity introduction to the session
- A physical activity
- A reflection task

The first activity session provides an overview of the '5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing' to ensure the children develop a basic understanding of these. In subsequent sessions, each of the '5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing' will be explored in more detail.

After each of the sessions, we encourage children and their families to prepare a weekly planner to schedule in activities centred around the '5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing'. We have designed a planner that can be printed and completed on a weekly basis. (Please see page 8)

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<b>5 WAYS TO MENTAL WELLBEING</b>	<b>WEEK 1</b>	<b>Introduction to 5 Ways to Mental Wellbeing</b> - Treasure hunt
	<b>WEEK 2</b>	<b>Connect</b> - Creative balance chain
	<b>WEEK 3</b>	<b>Be Active</b> - The name circuit
	<b>WEEK 4</b>	<b>Take Notice</b> - Yoga and meditation
	<b>WEEK 5</b>	<b>Keep Learning</b> - The sock challenge
	<b>WEEK 6</b>	<b>Give</b> - Skills with sibling and parent/carers feedback