

Community Pharmacy Living Well Campaign

 Public Health
Agency

 Health and
Social Care

February 2025

'Look after your mental health' campaign

The 'Look after your mental health' campaign highlights the importance of looking after your mental health, being aware of any signs of problems with it and using self-care techniques to manage your mental health.

The campaign will run during February and March 2025.

Campaign overview

In Northern Ireland, one in five adults has a potential mental health problem (Health Survey NI 2019/2020). Mental health is shaped by the wide-ranging characteristics of the social, economic and physical environments in which people live. Looking after our mental health is not something we should just do when we are feeling down, it's something we should proactively maintain just like our physical health.

Common mental health problems such as anxiety, stress, feeling low and depression can affect anyone. While these feelings can be a natural response to life's challenges, they can become more serious if we don't do something to help improve our mental health.

The campaign highlights the importance of looking after your mental health and recognising the signs of poor mental health. It outlines simple things you can do to look after and improve your mental health and how to get help if you need it.

Target audience

The target audience for the campaign is the general adult population.



Key messages

- Looking after your mental health is important.
- Like physical health, your mental health changes over time.
- Common mental health problems such as anxiety, stress, feeling low and depression can affect anyone.
- There are simple things you can do to look after and improve your mental health and wellbeing.
- If your mental health problems are affecting your day to day life, relationships or physical health, it's important to get professional help.
- You can get help from your GP or use the service directory on [Minding your head](http://www.mindingyourhead.info/finding-help) to look for a service that meets your needs. Visit www.mindingyourhead.info/finding-help
- People can and do recover from mental health problems.
- If you or someone you know is in distress or crisis, you can call Lifeline and speak to a trained counsellor 24/7. Call 0808 808 8000.
- If you or someone else is in immediate danger of suicide or you require urgent medical attention, call 999.

Campaign materials

Copies of the following materials are enclosed:

2 x A3 posters

Looking after your mental health is important



Apps can help with your mental health



1 x A1 poster

Looking after your mental health is important



A5 leaflet

Look after your mental health



Minding your head wallet card



Pharmacies should display the posters and leaflets in the pharmacy within a designated health promotion display area. Posters can be rotated over the two month period, but if space permits within the pharmacy all posters may be displayed at the same time. Pharmacies must show a poster in at least one window unit for the full duration of the campaign.

Campaign activities for the public

Community pharmacies are excellent settings for promoting mental health due to their accessibility and trusted position in the community.

Start conversations around mental health

The *Look after your mental health* leaflet and *Minding your head* wallet card can be handed out with prescriptions or to those attending the pharmacy and used as a conversation starter. You may wish to identify people who might need support, such as patients requesting over-the-counter medicine or herbal remedies for anxiety and/or sleep.

Mental health and wellbeing apps

The Health and Social Care apps library has information about mental health and wellbeing apps for adults. The apps include topics such as anxiety, depression, stress, sleep and meditation. You may wish to familiarise yourself with the apps available to provide personalised recommendations for patients.

Visit <https://apps4healthcare.ni.hscni.net/en-GB/adult-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

Social prescribing

Social prescribing involves putting people in touch with local networks and services, and increasing their active involvement within their local community. It complements the Take 5 steps to wellbeing approach. Emerging evidence suggests that social prescribing can lead to a range of positive health and wellbeing outcomes for people, such as improved quality of life and emotional wellbeing.

If you know of social prescribing projects in your area, please utilise them. We would encourage pharmacies to contact projects that are relevant to their patients' needs and enquire as to how to refer and any specific referral criteria.

Professional help

Some people may need extra help based on their individual circumstances. You may wish to familiarise yourself with the service directory on Minding your head and signpost patients to a service appropriate to their needs. Visit www.mindingyourhead.info/finding-help

If you are concerned about a patient, please encourage them to talk to their GP, a mental health professional or a relevant service, such as Lifeline.

Be mindful about the medicines that could affect mental health. You could undertake training in this clinical area to further enhance your knowledge and help identify those at potential risk.

Campaign activities for pharmacy teams

It is also important for pharmacy team members to prioritise their own mental health and create a supportive working environment. Here are some campaign activities to consider.

Host a mini-workshop

Pharmacies could host brief workshops (10-15 minutes) with the pharmacy team, perhaps before work, on topics like stress management, relaxation techniques, Take 5 or recognising signs of mental health concerns. You could collaborate with a local service to deliver the training. If space and time permits, you could even host a workshop for the public.

Weekly self-care challenges

Consider launching a weekly self-care challenge to encourage staff to adopt healthy habits. This could be building the Take 5 steps to wellbeing into everyday life, a digital detox before bed, or simply doing something that makes you happy every day.

Create a mental health resource corner

Consider dedicating a section of the staff room to mental health resources. Stock it with useful resources, such as guides on stress management, breathing exercises or sleep hygiene.

Pharmacists' Advice and Support Service


The Pharmacists' Advice and Support Service (PASS) provides a range of free, impartial and confidential services to pharmacists (and their dependants), and foundation year students. These include information and signposting to sources of support and face-to-face, telephone, and specialist counselling. For further information, visit www.pfni.org.uk/pass/how-we-can-help or telephone the PASS Coordinator (Mob: 07951 044876).


If you are aware of any other wellbeing benefits provided by your employer, please share this information with colleagues.


Social media

For pharmacies using social media channels, there is an opportunity to let followers know the pharmacy is involved in the campaign and to promote the campaign messages. Please share the Public Health Agency's posts or create your own posts and tag the Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care NI, Community Pharmacy NI and NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning & Development (NICPLD) in your posts.

Please use the hashtags #LivingWell, #MentalHealth, #MentalWellbeing and #MindingYourHead as appropriate on social media posts for this campaign.

 **X:**
@publichealthni
@HSC_NI
@compharmacyni
@NICPLD1

 **Facebook:**
@publichealthagency
@healthandsocialcareni
@communitypharmacyni
@NICPLD

 **Instagram:**
@publichealthni
@health_and_social_care
@compharmacyni
@NICPLD1

All Living Well materials to support this campaign can be found at <https://bso.hscni.net/living-well>

Training and professional development

NICPLD offers courses on anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar affective disorder, Zero Suicide Awareness training and schizophrenia. Visit www.nicpld.org/url/elearning For a recorded webinar on mental health and wellbeing awareness, visit www.nicpld.org/url/recordedwebinars

The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education offers an eLearning course on Consulting with people with mental health problems. This costs £10 and is available at www.cppe.ac.uk/programmes/l?t=MENTHEAL-E-01&evid=44577

Information on courses supported by the Public Health Agency (Mindset Adult, Mental Health First Aid NI, safeTALK and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills) is available at www.mindingyourhead.info/training

Find out more about mental health conditions, treatments and medications. Visit www.choiceandmedication.org/hscni

Questions and answers

Q: What do I do if someone requests herbal remedies to help with their mood?

A: The promotion of herbal medicines is not part of this campaign. Some herbal medicines can be misused or can affect how other medications work.

Q: What do I do if someone presents with a more serious mental health problem?

A: If you are concerned about someone, advise them to make an appointment with their GP. You can also signpost them to Lifeline or call Lifeline on their behalf – freephone 0808 808 8000. For more information, visit www.lifelinehelpline.info If you feel the person is in immediate danger, dial 999. Samaritans also offer listening and support to people – signpost them to call 116 123 (free from all landlines and mobiles) or visit www.samaritans.org for more information.

Q: What do I do if a young person or parent is looking for information?

A: The Youth Wellness Web is an online information resource. It has been co-designed by young people for young people for easy access to mental health resources and services. It provides ideas for mental health and wellbeing, as well as advice on bullying, bereavement, body image and more. There is also a section for parents with information and links for useful resources to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Visit <https://cypsp.hscni.net/youth-wellness-web/>



Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

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