

# **WELLBEING MATTERS**



**MECC PLUS POCKETBOOK**

## WELCOME TO YOUR MECC PLUS POCKETBOOK

This pocketbook aims to

- Briefly explain the links between lifestyle behaviours, wellbeing and preventable health conditions in the UK
- Suggest a format for having a wellbeing- focused "chat" in just a few minutes
- Suggest a format for a chat that encourages the initiation of behaviour change
- Introduce you to the T-GROW approach to health coaching

### WELLBEING MATTERS

Wellbeing is about feeling good, functioning well, and flourishing in your life. Focusing on wellbeing is important as it can strengthen individuals and communities, and may ultimately reduce the health and social care burden.

Wellbeing can:

- Add years to life and life to years
- Aid recovery from illness – poor wellbeing is associated with slower wound healing
- Lead to other positive outcomes – people with good wellbeing are more likely to have a healthy diet, be physically active and less likely to smoke
- Make young people less likely to engage in unhealthy or risk-taking behaviours
- Spread through social pathways and influence the wellbeing of others close to us
- Be associated with broader positive outcomes such as employment, education and relationships

**Lifestyle behaviours are linked to health and wellbeing:** Lifestyle issues, such as smoking, being overweight, drinking alcohol excessively and being physically inactive, can impact on the physical and mental health and well-being of us all. Poor diet and lack of physical activity are causal factors of obesity. Being obese can increase the risk of developing a range of serious diseases, including hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, some cancers, obstructive sleep apnoea and musculoskeletal problems.

**Early years are important:** What happens during pregnancy and in early childhood impacts on health and wellbeing throughout life. Babies who have very low weight at birth – caused by tobacco smoke, maternal or foetal stress, infections and violence – have a 22% chance of dying within their first year.

**Ageing:** The number of people over 85 in the UK is predicted to more than double in the next 22 years, from 1.5 million to 3.4 million. Older patients now account for 62% of total bed days spent in hospital. An unhealthy lifestyle can increase the risk of dementia. Muscle weakness, physical inactivity and balance impairment increase the likelihood of falling.

**Health inequalities:** Health inequalities are where there are unfair or preventable differences in health status. Sometimes where we live can impact on our health status. Unhealthy lifestyles cluster in the populations that are most deprived. You are more likely to have two or more unhealthy lifestyle behaviours if you live in a more deprived area than in a more affluent one. In short, the health of the people from more affluent areas is improving faster than the health of people living in more deprived areas. Other issues can impact on our health status too, such as our ethnicity, age, sex and work or employment

## **SOME COMMON CONDITIONS LINKED TO LIFESTYLE**

### **STROKE:**

**Hypertension:** the most important risk factor for Stroke -linked to inactivity, being overweight and too much salt intake. **CHD:** through MI and heart valve disorders.

**High Serum Cholesterol:** narrows arteries - a low fibre diet is a risk factor.

**Smoking:** Smokers are twice as likely to have a Stroke.

**Heavy Drinking:** more sticky platelets, leading to MI or Stroke

### **CHD:**

**Smoking:** is a risk factor via atheroma

**Binge Drinking:** can x2 the risk of death in MI survivors and can also lead to Cardiomyopathy and Atrial Fibrillation

**Inactivity and being Overweight:** increases risk via diabetes.

### **RESPIRATORY DISEASES:**

**COPD:** includes Chronic Bronchitis, Emphysema and Obstructive Airways Disease.

**Smoking:** irritates and inflames the lungs leading to permanent changes such as narrower airways, more mucus and damage to the delicate walls of the air sacs.

### **CANCERS:**

**Smoking:** risk factor for Cancers of - lung, mouth, lips, larynx, oesophagus, bladder, kidney, stomach, liver and pancreas

**Habitual Drinking:** increases risk of some Cancers - pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, liver, breast, colorectal - as alcohol is converted by the body into Acetaldehyde, a carcinogen.

**Metabolic Syndrome** can also increase risk of Cancers.

### **LIVER DISEASE:**

**Alcohol:** is toxic to liver cells, leading to liver disease and cirrhosis. The best way to reduce the risk is to drink at lower risk levels and have at least 2 alcohol free days a week

### **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE:**

Over 5 million people are unaware they have high blood pressure, yet it affects more than 1 in 4 adults and is one of the biggest risk factors for premature death and disability in England. There are certain risk factors that are lifestyle-related eg being overweight; eating too much salt and not enough fruit and vegetables; not doing enough exercise; drinking too much alcohol or coffee (or other caffeine-based drinks); smoking and having poor sleep

### **DIABETES:**

There is a direct association between obesity and type 2 diabetes. People with diabetes are at risk of a range of health complications including CVD, blindness, amputation, kidney disease, depression and dementia.

### **DEMENTIA:**

The ONS reported that since 2010, mortality rates for Alzheimer's and other dementias have increased, in contrast to the other top four leading causes of death in 2015 – ischaemic heart diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, chronic lower respiratory diseases and lung cancer – all seeing falling mortality rates in the last 15 years. The biggest risk factor for dementia is age. However, risk factors for cardiovascular disease (like heart disease and stroke) are also risk factors for dementia. Leading a healthy lifestyle and taking regular exercise will help lower your risk of cardiovascular diseases, and it's likely you could be lowering your risk of dementia too, particularly vascular dementia.

## THERE ARE 5 KEY THEMES IMPORTANT FOR WELLBEING

**HEALTH:** People are living longer nowadays than ever before, but not necessarily living longer with good health. Health behaviours – such as whether or not we smoke, eat a healthy, balanced diet, keep physically active, drink alcohol and cope well with stress – all impact on the risk of people developing these killer conditions. They also link to other common health conditions (co-morbidities) such as type 2 diabetes and depression

**RELATIONSHIPS:** Lack of social networks and support, and chronic loneliness, produces long-term damage to physiological health via raised stress hormones, poorer immune function and cardiovascular health. Loneliness also makes it harder to self-regulate behaviour and build willpower and resilience over time, leading to engagement in unhealthy behaviours

**PARTICIPATION:** Having meaning to life and being able to participate in your community can be a powerful asset for wellbeing. Linking people in with groups, or encouraging volunteering can be a good start, as can putting people in touch with cultural activities.

**SECURITY:** Feeling safe and secure at home is important, whether that means only allowing people into your home whom you trust or whether it's about practical issues such as having a smoke alarm in place or having a warm home in winter - all issues are important. Feeling financially secure can also improve your wellbeing.

**INDEPENDENCE:** Independence means having a sense of control over your life, and feeling that you can make yourself heard and have your choices respected. It can also mean having access to any help to improve your physical independence.

## MAIN HEALTH MECC MESSAGES

**1. QUIT SMOKING WITH SUPPORT:** Quit completely with a combination of treatments (eg Nicotine Replacement patches combined with shorter-acting treatments like Nicotine Replacement gum or nasal spray) plus the added help of support services. You are **4 times** more likely to quit smoking with support from **Stop Smoking Services** than by going it alone

**2. KEEP ACTIVE:** Aim to do **30 minutes** of moderate physical activity on at least **5 days/week**. It is important to avoid a sedentary lifestyle even if you are regularly active. It improves insulin resistance and lipid profiles, helps you to remain independent for longer and helps you to have great mental wellbeing.

**3. EAT HEALTHILY, LOSE WEIGHT IF NECESSARY:** Aim to eat a **healthy, balanced diet**, based around starchy foods and including 5 portions of fruit and vegetables. Eat less salt, sugar and saturated fats. **Control Your Calories** especially if a type 2 diabetic and overweight (an initial 5-10% weight loss is a good target). Regular physical activity combined with a healthy diet works best.

**4. DRINK ALCOHOL WITHIN LOWER RISK LIMITS:** Men and women should limit their alcohol consumption to less than 14 units per week, spread over a few days and with at least 2 alcohol free days/ week. A unit is half a pint of (3.5%ABV) beer, cider or lager, a small (125ml) glass of 8% wine or a single (25ml) measure of spirits.

**5. TAKE THE 5 WAYS TO WELLBEING:** Connect with other people; Keep active; Keep learning; Take notice of the natural world, still your mind and notice the good things around you; Give something back to your community – become a volunteer or just give your time to someone else for a few minutes

## **ANYONE CAN MAKE EVERY CONTACT COUNT!**

You don't need to be a health expert to encourage someone to improve their wellbeing. Just equip yourself with a few key facts, use some good communication skills and take an interest in the people whom you meet – that's all it takes.

You don't actually need much time either. It just takes a minute to raise awareness of the national ONE YOU campaign

## **FOLLOW THIS BASIC 3 STEP FRAMEWORK!**

1. **ASK:** Raise awareness of the topic you wish to focus on. Or just raise awareness of the national ONE YOU campaign if you prefer. Set the scene by putting up posters and having leaflets ready. Then ask a simple question –

*“Are you interested in....? “Would you mind if I asked you about....?” “We are asking everyone about XXXXXXXX – because we want to raise awareness about health and wellbeing in all our customers/patients/visitors”*

The next 2 steps are based on the person giving us a **POSITIVE RESPONSE** to our opening question:

2. **ADVISE:** This is NOT advice- giving in the usual sense. We are not going to tell people TO DO anything – rather we will suggest HOW TO do something if the person is interested.

*Eg “The best way to quit smoking is with a combination of the right treatments plus help from Stop Smoking Services*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** often people don't believe that it is possible for them to change or have other “self-limiting” beliefs. By “popping in a positive” we can help people to have a more positive view of change and this may help them to feel more motivated to change.

*Eg: “We have some great services to support you if you need any help”  
“Lots of people have found this website a great source of information and top tips which have helped them to successfully change. Why not give it a go?”*

3. **ASSIST:** Signpost to trusted sources of information and support EG local services, ONE YOU website, NHS Choices, Change4Life etc

If you get a **NEGATIVE RESPONSE**, then **ROLL WITH RESISTANCE** by simply reflecting back to the person what they have said and by keeping the door open for a chat on another occasion

*Eg: “From what you say now is not the right time for you to think about this – if you do change your mind then our door is open at any-time – just ask next time you pop in”*

## ONE YOU MECC CHAT

**ASK:** Raise awareness of the ONE YOU national campaign. *"Have you heard about the ONE YOU campaign?"*

**ADVISE:** *"Wellbeing matters – it can put years in your life and life in your years"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"ONE YOU is a national campaign which gives you information and Top Tips about how to have great wellbeing. Why not take the How Are You quiz to get started? Lots of people have found it an eye opener"*

**ASSIST:** *"Download the free ONE YOU App or visit the ONE YOU website for more information and top tips"*

## HEALTH (MECC CHAT EXAMPLES)

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

**ASK:** *"How often are you physically active?"*

**ADVISE:** *"Keep physically active and avoid a sedentary lifestyle. Aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 days of the week. All sorts of activities count, as long as you breathe a little faster and your heart beats a little quicker. You may wish to include activities that strengthen your muscles and help you to keep flexible too"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"We've got some great support locally that can help you to get started"*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to Change4Life, local physical activity support services

### SMOKING:

**ASK:** *"Do you smoke?"*

**ADVISE:** *"It is never too late to get benefits from stopping smoking. Quit smoking completely with help from Stop Smoking Services"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"There's never been more support to help you to quit smoking – I'm sure you can do this"*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to Local Stop Smoking Services; Smoke-Free

### HEALTHY EATING:

**ASK:** *"Are you interested in health eating?"*

**ADVISE:** *"Eating a healthy, balanced diet and keeping physically active has many benefits for health and wellbeing – including helping us to maintain a healthy weight. You can reduce calorie intake by eating smaller portion sizes and avoiding calorie dense foods, as well as foods containing sugar and saturated fats. It is important to make new habits of these healthier behaviours"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"We've got some great support locally that can help you to get started"*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to One You, Change4Life, local Weight Management support services

#### **ALCOHOL:**

**ASK:** *"How often do you have an alcoholic drink?"*

**ADVISE:** *"There is no safe level of risk. Men and women should now aim to keep alcohol consumption below 14 units a week, with at least 2 alcohol free days/ week"*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to local services; [www.DrinkAware.co.uk](http://www.DrinkAware.co.uk), Change4Life

#### **MENTAL HEALTH:**

**ASK:** *"Mental wellbeing is important. There are some simple things that we can all include in our daily lives that will help us to have good mental wellbeing. May I just explain?"*

**ADVISE:** *"Look after your mental health by following the 5 ways to wellbeing"*

*Connect up with friends and family on a regular basis; Keep learning, Notice the natural world and the good things in life a bit more, Keep active every day and Give something to others – a smile, a helping hand or a few moments of your time"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"We've got some great support locally that can help you to get started"*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to the Be Mindful online course at <http://bemindful.co.uk/>. [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk), social prescribing support services

### **SOME SPECIFIC CONDITIONS**

#### **MECC FOR BACK PAIN:**

We want to raise awareness amongst general public about the links between modifiable lifestyle behaviours and back pain. Most low back pain does not signify an underlying disease, and can be ameliorated by self-care. If the person has low back pain for more than 6 weeks or feels their symptoms are worsening they should see their GP

**ASK:** *'8 out of 10 people experience Low Back Pain at some point – do you?'*

**ADVISE:** *"Movement is Medicine for bad backs. So keep active every day and reduce the amount of time spent in bed or lying down. Take a simple painkiller – your local Pharmacy can advise you on this"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *'We know that being more active can really help...so give it a go'*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to local physical activity opportunities or to ONE YOU or NHS Choices

## LEARNING DISABILITIES:

People with Learning Difficulties are at greater risk of some health problems eg gastrointestinal illnesses, Coronary Heart Disease, diabetes, obesity and respiratory problems, amongst other things. Encouraging a healthy lifestyle is important. Carers need to support these tips being put into action

**ASK:** *“Can we have a chat about how you can stay healthy and well?”*

**ADVISE:** Offer brief advice containing the following: **KEEP WELL:** *“Keep active every day – have walk, go for a swim– anything that you enjoy will do” “Eat well – cut down on sugary foods and eat more fruit and vegetables” “Eat off a smaller plate” “Cut down on sugary foods and drinks” “Brush your teeth twice a day” “Make sure you go to your Health Checks”* **KEEP SAFE:** *“When you go out, stay with people you can trust”*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *“These things will help you to feel great”* **OFFER A LEAFLET:** There are some great Easy Read resources that you can offer.

## DEMENTIA:

**ASK:** Are you concerned about dementia?

**ADVISE:** Offer brief advice containing the following:

- **GET CHECKED:** *“If memory problems are beginning to have an impact on day-to-day life, visit the GP together and explain your concerns. Symptoms can be caused by all sorts of things, so a proper diagnosis is important. Early diagnosis is important too”*
- **KEEP WELL:** *“Stay well – keep active, eat well and stop smoking with support”*
- **GET SUPPORT:** *“If you are a carer of someone with dementia, the thought that someone you care about might have dementia can be scary but facing your fears is usually better than trying to ignore them”*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *“Lots of people have found that the right help and support can make all the difference”*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to GP, Age UK, Dementia UK 0800 888 6678

## SUPPORTING INTEGRATED CARE

### SELF CARE MANAGEMENT (COLDS AND FLU):

**ASK:** *“Most of us get a cold at some point. Sometimes people get Flu. May I share some tips about self-care? “*

**ADVISE:** *“You can look after yourself if you have a bad cold. If you have flu you may have a high temperature, feel shivery and have a headache. Your high temperature should go down after about 48 hours. You don’t need antibiotics. Antibiotics only work on bacterial infections and colds and flu are caused by viruses. Your cold may last for a week and a half”*

Look after yourself at home by following these tips *“Rest, eat well and keep hydrated. You may need extra fluids if you have a fever. Take a simple painkiller to ease fever and aches and, and inhale steam with a decongestant to relieve a blocked nose. You may want to try over the counter cold and flu treatments –your local pharmacist can advise”*

Keep well – *“Get your flu jab every year”*



**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *‘Your symptoms should ease when you take some simple painkillers, get rest and drink plenty of fluids’ Provide person with information. ‘Here’s a leaflet to help get you started.’*

**NB:** *“If your symptoms worsen, or if you are already frail or suffering from a chronic health condition, seek advice from your Urgent Care Centre, Walk In Centre or GP”*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to Pharmacist, NHS

**DENTAL HEALTH:** Some older people may find it difficult to brush their own teeth and may require assistance. Be aware that some people consider tooth brushing an extremely personal task and may be embarrassed to ask for help. Remember that assisting with brushing another person's teeth can be tricky and some people find it unpleasant, however, it is extremely important to help if assistance is required

**ASK:** *“It’s important to look after your oral health –may I share a few tips?”*

**ADVISE:** *“Brush your teeth at least once a day with fluoride toothpaste to avoid dental decay and gum disease. Use a good toothbrush”*

*“Keep your dentures clean, and get them checked if they don’t fit or have become damaged.”*

*“Cut down on sugary foods and drinks”*

*“Visit your dentist regularly”*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *“Your dental health is important, and these tips are simple things that you can do which can make a real difference”*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to local dental service, NHS Choices

## **CONSTIPATION:**

Constipation is very common (particularly in women and older people) and affects an estimated one to two out of 10 people at any one time. Common causes include not eating enough fibre (contained in cereals, vegetables and fruit), changing your eating habits, ignoring the urge to go to the toilet, not drinking enough fluids, not getting enough exercise – and certain medications, such as opiates, diuretics and antidepressants.

**ASK:** *“Many people experience constipation –may I offer you some tips about self-care?”*

**ADVISE:** *“Get more fibre by eating fruit, vegetables, seeds, pulses and cereals, or by taking soluble fibre in the form of oats. These food stuffs that make your stools softer and bulkier, and therefore easier to pass.”*

*“Drink plenty of water.”*

*“Try to be more active, which helps your bowels digest food.”*

*“Listen to your body and do not delay going to the toilet when you feel the urge to go.”*

*“Simple pain killers such as paracetamol can help to relieve pain”*

*“Speak to your pharmacist for advice on other medicines to treat constipation”*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *‘You should feel better in a few days, and following these simple tips can help you to cope better at home’*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to ONE YOU, NHS Choices or local Pharmacy

## FOOT CARE:

Foot care is important for people with diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, heart failure etc

**ASK:** *“Can I just share some tips about looking after your feet?”*

**ADVISE:** Give advice containing the following

**Wash your feet daily** to help prevent any infections. If you leave dirt on the skin, it can become irritated and infected. Dry them well, especially between the toes to help prevent Athlete’s foot. If you have some hard skin, apply moisturising foot cream (not body lotion).

**Toenails.** It can get harder to cut toenails as you get older, but keeping them short will help keep you mobile. When cutting your nails, trim them straight across, never at an angle or down the edge as this may cause an ingrown nail. You may need help with this from your chiropodist or a toenail cutting service. Ask Age UK if they provide or know of a local service.

**Keep warm** Warm stockings or socks can help. Avoid anything too tight which can restrict your circulation or cramp your toes. Bed socks are also a good idea when the weather is particularly cold. If your feet are cold, don’t try and warm them up by putting them close to a fire or on a hot radiator as this risks chilblains.

**Choose good footwear** If your shoes fit well they protect and support your feet and may improve your balance and stability. Poorly-fitting shoes or slippers can easily trip you up and cause a fall. You’ll find that a lace-up or Velcro fastening shoe will give more support than a slip-on.

**ASSIST:** *“Speak to your GP to find out if you are eligible for NHS treatment. If you are not or need urgent treatment, you should contact a private chiropodist.”*

## EYE HEALTH:

**ASK:** *“May I share some tips about eye health?”*

**ADVISE:** *“Get your eyes checked. It’s easy to neglect your eyes because they rarely hurt when there’s a problem. Having an eye test will not only tell you if you need new glasses, it will also check the health of the eye and can spot eye conditions before you become aware of them so they can be treated early. An eye test can pick up eye conditions, such as glaucoma and cataracts, as well as general health problems, such as diabetes and high blood pressure”.*

*“You can help keep your eyes healthy by: • not smoking – smoking damages the eye, making it more likely to develop age-related macular degeneration and cataracts • eating lots of fruit and vegetables • protecting them from the sun by wearing sunglasses2.*

**ASSIST:** *“If you’re 60 or over, you can have a free NHS eye test every two years. You can have a free test every year if you’re 70 or over. If you have a low income, you may be eligible for help with the cost should you need glasses or contact lenses”*

## EAR HEALTH:

**ASK:** *“Have you had a hearing test recently?”*

**ADVISE:** *“You may realise that you need to have the TV on louder or find you can’t always follow conversations, especially in a group. Having trouble hearing can make it hard to*

*understand and follow a doctor's advice, to respond to warnings, and to hear doorbells and alarms. This can sometimes be frustrating, embarrassing, and even dangerous.*

**ASSIST:** *"NHS hearing tests are free and can be arranged through your GP"*

#### **WINTER WARMTH:**

**ASK:** *"May I just check how you are coping in this cold weather?"*

**ADVISE:** *"Being too cold can cause serious problems for your breathing and may lead to a bad chest. It also puts pressure on your heart and blood circulation. This can lead to very serious problems such as heart attacks and strokes. To keep warm and well your living room or where you sit should be 21degrees and your bedroom or where you sleep should be 18 degrees.*

**"A hot meal a day helps to keep the cold away"**

**"A cosy cuppa will help keep you warm"** *"Eating properly plays a really big part in keeping warm and well in winter. It is really important to have at least one hot meal per day and plenty of hot drinks like tea, coffee or even hot water. Hot meals and drinks will give you extra warmth and energy that will help protect you against the harm to health caused by being cold."*

**"Prepare well"** – *make sure you can get your medicines if the weather turns cold; – have your flu jab – there may be financial help available for you to stay warm*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"These tips will help you to stay warm and well"*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to GP if concerns about worsening health; Age UK, local council for help and advice

#### **RELATIONSHIPS (MECC CHAT EXAMPLE)**

Carers may neglect their own physical and mental health. These tips may help:

1. **C**onnect with other people and avoid being isolated
2. **L**earn new things – play chess, sudoku, do crosswords etc
3. **A**ctivity is great for wellbeing, so be active every day
4. **N**otice the world around you – enjoy the seasons, stay in the moment
5. **G**ive something back to others – a smile, a moment of your time, volunteer etc
6. **E**at well – don't skip meals and have a balanced diet
7. **R**elax – take 5 minutes just for you
8. **S**leep well – get into a healthy sleep routine

**ASK:** *"If you are caring for someone else it's important that you look after your own mental as well as physical health...may I just share a few Top Tips?"*

**ADVISE:** *"These Top Tips can help you to care for your own wellbeing.*

*"It's important to take a break when you need to"*

*"Try to see the positives in your relationship – even though it may be challenging at times"*

*"Most important tip of all – ASK for support when you need it"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"You are important – so stay well"*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to 5 Ways to Wellbeing App, Carers UK, Age UK, MIND and local services

## **PARTICIPATION (MECC CHAT EXAMPLE)**

**ASK:** *"It's important that you look after your mental as well as physical health. Connecting up with other people on a regular basis is great for our mental health"*

**ADVISE:** *"We've got some great activities locally that can help you to meet up with people and make new friends."*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *'There are all sorts of activities – I'm sure there will be something to suit you.'*

**ASSIST:** Offer written information and signpost to "social prescribing" activities. *"Here's a leaflet to get you started that has a menu of options for you to look through"*

## **SECURITY (MECC CHAT EXAMPLES)**

Sometimes people's wellbeing can be affected if they are feeling unsupported at home, or worried about minor housing and repair problems that they feel they cannot tackle alone. Handy Person services offer help with small repairs (putting up curtain rails, shelves and pictures) safety measures (fitting smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, grab rails) home security (door and window locks, door viewers, door chains) energy efficiency checks (draught excluders, energy efficient lightbulbs etc)

**ASK:** *"I can see that you are concerned about tackling these issues on your own. Can we have a chat about the support you need?"*

**ADVISE:** Offer brief advice containing the following: *"Whatever your circumstances, there is help and support for you" "You are not alone – there are services to help you" "There is help for small house repairs and other things that will help you to feel safe and secure at home"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"Lots of people have found with the right help and support can make all the difference."* **OFFER A LEAFLET:** with tips and local numbers to access Handy Person services

**ASSIST:** Signpost to Age UK, local council advice lines. Stay Safe Around the House For information on gas, electrical and fire safety [http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Information-guides/AgeUKIL7\\_Home\\_Safety\\_Checker\\_inf.pdf?dtrk=true#](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Information-guides/AgeUKIL7_Home_Safety_Checker_inf.pdf?dtrk=true#)

## **DEBT MANAGEMENT:**

**ASK:** *"Are you worried about your finances in any way or just would like to talk to someone to get some money management advice?"*

**ADVISE:** *"Anyone can get into debt – it's important to remember that you are not alone and it's never too early or too late to get help"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *'We've got some great support locally to help you to be more in control of your money.'* Provide person with information. *'Here's a leaflet to help get you started.'*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to Age UK or Citizens Advice. For concerns about homelessness signpost to Shelter free helpline 0808 800 4444

## INDEPENDENCE (MECC CHAT EXAMPLES)

### FALLS PREVENTION:

**ASK:** *'May I share some tips with you about how you can look after yourself at home and reduce your risk of a fall?'*

**ADVISE:** Offer brief advice containing the following: *"Keep your home free of clutter" "Get rid of loose rugs and wear slippers or shoes that are non-slip and fit well" "Keep your home well-lit and make sure you wear clean spectacles" "Keep active every day"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *'Following these simple tips can help you to cope better at home and reduce your risk of a fall'* **PROVIDE LEAFLET** *'Here's a leaflet to help get you started.'*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to ONE YOU or NHS Choices or local services

**MAJOR LIFE CHANGES:** Sometimes major life changes can seriously impact on our wellbeing.

**ASK:** *"I know this is a challenging time for you. Can we have a chat about the support you need?"*

**ADVISE:** Offer brief advice containing the following: *"Whatever your circumstances, there is help and support for you" "You are not alone – there are services to help you"*

**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *"Lots of people have found their way forwards with the right help and support"* **OFFER A LEAFLET:** with local numbers

**ASSIST:** Signpost to Age UK, local council advice lines, local counselling support

### SELF CARE AT HOME:

**ASK:** *"May I have a brief chat with you about how you can best look after yourself at home?"*

**ADVISE:** *"There are some tips I can share which you may find helpful. Have healthy lifestyle behaviours: **eat well**, things like high fibre foods, starchy foods, skimmed milk, lean cuts of meat and plenty of fruit and vegetables, and cut down on portion sizes; **keep hydrated** – have 6-8 glasses of water a day; **keep active every day** – aim to be active for 30 minutes at least 5 times a week; **stop smoking**– quit completely with a combination of treatment and support; **limit alcohol use** **Keep connected** –keep in touch with friends as much as possible*

***Take your medications properly** - and chat with your GP if you have any concerns about side effects*

***Keep well** – get your flu jab and **Keep warm** –it's important to stay warm in cold weather, **Keep safe** – there are handyman services to help*

***Pace yourself** – have a daily plan to achieve things and take a rest if needs be*

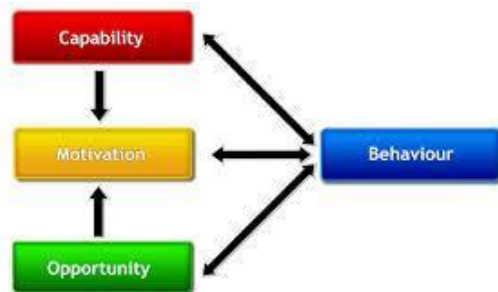
**POP IN A POSITIVE:** *'Think positively every day. We've got some great support locally and online to help you to be as healthy and well as possible'*

**PROVIDE LEAFLET:** *'Here's a leaflet to help get you started.'*

**ASSIST:** Signpost to ONE YOU, NHS Choices, Age UK and local support

## UNDERSTAND THE 3 KEY INGREDIENTS NECESSARY FOR CHANGE

**The COM-B Model** (Michie, S., van Stralen M.M. & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: a new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. Implementation Science, 6, 42)



### CAPABILITY

The person needs to feel capable of changing. They need to have the:

- ✓ Knowledge of how to change
- ✓ Skills necessary to change
- ✓ Ability to overcome barriers to change

### OPPORTUNITY

The person must have the opportunity to change. Support to change must be:

- ✓ Accessible
- ✓ Affordable

They must also have:

- ✓ The time
- ✓ The prompts to do the new behaviours
- ✓ People around them supporting change

### MOTIVATION

The person must be more motivated to do the new, desired behaviours at the relevant time than not do the behaviour, or to engage in a competing behaviour. They must:

- ✓ Understand the benefits of making a change
- ✓ Have the belief that change is possible.
- ✓ Be able to make good plans to change and turn those plans into action.

## BE PERSON-CENTRED IN YOUR APPROACH

A person-centred approach means that we put the person's needs and wants at the heart of our conversations, even in brief chats. By listening to what matters most to the person, and reacting appropriately, we can make our contact count.

We can help them to identify what is important to their wellbeing, can show that we value their opinions and will enable them to access the information and support they need to improve their wellbeing.

## SET THE SCENE

You can set the scene for a MECC conversation. If people visit your buildings then put up posters which invite people to ask you about how to improve their wellbeing.

Or put up a poster which primes the person to expect to be asked about wellbeing, such as the examples shown here.

## USE ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

- Think about the “signals” that you are sending out – think about your body language. Are you being inviting? Use open body language and open questions
- Be interested in the person - can you use Open Questions to be gently curious about the person and learn more about their needs?
- Watch for the signals they give back to you – are they resistant? Are they interested?

## ALWAYS MAKE ADVICE INTERESTING AND USEFUL

**Give information that is pertinent to the person. They will be more interested. For example:**

*“You mentioned that you would like to be more active to benefit your health. Did you know that we should all try to be active for about 30 minutes on at least 5 days in the week?”*

*“It’s never too late to quit smoking. Certainly quitting smoking will help you to recover more quickly from your recent operation.”*

**Ensure that the person understands the information and can make use of it in their everyday life. For example:**

*“You can do activities in 10 minute chunks instead of all at once. Anything that takes a bit of effort and makes you breathe a little faster will count. Having a brisk walk, doing some gardening or even some housework will all do. What do you think about this?”*

*“The best way to successfully quit smoking is through a combination of treatment and support from Stop Smoking Services. I have the number if you’re interested”.*

## SIGNPOST

You could signpost many forms of **self-help**, such as:

- Online support including NHS Choices, One You, Change4Life, Age UK, Arthritis Research UK, MIND, Dementia Awareness, and Talk to Frank
- Arts and creativity, such as writing, painting, libraries and museums
- ‘Green activities’ where people may become both physically and mentally healthier through contact with nature
- Learning and education, for example help with literacy and basic skills
- Volunteering
- Support back into employment
- Local council websites to access practical handyman support, advocacy or benefits advice
- Local support services and social prescribing options.

## **MORE TOP TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE CHAT FOR CHANGE**

### **GIVE PERTINENT FEEDBACK OF RISK and CONSEQUENCES (ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE A CLINICAL WORKER)**

Make a link between the health behaviour and their health condition; eg explain that smoking may slow wound healing;

Explain how being physically active can support the person to remain independent at home; how being alcohol free can reduce the risk of falls etc

### **ENCOURAGE A BELIEF THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE**

People may have “self-limiting” beliefs that hold them back from making changes eg “*I’m too old to change*” or “*I can’t do this*”. If you get the opportunity, gently challenge such beliefs and say something that encourages a belief that change is achievable for them eg

*"People who have used our local lifestyle services have made some real changes. I'm sure that you can too"*

### **ENCOURAGE CONSIDERATION OF THE BENEFITS OF CHANGE**

It helps if you can encourage the person to tell you what the benefits may be for them. That way they hear themselves state the benefits. *"What benefits can you think of for you, if you lost a little weight?"*

### **ENCOURAGE CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORT NEEDED TO CHANGE**

*"What information or support do you think you need?"*



## HAVING A CONVERSATION TO SUPPORT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

This section looks at the skills needed to have a conversation which goes a little bit further. Instead of just raising awareness and signposting, this conversation

- **Encourages the person to consider what really matters to them.** Is there is any issue in particular that they would prioritise?
- **Supports** the person to imagine the actual goal that they would aspire to – the personal outcome
- **Helps** the person to consider the support that they need to take their first steps towards their personal outcome

These are called “Brief Interventions”



## MORE ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

### ELICIT – PROVIDE –ELICIT FRAMEWORK for giving information

This is a simple way to understand the person’s information needs and enable the person to engage with information that may help them to change

**ELICIT:** “What do you know about this topic?”

**PROVIDE:** “Here is some information that you might find useful.....”

**ELICIT:** “Is that helpful for you? What do you make of this information? Would you like to know more?”

## ACTIVE LISTENING PRINCIPLES: RULE

### Resist the righting reflex

Don't try to set the agenda for the person, correct them or jump in with solutions that you think would work. Instead give them space and encouragement to work out their own priorities and solutions. If not, you may get a scenario like this – a typical “yes, but” answer:

**You:** *"You really need to lose weight through diet and exercise. There's a local gym that I know will help you. I can refer you now if you wish."*

**Other person:** *"Yes but it's so hard, my life is so busy, and I don't have enough money..."*

**Understand** what is important to the person by using an evocative style and inviting the person to tell you what really matters to them. Use open discovery questions and statements, for example: *"Tell me about what this means to you"*. We'll learn more about open discovery questions shortly.

**Listen well.** This means using good active listening skills such as open questions, affirmations and reflections, and giving the person space to talk about what matters to them. Always focus your full attention on the other person.

**Empower the person** by enabling them to consider the benefits of change and support they need to change, and by helping them to set goals, make plans and monitor their steps towards their personal outcomes.

### SKILLS:

**Open questions** are very useful because they help us to be person-centred. They put the control over where the conversation is going back in the person's hands. They also help the person to consider the things they want to change, and how to go about it.

Open questions start with words like who, what, why, how, when and where. For example:

*"What are you interested in changing?"*

*"How will you know when you've reached your outcome?"*

*"Why is it so important for you to make this change right now?"*

*"Who can help you to make this change?"*

*"When can you take your first step towards your goal?"*

*"Where can you go for more support?"*

**Open discovery statements.** Like open questions, open discovery statements also help us to be person-centred. The difference is that instead of a direct question, they invite the person to tell us more about their thoughts and feelings. For example:

*"Tell me about why this is so important for you."*

*"Describe some of the benefits for you if you make this change."*

**Listen for ambivalence:** Ambivalence means seeing both sides of a question and not knowing which way to go. It's very common when people are considering behaviour change. Most people want to be healthy, but the status quo is familiar and change can require a lot of effort. It's not surprising that many people feel ambivalent about change at first.

Statements describing ambivalence frequently have 'but' in the middle. For example:

*“I know I should take my medicine, **but** I hate the side effects.”*

*“I want to exercise more, **but** I just can’t seem to find the time.”*

Ambivalence can keep people stuck. However, if you try too hard to persuade the person to change when they are expressing ambivalence, you can, inadvertently, cause the person to dig their heels in and become more resistant to change. For example:

**Worker:** *“Well I know it’s difficult but you really ought to quit smoking as soon as possible as it’s so much better for your health.”*

**Person:** *“Well, I know that but right now I’m just too stressed out...it’s not that I don’t want to but, well, I don’t know.”*

Instead, be comfortable with their ambivalence. Think of it like a see-saw or a weighing scale, with reasons on both sides. When you hear reasons to stay the same, acknowledge them – they are important in the person’s eyes after all

**Encourage Change Talk:** When you hear reasons on the **change** side then acknowledge and affirm them – you may be able to strengthen them in some way. For example:

*“I hear what you’re saying – it’s hard for you to think about quitting smoking while you’re so stressed. And I also hear that you want to quit at some point. I’m sure when the time is right for you, you’ll make that change.”*

**Give affirmations:** Offer emotional support and encouragement. Affirmations can help give people confidence that they have the ability and support needed to make a change.

*“You are a very resourceful person.”*    *“You have great inner strength.”*

**Reflect back:** Reflecting back what you have heard helps **you** to check that you have understood properly and helps **them** to feel listened to and validated. Reflections can be given in a number of ways, such as repeating, rephrasing, paraphrasing, and reflecting feelings. For example:

*“It seems that you...”*        *“From what I understand, you...”*

*“I can hear how enthusiastic you feel about making this change.”*

Remember to reflect what you hear, even if it is ambivalent. For example:

*“So on the one hand you would like to be more independent and on the other hand you feel that you need to rely on your carer for so much at the moment, and this means that you feel frustrated sometimes.”*

**Summary statements** give you a chance to summarise what you have heard, check it out and form the basis for the next stage of the conversation. For example:

*“Let me see if I understand you so far...”*

*“Tell me if I’ve heard you right...”*

## THE 3 QUESTION FRAMEWORK

Use this 3 question framework to have a person-centred conversation about behaviour change

### Q1. Allow the person to set the agenda: *“What really matters to you?”*

It's normal that we all have an agenda which we need to work with – the issues that are important within our role. However, we may be unaware that the person we're talking to is worrying about bills that they cannot afford, or is anxious about feeling unsafe at home. Issues like these can impact on the person's health and wellbeing, and mean that they don't make significant improvements in the areas that you are there to support them with.

Making Every Contact Count is about **you** taking opportunities that arise to enquire:

*“Is there anything else that is important to you right now that would improve your wellbeing or support your recovery?”*

Ask a question – gently and sensitively – which will bring out the issues that the person feels impact on their wellbeing right now. In short:

*“What really matters to you?”*

### Q2. Explore the desired personal outcome: *“What would great look like?”*

Question 2 takes the area of concern mentioned by the person as important for their wellbeing, and invites them to imagine what their personal outcome might be. In other words:

*“In this area of concern for you, if things were at their best, what would “doing great” look like for you?”*

Or to put it another way: *“What’s the difference that will make the difference?”*

For a person worried about debts the outcome may be having a plan in place to pay off the debts, or being able to put aside savings every week to pay for bills in the future.

For a person concerned about feeling safe at home their ideal personal outcome may be to have all the keys to their own front door in their possession, or to be able to say ‘no’ to people who come around to their home expecting things from them.

Only when you **both** have a clear idea of what the ideal outcome would look like can you support the person to take some steps towards achieving that outcome.

### Q3. Encourage the initiation of behaviour change: *“What support do you need to take your first step?”*

Think COM-B. In order for the person to successfully take their first steps of behaviour change, we need to invite them to consider what they need in order to feel more capable, more motivated and to have the opportunity to make these steps a success. Start off by asking:

*“What will your first steps be towards achieving your personal outcome?”*

If the person has a clear image in their mind about what their desired personal outcome is, it may be helpful to ask them to think about what they need to make this image a reality. For example:

*“What support do you need to make this happen?”*

## T GROW - A HEALTH COACHING MODEL

**T = TOPIC:** Help the person to prioritise the topics that are most important to them.

*"Which of these issues is most important for you to address first?"*

**G = GOAL:** You need to help the person to think about their first steps and set a SMART goal. SMART stands for:

- ✓ **SPECIFIC:** *"What sort of exercise would you like to do each day?"*
- ✓ **MEASURABLE:** *"How much brisk walking will you do? Ten minutes a day? Twenty?"*
- ✓ **ACHIEVABLE:** *"Is this something that you feel you can achieve?"*
- ✓ **RELEVANT:** *"Tell me about why you feel this will improve your wellbeing."*
- ✓ **TIMELY:** *"How long will you do this for?"* Most changes need to be kept up for about three months before they become a habit.

**R = REALITY:** Limiting beliefs can hold people back from either initiating changes or making them sustainable. You may need to challenge limiting beliefs when you hear them.

*"I'm too old to change now."*

*"What evidence do you have for believing that?" "Can you think of anyone your age whom you have ever heard of who has made similar changes?"*

*"I could never do that..."*

*"What would have to happen for you to believe that you could do this?"*

**O = OPTIONS:** *"What options do you have?" "Which of those options appeals to you most?"*

*"What information and support will you need to take this option and make it work for you?"*

**W = WAY FORWARD:** If-Then plans can be useful as they can help the person to replace old unhelpful habits with new useful ones. For example, if you're trying to better control your stress levels and stop yourself from getting panicky, you might create an If-Then replacement plan such as:

*"If I'm starting to feel stressed, then I'll take three deep breaths to calm down."*

Here is an If-Then plan to help someone be more in control of their health care plan:

*"If I'm going to see my doctor about my medicines review, then I'll write down in advance the questions that I want to ask."*

*"If I feel unwell after taking one of my medications then I'll note it down in a diary so that I can show the doctor."*

Some other ways of establishing good habits are to:

- Do something at a regular time of day
- Remind yourself that you need to do something at a specific time
- Prompt yourself by leaving a message on your fridge or an alert on your phone
- Tell your close friends or family that you are going to be more active from now on and seek their support.

## NOTES