



Keeping busy

- Writing a plan each week with something to do every day that the person enjoys.
- Making sure that arrangements are made for everything in the plan to happen.



Meeting up with friends and other people

- Helping people to arrange social activities with friends.
- Looking at what is on in the local community (looking at local papers etc).
- Helping to arrange transport.



Relaxation

- Doing relaxing activities (things that the person enjoys).
- Creating some time within each day that is peaceful and quiet.



Talking about feelings

- Making space each day to talk.
- Spending time together.
- Talk about things that are good in their lives, but also encouraging people to talk about things that are not so good.

You can find out more from MIND and from the Mental Health Foundation. Both of these organisations offer information, factsheets and advice on all areas of mental health.

www.mind.org.uk
tel: 0845 766 0163

www.mentalhealth.org.uk
tel: 020 7803 1100

Helping people to look after their Mental Health



Information for carers and staff

This leaflet has been developed to complement the information leaflet for people with learning disabilities called 'Looking after your Mental Health'.

Introduction

There are several key areas in which we can make changes in our everyday lives to look after our mental health and emotional well being.

Broadly speaking these are:

- Looking after our physical health – healthy diet, exercise, regular health checks, drinking sensibly, not smoking.
- Sleep, rest and relaxation.
- Relationships and self esteem.
- Keeping busy and having something to do.

However, most people with learning disabilities are not fully in control of certain aspects of their lives and often have limited opportunities to do many of the things that other people take for granted.

This leaflet offers some suggestions as to how, as a carer or member of staff, you can give practical help and support to people with learning disabilities to look after their mental health.

What you can do to help

Look at each key area below and think of ways that you can help the people that you support.

Think carefully about each person's daily routine, their likes and dislikes and their opportunities to do things for themselves. You will find that there are many practical ways in which you can help. For example, by arranging transport to and from a visit to a friend's house.

Healthy Diet



- Putting a piece of fruit into a packed lunch.
- Having a fruit bowl in the house.
- Chopping fresh fruit over breakfast cereal.
- Having two types of vegetables with a meal.



Exercise

- Going for walks together in the evening and at weekends.
- Buying a pedometer and having fun counting the steps.
- Finding out what is on in the local community.



Alcohol, smoking and drugs

- Encouraging sensible drinking.
- Discouraging smoking
- Discouraging illicit drug use.



Looking and feeling good

- Encouraging good personal hygiene.
- Making sure that washing facilities are available.
- Making sure that people have clean clothes to wear.
- Encouraging people to do things that make them feel good about their appearance - new clothes/hair-do etc.



Sleep

- Encouraging a good sleep routine (going to bed and getting up at regular times).
- Encouraging an evening routine (having a bath, a hot milky drink etc).



Going to the doctor

- Making regular appointments with the doctor (GP) for check ups and to check medication.
- Having other health checks (going to the dentist, eye tests, chiropody etc).