

**Creating and Inspiring Hope for Mental Health
Integrating RECOVERY Principles and Values into Everyday
Practice**

What does wellness mean to you?

Introduction - Defining wellness

This exercise is very similar to “**What Does Recovery Mean to Me?**” (From day 1) in which participants identified a personal definition of recovery. The exercise follows a similar process but participants are asked this time to focus on wellness and what being and staying well means to them. Each person is asked to produce a poster to illustrate his or her understanding of wellness. The posters are displayed and the group is invited to compare and contrast individual perspectives and agree a shared vision of wellness that they return to as they work through the rest of the programme and amend and develop as their learning grows. Participants should be encouraged to be as creative as possible in producing their wellness posters and the availability of additional art materials will encourage this process. You may also wish to consider introducing this exercise on day one of the module. In this way you could ask people to bring in any photographs, art work, books, music etc that is important to them in illustrating their understanding of wellness and what being and staying well means.

Aims:

1. To identify a personal description of wellness and wellbeing
2. To share this with other members of the group
3. To agree a shared description of wellness that will be amended and developed as the programme progresses
4. To critically explore the essential features of wellness and wellbeing

Materials:

1. One copy of the “**What Does Wellness Mean to Me?**” worksheet for each person.
2. Essential - flip chart paper and coloured pens for each pair/group
3. Optional - additional art/craft materials – coloured paper, paper shapes, glue, glitter powder etc
4. Essential - Masking tape or blu-tac to display the finished posters
5. Optional – Digital camera to photograph the posters.
6. Optional – packet of Rollos or other sweets to award to the designers of the most creative poster.

7. Optional – participants bring in photographs, music, books, articles, poetry to illustrate their posters.

Timing:

1. Facilitators introduction 10 minutes
2. People work in pairs or in small groups to prepare their wellness/wellbeing poster.- 30 minutes
3. Discussion of wellness posters and agreement of a shared vision of wellness/wellbeing – 20 minutes

Total time for exercise: can be completed in one hour but an additional half hour would make for a more relaxed pace and provide more time for creativity and discussion.

Instructions:

1. Introduce the exercise by referring to the aims and talking people through the “**What Does Wellness Mean to Me?**” worksheet. Ask participants to be as creative as possible in preparing their posters, emphasise how important these will be and how they will be used throughout the remaining sessions of the workshop
2. You will find it very helpful to have your own wellness poster available to illustrate what the learners are expected to achieve. After you’ve done this exercise once you’ll have a good collection of wellness posters for future exercises. You might find it helpful to keep digital photographs of them – they are much easier to store and also can be turned in to very useful power-point presentations. You can also post them as email attachments to the students.
3. Check that everyone understands what’s expected of him or her and answer any questions.
4. Divide participants into pairs or small groups. Everybody should get a chance to be actively involved in the preparation of the posters so it’s probably best to work with pairs or groups of three to five people.
5. In their small groups remind everyone that the task is to prepare a poster to illustrate their understandings of wellness; emphasise that they can either produce one poster for the group or each person can produce their own poster.
6. Before everyone starts drawing suggest that the best way to get inspiration for the poster is to listen to the wellness stories of the other people in the group. Be clear that they have a limited amount of time to do this – keep time and remind them after ten minutes to move on to the next stage and draw the poster – again encourage creativity.

7. You might like to visit each group as they work and make suggestions to help them with the production of the posters – having prepared your own really helps with this part of the exercise.
8. After ten minutes ask everyone to finish what he or she is doing, display the poster on the wall and return to the large group.
9. When everyone is back in the large group and all the posters displayed ask people to look at each of the posters for patterns, themes, similarities and differences.
10. Allow them a minute or two to browse the posters and then lead a discussion to agree a shared vision of wellness. The following questions might help to stimulate the discussion – keep a record of the discussion on flip chart paper.
 - i. What are their initial impressions of the posters?*
 - ii. What do the posters have in common?*
 - iii. What are the important and significant differences?*
 - iv. Is it possible to identify one poster that could be used as the starting point for agreeing the group's vision of wellness?*
 - v. What do people want to see in the group poster?*
 - vi. What lessons have they learned from the exercise?*
11. You can add an extra dimension of fun by asking the group to vote on which is the most creative poster and award a small prize to the winner e.g. a packet of Rollos (what about something that is 'healthy'?!).
12. In addition to or instead of step 10 you can invite participants to view the posters prepared earlier and invite them following the viewing to collaborate with the other members of the group to distil the essential features of the smaller posters in producing one big group poster. This will require some advance preparation on your part to join –eight or so flip chart papers together with masking tape. This is a fun way to conclude this exercise but you should take extra care to involve everyone.
13. Finish this exercise by summarising the discussion and the essential ingredients of wellness and wellbeing as identified by the participants. Ask for a volunteer to type and circulate the notes of the discussion taken from the flip chart paper.
14. If you have a digital camera take photographs of the group (with their agreement of course) and the poster in-situ – make sure each member of the group gets a copy of the photograph.

What does wellness/wellbeing mean to me?

The task of this exercise is to agree a shared vision of wellness. You will do this in three easy stages as follows

- Step 1- Drawing your own or your group's wellness/wellbeing poster
- Step 2 – Discussing the similarities and differences between all the other posters prepared by people in your group
- Step 3 Agreeing a shared vision of wellness

The workshop facilitator will guide you through each stage.

Step 1: What does wellness/wellbeing mean to you? Prepare a poster to illustrate your understanding of wellness/wellbeing based upon your discussion with the other people in your group.

Be as creative as you can, use different colours, limit the writing on the poster and use as much drawing as possible. Ask the facilitator if there are any additional art materials available so that you can produce a really creative poster. You might want to bring in some of the books, quotes, music, photographs etc that are important to you in illustrating wellness and wellbeing.

You should consider the following;

- How would you describe wellness to other people?
- What strategies do you use to stay well? e.g. exercise, diet, meditation, vitamin pills, medication, keeping a journal, massage, seeing a counsellor or a psychotherapist, listening to music, joining a self-help group etc,.
- What personal supports do you use or have available to you to help you stay well? e.g. the people in your life, a support group that you belong to, a hobby, professional supporters etc
- What community resources do you use/have access to e.g. local leisure centre, well-man clinic, place of worship, poetry café, the local service user group, walking group etc
- What part does health or social care services play in helping you keep well?
- Anything else that does not fit the other categories?

When you're finished display your poster on the wall and return to the large group.

Be creative. There may be a small prize for the most creative poster