

# The Big 5

## THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Our research with over 20,000 people has shown that five types of actions are strongly linked to good mental health.

We call these 'The Big 5' and we know that people who do them regularly each week are likely to have good mental health.

### Key Points:

- Doing The Big 5 regularly is the foundation for good mental health.
- Most people stop doing The Big 5 when they feel unwell, stressed, or experience a change in their lives.
- Use The Big 5 Checklist (overleaf) to check your Big 5 activities and get ideas on how to do them more often.
- If after two weeks you aren't improving, please visit your GP or MindSpot for professional support.

**MindSpot**

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The Big 5 are things we can all do. They are the building blocks for good mental health and include:

### 1. Meaningful Activities



Meaningful Activities give us a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction or joy. They can be as simple as listening to a favourite song or watching a good show.

### 2. Healthy Thinking



Healthy Thinking means having realistic thoughts about ourselves, the world, and the future and treating ourselves with the same respect as we would treat a friend, particularly when things are difficult.

### 3. Goals and Plans



Goals and Plans help us to stay motivated and energised. They give us something to look forward to and stop us from dwelling on past problems.

### 4. Healthy Routines



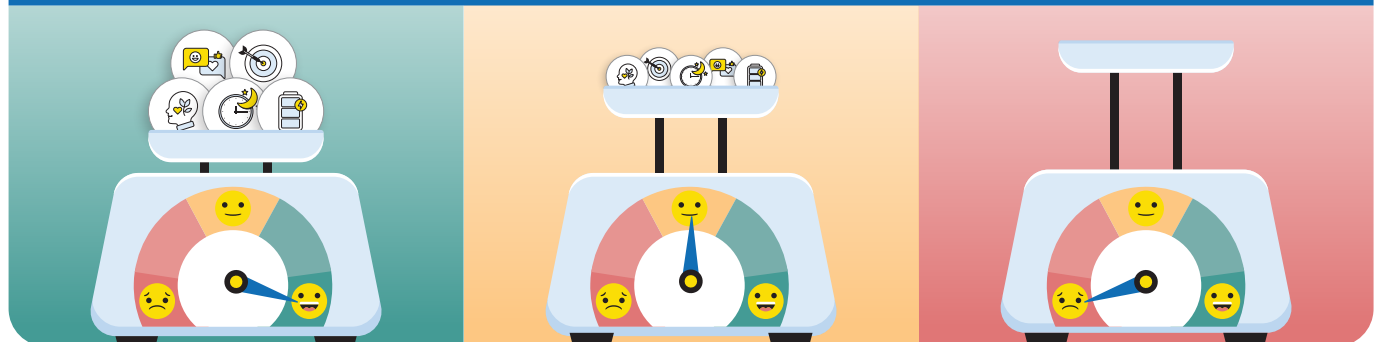
Healthy Routines we do automatically, like our sleep routine, eating well or being active, are critical for good mental health. These actions set us up for the day.

### 5. Social Connections



Regular contact with people we love and respect, which may include our family, friends or tribe, help us to feel validated and give us a sense of belonging.






## The Big 5 SMALL ACTIONS – BIG CHANGE



# The Big 5 Self-Assessment Checklist

This Self-Assessment Checklist contains five types of activities which are strongly linked to mental health. To complete the checklist:

- Tick the column which best matches how often you did a Big 5 activity in the past week. We have listed three examples for each activity
- If any of your answers are in the yellow or red section, consider the suggestions in the next column on how you might do them more often

| ACTIVITIES  | EXAMPLES  | HOW OFTEN DID YOU DO THESE EACH WEEK? |           |           |           |       | SUGGESTIONS  |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|--|
|   |   | Every day                             | 5-6 times | 3-4 times | 1-2 times | Never |  |
| <b>1 Meaningful Activities</b><br> | I did something enjoyable   |                                       |           |           |           |       | Take at least 10 minutes each day to enjoy a favourite piece of music, a show, time outside or a book                        |
|   | I had something to look forward to                                  |                                       |           |           |           |       | Make a list of the simple things you used to enjoy doing and start to re-engage with that hobby or activity                  |
|   | I did something that was very satisfying to me                      |                                       |           |           |           |       | Find activities that align with your values, including doing things for the community, friends, family, pets, or environment |
| <b>2 Healthy Thinking</b><br>      | I kept a realistic perspective on things                            |                                       |           |           |           |       | Practice accepting that making mistakes is normal and not a sign of weakness   |
|   | I dealt with feelings of frustration or impatience in a healthy way |                                       |           |           |           |       | Treat your frustration as a signal to solve or address the problem that is triggering your reactions                         |
|   | I treated myself with respect                                       |                                       |           |           |           |       | Check, are you treating yourself in the same way that you would treat others?  |
| <b>3 Goals and Plans</b><br>      | I did something to help me live my "ideal" life                     |                                       |           |           |           |       | Visualise your "ideal" life and then plan to do something simple that will help you to start to achieve your vision          |
|   | I did something to help me achieve my goals                         |                                       |           |           |           |       | Use an online calendar or notebook to help remind you of your goals and plans  |
|   | I did something to improve or maintain the quality of my life       |                                       |           |           |           |       | Make a commitment each day to do something simple that will help improve or maintain your quality of life                    |
| <b>4 Healthy Routines</b><br>    | I went to bed and woke up at a regular time                         |                                       |           |           |           |       | Create a relaxing bedtime routine to help you settle at night and get up at a regular time each morning                      |
|   | I kept a healthy daily routine                                      |                                       |           |           |           |       | Start to take a short (or longer) walk each day  |
|   | I prepared and ate a healthy meal                                   |                                       |           |           |           |       | Add a bit more fruit and veggies to your daily diet  |
| <b>5 Social Connections</b><br>  | I socialised with positive people                                   |                                       |           |           |           |       | Make a list of the people you care about, then select three you will talk to each week                                       |
|   | I had a meaningful conversation with someone                        |                                       |           |           |           |       | Think about what you want to talk about and to whom  |
|   | I talked about my day with a friend or family member                |                                       |           |           |           |       | Make a regular time each week to talk to someone you care about  |

