



Windmill L.E.A.D. Academy

A L.E.A.D. Academy

# Strategies to Support Well-Being



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## Well-being research

The DFE Wellbeing Charter defines wellbeing as, “A state of complete physical and mental health that is characterised by high-quality social relationships.”

It also recognises wellbeing as a sense of ‘how we are doing’ that includes, but is not limited to, our physical and mental health, and the quality of our social relationships.

### Well-being as individuals

The wellbeing of an individual is affected by many interrelated factors and challenges.

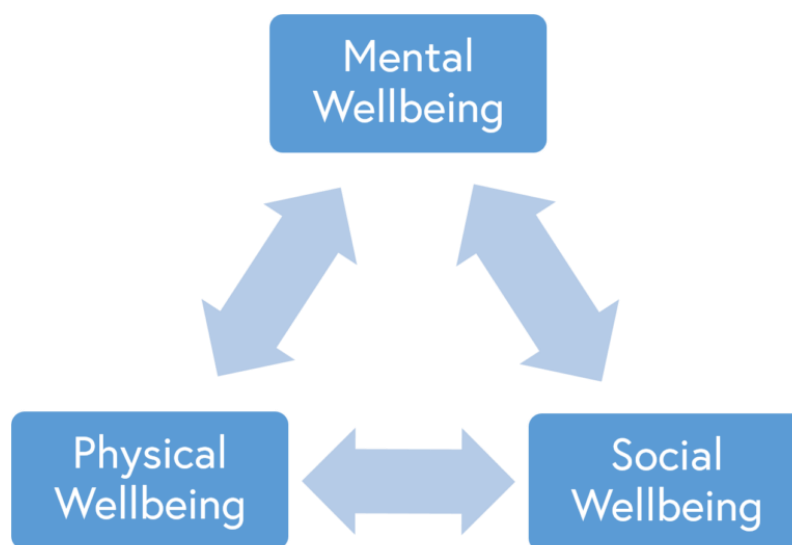
This means that levels of low or high wellbeing are rarely due to just one factor, and that it should be looked at holistically.

This shows us that wellbeing is not only affected by the job we do; it is impacted by a person’s experiences as a whole.

**Figure 2: Definition of wellbeing (Dodge et al, 2012)**



## The different types of well-being



### **Psychological (mental) well-being:**

At the most basic level, psychological well-being is quite like other terms that refer to positive mental states, such as happiness or satisfaction. It can be sorted into two key components: subjective well-being and the need to experience purpose and meaning in the things we do.

Subjective well-being refers to the extent to which people experience positive emotions or feelings of happiness (*Diener, 2000*). This is a necessary part of overall psychological well-being but is not enough on its own.

To really feel good we need to experience **purpose and meaning**, in addition to **positive emotions**.

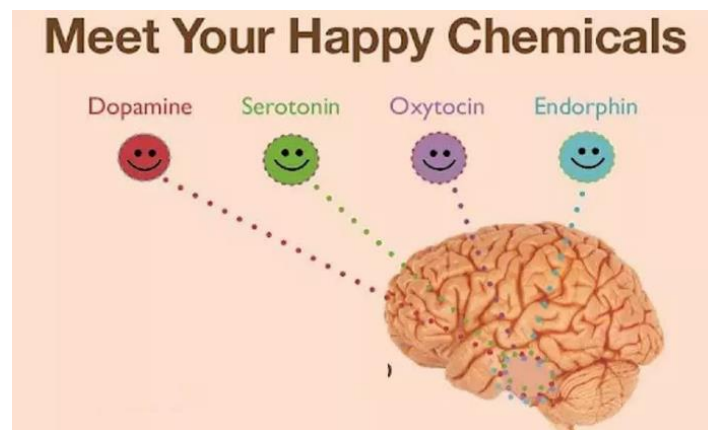
So, the two important ingredients in psychological well-being are the subjective happy feelings brought on by something we enjoy AND the feeling that what we are doing with our lives has some meaning and purpose.



## Physical well-being:

Physical well-being is much more than good health. It is the direct result of lifestyle choices and our behaviors around **sleep, diet, physical activity, hygiene and relaxation** that achieve or derail optimal functioning.

It includes recognising that our daily habits and behaviours have a significant impact on our overall health, well-being and quality of life.



When you exercise, your body releases several chemicals. These interact with the receptors in your brain that reduce your perception of pain. They also trigger a positive feeling in the body. This, in turn, can help to improve mood, reduce stress and anxiety, and helps to support mental health.

While studies have shown higher intensity exercise to be the most helpful, recent research has suggested that even low-intensity activity, performed regularly, can be beneficial for your mental health.

It is important to remember that physical activity is not the only component of physical well-being. For example, sleep and relaxation. The impact a good night's sleep can have on our physical and mental health is widely recognised. Sleep is as important to **our health as eating, drinking and breathing**. It allows our bodies to repair themselves and our brains to consolidate our memories and process information.

### **Social well-being:**

Social well-being (the social dimension of health) refers to our ability to make and maintain meaningful positive relationships and regular contact with other people in our world – family, friends, neighbours and co-workers.

Good social well-being includes not only having relationships but also behaving appropriately in these relationships. Our relationship with our family, the basic social unit, impacts our life the most.

We build our social well-being by interacting with people around us. These interactions involve using good communication skills, creating and maintaining meaningful relationships, respecting ourselves and others, and creating support systems.

**“Man is by nature a social animal.” (Aristotle)**

Humans are mutually dependent social creatures – we need to love and be loved. We have a need to belong, and we feel good when we

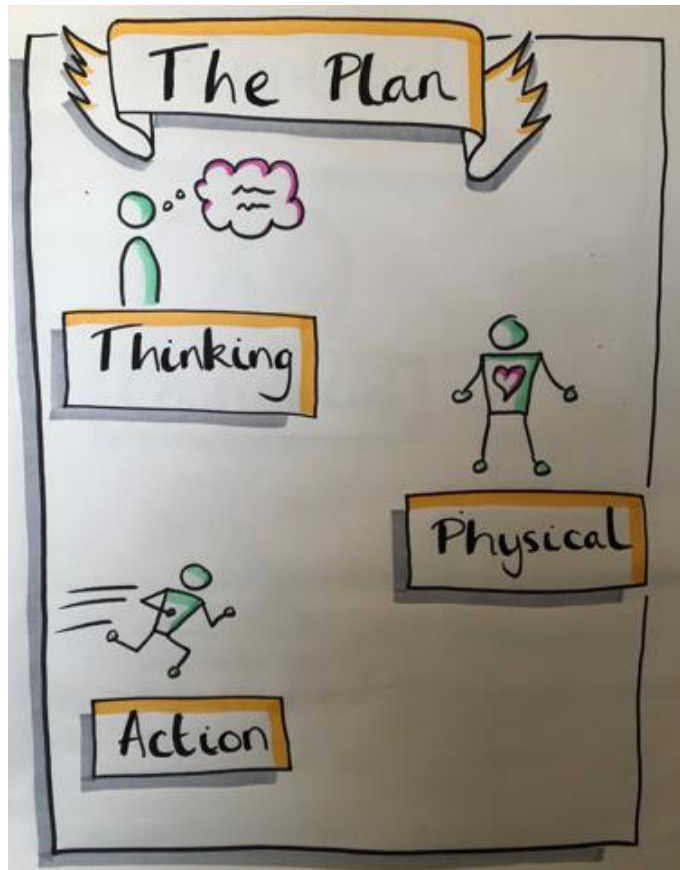
share our experiences with others. The relationships we cultivate are essential to our health and happiness or, in other words, our wellbeing.

Social well-being affects our physical health. People with meaningful social relationships and good social connections tend to be happier and healthier.

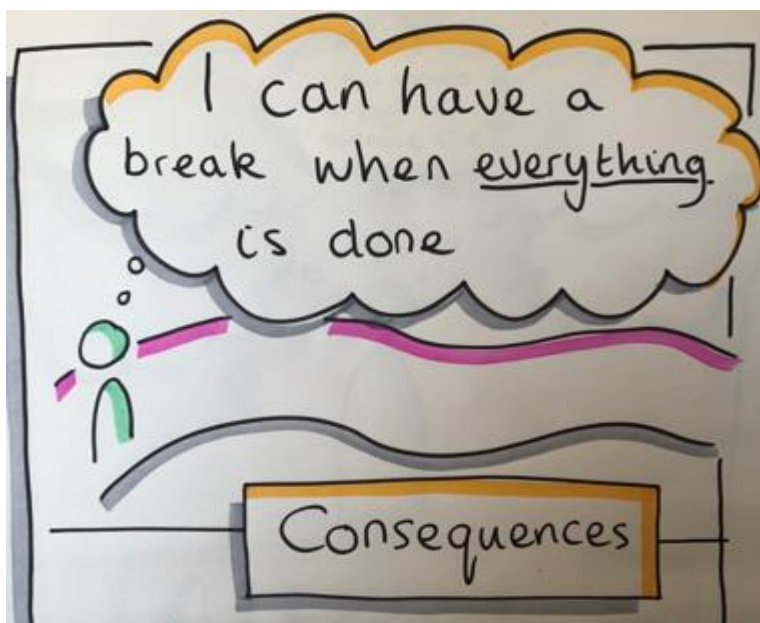
### **Top tips from Ted Bradshaw**



These next few pages will outline strategies, given to us by Ted, to support well-being. These strategies will either be a 'thinking', 'physical' or 'action' strategy.



### Thinking strategies:



This is a phrase that many people say to themselves during the working day; however, the consequences of this can have a negative effect on our well-being.

The first tip Ted suggests is to change your mindset.



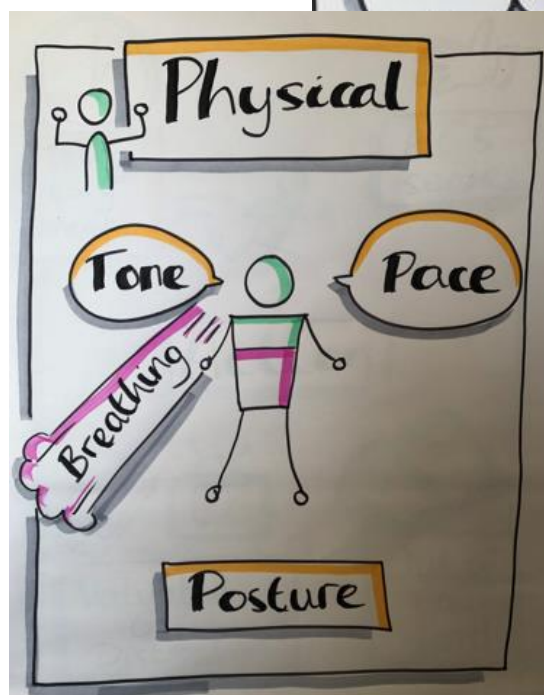
If someone you cared about was feeling stressed or overwhelmed, and said this phrase to you, what advice would you give them?

When you find yourself in a similar situation to this, as yourself...what advice would I give to someone else who was feeling this way?

Answering this simple question takes us out of the situation. In doing this, you are more than likely going to give some really good advice.

The next challenge is to follow this advice!

## Physical



## strategies:

There are four main areas we can focus on, when thinking about ways to physically do something to

reduce stress or anxiety: breathing, posture, tone and pace.

During a busy, school day, it can be hard to find time to have a long break, away from everything. However, an effective break does not have to be 30minutes long; it can simply be taking 2-3minutes.

When stress is felt, the body speeds up: breathing increases and the heart beats faster. This response to stress is your body making sure

there is enough oxygen getting to your muscles, which stems from our 'fight or flight' response. The following strategies are designed to help slow this process down.

### Breathing:

- Take 2 minutes to concentrate on your breathing
- With feet flat on the floor and back resting against your chair, place one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
- Slowly, breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. You want to concentrate on getting your belly to move before your chest.
- Adding to this, while breathing out, you may want to make noises. This can help to further reduce your breathing and let out any stress or anxiety you are feeling.

### Posture:

When feeling stressed or anxious, the body's muscles tense up; when relaxed, the body is open, and muscles can rest and recover. In times of stress, a strategy is to trick the body, physically, into thinking you are relaxed. Below are some strategies to help you do this.

- Sitting on a chair, hang your head between your legs – let your whole-body flop. While in this position, say "I'm so excited." After, lie on your back, breath in and out slowly and say, "I feel so tense."  
The contrast with what you are saying and your body position should help to alleviate some stress.
- If you are feeling stressed, tense, or anxious, take a minute to focus on your body posture. Loosen your shoulders and move them back and down. Then take some slow breaths in and out.

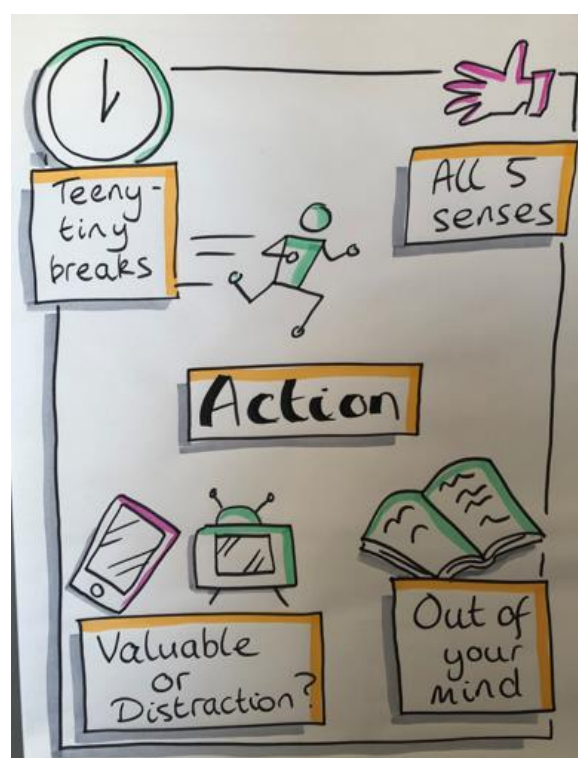
This forces you to take on a more relaxed posture. This may not stop the feeling of stress, but it will help.

### Pace and tone:

When in a state of stress or anxiety, we tend to speak and move a lot faster. This is done to try and get through our 'to-do' lists faster; however, it can have the opposite effect. Below are a few strategies for slowing down our pace and tone.

- Slow down your speech. This will also help to slow down your breathing.
- Lower the tone you speak in. It is harder to be stressed when speaking in a lower tone.
- Take a breath between each word.
- Concentrate on slowing down your actions. By doing this, your body will follow and slow down too.

### Action strategies:



The last set of strategies are things you can actively go and do.

### Valuable or distraction:

When anxious, some of us will seek distractions: scrolling on your phone, online shopping, gaming, cleaning etc.

If you do this, an important question to ask yourself is 'Do I enjoy doing this?'. If the answer is yes, then it is probably a strategy that works for you. If the

answer is no, or you realise that you don't actually feel anything while doing the activity, then it may not be an effective or valuable strategy. Sometimes, distractions are not the answer, even though they are the easier option. At times, we have to choose to do what is good for us, even when it is harder. Work worries can still be at the back of our minds but these strategies are not always about getting rid of these thoughts; it is about **how we manage them**.

- Try being present, in the task you're doing. Sensory activities are especially effective in helping with this.

### Get out of your mind:

This does not mean to forget or 'not think' about the thing that is causing stress or anxiety. It is about how to manage these feelings.

- When you have got something playing on your mind, spend 2minutes writing it down. Start writing with "I feel...because...". It is important to recognise the emotion as well as the task you need to do.

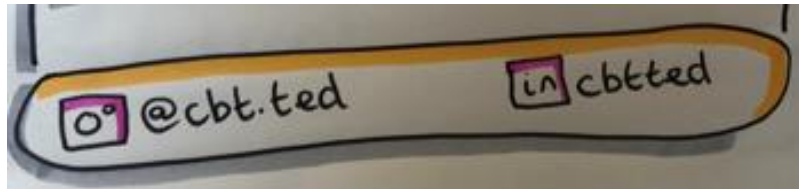
### Teeny-tiny breaks, using all 5 senses:

As mentioned before, breaks are not always about the length of time you spend on them – it is what you do during them. It is possible to feel refreshed and energised from a well-used 3minute break.

- When you make your cup of coffee or tea, spend the first 2minutes feeling how warm it is or, at dinnertime, pay attention to the taste of your sandwich. By focusing on one thing, it helps calm and recharge the body.
- Change your body position from the one you have been working with. This could be lying down, looking at the ceiling and letting your thoughts roam. It could also be sitting in a comfy chair and concentrating on relaxing each muscle, in your body.

- Get outside – especially on a cold day! By changing your setting to somewhere different, it is easier to be more present in the moment.

**For more information or tips from Ted, please see his details below.**



## Self-awareness

### What is self-awareness?

Self-awareness is about understanding ourselves and being in tune with our emotions and needs. It means recognising your behaviour in certain situations, the reasons you act in such a way, and how to **support yourself** so you can be your best self at work.

### What are the benefits of self-awareness?

Being self-aware will improve your teaching as being sure of yourself and what you need will help you teach to the best of your ability.

In teaching, we are often at the front of the classroom or kept busy with the things that need to be done. Sometimes this can *feel* more difficult or complex and can impact upon our work and teaching. Being aware of our own habits, tendencies, and needs means that we can try to combat these feelings by establishing strategies that work for us as individuals.

If you know yourself, you are able to better understand people's reactions to your actions. This means you can plan how to interact with students.



Contemplate how your life experiences may help inspire your students. Be aware of any struggles or privileges you have had. Talk about any struggles and how you overcame them when trying to inspire and empower your students.



Think about your needs. Don't try to give your best performance at work when you haven't properly fulfilled those simple needs. For example, eat a proper meal before teaching your first lesson.



Mindfulness is the ability to be aware of our experience in the present moment, without judgement. It is helpful as it can give you resilience and the strength to rise above the challenges of life. Practicing mindfulness can be done anywhere as it is a quiet activity in our heads.

## Confidence

### What is confidence?

Confidence is about believing you are **valuable**, **worthwhile** and **capable**. This helps us to face challenges head on and overcome potential barriers to our work.

While there are certainly some aspects of confidence that we cannot control, a central part of developing confidence, in your classroom practice, is reflecting upon the choices you make, the risks you take and how to respond to challenges. Part of this is instinctive in teachers, as throughout our training we are encouraged to use deliberate and reflective practice.

However, revisiting some of these techniques throughout our careers, can help give out the confidence boost needed to keep combating the evolving challenges facing the education sector.



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## Celebrate your successes

When times get tough, it can be useful to reflect upon the journey you have taken to get here:

- Identify just one thing that you think went well this week.
  - What made it go well?
  - What can you do to ensure this happens more regularly?

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## Reflect on challenges



## Set realistic goals

Be careful, not to overwhelm yourself by setting yourself too many goals - the classroom is busy enough as it is!

Select one or two goals to work on, over a fortnight or even a half term.

Use our planner insert, or handy goal tracker to help you set manageable goals.



## Seek support from others

Remember that you are not in this alone!  
Whether it is speaking to a manager, or chatting with your colleagues, a problem shared is a problem halved!



### Resilience



Teaching is immensely rewarding and gives us the opportunity to tackle new challenges, which enables us to grow and develop both



personally and professionally. At these times, having personal resilience and a positive mindset are key in helping to turn these challenges into successes.

Below are four practical ways to build resilience.

### **1. BUILD COMMUNITY:**

Having people you can confide in can be a source of strength in difficult situations. Arrange social events regularly to maintain positive relationships.

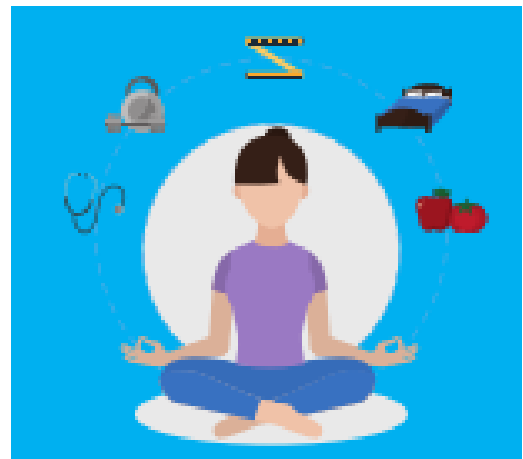
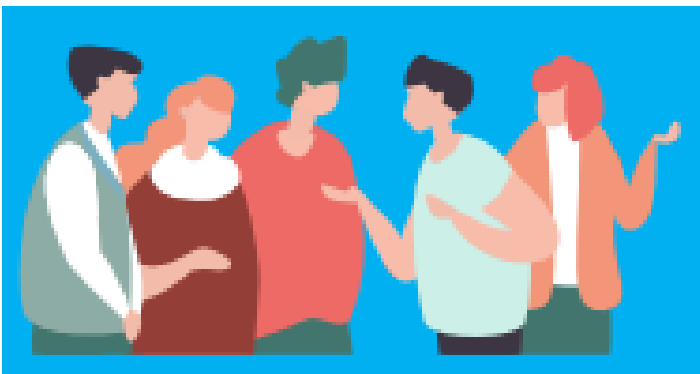
### **2. GET TO KNOW YOURSELF:**

Recognise what you need to do to feel like your best self and prioritise this. Use a habit tracker to ensure that you are monitoring what works well for you.

### **3. BE A LEARNER:**

Take time to reflect on difficult situations and what you can learn from them moving forward. Regular journaling can help you change the

**4. CELEBRATE THE SMALL WINS:**  
It is easy to focus on the negatives, so prioritise celebrating your small wins! Make a positivity jar to remember your highlights and successes.



### **Top tips for efficiency**

A good way to help keep balance, and therefore support well-being, is to be mindful of how to manage your time. Below are suggests

collected from staff at Windmill for how to be more efficient throughout the school day.

### Planning and creating slides:

- Adapt what is already on the system
- Speak with previous year group teacher if you are new to the year group
- Use resources on the server and websites we have logins for
- Make a note of the sequence of lessons
- Create a timetable before your PPA
- Plan in blocks
- Prioritise your workload
- Use PowerPoint template/master slides
- Having all relevant documents to hand. For example, the MTP saved onto your computer.
- Work with your partner teacher share planning

### Making and preparing resources:

- Reducing worksheets
- Adapting what is already on the system
- Use resources we have access to (White Rose, Literacy Shed etc)
- Ask yourself, “What will the impact be?” and “Will it benefit the children?”
- Make the resources in advance (print all resources for the week on a Monday morning)
- Use of Widgets and the snip tool
- Plan what resources you need before you start making or looking
- Create a bank of resources to re-use in the future
- Yellow sheets are taken from the teaching slides
- Use of laptops or iPads.

### Marking:

- Use self or peer-assessment when appropriate
- Mark everyday – do not let it build up
- Live marking, shared with TA
- Have responses either already printed off or on the PowerPoint.
- Set focused time aside to mark books and limit distractions. For example, put phone on silent, in your bag
- Plan when you are going to do your ‘deep marks’ so that they are spread out over the week
- If you can, mark some books during breaktime



## Switching off strategies

Another good way to help keep balance, and therefore support well-being, is to make time to “switch off” and not think about school. This can be very challenging, as in this job there is always more that can be done. Below are suggests collected from staff at Windmill for how to ‘switch off’.

- Set a time to go home, each day
- Have a routine in place. For example, school, gym, home
- Listening to specific music on your way home
- Talking to someone on your way home from school and/or debrief with someone who understands
- Using valuable distraction strategies
- Organise yourself for the next day
- Write a to-do list, prioritising things for the next day
- Meditation and mindfulness after school
- Socialising or making plans for the weekend
- Doing an outdoor activity (walking, running, walking the dog etc)
- Having a nice coffee or tea, with a biscuit, when you get home
- Assuring yourself that the job can be done on the following day
- Leaving your laptop at school
- Being realistic with how long something will take you, after school
- Do a ‘breaker activity’ to separate work and home (take a shower, change your clothes etc)
- Have separate work and relaxation zones at home
- Finish the day with a small, completed task
- Declutter at the end of the week
- Set things up for the next day (dates, timetables, resources etc)
- Read for fun or listen to audio books
- Watch television with someone

- See family or friends
- Have 5minutes of silence
- Complete a crossword or wordsearch
- Ice cube trick to take your mind off of work

## Links and resources



Daily calm – 10minute  
mindful meditation



Insight Timer – a website full of free  
videos to manage stress, anxiety, and  
mindfulness.

The power of everyday heroes by Jaz Ampaw-Farr. This  
is a Ted Talk from the lady who spoke about resilience  
with chocolate hobnobs.



An NHS website that outlines 5 steps to mental  
well-being.

Part of the Mind website. This page gives information  
and advice on how to improve your mental well-  
being.

