

being well

A RESOURCE JUST FOR YOU



BanyuleYouthServices



ENGAGE!



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Acknowledgment

Banyule Youth Services are proud to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land as the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and we pay respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history.



what is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors. Wellbeing is strongly linked to happiness and life satisfaction and is different for each individual.

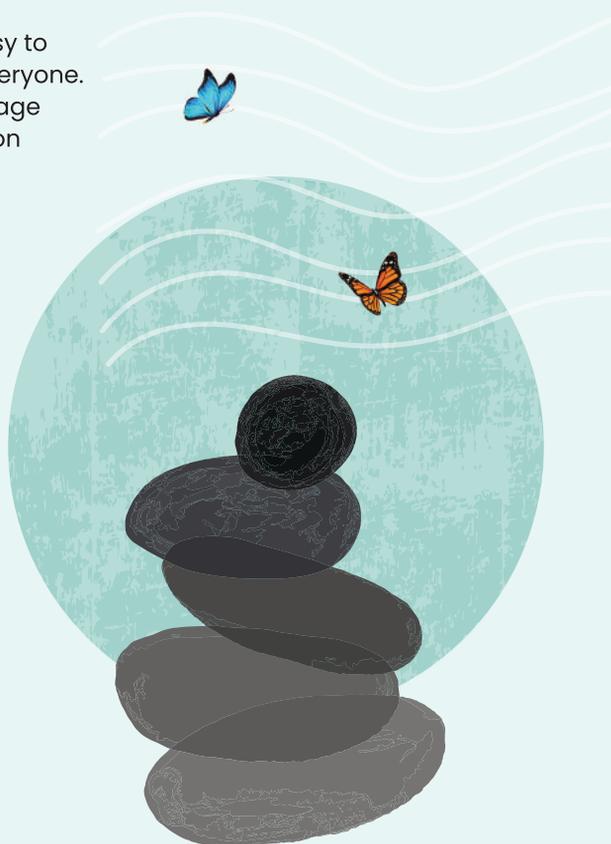
Feelings of wellbeing are fundamental to the overall health of an individual, enabling them to successfully overcome difficulties and achieve what they want out of life.

How to use this resource

This book has been designed as an introduction to wellbeing that is easy to navigate and has something for everyone. You may choose to read through page by page or jump straight to a section that feels most important for you at the time.

You may choose to only use this book at times of heightened stress, but for the greatest benefit to your wellbeing we encourage you to develop regular habits to improve your wellbeing.

There is also reflection & activity pages at the back which you might want to fill out and refer to. All the topics covered are introductory and we encourage you to seek out further information on topics that you find interesting and beneficial.



music and your mood

All types of music can affect how we feel and how we regulate our emotions. Music can reduce your anxiety, loneliness and stress, and can also boost your mood.

Different types of music will bring different benefits to different people, depending on your preferences. For some people, sad music can cause negative emotions, but for some it brings comfort and relief. Most people will find mood boosting and therapeutic benefits from calm or upbeat happy songs, rather than sad songs. Boosting your mood through music leads to better mental and physical health, and greater satisfaction in life.

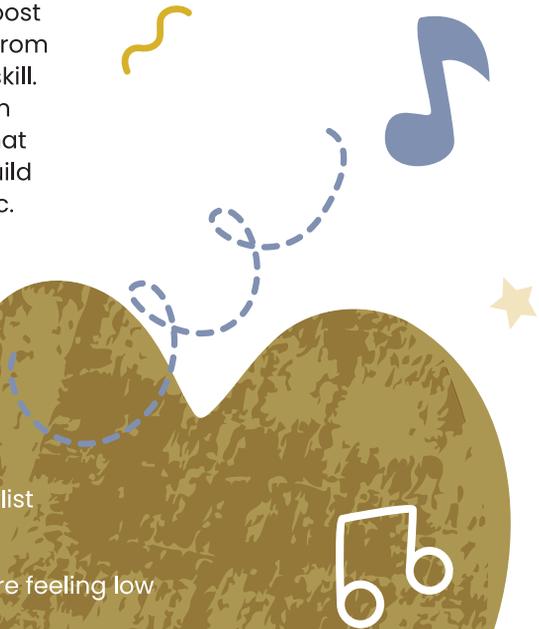
Experimenting with playing music yourself is also a great way to boost your mood, take some time out from ordinary life and to learn a new skill. Some people prefer to try learn in a structured way, but playing what you feel is also a great way to build a positive relationship with music.

Try making a playlist of songs that make you feel happy. Then, whenever you feel like a mood boost, you can switch to your happy playlist. You can also make a “calming down” playlist or one for any other mood.

You can follow a “Mood Booster” playlist on Spotify, if you find it hard to make your own playlist. There are heaps to choose from. You can find them here; www.spotify.com

Wellbeing Checklist

- create a “happy”, “calm” playlist
- play an instrument
- play your playlist when you are feeling low



creativity

Studies show that being creative once per day can increase your wellbeing & level of happiness.

"You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop."

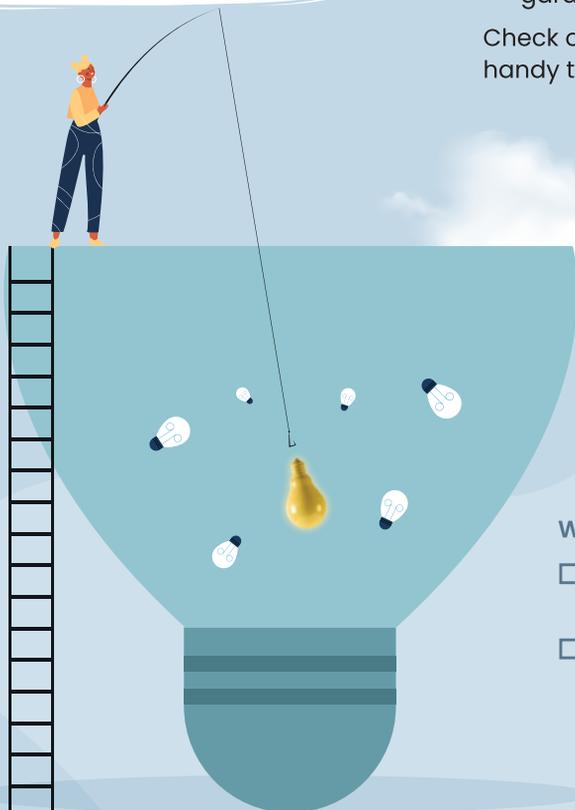
— Rumi

It allows us to express our emotions, it feels good and it forces us to focus on the moment.

Some types of creativity you could try:

- song writing
- creative writing (such as poetry or short fiction)
- knitting or crochet
- painting
- drawing
- sketching
- graphic and digital design
- jewelry making
- photography
- musical performance
- gardening

Check out YouTube tutorials for handy tips.



Wellbeing Checklist

- schedule time in your day to be creative
- watch a tutorial about a creative pursuit you are interested in

sleep

Sleep helps our body to regenerate. It helps us to grow, retain information we have learnt and build a strong immune system.

Getting a good night's sleep can also improve your mood with research showing that after a restful sleep, you are likely to feel less anxious and more confident.

Did you know that young people are sleeping less than ever before? On average Australian young people sleep for only 6.5 hours per night and yet at this life stage we need around 10-12 hours per night for wellbeing.



"You do not just wake up and become the butterfly. Growth is a process.."

— Rupi Kaur

How can you get better sleep?

- By creating a bedroom with spaces for different things we can increase our chances of getting a good night's sleep. Try having a zone for sleep, a zone for study, a zone for our clothes & a zone for our phones and other devices.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine. This could include meditating, reading a book, a warm shower, or listening to calming music.
- Limit light exposure – light cues the brain to stay awake. In the evening, lights from TVs, mobile phones and computers can prevent the production of melatonin, the brain chemical responsible for sleep.
- Avoid stimulants in the evening like coffee, tea, soft drinks and energy drinks.

Wellbeing Checklist

- create zones in your bedroom
- do a bedtime routine
- unplug an hour before bedtime

zen your bedroom space

Your bedroom should be your safe space. It should be a calm, peaceful area within the house for you to be free from stress.

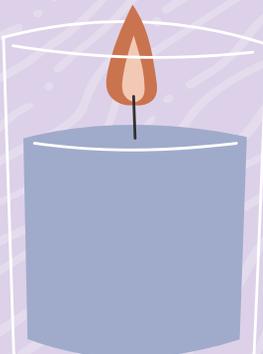
Having your own space not only benefits your mental health by acting as a personal retreat, but also your physical health by promoting healthy sleeping habits.

Making your bedroom a calmer space doesn't have to be expensive, but it might take a little work before you start relaxing! Your bedroom should reflect your own personality and style, so everyone's will look a little different.

TIP: Sleep Ninja® is a free, evidence based smartphone app shown to be effective in helping young people with sleep problems.

Ways to promote good vibes in your room include:

- Opening a curtain and letting the natural light in
- Cleaning your bedroom – going through your drawers can help you feel less cluttered
- Get rid of stuff you don't like or that gives you negative feelings
- Try use calming, earthy colours like soft yellows, blues and greys
- Avoid stimulating colours like vibrant reds or colours you don't like
- Use essential oils or candles with calming scents
- Add a bedroom plant
- Add your own artwork, or art made by your friends
- Separate work and relaxation time by not studying or working in bed



Wellbeing Checklist

- clean your bedroom of clutter & organise
- put up posters, artwork plants that make you happy

food and mood

All things in moderation is the key to feeling happy. There is proven research showing that the bacteria in our stomachs has a massive effect on our brain.

Gut health helps brain health and vice versa. When we eat vitamin-rich food, we allow our bodies to thrive. Try eating more fresh fruit and vegetables each day with your diet – focus on having a good balance of complex carbohydrates, protein and fruit & vegetables. But remember.... chocolate and chips can be self-care sometimes too! 80% healthy & 20% fun is a good mixture!

It's also important to think about when you are eating. You should stabilise your metabolism and your mood. It's not good for your mood to purge eat once a day, or to only eat snacks because it can make you more irritable.

TIP: eatforhealth.gov.au has information and recipes to try

Banyule Youth Services also has a recipe book for young people that you can download: banyuleyouth.com/download-free-resources

Hydration

Studies show that even mild dehydration can have a significant impact on your mood, energy, and even your ability to think clearly and concentrate.

The fact is that the human brain is comprised of about 75% water so it's no surprise that even mild dehydration can have a major impact on us.

Water is the best thing to keep us hydrated and things like coffee and soft drinks can dehydrate us or cause changes to our mood due to the amount of sugar in them.

TIP: Try adding a squeeze of juice from a lemon or orange to water to add some flavour.

Wellbeing Checklist

- cook something from the cookbook
- cut down on sugary drinks & coffee
- track your water intake (keep hydrated)

Time with loved ones

Spending time with people you love and animals is proven to directly change how your brain responds to stress.

When we spend time with animals (or small children), we are forced to be 'in the moment' and it can help take away our thoughts of other things or worries we may have by focusing our attention on caring for another. It can also help to keep you active and boost your mood through social interaction. Even watching a fish swim can help you to feel calmer.

TIP: Plan to spend 30 minutes a day with your pet or book in a trip to your local petting farm. If you can't do that, visit or videocall a loved one or even watch animal videos.

"How you love yourself is how you teach others to love you."

— Rupi Kaur

Wellbeing Checklist

- make a list of friends/family that you can contact when you need support
- schedule time to call/visit/text each week

move your body

Talking about how we feel is important, but something just as important for our mental health is moving our bodies.

The more we move the better we feel. Exercise increases your overall health and your sense of wellbeing. It also helps to bump up the amount of endorphins in your body.

Exercise is meditation in motion. When exercising, try to focus only on the movement of your body – the next thing you will do. It stops thoughts of other things in the moment and will assist you to worry less for the rest of the day. Plus, starting a new hobby will often distract you from your worries too.

Exercising improves your mood. Regular exercise can increase self-confidence and relax you. Exercise can also improve your sleep as it promotes the release of hormones that increase our ability to rest well at night.

Find an exercise that works for you and aim to do it a few times per week. If you find yourself unsure of what types of movement you can try, here are a few ideas:

- Dancing by yourself or with others
- Try yoga to help clear your mind and relieve stress
- Do a gym workout, there are plenty of exercises with no equipment needed
- Go for a skate, scoot or bike ride and feel the fresh air outside
- Kick or throw a ball with a friend in a local park or your garden
- Go for a walk or run, by yourself or with a friend

TIP: There are heaps of tutorials on YouTube to learn new skills when trying to exercise, like gym-free workouts, beginner yoga and dance, stretching and even tutorials for skating, scootering and riding.

Wellbeing Checklist

- find an exercise that you enjoy & plan to do it a few times a week
- explore your local park
- take a walk with a friend or your dog

writing or journaling

When we write down how we feel, we can gain control of our emotions and keep track of each day. This helps us see patterns in how we feel, find positives, and explore solutions.

Writing a journal helps to take all those thoughts out of your head and place them somewhere else.

Studies show that people who put their journals in their room or spend 10 minutes a day writing in it, increase their happiness dramatically over time. Try putting it next to your bed in case you wake up in the middle of the night.

Journaling goes beyond note-taking; it's a way to engage in self-expression, self-reflection, and self-awareness. Whether you're jotting down daily events, exploring your emotions, setting goals, or brainstorming ideas, journaling is a safe and private space to connect with your thoughts and feelings.

TIP: If you feel stuck or are just starting, there are lots of YouTube videos which help guide you depending on the type of journaling you want to try.

"You alone are enough. You have nothing to prove to anybody."

— Maya Angelou

Wellbeing Checklist

- keep a notebook by your bed & start writing when you wake up
- at the end of the day write in your journal for 10 minutes



Journal space
next page

gratitude

Exercising gratitude routinely will help improve your life. When we are grateful, we experience a warm thankfulness in relation to events, people and the wider world.

It helps us reflect on the positive things in life and take a moment of appreciation. By practising gratitude, you can feel more satisfied with your life and improve your happiness levels.

There are many ways to be grateful, but here are a few that you can build into your day-to-day life:

- Recognise the small, good things in life
- Pick one, two or three things to remind yourself you are grateful for each day. You can write them down, or tell them to a friend
- When you feel bad, try writing a list of every single thing you can think of that you are grateful for
- Help someone do something, do something nice for someone or start volunteering
- Start a group chat with friends or family to share gratitude, each other's joy and support each other

TIP: Start a gratitude journal

Grab a notebook and, each day, jot down three things you're thankful for. Regularly journaling what you're grateful for can make you more aware of the little joys and simple pleasures around you.

Write a gratitude letter

Think of someone who has significantly impacted your life and express your appreciation in words. Detail how they helped you and the difference they made. You can choose to send it or keep it for yourself.

Wellbeing Checklist

- start a group chat with friends or family to share gratitude's
- help someone or start volunteering
- make a gratitude jar and write down a note of gratitude each week/day



mindfulness

Mindfulness is all about being present and aware in the moment.

Specifically, it's about being aware of your physical and mental state, your thoughts, emotions and surroundings. Practicing mindfulness will help improve your ability to regulate emotions and can help to decrease stress, anxiety and depression.

What can you do to practice mindfulness?

- Do breathing exercises
- Go outdoors and embrace the surroundings
- Mindful exercise
- Take some time away from screens
- Pay attention to your five senses when doing different activities
- Get creative

TIP: Body scan

This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of your body. Start from the top of your head and move all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation of different parts of your body.

TIP: Mindful colouring and drawing.

You could use a mindfulness colouring book or download mindfulness colouring images. There are some great apps to support you to develop mindful practice. Check out the smiling mind app.

Wellbeing Checklist

- check out the smiling mind & headspace apps
- give yourself "screen free" time each day
- try a mindful exercise, there are heaps online



essential oils

Essential oils come from plants and capture the individual scent, or “essence” of the plant.

The unique oils can be used in aromatherapy, which is where they are inhaled to create positive responses in your body. Many people just use essential oils to make their home smell nice. There are many different oils, some well-known ones are:

- Lavender: relieves stress and loneliness
- Peppermint: boosts energy
- Rose: boosts mood and reduces anxiety
- Jasmine: can stabilise moods and help depression
- Chamomile: promotes relaxation and improves mood
- Bergamot: reduces stress
- Sandalwood: helps focus and calm nerves
- Tea Tree: boosts immunity

It's best to inhale essential oils – you **SHOULDN'T** ingest them.

TIPS: Some fun ways to use them include an essential oil diffuser, candle, a roll-on stick or adding a few drops to a bath. Be careful using essential oils if you have asthma or allergies, and keep them away from your pets.



Wellbeing Checklist

- research about different essential oils and create your own blend
- make a body/lip scrub using oils
- use a fragrant oil in your bath or shower

You can also try making your own aromatherapy diffuser blend. There are heaps of recipes online which can help you focus, relax and calm down.

plan for self-care

Having a plan for your own self-care helps improve health and wellbeing, keeps you accountable, and can help manage your stress.

Learning your triggers for negative emotional responses and identifying activities and practices that promote positive feelings can help your self-care

TIPS:

- Write out your own self-care plan with clear, achievable goals.
- Celebrate your small changes and wins
- Schedule your self-care activities. Bring your chosen activities into your schedule
- Monitor your progress and adjust as necessary.
- Seek support when needed.

Plan for your physical self-care by incorporating the following into your habits:

- Set a bedtime for yourself and get an appropriate amount of sleep each night
- Stay hydrated throughout the day & choose foods that is healthy & make you feel great
- Take breaks when working or studying
- Create a time to exercise daily
- Plan for your emotional self-care by trying the following:
- Surround yourself with supportive people
- Practice gratitude and mindfulness exercises
- Prioritise time for hobbies and relaxation
- Have a strategy to deal with negative emotions and events

Wellbeing Checklist

- create your own "self care kit" which might include; herbal tea bags, hand cream, essential oils, journal, warm socks, eye mask, positive books, a "feel good" playlist, gratitude jar, list of services & people to call, letter writing kit, squishy toy & blanket.

seeking support

As humans, we will ALL have times where we don't feel quite like ourselves. Some weeks just aren't as good as others. If you feel like you aren't finding things that make you feel good, then it's a good idea to ask for support.

Banyule Youth Services offer free support, advice and information to young people on a range of topics

Phone: 9457 9855

banyuleyouth@banyule.vic.gov.au

banyuleyouth.com/need-help

Kids Help Line

24 hour telephone counselling for 5-25 year olds

Phone: 1800 55 1800

www.kidshelpline.com.au

headspace Greensborough

Support, information and assistance for young people aged 12 to 25 years.

Level 1, 78 Main St, Greensborough, VIC 3088

Phone: 9433 7200

www.headspace.org.au

www.eheadspace.org.au

"If you were born with the weakness to fall, you were born with the strength to rise."

— Rupi Kaur

Sometimes even when we try everything we can to feel relaxed, it just doesn't happen. That is okay.

Austin Heath, Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) -

Specialist mental health service for children and adolescents up to the age of 18.

Phone: 1300 859 789 then select age of the person requiring assistance

Phone Support:

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Beyond blue - 1300 22 4636

Safe Steps - 1800 015 188
(family violence response centre)

Rainbow Door - 1800 729 367
(Free LGBTIQ+ helpline)

Sexual assault crisis line -
1800 806 292

Direct line - 1800 888 236
(alcohol and other drug counselling)

Mens line - 1300 78 9978

having a tough moment?

Mental health and wellbeing apps to try:



Try some of the following activities to help you calm down & feel better:

- Go outside – whether it's to exercise, walk or just relax
- Call a friend
- Organise a group video call
- Create a self-care pack
- Mindfulness colouring
- Go for a bike ride, scooter or skate
- Cook something new
- Play an old videogame
- Create a new music playlist



Calm harm

To help manage the urge to self-harm



Calm

Stress and anxiety relief, sleep tools, mindfulness



Sleep ninja

Free evidence based app to help young people with their sleep issues



Clearly me

Teenagers experiencing depressive symptoms, psychological distress or just going through a tough time



Smiling mind

Daily meditation and mindfulness exercises



Balance app

Personalised meditation



Headspace

Mental health support



Finch

Selfcare help



Beyond blue

Suicide safety planning app



How we feel

Check in on your emotions



Ask izzy

Help and services near you

positive affirmations



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