



Transcultural
Mental Health Centre

A practical guide about:
Promoting wellbeing – (ENGLISH)

The aim of this booklet – *'A Practical Guide About: Promoting wellbeing'* is to assist individuals to recognise the importance of obtaining and maintaining wellbeing.

The objective of the information contained within this booklet is to assist individuals to be aware of the factors that affect people's health, quality of life and wellbeing by:

- explaining what it is to have good mental health.
- what on a personal level can be done to obtain and maintain mental health.

This booklet is available in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Other booklets available in *'A Practical Guide'* series include:

- PROBLEM SOLVING AND GOAL SETTING.
- STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT.
- A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP. This booklet is available in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, English, Farsi, Filipino, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Maltese, Polish, Spanish and Vietnamese.



A PRACTICAL GUIDE ABOUT:

Promoting wellbeing



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Copies of this and related booklets in the 'A Practical Guide' series (as well as other resources) are available from the:

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The information contained within this booklet has been compiled from a number of published and unpublished sources.

The Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC) has received permission to use information from the following publication.

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care (2000). Promotion, Prevention and Early Intervention for Mental Health – A Monograph, Mental Health and Special Programs Branch, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, Canberra.

This publication is intended to provide general information only. It should not be used as a substitute for seeking professional help. You may want to consider consulting your local general practitioner on issues raised in this booklet. There are also a number of telephone numbers, internet and websites on page 5 of this booklet that you may find useful.



Some useful telephone numbers

Mental Health Line

Tel: 1800 011 511

In an emergency call 000 immediately.

Transcultural Mental Health Centre

Tel: 1800 648 911

If English is not your first language the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** can provide you with free assistance on 131 450.

WayAhead - Mental Health Association NSW

Tel: 1300 794 991

Some useful websites

WayAhead – Mental Health Association NSW
<https://wayahead.org.au>

Multicultural Health Communication Service
www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au

NSW Ministry of Health
www.health.nsw.gov.au

Local Health Districts and Specialty Networks are listed at www.health.nsw.gov.au/lhd

If you are interested in attending a course on any one of the 'A Practical Guide' series topic areas, phone the Transcultural Mental Health Centre on (02) 9912 3850 to register your interest.

If you live in rural and remote areas of NSW you can call the TMHC (free call) on 1800 64 8911 to register your interest.



In summary, the promotion of mental health is about enabling people to maximise their wellbeing. Some of the things that influence our mental health are out of our direct control while others are within our control. There are certain things that we can all do to promote our own mental health. These actions include:

- set realistic goals.
- eat and sleep well.
- exercise on a regularly basis.
- talk to others to share our feelings and to talk about problems.
- accept ourselves for who we are.
- make time to relax in ways that we enjoy and find relaxing.
- learn to be a good listener.
- make the effort to keep in touch with friends.
- get involved in things that are of interest to us.
- always drink in moderation.
- learn new skills.



Promoting wellbeing



What is good mental health?

It is not easy to define what good mental health is. Add to this, complex issues such as our language, our culture, and our migration experience, then one can begin to appreciate the challenges when discussing what constitutes good mental health.

However, the achievement of good mental health is more than just an absence of mental illness. It is about a state of emotional and social wellbeing in which the individual can cope with the normal stresses of life and achieve our potential. It includes being able to work productively and contribute to community life.



The World Health Organisation (1999) recognises good mental health to be a state of emotional and social wellbeing in which individuals:

- realise their own abilities.
- can cope with the normal stresses of life.
- can work productively or fruitfully.
- are able to make a contribution to their community (Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care, 2000. p.3).





Some of the most important environmental influences on mental health are opportunities that enable us to exercise control over our lives, to use our skills and to engage in supportive social interactions. It is also important for us as individuals, groups and communities to be able to set goals and experience a variety of opportunities.

Also fundamental to mental health is:

- having a valued social position.
- an adequate income.
- physical security.

High levels of these promote emotional and social wellbeing, while low levels may be harmful.



Positive mental health is a resource that enables us to manage our lives successfully. It is underpinned by increasing our emotional and social skills. Increasing our emotional resilience benefits ourselves and that of the entire community. Psychological processes: how we think, feel, interpret the world and communicate effect interactions and experiences at all levels. The development of personal skills to enhance emotional and social wellbeing is therefore important to the development of our positive mental health.

Personal skills such as the ability:

- to manage change.
- to recognise, acknowledge and communicate thoughts and feelings (both positive and negative).
- to make and maintain relationships.
- to acquire and develop resources and skills to cope with stress and adversity.



We need to have feelings of self-worth and empowerment, the belief that we can control and influence our life experiences. However, it is also important to accept that mental health problems and mental disorders do occur, in both ourselves and other people, and that the associated burdens can be overcome.