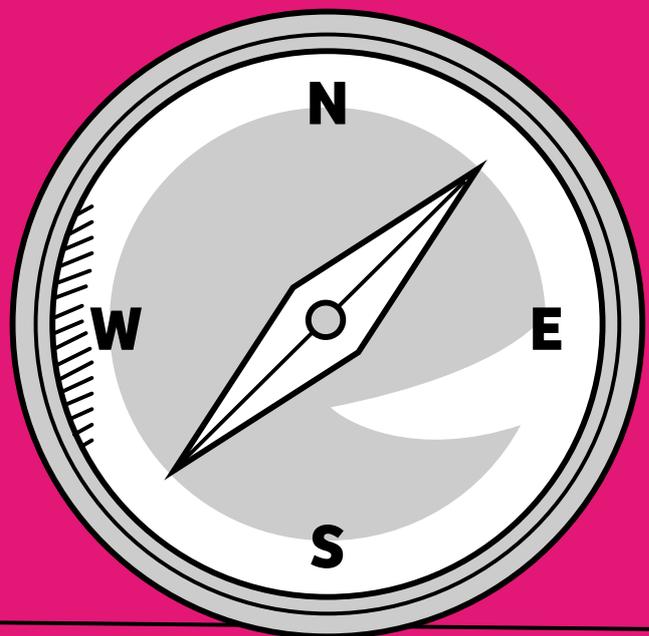


# Walking for wellbeing and good mental health

Tool kit



# Walking to improve our Mental Health and Wellbeing

We all know that walking is the perfect activity to keep you healthy, active and reduce your chances of becoming unwell. Getting out and about and taking part in physical activity is so important to supporting our mental health and wellbeing too. We know that walking can have a positive effect on our mood, our self-esteem, and can create opportunities to connect and learn from others.

We also know that the barriers to engaging and participating in physical activities include lack of openness around mental health, fear of judgment and stigma, anxiety and a lack of confidence.

Paths for All, SAMH and See Me are working in partnership to encourage people to look after their mental health and wellbeing by walking. We want to engage with a wide range of new and existing walkers to raise awareness of the mental health benefits of walking. The aim is to support local communities to create inclusive and inviting walks to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and break down barriers to participation.



# Mental Health Walks for Wellbeing

There are many ways in which you can make mental health a focus of your walks, or even just start to introduce the topic and discuss the benefits that walking can have with walkers:

## Welcome and introduction to the Health Walk

- Introduce the concept of Health Walks for Wellbeing, highlight that this is a partnership with Paths for All, SAMH, and See Me to promote the positive impact that walking has on our mental health.
- Highlight that we all have mental health and Health Walks are a great opportunity to raise our awareness and encourage us to look after our mental health and wellbeing.
- Let people know that we all have mental health and it is important to look after it. Highlight that everyone has mental health just like we have physical health and sometimes it can be good or bad
- Highlight the importance of talking about our mental health, good or bad and that today we are going to encourage everyone to connect and talk to each other, simply saying 'how are you?' to someone, can make a real difference.
- Highlight through the walk that we will have key opportunities to learn, connect, give, be active and take notice of what's around us.



## Identifying Opportunities to Improve Wellbeing and talk more openly about mental health

During your Health Walk there are lots of opportunities to encourage better mental health and wellbeing through connections, conversations and the experience of being outside in our environment. We can also encourage walkers to start to think about the **5 Ways to Wellbeing** which can support good mental health.

Here's how you could discuss these during the walk:

# 1

## Get Active

Health Walks are accessible physical activity for all. Being active has a positive effect on mood and wellbeing as well as your physical health. It's been shown that being active outside has even bigger benefits for your mental health. Increasing your activity can help you deal with the challenges of living with a long term condition as well as help prevent them.



# 2

## Give

Give your time and attention to your community through being part of a health walk.

Also don't forget to see the health walk as time you are investing in yourself. You're giving yourself the gift of something that will benefit your physical and mental health, you're worth it!

# 3

## Connect

Being connected to a group or walk like today's is key to our wellbeing. Creating and maintaining connections in our communities is a key element of what keeps us well and fulfilled.

Ask individuals as they go on the walk, to say hello to each other, and they may wish to walk and talk....to support this, suggest that they may want to ask these questions below or use the conversation card provided.



# 4

## Take Notice

Highlight we are outdoors, enjoying the fresh air (if it's raining heavily, recognise their commitment to taking part!

Encourage people to ask others as they are walking along – How are you doing, what are you noticing as you walk? Point out wildlife, plants or patterns. Are there things that you notice more if you take the time to really look around you?

### Highlight the following



**Taking notice of how others are feeling is so important for our and their mental health wellbeing**

### Ask



**Are you okay?**



**What helps you look after you mental health and wellbeing?**



# 5

## Learn

As you highlight a specific key piece of history or landmark and share this with individuals, highlight the following;



**Did you know that learning enhances our self-esteem and confidence?**

It is also a great way to meet new people or stay in touch with others, look at today, we are all here and hopefully you are introducing yourself and meeting new people.

# Ending the Health Walk

Ask walkers who participated;



You could also ask if they would mind filling in the simple feedback card, highlighting that they are completely anonymous, and will be used to let us know how they felt about this walk and if it made a difference to their mental health & wellbeing. If they do not want to fill out the form they do not have to.

Remind walkers of the five ways to wellbeing and conversation starters' and encourage them to come on other walks and keep looking after their mental health and wellbeing.

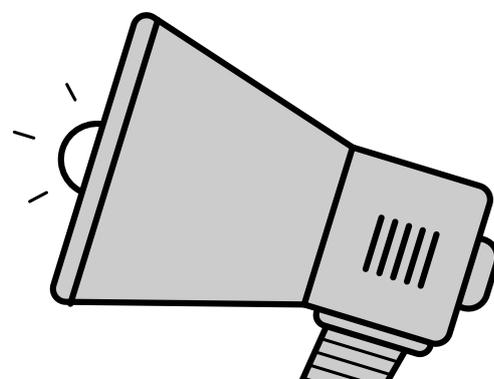
Encourage walkers to let others know about this experience, either tell a friend, share on Facebook, or tell others in a group they are involved in.

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## Please share your experiences and successes

We'd love to hear your experiences of walking and talking about mental health and wellbeing. If you'd like to share your story please get in touch with us at Paths for All, See Me or SAMH. Sharing your stories on social media and with your community about the difference walking can make could help inspire others to get involved.

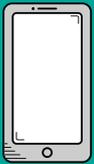
We are not all expected to be mental health experts to start the conversation and help someone. Often in starting the conversation we can further help by signposting people to the relevant supports that may be able to help them further.



# Sources of support for mental health

## The Samaritans

The Samaritans provides free confidential non-judgemental emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



**Call:** 116 123

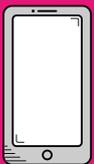
**Visit:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**Email:** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

## Breathing Space

Breathing Space is a free, confidential phone line service for any individual who is experiencing low mood and depression, or who is unusually worried and in need of someone to talk to.

Lines are open from 6pm – 2am Monday to Thursday and 6pm – 6am Friday to Monday AM

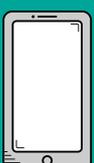


**Call:** 0800 83 85 87

**Visit:** [www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

## NHS 24

NHS 24 is a call centre operated by the NHS to provide patients with health advice and help over the phone when your usual GP services aren't available. Referrals can also be made over the phone to crisis support and other mental health professionals out-with normal GP practice working hours.

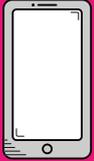


**Call:** 111 or if you think you need an emergency ambulance, call 999 and speak to the operator

**Visit:** [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

## ChildLine Scotland

ChildLine is a counselling service for children and young people. You can contact ChildLine anytime and in these ways: You can phone, send an email, have a 1-2-1 chat, send a message to Ask Sam and you can post messages to the ChildLine message boards. Visit the website to find out more.

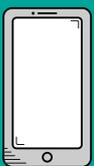


**Call:** 0800 1111

**Visit:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## SAMH

Around since 1923, SAMH currently operates over 60 services in communities across Scotland providing mental health social care support, addictions and employment services, among others. These services together with national programme work in See Me, respectme, suicide prevention, physical activity and sport; inform SAMH's policy and campaign work to influence positive social change.'



**Visit:** [samh.org.uk](http://samh.org.uk) to download our helpful information leaflets about looking after your mental health, and getting help when you need it.