

**AN INTRODUCTION
TO
MENTAL WELLBEING
FOR
YOUNG CRICKETERS**

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This resource has been designed to introduce the topic of wellbeing to young cricketers. It covers the following topics:

- What is mental wellbeing?
- Ways to wellbeing
- Recognising the signs of a poor mental wellbeing
- Tools to promote positive mental wellbeing
- Further support

This resource has been produced by the **MCC Foundation** in collaboration with **Opening Up Cricket**.



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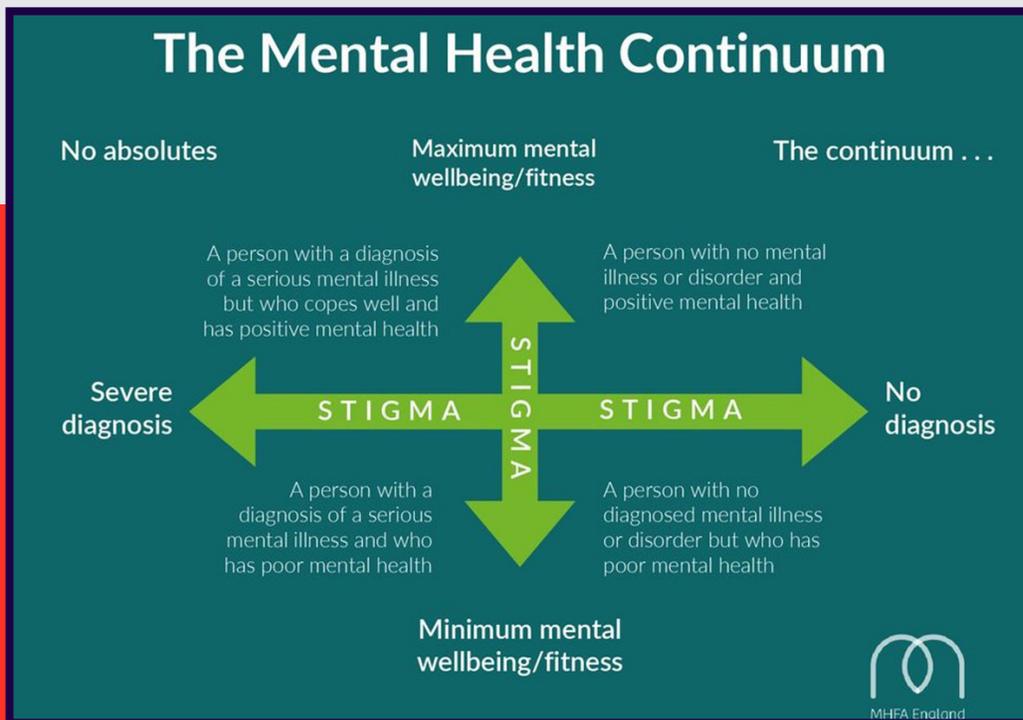
WHAT IS MENTAL WELLBEING?

Mental wellbeing is important for everyone. It is a big part of how we deal with all the different things that happen in cricket, school and wider life. Consider it a 'continuum' that every person moves along depending on a number of factors.

If we think of this as mental fitness it can help remind us that there are ways to positively influence our mental wellbeing. Cricket gives us opportunities to develop mental fitness. Paying attention to this can help in the sport and beyond!



The image below is the Mental Health Continuum - everyone's mental wellbeing exists somewhere in this continuum and is able to change. This resource is designed to promote positive mental wellbeing and fitness, to support you to be in the top half of the continuum.



Source: Mental Health First Aid England

[Click here](#) for more information about mental wellbeing

WAYS TO WELLBEING

Many people use the 'ways to wellbeing' as a guide to looking after their mental wellbeing. All of these can be achieved through cricket.



Source: LiveWell Dorset

Task: Think about how each 'way to wellbeing' can be used in your cricket setting.

[Click here](#) to listen to a podcast about the five ways to wellbeing.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS

Just like anyone can get a physical injury, our minds can be unwell too. It is useful to be able to spot some common signs of a decline in mental wellbeing.

Here are some example signs to look out for:



These signs are just a guide. If you feel like these or other changes are affecting your day-to-day life, you don't need to suffer in silence - it will help to talk to someone you trust about it. This could be a parent or guardian, cricket coach or teacher, or it could be a specialist organisation that supports young people (see page 9 for links to further support).

TOOLS TO PROMOTE POSITIVE MENTAL WELLBEING

Below are four ways we can use cricket to develop mental fitness. These examples are used by professional cricketers to develop their mental fitness skills.

If one technique doesn't work for you, try different techniques over a period of time. We encourage you to trial them all and see what works best for you!

1) MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness involves paying attention to what is going on inside and outside ourselves - it is a form of self-awareness which can help you understand yourself and the world around you a little bit better.



England cricket sensation Jos Buttler uses mindfulness to help his mind be at its best and promote positive mental wellbeing. This can help with concentration and focus. One example of practicing mindfulness is through simple breathing exercises.

Try the 4-7-8 technique:



(Repeat this sequence 4 to 8 times)

This technique could be used before going into bat, or before coming on to bowl to improve focus.

[Click here](#) for more information about mindfulness.

2) GRATITUDE

Indian batting legend Virat Kohli remains very enthusiastic about cricket, even after many years at the top of the game. We can develop a skill of gratitude, connecting with the positives around us with a quick technique.

At the end of a training session or match, write down three things that went well. Each time, try to write down different things.

Examples could be:

- Enjoying a drill
- Taking a great catch
- Taking a wicket
- Hitting a boundary
- Supporting a team mate
- Working well as a team

By doing this regularly after each training session or match, you will be creating a habit of seeing the positives in your cricket.



3) JOURNALLING

To help manage his nerves the night before a test match, former England cricket captain Alastair Cook used to write down what he was aiming to do the following day. Then, the next morning he looked back on it knowing he had a plan of action.

[Click here](#) to watch an interview with Alastair Cook on mental toughness (click to 4:10 to hear him speak about this technique).

Many professional players keep a journal as a way to plan and review, as well as to clear and focus their minds. Cook speaks of consistency as key to this method to promote positive mental wellbeing. To try this technique, you don't have to write a lot or in a certain way, just give it a go!

Here are some prompts to get you started:

- Write about your day
- Identify things you are grateful for
- Describe your emotions
- Describe a goal



**Kate Cross,
England Cricketer and Podcaster**

“For my mental health it’s about recognising what my triggers might be as early as possible so I can use my strategies that work best for me.

Sometimes it’s disrupted sleep, lack of appetite or just not ‘feeling right’. Once I have recognised something is a bit off then I go through my routines that help me get back to a good place. For me, this hopefully stops the bad days from becoming longer periods of time. And I have found that when I share these moments with the people I trust the most, they become slightly easier to deal with.

Talking is also a huge part of my mental health.

Finding someone you trust to be able to honestly speak about how you’re feeling in a given moment is invaluable. That might be a friend, family member or a professional.”

4) COMMUNICATION

Team sport gives us a chance to get support and to help others. This is part of what makes cricket so great.



During the 2019 Ashes series in England, Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh shared with his team mates that he was available for a walk and talk every morning of the tour. This not only brought people together, but it used several of the ways to wellbeing (being active, giving and connecting).

FURTHER SUPPORT

The [NHS website](#) can signpost you towards different services and organisations that can help. **Below are some other organisations that support young people:**

YOUNG MINDS

- Website with resources to help young people understand their mental health and tools to address poor mental health
- For more information, visit their website: youngminds.org.uk



CHILDLINE

- Helpline available to young people facing any worries
- Online resources to provide information and advice
- For more information, visit their website: childline.org.uk



MUSLIM YOUTH HELPLINE

- Faith and culturally sensitive support by phone, live chat, WhatsApp or email
- For more information, visit their website: myh.org.uk



SHOUT - TEXT 85258

- Free text messaging service available 24/7 to anyone in the UK
- Messages remain confidential and anonymous
- For more information, visit their website: giveusashout.org



CHARLIE WALLER TRUST

- Online resources on mental health for young people
- For more information, visit their website: charliewaller.org



If your life is at risk right now call 999 or go straight to A&E



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