

time to change leicester

let's end mental health discrimination

Someone you
know will have
a mental health
problem.



A guide to reduce stigma and improve mental wellbeing

Just because you can't see something physically wrong with someone doesn't mean they are fine. 1 in 4 people experience a mental health problem in any year. Let's change the way we all think and act about mental health.

Let's talk about mental health

What is mental health?

Good mental health is just as important as good physical health.

When we have good mental health, we can function well, socialise, enjoy activities, feel motivated and thrive.

When we have poor mental health or suffer from a mental illness, these things may become harder to do.

Mental illness affects the way people feel, the way they think and their subsequent behaviour. It affects relationships and the way people interact with others. Poor mental health can affect the ability to deal with the ups and downs of everyday life and to manage stress, as well as daily tasks.

Mental illness can differ greatly from person to person. For example, a person with depression may be unable to get out of bed in the morning and may be too unwell to function. Yet, the person sitting next to you at work or school maybe someone who struggled to get out bed. Just because you cannot see something physically wrong with a person doesn't mean that they are fine.

Some people are unwell for a very short period of time, whilst others may struggle for longer. Achieving good mental health is possible and for some managing their symptoms, reaching out for support is their way to recovery.

Although mental illness affects people individually, the stigma surrounding mental illness and subsequent discrimination affects everyone. For many, the stigma associated with poor mental health is as difficult to cope with as poor mental health itself.



Mental health in Leicester

In Leicester, we have higher levels of poor mental health than the national average.

Likewise, the number of people with long-term mental health problems is significantly higher than the average across England.

Mental health disorders in children and young people are also higher than England's average.

Challenging the stigma

The national Time to Change campaign

Time to Change is the biggest programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination across England. The campaign aims to improve public attitudes towards people with mental health problems by reducing discrimination, particularly within schools, workplaces, communities and social settings.

Time to Change Leicester

Time to Change Leicester is a year-long campaign which aims to challenge attitudes towards mental health by kick starting conversations about mental health across the city including, supporting people who are experiencing or have experienced mental health problems to run events and projects that challenge stigma in their communities.

Time to Change found that...

- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.
- Assumptions about mental illness, such as its effect on someone's behaviour can increase the likelihood that they will be singled out, or labelled as 'different'. This is mental health stigma.
- If you treat someone differently from how you treat others because of their mental health, this is mental health discrimination.
- People with poor mental health often experience stigma and discrimination that is worse than the illness itself.
- In the Time to Change Stigma Shout survey, 9 out of 10 people with mental health problems reported the negative impact of stigma and discrimination on their lives.



Be supportive

Time to Change aims to reduce negative attitudes towards mental illness and to normalise conversations surrounding mental health. Supportive friends, family and colleagues can play an important role in achieving good mental health.

Mental health disorders are as real as physical illnesses and it is important to remember that a person cannot just “snap out of it.” At times, poor mental health can get in the way of a person living their life.

But people are not their symptoms, illness or diagnosis. They have dreams, aspirations and talents like everyone else.

Just like physical illness, during a difficult period of mental ill-health, care and compassion can help a person to self-manage their condition, or can support someone to access the treatment they need.

Although you may not fully understand what someone is going through, approaching conversations with an open mind can make the difference between someone reaching out for support, or not.

Mental health awareness and educating one another reduces isolation faced by those struggling with their mental health.

Keeping in contact with those who have poor mental health, a simple hello or meeting for a coffee can help someone feel less alone and more supported. Small gestures can have a powerful impact!

10 things not to say to someone struggling with their mental health...

Sometimes we can say the wrong thing. Often this is unintentional and due to a lack of understanding or learnt stigma. This can make an individual feel worse.

1. **People like you always act like this**

Don't categorise, label or generalise. Do not blame every emotion or action on their mental illness.

2. **Drama queen/king/You are doing this for attention**

This is invalidating and hurtful to someone who is struggling with their mental health. Mental illness is not for attention and is not an act.

3. **You don't understand how much your illness hurts the people around you**

People with mental illness already feel bad for the impact they have on others, don't reinforce the guilt. Remember mental illness is not a choice.

4. **It's not that bad. It could be worse**

It's impossible to tell how much someone is suffering inside from looking at them from the outside.

5. **You have so much to be happy about, why can't you just focus on those things?**

Happiness and mental illness are not interchangeable. Being happy does not 'cure' mental illness.

People do not focus on negativity. Saying this to people could make them feel guilty and unappreciative and make their health worse.

6. **You are crazy and it's all in your head**

Mental illnesses are an illness of the mind; they are real, as are the thoughts and feelings that they cause.

7. **You are not even trying to get better**

Nobody wants to be ill. The person may not have the right help, support or tools. It doesn't mean that they aren't trying.

8. **I felt sad and worried yesterday, so I know how you feel**

Sad and depression are not interchangeable, neither is worrying and anxiety. If you haven't experienced mental illness, you can't possibly know what it feels like.

9. **There's someone worse off in the world than you**

Do not compare somebody's suffering to another's. Mental illness is an individual experience and not comparable to other circumstances. You wouldn't do this if it was a physical illness.

10. **You are an emo or a goth because you self-harm**

Stereotypes are both wrong and damaging. People self-harm due to overwhelming emotional distress. This is a sign that someone needs help, not judgement.

What you could say...

- I don't fully understand, but I can see that you are struggling & I want to support you.
- Do you want to talk about what you are going through?
- Is there anything that I can do to help you?
- Does anything make it more difficult or easier for you?



Ways you can help others...

- **Listen and be approachable** - show that you are interested and want to be supportive.
- **Don't judge or blame** - or tell the person how they should or shouldn't feel.
- **Treat the person as you would treat any other** - as themselves, not their illness or diagnosis.
- **Keep in contact** - talk to the person regularly and invite them to social occasions or events. Isolation makes mental illness more difficult to cope with.
- **Stay calm** - don't get angry or let your worry cause the conversation to turn into panic.
- **Don't force someone to get help** - unless they are an immediate risk to themselves or others, be patient and allow them to reach out. You can sign post to services if they request.
- **Educate yourself** - learn more about their illness, how it affects them and what you can do.
- **Keep confidentiality** - don't damage a person's trust. It is likely that it took a lot of courage for them to tell you. Respect their wishes as to who they tell and who they don't.
- **Be realistic about what you can do** - don't make promises you can't keep. Ensure that you make time for your own wellbeing and don't try to 'fix' a person's illness.
- **Ask what you can do to help** - sometimes the best person to ask is the person who is experiencing it. Asking what you can do shows that you care and helps to provide suitable support.

What is self-stigma?

Self-stigma is a result of negative perceptions surrounding poor mental health that society has created. Comments people make and the discrimination faced by those with mental illness can prevent them from seeking the help they need. People feel bad for their poor mental health and for not being okay. This is wrong. Everyone with poor mental health deserves support and shouldn't be made to feel blamed for their illness.

It's okay to not be okay

Accepting when you are unwell can be an important step in getting better. At times, it is easy to think I'm not that unwell or people will think that I'm making a big deal over nothing.

It is important to recognise the signs that you're not okay, and take steps to look for help. If you break an arm, you need a plaster cast. If you have a sports injury, you may need physiotherapy. Why is mental illness any different?

Psychological therapies, medication if appropriate, holistic approaches or resources to help ones' self can all treat mental ill-health.

Being open and building a support network can help a person to improve their emotional resilience, and increase long-term mental well-being, irrespective of how much they are struggling.

How can I improve or maintain positive mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing is important not only for those with poor mental health, but for us all. Here are some examples of how we can all protect our mental health.

- Take time out for yourself
- Build positive relationships and reduce bad ones
- Look after your physical health
- Try to have a routine
- Access help and support
- Live in the present moment
- Practice mindfulness - pay more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you
- Identify and use your individual strengths
- Practice gratitude
- Monitor your thoughts and emotions
- Improve your work-life balance
- Focus on the things you can change
- Appreciate the simple things



Improving the here and now

- Soaking in the bath
- Planning your career development
- Focusing on the moment
- Going to the cinema or theatre
- Listening to music
- Walking outdoors
- Meet a friend for coffee
- Relaxing
- Exercise
- Thinking about past trips
- Listening to others
- Reading magazines or newspapers
- Practising hobbies (arts and crafts, stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
- Recalling positive memories

The Five Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing is a recognised approach to improve mental wellbeing. This is an individual experience, as what works for one may not work for another

1. Connect

Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours:

Have face-to-face conversations

Put five minutes aside to find out how someone is really feeling

Ask someone how their weekend was

Speak to someone new

2. Be active

Being active is great for your physical health and evidence shows that it can also improve your mental wellbeing, you could:

Walk instead of taking a bus

Take the stairs instead of the lift

Do some regular exercise

Participate in a social sport

Go for a jog in a park

3. Take notice

Being aware of what is taking place around you. This directly enhances mental well-being:

Declutter your space

Focus on the weather or seasons

Eat lunch in a new place

Focus on exactly what you're doing

4. Keep learning

Learning new skills can give a sense of achievement and new confidence:

Sign up for a new class

Learn arts and crafts

Read a book

Rediscover an old interest

5. Give

Small acts whether it's a smile or a kind word or larger acts, such as volunteering can improve mental wellbeing:

Volunteer for a local charity or club

Thank someone

Smile at someone and say hello

Do something nice for a friend

**time to change
leicester**

let's end mental health discrimination

Community Grant Scheme 2017-2018

**Do you have an idea for an event
that will improve the way we talk
about mental health?**



**Grants up to £1,500 are available for community groups
and individuals who are changing attitudes and behaviour
towards mental health in their communities.**

What is the community grants scheme?

The community grants scheme has £50,000 in total to award to community groups and individuals who are planning activities and events, which will establish meaningful and open conversations about mental health with others in different communities across the city.

Small grants up to £500 will be awarded for one-off events, and grants up to £1,500 will be awarded for larger projects that take place over a number of months.

What type of projects will be funded?

The scheme will fund local community-led projects that:

- Empower people with mental health problems to speak out about their experiences.
- Change behaviour and attitudes towards people with mental health problems.
- Reduce the levels of reported stigma and discrimination in the city.

Grants will not pay for equipment, training or salary costs, and all activity must be public facing.

How to apply

Applicants must be over 18 years of age, live in Leicester and show commitment to the three bullet points above. For further information and to apply for a grant visit: leicester.gov.uk/mentalhealth





Get involved!

Become a Time to Change Champion

A time to change champion is a person who has experience of living with mental illness who campaigns to end mental health discrimination in local communities.

Champions use their own experience to encourage open conversations surrounding mental health. Through challenging negative perceptions and discrimination towards mental illness, champions can reduce stigma. Becoming a champion provides an opportunity to meet like-minded people and work together to change attitudes and behaviour.

If you are someone who could use your personal experience to raise awareness and support others, and want to be involved in activities or events to enact positive change, we would like to hear from you!

For more information visit
leicester.gov.uk/mentalhealth

 /leicestercitycouncil
 @Leicester_News
#endstigma

time to change
leicester
let's end mental health discrimination

Our
healthy
city


Leicester
City Council

Useful resources, links and advice

General mental health sites

- Lampadvocacy.co.uk
- Richmondfellowship.org.uk
- Mind.org.uk
- Elefriends.org.uk
- Time-to-change.org.uk
- Headstogether.org.uk/Mental/Health
- Rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice
- Themix.org.uk/get-support
- Sane.org.uk
- Samaritans.org
- Bullying.co.uk

Crisis phone lines

- Samaritans **116 123**
- Emergency services **999**

Young people and children

- Childline.org.uk
- Studentminds.org.uk
- Youngminds.org.uk

Anxiety support

- Anxietyuk.org.uk

Eating Disorder support

- Beateatingdisorders.org.uk

Later life support

- Ageuk.org.uk