



Essex Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust

Your Life, Your Health



Welcome to our Your Life, Your Health booklet which contains helpful information on improving your physical health

Before we go into detail about a few major lifestyle changes you can make, here are some general health and wellbeing websites to help you look after yourself.

NHS Choices for national help and advice www.nhs.uk

ACE (Anglian Community Enterprise) for Essex-wide help and advice www.ancelifestyle.org

Change4life www.nhs.uk/change4life

ECC (Essex County Council) for Essex-wide help and advice www.livingwellessex.org/health-and-well-being or download their mobile app [Lifestyle Essex](#)

One You campaign www.nhs.uk/oneyou

Provide for general wellbeing www.essexlifestyleservice.org.uk

Provide for health and social care services www.provide.org.uk

Essex is a great county to explore, enjoy and experience, go to www.visitessex.com/what-to-do for fun days out

Remember to let your Care Co-ordinator/Lead Practitioner know about the changes you are making.

Why we have written Your Life, Your Health

You have been given this booklet as you are currently using our services to improve your mental health. Mental health issues can be a large part of your life, but they shouldn't define it and affect your physical health.

Physical and mental wellbeing go hand in hand but either one or both can get overlooked at different times during our lives. It's important to look after both as consistently as possible.

Your lifestyle could already have been unhealthy before your mental health problems - eating too much food or the wrong kinds of food, smoking, substance misuse (including alcohol) or lack of exercise.

As you became mentally unwell, these habits may have acted as a comfort. However, it's in your best interest to keep an eye on your physical health and your habits as medications we prescribe may cause side effects and cutting back on smoking or drinking, for example, can help lessen these side effects.

Earlier in your care, you and your Care Co-ordinator will have met to discuss your recovery. You will have been given a **My Care My Recovery: Personal Care and Recovery Plan** to complete either by yourself or with your Care Co-ordinator, whichever way you preferred. Recovery is for everybody and should include improving your life in all areas.

Some of the questions in the **My Care My Recovery Plan** asked you to think about ways to improve your life and wellbeing along with whose help you would need in doing this.

The questions that relate to this booklet include:

Q8 - Who supports me in my care (family, friends, carers)?

Q9 - What does staying well mean to me (lifestyle, interests, hopes for future)?



Q10 - What do I want to do different in my life (physical health, financial situation)?

Q12 - This is how I want to feel, these are my goals (personal care, wellbeing, work, social, spiritual, friends and family)?

These questions, as well as the others in the Plan, work together for a holistic approach to your mental health recovery and we'd now like to look at these healthy lifestyle aspects with you.

By improving your lifestyle, you can improve your mental and physical wellbeing in both the short and long term. It's well documented that simple (and sometimes free) things like walking in a local park can improve your mental and physical wellbeing.

Although we think that a drink (or three) will help us unwind, we can lose track of how much and how often we drink so it has the opposite effect as well as serious health consequences. Smoking is thought to be a calming thing to do but, if we stop and think about it, not smoking is more calming as we're not craving for something and getting anxious if we can't have a cigarette when we want.

Eating well and a healthy lifestyle helps prevent diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease. More often than not, these diseases are only diagnosed when the damage has been done and your health and way of life is compromised.

Your GP and Care Co-ordinator/Lead Practitioner can carry out regular checks on your blood pressure, cholesterol, weight and blood sugar levels. They can also offer lifestyle advice to help.

By looking after yourself you'll notice:

- better physical health;
- improved sleep;
- improved self esteem;
- healthier lifestyle;
- improved social life;
- improved quality of life.

Keeping an eye on your physical health is especially important if you take mental health medication as some of these (such as antipsychotics or mood stabilisers) can cause sleep problems, sexual health problems and may make you want to eat more. Your Care Co-ordinator will review your medications regularly but please talk to him/her or your GP if you feel they should be reviewed more often.

This booklet helps you get started on your journey to a healthier lifestyle. It is part of our commitment to your physical and mental wellbeing. Talk to your Care Co-ordinator/Lead Practitioner if you are making changes so they can support you and review your medications where necessary.

Here are some questions to ask yourself before you begin any lifestyle changes:

- What's important to me?
- Am I ready to get healthier?
- What's my goal?
- What makes me feel good and what doesn't?
- How healthy do I think my lifestyle is?
- Am I being realistic?
- What's my reward?

In the following pages, we'll begin by briefly mentioning some habits that should be eliminated or controlled - smoking, substance misuse (including drinking), weight management and exercise. These are the four main lifestyle changes that can make a huge difference to your health and wellbeing.

You'll find space to write your goals to help you towards a healthier lifestyle, along with a small 'diary' to record what you're doing and whether you've noticed any difference.

At the back, we have a number of useful websites relating to various physical conditions which may be of help to you.

Physical and mental health are closely linked and it's important to look after them both.



Smoking

Why I want to quit smoking:

Lots of smokers want to quit, but it can be especially difficult if you have a mental health condition. We all know smoking causes serious physical health problems. Quitting will have a huge impact on your wellbeing by reducing the risk of developing smoking related illnesses such as heart disease, cancer and stroke. More immediately, your breathing and general fitness improves, your skin looks better and your sense of taste returns. It will also benefit your family's health as they won't be breathing in second hand smoke.

STATISTIC: In England, 45 cardiovascular disease deaths a day are due to smoking. Within a year of quitting, the risk of heart attack is halved. Within two years, the risk of stroke is reduced to that of a non-smoker.

Quitting smoking is really good for your finances - you could save around £250 a month.

Contact your Care Co-ordinator as changes to your medications may need to be made.

Go to Page 22 for websites to help you quit.

Substance misuse including drinking

Why I want to give up drugs and/or alcohol:

Substance misuse includes taking legal substances (such as alcohol) or illegal substances (opiates such as heroin; stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines; and cannabis).

This also includes prescription drugs which, although prescribed by professionals, can be misused.

FACT: Substance misuse can cause or increase symptoms of mental health conditions.

FACT: Mental health conditions may lead to abusing substances to block out the symptoms or side effects of medication.

Substance misuse is bad for your mental and physical wellbeing. It can cause liver problems, heart disease and cancers.

Substance misuse can take priority over your life and your ability to ensure your physical wellbeing by eating properly etc.

Any medications you are taking can be affected by substance misuse or alcohol.

Your senses and reflexes are adversely affected and you should not drive while under the influence.



It's best to tell your Care Co-ordinator if you take drugs, drink alcohol or are misusing prescription medications.

It's easy to slip into the habit of drinking too much alcohol on a regular basis. Cutting down or quitting alcohol has immediate benefits: reduced risk of ill health; more energy; faster reflexes, and more money in your pocket.

You need to be aware of how much you drink both at home and when socialising. One serving of wine at home can be a lot bigger than one serving in the bars where drinks are measured a lot more accurately.

Talk to your Care Co-ordinator or GP if you are worried about how much you drink or have substance misuse concerns.

They will work with you to help you stop safely and with as few side effects as possible.

They are there to support you.

Go to Page 20 for websites to help you quit.

Weight management, exercise and diabetes

Some medications you take may have side effects such as encouraging weight gain or increasing the risk of developing diabetes or heart disease. Talk to your Care Co-ordinator if you think your medications are making you gain weight or if you have any concerns about their side effects.

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that happens when a person's blood sugar (glucose) level is too high because the body can't use it properly.

A healthy body weight is important but must be balanced with a good diet and an active lifestyle. A good diet is an important step towards good health and essential for a full and active life. It reduces the risk of getting a large number of diseases.

Being over, or under, weight can have serious consequences and put a strain on your body. Even if your weight is not a problem, having a badly balanced diet puts your overall health at risk.

Eating the right foods and adjusting your diet can make a major difference to your mental and physical health. Reduce the amount of salt, sugar and bad fats in your diet. Good nutrition improves mood and general well-being. It's important to eat regularly and include the main food groups: starchy food (such as rice, potatoes, bread); fruit and vegetables; meat; fish; eggs; beans; limited dairy; limited fatty and sugary foods.

Exercise is good for your overall health and wellbeing. It can help reduce the effects of anxiety and depression.

Whatever your fitness level, there's an exercise for you. It can be walking in the park, team sports, lifting weights, dancing or light exercises designed specifically for those with health problems.

NHS Choices has a 12 week weight loss plan and other useful information www.nhs.uk and search lose weight.

www.activeessex.org is a great place to find information if you'd like to get involved in activities.

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk and search fitness. has information on gym free workouts, get fit for free, stretching, balance etc.

Get back into walking with free walks. For nationwide walks, go to www.walkingforhealth.org.uk For Chelmsford walks, visit www.chelmsford.gov.uk and search heart and sole or telephone 01245 606569.

For running, there are free organised 5K park runs in Essex and throughout the UK www.parkrun.org.uk

If you're interested in cycling, visit www.essex.gov.uk and search cycling.

www.livingwellessex.org is packed with information on a balanced diet, eating when unwell, suggestions on snacks and much more.

www.nhs.uk/change4life has great information on healthy eating, finding local activities and tips on getting started.



My personal goals and commitments

These pages are for you, but please include friends and family if you would like their help and support. Your Care Co-ordinator is there to support you too and help you get started.

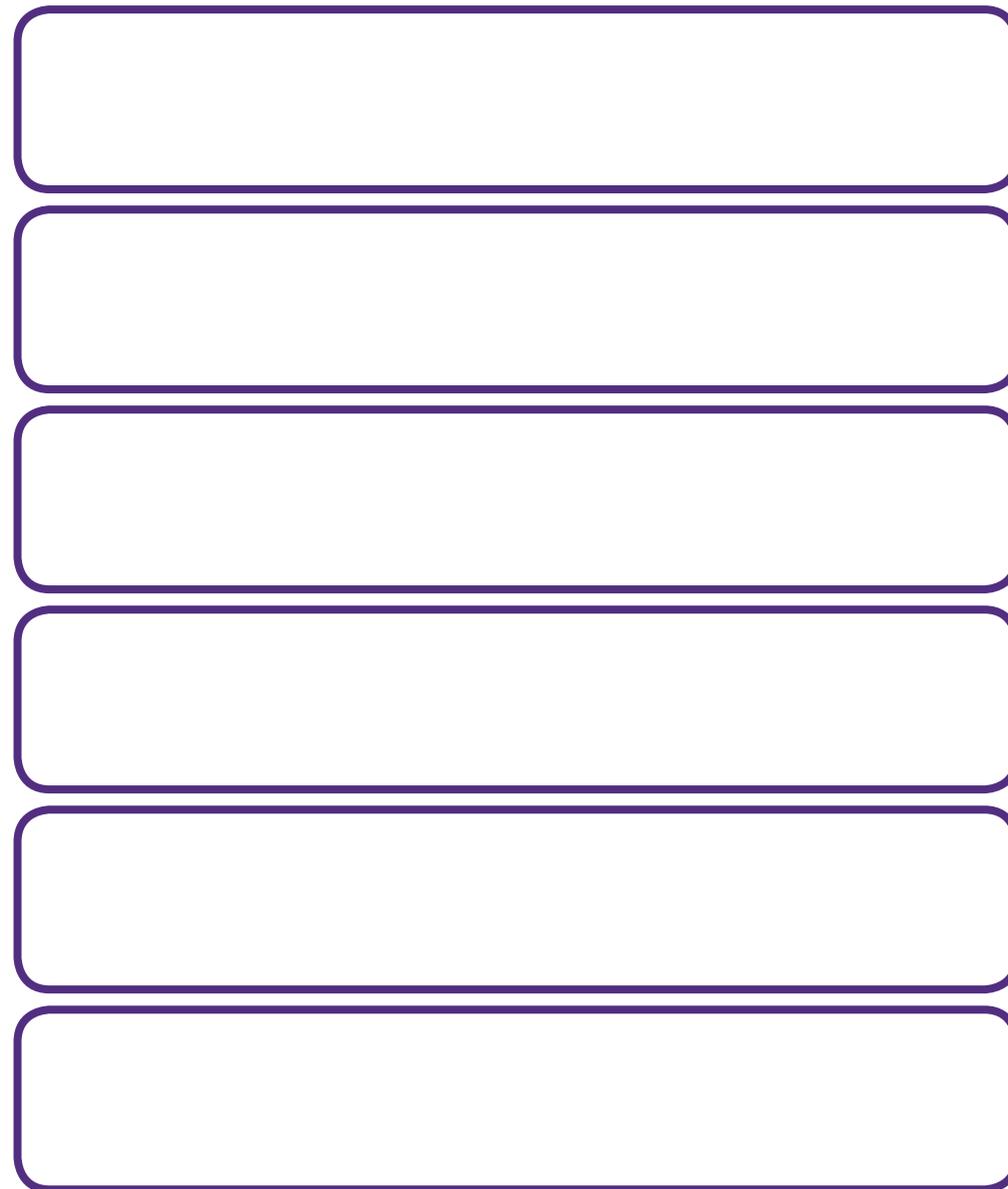
You may want to start a diary to note how you are getting on, your thoughts and your feelings. It's helpful to write things down so you can see what works, what doesn't and what sabotages your good intentions.

You may want to write down what you actually smoke/drink/eat/exercise as a 'before' and 'after'. This will show you how much you've progressed.

There's a diary beginning on Page 14 to help you chart your progress during the first few weeks.

Remember, if you slip up a few times don't give up - stay positive and focused.

What I want to achieve: Healthy goals



Six empty rounded rectangular boxes stacked vertically, intended for writing healthy goals.



It's time to start

Week one

Mon	
Tue	
Wed	
Thur	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	

Week two

Mon	
Tue	
Wed	
Thur	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	



Week three

Mon	
Tue	
Wed	
Thur	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	

Week four

Mon	
Tue	
Wed	
Thur	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	



Have I noticed any difference

End of week one

End of week two

End of week three

End of week four

Helpful websites

Having a long term physical illness can be challenging, but when you also have a mental health condition it can be overwhelming. It's important not to neglect either.

Here are some helpful websites. You can always ask your GP, Pharmacy or Care Co-ordinator if you have any questions.

Arthritis

www.nhs.uk/Conditions

Asthma

www.blf.org.uk

Autism

www.autism-anglia.org.uk

www.ecdp.org.uk

www.aspergers.org.uk

Blood pressure

If you're worried about your blood pressure visit your GP

www.bhf.org.uk

Cancer

www.cancerresearch.org.uk

www.macmillan.org.uk

Diabetes

www.diabetes.org.uk

www.diabetes.co.uk

Drinking

www.drinksometer.com gives feedback on your drinking habits

www.dontbottleitup.org.uk works out

your risk level from drinking

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/drinking

www.livingwellessex.org

www.drinkaware.co.uk

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Drinkline 0800 917 8282

Drugs

Your GP is a good place to start, especially if you need help with prescription medicines addiction or 'legal highs'. As of May 2016, 'legal highs' are called psychoactive substances and no longer legal.

www.nhs.uk

www.livingwellessex.org

www.openroad.org.uk

www.talktofrank.com

Heart disease

ACE and Provide offer free health checks to those aged 40-72

www.bhf.org.uk

HIV and AIDS

www.hivaware.org.uk

www.tht.org.uk



Patient Experience Team

If you have any concerns or need advice about accessing NHS services, you can speak in confidence to the Patient Experience Team on [0800 085 7935](tel:08000857935) or you can email epunft.pals@nhs.net

This leaflet can be produced in large print, CD, Braille and other languages on request.



Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust regards equality and diversity as integral to the way it works. Our staff will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and no one is discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

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