

WELL-BEING

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Well-being – feeling well in body and soul – may be about feeling satisfied and relaxed after a good meal, a walk, a meeting with a close friend. It may be the feeling of relief when a pain releases its grip, when you can sleep again, when a wound begins to heal. Well-being can also be about feeling alive, blossoming and feeling present. It can be about being able to manage and control your life and about life having meaning.

A lack of well-being may be due to a number of issues. This could be illness, difficulties, discomfort, low self-esteem and any other source of strain, whether at work or at home. Common causes of stress and a reduced feeling of well-being are excessive demands and a lack of opportunities to influence your life.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to put your finger on why you are not feeling well. The reason then may be negative events and burdens from the past. Things that you have not been able to let go of and that create an internal stress.

HOW ARE THINGS FOR YOU?

What is your life like? What makes you feel good, what gives you joy and pleasure? Is there anything that stresses you, takes away your strength and energy, reduces your well-being?

It is important not to compare yourself with other people. We all differ in how ‘hardy’ we are, and we all have different vulnerabilities in life. What may be felt as a minor stress for one person could be the thing that breaks the camel’s back for another.





FINDING SOLUTIONS

People under strain and stress are prone to ‘tunnel vision’, where they focus their attention on the things that are problematical. This makes it easy to get stuck in old thought processes. One way to move on may be to share thoughts and to consider and reflect with others on how you are feeling. Once you can see a bigger and more nuanced picture, new opportunities and solutions may appear.

When the strain is difficult to cope with and the stress unrelenting or pronounced, you may need professional help to move on.

A SIMPLE METHOD

Going for a walk or run, or doing some other form of exercise, will let you wind down and reduce the stress reaction, anxiety or depression. It will also improve your sleep.

Having difficulty getting started? Take a small step towards change and adapt it according to your energy level. If you take on too much at the start, it is easy to lose the desire, so increase things gradually instead.

A simple method of reducing stress

Times of strain and stress activate our body in different ways. The purpose is to enable us to react quickly with some physical activity, such as fighting or fleeing from whatever is threatening us. As the stress reaction involves preparing for physical activity, it is a good idea to give the body what it has prepared for – i.e. exercise. Going for a walk or run, or doing some other form of exercise, will let you wind down and reduce your stress, anxiety or depression, while at the same time improving your sleep.

Are you unused to exercise, or do you find it hard to get started? Take a small step towards change and adapt it according to your energy level. Once you have started, you can increase things gradually. If you find it difficult and need help, you can obtain a prescription for physical activity at your medical centre.

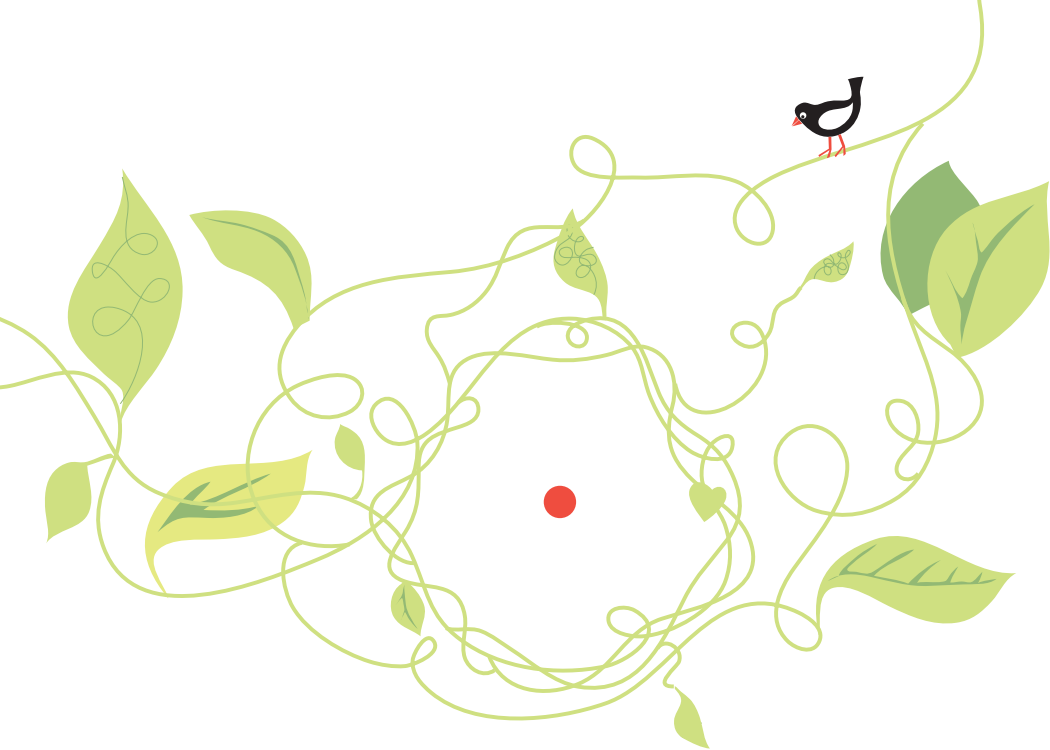


THAT SMALL STEP TOWARDS A CHANGE

Sometimes, we need changes of some kind in order to feel better in the long term. It may be a question of reviewing your burdens, starting to say 'no' and setting boundaries. Consider whether your own demands, and those of others, are reasonable.

If you need to change something, it is a good idea to think in small steps. Steps that involve a small change, but at the same time are small enough to manage.

When you try new steps, allow yourself to fail. Nobody is perfect. Accept how things turned out, consider whether you could do something differently and then put your energy into further steps in the desired direction.



LIVING IN THE HERE AND NOW!

It is good to consider and reflect on things. It is one way of sorting out, putting words to and dealing with the way things are and have been.

Sometimes, however, thoughts mainly involve ruminating over what has happened, or anxious thoughts about the future. This saps energy and, after all, changes nothing. It is not easy to release thoughts, but it is something you can teach yourself. It is about training your attention to focus consciously on something other than your thoughts. It is about the things that are in the here and now, that you are experiencing with your body and senses: breathing, the ground beneath your feet, smells, sounds, tastes...

You can find out more about attention training/mindfulness at www.1177.se under the Hälsa och Livsstil (Health and Lifestyle) subject.



ADDING PLEASURE AND JOY

What gives you pleasure and joy and helps you relax?
Can you do more of this? Sometimes you need a
reminder of what makes you feel good. It is easy to
forget the positive when everyday life is tough.

One way of boosting what feels good about life is
to recall, in the evening before you go to sleep, three
good experiences from the day. These do not have to
be major things; it may be the good weather, a smile, a
good meal...



MORE INFORMATION ON WELL-BEING

www.1177.se Hälsa och Livsstil
(Health and Lifestyle) subject page

For support and advice, contact your medical centre
or the primary care health unit.