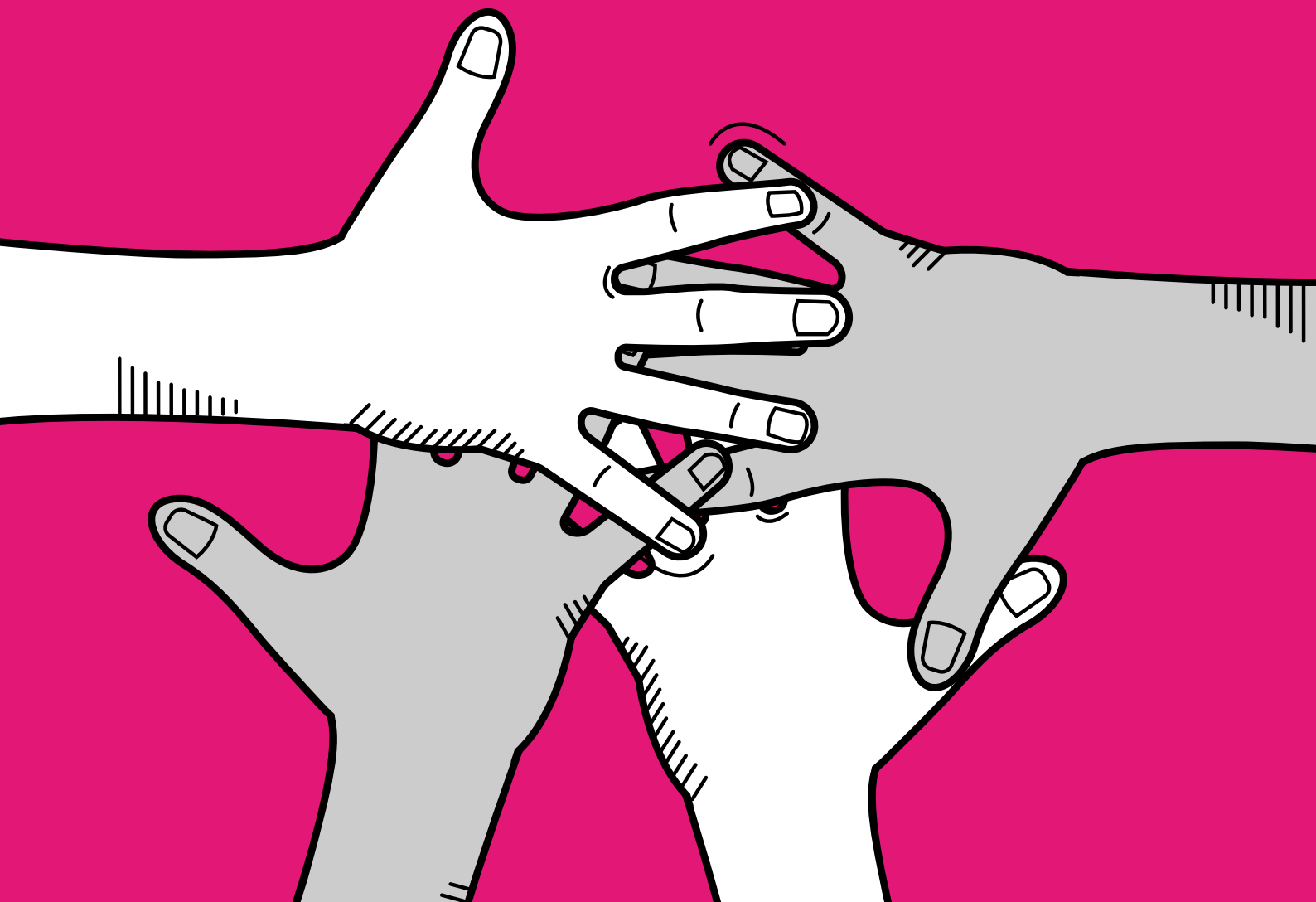
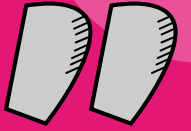


# Communities Can: A Toolkit For Tackling Mental Health Stigma





Thank you for using this pack. Across Scotland there is a social movement for change and by reading this pack you are part of it – how exciting! The social movement is always growing and it's made up of people like you who want to see attitudes and behaviours about mental health in Scotland become more accepting, understanding and tolerant. Tackling mental health stigma and discrimination is a team effort, so we're glad you want to get involved. – **See Me**



## Welcome

### What is this pack?

This pack contains information, session plans, tools and resources which can be used to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. It has been made by people with lived experience of mental health problems and See Me.

### How do I use it?

This pack is split in to two sections. The first section has information about stigma and discrimination which is useful to know if you are running a session or using the tools. The second section contains all of the tools you'll need for working with your community. There is an appendix section at the back with all of the printable resources.

### Who is it for?

This pack is for everyone! It is designed to be used by community members who are passionate about ending mental health discrimination. The tools can be used to start conversations about mental health. You can use this pack to explore how to collectively tackle stigma and discrimination within your own community.

### What is a community?

A community is anywhere people live, work or connect with others. It could be a geographical community, like where you live, or it could be a community of interest which brings people together through a shared passion or aspiration.



# Our Approach



## Lived

The magic ingredient in creating real, lasting behaviour change is lived experience.

Lived experience is the first hand understanding of those who have faced mental health stigma and discrimination.

Those of us with mental health problems have powerful and valuable knowledge when it comes to the issues, solutions and future of creating a stigma and discrimination free Scotland.

By including people with lived experience when using this pack you are ensuring that a wide range of voices can be heard.

You are also supporting a movement which only thrives when it is informed by and driven by the people it affects most.



## Experience

See Me is Scotland's national programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination. Fundamentally, change is what See Me is all about. We challenge stigma and discrimination at its roots – wherever people experience it – at work, through health and social care, in education, at home or in local communities.

Our message is simple – we ALL have mental health. We understand that our mental health can play a huge part in dictating the quality of our lives. People with mental health problems should be able to participate in society without fear of exclusion or discrimination.

Our drive for change is led by a growing social movement. The movement is open to all and lived experience voices inform all of See Me's activity.

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# **Section One:**

## **Information about mental health stigma and discrimination**

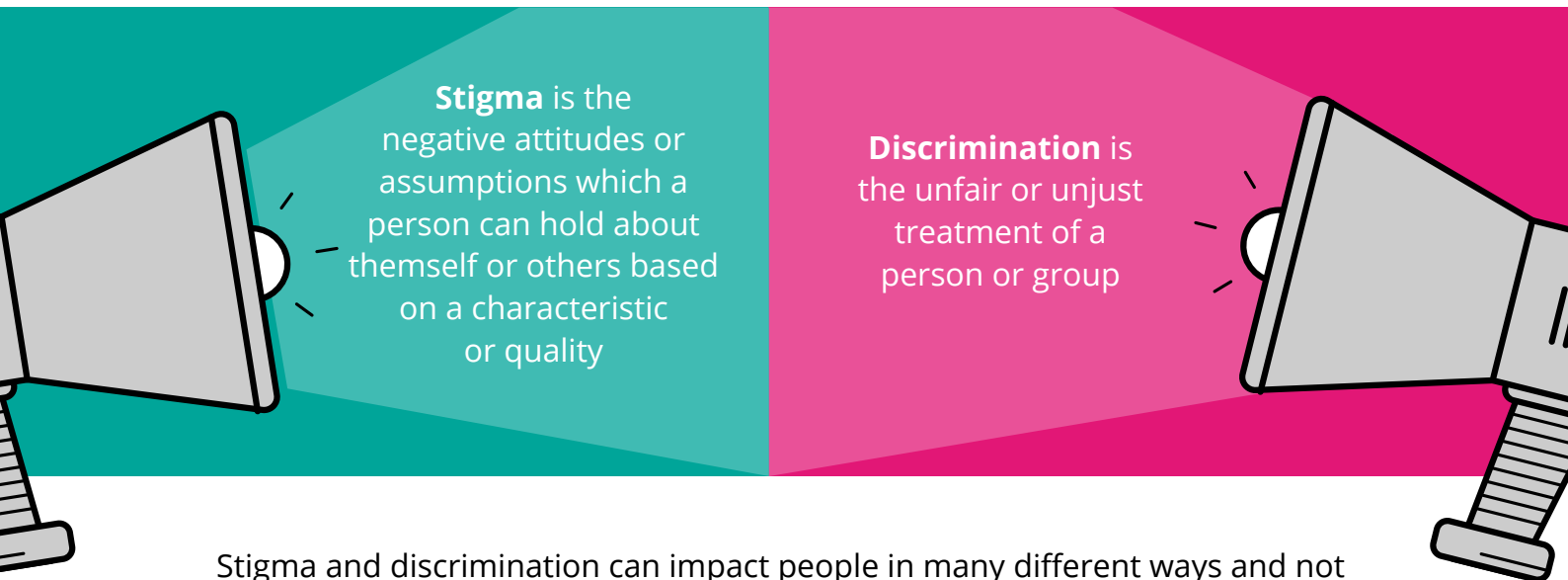


# What is stigma and discrimination?

**9/10**  
people who experience  
a mental health  
problem have  
faced stigma and  
discrimination

Mental health problems can be hard for anyone to cope with but it can be made worse by having to deal with stigma and discrimination. It's not always easy to know what counts as stigma or discrimination or even to tell the difference between them both.

Here are some definitions to get you started:



Stigma and discrimination can impact people in many different ways and not everyone will experience it the same.

Over the page are some definitions from people who have lived experience of mental health problems.

## Stigma

"I never used to talk about struggling with my mental health. If anyone asked me how I was, I always said: "I'm fine" even when I was feeling terrible. I still do it sometimes, it's hard to break a lifetime habit." **Abi**

"One of the hardest things about having a mental illness is when you're open enough to talk about it and people hold you at arms length. They see you differently and your diagnosis becomes your label." **Kat**

"It's being judged by people when you tell them you have a mental health condition." **Liam**

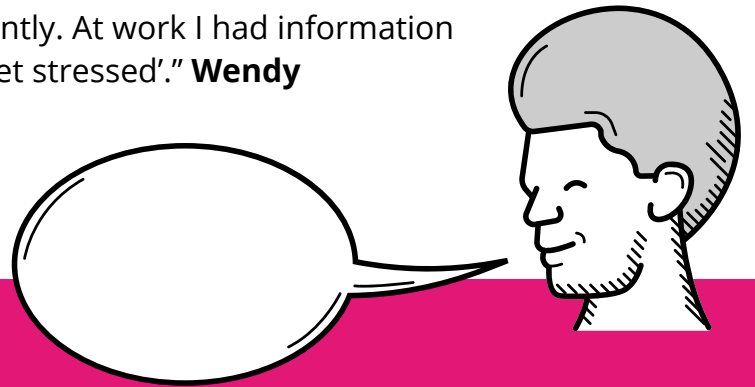


## Discrimination

"Discrimination is placing barriers to achieving what everyone else is allowed to. Denying someone the opportunity to flourish in life, friendships, relationships, career and their place within their own community." **John**

"It's being excluded from normal things because of your mental health like work and family events." **Liam**

"Discrimination is being treated differently. At work I had information withheld from me to ensure 'I didn't get stressed'." **Wendy**



### How are the two related?

A simple way to understand both stigma and discrimination is that stigma is the negative attitudes and assumptions which people hold, whereas discrimination is the actions based on those negative attitudes and assumptions. So, you could think of stigma as **thoughts** and discrimination as **actions**.

Both of these are linked, so in order to tackle discrimination around mental health we need to change not just how people act but how they think!

# Stigma

Stigma is a broad term which covers lots of different definitions. Being aware of the different types of stigma can make it easier to spot. It can also make it easier to have conversations which challenge stigmatising attitudes.

Stigma can be used as an umbrella term for the following:

## **Public stigma:**

The negative attitudes and beliefs held by the general public towards people with mental health problems.

## **Self-stigma:**

Self-stigma happens when people who experience mental health problems internalise public stigma

## **Stigma by association:**

Someone connected to people with mental health problems, e.g family member or friend who experience stigma as a result of this association

## **Structural stigma:**

When the rules, policies, and practices of social institutions restrict the rights of, and opportunities for, people with mental health problems



## What Are The Effects Of Mental Health Stigma And Discrimination?

For those who live with mental health problems, experiencing stigma and discrimination can have a profound impact on day to day life.



It can be difficult to talk about your own mental illness and when people do speak out they often feel that they are let down and misunderstood by family, friends, health professionals and work colleagues. Whilst recognising that this is often unintentional, it can have a big effect on being able to deal with your illness.

Stigma and discrimination can make you feel like you don't matter and it can be frustrating to think that others view a mental health diagnosis as a more important part of your personality than the person themselves. The impact that the actions and reactions of others have on an individual should not be underestimated. Stigma and discrimination can leave you feeling isolated and can affect your day to day life. The list below will give an idea of some of the most common issues people face.

### **Common issues that people face:**

- Difficulty in finding and keeping a job.
- Isolation from friends, family and daily activities.
- Harder to stay in stable long-term relationship.
- Fear to open up to professionals, family and friends about mental ill health.
- Anxiety about health due to overwhelming belief of not being listened to.
- Avoiding speaking to doctors about mental health concerns which means treatment and care is not given. This can also have a knock on effect on recovery.
- Making excuses for not going out places due to the fear of telling people about feeling unwell mentally.
- Low self esteem from believing the stereotypes portrayed about mental ill health.
- Physical health can be affected too.
- Negative experiences make it harder to ask for help.



It is important to note that not everyone who has a mental health problem will have similar experiences of stigma and discrimination. There are a number of factors which can impact the way someone is affected such as employment status, race, gender and sexuality.

---

## Stigma and Discrimination In Communities

Communities are an important part of everyday life. For many, feeling part of a community is an essential way of maintaining good mental health. For those of us with mental health problems however, stigmatising attitudes and discriminatory behaviour can create barriers and make this difficult.

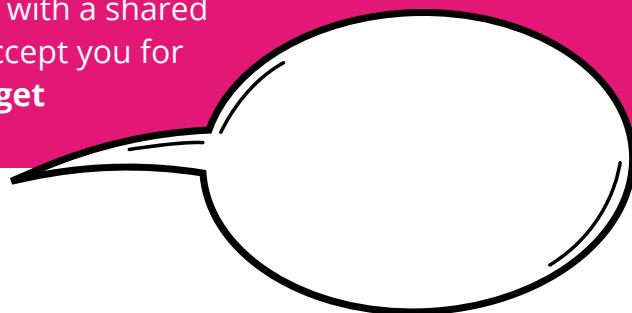
We want to help create communities who are informed, supportive and aware of mental health so that anyone who may experience mental health problems feels able to speak out and seek help.

**Below some See Me volunteers tell us why having a community is so important to them.**

“For me, a community is a safety net. In whatever form your community might be, without it, people lose their sense of identity. We all need people around us who share our ideas and motivations. Even in the loneliest of times, being able to reach out to someone in your community can be a lifeline.” **Davey**

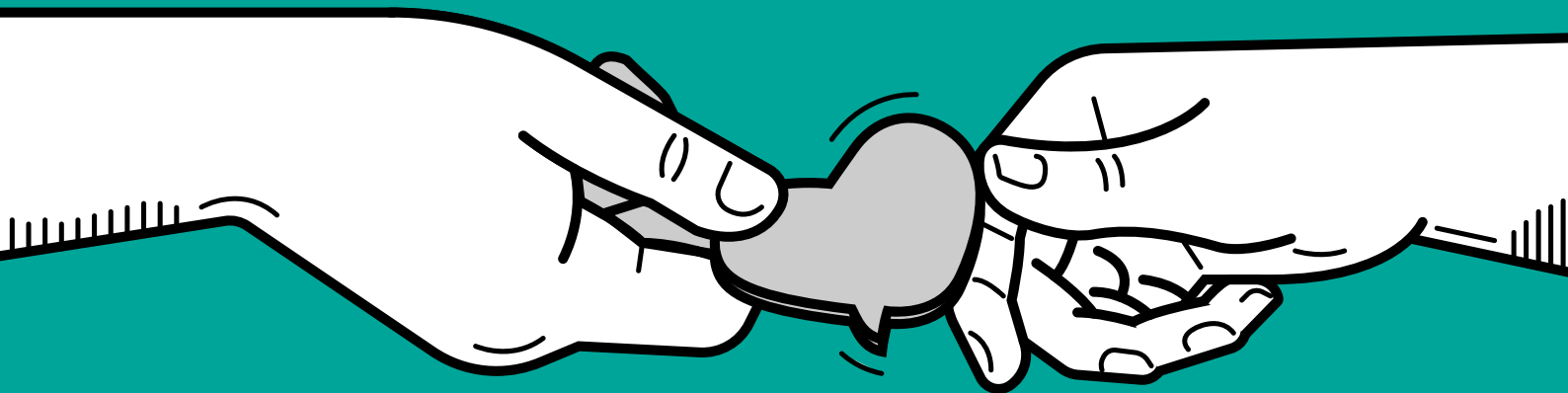
“The community is what makes things happen, without a supportive community it would be hard to get things up and running. Communities come together for events and these events are great as it shows where we live has great support which drives you to do more.” **Des**

“Communities are enormous but I think of them as a group of people who interact and have shared needs, wants or interests. They’re important because they tie people together with a shared experience. A positive community should accept you for who you are and not be judgemental.” **Bridget**



# Section Two:

## Tackling stigma and discrimination in your community



# Can We Change Communities?

**Change happens because of people like you.** We know stigma and discrimination is devastating for those who experience mental health problems. Fortunately, it's possible to do something about it.

Social change is something which happens gradually over time. As a community we can help promote change by bringing people together to have conversations, share experiences and challenge assumptions.

There are three key approaches used to reduce stigma in communities; social contact, protest and education. These approaches can be used individually but the real benefit happens when they are used together!

# 1

## Social Contact

This is when conversations happen between those who experience mental health problems and those who do not. Social contact can also extend to include listening to, watching or reading about someone's experiences. Social contact works because it focuses on the people, not the labels of mental illness. This means that negative assumptions and attitudes are challenged, in turn reducing stigma.

# 2

## Education

Education seeks to replace stigmatising attitudes with accurate representations of mental health. Through providing facts and dispelling myths about mental health, people are better able to understand and support others with mental health problems.



# 3

## Protest

A protest is a statement or action which shows disapproval or objection. Not all forms of protesting involve big groups of people and signs! It is possible to make small, individual protests and still have an impact. Things like boycotting, petitions and speaking out against inequalities are all ways to protest. Protests work because they get lots of people rallied around a shared cause and put pressure on decision makers or organisers to change.

# Exploring Stigma & Discrimination

These sessions and resources can be used to start group discussions about stigma and discrimination. They aim to help groups understand how stigma and discrimination impacts both individuals and communities.

## How To Use This Section

You can work through these exercises in any order and adapt them to suit your community. There are printable versions of resources in the appendix on page 40.



## Discussing Stigma



**Materials:** Prompt Questions

### Instructions:

Ask the group if they know what the word “stigma” means. Lead a whole group discussion on the definition of stigma and the relationship between stigma and stereotyping. (20 mins discussion)

### Prompt Questions:

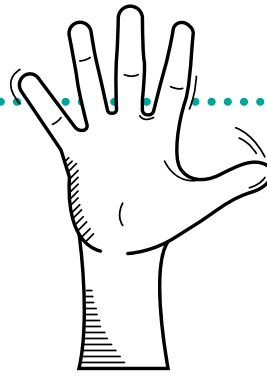
- What are some of the negative things you have heard about people with mental health conditions (Responses may include: violence; crazy)
- Why do you think people with mental health conditions are stigmatized? (Possible answers include: they are weird/different; people don't really know the facts)
- Can you think of any other health conditions or social issues that have been stigmatised throughout history? (Possible answers include: homosexuality; leprosy; AIDS; unwed motherhood; divorce)
- What kinds of factors have contributed to changing public attitudes around some of these conditions or issues? (Possible answers include: education; research; legislation)
- What do you think influences perceptions about mental health? (Possible answers include: the media – films, news, newspaper headlines and stories that associate people with violence)
- How do you think stigma affects the lives of people with mental health conditions? (Possible answers include: people decide not to get help and treatment even though they would benefit from it; it makes them unhappy; they may not be able to get a job or find housing)



**Stigma definition:**

**“Stigma is the negative attitudes or assumptions which a person can hold about themselves or others based on a characteristic or quality”**

## Hands Up For Stigma



**Materials:** Scenario questions below

### Instructions:

Ask the group to raise their hand. Read out the different scenarios below and ask everyone to consider how open they'd feel about talking about their own mental health.

**1. You are at a close friend's house catching up after not seeing them for a while. They ask you how you have been feeling.**

*Keep your hand up if you feel you are able to talk to someone about your mental health and speak with them about some of the difficulties you have recently had. Put your hand down if you decide to brush it off and just say "I'm fine".*

**2. You have just applied for a new job. It is one that you really hope you will get and you are really excited when they ask you to come in for an interview. In the interview one of the interviewers asks why you were unemployed for some time, this was when you had to take time away from working to look after your mental health.**

*Keep your hand up if you feel you are able to be open about your mental health problem and be honest about the reasoning for your time off work. Hands down if you decide to make up another reason.*

**3. You are on a first date. So far it is going great and you think there might be something there. As the date ends you start to talk about a recent programme on TV that looked at mental health.**

*Keep your hand up if you feel you are able to be open about your experience of mental health difficulties and what you felt about the TV programme. Hands down if you say nothing at all.*

How many people are left with their hand up?

### Discussion points:

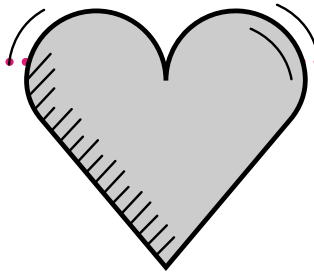


### Summary:

Stigma stops people from speaking out. People are often afraid of being judged or misunderstood if they open up about how they feel. This can mean that those who really need help do not seek it out and recovery is delayed. Speaking about mental health gives stigma less power as it normalises it.



## Get Well Soon



**Materials:** Flip chart paper, pens and different coloured post-it notes, blue-tac

**Preparation:** Draw a get well soon card on to a piece of flip chart paper and affix it to the wall

### Instructions:

Hand out post-its to the group and ask them to write down a message of support for someone with a physical health problem (for example a broken arm) and ask them to jot down some ideas of things they can do to help. Give them 5 minutes to do this.

Once they have finished ask each person to read out their message and stick it up on the get well soon card.

Discuss the messages and show how the same support should be applied to mental ill-health.

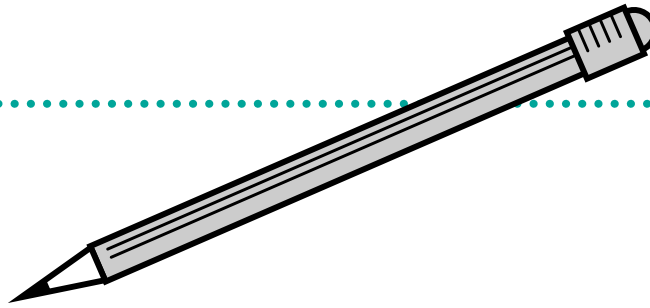
### Summary:

Being supportive towards someone with mental ill-health is not different from being supportive towards someone with a physical health issue; even if one cannot see anything being “broken” or wrong on the outside.

### Suggestion:

**If you have more time, repeat the exercise with messages of support for a mental health issue (such as depression) on different colour post-it notes.**

## Word Association



**Materials:** Statements, flipchart/whiteboard and blu-tac

**Preparation:** Printed and cut out statements. Draw two line scales showing 'Most Positive – Least Positive' and 'Most Supportive – Least Supportive'

**Appendix:** p40

**Instructions:**

Divide the room into smaller groups.

Divide the printed out statements between the groups and ask them to discuss where each statement would sit on the scale. Give them 5 minutes to talk about this.

Ask a representative from each group to come up and stick the statement on the scale on the board.

Any particular negative or positive words should be talked about, focusing on the negatives – why is this negative?

Discuss how using these terms could make someone with mental ill-health feel.

**Summary:**

People can be misunderstood by stigma and isolated from their community as a result. It's important that we are supportive of people with mental health issues and ask questions which encourage positive conversation.

Quite often, those with mental health problems can be put off seeking support because of the dismissive and negative language used by the people around them.

Showing a willingness to listen, ask questions and using language which isn't dismissive can really help someone experiencing poor mental health.

## Mental Health Quiz (Answers)



**1. How many of us have mental health?**

25%   50%   100% ✓

**2. How many GP appointments in Scotland relate to mental health?**

1 in 2   1 in 3 ✓   1 in 4

**3. Do more women or men in Scotland take their own lives each year?**

Women   Men ✓

**4. How many people in Scotland over the age of 15 take anti-depressants every day?**

6%   19% ✓   24%

**5. How many people in the UK say they have experienced a mental health problem?**

25%   45%   65% ✓

**6. Which age group in the UK report experiencing better mental health than average?**

16-35   35-55   55+ ✓

**7. In the same survey as Q5, how many people were able to report positive mental wellbeing?**

13% ✓   25%   37%

### References:

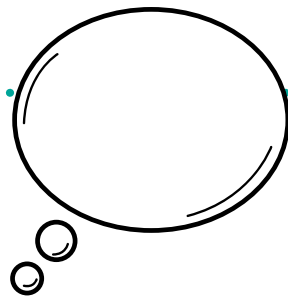
Q2: Scottish Parliament SPICe briefing, May 2014

Q3: Choose Life

Q4: <https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Prescribing-and-Medicines/Publications/2017-10-10/2017-10-10-PrescribingMentalHealth-Report.pdf>

Q5, Q6 & Q7: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/surviving-or-thriving-state-uks-mental-health>

## Personal Attitudes



**Materials:** Survey, pens and flipchart/whiteboard

**Appendix:** p42

**Preparation:** Print out surveys

**Instructions:**

Provide each group member with a copy of the survey and ask them to fill it out individually.

Afterwards, using a show of hands, compile the results of the group on a flipchart or whiteboard.

Lead the group in a discussion using the 'Best Answers' sheet as a guide over the page.

## Personal Attitudes Survey: Best Answers

### 1. People should sort out mental health problems on their own.

*Not true. A mental health problem is just like a physical health problem. Due to stigma surrounding mental illness, many people are reluctant to seek help.*

### 2. Once you have a mental illness, it's for life.

*Depending on the type of illness, it is possible to recover. Most mental illnesses tend to be episodic, meaning the symptoms appear and reappear. Those with lifelong conditions can, when the illness is managed, live positive and productive lives.*

### 3. Females have worse mental health than males.

*Men and women are equally affected by mental illness in general, but women may experience higher rates of specific illnesses such as eating disorders and depression. Men have higher rates for suicide. This may be because women are more likely to seek help and to share their concerns with friends than men are.*

### 4. The best treatment for mental illness is medication.

*Medication can be an effective part of managing a mental illness but it is by no means the only type of treatment or support that helps people recover. A wide range of appropriate interventions, including medication, counselling, social and recreational groups, self-help, holistic health, hospital care, exercise and nutrition are options for helping people recover and stay well.*

### 5. If you have a mental health problem you are more likely to be dangerous and violent'.

*People with mental illness are generally not more violent than the rest of the population. Mental illness plays no part in the majority of violent crimes committed in Scotland.*

### 6. Adults are more likely than teenagers to have a mental illness.

*Some illnesses are first diagnosed in childhood but many more begin to appear during the late teenage years and into early adulthood.*

### 7. You can tell someone has a mental illness just by looking at them.

*Sometimes if a person is experiencing symptoms of their mental illness, how they are feeling, thinking and behaving may be different from what is normal for them, but generally, you cannot tell if a person has a mental illness based on their appearance.*

**8. People with a mental illness are generally shy and quiet.**

*Having a mental health problem can affect individuals in a number of ways. Your character, like whether you're extroverted or introverted, doesn't make you any more or less likely to develop a mental health problem.*

**9. Only certain types of people can become mentally ill.**

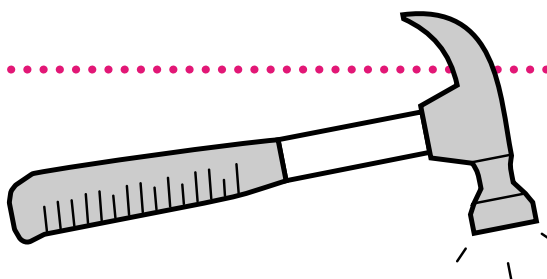
*Not true. Mental illness can happen to anyone.*

**10. Most people will never be affected by mental illness.**

*The statistic in Scotland is that one in three people will experience a mental illness at some point in their life.*

Exercise adapted from 'Mental Health Lesson Plans', [canwetalk.ca](http://canwetalk.ca)

## Smashing The Stigma



**Materials:** Pens, paper and WALLS handout

**Appendix:** p43

**Preparation:** Print out a 'WALLS' hand out to give to each person

### Instructions:

Tackling stigma and discrimination isn't easy but there are simple things you can do to help. Using the WALLS acronym you can help smash the barriers created by stigma.

Each letter is broken down with helpful discussion points. As you read out each letter and its corresponding suggestion, use the discussion questions below to prompt some conversation.

## Words

**Make sure you are not using language or comments that stigmatise people with mental illness.**

### Discussion Questions:

- Why might words or phrases like "looney bin" "nutter" or "psycho" be hurtful to someone with a mental health problem?
- Are there more positive ways to describe mental health issues?

## Ask

**A lot can be learned by asking questions to someone who has lived experience of a mental health problem, or a health professional like a doctor or a therapist.**

### Discussion Questions:

- What sort of questions might you ask someone with a mental health problem?
- How might someone with a mental health problem feel when they are asked questions it?
- Are there any positive examples from when you have had a conversation about mental health?

## **Learn**

**There are lots of resources available online to help educate you on different mental illnesses. More knowledge and understanding means less stigma.**

### **Discussion Questions:**

- Where might you go to learn more about mental health?
- What do you need to learn more about?

## **Listen**

**When someone is sharing their experience of mental health problems you can show support by really listening. If you have lived experience, consider sharing your story with others.**

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What qualities make a good listener?
- What effect can listening have for someone with mental health problems?

## **Speak**

**When you hear others being stigmatised or discriminated against, speak out to show that it isn't acceptable.**

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What are some things you can say to someone who doesn't understand mental health problems?



# Video Resources

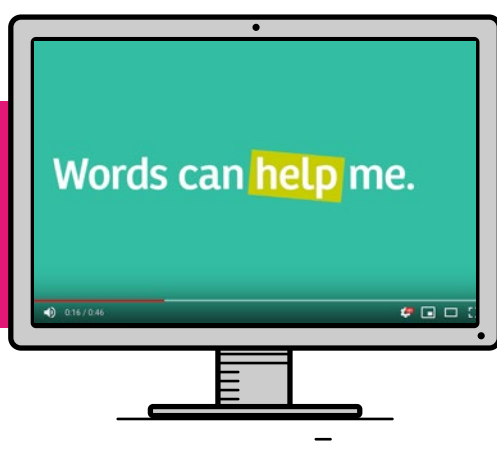
See Me has lots of video resources which cover stigma and discrimination not just in communities but also education, health and social care and the workplace.

Below are some videos which could be useful for community groups. You can explore the whole range of video resources [here](#), or by searching See Me Scotland on YouTube.



Danny Quin is a rapper whose work focuses on the stigma surrounding speaking out about having a mental health condition.

Angela McCrimmon is a poet and author who writes about mental health, recovery and compassion.



A short video showing how helpful words can be.



A video from our 'It's Okay To' campaign aimed at young people.

Advice From Young People on mental health.



A video from our campaign 'The Power of Okay' aimed at workplaces.

Zoe, a youth volunteer, speaks about human rights.



# Starting Conversations

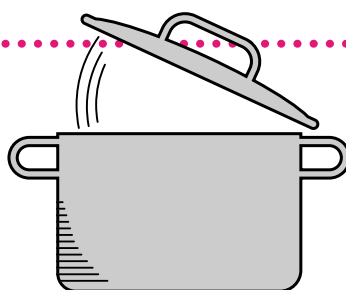
Meaningful conversations about mental health can create real change. When we speak openly about mental health we are showing that there's nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about. Knowing when or how to have conversations can be difficult, especially if we don't feel like we have the right tools.

This section contains tips and tools for starting those important conversations about mental health.

## How To Use This Section

You can work through these exercises in any order and adapt them to suit your community. There are printable versions of resources in the appendix on page 40.

### Cooking Up A Conversation



**Materials:** Recipe card and pens

**Appendix:** p44

**Preparation:** Print out recipe cards

**Instructions:**

Fill out the recipe card with your ingredients for a conversation about mental health.

## What Makes A Good Conversation?



**Time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:** Paper and a pen

### Instructions:

In small groups, use the question below to start a discussion:

Think about a time you had a difficult conversation and it went well or better than expected. What helped it to go so well?

### Summary:

Conversations about mental health can be difficult and that's okay. In most cases, however, we have experience of having a difficult conversation. It can help to draw from our own experiences and use this when we are in a situation which we are unsure about.

With the right conditions and an understanding ear we can create the perfect conditions for conversations about mental health.

Really listening can be a huge help and we don't always have to come up with a solution. It can help to think about the kind of things you would like someone to say to you too.



## Top Tips For Talking About Mental Health

### 1. Show You Care

Ask "How are you?" Showing you care and just being there means a lot. It can help to ask more than once.

.....

### 2. Be Patient

With mental health there are good days and bad days.

.....

### 3. Listen

Listening is as important as talking.

.....

### 4. No Pressure

You don't have to be a mental health expert to help. It's not about 'fixing' things, just having a chat.

.....

### 5. Small Actions

Natter over a brew or drop a text. Small actions can make a big difference.



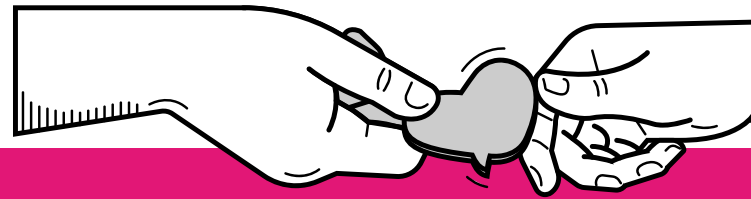
## See Me Resources

See Me have a number of resources which communities can tap in to and use! Whether you want to get walking and talking or turn up the music, there's something for most folk.

### Pass The Badge

You can use this simple tool to get your community talking about mental health. See Me provides small enamel pins with the aim of starting and spreading conversation about mental health.

You can order badges from the See Me website [here](#).



The idea is simple; you wear the badge for 24 hours and then you pass it on. When you do, you start a conversation about mental health. You then ask that the person wears the badge for 24 hours and passes it on too.

We know that starting a conversation can be daunting so below are some openers you can suggest to the group to get started:

**How are you today?**

This is an easy and familiar conversation starter, but it's worth remembering that asking it can make a big difference to someone who would like to talk. Sometimes you may need to ask more than once.

**What is the best thing you do to take care of your mental health?**

This reminds people that we all have mental health and we all understand the need to take care of it.

**Have you ever seen an example of mental health stigma or discrimination?**

This could be something the person has heard or seen in relation to someone else that could be challenged or discussed.

We also have a digital badge you can pass on at [passthebadge.co.uk](https://passthebadge.co.uk). Use #passthebadge and #starttalking to get involved online.

## Feels FM

As part of Year of Young People See Me we have created Feels FM, the world's first emoji powered jukebox for mental health. It's been made with young people, to promote music as a positive coping strategy to deal with feelings and to encourage people to talk about their feelings and their mental health.

To access Feels FM click [here](#). You can watch a short video about it [here](#).

### Running Your Own Feels FM Activity

All you need to do is to order the pack! This can be done by contacting [volunteer@seemescotland.org](mailto:volunteer@seemescotland.org) and requesting one. The pack contains all the guidance you need to run a Feels FM Activity.

#### Additionally you will need:

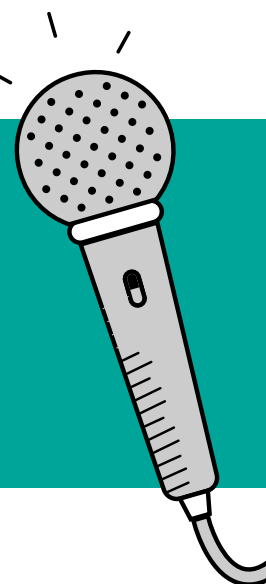
- 30 minutes to run the session
- Computer/laptop/tablet which can access Feels FM (online)
- Speakers or a computer loud enough to play your Feels FM playlist
- Facilitators to help the conversation
- Markers/pens for everyone taking part

## Walk A Mile

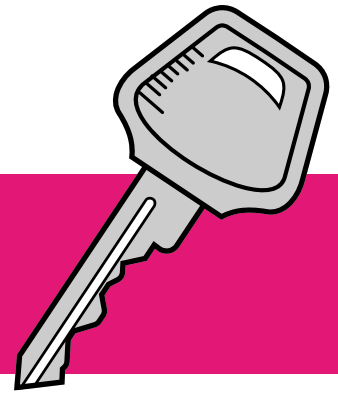
Walk a Mile brings people together to speak about mental health and 'walk a mile in each other's shoes'. The idea is that people get paired up with someone they don't know, using different colour stickers, and then walk a mile together speaking about mental health.

You can run a Walk A Mile in lots of different settings and you can find out more about it [here](#).

If you want to know more about our **campaigns** then you can read our 'Everything You Need To Tackle Mental Health Stigma' pack [here](#).



# Key Messages



Here are some key messages which can be helpful to use when having conversations about mental health.

**Mental health is part of everyone's day to day life, it affects all of us, but there is still a stigma around it. To tackle this properly people need to understand that it is okay not to be okay and you can talk about it.**

You don't have to be an expert to speak about mental health, just asking someone if they are okay can be a powerful thing.

.....

**We need to change the culture around mental health so people feel confident enough to speak about how they are feeling and can ask for help if they need it, without the fear that they will be stigmatised and discriminated against.**

No one should ever be made to feel ashamed or embarrassed to tell anyone that they experience mental health problems.

.....

**Too many people in Scotland with mental health issues are denied their rights, which can have a devastating impact on their lives.**

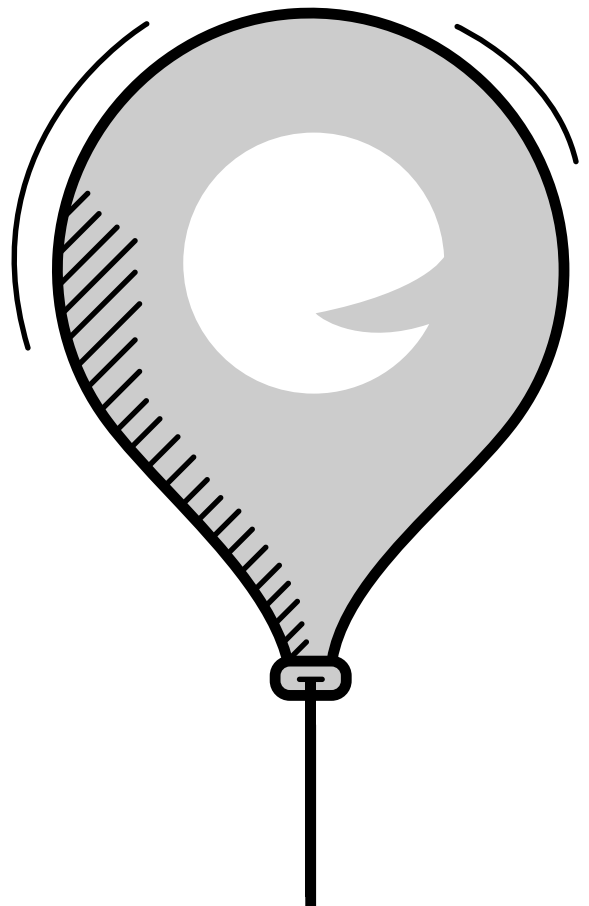
People with mental health issues face unacceptably high levels of stigma and discrimination, particularly in work, education, health and social care and their local communities.



# Stories Of Success

Across Scotland there are lots of inspiring and dedicated people who care about their community and are working to make mental health more accepted.

This section contains some case studies which showcase the variety of ways people are using their skills, passion and lived experience to end stigma and discrimination in Scotland.



**Davey**



"I'm Davey. I run a podcast called MenTalkHealth and produce online content that gets people talking and laughing about mental health. I'm also proud to be a See Me Community Champion.

For me, a community is not just the place where you live. My community is more than those I see every day; it is online, worldwide, and fabulous!

Most of us will at some point face discrimination because of an aspect of our lives. It is often in the face of discrimination that a community emerges and learns to thrive and grow.

Nothing exemplifies that more for me than the LGBTQ community. I work especially hard to make sure my community, who have supported me and given me a safe space to be myself, have the opportunity to share their mental health stories.

My podcast MenTalkHealth not only serves as a way to tell my personal story of recovering from mental illness and my experience as a gay man, it has also given me a chance to work directly with people with different backgrounds and experiences.

I initially started the podcast for myself and my recovery. I did not expect it to have such an impact on my life or on others but it opened doors, gave me purpose and helped me move forward with my recovery.

As for my community, every week I hear from someone who has listened to the show and identified with it. It has led them to start their own conversations, either with their friends, family or even their GP. In some cases those conversations have saved lives.

I started the show for me. I started talking to save my own life and my LGBTQ+ community embraced both it and me."

**Des**



"My name is Des and I am a 41 year old married father of three. I work as a barge master for Aggregate Industries which involves shipping all the heavy plant to and from one of Europe's biggest quarries.

My passion is mental health and working towards making the community a better place by talking about mental health and putting on activities.

For me a community is a team. Without the support and passion from the community I would really struggle to do what I do with regards to mental health.

Most of my community work has been focused on fundraising. I have been involved in organising and running many events to raise money for charities like the Beatson and Poppy Scotland. This really shows what support we get from the community.

In July 2018 I decided to run a Walk A Mile in Oban. I partnered up with the local support worker from ACUMEN (Recovery Across Mental Health) and together we planned the day. I organised a hall and I found a sponsor for t-shirts and tea and coffee, as well as delicious home baking. I linked in with all the local mental health groups and invited them to have a stall at the event. I had planned for around 70 people to turn up but on the day we had more than 200 which left me proud but absolutely shocked.

The walk inspired me to start a men's peer to peer support group. By December I had set up Martyn's Monday Club (MMC), a space where men can speak openly about mental health. I also started a women's peer support group too. The groups have really grown and now we have groups starting in Fort William.

I put a lot of time and effort into keeping the groups going along with the MMC team. I have the support of my wife and kids which really does help me to achieve this.

The group has had a huge impact on those who attend. We have saved multiple lives through the peer support offered, which is massive. Getting people out of their houses and back involved with others is so important.

I think we still have to chip away at the people who are not ready to talk about mental health. We still have stigma and discrimination lingering and this is what we will continue to fight to change. "

## Bridget



"My name is Bridget and I am a mother, a wife, a friend, a colleague, a supper group leader, a volunteer and an employee.

I've been involved in communities in lots of different ways. I've organised four Walk A Mile's and I run events called 'Don't Judge A Book By Its Cover'. They take place in bookshops and focus on mental health and literature. I also founded a support group in Peebles for people in recovery from mental health issues.

The great thing about doing a Walk A Mile is that you meet new people every time. It's lovely seeing people coming back who have been once and have found a community.

The idea of doing something involving books came from my passion of reading. I thought that bookshops were a nice, quiet, calm space and an innovative way of getting people's attention who maybe haven't been involved in this kind of thing before.

Each time I've hosted a 'Don't Judge A Book' event it's been different. I normally start off by doing a talk explaining why books are important to me, what I've learned from them and how they might be able to help others. I have different guest speakers who are quite inspirational.

Doing the See Me training was a real eye opener to me. I felt how helpful it was to be with other people who understood mental health. It meant so much to me and I was so aware that there was nothing like that in Peebles, so I set up a support group for people in recovery. There are about 15 of us and we've been running now for over two years. We have a WhatsApp group too and it's a place where everyone knows that if they're having a bad day they can go for support.

Running 'Don't Judge A Book' has led me to becoming involved with the Border's Wellbeing College. This has been a huge new huge opportunity for me. In doing the peer support group I've met some wonderful people and made some great friends. It can be stressful at times so it's important to have fall back support.

If I had one thing to say to my community I would want to highlight the importance of tolerance and acceptance. Let's all strive to be like Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby!"

## Suzanne



I am Suzanne Baines and I am a Community Champion with See Me.

I think communities are an integral part of society because they provide a sense of belonging and acceptance that connects us to civilisation in an inclusive, productive and meaningful way.

My own idea of community is a group of people who share a strong connection or bond because of their shared attributes, vision, aspirations and beliefs.

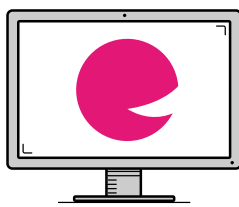
I have lots of experience working with communities. This ranges from continually striving to silence mental health stigma and discrimination through walks, talks, tours, events, poetry etc in collaboration with my own family unit, friend's groups, workplaces, online community and volunteering groups.

Through my role with See Me I was fortunate enough to represent the See Me Champions and volunteers at the International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership (IIMHL) conference in Sweden last year to address mental health stigma on a global scale.

I have also been on two 'Time to Talk Tours' around Scotland (with my fellow See Me Community Champion, Karen). Our goal was to encourage communities to talk openly about mental health and hear about their strengths, struggles and solutions.

I was also part of a planning committee for the Recovery Walk Scotland 2018 and asked back as a 'key individual recovery ambassador' for the 2019 Recovery Walk. This is two communities (from addiction and mental health) coming together to tackle stigma head on because far too many lives are being lost through fear, misconception and ignorance. In addition, I am a member of the Renfrewshire Anti-Stigma Alliance (RASA) who proactively work to end mental health stigma and discrimination across Renfrewshire. Finally, I created my own concept called You Matter Always (YMA) which strives to tackle stigma and discrimination in a more long-term way by adopting a strengths-based approach. YMA aims to remind people that their THOUGHTS, FEELINGS, VOICE, STORY and LIFE matters...ALWAYS!

# Signposting



It's great to start conversations in your communities and we hope that our materials and ideas help you to do this. Sometimes this can mean that people currently experiencing mental health problems will need some support as sensitive conversations may bring up difficult things. In that case just listen and show you care. If you think they need to speak to someone, suggest going to their GP, or calling any of the numbers below.

If you are experiencing mental health problems or need urgent support, there are lots of places you can go to for help. See Me is focusing on changing how we all think and act about mental health. We're not able to provide individual or emergency support for people in crisis, but there are lots of people who can. They are listed here:



## The Samaritans

Provides confidential, non-judgmental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. You can phone, email, write a letter or in most cases talk to someone face to face.



**Telephone:** 116 123 (Free 24 hours a day)

**Text:** 07725 90 90 90

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

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

## Breathing Space

Breathing Space is a free, confidential phoneline 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 to 2am, Monday to Thursday  
6pm to 6am, Friday to Monday



**Call:** 0800 83 85 87

**Website:** [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 outwith normal GP practice working hours.



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

**Website:** [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.

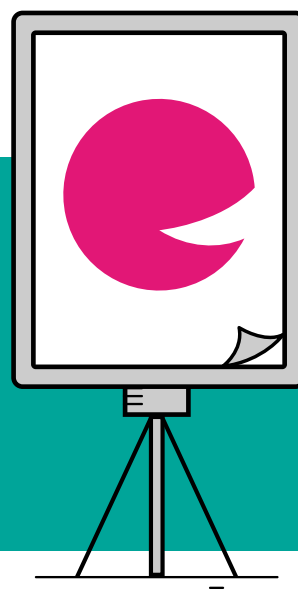


**Call:** 0800 1111

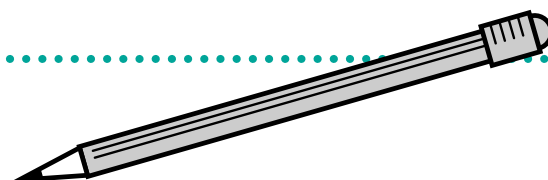
**Website:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

# Appendix

Word Association	p40
Mental Health Quiz	p41
Personal Attitudes Survey	p42
WALLS Hand-out	p43
Recipe Cards	p44
Top Tips	p45



## Word Association Statements:



You're off your nut.

They're just looking for attention.

Just ignore them!

Are you OK?

Do you want to talk?

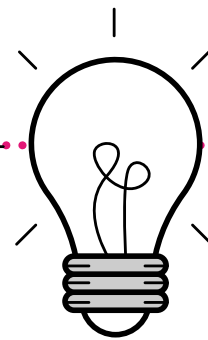
You must be depressed.

Everyone gets stressed, what's wrong with you?

Do you want to come over for dinner?

Why are you hurting yourself?





## Mental Health Quiz

**1. How many of us have mental health?**

25%    50%    100%

**2. How many GP appointments in Scotland relate to mental health?**

1 in 2    1 in 3    1 in 4

**3. Do more women or men in Scotland take their own lives each year?**

Women    Men

**4. How many people in Scotland over the age of 15 take anti-depressants every day?**

6%    19%    24%

**5. How many people in the UK say they have experienced a mental health problem?**

25%    45%    65%

**6. Which age group in the UK report experiencing better mental health than average?**

16-35    35-55    55+

**7. In the same survey as Q5, how many people were able to report positive mental wellbeing?**

13%    25%    37%

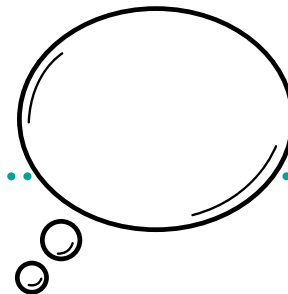
### References:

Q2: Scottish Parliament SPICe briefing, May 2014

Q3: Choose Life

Q4: <https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Prescribing-and-Medicines/Publications/2017-10-10/2017-10-10-PrescribingMentalHealth-Report.pdf>

Q5, Q6 & Q7: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/surviving-or-thriving-state-uks-mental-health>



## Personal Attitudes

Circle the most appropriate answer

**1. People should sort out mental health problems on their own.**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**2. Once you have a mental illness, it's for life.**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**3. Females have worse mental health than males.**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**4. The best treatment for mental illness is medication.**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**5. If you have a mental health problem you are more likely to be dangerous and violent**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**6. Adults are more likely than teenagers to have a mental illness.**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**7. You can tell someone has a mental illness just by looking at them.**

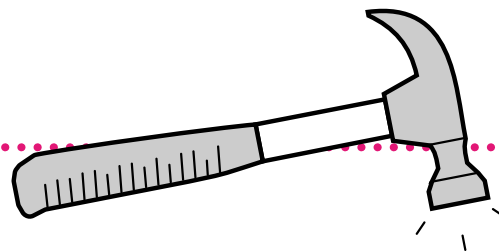
Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**8. People with a mental illness are generally shy and quiet.**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree

**9. Only certain types of people can become mentally ill.**

Agree   Not sure   Disagree



## Smashing The Stigma

Help end stigma and discrimination by breaking down the **WALLS** around mental health. Use the tips below to tackle stigma.

### Words, Ask, Learn, Listen, Speak

#### Words

Make sure you are not using language or comments that stigmatise people with mental illness.

#### Ask

A lot can be learned by asking questions to someone who has lived experience of a mental health problem, or a health professional like a doctor or a therapist.

#### Learn

There are lots of resources available online to help educate you on different mental illnesses. More knowledge and understanding means less stigma.

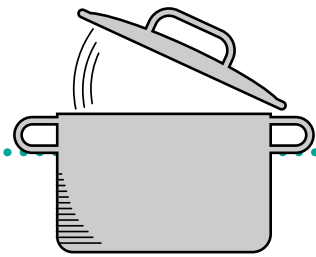
#### Listen

When someone is sharing their experience of mental health problems you can show support by really listening. If you have lived experience, consider sharing your story with others.

#### Speak

When you hear others being stigmatised or discriminated against, speak out to show that it isn't acceptable.

Adapted from 'Mental Health Lesson Plans', [canwetalk.ca](http://canwetalk.ca)



## Cooking Up A Conversation

My recipe for a conversation about mental health

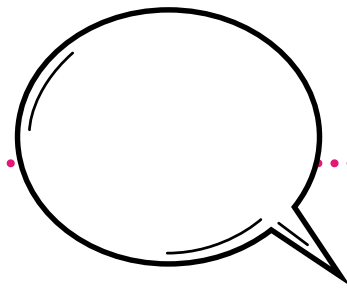
### Ingredients

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

### Instructions

To make a great conversation about mental health....

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Top Tips For Talking

### 1. Show You Care

Ask “How are you?” Showing you care and just being there means a lot. You might need to ask more than once.

### 2. Be Patient

With mental health there are good days and bad days.

### 3. Listen

Listening is as important as talking.

### 4. No Pressure

You don't have to be a mental health expert to help. It's not about 'fixing' things, just having a chat.

### 5. Small Actions

Natter over a brew or drop a text. Small actions can make a big difference.