

Staying Emotionally Healthy

We are not only born with physical needs (like needing food and water) but also emotional needs. When these needs are not met, as when our physical needs are not met - our health is affected. How well we meet our emotional needs and what we do when they are not met relates to how stressed we are.

Stress, anxiety, depression, anger and addiction are the result of our emotional needs not being met. This could be because of our situation, behaviours we have learnt or how we use our imagination (like worrying!) Our emotions are a signal that we need to make some changes in our life.

How well are your emotional needs being met?

Rate yourself on the different emotional needs below, on a scale of 1-5.

(1 = not at all and 5 = a lot)

- ***Do you feel safe?*** Are you confident at work or in social situations? Are you being bullied or have you experienced any trauma? Do you have a safe place to live?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

- ***Do you have people in your life who are important to you and to whom you are important?*** Have you experienced loss through a relationship ending or bereavement? Have you lost touch with friends or stopped seeing them lately? Is there someone you can have fun, share your worries and be yourself with?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

- ***Do you have wider connections?*** Do you know people outside of close family and friends? Do you help others such neighbours or through volunteering? Are you religious? Do you take part in any community activities such as a football team, drama group, or have you withdrawn or lost interest recently?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

- ***Are you comfortable with your status in society?*** Do you feel good about yourself or the way you think others see you? Do you feel appreciated? Do you feel you could have achieved more? Do you want what you haven't got?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

- ***Do you have a sense of competence and achievement?*** Are you doing what you want to do with your life or do you have other interests? Do you enjoy the way you

spend your time and feel challenged by it, or do you feel out of your depth? Do you feel stuck, unchallenged or bored in any areas of your life?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

- **Do you have a sense of control?** Do you have too much or too little responsibility - does someone take control for you or can you take responsibility for decisions? Have there been any changes which have taken away your sense of control, such as at work or in your personal life? Do you feel you should control things that are in fact outside of your control and feel annoyed at yourself if they don't work out?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

- **How healthily are your attention needs being met?** We all need to receive and give attention. But attention is a form of nutrition and, like food, we need the right kind in the right amount at the right time. Do you spend too much time alone? Are you shy? Do you take part in activities to gain attention? Do you give sincere attention to others? Do you get attention by being depressed?

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

- **Are you being 'stretched' by how you live or what you do?** Our sense of meaning and purpose in life comes from making an effort to do things. Do you have activities that interest and still challenge you? Are you still learning? Are you developing new skills? Do you put yourself out for others? Do you have a commitment to something bigger than yourself - a cause, sport, religion, politics or community activity? Remember, life offers back little meaning to lazy people. Meaning comes from being stretched and engaged with the world.

(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (A lot)

Results:

If your scores are mostly low, you are likely to be suffering stress symptoms. If any need is scored 3 or less, this is likely to be a major worry for you.

How well each of our needs is being met changes with different situations and events in our lives. Even if only one need is scored very low it can be enough of a problem to seriously affect your well being and how you feel.

When our emotional needs are met in a *balanced* way (like having a healthy diet) we are emotionally healthy and feel good. ***This guide can help you identify how you could make changes in your life to improve your sense of well being.***

*For more information please visit:
www.hgi.org.uk*