

Wellbeing is a term that is used a lot but is so broad that it can be tricky to find a definition that covers everything.

We value and appreciate all our volunteers who are generous with their time, providing befriending to older people experiencing loneliness. With quality befriending relationships in mind, we have produced a wellbeing resource which includes reflections and suggestions by friend of the Charity, Psychotherapist, Peter Wells. We hope that this resource is useful to our volunteers who continue to make a positive difference in the lives of the people they befriend.

Wellbeing is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as 'the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy'. Surely each of us will have different ideas about what 'comfortable, healthy, or happy' look like. And it may also look like something different from one day to the next, or change over time.

Different factors contribute to our sense of wellbeing, from long term considerations like our overall health or financial situation, to everyday things like how we have slept, what we have eaten or even what the weather is like.

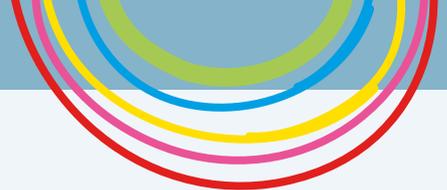
While wellbeing looks different from one person to the next, there are some aspects of wellbeing that are considered to be universal. One such factor is the quality of our relationships.

As we might expect, people who enjoy good quality relationships – and invest in these relationships – are said to have a stronger sense of wellbeing.

Wellbeing and caring for others

Offering to support and befriend others must include knowing how to support and look after ourselves! If we don't take care of ourselves, we cannot truly take care of others...





Each of us only has so much to give

Our lives often contain many different layers that each require our time and energy. Imagine that **you are the green circle** in the middle, in your life might be a **blue partner, yellow children, pink work, red elderly parents** and more circles such as social life, pets, befriending etc... People who care for others can often give a lot to those who are in the outer circles and forget about those close to them and even themselves. We need to be careful not to take ourselves and others for granted and make sure that we get some attention, our partner gets attention etc... So it is important to know our limits.

The difference between 'Capacity' and 'Capability'

Often particularly busy and caring people feel that they can keep taking on requests for their time. Before long it can leave people feeling that they do not have the capability to manage all these requests. The real issue is that most people probably have the capability, but simply do not have the capacity. It is easy to think we are failing when this happens. But, in reality it probably means that too much has been taken on and there are not enough hours in the day, or emotions in the jar, to keep pouring out. We need to give ourselves permission to know when to say no or when we need a break.

Press the Pause Button when listening to others

We can sometimes become anxious when talking to others because we think we have to have all the answers. Supporting another person as a befriender requires a different approach to being with those we live with, although some of the skills can still be very useful.

Whilst the other person is talking we often will be thinking about what they need to do, what we need to do as a befriender, what would help, and what can be offered. But to truly listen to what is being said, it is important to put all these questions aside. Quite often we can discover what people want more than anything else, just by providing a listening ear. Not everyone needs their problems solving. Quite often people feel better just by telling someone.

But if you are concerned about the scheme member you are matched with, or you are feeling overwhelmed by the problems they are facing, please do not hesitate to contact the team on 01273 737710 or email info@tttb.org.uk. Please also refer back to our boundaries video for additional information if this is helpful. The password to access our videos is: timetotalk. <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8953668>

PAUSE to listen:

P = Press the 'Pause Button', to give yourself time and space to listen, and be aware of what will stop you listening

A = Attention to what they are saying, reflect back to make sure you have heard them

U = Ultimately this is about them, not you

S = Solving the problem is not the issue, helping to clarify what they need is the focus

E = Essential to know your limits and places of referral

Before you offer any suggestions try asking these questions to the other person:

What options do you feel you have?

Who else do you have to talk to?

What are your expectations of me?

Remember :

As they are talking, if you know what you are going to tell them, you have probably stopped listening!

We need to know how to 'compartmentalise'

Understandably, when we have visited someone who is very upset, or someone who is lonely because they don't have many visitors, we can find ourselves thinking about them when we are at home. We might also find ourselves waking up thinking about them. But, it is important for our own wellbeing to not carry them with us all the time. It is fine to think about them a little but not all the time, because all the thinking and worrying will not change their situation. 'Compartmentalising' can seem rather mechanistic and cold, but it means we can be really with people when we are with them, and really with ourselves, and the others in our life, when we are with them. Perhaps set aside 5-15 minutes a day when you can think about the person you are befriending, wishing them as well as they can be, and at the end of the time move on to the others things and people you need to be with.

Decide how much time you want to spend thinking about the person you are befriending and then move on to the rest of your day. This means you will have honoured the person you are befriending whilst also looking after yourself.

As always if you are concerned about the person you are befriending please contact the team who are here to help.

We need to think about helpful distractions:

The reason for knowing what can help distract us is because, if we are not careful, we can end up by ruminating on what has happened or fixating on what might happen. Either way we find that both of these can leave us feeling stuck. As mentioned earlier, spending our time worrying will not change anything. We need to know that we can only ever do so much. Identify what it is that will help you focus on other things and help to restore you such as walking in nature, or swimming, or reading etc.

Sense of agency

We know that what really helps us is having a sense of 'agency', a sense that we can do something. We often imagine that this needs to be practical. We question ourselves that we should be 'doing' something. In befriending, and on other occasions with friends and family, the greatest thing we can do is to truly listen. Giving someone else our time and attention is powerful and a precious gift, so please remember you are making a difference!

It says: "I am with you" "you are not on your own for the time that I am with you" "you matter here and now"

Be kind to yourself, be assured that the time you give, and listening you offer to the people you befriend does make a difference, even if it might not seem enough for them. You can only do what you can do and if our scheme members need additional support the team can help them access it, so don't hesitate to get in touch.

Go gently with yourself and take care of you, as you take care of others, because you matter too!



Thank you to **Peter Wells**

Psychotherapist and former Lead chaplain at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton, Peter provides integral training and support to the team and volunteers to better understand bereavement and loss which has always been a reality of our work with older people but especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Peter continues to add value to our work thanks to his expertise and willingness to collaborate with us!

For access to other resources Peter has contributed towards please visit [tttb.org.uk/resources](https://www.tttb.org.uk/resources)



With special thanks to **Charlotte Evans, Story Chaplain** [storychaplain.com](https://www.storychaplain.com) for working with us to bring this resource together, and to **Ellen Stewart Design** [ellenstew-art.com](https://www.ellenstew-art.com) for her expert design skills!



Time to Talk
Befriending

in the heart of the community

Time to Talk Befriending, City Coast Centre,
North Street, Portslade, BN41 1DG

T: 01273 737710

E: info@tttb.org.uk

www.tttb.org.uk

Charity Incorporated Organisation Number: 1186555