

Mental health in older people

Looking after your mental health is an important part of ageing well.

Who is this page for?

This page is for older adults, their families and carers who are looking for information about mental health, emotional wellbeing and support available in Northern Ireland.

Looking after your mental health as you get older

Mental health is important at every stage of life. Changes such as retirement, bereavement, living with a long-term health condition, caring responsibilities or becoming less independent can affect how you feel.

There are things you can do to support your mental wellbeing, and help is available if you are finding things difficult.

Take 5 steps to wellbeing

Connect - spend time with family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, work, school or in your local community.

Keep learning - try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course.

Be active - find ways to move that suit your health and mobility.

Take notice - take time to notice what's happening around you and how you are feeling.

Give - help someone else, volunteer or get involved in your community.

Find out about Take 5 steps to wellbeing

on [Minding Your Head website](#).

Loneliness and staying connected

Feeling lonely or socially isolated can affect your mental and physical wellbeing.

Staying connected with family, friends and your local community can help. Community groups, volunteering, hobbies and local activities can provide opportunities to meet people and maintain social connections.

Find support and stay connected:

- [Talk to someone if worried about mental wellbeing | nidirect](#)
- [Combating loneliness | Age NI](#)
- [New resource aimed to help tackle loneliness and isolation in our communities - NISCC](#)

When to seek help

Everyone can experience periods of low mood, worry or stress. If these feelings are persistent, are getting worse or are affecting your everyday life, support is available.

You can speak to your GP or another healthcare professional about how you are feeling.

Find mental health support - [Looking after yourself | Minding Your Head](#)

If you need urgent help

If you or someone you know is in distress or crisis, support is available through [I need help | Lifeline Helpline](#), Northern Ireland's crisis response helpline.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention, call 999.

Resources for ageing well



Ageing well: a 10 minute guide

A guide on healthy ageing, including staying active, eating well, supporting mental wellbeing, preventing falls, keeping your home safe, understanding dementia, accessing help to live well.



Take 5 steps to wellbeing (English and translations)

This leaflet and poster outline five simple ways in which people can maintain and improve their mental wellbeing.



[Looking after your mental health](#)



[The pocket guide to good mental health](#)

How the PHA helps

The Public Health Agency works with HSC organisations, councils, community and voluntary organisations and other partners across Northern Ireland to

- promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing
- reduce loneliness and social isolation, and
- help people access appropriate information and support.

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Other resources

- [Mental health and support as you get older | nidirect](#)
- [Mental health services and support | nidirect](#)
- [Healthy Ageing - HSCNI Microsite](#)
- [Health & wellbeing - AgeNI](#)

Related content

- [Age-friendly communities and coordinators](#)
- [Healthy ageing](#)