



# Looking after our Mental Health when affected by homelessness



## INTRODUCTION

Mental health and well-being is about the way we think and feel and this in turn impacts on how we behave. Most people feel low or stressed at some point in their lives, but for 1 in every 4 people these emotions appear more often, are intense and don't go away easily. We know that people who are affected by homelessness are at greater risk of experiencing stress and low mood because of the wide impact that this has on our lives.

This leaflet has been developed to let us know that we are not alone. There are steps that we can take to look after our own mental health but also services that are there to support us.

### HOW CAN HOMELESSNESS AFFECT US?

- ❖ Feelings of loneliness and isolation
- ❖ Lack of confidence and self-esteem
- ❖ Worries with housing, money and families
- ❖ Low mood and depression
- ❖ Stress
- ❖ Sleep problems
- ❖ A sense of fear

### HOW CAN WE KEEP WELL?

These are some of the positive ways to help look after our mental health:

- ❖ Talking about our feelings and concerns e.g. speak to a friend, support worker or project worker. This helps to stop us bottling up our feelings.

- ❖ Stay in touch with friends and family if possible therefore not isolating ourselves.
- ❖ Ask for help from your Housing officer/advisor. He or she can tell you what support is available within your area.
- ❖ Eat well.
- ❖ Keep active. You can ask your support worker or housing officer/advisor what is available in you area.
- ❖ Do something you enjoy.
- ❖ Find time for relaxation.
- ❖ Accept that your present situation is not permanent and in time things will change.
- ❖ Avoid using alcohol or illegal drugs to cope with stress or low mood. This just makes it worse.

**We can all have difficult days from time to time.**

**Every day that we cope with something different, we learn how to survive and live.**

## **WHERE DO I GO FOR SUPPORT FOR MY MENTAL HEALTH?**

- ❖ Speak to your GP if you are living within your GP catchment area.
- ❖ Alternatively you can be referred by your support worker, housing officer/advisor or refer yourself to the Health & Homelessness Service.
- ❖ Contact Tel No: 01698 727534 Fax: 01698 727538

Remember, should your problems persist or you feel you need help urgently please contact your **GP** or if your surgery is closed call **NHS 24** - 08454 24 24 24 (24hrs) [www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

The following other agencies can also help:

- ❖ **Breathing Space** - 0800 83 85 87 (*evenings and weekends*)  
[www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk)
- ❖ **Samaritans** - 01698 429411 or 08457 90 90 90 (24hrs)  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)
- ❖ **Childline** - 0800 11 11 (24hrs) [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- ❖ **National Debt Line** - 0808 808 4000  
(Monday to Friday 9am-9pm & Saturdays 9.30am-1pm)
- ❖ **Al-anon** - 0141 339 8884
- ❖ **Stop Smoking** - 08452 177 707
- ❖ **Smoking Cessation** - 01698 366978
- ❖ **Drinkline** - 0800 7 314 314
- ❖ **Scottish Domestic Abuse Line** - 0800 027 1234 (24 hours)
- ❖ **Lanarkshire Rape Crisis Centre** - 01698 527 0039 (*helpline*)
- ❖ **Emergency Social Work Services Out of Hours:**  
South Lanarkshire - 0800 678 3282  
North Lanarkshire - 0800 121 4114

Remember, in emergency circumstances dial 999.

For further information visit your local library which has a **Healthy Reading Section**, with a wide range of mental health and well-being self-help leaflets, books, CDs, DVDs and web-based support. You will also find a wide range of information for mental health and well-being at elament, visit: [www.elament.org.uk](http://www.elament.org.uk) or call North Lanarkshire Mental Health Information Line 0800 073 0918.

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Pub. date:   | November 2011 |
| Review date: | November 2013 |
| Issue No:    | 02            |
| Department:  | Mental Health |