

# Physical Activity & Mental Health

It is proven by researchers that physical activity improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression, and negative mood and by improving self esteem and cognitive function.

Research has shown that physical activity releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good - boosting your self-esteem, helping you concentrate as well as sleep, look and feel better.

## How can Physical Activity help my Mental Health?



### Better Sleep

By making you feel more tired at the end of the day.



### Happier Moods

Physical activity releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better about yourself and give you more energy.



### Managing Stress, Anxiety or Intrusive and Racing Thoughts

Doing something physical releases cortisol, which helps us manage stress. Being physically active also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times.



## Better Self-Esteem

Being more active can make you feel better about yourself as you improve and meet your goals.



## Reducing the Risk of Depression

Studies have shown that doing regular physical activity can reduce the likelihood of experiencing a period of depression.



## Connecting with People

Doing group or team activities can help you meet new and like-minded people and make new friends.

# What is Wellbeing?

The government defines wellbeing as 'a positive physical, social and mental state.' Mental wellbeing does not have a single universal definition, but it does encompass factors such as:

The sense of feeling good about ourselves and being able to function well individually or in relationships.

The ability to deal with the ups and downs of life, such as coping with challenges and making the most of opportunities.

Having control and freedom over our lives.

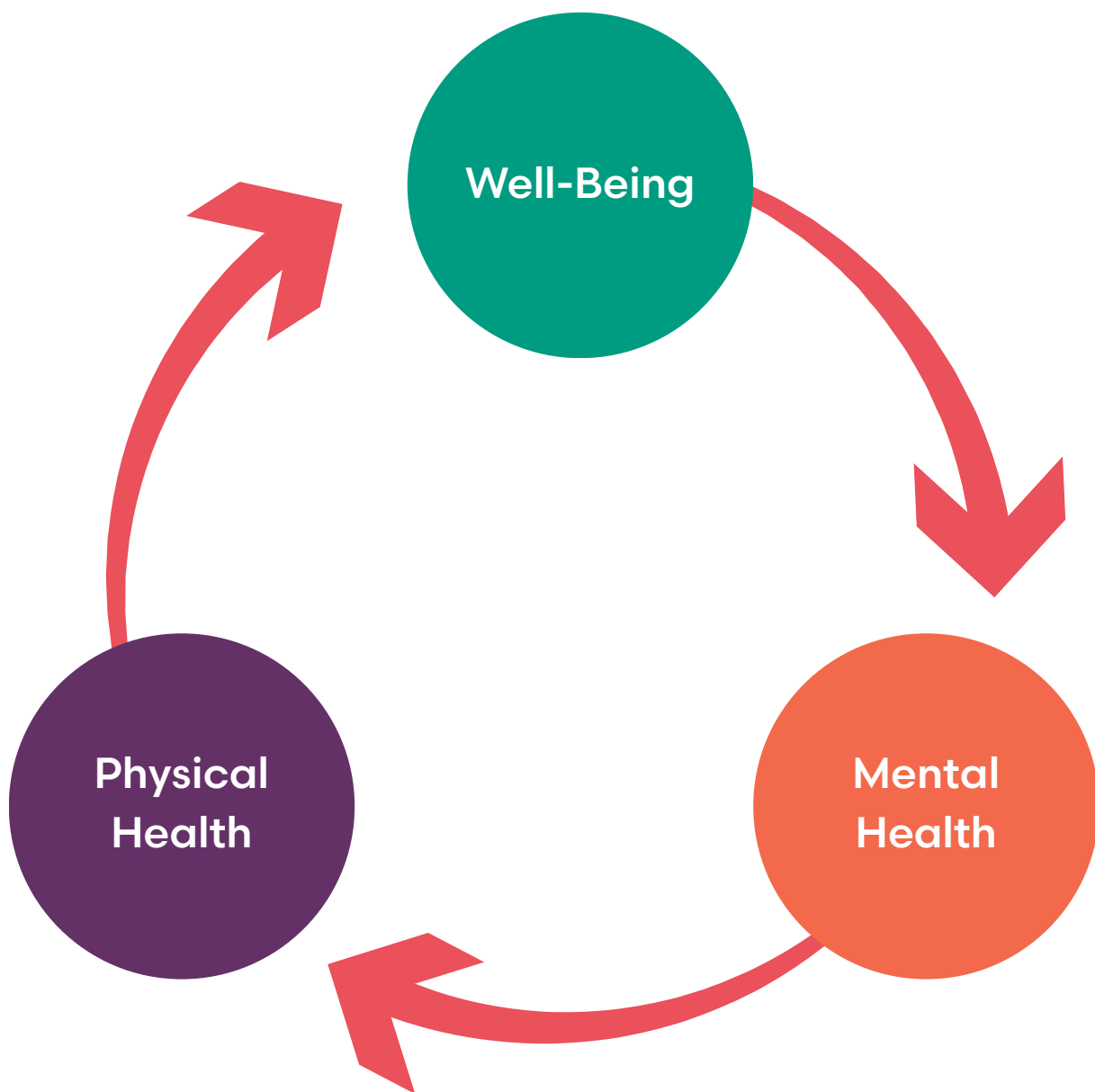
Having a sense of purpose and feeling valued.

The feeling of connection to our community and surroundings.

Of course, mental wellbeing does not mean being happy all the time, and it does not mean that you won't experience negative or painful emotions, such as grief, loss or failure, which are a part of normal life. However, whatever your age, being physically active can help you to lead a mentally healthier life and can improve your well-being.

# What Impact does Physical Activity have on Well-Being?

Physical activity has a huge potential to enhance our well-being. Even a short burst of 10 minutes' brisk walking increases our mental alertness, energy and positive mood.



Participation in regular physical activity can increase our self-esteem and can reduce stress and anxiety. It also plays a role in preventing the development of mental health problems and in improving the quality of life of people experiencing mental health problems.