



Looking after you

What you'll find out:

- What we mean by wellbeing and ways units can help look after it.
- Who in your network can support you.
- How you can support the wellbeing of other people as a young leader.
- Why it's useful to recognise your strengths and weaknesses.
- Why setting goals is good for our wellbeing, and how we can achieve them.

What is mental health?

Mental health is a tricky term. Some people say mental wellbeing, others say mental health and some people talk about how their brainbox is feeling. Check out the [definitions by YoungMinds](#), a charity who advocate for children and young people's mental health. Mental health is an ever-changing thing that's about how you think, feel or act. A mental health problem is when those negative thoughts and feelings impact on your day-to-day life.

However you talk about your mental health, it's important to look after it just as much as your physical health.

Creating wellbeing

We all have things we can do to improve our [wellbeing](#) (our general sense of happiness, healthiness and comfort). Some of these are simple, others are easier said than done. Here are a few things you can try:

- Focus on what's in your control - often when we worry, it's because we're focusing on things that are out of our control. We need to remember that while we might not have control over how something develops, we do have control over how we respond and what we do each day.
- Maintain a balanced lifestyle - this includes hobbies and activities, connecting with others, and reaching out to people we care about.
- Adopt self-care - this is all about looking after yourself. Explore how to care for your body and mind. From relaxing showers and nourishing food to trying something new.
- Practise mindfulness - A regular practice of mindfulness (paying attention to the present moment) can help pull you out of a cycle of worrying by bringing your attention back to the here and now.

What can you do for your wellbeing?

Think about what you can do to help manage your wellbeing.



You're always a person... even when you're a volunteer

It can be hard to look after your own wellbeing when you're a volunteer. But you don't stop being a person when you come to meetings, and all the things going on in your personal life don't stop either.

Here are some top tips on mental health from young leader Chloe:



'As a young leader during GCSE years, I know things can get tough, especially when exams are coming up. Winding down before meetings is a great idea. I feel like when I'm in a certain mood, the girls try to copy it and match my energy, bringing in a wrong mood to a meeting might mean that the girls might be upset, or misbehave. I find that sports and doing art really helps me because I love it so much!'

Team you: who is your support network?

It's not easy looking after your wellbeing all by yourself. Just like you support friends, family and other girls in your unit, you also have people around you to support you.

Your personal support network is like your own team of cheerleaders who support, encourage and help you grow. Different people in your life will support you in different ways – family, teachers, leaders, friends.



Guiding superheroes: your leaders

Your leaders are here for you. And leaders, being the superheroes that they are, might notice when you're not feeling 100% and ask how you're doing. There are a few things they might do to help with your mental health:

- Make a [wellbeing action plan](#) – this is a personalised, practical toolkit to help you stay involved with guiding, and get the most out of it.
- Chat to your parents or carers – this can make sure that your support network can fly into action.
- Chat to the team at Girlguiding HQ for further support – there are heroes in Girlguiding HQ too, who are there to help people when their mental health isn't at its best.

These are exactly the same things they might do for their Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers if they're worried about their wellbeing.

Hearing about young people's wellbeing

Sometimes, girls might come to you to talk about their wellbeing – whether there's something going on at home, or they're just feeling a bit down. It's great when girls feel they can chat to you, it means they trust you. You just need to make sure you follow the a safe space guidance and keep your adult leaders updated. To help with your wellbeing, they can debrief with you after any tricky conversations. This means talking through what happened, how it went, how you being there helped, and how you could set some boundaries.

Boundaries are the invisible lines we draw around ourselves to keep us safe. Some boundaries are straightforward, like not talking about a topic you find upsetting. You may find it helpful to have some boundaries with the girls you're working with. If you need help setting these boundaries, you and your leader can work that out together. For example, maybe you could come up with a signal which says, 'Hey, Brown Owl, I need you to come and tag into this conversation now'.

Activities to help with wellbeing

You might want to talk about mental wellbeing with your unit. Activities that help build wellbeing can be about building confidence, self-esteem or finding ways to calm our minds and bodies. There are lots of ways to build wellbeing. Here are some unit meeting activities you might like to try:

Rainbows

- [Cheer challenge](#)
- [The big blue whale](#)
- [Laugh out loud](#)

Brownies

- [Big up a Brownie](#)
- [Mellow moment](#)
- [Mindful music](#)

Guides

- [Tai one, two, chi](#)
- [Checking in](#)
- [Soothing scribbles](#)

Goals for wellbeing: developing your skills

One of the things we know helps with wellbeing is setting a goal and achieving it. It makes you feel great. Whether it's completing an art project, watching the whole of your favourite series or doing a young leader module! Make sure you take time to do something important for yourself.



Strengths and weaknesses

Take a moment to decide on a goal. Think about what you can do to help you achieve it, and what you might need to focus on. If you find it helpful, talk this through with someone and try asking yourself questions like:

- What am I good at?
- What have other people complimented me on?
- What have other people had to help me with on more than one occasion?
- Which projects and tasks seem to drain my energy?
- Which projects have I spent hours on without getting tired?
- What are my hobbies and why do I like doing them?



Great work!

You've thought about what mental health is, who can support you, what you can do with your unit, how to develop your skills and how to make sure you look after you. Well done!

