

# Public Mental Health Content Guide

For introductory courses or professional development in mental health and wellbeing



In partnership with Public Health England and the Faculty of Public Health

Developing people  
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# Introduction

Improving the population's mental health is a national priority. As many as one in four of us will experience a mental health problem in our life. Our mental wellbeing underpins our general functioning and quality of life - at work, school, home and socially. Improving the nation's mental health touches on the work of many diverse organisations and communities. Many staff can make a difference to people's mental health and wellbeing through better understanding of this complex area and what can be done to address it.

This document has been developed and informed by national priorities, evidence and learning from a range of sources, including:

- Health Education England's Action Plan for mental health promotion and prevention training and the Mental Health Workforce Plan for England: Stepping Forward to 2020/21
- Public Health England's Public Mental Health Leadership and Workforce Development Framework and Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health
- The Faculty of Public Health's Better Mental Health for All programme and work plan



## Principles

- Mental health is everybody's business and we all have a role to play
- Mental health ranges from positive wellbeing to mental health problems
- Mental health has not had the same attention as physical health, both should be treated equally
- Mandatory training in mental health and wellbeing can make a difference



## Purpose and use

This guide provides content to inform an introduction to public mental health for a wide range of workforce who have a role to play in improving the public's health. For example health and social care staff, emergency service personnel, housing and welfare officers. It is intended as a guide only.

The content has been divided into core (column 2) and advanced (column 3) depending on the workforce. It has been mapped against the 12 core principles of Public Health England's public mental health leadership and workforce development framework<sup>1</sup> (column 1). It can be used by course providers or by individuals as a guide and self-assessment (column 4):

1. **Training courses:** course developers, trainers, employers can use the guide to inform the production and delivery of staff training programmes. The self-assessment can be used to appraise and review course content.
2. **Individuals:** can appraise their current knowledge, values and skills and identify areas for personal and professional development.

Accredited qualifications – there are a number of existing regulated qualifications that already address aspects of this content

Training courses – there are a number of mental health promotion and prevention training courses available

HEE also provides E-learning courses in mental health awareness

Core principles (PMH L&WD Framework1)	Core content:	Advanced content:	Self-assessment: Fully/ partially met or development area
<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	1. Know the nature and dimensions of mental health and mental illness Understand and define mental health, wellbeing and mental health problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand cultural differences and perspectives in mental health</li> </ul>	
	2. Know the determinants at a structural, community and individual level Understand what influences mental health (risk and protective factors): Wider factors e.g. poverty, employment, housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community factors e.g. social connections, community life, family parenting</li> <li>Individual factors e.g. sense of control, resilience, physical health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the importance of a whole population approach</li> <li>Understand how inequalities shape people’s risk and resilience</li> </ul>	
	3. Know how mental health is a positive asset and resource to society Understand how mental health affects other outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our physical health and health behaviours</li> <li>Our functioning in work and school</li> <li>Our relationships with family and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand different outcomes for children, young people, adults and older adults</li> </ul>	
	4. Know what works to improve mental health and prevent mental illness within own area of work Understand approaches that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen individuals: positive thinking and behaviour change, personal skills and resilience building, physical health, five ways to wellbeing</li> <li>Strengthen families: preventing adverse childhood experiences, supporting parenting</li> <li>Strengthen communities: empowerment, participation, co-production, social action</li> <li>Create mentally healthy environments and policies: green and public spaces, healthy schools and workplaces, welfare systems, accessible services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the contribution of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and recovery approaches</li> </ul>	

Core principles (PMH L&WD Framework1)	Core content:	Advanced content:	Self-assessment: Fully/partially met or development area
5. Understand your own mental health, what influences it, its impact on others and how you can improve it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the role personal mental wellbeing plays in competent practice and take responsibility for developing and nurturing your own wellbeing and seeking help as appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand that each individual faces different challenges and has different coping resources and experiences</li> <li>Understand what influences mental health in the workplace</li> </ul>	
6. Appreciate that there is no health without mental health and the mind and body work as one system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the links between physical and mental health</li> <li>Appreciate that mental and physical health should be treated equally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be aware of wellness and wellbeing approaches in practice</li> </ul>	
7. Commitment to a life-course approach and investment in healthy early environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the impact of childhood experiences, including trauma, on adult mental health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the importance of pre-pregnancy/peri-natal early years development to lifetime mental health</li> </ul>	
8. Recognise and act to reduce discrimination against people experiencing mental illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand stigma and discrimination and its impact</li> <li>Understand the difference in life expectancy of people experiencing mental health problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for mental health and addressing mental illness as central to reducing inequalities and creating thriving communities and economies</li> </ul>	

VALUES

Core principles (PMH L&WD Framework 1)	Core content:	Advanced content:	Self-assessment: Fully/partially met or development area
SKILLS	9. Communicate effectively with children, young people and adults about mental health  Within your role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage and enable individuals and families to identify the things that are affecting their mental health, now and in the future, and the things they can do to improve it</li> <li>• Enable people to get hold of up to date appropriate information and advice when they need it and access opportunities in their community and digitally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use appropriate tools and approaches that support people to build their skills and confidence in staying mentally healthy</li> <li>• Help people to develop and implement a personal or family action plan to improve their mental health</li> </ul>	
	10. Integrate mental health into your own area of work and address mental and physical health holistically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate and align mental health into your daily practice</li> <li>• Deliver care holistically; through integrating physical, psychological and social factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support people experiencing mental illness to make and maintain informed choices about improving their health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Access information, support and signpost where needed</li> </ul>	
	11. Consider social inequalities in your work and act to reduce them and empower others to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action to reduce inequalities where possible: socioeconomic disadvantage and meeting the needs of the most marginalised</li> <li>• Reduce discrimination faced by people with mental health problems including their physical health needs, access to services and cultural needs of diverse groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support individuals and communities in the articulation of their priorities and advocating for health and wellbeing</li> </ul>	
	12. Support people who disclose lived experience of mental illness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise when someone may be experiencing mental distress, including self-harm and suicidal thoughts and intentions</li> <li>• Link people to appropriate sources of support, to address psychological need and social causal factors</li> <li>• Incorporate the voice of people with lived experience in your work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess risks and follow appropriate procedures and guidelines</li> <li>• Apply an early intervention model (for suicide or mental health)</li> <li>• Engage people with lived experience in service design and co-production</li> </ul>	

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