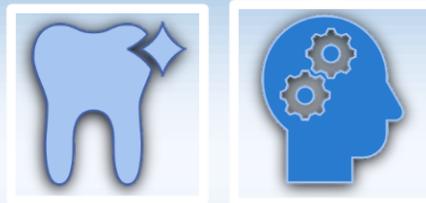




Mental Health Maintenance

Most people take time every day to maintain their Dental health – they brush their teeth at least twice a day and go for check-ups with their dentist to ensure that their teeth don't deteriorate, develop cavities and either hurt or fall out. If only we treated our mental health in the same way. We would then be keeping an eye on our mental health and doing things to prevent ourselves from becoming unwell rather than waiting until we start to struggle to take action.



Mental Health Check- up

Here's a simple tool you can use every day to do your own mental health check-up.

You can use it to see where you are in terms of your own wellness at any given time because if you are not sure where you are starting from it is difficult to know what you need to do to get yourself to where you want to go. Just like taking a trip, if you know you want to get to Cork you need to also know where you are starting from (e.g. Dublin, Galway, Donegal) to plan the most efficient and effective route to get you there.

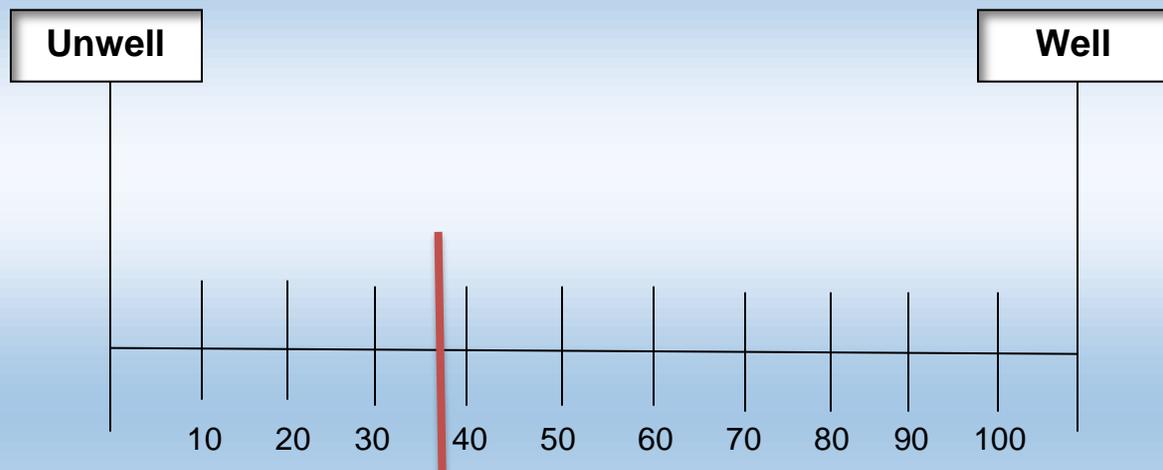
The Wellness Continuum is really just a simple line that runs from 0 where you are feeling at your worst to 100 where you are feeling at your best. We don't stay at 0 or 100 all the time, in fact our wellness moves up and down depending on what is going on in our lives – that's a normal part of everyday life for most people. However, we can



often find ourselves sliding down the continuum and not even realising it or staying at a lower point than we would like, for longer than we would like.

If we take a minute to look at where we are at on the health continuum at any moment in time, we can then consider what we can do to improve our wellness if we're starting to struggle, or to maintain it if we are doing well.

The Wellness Continuum



As human beings we have a negativity bias. That means that we tend to think more negatively than positively, particularly when things are not as we would like them to be. This means that when we start to slide down the Wellness Continuum and to struggle, we can forget all the good stuff that has happened to us in life, the things we enjoy, and the things that can help us feel good. This can result in us dropping further down the line. You can use the continuum to give you more control over your own wellness.

If you look at the continuum at a particular time and note that you are at 38 then it is useful to think about what you can do to improve your wellness at this moment even by one point – to 39. It's not about aiming for 100 as that's too big a jump for anyone to



make, but if you can move to 39, then maybe you can move to 40 and so on. Sometimes it's just about staying where we are and not dropping further down the line.

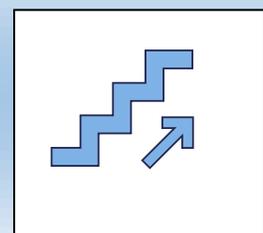


If you find yourself up at 65 or 70 it's about looking at what you can do to keep yourself there or even to improve things even further.

If we keep a constant eye on our wellness and where we are on the wellness continuum each day and put in place strategies to increase our wellness by even just one point, then we can prevent ourselves from tipping into un-wellness and support ourselves to feel better quicker if we do.

What could you do to move yourself up one point on the line?

Have look at the Wellness Continuum and where you are at this moment in time. Now think about what one thing you could do that would help you move up one point on the line. You can make a list of things that you could do by clicking [here](#). You can add to this list over time, but it is really useful to have a list to hand because when we are struggling it can be difficult to remember what works for us, and what will work in one situation won't always work in another.



Developing your own Mental Health Maintenance Plan



Taking a proactive approach to our mental health is as important as, or even more important than it is for our dental health.

Another step you can take is to develop your own Mental Health Maintenance Plan. This is a plan for how you are going to look after your mental health every day rather than waiting until you start to struggle.

Your plan will be unique to you and should contain things that are important for you to do every day to maintain your mental health and things you can do to give it an extra boost. These can double up as tools that you can use to help you move up one point on the Wellness Continuum or to prevent you slipping further down than you'd like.

Things you can do every day to maintain your mental health can be things like eating regular meals or eating certain types of food, drinking enough water, getting some form of exercise, connecting with others, getting a certain amount of sleep, getting fresh air, doing something fun etc. These are things you will benefit from doing every day to maintain your mental health/ wellness.





Mental health boosters can be things like making firm plans to do things you like so you have something to look forward to, reading uplifting books/ watching uplifting movies, visiting places you like, socialising, treating yourself etc. These are additional to the daily maintenance activities and can give you an extra boost.

When we are struggling or under pressure the things that we might now choose to put in our mental health maintenance plan are often the things we let go of. We often reach for sugary foods and caffeine, we might skip meals, stop drinking water, stop taking exercise, stay indoors, isolate ourselves from others, and get less sleep. We can do things that in the long-term can add to our struggle. That's why having a Mental Health Maintenance Plan and using it every day can be useful – it can help us to get into the routine of looking after ourselves, so we are more likely to keep it up when times are tough.

If you write your plan down it is harder to ignore it – you can stick your plan up in a place where you will see it every day or keep it somewhere that you know you will look every day. You can even set reminders for yourself on your phone or computer to remind you of what you can do to maintain your mental wellness, or you can develop a daily checklist that you carry with you. [Click here](#) for worksheets that can help you to develop your own Mental Health Maintenance Plan.

When using the worksheets try to be as specific as possible – the more specific you are the harder it is to kid yourself into not doing the things on the lists.

[Click here](#) for an Impact Sheet you can use to record what worked well for you and what was less useful so you can refine your plan.



Impact Sheet

Mental Health Maintenance and Booster Activities

You can use this sheet to record the effect that using your daily maintenance and mental health boosters has had on you and your mental wellness – this can help to find out what has worked best for you and to encourage you to keep it up. You can record the type of mental health maintenance/ booster activities you did each day and what difference it made to you in terms of how you felt physically and emotionally, what you did and what you thought. This sheet should be filled in at the end of every day so that the effect is clear in your mind.

Date:	What I did	What difference did this make?
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		