

Five Ways to Wellbeing

Evidence suggests that a small improvement in wellbeing can help people to flourish. The centre for wellbeing at nef (the new economics foundation) has developed 'Five Ways to Wellbeing': a set of evidence-based actions to improve personal wellbeing. For more details search for 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' at www.issuu.com.

We think there is lots of opportunity across all sectors to use this simple model.

We've outlined these 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' below, and illustrated how schools, mental health support groups, and outdoor centres have used the John Muir Award to help promote these themes.

nef descriptions

Connect...

Connect with the people around you. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

Be Active...

Discover a physical activity you enjoy and one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

Take Notice...

Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflect on your experiences and appreciate what matters to you.

Keep Learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

Give...

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

Schools

Participating in whole class (and whole year) projects to engage in peer learning. Engaging in collaborative work with teaching staff. Talking to parents/carers and family about experiences.

Exploring school grounds on a scavenger hunt. Rhododendron bashing – cutting, chopping, dragging. Orienteering.

Using Mission:Explore activities. Taking before-and-after and seasonal photos. Keeping a personal Award Record Book. Painting with mud, mapping sounds, and making smelly cocktails.

Producing a photo-journal – learning photography and creative writing skills. Presenting and public speaking. Learning about local biodiversity through nature study.

Creating and tending a wildlife garden. Adopting a beach, as part of a UK-wide initiative. Contributing to a citizen science survey. Presenting Award certificates and saying why they are deserved.

Mental health support groups

Meeting new people and building a community of shared interests and shared purpose. Bonding through common experiences – walks, eating together, discussions.

Walking in new places, experiencing local pathways and nature spots. Woodland tai chi. Outdoor cooking.

Focusing on senses – walking in silence, picking out 5 different smells. Listing wildlife identified on a walk. Group reflective discussions on experiences and feelings that arise.

Building confidence through learning new skills and using tools – willow weaving and woodwork. Writing poems in new, creative formats eg haiku. Learning to work with others through conservation tasks.

Supporting and looking out for each other. Looking after a local wild place, active stewardship for it. Discussing our place in the world around us. Sharing opinions on values and lifestyle choices.

Outdoor centres

Having shared experiences and tackling challenges together, in new and stimulating surroundings. Focusing on teamwork. Trusting each other, in consequential situations such as belaying. Spending time with instructors and seeing them as role models. Participating as equals with teachers. Living together in close quarters – dorms and tents. Sharing meals both inside and outdoors.

Participating in many and varied activities! Hiking and camping amongst mountains, forests, rivers and coasts. Climbing, at various grades. Canoeing, cycling, gorge walking. Working with a 'challenge by choice' ethos.

Weather watching, cloud spotting and stargazing. Finding quiet spots, taking solo time. Increasing awareness of the needs, contributions and achievements of self and others. All contributing to a Group diary. Discussing a communal 4 Challenge Review. Reflecting around the camp fire.

Meeting personal and group challenges – physical, social and emotional. Learning to (support others to) overcome fears. Managing risk, both real and perceived. Learning and improving skills associated with activities. Taking responsibilities for goal-setting, planning and decision-making.

Considering the context of the Conserve challenge and reasons to care for the environment whilst immersed in the outdoors. Actively applying minimum impact/leave no trace principles, considering access rights & responsibilities. Contributing to an in-grounds 'bio-blitz'. Giving (and receiving) personal feedback during and at the end of the week.

What next?

Why not map your own John Muir Award experiences against the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' (or SHANARRI)? Download the Five Ways to Wellbeing app from Google Play, set activities to help you improve your wellbeing, and track your progress.

¹'Five ways to wellbeing' is used by health boards across England. Its themes are comparable to those identified by the Scottish Government as essential for the wellbeing of children and young people: that every child should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/well-being>

