

## Promoting Mental Health in later life

### What needs to be done?

Area	What needs to be done?
Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote age equality, particularly within mental health promotion</li> <li>• Work with the media to improve portrayals of ageing and older people</li> <li>• Educate and train all employees who have direct contact with the public to value and respect older people</li> <li>• Promote intergenerational activities to strengthen understanding and respect between younger and older people</li> <li>• Teach younger people about ageing so that they can prepare themselves for good mental health and well-being in later life</li> </ul>
Participation in meaningful activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the skills and knowledge that older people have to contribute and provide opportunities for older people to share these with people of all ages</li> <li>• Remove or reduce barriers to participation in later life</li> <li>• Promote opportunities for lifelong learning for people of all ages</li> <li>• Help people to take planned flexible retirement</li> </ul>
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise and strengthen the existing positive relationships that older people have with friends, family, neighbours and “significant others”</li> <li>• Tackle fear of isolation and loneliness for people of all ages</li> <li>• Recognise and tackle abuse and violence that affects older people</li> <li>• Provide support to people following bereavement</li> <li>• Recognise the importance of pets and support pet ownership</li> <li>• Recognise the importance of spiritual belief and faith communities and ensure that people are able to access them</li> <li>• Promote social interaction between people of all ages</li> <li>• Include older people in community development initiatives</li> </ul>
Physical health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote holistic definitions of health which include mental as well as physical health</li> <li>• Promote physical activity for people of all ages, including people with disabilities</li> <li>• Provide information, encouragement and opportunities for older people to engage in physical activity and make other healthy lifestyle choices</li> <li>• Promote a healthy diet and moderate alcohol consumption</li> <li>• Improve access to fresh, affordable foods</li> </ul>
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackle pensioner poverty for older people</li> <li>• Give people the choice to keep working in later life to maintain or increase their income</li> <li>• Provide financial and practical assistance to help improve older people’s income</li> </ul>

(Taken from ‘Promoting mental health and well-being in later life’ – A first report from the UK Inquiry into Mental Health and Well-Being in Later Life, Age Concern/Mental Health Foundation)

