

# Strengthening Mental Well-being in Services for Older Persons

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# Focus on mental well-being in old age

- 🌀 Mental well-being/positive mental health as part of good ageing, functional capacity, overall well-being and daily life of older people.
- 🌀 Resource that can be strengthened in all life-situations.
- 🌀 Older people and professionals need knowledge, skills and tools to enhance mental well-being.
- 🌀 Life experience, resilience, resources and strengths of older people.

## Key questions:

- What builds good and meaningful life in services?
- How to support in challenging life situations, losses and changes?



# Mental health competence as a solution in services for older people

Focus on mental well-being/positive mental health, positive psychology and resource-based and solution-focused approach.

## AIMS:

- 🦑 Strengthen mental health competence and skills of professionals.
- 🦑 Deepen understanding of the key factors of mental health competence and ways to enhance mental well-being of older people.
- 🦑 Develop practices, methods and tools for both older people and professionals.
- 🦑 Build cooperation to enhance mental well-being of older people.

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# The cornerstones of promoting mental well-being

## Psychological basic needs

Autonomy

Competence

Relatedness

## Positive psychology

Positive emotions

Engagement

Relationships

Meaning

Accomplishment

## Solution-focused and resource-based orientation

Recognizing human uniqueness

Focusing on what is well and what works

Looking at preferred future

Understanding the power of words and questions

# Project's core was long-term coaching processes for professionals

**14** Municipalities

**74** Participants

**18** Workshop

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**30** Good practices

**3** Focused coaching processes

**1** Materials: guidebook and tools



# Good practices for strengthening mental well-being in services for older people



## Home care

- The importance of respectful communication
  - Recognizing strengths and personal resources
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## Nursing home

- Supporting meaningful daily life
  - Recognising the individual sources of mental well-being
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## Day care services

- The themes of group activities (e.g. emotions, strengths)

# Solution-focused coaching process changes care culture



## **Increased competence of professionals**

- Knowledge on mental well-being increased.
- Skills to support mental well-being of older people strengthened.

## **Positive outcomes**

- "It has been great to get to know the residents in a new way."
- "It's nice to come to work; improved atmosphere"
- "It doesn't always have to be something big"
- "Process has helped the professionals to believe in their own skills and competence."

## **Experiences from the older people**

- "I don't deal with these things on my own."
- "I have new perspectives on life."

## Key learnings

- Mental well-being as a human right and an objective in services and care.
  - Promotion of mental well-being is a basis of high quality care.
  - Knowledge and tools are needed for both older people and professionals.
  - Solution-focused approach empowers and supports mental well-being.
- After all, it is how older people are encountered, their individual strengths recognised and their sense of meaning in life and resilience supported.





## Encouraging words

Words point to where attention is focused. Well-chosen words create hopefulness and promote the feeling of capability in older adults.

- Observe things that go well. Say this out loud.
- Focus on progress and successful things.
- Give positive feedback and encouragement.
- “Thank you for being...”



## The art of asking

By asking questions you can show that you are interested in, and you appreciate older people’s thoughts and opinions. The questions help to observe the situation and they challenge you to hear the older person’s responses.

- What has helped you in particular?
- When can you see that your daily life is going well?
- What things would you like to change?
- Tell me more. Can you give me some details?

As a result of the project material pack was produced: “Mental Well-Being for Older People – Information and Activities for Professionals”. It includes 1) Mental Skills Cards for Older People, 2) Notebook for Professionals and 3) Guidebook on Mental Well-being in Services of Older People. Download from [this link](#) (in Finnish).



**Thank you!**

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References up on request



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