

Activity 1.

Planning meetings on mental health and wellbeing

Discussing mental health and wellbeing in a meeting can be daunting and it is important that all staff feel safe. Some ground rules and structure will help.

Let people know in advance that you are planning the meeting. Invite people to talk to you about it in advance in case they have any questions or are worried about their wellbeing. Make sure that people have access to information about where to go if they want outside help.

Establish ground rules with the group e.g. *"We are going to have a meeting to talk about mental health and wellbeing, but we all need to follow some rules so we can all contribute safely and in confidence"*.

Setting the tone

Say why wellbeing and mental health at work is important eg:

- Because it's important that people feel good about work and life
- Because you value and care for your team
- Because early years work is enjoyable and fulfilling, but it can also be stressful
- Because you want this setting to be the best possible setting for staff
- Because happy staff work better, and we all want this setting to be the best possible setting for our children

If you are leading the discussion, acknowledge that improving standards for staff means identifying areas where you could do better and set an example by confidently taking ownership for mistakes. For example: *"I've always wanted to have more discussion about wellbeing, but it's so busy running this nursery that I haven't found time. But I think that's a mistake, because your work is at the heart of everything we do here, and I want put that right now."*

Some questions in this document may feel personal. Make sure that you create a safe space to discuss them, constructively, without apportioning blame. Focus on *what* caused the problem, not *who*.

Focus on learning; how can we do things even better?

Be appreciative – input and engagement are great resources. Value them.

Let people know that there is a purpose to this: that changes will happen (for example, writing, rewriting or reviewing your staff wellbeing policy).

Structure

Structure brings clarity to everyone. Make sure:

- You give a clear introduction
- You explain the purpose of the meeting
- You are clear about actions, who is doing them and by when.

Ground rules

- Invite ground rules from others
- Allow people to speak
- All ideas are welcome

Remind people at the end that if they need support, they can talk to their line manager or can be signposted to other services.