

Healthy Living Overview

Four parts to help support workers understand healthy living and support person-led change.



Healthy living is about feeling good

It means looking after the whole person - body and mind. Small, steady choices matter more than being perfect.

				
Moving more	Eating good food	Sleep and rest	Relationships	Doing things we enjoy

Healthy living can help people have more energy, feel stronger, feel happier and prevent some health problems.

1 About Healthy Living

Healthy living is about everyday choices that affect health and wellbeing.

- Move more, eat good food, get enough sleep and rest, do enjoyable things, and maintain good relationships.
- Aim for small daily choices - not perfection. These choices can improve energy, strength and happiness, and may reduce sickness or pain.
- Before making changes, talk about why healthy living matters to the person. Listen to their thoughts and feelings.
- Understanding the “why” can build motivation and help the person choose changes that work for them.



Healthy Living and Complex Needs

Accessible information, realistic goals and person-led decisions make healthy change possible.



2 Healthy Living for People With Complex Needs

People with complex needs face a higher risk of preventable health problems and may face extra barriers.

- Preventable problems can include high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, obesity, sleep apnoea, dementia and some mental health issues.
- A person may have many support needs, while supporters may not have enough time to plan for their overall health.
- The person may not have had opportunities to learn about healthy choices or receive support to make a plan.
- Barriers may include difficulty moving, communication needs or sensory needs around food.
- It is important to share accessible information, help the person describe the changes they want, and know who to ask for specialist help.

This takes time. Focus on small, realistic changes in the person's own way and at their own pace.



3 Healthy Habits

Habits are everyday things we often do without thinking. One small change can add up over time.

- Walking 200 extra steps each day adds up to about 50 kilometres in a year.
- Look at moving more, eating well and wellbeing - including relationships and engaging with the world.
- Notice which habits are helping and which are not.
- Change can be stressful. Familiar habits take thought and energy to change.
- Some habits provide comfort or help with anxiety, so decisions to change them need care and must be made together.
- Avoid changing too many things at once. Start with small, achievable changes that can become long-term habits.



From Healthy Habits to Lasting Change

Change works best when it is small, achievable, accessible and led by the person.



4 Supporting Change

People with disability are often told what to do without being part of the conversation. Listen first, understand their choices, and help them make their own plan.

Explore what matters to the person, including their likes, dislikes and the life they want. For people with complex communication needs, use what is already known about their preferences to build a safe plan that works for them.



1 Person-centred conversation

Explore likes, dislikes, strengths, preferences and what matters.

2 Accessible information

Use clear language, pictures or videos so the person can understand.

3 Consider barriers

Identify what may get in the way and plan around it.

4 Plan and prioritise

Support the person to choose what to focus on first.

5 Make a plan together

Agree on actions and make sure the right people know.

6 Reflect and adjust

Check in, celebrate progress and change the plan when needed.

Change is more likely to last when it happens in small steps, builds on what the person already enjoys, and accounts for what makes change hard. Big, sudden resolutions often fail. Healthy change is a lifelong process, not a single event.

Putting it all together

Healthy living is personal. People with disability should lead their own health decisions wherever possible. Supporters help by listening, sharing accessible information, planning together and celebrating progress - not by telling people what to do.

Small steps. Person-led choices. Sustainable change.

