



Mental Well-being Impact Assessment

“A pioneering methodology that enables a wide range of organisations and programmes to identify and demonstrate their impact on mental well-being”

MWIA (Mental Well-being Impact Assessment) provides a structured analysis of how policies, proposals, programmes and projects might influence mental health and well-being. The method is called Mental Well-being Impact Assessment, firstly to reflect its focus on positive mental health and secondly, because it is informed by Health Impact Assessment methods. MWIA is based on a review of the evidence on what factors promote and protect our mental well-being. In particular, it focuses on the social determinants of health and four factors identified by the Department of Health (2001) that are strongly associated with a positive impact on mental well-being. The four factors are:

- Enhancing control
- Increasing resilience and community assets
- Facilitating participation
- Promoting inclusion

The only tool for conducting an MWIA globally has been produced within the UK and has been tested and used within a number of regions and across the world. South London and Maudsley Trust are one of the organisations that have been engaged in developing MWIA and have contributed to the publication of the first Mental Well-Being Impact Assessment Toolkit.

MWIAs have been carried out with:

- Community and regeneration projects such as Time Banks
- Arts projects such as community choirs
- Major programmes such as the European Capital of Culture in Liverpool 08
- Schools – for example on engaging parents and the impact of new policies on staff well-being
- Physical activity programmes such as a clinical exercise group
- Mental health services and projects

The MWIA process is participative and has been found to have the following benefits:

- Engaging a range of stakeholders, including beneficiaries/ people who participate in a programme, to increase awareness and understanding of mental well-being
- Identifying potential positive and negative impacts of a ‘project’ or ‘proposal’ on mental well-being
- Creating set of evidence based recommendations and an action plan for a project to enhance positive impact and minimise negative impacts
- Developing specific indicators (measures) of mental well-being for projects

The MWIA toolkit and MWIAs reports on a wide range of programmes and guidance are available on the Health Impact Assessment Gateway: www.hiagateway.org.uk

For further information on MIWA please contact:

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