

An introduction to women and mental health Discussion guide

1. Overview

In June 2018, the WI passed a resolution calling for better support for people with mental illness, and action to tackle the stigma associated with mental health.

To support WI members in starting and facilitating conversations about mental health, the NFWI, in partnership with Rethink Mental Illness, has developed a series of step-by-step discussion guides.

This guide will cover the topic of women and mental health, and accompanies a video on the same subject which can be downloaded here: thewi.org.uk/s/maketimeformentalhealth

It offers a timed agenda with suggested topics of discussion, as well as external sources of mental health support. It's completely up to you whether you would like to follow the proposed timetable, or use it as a rough guide. If you decide to, please allow approximately 45 minutes.

2. How to use this discussion guide

This guide can be used at WI meetings and events to start a conversation about women and mental health. It is designed to be used in conjunction with the introductory video and video four in which WI member Justine Mason talks about the gender differences in mental health problems. However, it can be used alone.

By providing topics of conversation and a suggested timed agenda, it is intended to help you plan your meeting. However, depending on your interests and what you would like to talk about in your WI you may wish to adapt it. Regardless, please be sure to highlight sources of mental health help and support which are included at the end of this briefing.

To guide the discussion, it can be helpful to select someone in your group to chair it. Their role would be to help your meeting run smoothly by keeping note of the time and reading out each question in the agenda. At the end of the meeting, they may also wish to summarise what was discussed and any key activities the group has decided upon. Neither the chair nor people attending your meeting need to be experts in mental health. However, as the chair, it can be helpful to familiarise yourself with the video and discussion guide beforehand.

Please note, this guide and the video which accompanies it are not intended to substitute medical advice. If someone raises a mental health concern before, during or after your discussion there are lots of professional sources of support you can direct them to. This includes your GP if you have a mental health problem that is not an emergency. Please turn to the end of this briefing for more information.

You might find that the conversation in your meeting touches on mental illness. If it does, and you would like to learn more about this topic, you could contact Rethink Mental Illness to find out whether they have a group locally who could come and talk to your members at a later date. Please email: groups@rethink.org

3. Suggested agenda

Segment	Timings
The chair of your meeting may wish to give a brief introduction to the meeting and outline what they hope members and visitors will be able to take away from the discussion	2 minutes
Play video 1 - Introduction from Ann Jones, NFWI Vice-Chair and Chair of the Public Affairs Committee	2 minutes
Play video 4 - WI member Justine Mason on women and mental health	5 minutes
<p style="text-align: center;">Group discussion</p> <p><i>Depending on the number of attendees, you may wish to divide into smaller groups for the next two sections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What particular challenges do you think women can face to maintaining good mental health? (For example, women tend to be the ‘guardians’ of family mental health, and are more likely to be carers) • What professional resources and/or services are you aware of that could help with these challenges? • Do you think there is a role WI members could play? • What personal attributes could women use to stay mentally healthy? • Are there additional ways that you could support members of your WI and reach out to other women in your community? 	30 minutes
The chair may wish to summarise the discussion and highlight any specific activities or actions the group has decided to take forward. Please take this opportunity to mention where attendees can find out about professional sources of mental health help and support (see below).	5 minutes

4. Sources of mental health help and support

Your GP

GPs are there to help you with your physical and mental health. If you are interested in finding out what to expect from an appointment with your GP and how you can prepare, take a look at the Rethink Mental Illness website (<http://www.rethink.org/>). Click on 'diagnosis & treatment' followed by 'treatment and support'. Then look for 'GP-what to expect from your doctor' down the left hand side of the page.

Rethink Mental Illness Advice Service

Telephone: 0300 5000 927 (Monday to Friday 9:30am – 4pm)

Email: info@rethink.org

Website: <http://www.rethink.org/about-us/contact-us>

The Rethink Mental Illness Advice Service offers practical help on issues such as the Mental Health Act, community care, welfare benefits, debt, criminal justice and carers' rights. They also offer general help on living with mental illness, medication, care and treatment.

Mind Infoline

Telephone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday 9am – 6pm)

Email: info@mind.org.uk

Website: <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>

Mind Infoline provides information on a range of topics including: types of mental health problems; where to get help; medication and alternative treatments; and advocacy. They will look for details of help and support in your own area.

Samaritans

Telephone: 116 123 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: <http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you>

Samaritans is there for anyone who is struggling to cope, no matter who you are or what you're going through. They don't judge, and you don't have to be suicidal to talk to them. You can call Samaritans for free, at any time and from any phone. Their number will not appear on your phone bill. You can also email Samaritans, write them a letter or visit one of their local branches if you would like to speak to someone face-to-face.

Emergency and urgent care

In an emergency call 999.

If you need urgent help or advice there are several options including: visiting A&E; calling NHS 111 (if you are based in England) or NHS Direct Wales on 0845 46 47; and making an emergency GP appointment.