



Growing Well

> ways of noticing our
emotional & mental
wellbeing



Innovative
Resources



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Booklet: Russell Deal • Design: Tim Lane

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Foreword

By Jennifer Lehmann

Attaining and maintaining mental and emotional wellbeing is becoming one of the greatest challenges worldwide. This comes at a time in our history when many people throughout developed countries are more affluent than ever before; yet experience the world as uncertain, risky, competitive and changeable. And for the majority of people who remain living in poverty, there continues to be a sense of vulnerability, exclusion and disempowerment, all of which have profound impacts on wellbeing. For rich and poor alike, the chances of being touched by the problems generated by less than optimum mental health are unacceptably high.

But how do we attain and maintain mental wellbeing? There is no single or simple answer to this question. However, we do know that important contributions to wellbeing lie in having a strong sense of personal identity, in having a sense of meaning in our

lives, and being socially connected. In short, we survive and attain wellbeing through our conversations with others, and through those internal dialogues we have with ourselves.

We know who we are through conversations with family and friends and our memories are significant because they are the stories of our social experiences. Our feelings of being valued and accepted depend on dialogue and connectedness to other people; and we notice things about ourselves largely as a result of sharing ideas, feelings and experiences.

Growing Well stems from attention to, and regard for, the essential nature of conversation and provides us with a seriously optimistic approach to tackling the issues of mental health. The development of this tool was not merely an academic, clinically-focused exercise. Nor is it one of the multitudes of do-it-yourself, simplistic, quick-fix approaches that have infiltrated the market. This is a tool that resonates with the voices of

those who have an intimate knowledge of mental ill-health. The dialogues that lie behind the tool, and have informed its development, bring together the reality of living with the struggle to achieve and maintain mental wellbeing, human service practice wisdom and contemporary research.

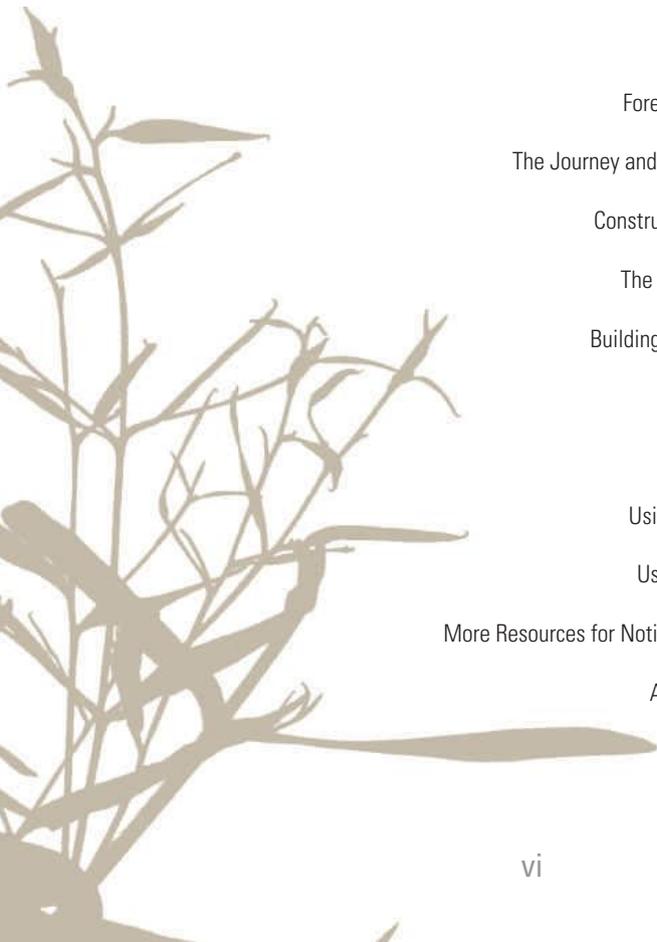
Growing Well is about noticing change within ourselves and others, and provides a foundation for conversations and questions that might otherwise be neglected. Human service workers will find *Growing Well* useful for opening up and establishing ongoing exchanges with people who access their services. This is because the tool enables conversation about the most subtle of changes while remaining grounded in the reality of dealing with mental health issues and measuring change. For those experiencing the impacts of mental illness, the tool echoes the struggles and achievements of others who have generously shared their understanding of what is important in becoming well. Used with the respect and hope that are

essential to wellbeing, *Growing Well* is more than a tool; it offers the potential for artistry to be brought to bear as we strive to find depth and meaning in our lives.

Jennifer Lehmann has a PhD and 30 years experience as a social work practitioner, manager and consultant. She is currently a lecturer in social work at La Trobe University, Bendigo, Australia. She is author of The Harveys and Other Stories, published by Innovative Resources in 2003. In this book Jennifer uses her short stories as tools for encouraging the development of 'reflective practice'.

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THE JOURNEY AND THE THANKS ALONG THE WAY

In 2001, Marg Brooks and Phil Eddy, two creative mental health services managers from St Luke's Anglicare (now a part of Anglicare Victoria), had the vision of developing tools that focused on people's strengths and capacities, rather than on what they couldn't do because of their illness. The mental health rehabilitation environment was moving towards the use of clinical measurement tools that some people felt were more useful to workers than to the people using services. Marg and Phil expressed a wish for respectful, user-friendly, narrative tools that could be used by people accessing mental health services to establish their goals and evaluate and describe their own process of recovery. These tools were to be accessible, jargon-free and most importantly, they were to emphasise strengths and capabilities rather than deficits.

Marg and Phil then sought to develop their idea by initiating a fascinating collaboration between St Luke's Anglicare and La Trobe University (in Bendigo, Australia) called the 'Mental Health Recovery Project'. This project ran from August 2001 to August 2002 with the oversight of a critical reference group consisting of representatives from St Luke's, clients, carers, clinicians and the Department of Human Services.

The aim of the project was to develop user-friendly evaluation tools that would:

- provide quantitative and qualitative data
- acknowledge relative change and goal achievement
- be transferable across workers and recovery-focused mental health services
- complement other tools
- encourage reflection on personal outcomes for clients and the impact of how services operate
- provide for a variety of perspectives i.e. views of clients, carers and relevant workers.

The eventual development of the *Growing Well* kit is due to the vision, energy and dedication of this team.

The literature review, consultations with people accessing services, carers and workers, and the production of prototypes were conducted over six months. A subsequent six-month period was devoted to familiarising staff with the tools, and then trialling and refining them. This is where the dedication of mental health staff at the time—Sylvia Grant, Bill Dower, Patrick O’Sullivan, Rod Healy and Mark Jackson—shone through as they spent time carefully talking to clients and carers to hear their views on what it was like to use a strengths-based tool and to see how carefully this matched their expectations and aspirations. The input from people accessing mental health services was particularly important in the process of developing *Growing Well*; it was they who initially provided ideas and then feedback on the tools.

The project report was completed by Fiona Gardner, Jennifer Lehmann and

Grace Brown with research assistance from Caitlyn Lehmann. This work was done through the Social Work Department at La Trobe University.

The tools that grew out of the project were then implemented and evaluated over a two-year period in an attempt to make them as accessible and effective as possible. The language, the visual imagery and design underwent a number of changes to ensure that they didn’t inadvertently cause offence or create other difficulties.

The team at Innovative Resources then took up a further process of challenging and simplifying the language. Karen Bedford and John Holton joined Russell Deal in the task of creating a tool that might work for mental health professionals, people accessing services and anyone who wishes to actively engage with their own mental health and wellbeing. Hopefully, with society’s emerging awareness of the need to care for our own mental health as much as our physical health, that is everyone!

Step Forbes contributed his valuable print production skills to the project. Tim Lane of Woosh Creative brought his design sensibility and sheer magic to the mix and is responsible for all the visual elements of the cards, pads, booklet and box that make up the *Growing Well* kit.

Jennifer Lehmann's and Fiona Gardner's contributions to this project go well beyond the research and reporting phase in many significant ways. In her foreword to *Growing Well*, Jennifer shares some of the practice wisdom she has gained from her 30 years' experience as a social work practitioner, consultant and educator. Fiona Gardner, who was the head of social work (Bendigo) at La Trobe University, Australia, assisted us with valuable feedback on the early drafts of the booklet.

The *Growing Well* cards, booklet and scaling pads are the end result of this exhaustive process. Other tools that were explored during the mental health project have not been published at this time.

The kit is intended to be a respectful, useful and empowering tool that can complement, rather than replace, other tools that may have a more clinical or quantitative emphasis.

In our experience no tool 'covers all the bases' or is guaranteed to work in all situations. We believe the *Growing Well* kit makes a significant contribution to the mental health field by providing a distinctively different conversation-building approach.

The *Growing Well* kit is no panacea but we believe it meets our criteria for what makes a good strengths-based or 'seriously optimistic' conversation-building tool. These beliefs include:

- There are lots of good tools but no perfect tools.
- Even the best tools are not guaranteed to work.
- Good tools are culturally-relevant.
- Good tools are inclusive and respectful.
- Good tools lead towards enhanced fairness and social justice.

-
- Good tools celebrate the skills and strengths of the learner not the cleverness of the facilitator.
 - The best tools are made by, or shaped by, the learners themselves.
 - Good tools have diverse uses and applications.
 - Good tools do not require experts, detailed instructions or extensive training.
 - Good tools are practical, useful and are catalysts for change.
 - Good tools use plain language and are jargon-free.
 - Good tools can sometimes contain humour providing it is respectful, and neither offensive nor condescending.
 - Good tools demonstrate that the learner is valued through quality design.

We trust that the *Growing Well* cards and scaling pads reflect these principles. We hope that they will form a useful part of your repertoire of tools. Innovative Resources welcomes feedback and is open to possibilities for improving our materials. So, please let us know your thoughts about *Growing Well* and

especially your experiences of using it.

If you would like to explore other tools published by Innovative Resources for working with health and wellbeing, please see *Anxiety Solutions*, *Self-Care Cards*, *Body Signals* and *Next Steps*.

CONSTRUCTING THE GROWING WELL KIT

The Mental Health Recovery Project identified five key themes or ‘dimensions’ of mental health that could be used to measure wellbeing. These five dimensions emerged consistently from the literature, from focus groups and interviews.

These five dimensions are:

1. Social connectedness

This dimension embraces the range of positive relationships that contribute to wellbeing—friendships, family, social groups, neighbourhood and community connections, relationships at work and with professionals and services.

2. Wellbeing and life satisfaction

This includes subjective perceptions of attitudes, beliefs and feelings, and control over these. Wellbeing and satisfaction embraces such components as decision-making, setting appropriate goals and challenges, taking risks, a sense of spirituality and remaining hopeful.

3. Practical day-to-day tasks

Because mental illness can disrupt a whole range of daily living activities, measurement of wellbeing is seen as needing to take into account a variety of practical tasks that vary enormously from person to person but can include: finances, housework, shopping, transport, accommodation, routines, health and hygiene.

4. Activities

Participation in meaningful activities (‘reasons for getting out of bed’) is commonly identified as crucial. Staying active relates to health, self-confidence, motivation, social connectedness and employment.

5. Managing the illness

This dimension relates directly to people’s ability to understand and control their illness. Managing symptoms and maintaining medication are central. But seeking support, professional advice

and developing self-assessment skills are also crucial.

The consistency with which these five dimensions appeared in the literature and emerged from interviews and focus group discussions suggested that they should be the themes around which to build a tool. Because the dimensions overlapped there was scope to place special 'indicators' of wellness in several themes. A comfortable fit of ten indicators that sat with each of the five dimensions soon emerged and this became the basis for the construction of *Growing Well*.

The 'linguaging' of the five dimensions and 50 indicators was a challenge and demanded considerable reflection. Even the terms 'dimensions' and 'indicators' may not be readily understood by everyone. Therefore, in creating a tool based on a card set we have preferred to call them simply 'suits' and 'statements'. Throughout the process of simplifying the language of each of the statements, the development teams

at La Trobe University and Innovative Resources have tried to ensure that:

- the language is plain, simple and accessible
- the tool focuses on strengths not deficits
- assumptions are not forced on people nor stereotypes reinforced
- the tool can be used preventatively when no clinical diagnosis has occurred as well as during formal treatment
- care has been taken to minimise the possibility of giving offence or causing misunderstandings.

THE LIST OF GROWING WELL CARDS

BEING CONNECTED

I am comfortable in my relationships with:

people I live with

my family

my neighbours

my friends

people I see regularly

people who share my
interests and values

key professionals

people who understand me

people who trust me

people I trust

BEING HEALTHY

I stay healthy by:

eating well

sleeping well

thinking clearly

noticing change

asking for help when I need it

having an emergency plan

understanding my medication

maintaining my medication

managing unwelcome thoughts

maintaining balance in my life

BEING ACTIVE

I stay active by:

exercising my body
exercising my mind
being creative
doing things by myself
doing things with others

managing boredom
managing loneliness
managing my feelings
learning new things
doing things I enjoy

BEING SATISFIED

I am satisfied with:

myself
my friendships
my ability to change
my ability to make decisions
how I stay safe

how I take risks
where I live
my sense of purpose and meaning
my goals in life
the progress I am making

BEING ORGANISED

I am organised in:

making appointments
keeping appointments
managing my money
achieving what I want
my daily living tasks

my work
my leisure activities
looking after myself
getting around
planning ahead

BUILDING ON THE STRENGTHS TRADITION

Growing Well was initially created as a conversation-building assessment tool for use by people accessing mental health services. It was informed by a range of assessment tools designed to measure wellbeing, life satisfaction, quality of life and self-esteem. Most of these tools rely significantly on subjective, self-reported data and many have emphasised strengths rather than the deficits, deficiencies, weaknesses and pathologies described at length in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4 (published by the American Psychiatric Association in 2000. A fifth edition was published in 2013)

While starting with people's strengths was inherent within social work from the very beginning, the dominance of the medical model and lack of counter-valuing strengths-based technologies has meant that paradigms of dysfunction have frequently dominated professional

discourse. Consequently, there is a profusion of frameworks, language and tools that describe faults, failures and weaknesses. Despite the rhetoric about holistic approaches and the importance of using client strengths, deficit-saturated approaches continue to prevail.

However, it is heartening to see that strengths-based approaches and strengths assessments can provide an alternative voice—a voice that, hopefully, will continue to inform, complement and challenge these deficit-focused approaches.

Growing Well has attempted to build on the strengths tradition by providing a tool that:

- identifies key indicators of wellbeing and healthy functioning
- emphasises strengths, achievements, and growth
- allows a person to describe and evaluate their personal, relational and environmental assets
- is inherently respectful and empowering

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- uses plain language
 - uses a visual metaphor to build meaning
 - values clients through high quality production
 - does not require an external expert (such as a human service professional) to administer or interpret
 - does not require extensive training
 - builds therapeutic (change-orientated) conversations
 - has a focus on the here and now
 - encourages realistic goal-setting
 - treats people as unique individuals
 - is used in non-prescriptive and non-formulaic ways
 - can be used over a period of time
 - has no hidden or covert components
 - can be directed and owned by the person using the tool
 - allows the person to modify the tool by changing the language, the components and including their own personal stories.

While all the above attributes have significance it is probably the 'ownership' of the tool which is most critical. Whereas most mental health tools are designed primarily for the benefit of the worker and the agency, *Growing Well* is designed to be directly useful to the person using the tool. However, like any tool, it has the potential to be used in inappropriate ways. Therefore, the way it is introduced and implemented is vital.

USING TOOLS RESPECTFULLY

As a strengths-based, self-assessment tool *Growing Well* should only be introduced with the consent of the person or group who will be using it. Many people will be wary of a new and different paperwork tool and undoubtedly some will not want to use it. These concerns must be respected. It would be self-defeating and counter-productive to use *Growing Well* in a coercive or 'power-over' way.

Generally, strengths-based tools require two pre-conditions. One is a trusting and respectful relationship and the other is a willingness to take a risk. These two conditions may take some time to establish. Here are some questions to consider before implementing any part of the *Growing Well* kit.

- Does the physical environment feel comfortable and safe for the person using the tool? Is there privacy so that their confidentiality is protected? Is it their home or a place of their choice?
- Does it hold some clues about the person's strengths, preferences and challenges?
- What are the most useful questions to ask at the beginning of using *Growing Well*?
- Is the person an active participant in the conversation? Is it a two-way conversation in which the person can freely contribute? Can the conversation proceed at the client's pace? What is their concentration span? Do they have the ability to ask for a break or to end the session?
- Can the person progress through *Growing Well* in their own way? Can they decide which cards they want to talk about and in what sequence? Can the conversation move into areas of the person's interest that may be quite removed from the focus of the *Growing Well* indicators?
- Can the person do their own recording? When might it be appropriate that they do this by themselves, and when should

-
- it be done with a carer or worker present? When is it appropriate for other people to do the actual recording? Is it ever appropriate for a professional to complete the scales without the person being present?
- When is it appropriate to challenge someone's perception, reframe or offer an alternative opinion? When a person falls into a negative set how might a strengths emphasis be re-established?
 - Given that strengths assessment is continuous, how frequently should *Growing Well* be offered? What time intervals would allow for optimal comparisons?
 - Is the person comfortable keeping their *Growing Well* record? Do they feel they can keep it safe and confidential? Do they feel confident to add to it without a helping professional being present? When does the professional or agency need a copy? How can this be negotiated?
 - How might the usefulness of *Growing Well* be evaluated? What are some indicators that the tool itself is useful? Does the use of *Growing Well* enervise the conversation? Does it generate curiosity, insight or changed behaviour? Or might the person design their own strengths assessment tool that is more appropriate for their individual needs?
 - What else would be useful? Are there other tools that might complement *Growing Well*? Are there other tools that can build self-esteem, reinforce strengths or increase the user's understanding of their situation?
 - How can *Growing Well* help encourage the user to be their own personal scientist; to maintain a curiosity about their own mental wellbeing and the strengths at their disposal?
 - What are the most useful questions to ask at the end of using *Growing Well*?

NOTICING CHANGE

Central to the *Growing Well* concept is the oft-repeated maxim ‘Change only happens when it is noticed’. *Growing Well* is designed to be an aid or a tool to help ensure that significant change is not overlooked. Change can be slow and incremental; it can be missed if our attention is not drawn to it or if we don’t have the right tools to ‘see’ it.

Noticing change can be more complex than we might first think. It can include:

- naming the behaviour in specific, concrete terms
- creating a device to measure the change
- creating a means of recording the change
- adding the perceptions of significant others to our own
- taking action on the observations
- evaluating the significance of the changes
- celebrating success
- setting new goals.

Equally, not all change is progress. Noticing positive change needs to be complemented by noticing negative change, set backs and deterioration so that ‘slipping back’ can be better understood. And, indeed, noticing a lack of change in either direction—that is, maintaining the status quo—can be very important at times. As one person commented, ‘If I can tell you there’s no change, I’d be the happiest person in the world.’

Also when noticing change it is important to understand that change is seldom linear, sequential or logical. Noticing the ‘one step back’ as well as the ‘two steps forward’ can be vital.

Finally, a person’s perception of their own change needs to be tested against the perceptions of others. In the case of those people facing issues of mental health, the perceptions of carers and workers need to be taken into account. What we see as significant, positive change may be regarded as negative or insignificant by others, and vice versa.

As another person said, 'What is a help to one person is a hindrance to others.'

Therefore, the process of 'noticing change' can include both personal reflection and conversations with significant others. *Growing Well* is designed to encourage both. To do this *Growing Well* incorporates statements written in plain English and a simple visual rating scale. The rating scale uses the metaphor of the growth of a seedling on both the scaling pads and cards.

Words can be substituted if the person using the tool is not comfortable with any of the language or the numerical scale (ie 1-10). Similarly, if the seedling scale does not appeal for any reason, Innovative Resources has developed other visual rating scales in digital form called *The Scaling Kit* that you may wish to consider (see page 23). Please don't hesitate to visit our website to view our comprehensive range of tools: www.innovativeresources.org

Growing Well does not pretend to be a one-size-fits-all tool. It is the process of noticing change that is important, not the tool used. If a person is not comfortable, this in itself can be the centre of a discussion and may generate alternative suggestions for how their change might be noticed. There are a multitude of other forms for noticing change including painting, music, clay, sand play, journalling, creative writing and storytelling.



USING THE GROWING WELL CARDS

The *Growing Well* card set consists of 50 laminated, write-on/wipe-off cards with key statements that can be used as indicators of mental wellbeing. As well as the statement, each card features a scale made up of six small boxes with an illustration inside each box. The illustrations show six stages of a seed growing into a seedling and finally, a tree. Anyone can select a card, read the statement on the card and, if they wish, mark a box (with a non-permanent whiteboard pen) that shows where they feel they are at in relation to the statement. The cards can then be wiped and re-used many times over.

Clearly, not all statements will be relevant to everyone. A therapeutic conversation may be built around a single card or the cards can be sorted according to their perceived relevance. To assist with this, the cards are colour-coded (10 cards in each of the five

suits). By selecting specific cards, users can opt to focus on a particular theme (for example, all the pink cards in the 'Being Healthy' suit).

The *Growing Well* cards can be used in many different settings and ways. They are designed to be used by individuals alone or as conversation-building tools

between a professional and a client, or between colleagues, friends or group members. Apart from the cautions mentioned earlier, there are no rules that dictate how they are to be used. This will vary with the creativity and discretion of

the people introducing them. Here are some suggestions that might spark your imagination:

Spreading and Grouping

Spread the *Growing Well* cards out on a flat surface like a kitchen table so that they can all be looked over quite quickly. The cards can then be categorised or grouped according to a range of possible



themes.

- Which cards are the most important considerations for you?
- Which do you have the most trouble with; which worry you the most?
- Can you group the cards in a number of stacks from least to most difficult to get right?
- Are some cards a challenge now? Have some cards been a challenge in the past? Have some cards never been a challenge?
- Do you expect some cards might be a challenge in the future?
- Which cards would be high priorities for us to concentrate on?
- Which of the cards do you do really well? Might these give us some clues about how to tackle the cards you find more difficult?



- Which cards are you confident to work on by yourself and which ones could you use some help with?

Limiting the Range

At times it will be important to reduce the number of cards used. This might be because of an individual's attention span, the amount of time available, the lack of relevance of some cards or because some of the issues have been dealt with in previous conversations. For example, it may be apparent that one of the five suits should take priority over the other four. This gives 10 pertinent cards to scan, sort and discuss. Of course, a powerful conversation can be built around a single card if the issue it raises is relevant.

Random Choice

Shuffling the cards into a deck, turning them face down and then turning them over one at a time provides an interesting means of introduction. This can add an element of surprise and serendipity to the conversation. The

cards can still be sorted into categories as above, but the sequence of the cards might provide another element to consider.

- What do the first five cards say about you?
- Can you see any patterns emerging from the sequence of cards?
- Can you guess which card you will turn over next? Why?

For Journalling

Many people use journal writing as an important way of recording both their journey through life and as a means of staying healthy.

- Do any of the cards suggest something you would like to write about?
- Are there any words on the cards that spark your imagination or interest you for any reason? Place a word in the centre of a page and circle it. Create a mind-map by placing other circled words that come to mind around it. Draw lines between words to create chains of linked words. Let your



imagination run free with the words and then stand back and see if any significant information has been captured on the page.

- Are any of the statements on the cards very significant for you? Write one of these statements in your journal and use it as a prompt for writing.
- Take a statement from one of the cards that you think is important for you (e.g. 'I stay healthy by eating well') and create a collage of images from magazines and newspapers.
 - Use the same statement as a theme for a poem or short story, or use it as a theme for writing a paragraph each day for a week.
 - Which cards describe an important part of your journey at present?
 - Which parts of your journey are worth recording so that you can look back on them to note how you have grown?
- Write a letter to yourself as if you are 100 years old and now have a great deal of wisdom. Speak very kindly to yourself in this letter.

In Group Work

Sharing stories of struggles and successes is an essential element of many groups. As well as being suitable for personal reflection and one-on-one conversations, *Growing Well* has many applications within small groups. Each member of the group can be asked to pick one or more cards that say something about them.

- What is working well in your life at present?
- What have you achieved recently that you are most proud of?
- What would you most like to be doing differently in the future?
- Do any of the cards name skills that you have that you might be able to teach others?

An alternative for groups is to use a random selection activity by inviting participants to each discuss how they can go about achieving success with each card as it is turned over.



Or the cards might be shuffled and dealt out around the group with each participant invited to talk about the 'hand' of cards they have been dealt, or an individual card from that hand that they would most like to talk about. Each hand can be passed to the next person to continue the discussion or the deck can be reshuffled to start again.

Card of the Day/Card of the Week

With 50 cards in the set, the *Growing Well* cards can provide a daily or weekly reminder of skills we might practise or areas in our lives where we can make improvements.

A card of the day or the week can be put in a prominent place – on a desk, a notice board, a fridge or in a diary – to remind us of some of the significant components of a healthy life. Even if the cards describe activities that come easily to us they can remind us that there is always room for improvement.

USING THE GROWING WELL SCALES PADS

The five suits and 50 statements (10 for each suit) that make up *Growing Well* are available as five gummed, tear-off, A4-sized pads, each with 25 sheets. Each of the statements is accompanied by the same visual rating scale (a seedling growing into a tree) that appears on the cards.

These scaling sheets are simple, practical, highly accessible paperwork tools that can be dated, written on, given away, used over time and included in a case file or service folder, if desired.

People using the pads can do their own recording on each sheet or they can do this in conjunction with a carer, support worker, therapist, clinician or case manager. While originally designed as a self-assessment tool for people accessing mental health services, they

can be used by anyone who wishes to actively engage with their own wellbeing. The scaling pads can thus provide a rich record of a person's self-perceptions as well as a record of the perceptions of significant others over time.



Each of the five suits or dimensions of 'wellness' (Being Connected, Being Healthy, Being Active, Being Satisfied and Being Organised) has a checklist of 10 statements that accompany it (see page 07).

Each statement on the checklist (for example, 'I stay healthy by thinking clearly') is written in plain, simple English giving opportunities for people to maintain their own record of their growth and change.

Sometimes, these pads will be used by individuals in conversations with a professional. The pads can help story a person's journey through their own eyes and through the eyes of the worker, as required.

Completing the checklists can provide a 'snapshot' of how an individual is travelling at a particular time. This can be tested against the perceptions of others. It can also be compared to other snapshots taken at other times to note the changes that have taken place over time. As a record purely of an individual's

own perceptions, the key question is how to make the pads most useful to a particular individual. What is useful to one person may be the opposite for others.

There are no rules laid down for how the pads should be used. All of the suggestions made earlier in this booklet for using the cards can be adapted for use with the pads. As stated earlier, privacy and confidentiality should be negotiated beforehand with a clear statement that there are no hidden meanings and no claims of statistical significance.

Being Active

I stay active by:

1. Resourcing my body
2. Resourcing my mind
3. Being creative
4. Doing things for myself
5. Doing things with others
6. Managing my time
7. Managing my health
8. Managing my feelings
9. Learning new things
10. Doing things I enjoy

The checklist features a grid of 100 small icons, each corresponding to one of the 10 sections. The icons represent various activities and concepts related to staying active.

Being Connected

I am comfortable in my relationships with:

1. People I love
2. My family
3. My long-term
4. My friends
5. People I am regularly
6. People who offer a way to make a positive
7. My professionals
8. People who understand me
9. People who trust me
10. Strangers I meet

The checklist features a grid of 100 small icons, each corresponding to one of the 10 sections. The icons represent various relationship types and concepts related to being connected.

Some questions to consider in introducing the *Growing Well* pads are:

- Is it useful to use only one of the pads per session or all on the one occasion?
 - Is it useful to complete the pads with a professional present?
 - Is it useful to record the professional's perceptions together with those of the person accessing the services?
 - Is it useful to save the completed checklists as a record of the person's journey?
- Is it useful to compare the completed checklists with others completed at different times?
 - Is it useful for others to see the completed checklists? Do you have the person's permission to do this? Are there other people the user of *Growing Well* wants to involve in observing their growth and change?
 - Is it useful to go slowly and allow the individual's stories to emerge and to follow these even if this means the checklist is never completed?



The style of the *Growing Well* pads is designed to integrate with client-directed, client-owned case recording systems. (Please see Wayne McCashen's book called *The Strengths Approach*, published in 2017 by Innovative Resources for a description of service folders as they are used in strengths-based social work practice.)

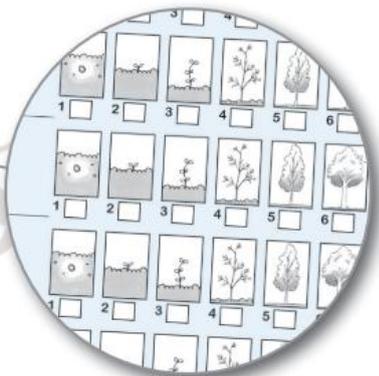
Client-owned recording systems are based on the understanding that the ownership of any records of service delivery rests with the person accessing the services. They are the ones who should have maximum input into, and control over, any record-keeping that is required by a human service professional or organisation. If such a system is adopted it is suggested that clients keep the originals of their completed checklists and workers keep a photocopy.

Being Satisfied *Growing Well*

I am satisfied with:

1. Myself
2. My relationships
3. My ability to change
4. My ability to make decisions
5. How I feel about
6. How I feel about
7. Where I live
8. My sense of purpose and meaning
9. My goals in life
10. The progress I am making

The form features a grid of 10 rows and 6 columns of icons. Each icon depicts a different stage of a plant's growth, from a seedling in a pot to a fully developed tree. The icons are arranged in a grid that corresponds to the 10 items on the left.



MORE RESOURCES FOR NOTICING STRENGTHS AND CHANGE



The Scaling Kit DVD or web-based app

Of course, monitoring progress is an essential part of any therapeutic practice or learning program. Innovative Resources has published a range of simple, interactive scales to support this process of measuring change. Each of these images appears on a DVD or web-based app and can be used to measure where we are at with the *Growing Well* statements (e.g. 'I am organised in managing my money').

Each digitally interactive image consists of a simple line drawing with a moveable scale. This is an empowering and accessible way for people to measure and communicate their moods, progress and wellbeing, even when words may be hard to find.

The ten visual metaphors in this digital kit are: Balance, Circle, Ladder, Pathway,

Pendulum, Rating Wheel, Sun Up/Sun Down, Thermometer, Ups and Downs and Water Tank.

- write in the notes page or directly on the image
- circle or underline key words
- draw shapes, symbols, or any other images
 - to help illustrate the conversation
- save and print at anytime, if your device allows
- send via email and add to client records as desired.

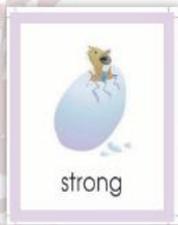
- Human resource professionals can use the scales to evaluate job satisfaction.
- If, on a feeling scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is very sad and 10 is very happy), you are currently a 3, what would it take for you to move to a 4?

Strength Cards



The original *Strength Cards* was the first card set produced

by Innovative Resources and it has been used by thousands of family workers, teachers, counsellors, trainers and parents worldwide. The current edition of 54 cards or stickers combines simple, positive words with



light-hearted graphics to reinforce the important principle that we all have strengths, and that our strengths are our best resources for tackling difficulties.

- Thinking of someone dear to you, what are three of their strengths?
- What are three of your strengths?
- What strengths did you use this morning to get out of bed and start your day?
- Thinking of a challenge you have faced in the past, what strengths did you draw on? How might you draw on these again now?
- Thinking about a goal that you have, what strengths will you want to draw on?
- Which cards do you think are really important strengths for each of the suits in *Growing Well* (Being Healthy, Being Active, etc)?

ABOUT INNOVATIVE RESOURCES

St Luke's Innovative Resources is part of Anglicare Victoria, a community services organisation providing child, youth and family services in Victoria and New South Wales, Australia. We publish card sets, stickers, books, and digital and tactile materials to enrich conversations about feelings, strengths, relationships, values and goals. Our resources are for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, ability or age. They are used by counsellors, educators, social workers, mentors, managers and parents. We also offer 'strengths approach' training and 'tools' workshops, both online and in-person.

www.innovativeresources.org





This set of 50 cards is a self-evaluation tool that identifies five key indicators of mental health:

- Being Organised
- Being Satisfied
- Being Healthy
- Being Connected
- Being Active

There are 10 cards in each of these colour-coded suits. Each card features a statement and a scale of a seed growing into a tree which people can use to evaluate how they are doing. Monitoring over time builds self-awareness and places the client at the centre of tracking their own mental health.



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