

Using the '6 pillars' in consultations

(BSLM accessed March 2024, Future Healthcare Journal 2023;10(3):226-31, RCGP GPwERLM Framework 2024, pragmatism and Red Whale team experience)






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Incorporating the '6 pillars' into our clinical assessments

Establish which pillar(s) the person is ready to change (or interested in discussing).

In the context of a typical NHS consultation, we would probably not have time to address ALL these areas; you might prioritise based on what matters most to the person in front of you. *These questions are of a general nature and reflect those the Red Whale team has found useful – you will have your own.*

Pillar	Explore...	Types of question we might ask...
 Nutrition	Diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What food do you eat on a typical day (<i>types and quantity</i>)? Do you have any dietary restrictions, preferences or allergies? When do you eat (<i>frequency, meals, snacks</i>)? A food diary may help!
	Hydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your fluid intake across the day? What types of drinks do you consume (<i>be aware of sugar, caffeine and alcohol here</i>)? Do you have to restrict fluid intake for any reason (<i>e.g. heart failure, incontinence concerns</i>)?
	Supplements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you use any nutritional supplements?
 Physical activity	Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type(s) of physical activity do you do at the moment (<i>aerobic, strength, balance, flexibility</i>)? How often do you do these activities, and for how long? Have there been any recent changes in your activity levels? Do you have any restrictions on physical activity?
	Occupational activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you do for a job? What kind of physical activity does that involve? How much time do you spend sitting or standing at work? Do you have any physical challenges at work?
	Sedentary time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much time do you spend sitting down? How much screen time do you have each day? Have you taken any steps to reduce sedentary behaviour?
 Sleep	Sleep patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many hours sleep do you get, on average, each night? How easily do you get to sleep? How long does it take? How well do you sleep (<i>ask about quality, e.g. restless or disrupted</i>)? Do you use a sleep tracker? Do you have any diagnosed sleep disorders (<i>e.g. obstructive sleep apnoea, restless legs</i>) or concerns about your sleep?
	Sleep hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your morning and evening routine? How do you use electronic devices around bedtime, and when do you stop? Ask about caffeine, alcohol and other environmental factors that may affect sleep.

We make every effort to ensure the information in these pages is accurate and correct at the date of publication, but it is of necessity of a brief and general nature. The information presented herein should not replace your own good clinical judgement, or be regarded as a substitute for taking professional advice in appropriate circumstances. In particular, we suggest you carefully consider the specific facts, circumstances and medical history of any patient, and recommendations of the relevant regulatory authorities. We also suggest that you check drug doses, potential side-effects and interactions with the British National Formulary. Save insofar as any such liability cannot be excluded at law, we do not accept any liability for loss of any type caused by reliance on the information in these pages. March 2024. For full references see the relevant Red Whale articles.


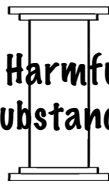

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Pillar	Explore...	Types of question we might ask...
 <p>Mental wellbeing</p>	Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What matters most to you about your health or life now? • What values are most important to you?
	Stressors and life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any major stressors in your life? • How do you tend to cope with this stress? • <i>We might use a 'wellness wheel' as a visual guide – perhaps as homework!</i>
	Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any tools you use to help you manage stresses, e.g. <i>mindfulness, relaxation techniques?</i> • How frequently are you able to practise these?
 <p>Harmful substances</p>	Smoking/ tobacco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking, tobacco and e-cigarette use history. • Have you previously tried to quit? What helped? What got in the way?
	Alcohol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you drink alcohol? How often and how much? • <i>Consider FAST or AUDIT scores (read more in the 'Alcohol' article).</i>
	Illicit drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you currently or have you ever used recreational drugs? If yes, type, frequency, etc.? • Have you ever participated in any rehabilitation programmes?
	Pornography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about consumption patterns, and whether they have any concerns about this. • Ask about impact on intimate relationships. Are they able to talk about it within their relationships? • Do they wish to modify their consumption? • Have you ever tried to cut down or stop? Would you want to?
	Gambling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often to you take part in gambling? • Have you experienced any negative financial consequences, or impact on your personal relationships or professional life?
	Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you use social media? • How do you use it, e.g. time spent, frequency of checking notifications (<i>looking for compulsive or addictive behaviour</i>)? • Do you notice any impact on your mood or mental health? • Do you take any actions to maintain a healthy balance with use?
 <p>Healthy relationships</p>	Social connection, relationships and support system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about the relationships in your life (<i>quality and quantity</i>)? How robust is your support network? • How do your relationships support your physical and mental wellbeing? • Are there any challenges or conflicts in your personal relationships that you would like to talk about?
	Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you find expressing your thoughts and feelings? • How do you find listening to others, and being able to communicate with them and understand how they might be feeling (<i>explore empathy</i>)?
	Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your boundaries/red lines, etc.? • How is it for you when you have to assert these boundaries? • Tell me about any challenges with this...