

What's Heavy Today

A quick check-in for identifying what feels hardest right now and choosing one place to begin.

WHO LEADS IT

Case manager, DSP, or group home administrator

TIME

5–10 minutes

YOU'LL NEED

This sheet + a pen

How to use this check-in

- 1 Pick a calm moment.** Sit side by side if you can. Ask, "Can we take a few minutes to check in?" If the answer is no, that's okay — offer another time.
- 2 Read each question out loud.** The person can point, circle, tell you, or have you mark it for them. Words, pictures, and gestures all count.
- 3 Listen more than you fix.** Reflect back what you hear: "So money feels the heaviest today." Don't argue with how heavy something feels.
- 4 Choose ONE place to begin.** Not everything at once. The person makes the choice; you can offer the options on page 3.
- 5 Set a check-back time and keep it.** Following through is what builds trust. Use page 4 to track check-backs over time.

Helpful things to say

- "There are no wrong answers."
- "We don't have to fix it all today."
- "You can stop anytime."
- "What would help, even a little?"

Try to avoid

- "It's not that bad."
- Rushing to solve the problem
- Choosing for the person
- Adding your own worries to their list

If something serious comes up

If the person shares that they are being hurt, are unsafe, or may hurt themselves or someone else, pause the check-in, stay with them, and follow your agency's incident and reporting procedures right away. This tool is a conversation starter — not an assessment, diagnosis, or crisis plan.

HOW IT FOLLOWS THE BRIDGE METHOD

See

Q1 · How heavy

Sort

Q2–3 · What & which one

Support

Q4 · Where to begin

Sustain

Q5 + page 4 · Check back

My Check-In

Name or initials _____ Date _____ With _____

1 How heavy does today feel?

Point to one.

1  Light	2  A little heavy	3  Heavy	4  Very heavy	5  Too heavy right now
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2 What feels heavy right now?

Circle as many as you want. There are no wrong answers.

 My body sick, hurting, tired	 Sleep too little, too much	 My feelings sad, worried, mad, scared
 People in my life family, friends, partner	 Where I live housemates, my room	 Staff or helpers changes, not getting along
 Money not enough, spending	 Work / day program too much, too little	 Getting places rides, the bus, being late
 Food meals, hunger, choices	 Appointments doctor, meetings, forms	 Missing someone someone gone, a change
? Something else: _____		

3

Which ONE feels the heaviest?

Put a star on it on page 2 — or say it, and write it here.



4

Where do you want to begin?

Pick one. You can change your mind later.



Talk about it

Say more with someone who listens



Make a small plan

Break it into one or two steps



Ask for help

Bring in someone who can help



Fix one small piece

Start with the easiest part



Calm down first

Breathe, music, a walk, quiet time



Rest, then try again

Come back to it later today



Learn more about it

Get information or answers



Wait and check again

Not today — and that's okay

5

My one small step

Something small enough to do soon.

Today I will: _____

Who will help me: _____

We will check back on: _____



You don't have to carry it all at once.

Picking one piece is a real start.

Staff Wrap-Up

Record only what your agency's documentation policy allows. Use the person's own words, not your interpretation.

Date

Staff (first name)

How heavy (Q1):

1

2

3

4

5

1 = light · 5 = too heavy right now

Heaviest thing, in their words:

Where they chose to begin (Q4):

Small step agreed (Q5):

Who's helping:

Check back on:

Anything need follow-up?

- ☐ No follow-up needed

☐ Shared with supervisor

☐ Added to team meeting

☐ Followed agency reporting procedure

☐ Updated plan or schedule

☐ Referred to:

Check-back log

When you check back, ask: How did the small step go? · Does it still feel as heavy? · Same place to begin, or a new one?

Date	Heavy (1-5)	Step tried — how it went	Next step