

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING HANDBOOK

OF



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ABOUT THIS MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING HANDBOOK

Date on which this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook issued	March 2021
What is the purpose of this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook	The Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook introduces temporary measures guidance, policies, procedures and tools so that the Company can take all reasonable steps to safeguard the mental health of all staff during the worldwide pandemic.
Duration of this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook	The Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook applies whilst there is presence or ongoing risk (including but not limited to risk or threat of return or further wave) of a global or national epidemic/pandemic resulting in social and/or trading restrictions and will remain in force until the Company notifies all staff of the cessation of this policy.
Why do we need this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook?	Following the recent COVID-19 outbreak, the Company is having to take exceptional and unprecedented measures not only to safeguard not only the physical but also the mental health of all staff.
Contractual status of this policy:	Non-contractual. Continued employment after receipt will be deemed acceptance of the temporary variations contained within this document. This procedure does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.
Which business units does this policy cover?	All business units, locations and group companies.
Who does this policy apply to?	This policy covers all staff, including employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and internal agency or temporary workers.
Which staff members are responsible for, and which can enforce this policy?	The Group HR & Compliance Director has overall responsibility for the effective operation and implementation of this policy. Managers have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook and all members of staff are responsible for supporting colleagues and ensuring its success.
Associated policies to refer to:	Health and safety policy Flexible working policy Lay-off and short-term working policy Sickness absence policy Disciplinary policy Equality & diversity policy Temporary holiday (annual leave) policy Whistleblowing policy Data protection policy
If I have a query about this policy, who do I speak to?	Group HR & Compliance Director If your complaint concerns the Directors application of this policy, your complaint should be raised with the CEO.

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Review details:	We will review this policy frequently to ensure that it reflects appropriate standards and continues to meet our needs. The next review date is set as January 2022.
Breach of policy	Staff acting contrary to this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook may be put at risk their own mental health and the mental health of their colleagues and families. All staff are therefore responsible for notifying the Directors or their line manager, if they believe that there has been a breach of this Mental Health & Wellbeing handbook or if they are concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of any of their colleagues.

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SECTION 1 – ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING HANDBOOK

What is this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook?

The Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook is a non-contractual temporary Handbook which runs alongside the Company's COVID-19 handbook and Company handbook.

The purpose of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook

The Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook introduces temporary measures guidance, policies, procedures and tools so that the Company can take all reasonable steps to safeguard the mental health of all staff during the worldwide pandemic.

The Company's objectives of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook

The Company's objectives in issuing this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook are as set out below:

- To raise awareness of the mental ill health generally and within the workplace;
- To demonstrate an understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on mental health;
- To safeguard the health and safety of staff during the impacted period;
- To encourage staff to take positive steps to safeguard their own mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19 and the impacted period;
- To encourage staff to display positive behaviours towards themselves and colleagues during the impacted period;
- To put in place additional measures to monitor and support staff throughout the pandemic and impacted period;
- To safely manage change once the pandemic is over and the additional measures set out in this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook and the COVID-19 Handbook are no longer required.

The duration of the measures referred to in the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook

The Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook will remain in place whilst the following:

- There is presence or ongoing risk (including but not limited to risk or threat of return or further wave) of a global or national epidemic/pandemic;
- Social and/or trading restrictions continue to be in place;
- The Company continues to be impacted by COVID-19 in any capacity.

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Amendments to the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook

The Company reserves the right to amend the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook and those initiatives referred to within the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook at their complete discretion. Reasonable notice will be provided of any and all amendments to the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook or changes to the initiatives put in place as part of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook or Plan.

Withdrawal of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook

The timing of the withdrawal of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook will be determined by the Company. Reasonable notice will be provided with the withdrawal of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook and all initiatives referred to with the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook or subsequently implemented as part of a formal Review.

Consequence of not following the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook

Staff acting contrary to the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook may be put at risk their own mental health and the mental health of their colleagues and families.

Depending on the seriousness or impact of the failure to follow guidance or measures put in place by the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook may result in disciplinary proceedings.

All staff are therefore responsible for notifying the Directors or their line manager, if they believe that there has been a breach of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook or if they are concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of any of their colleagues.

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SECTION 2 - RAISING AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candour, and more unashamed conversation.” Glenn Close

Paying attention to workplace mental health has never been more important. The pandemic has affected our lives and brought change and uncertainty. The way employers view workplace wellbeing is changing. The focus is shifting from reactive management of sickness absence to a more proactive approach of prevention through promoting wellbeing and improving employee engagement. We are looking at new ways to address staff wellbeing and support all our employees to manage their mental health and wellbeing at work.

Understanding mental health – definitions

Common mental health problems

“1 in 5 people have dandruff. 1 in 4 people have mental health problems. I’ve had both.” Ruby Wax

Common mental health problems include depression, anxiety, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). These make up most of the problems that lead to one in four people experiencing a mental health problem in any given year. Symptoms can range from the comparatively mild to very severe.

For more Types of Mental Health Problems and definitions of these please see Appendix 1.

COVID-19 related mental health problems

“When lockdown began, everything felt surreal...I was one of the lucky ones – I could work from home...I’ve always lived with depression and anxiety, but the easing of lockdown has exacerbated my conditions.”
Seren, July 3, 2020, Time to Change

COVID-19-related mental health problems are newly occurring mental health conditions and exacerbated pre-existing mental health conditions triggered by the stressors of COVID-19. These conditions could include increased levels of alcohol and drug use, insomnia and anxiety.

COVID-19 itself can lead to neurological and mental complications, such as delirium, agitation, and stroke. People with pre-existing mental, neurological or substance use disorders are also more vulnerable to SARS-CoV-2 infection (the virus that causes COVID-19) and they may stand a higher risk of severe outcomes and even death. (Source: World Health Organisation)

Disabled person

A disabled person in the workplace is defined someone who has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long term advised effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Emotional Resilience

“Resilience is a muscle. Flex it enough and it will take less effort to get over emotional punches each time”
Alecia Moore (Pink)

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Emotional resilience is the ability to bounce back and recover from hard situations. Developing emotional resilience means a person is more able to adapt in difficult times and move towards solutions.

Less common mental health problems

“It is okay to have depression, it is okay to have anxiety and it is okay to have an adjustment disorder. We need to improve the conversation. We all have mental health in the same way we all have physical health.”

Prince Harry

Less common conditions like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder can have a big impact on people’s lives: it may be harder to find appropriate treatment and, as understanding tends to be lower, people may face more stigma. However, many people can live with and recover from these diagnoses and manage the impact on their life well.

Mental health

“Regardless of who you are or what you do for a living or where you come from, it doesn’t discriminate, we all kind of go through it.” Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson

The mental health charity Mind, describes wellbeing as a dynamic mental state. This means it can change depending on circumstances which is entirely relevant to the current pandemic.

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health, and how we feel can vary from good mental wellbeing to difficult feelings and emotions, to severe mental health problems.

Mental health problems

“Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of, but stigma and bias shame us all.” Bill Clinton

We all have times when we struggle with our mental health, but when these difficult experiences or feelings go on for a long time and affect our ability to enjoy and live our lives in the way we want to, this is a mental health problem. You might receive a specific diagnosis from your doctor, or just feel more generally that you are experiencing poor mental health.

Mental Wellbeing

“If you take care of your mind, you take care of the world.” Arianna Huffington

Mental wellbeing is the ability to cope with the day-to-day stresses of life, work productively, interact positively with others and realise our own potential.

Neuro-divergence and mental health

“Great minds think differently” Amanda Armstrong, CEO with autism

Neurodiversity is the different ways the brain works to interpret information. Most people are neuro-typical, meaning that the brain functions and processes information in the way society expects but more than 15% of the UK population are neuro-divergent – they learn and process information differently. Employers are increasingly recognising the benefits of neurodiversity in the workplace. There is growing awareness of the skills and strengths of employees with neurodevelopmental conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, ADHD and Asperger’s.

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Not all disabilities are visible and neuro-diverse employees are statistically more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression. Essentially, neuro-diverse employees are already operating in a neuro-typical world that is not an ideal fit for them, their baseline for stress is, therefore, higher than neuro-typical employees.

Poor mental health

“For a long time I used to think that soldiers don’t go through that. You know? Like, strong people in life, the bravest, the most courageous people, they don't go through that, they just get on with it... and that’s not the case.” Stormzy

Poor mental health is a state of low mental wellbeing where you are unable to realise your own potential, cope with the day-to-day pressures of life, work productively or contribute to a community.

Work related stress

“All I want is to do well at work – I have a right to mental health support. I am a 38-year-old male, I would and have always been described as one of the lads. I love footy, enjoy a beer and a boisterous lifestyle and I have been diagnosed with depression.” Joseph, April 6, 2019, Time to Change

Work-related stress is defined by the Health and Safety Executive as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work. Stress, including work-related stress, can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as increased capacity for error. Stress is not a medical diagnosis, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or more severe mental health problems.

Wellbeing Action Plans (WAP)

The Wellbeing Action Plan is inspired by Mary Ellen Copeland’s Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®): an evidence-based system used worldwide by people to manage their mental health. WAPs are a personalised, practical tool we can all use – whether we have a mental health problem or not – to help us identify what keeps us well at work, what causes us to become unwell, and how to address a mental health problem at work should you be experiencing one.

Understanding Good Mental Health

“I make it a point to practice self-care. I make an appointment with myself.” Dr. Manisha Singal, doctor on the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19

Individuals with good mental wellbeing can:

- Feel and express a range of emotions
- Feel engaged with the work in general
- Feel relatively confident in themselves and positive self esteem
- Live and work productively
- Cope with the stresses of everyday life
- Adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

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- Preventing mental ill health
- Building resilience
- Promotion of positive mental attitude and practices
- Maintain productivity, motivation and energy
- Promotes good self-esteem and healthy habits

Poor mental health also has an effect on the body and has been linked to cancer, heart disease and respiratory infections. Keeping the mind healthy also helps you physically!

Understanding the symptoms of poor mental health problems

Here are some of the indicators of poor mental health to look for:

Physical

- Fatigue
- Visibly often tired
- Headaches or backache
- Change in sleep pattern
- Sweating/constantly feeling cold
- Appetite
- Rapid weight changes
- Digestive problems
- Visible tension

Psychological

- Anxiety or distress
- Mood changes
- Feeling low
- Indecision
- Lack of focus
- Loss of motivation
- Distraction or confusion

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- Irritability
- Short temper
- Loss of humour
- Increased sensitivity
- Tearfulness
- Lapses in memory
- Difficulty relaxing
- Restlessness

Behavioural

- Increased smoking and drinking
- Substance misuse
- Withdrawal/isolation from other staff
- Resigned attitudes
- Nervous habits
- Increased sickness absence
- Uncharacteristic errors
- Intense or obsessive activity
- Risk taking
- Working longer hours
- Disruptive or anti-social behaviour
- Irritability, anger or aggression
- Inconsistent or impaired performance
- Procrastination
- Reduced quality of work

It is typical that you may experience common response feelings of worry, concern and anxiety due to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. If you have pre-existing poor mental health, you might suffer exacerbated symptoms.

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SECTION 3 – UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Impact of COVID-19 on mental health

The impact of the COVID-19 on mental health has the potential to be far reaching.

As early as June 2020 mental health charity Mind, declared a mental health state of emergency in the UK based on their survey findings. (Source: [the-mental-health-emergency_a4_final.pdf \(mind.org.uk\)](#))

Some of the key findings by Mind were as set out below:

- More than half of adults (60%) and over two thirds of young people (68%) have said their mental health got worse during lockdown.
- Young people and those with experience of mental health problems are particularly affected, more likely to see their mental health worsen because of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Many without previous experience of mental health problems have experienced poor mental health during lockdown and have seen their mental health and wellbeing decline.
- Employees who had been furloughed also reported a slight decline in their wellbeing compared to others.

In addition to the above, Mind’s early research into the health impacts of lockdown report:

- fatigue
- musculoskeletal conditions
- poor work life balance
- reduced exercise
- increased alcohol consumption

In relation to mental health specifically, Mind confirmed employees report:

- reduced motivation
- loss of purpose and motivation
- anxiety
- isolation

Mind also observed that evidence from previous quarantine situations, prior to the current pandemic, suggests that there are likely to be long lasting effects on mental health:

- irritability
- anger

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- depression (possibly long term)
- post-traumatic stress (possibly front-line workers)

Impact of COVID-19 on employees

It is then critically important to understand the additional stresses and pressures caused by COVID-19 so that we can support you through difficult times.

Factors causing stress pre-pandemic

A survey completed **before** the pandemic (source: CIPD 2020) confirmed the most common causes of stress at work were:

- Workload / volume of work
- Non work factors – relationship/ family
- Relationships at work
- Non work factors - Personal illness/health issues
- Pressure to meet targets and deadline

You should also be aware that additional factors are causing increased stress at work **because** of the pandemic (COVID-19 stressors). These are listed below:

- Bereavement
- Caring responsibilities
- Home schooling
- Key worker in household
- Isolation
- Work apportionment
- Loss of income (or lower income)
- Financial concerns
- End of flexible working and return to the workplace
- Using public transport for commuting
- Lack of routine

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- Irregular and long hours of work
- Combining work with home-schooling and other family and caring responsibilities
- Pre-existing mental health condition & disabled persons
- Neuro-divergence

List of common concerns and feelings

Everyone’s responses to the pandemic will be different and influenced by a wide range of risk factors including vulnerabilities within the family, change in job roles, threat of redundancy, skill shortages, social networks, and current and previous experience of loss, bereavement, and illness. Some people are likely to be significantly affected by factors that increase the risks and challenges posed by COVID-19 (e.g., being from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic [BAME] background).

Here is a list of common concerns and feelings you might have:

- *Fear of exposure to COVID-19*
- *Psychological work-related stress*
- *Concerns related to financial pressures*

Other emotional reactions

- Irritation about colleagues’ varying interpretations of risk at home and at work
- Frustration/discomfort at having to wear PPE and the effects on job performance
- Grief due to bereavement or other losses (e.g., teams, colleagues, or roles)
- Sadness about returning to the workplace having found pleasure in working from home
- Feeling emotionally exhausted, numb, lacking enthusiasm or engagement
- Feeling disempowered and that things are out of your control

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SECTION 4 – WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

If you recognise some of the symptoms, feelings and responses in yourself, your colleagues or others, we recommend you consider the following advice and guidance:

Yourself

- Report to your line manager to HR so that we are aware that you may need additional support
- Seek medical assistance from your GP
- Contact a counsellor
- Consider whether you are well enough to work
- Make sure you are following your WAP and set yourself wellbeing targets
- Review the company's Top Tips and engage with them

Colleagues

- Engage with your colleague, ask how they are and if everything is ok
- If you continue to be concerned, report your concerns to your line manager, HR or a Mental Health First aider
- Do not discuss your concerns with other colleagues as this is likely to be a sensitive and confidential matter. Leave the concerns with us and continue to focus on your own wellbeing
- Should you continue to be concerned about your colleague, we recommend you report the matter again to your line manager, HR or a Mental Health First aider

Family, friends or other

- Be aware that this could be impacting on your mood, mental health and wellbeing
- Report to your line manager to HR so that we are aware that you may need additional support
- If necessary, seek medical assistance from your GP
- If necessary, contact the Company's counselling line and / or a counsellor
- Make sure you are following your WAP and set yourself wellbeing targets
- Review the company's Top Tips and engage with them

Also remember that it is good to talk to people and to share that you may be struggling or concerned with others. Should you however choose to discuss matters with your colleagues, ensure they are trusted.

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SECTION 5 – CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COMPANY’S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN

The Employees legal responsibilities

With regard to health and safety, you have a legal obligation to take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of other persons.

The Company’s legal responsibilities

Implied duties

We have a common law duty to provide safe equipment, a safe workplace and safe systems of work.

Legislation – Health and Safety At Work Act 1974

In addition, we must comply with section 2 (1) Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which requires us to “ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work” of our employees.

Our legal obligation is therefore to take all steps “reasonably practicable” to safeguard both **physical and mental health** in the workplace.

Legislation – Disability Duty not to subject employees to disability discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 protects disabled persons from being subject to discrimination states that the employer has a duty not to discriminate.

The duty not to discrimination against a disabled person includes the following types of discrimination:

- Direct discrimination
- Indirect discrimination
- Unfavourable treatment arising in consequence of disability
- Harassment
- Victimisation
- Failure to make reasonable adjustments

Government industry guidance for mental health

The Thriving at Work UK Government report sets out 6 standards or actions for us to support mental health and mitigate the risks associated with the escalating cost.

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The six standards:

1. Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan
2. Develop mental health awareness among employees
3. Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling
4. Provide your employees with good working conditions
5. Promote effective people management
6. Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing

The above standards can be found in the report via the following link:

[Thriving at Work: the Stevenson/Farmer review on mental health and employers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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SECTION 6 - THE COMPANY'S MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN

Even with the global administration of vaccinations, the predictions are that we will all be living with COVID-19 and its restrictions for some time to come. When making a plan, we need to take into account everyone's resilience now and in the future. Of course, with COVID-19, it is impossible to predict with certainty what will happen but this cannot and should be used as an excuse for us not managing our mental health and wellbeing at work. Individual needs will vary but, when COVID-19 and its restrictions lower or disappear, we will all need re-energising and support when returning to the "new norm".

The plan will include the following:

- The duration of the plan;
- Its objectives and intentions for each quarter;
- The impact of COVID-19 on the business, industry and workforce;
- What COVID-19 adaptations in the workplace will be adopted permanently;
- The Actions being taken by the business to safeguard, monitor, support, re-energise and motivate staff throughout the year;
- A month-by-month planner;
- Regular reviews and updating the plan as and when necessary.

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SECTION 7 – ACTIONS

This section sets out all actions we referred to in the COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan. They are actions we are taking or implementing to safeguard you and your colleagues' mental health during this difficult time.

ACTION 1 – RESEARCH

In preparing the COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan, we have reviewed legislation and guidance issued by government and other organisations, surveys and other materials to ensure that we fully understand what actions we need to take so that we can safeguard your mental health.

ACTION 2 – MAKING A MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PLAN

ACTION 3 – MAKING A PLEDGE

As part of the COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan, we make a pledge to support you but also ask you make a pledge in return.

We ask this as we carry the legal responsibility to safeguard your health and safety at work and we believe it is important that you and your colleagues also agree to do as much as you can to look after your own mental health and wellbeing.

In signing the pledge all we ask is for you to be proactive and follow the company's guidance set out in this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook and Plan.

The Mental Health Pledge will be issued to you by the Company for signing. It is also set out in Appendix 3.

ACTION 4 – COVID-19 SAFE

We have taken all reasonable and necessary steps to ensure that our COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan is COVID-19 Safe. The steps taken include but are not limited to the following:

- Risk Assessment(s)
- Safe systems of work
- Issue of COVID-19 Handbook
- Risk declarations
- Adaptations in the workplace

ACTION 5 – MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING HANDBOOK

We have prepared a Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook which is dedicated to mental health and wellbeing. This is designed to be an information source which raises awareness, shares research, data and our COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan and actions which have been put in place to safeguard you and your colleagues.

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ACTION 6 – STRESS & MENTAL WELLBEING AT WORK POLICY

We have prepared a Stress & Mental Wellbeing at Work Policy which is attached at Appendix 4.

The Stress & Mental Wellbeing at Work Policy becomes effective from issue of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook and will be added to the Company’s staff handbook.

ACTION 7 – MENTAL HEALTH APPOINTMENTS

We understand the importance of available support in the workplace. We will be appointing in the following roles:

- *Mental Health Lead* – The Mental Health Lead will fully support the mental health strategy and oversee the implementation of the COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan, the Mental Health Team and Wellbeing Forum
- *Mental Health Champions* – The Mental Health Champion will use their own experiences of mental health problems to change how we all think and act about mental health. You do not need to be an expert on mental health or have knowledge of different mental health conditions and you only need to do what you feel comfortable doing and have time for.
- *Mental Health First Aider* – The Mental Health First Aider is a trained role where you identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issue while keeping yourself safe. An MHFA is not a therapist but is trained on a two-day course to listen, support and empower someone – face to face or remote working - to access the support they might need for recovery or successful management of symptoms.

See details of the appointments in the Company’s COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan.

ACTION 8 – ESTABLISHING A MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING TEAM / FORUM

We will establish a team that meet on a regular basis as part of a forum. The forum will do as below:

- Review the mental health COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan
- Review to ensure adequate policies, processes and promotion of wellbeing are in place
- Ensure employee mental health is taken into account during the different stages of the pandemic and other organisational change

ACTION 9 – EQUIPPING THE MANAGERS

The Company will ensure that managers also act in a manner which supports the Company’s COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan. The Company will do this by ensuring that all managers have read and understand the Company’s COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan.

ACTION 10 – MONITORING MENTAL HEALTH

As we have a legal responsibility to take reasonable steps to safeguard your health and safety in the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are putting in place steps to monitor your mental health and wellbeing on a regular basis.

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Monitoring will allow the Company to engage with employees whilst sign posting and safeguarding employees who may be struggling.

Monitoring will be carried out by the following means:

- Mental health and wellbeing questionnaire
- Mental health and wellbeing pulse surveys
- Wellbeing meetings
- One to one meetings

We have prepared a Mental Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire which is attached at Appendix 5.

ACTION 11 – PROMOTION OF WELLBEING

As we have a legal responsibility to take reasonable steps to safeguard your health and safety in the workplace during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are putting in place a process which will encourage you to take steps to maintain and sustain your wellbeing.

The process involves the following:

- The issuing of a Wellbeing Action Plan for you to complete
- Wellbeing Action Plan meetings with your line manager
- Agreed Individual Wellbeing Action Plans with reviews

For full details of the Wellbeing Action Plan, please see Appendix 6.

ACTION 12 – FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

We have understood that you and your colleagues need, where possible, flexible working arrangements to balance work and home life during the COVID-19 pandemic. In an attempt to prevent COVID-19 stressors we have, where possible, offered the following flexibility working arrangements:

- Furlough leave where COVID-19 prevents you from being able to work
- Flexi Furlough leave
- Work from home where necessary, reasonable and efficient
- Varied start and finish times
- Varied working hours

ACTION 13 – WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, wellbeing activities and targets are proving critical to people maintaining and sustaining their mental health and wellbeing. The Company fully supports this approach and has therefore put in place the following initiatives to facilitate good wellbeing:

- The Pledge
- Virtual tea breaks
- Posters
- Top tips and ‘How To...’ – posters, short videos, emails
- How To guidance
- Recommendations of resources

For Top Tips see Appendix 7; for How To...guides see Appendix 8.

ACTION 14 – ACTIONS AND SIGNPOSTING WHERE CONCERNS ARE IDENTIFIED

Where concerns are identified about an employee’s mental health and wellbeing, we have identified the following actions or signposting to ensure that the employee gets the help and support they may need. The actions and signposting are set out below:

- Review of Wellbeing Action Plan
- Encouragement to set or review wellbeing targets
- 1-2-1 meetings with management or HR representative
- Welfare meetings
- Referral to doctor
- Referral to occupational health
- Recommendation of Counselling

ACTION 15 – RE-ENGAGEMENT WITH THE TEAM

After so many months of lockdown, restrictions, a dis-engaged and fatigued workplace, it is critical that our COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan facilitates re-engagement within the team and company generally. We will achieve this by carrying out the following:

- Team meetings
- One to one meetings
- Social events

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ACTION 16 – KEEPING THE WORKFORCE MOTIVATED

We understand that we need to do our bit to provide an environment which encourages motivation and healthy productivity which is even more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this, we have put in place the following initiatives:

- Set wellbeing targets and achievements
- Encourage employees to set personal SMART goals
- Presentation about business plan, launch and positive news
- Review mission, values and purpose in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

ACTION 17 – COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

We fully appreciate that the past year has seen unprecedented changes within our personal and professional lives. As we move through the year, more changes are expected even if it is the world returning to the old or new ‘norm’. It is important changes are communicated well in advance of the change being effective and in an informative and helpful manner. We commit to doing this and hope that it will help you anticipate, prepare for and manage future changes. Communications must be clear, concise and accurate. Depending on the information or changes involved, communications will be distributed by the following methods:

- Email circulars and other digital communications
- 1-2-1 meetings
- Team or departmental meetings
- Presentations
- Training or workshops
- Updated policies and procedures

ACTION 18 – DISTRIBUTION OF USEFUL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

We have identified useful resources and information and have included these in this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook:

- Appendix 1 - Types of Mental Health Problems
- Appendix 3 - The Mental Health & Wellbeing Pledge
- Appendix 6 - Wellbeing Action Plan
- Appendix 7 - Top Tips Posters
- Appendix 8 - How To...Guides

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The Company will distribute additional information and resources as and when they become available. The information and resources will be distributed by the following means:

- Email
- Posters – digital and printable
- Distribution of digital and/or printable at start of shift/safety briefing

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SECTION 8 - CONTACTS / SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions

It is important that we continuously improve our Mental Health and Wellbeing, and we welcome suggestions you may have for consideration in our future planning. Approach your Line Manager or an appointed member of the Mental Health Team and Forum.

Queries or concerns

If you have any queries or concerns about the contents of the COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing strategy, this Mental Health & Wellbeing Handbook or mental health and wellbeing generally - as managers or employees - please do not delay in raising these.

Sources of information considered:

For further information and guidance about COVID-19, we refer you to the following websites:

1. www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus
2. www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus
3. www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/
4. www.gov.uk/coronavirus
5. <https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk>

Emergency contact details:

The person(s) responsible for overseeing this policy and, unless notified otherwise, deemed to be the emergency contact for all issues related to COVID-19 is / are:

Contact 1

Name : Charlotte Harkin
Position : Group HR & Compliance Director
Email : charlotte.harkin@jarell.co.uk
Telephone : 07949 040510

Contact 2

Name : Rav Sundhers
Position : Group Operations Director
Email : rav.sundhers@jarell.co.uk
Telephone : 07984 469992

In cases of emergency, the above persons can be contacted out of hours for all issues related to COVID-19.

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APPENDIX INDEX

<i>Appendix 1</i>	<i>Types of Mental Health Problems</i>
<i>Appendix 2</i>	<i>COVID-19 Mental Health & Wellbeing Plan and Planner (Not included in Handbook)</i>
<i>Appendix 3</i>	<i>The Mental Health & Wellbeing Pledge</i>
<i>Appendix 4</i>	<i>Stress & Mental Wellbeing at Work Policy</i>
<i>Appendix 5</i>	<i>Mental Health & Wellbeing Questionnaire</i>
<i>Appendix 6</i>	<i>Wellbeing Action Plan</i>
<i>Appendix 7</i>	<i>Top Tips Posters</i>
<i>Appendix 8</i>	<i>How To... Guides</i>

END OF MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING COMPANY HANDBOOK

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APPENDIX ONE

Types of Mental Health Problems

Anxiety & panic attacks

Anxiety is a normal emotion that we all experience. You might think of anxiety as feeling stressed, tense, worried, uneasy or scared. Most of the time these emotions are not a problem.

Bipolar disorder

Bipolar disorder is a mood disorder that can cause extreme periods of low (depressed) and high (manic) moods. Bipolar used to be called manic depression.

Depression

Depression is when someone experiences a low mood that lasts for a long time and affects their everyday life.

Eating disorders

An eating disorder is when someone has unhealthy thoughts, feelings and behaviour around food.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a diagnosis given to someone who experiences obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours.

Personality disorders

A personality disorder can affect how a person copes with day-to-day life and manages relationships, as well as how they feel and behave.

Phobias

A phobia is an overwhelming and debilitating fear of an object, place, situation, feeling or animal. Phobias are more pronounced than fears. They develop when a person has an exaggerated or unrealistic sense of danger about a situation or object. If a phobia becomes very severe, a person may organise their life around avoiding the thing that's causing them anxiety.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a diagnosis given to people who develop a certain set of symptoms following a traumatic event.

Psychosis

Psychosis is a term used to describe when a person perceives the world in a different way to those around them. This can include how a person will experience, believe or view things.

Schizoaffective disorder

Schizoaffective disorder is a mental illness that affects a person's mood, thoughts and behaviour. Around one in 200 people develop schizoaffective disorder and some point in their life.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a mental illness that affects the way a person thinks. Schizophrenia affects around 1 in 100 people and can only be diagnosed by a psychiatrist.

Self harm

Self-harm is when someone purposely hurts themselves, usually in order to cope with intense emotional distress.

Suicidal feelings

Suicide - when someone intentionally takes their own life – can be very complex.

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Appendix Two

Well Being Plan, Not Included at this stage

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APPENDIX THREE

THE MENTAL HEALTH PLEDGE

As part of the mental health plan, we make a pledge to you of support but also ask you to do the same. We have a responsibility to safeguard your health and safety at work and we believe it is very important that you also agree to do as much as you can to look after your mental health and wellbeing.

OUR PLEDGE

We, the Company, pledge to:

1. **Prioritize** mental health in the workplace so that it is seen to be as important as physical safety.
2. **Proactively** raise mental health awareness.
3. **Promote** and open culture around mental health.
4. **Increase** support for mental health and wellbeing.
5. **Provide** mental health and wellbeing tools and materials.
6. **Increase** transparency and accountability for wellbeing through internal and external reporting.

YOUR PLEDGE

I pledge to:

1. **Be patient** with colleagues because I recognise we all have different needs and responsibilities in our lives.
2. **Respect** that everyone has been impacted by COVID in different ways that are not always obvious or visible.
3. **Make time** to speak to a colleague, to check-in and chat with them because my connection might make a positive difference to their day.
4. **Move my body** every day where and when possible because I understand exercise is good for mental health and wellbeing.
5. **Ask for help** if I am struggling or need support because my mental health and wellbeing is essential for me to thrive.
6. **Bring balance** to my day by trying to carry out at least one mindfulness activity.

xxx

On behalf of the company

xxx

Date

xxx

Employee signature

xxx

Date

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Appendix Four

STRESS AND MENTAL WELLBEING AT WORK POLICY

1. About this policy

1.1 We are committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff. We recognise the importance of identifying and tackling the causes of work-related stress. We also recognise that personal stress, while unrelated to the workplace, can adversely affect the wellbeing of staff at work. We want to support the mental wellbeing of all our staff and will provide appropriate support for staff who are suffering from stress or mental ill health, on a confidential basis where appropriate, regardless of its source.

1.2 We will:

- (a) Promote a culture of open communication. We want staff to feel confident that any concerns they raise about their work or working environment will be addressed. We will provide both formal and informal means for them to raise concerns.
- (b) Provide training for managers in good management practices.
- (c) Take account of stress and mental wellbeing when planning and allocating workloads. We will provide opportunities to discuss these through our appraisal processes.
- (d) Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking and monitor holidays to ensure that staff are using their entitlement.
- (e) Ensure risk assessments include or specifically address work-related stress.
- (f) Facilitate requests for flexible working where reasonably practicable in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.
- (g) Ensure that in any workplace reorganisation our change management processes are designed to minimise uncertainty and stress.
- (h) Implement policies and procedures to address factors that can cause stress at work, or add to personal stress, in particular so that we can:
 - (i) provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying and victimisation; and
 - (ii) address inappropriate behaviour through disciplinary action.
- (i) Provide training to help all staff understand and recognise the causes of work-related stress and mental ill health, the impact of stress from factors in everyday life and the steps they can take to protect and enhance their own mental wellbeing and that of their colleagues.
- (j) Provide support services such as mental health champions for staff affected by or absent by reason of stress.

1.3 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, internal casual workers and agency workers.

1.4 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

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2. Legal obligations

- 2.1 We have a legal duty to take reasonable care to ensure that your health is not put at risk by excessive pressures or demands arising from the way work is organised.
- 2.2 This policy takes account of our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Employment Rights Act 1996, Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Working Time Regulations 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

3. Personnel responsible for the policy

- 3.1 The Group HR & Compliance Director has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework.
- 3.2 We will monitor the development of good practice in approaches to work-related stress and mental wellbeing at work and will keep our practices and the effectiveness of this policy under review to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives.
- 3.3 All managers have a responsibility to recognise potential issues of work-related stress or mental ill health in the staff they manage. They should seek advice HR in the event that they have concerns.
- 3.4 We will be appointing a number of mental health champions whose details will available and whose role is to ensure the effectiveness of this policy. Staff can contact a mental health champion to discuss any concerns they have about work-related stress or any other issue affecting mental health at work.
- 3.5 All staff should ensure that they are familiar with this policy and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. Staff should plan and organise their work to meet personal and organisational objectives and co-operate with support, advice and guidance that may be offered by line managers and HR. Anyone who experiences or is aware of a situation that may result in work-related stress or undermine mental wellbeing at work should speak to a manager or a mental health champion.

4. Understanding stress and mental health

- 4.1 Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them. Stress is not an illness but, sustained over a period of time, it can lead to mental and/or physical illness.
- 4.2 Mental health is a term to describe our emotional, psychological and social wellbeing; it affects how we think, feel and act and how we cope with the normal pressures of everyday life. Positive mental health is rarely an absolute state since factors inside and outside work affect mental health, meaning that we move on a spectrum that ranges from being in good to poor mental health.
- 4.3 There is an important distinction between working under pressure and experiencing stress. Certain levels of pressure are acceptable and normal in every job. They can improve performance, enable individuals to meet their full potential and provide a sense of achievement and job satisfaction. However, when pressure becomes excessive it produces stress and undermines mental health.

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4.4 Pressures outside the workplace, whether the result of unexpected or traumatic events such as accidents, illness, bereavement, family breakdown or financial worries, can result in stress and poor mental health. They can also compound normal workplace pressures.

4.5 We recognise that individuals react to similar situations in different ways and that what triggers stress and poor mental health varies from person to person.

5. Supporting mental wellbeing at work

5.1 We want to ensure that our workplace supports good mental health for all staff. However, we recognise that there may be occasions when events at work or outside work result in staff feeling that their mental health is suffering. Anyone who feels that they are suffering from work-related stress should follow the steps set out in paragraph 6 in addition to making use of the support services referred to in this policy which all staff are encouraged to access if they ever feel they need support or assistance.

5.2 All managers should, working with HR, provide support to staff. In particular, they need to:

- (a) Promote a culture of open communication.
- (b) Effectively plan and provide feedback on performance.
- (c) Ensure that staff receive necessary training.
- (d) Monitor workloads and reallocate work where necessary.
- (e) Ensure that staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and others, and act on behaviour that falls below those standards.

5.3 We will have a number of mental health champions who can be contacted by any member of staff who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress, and who can provide details of available support. Details of mental health champions will be published soon.

5.4 Help and information can also be obtained from Mind, the mental health charity, www.mind.org.uk or the Samaritans, www.samaritans.org.

5.5 If any member of staff is considered by their manager or colleagues to be at serious risk of self-harm, or of harming others, action must be taken straight away. The matter should be referred to a Director or HR who will seek medical advice if that is reasonably practicable. Every effort will be made to contact any person nominated by the member of staff as an emergency contact. Where necessary the emergency services will be called. The wellbeing of the member of staff and those around them will at all times be our first concern.

6. Addressing work-related stress

6.1 If you believe you are suffering from work-related stress you should discuss this with your manager or supervisor in the first instance. If you feel unable to do so you should contact a mental health champion and / or the HR.

6.2 Once an issue affecting your health comes to the attention of your manager, supervisor or HR we will discuss with you what steps can be taken to address that issue. Those steps may include any of the following:

- (a) A review of your current job role, responsibilities, workload and working hours. Adjustments may be agreed to these, on a temporary basis and subject to further review, where appropriate.

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- (b) Where it appears that stress has been caused by bullying or harassment, investigation under our Disciplinary and/or Grievance Procedures.
- (c) Referral for medical advice, treatment and/or a medical report to be provided by our medical advisers or any specialist or GP who has been treating you.
- (d) If you are on sickness absence, discussion of an appropriate return to work programme. Our Sickness Absence Policy may be applied.

7. Absence due to stress or mental ill health

- 7.1 If you are absent due to work-related stress or mental ill health, you should follow the sickness absence reporting procedure contained in your contract and/or our Sickness Absence Policy.
- 7.2 In cases of prolonged or repeated absence it may be necessary to apply the procedure set out in our Sickness Absence Policy and Capability Procedure.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Information about stress, mental health and mental wellbeing is highly sensitive. Every member of staff is responsible observing the high level of confidentiality that is required when dealing with information about stress or mental health whether they are supporting a colleague or because they are otherwise involved in the operation of a workplace policy or procedure.
- 8.2 Breach of confidentiality may give rise to disciplinary action.
- 8.3 However, there are occasions when information about stress or mental wellbeing need to be shared with third parties. For example:
 - (a) Where steps need to be taken to address work-related stress such as reallocating work within a team.
 - (b) Where medical advice is required on how to support a member of staff, address issues raised by work-related stress or address issues raised by mental ill health.
 - (c) Where allegations of harassment, bullying or other misconduct require a disciplinary investigation or proceedings to take place.
 - (d) Where a member of staff presents an immediate danger to themselves or others.

In these circumstances, wherever possible, matters will be discussed with the member of staff concerned before any action is taken.

9. Protection for those reporting stress or assisting with an investigation

- 9.1 Staff who report that they are suffering from work-related stress or mental ill health, who support a colleague in making such a report or who participate in any investigation connected with this policy in good faith will be protected from any form of intimidation or victimisation.
- 9.2 If you feel you have been subjected to any such intimidation or victimisation, you should seek support from your line manager and / or HR. You may also raise a complaint in accordance with our Grievance Procedure.
- 9.3 If, after investigation, you are found to have provided false information in bad faith, you will be subject to action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

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APPENDIX FIVE

Your Mental Health & Wellbeing Monitoring Questionnaire

Why?

The purpose of this questionnaire is simply to allow the company to monitor how you are managing during the pandemic. If we are concerned we will reach out to you and arrange a welfare meeting to check in with you. Your scores will not be shared for any other reason than this.

How it works

Read each question and score yourself on a scale of 1-10, 1 being *really struggling* and 10 being *doing really well*. Make sure your scores accurately reflect how you are feeling.

1 - really struggling

10 - doing really well

NAME :		
POSITION :		
Questions		
1	I am sleeping well	
2	I feel positive most days	
3	I am exercising regularly	
4	I am coping with the pandemic and restrictions	
5	I am managing personal stresses or problems	
6	I am able to concentrate and focus when at work	
7	I am managing my workload	
8.	I am taking regular breaks during the working day or time away from work	
9	I have felt supported by management and the company	
10.	I am looking forward to returning to normal life	

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APPENDIX SIX

Wellbeing Action Plan

1. What helps you stay mentally healthy at work? (For example: taking a lunch break, keeping a to do list)

2. What can your manager do to support you to stay mentally healthy at work? (For example: regular feedback and supervision, explaining wider developments in organisation)

3. Are there any situations at work that can trigger poor mental health for you? (For example: conflict at work, organisational change, something not going to plan)

4. How might stress /poor mental health difficulties impact on your work? (For example: find it difficult to make decisions, hard to prioritise work tasks)

5. Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to feel stressed/ mentally unwell? (For example: changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues)

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6. What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or to support you to manage symptoms? (For example: extra catch-up time with line manager)

7. warning signs that you are feeling stressed or unwell – what should we do? (For example: talk to me discreetly about it, contact someone that I have asked to be contacted). Please include contact names and numbers if you would like your line manager to get in touch with someone if you become unwell.

8. What steps can you take if you start to feel unwell at work? (For example: take a break from your desk and go for a short walk, ask your line manager for support).

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6 Wellbeing Top Tips during COVID-19

1. **BE SELECTIVE** - While you can't completely ignore the news, try not to let it be the dominating force in what you read, watch and listen to every day.
2. **KEEP IN TOUCH** - Utilise mobile and desktop apps – messaging or voice and video calls - so you can still have those all-important social interactions everyone needs to support positive mental wellbeing.
3. **KEEP EXERCISING** - Whether you decide to do a home workout or get out for a walk, jog, cycle or just a brisk walk, staying active is a great for your mind and body.
4. **GET LOST IN A BOOK** - Not only will it keep you entertained, it'll keep your brain occupied and focused – win-win!
5. **HAVE A HEARTY BREAKFAST** - Porridge is a great way to start your day and also helps boost your intake of fibre.
6. **EAT MORE FRUIT AND VEG** - Make sure you are including 5 portions of fruit and veg into your diet.

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Healthy Working during COVID-19

1. **WORK REGULAR HOURS** - try to take the breaks and holidays you're entitled to. If things are getting too much, book a day off or a long weekend.
2. **MAKE THE MOST** - of opportunities for contact and develop good relationships with colleagues so you can build up a network of support
3. **SAY** - if you need help. Talk to someone you trust, at work or outside, about what upsets you or makes you feel stressed.
4. **TAKE A DEEP BREATH** - if everything starts to feel overwhelming. Try and get away from your desk or situation for a few minutes.
5. **WRITE A LIST** - of what needs to be done; it only takes a few minutes and can help you to prioritise, focus and get things in perspective. It can also feel satisfying to tick items off once they have been done.
6. **TAKE A WALK** - or get some fresh air during the day. Exercise and daylight are good for your mental health as well as physical health.
7. **TAKE BREAKS** – remember to make yourself a drink, take a few minutes to stretch and move away from your screen and workspace from time-to-time throughout the day.

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Healthy mind during COVID-19

1. BE MINDFUL - of how you start each day and approach your work life balance. Try using a mindfulness app to help you stay motivated!
2. STAY ORGANISED - by balancing stressful tasks with things you enjoy; packing too much in or setting large targets will add more pressure.
3. BREATHE – breathing or meditation techniques could help you to keep calm.
4. INTRODUCE HEALTHY HABITS - exercise, a new hobby, or taking a break from social media to your day to help refocus.
5. RELAX - Learn some relaxation techniques
6. REFLECT - try keeping a journal to summarise each day or reach out to people to share your thoughts with and talk about your day.

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Healthy body during COVID-19

1. **EAT A WELL BALANCED DIET-** Include plant-based foods such as vegetables, fruits and nuts in your diet to help support your immune system.
2. **GET PLENTY OF VITAMIN C -** Vitamin C is an important part of a healthy diet. It can't be stored in the body, so you need it in your diet every day.
3. **USE HERBS AND SPICES -** Spices such as cayenne pepper, allspice and turmeric contain components that can help boost your immune system.
4. **DRINK PLENTY OF CLEAN WATER -** Water helps in the production of lymph, which carries white blood cells and other immune system cells.
5. **SLEEP WELL -** Reduce screen time close to bed time so you can switch off and sleep easier. Avoid nicotine, caffeine and alcohol, as these can make anxiety worse.
6. **MANAGE FATIGUE -** don't worry too much if you did not get much sleep, or it was poor quality – it is not the end of the world. You will get through the next day alright and if you are quite tired, it's likely you will sleep better the next night.

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APPENDIX EIGHT

How To Guides

- How to Stay Positive in Lockdown
- How to Stay Well in Winter
- How to Build Emotional Resilience
- How To Reconnect and Re-energise

How to Stay Positive in Lockdown

Explore different ways of passing time to keep your mind nourished when you can't leave home and socialise outdoors as much as you might be used to.

Find ways to relax and be creative:

There are lots of different ways that you can relax, take notice of the present moment and use your creative side to express your feelings. These include:

- arts and crafts, such as drawing, colouring, painting or collage
- sewing or craft kits
- upcycling or finding creative new uses for things
- DIY
- playing musical instruments, singing or listening to music
- writing
- yoga or exercise
- mindfulness
- meditation

Keep your mind stimulated

Try to keep your mind stimulated and your brain occupied and challenged and set aside time in your routine for this. You could read books, magazines and articles. Or you could listen to podcasts, watch films or do puzzles.

There are lots of apps that can help you learn things, such as a foreign language or other new skills.

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How to stay well in Winter

Adapt your routine for Winter:

- If you've been spending a lot of time at home during the coronavirus pandemic, you may already have a routine of activities. But it may be helpful to think about how you can adapt this for the winter months.
- Trying out a new winter routine might help give you a sense of change if you're struggling with how long the pandemic is continuing. For example, you could spend time cooking and trying some new winter recipes, or learning a new skill.
- If you find your mood or energy level drops during a particular season such as winter, you might find information on seasonal affective disorder (SAD) helpful.
- Although the coronavirus pandemic may mean that your choices are more limited, try to focus on the things you can change. List the things you can change on one piece of paper and all the things you can't on another.
- If there are certain times that are especially difficult for you during winter, you could try and plan ahead for these times. For example, around Christmas or in January. If you're worried about having lower energy, it might help to make some meals in advance and freeze them ready for when you need them during tough times.

Get as much natural light as you can:

- Try to plan your day to get the most out of natural light. For example, you could try sitting by a window where you can look at the sky or trees, or watch birds and other animals. This can help give you a sense of space.
- You could change rooms during the day depending on which rooms get the most light at different times, if this is possible where you live. And when it does get dark, try to keep your living space well lit so that you're not straining your eyes.
- If you are able to spend time outside in winter, such as in a garden or on a walk, plan to do this during daylight hours. If the weather's cold, wrap up warm and bring a warm drink with you in a flask.
- Look at photos of your favourite places in nature. You could use them as the background on your mobile phone or computer screen. Or you could print photos and put them up on your walls, if you have a space of your own.
- Listen to natural sounds, like recordings or apps that play birdsong, ocean waves or rainfall.
- You may be able to buy seeds, flowers or plants online for delivery, to grow and keep indoors.

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How to build emotional resilience

“The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

Nelson Mandela

Building your emotional resilience means you protect your health as you are less likely to become easily stressed or anxious when faced with difficult situations.

Be open

Have someone to talk to and don't be afraid to open up about your problems. Try to develop a few positive friends, relatives or mentors that you can turn to. Knowing someone cares and can help you explore different ways of seeing or dealing with a situation can help.

What if you're an introvert? Being introverted does not mean you don't need to talk to someone. Try chatting with a friend online or on your mobile via a messaging service.

Practise positive affirmations

Don't let negative thoughts and emotions takeover and hijack your day. Try repeating out loud positive affirmations when the going gets tough, for example:

- I will stay positive and work on a solution
- I will not let thoughts control the way I feel
- My life is good with all the positive and negative things in it
- I am enough, I am complete

Focus on your needs

Don't allow yourself to become moody and fatigued when stressful events happen. Look after yourself, don't give in to eating too much junk food or skipping meals. Make you and your health a priority. Make a note of 3 positive things you can turn to when you start to feel negative. E.g. take a walk, run a relaxing bath, make your favourite healthy snack.

Embrace Change

Try to see change as a challenge and embrace it. Change is inevitable and resilient people are aware of this fact and adapt to the change which helps overcome feelings of discomfort. Even if change is unpleasant if

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you try to see it an opportunity – remember that often it’s our fear of the unknown that makes us sometimes feel uncomfortable with change.

Push through and try to make the best out of every single challenge. This way you will build your emotional resilience and every new problem will shake you less and less.

Focus on the positive – no matter what

Maintaining a positive attitude in stressful situations is a skill that requires practise. The trick to changing your mindset from negative to positive when faced with problems is to view each problem as temporary or amendable. Here’s how to learn to stop negativity in it’s tracks:

1. Take a step back from a stressful situation, do something else, something you enjoy or are good at to give you a new focus and clear your mind.
2. Once you have taken a break you can return to the problem and try to sort out your thoughts and consider your options.
3. Try writing out your thoughts and options as this help you to recognise any irrational beliefs, see what the problem really is and work out a solution.

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How to reconnect and reenergise

Make SMART goals

Build up your motivation by goal setting. Setting work and personal goals gives us direction, something to work toward. Start small, and keep goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. Maybe your goal is to meditate or exercise three times a week; maybe it's to tackle a work task you've been putting learn something new, or maybe it is to take time out to meditate or relax more. Whatever your goals may be, keep a note of them and check in with them at the same time every week to review your progress.

Eat the frog for breakfast

Getting the task you find most challenging done at the beginning of the day means it won't be weighing on your mind the entire day. Once you've accomplished this challenge you'll be more motivated to keep working on other tasks as they'll feel much easier or simpler in comparison.

Tackle Daily Tasks

Goals help us frame the future and stay on track, but sometimes that isn't quite enough to drum up much-needed motivation—especially if the day ahead is still filled with uncertainty. One way to regain control over that uncertainty, however, is to plan out your daily tasks.

Seeing all the tasks in your day laid out in front of you can help declutter your mind and provide a more accurate picture of what you have going on. Make a list that includes work-related tasks like a meeting or personal tasks like eating lunch or going for a walk. Crossing out each task once it's finished can be a weight off of your shoulders, and the immediate reward of seeing the list get smaller can give an extra boost.

Review your routine/change it up

If every day feels the same it's easy to lose motivation. Aim to change one thing each day to keep things fresh. Go for a walk in the afternoon instead of the morning or try meditating or exercising at a different time of day. Small changes make a difference.

Virtually co-work

Make sure you don't miss the camaraderie of the office – open up a Zoom or Teams call to work together with a colleague or your team. You can even build in coffee breaks for a chat as you would in the office.

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