



Mental Wellbeing

We continue our series of articles by Dr Libby Artingstall and Dr Sile McDaid, Co-Founders and Directors of Team Mental Health.

Thriving not Surviving

For us, to thrive means to be able to grow, develop and be successful in life at work, and at home. If we are to thrive, our mental wellbeing is crucial, and this can be influenced by several elements including our physical health, our mental health and our relationships and social interactions. It's important to reflect and take the time to consider how we could positively influence each of these elements in our daily lives. To assist, we've jotted down some ideas below.

Physical health

- Engage in regular physical activity, even in small amounts. This stimulates the body and mind and can help you to feel energised.¹

- Eat sensibly. Foods with a low glycaemic index, such as wholegrains, nuts, beans & leafy greens release energy gradually. Therefore, they can assist in keeping us alert for longer.²

- Stay hydrated. One of the first signs of dehydration is fatigue therefore, to enhance performance and energy levels, make sure you drink enough water throughout the day.³

Mental health

- Sleep well. Sleep has a huge impact on both our mental and physical health and its importance should not be under-estimated. If you're experiencing difficulties sleeping, take action to implement a good sleep hygiene routine and if this doesn't work, seek support from a health care professional.

- Assess and manage stress. Engage with work-related stress risk assessments and act on them. Be aware of your own signs of stress and implement positive rather than negative coping strategies.

- Take time to relax. Explore different techniques and find out which work for you. Deep breathing, yoga, meditation and mindfulness can have a positive influence in terms of helping us regulate our response to, and recover from, stress. However, it's important to recognise that for some individuals, particularly those who may have experienced trauma, meditation or mindfulness may not be the right way forward.^{4,5}

- If you're experiencing difficulties with your mental health, let someone know. The earlier the intervention, the less risk there is of more complex, long-term problems and / or a crisis situation occurring.

Relationships and Social Interactions

- Connect with others. Having good support networks in place protects our mental health and well-

being. By making meaningful connections with people who share common ground, ideas and values, we can develop a sense of community and belonging. This can help us feel valued, cared for and supported.⁶

- Listen to understand. It's easy to be engaged in a conversation, to listen to respond and interrupt. It's not as easy to listen to understand but it's so important that we do. Active listening helps us to build and maintain healthy relationships which protect our mental health. It can also help us support someone if they are experiencing difficulties.

- Think win-win. It's important to recognise that our interactions with others are likely to be influenced by our own goals and ambitions, and the goals and ambitions of others. If there is a way to navigate a circumstance so as to find mutually agreeable and advantageous solutions, then take it because it can promote wellbeing, satisfaction and success.

References:

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