

“Every conversation starts with the child”

Well-being – the Importance of Connecting

WINNING WAYS TO WELLBEING



INTRODUCE THESE FIVE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS.

 Mental Health Foundation
of New Zealand
www.mentalhealth.org.nz

This week's blog is presented by Sophie Wales and is intended to support you in accessing resources which will support you in ensuring your personal wellbeing. This is a welfare issue for all of us and we need to remember that if we are not able to take care of ourselves, we will not be able to be effective in our work. Please remember to let me/Sophie know if there are things which are standing in the way of you being able to ensure your wellbeing at work.

I am also working with a colleague to consider whether a wellbeing group would be useful to develop other resources to support us – if you would be interested or are a hypnotherapist (just joking), please get in touch. We are also doing some work in the safeguarding partnership to replicate a mindfulness session facilitated by a police colleague which attracted some excellent feedback. We would like to do this in our planned, corporate and partnerships wide, Wellbeing week which will take place week beginning the 18th of January 2021, so [look out](#) for this.

Sophie Wales...

'We are in a period of what feels like constant change and pressure and as we find ourselves in another lockdown, this time in winter, we wanted to make sure that we are focusing on your wellbeing and resilience. I know how hard you work and the additional challenges and pressures that front line work brings is understood.

In the recent staff engagement events you were asked a series of questions that were placed in 'word clouds' and it is clear to me that work / life is hard

for some at the moment in such uncertain times. For some it also feels like an opportunity, some of you citing a chance to reconnect with family, partners and friends, even if it's virtual. What was clear, from many of you, was the importance more than ever of connecting. As we continue to work virtually, away from our teams and offices it's vital that we use all opportunities available to us to do this.

For this reason I am starting a series of initiatives to make sure you get the support that you need to continue to keep our most vulnerable children safe. The first is this blog to direct you and encourage you to use the support that is available to you as employees. I am also sending an LGA survey for **all CSC staff** to ask you how you are feeling and how we can help to support you (I know it says 'SW' survey but the results for all staff will be defined in the final report). [Please find the Social Worker survey here - Health Check Survey \(onlinesurveys.ac.uk\)](#). We will then create a schedule of support to try to meet your needs and help you to continue in the valuable roles that you perform'.

Last weeks (27.11.20) CYC staff comms included access to some [brand new wellbeing courses for our staff from York Learning](#), I did try to book onto the 'wake up and stretch' but it was a bit early for me so I think I may have to look further into lunchtime and end of the day ones !! In the meantime...Just having a conversation about mental health with a colleague could have a significant impact on them and on you. There is evidence to suggest that currently too many professionals are experiencing some level of difficulty in terms of wellbeing, isolation and simply 'fed up' with the current pandemic restrictions. They could be feeling isolated, whilst worried about their colleague's reactions if they speak out. (This is me in the picture)!! However, positively it is also clear that we all want to support one another and have those conversations but maybe don't feel comfortable or 'upskilled' enough to start them? Talking about wellbeing doesn't need to be difficult. It can be as simple as making time to have a cup of tea with each other, or going for a (socially distanced) walk and listening to a colleague talk about how they feel and about life generally. Being open about mental health and ready to be in your colleague's corner can make a positive difference to you and them.



This blog, and the information from Sophie aims to get us all talking about wellbeing and mental health by '*being in each other's corner*' and we can start by supporting each other to start up a supportive conversation with colleague and be in their corner from now.

Date for your diaries - please note for the social workers among you, Social Work England are promoting Social Work Week between 8th and 12 March 2021. This will be a virtual programme of events bringing together over 40 activities including speakers, artistic content, workshops, debate, discussions, and wellbeing drop ins. <https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/Infectious-Diseases/Coronavirus/Self-Care-During-the-Coronavirus-Pandemic> and here: <https://www.basw.co.uk/quick-guide-self-care-social-workers-during-covid-19>

#inyourcorner is a pack which is designed to help you explore how you can be in your colleague's corner in six different ways. It also provides you with the tools and information to empower your colleagues to become involved and ready to start their all-important conversations with each another. This can be found at [C2. six degrees of being in a colleagues corner.pdf \(time-to-change.org.uk\)](#) and there are a wealth of other resources which can be found on the internet.

However, we are also lucky enough to have a wide range of resources available to us within City of York and you will find these on Colin and also in the weekly Buzz magazine. Some of these are documented below;

Employee Wellbeing Line - 01904 551800. You should access this with any queries about HR issues or if you need any support with home working including difficulties with child care etc. in lockdown.

Employee Assistance Program - EAP is a service that helps mitigate the effects of employees' personal problems on their workplace engagement, happiness and overall productivity.



Most employees accessing EAP services will refer themselves. However, EAPs will also accept referrals from HR advisors or line managers who may be able to see that an employee needs assistance before the employee can see it themselves.

You can contact the service on 0800 111 6387 or visit the website

<http://www.my-eap.com/> (the access code you require to enter the site is CYC).

This program can offer support for employees on matters such as:-

- Managing finances: budgeting, managing debt, tax, pensions, benefits and financial education
- Legal matters: divorce and separation, motoring offences, property
- Relationship concerns

- Practical and emotional support following a bereavement
- Managing life events: buying a home, getting married, having children
- Health issues such as giving up smoking or nutrition
- Self-development: time management, assertiveness skills etc.
- Managing stress (**six counselling sessions are available to each employee**)

There are other options available to you. Remember you can:

- Speak to you team or line manager, your one to ones or supervisions are there to help and support you.
- Team meetings. Many of us are missing our teams and colleagues you can use some of this time to just check in with each other and see how you are all doing
- Plan a weekly get together via your team
What's AP. 'Tea at 3' on a Friday or similar
- Notice those around you that may not have a large team and invite them into your support groups
- Remember we want to support you to work flexibly so speak to your managers about how this can be arranged.

Check in suggestions:-

1. What are you wearing on your feet?
2. What are you drinking and is the mug meaningful to you?
3. Best film, TV or book you have seen in the last

Some of you will be spending a lot more time indoors and working most of the time in your home. The NHS has issued some tips <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/7-simple-tips-to-tackle-working-from-home/#>

Sophie Wales intends to include an hour's break during her working day, every day to ensure that she is able to spend some time away from the computer, what change could you introduce?

'It takes a brave person to put a meeting in my lunch break, this is the hard bit, this is what I am doing what are you doing? 'And remember now we are in winter getting outside in day light is important so try to plan a walk in daylight hours if this is not part already part of your natural routine' (Sophie Wales).

Some of you are out and about visiting families, remember the visiting guidance to keep safe [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance for children's social care services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-childrens-social-care-services)

There are also some good apps available for meditation and mindfulness which can help us slow down and take stack. Try Insight Timer <https://insighttimer.com/>

It is advised to play with some different options and experiences on here, some of the voices can drive you mad! However, when you find the right one of you they are really beneficial (recommended davidji).

Another option is <https://www.headspace.com/> which is often recommended by GPs.

Sophie would also like to invite you to consider some of the resources she has identified to support your wellbeing;

[Quick Guide: Self-care for Social Workers during Covid-19 | www.basw.co.uk](#)

This quick guide is designed to support social workers with ideas and strategies for self-care www.basw.co.uk

[Self-Care during the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

www.socialworkers.org

Founded in 1955, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with more than 120,000 members. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/six-building-blocks-of-resilience-for-line-managers/>

[Six building blocks of resilience for line managers](#) www.personneltoday.com

Line managers are exposed to increasing stress but lack the "soft" skills to deal with pressure and build personal resilience. There's some interesting critiques around now of building resilience, mindfulness, self-care etc. as neo-liberal organisational strategies that ultimately individualise responsibility for surviving and thriving by placing the onus on individual staff - 'responsibilisation' it is sometimes called. May not be relevant to your task here but one implication is that leaders and senior managers need to collectivise risk and responsibility and help staff feel cared about and held by the organisation. This also comes to mind, which was written early on in the pandemic. <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/news-views/2020/april/social-work-from-home-creating-thinking-spaces/>

[Social work from home: Creating thinking spaces; www.researchinpractice.org.uk](#)

Not travelling between the office and people's homes can remove thinking space and transitional experiences that were previously helpful in social work.

Peter can offer a short introduction to mindfulness including basic meditations/exercises around posture, a body scan and breathing and a simple visualisation exercise. All these things can aid relaxation and potentially help to

manage stress. He can also provide some practical suggestions of ways of incorporating mindfulness into a busy daily life and also signpost resources.

Peter can provide a short mindfulness session (10 to 15 minutes) at the beginning of or during a team meeting or a longer session of 30 minutes if required.

Peter.Horsley@york.gov.uk

We also have a wellbeing phone line and email address where we can signpost you to any wellbeing queries you may have.

- Employee Wellbeing Line telephone number: **01904 55 1800**
- Employee Wellbeing Line email: employeewellbeing@york.gov.uk

Don't forget if all else fails – eat cake!!

Please remember to share your thoughts on this blog and any other with me, your feedback is vital, is this blog useful? What are your thoughts/tips on recording?

What is going well	What is not going well	What would you like to change
Comments		

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Sophie and Dallas

Useful Links

<https://www.york.gov.uk/C19CYCStaff/MentalHealth>

<https://www.york.gov.uk/information-cyc-staff/keeping-well-taking-regular-breaks>

<https://www.york.gov.uk/information-cyc-staff/keeping-well-ensuring-good-work-life-balance>