

Five Ways to Wellbeing – Home-Working

Some home-working tips to help look after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak:

If you are currently home working or supervise home workers these tips should help to protect mental wellbeing. Having a strategy to support our wellbeing can help increase resilience to every-day stress.

Five Ways to Wellbeing Adapted for Home-Working

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice
- Learn
- Give



Five Ways to Wellbeing was researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation and has been used by organisations such as the NHS for some time now. I've updated the Five Ways to Wellbeing from Mind's website for anyone home-working. The Five Ways to Wellbeing lend themselves perfectly to home-working as well as every other part of our life: lockdown or normal life, crisis or staying well.

Imagine Independence use the Five Ways to build person-centred support plans, and I use it regularly as part of ALGEE support plan when running #MHFAEngland training – the last “E” stands for Encourage Additional Supports. Exactly what we need in these challenging times.

Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. Many of us are feeling extremely connected

at the moment but we need to keep this going, potentially over months. Be aware of those who might be home-working alone; for so many, the act of “going to work” is a life saver.

- Email, call or use social media to reach someone you’ve not spoken to in ages
- Connect every day with colleagues. Maybe a set time; routine is important
- Speak to someone new
- Ask how someone’s week was and really listen when they tell you
- Set up a network who you can contact at the start and end of your work day
- If your work allows; end work connections at a set time each day and disconnect.

Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups.

Our daily 30 minutes of exercise out-doors could be a catalyst for change in your life. But it doesn’t need to be particularly intense for you to feel good - slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

Today, why not get physical? Here are a few ideas:

- Couch to 5K: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/get-running-with-couch-to-5k>
- Leave your desk and do some gentle exercise at regular times
- Organise a work sporting activity on line using a meeting platform
- Learn a new activity using online resources
- Do some ‘easy exercise’, like stretching, before you sit down at your desk.

Take notice

Do you find it hard to notice the good things around you? Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you. Studies have shown

that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring ‘the moment’ can help to reaffirm your life priorities. We may feel guilty at doing this during a time of crisis, but make an attempt. Here are a few ideas:

- Take notice if you’re not feeling yourself and ask for help
- Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting
- Move a plant from another part of the house into your work area
- We can walk away from the office, but not home so pack away at the end of each day and re-set in the morning
- If you’re sharing a workspace with another family member, take notice of what they are doing
- Tips for those with young kids:
<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-work-from-home-with-young-children-during-coronavirus-2020-3?r=US&IR=T>

Learn

Learning encourages social interaction and can help people out of depression. The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

Home working presents many challenges, and we have to learn new ways to work. We can use time not used for travel to learn something new.

- Sign up for a virtual class – go onto youtube and everyone is doing classes
- Read the book you’ve always been putting off, or charge up your kindle
- Make sure you have a break
- Download a learn-a-language app
- Research something you’ve always wondered about
- Get colleagues to post on-line quizzes
- Learn mindfulness.

Give

Participation in social and community life by individuals and have a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

- If you are at home with family, give time and support to them – even while you’re working. After all, you’d probably do this in the office
- Once “out” of work, find ways to volunteer during the Coronavirus Pandemic. Local and national organisations are looking for helpers with all kinds of skills
- Give time to others who may be struggling. Contact your manager and ask if you can be put onto a contact list for supporting other staff who need help for their mental health.

Previous Posts:

Zero Suicide Alliance 30 Minute Training.
<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training/>

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For details of our MHFA England accredited Mental Health First Aid training please visit:

<https://www.imagineindependence.org.uk/services/mental-health-first-aid-training/>

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