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Wellness Action Plan

We aim to create a supportive working environment that maintains and promotes the health and wellbeing of staff. We want to encourage managers and staff to have positive open dialogues about managing everyday wellbeing.

To assist you with having these conversations, you may wish to fill in a Wellness Action plan (optional, confidential, personalised) based on a Wellness Action Plan devised by the Mental Health Charity Mind.



## What is a Wellness Action Plan?

Having a wellness action plan can help generate meaningful conversations about your overall Wellness with your line manager, Occupational Health and your colleagues.

In the plan you can specify, what you need to meet your wellness goals and how you maintain good health at work. It can help to identify what keeps you well at work and what causes you to become unwell.

The Wellness Action Plan can be a helpful ongoing tool for your manager giving ‘permission’ to revisit conversations if potential triggers or poor mental health is noticed.

The WAP can help you feel empowered and in control and allows you to review your experience and make sure the support you receive is the best for you right now.

## How to use the Wellness Action Plan

The assessment tool is comprised of reflective questions on the way you work, your needs and triggers. The aim is to become aware of what promotes good mental health at work and generate concrete steps to maintain this.

### 1. Set aside time to reflect

You know yourself best. Take time to think about your experiences, considering your health and specific needs, aspects such as lifestyle, work demands, support and relationships.

### 2. Generate the actions

Within the plan you will map out the steps needed to stay well. Consider actions you, your manager and colleagues can take and what support looks like to you. Actions can include changes to our routine, adjustments to work arrangements or steps to minimise triggers.

### 3. Working well

Identify what works and does not work so well for your wellbeing. Think of the current pressures you are facing and how these impacts you.

### 4. Engaging with plan

The Action Plan works best when used collaboratively. Discuss the plan with your manager (and/or OH) to help them consider what support and adjustments you need. Review progress and make changes as needed.

## What support is available?

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| Adjustments |
| * Support from your manager (advice, workload support, agreeing the type of work, catch-ups) * [Flexibility with working patterns](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/employment-policies-procedures/flexible-working) (flexible working hours, allowing time off when someone is particularly anxious, etc.) * [Working from home/ Hybrid working support](mailto:https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/working-from-home/working-from-home-during-covid-19) * [Stress Management](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/policies/stress-management-policy.doc) practices |
| Services |
| * [Counselling and Support Services](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/health-and-wellbeing/counselling-and-support-services) * [EAP Service](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/health-and-wellbeing/counselling-and-support-services) * [Occupational Health](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/professional-services/occupational-health-team) * [Report and Support](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/emergencies-security-and-safety/report-harassment) * [Workplace Coaching](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/professional-development-and-training/coaching-for-success) |
| Resources |
| * [Silvercloud](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/health-and-wellbeing/silvercloud-for-staff) * [Building Resilience](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/health-and-wellbeing/building-resilience) * Support and Guidance on [Health and Wellbeing](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/health-and-wellbeing) * [Forums and Networks](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/forums-and-networks) * [Mental Health First Aiders](https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/health-and-wellbeing/dedicated-mental-health-first-aiders) |

## How you work

Reflect on your current way(s) of working.

This includes your **work environment**-the people you interact with and how much support is in place. What makes you feel well? For instance, taking part in wellbeing events may help lower stress and boost productivity, while providing opportunities to meet others.

Consider your work structure. Achieving a good work life balance and having flexibility allow us to manage and recover from the pressures of work.

The University supports flexible working arrangements as detailed in the [Flexible Working Policy](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/directories/human-resources/work-life-balance.pdf?la=en#:~:text=All%20grades%20and%20job%20roles,an%20equitable%20and%20consistent%20way.&text=A%20flexible%20working%20culture%20relies,University%20and%20teams%20within%20it.).

What steps can you or your manager take to support your wellbeing?

For example: Isolation due to remote working - arranging frequent catch-up meetings/ arranging to come into the office on some days; Childcare commitments- flexible working hours;

### What resources, services or practices do you use to stay well?

Think about the resources in place at the University that may help you. For example, self-development opportunities, EAP support, having a written work plan.

### Are there any characteristics of your individual working style that your manager/colleagues should be aware of?

Think about your preferences and needs. For example, you may prefer digital communication to face to face contact for some work activites.

### What are your current and intended working arrangements?

Outline what your week looks like. Think about the type of flexibility needed, your work environment and equipment. What are the adjustments needed?

### Are adjustments to your work structure needed to support you?

For example, flexible working patterns, compressed hours. Consider the benefits and challenges of these.

## Staying mentally well at work

Reflect on what works best for you personally and what affects you negatively.

Everyone's wellbeing needs are different. Think about the type of environment, relationships and practices that has or may enable you to stay well at work.

Next, consider the type of situations that caused your mental health to suffer. Identify your unique triggers and try to understand these carefully. What reasonable actions can be taken to minimise or manage these?

For example:

Conflict at work- Timely intervention

Being excluded from decision-making- Being invited to a particular meeting

What causes you to take days off and what exacerbates your symptoms? Was there anything that helped your recovery?

### What helps you stay mentally healthy at work?

Think about what has worked for you in the past. For example, taking a lunch break away from your workspace, getting some exercise before or after work , natural light at your workspace, opportunities to get to know colleagues.

### What triggers poor wellbeing for you?

For example, conflicts, task-related pressure, lack of contact or communication, organisational change. What action would you like to be taken?

### What can you, your manager or colleagues put in place to support you to stay mentally well at work and minimise triggers?

For example regular feedback and catch-ups, flexible working, clarifying expectations and tasks.

## Experiencing poor mental health at work

Reflect on how you feel when experiencing poor mental health.

When our mental health declines, this can feel scary and also difficult to spot and manage. There may be some indicators that a decline is happening. The combination of signs and symptoms is unique for each one of us.

For example, someone with poor mental health may experience excessive worry, irritability, fatigue, changes in mood or they may find it difficult to concentrate.

It is important to consider what is also happening outside of work- stressful events, traumatic experiences, medical conditions can also trigger a decline in mental health or make it more difficult for us to cope with day to day pressures.

### What does poor mental health look/feel like for you?

Think about the unique combination of signs and symptoms and consider situations that make you more at risk. For example, you may find it difficult to make decisions, struggle to prioritise work, feeling drowsy/confused.

### What signs should colleagues look out for?

Consider how poor mental health may affect your behaviour and work performance. For example , being late for meetings and becoming withdrawn.

### What actions you would like to be taken if warning signs are noticed?

Think about how you would prefer others to respond. or approach you. Is there anyone they should contact (family, GP)

### Is there anything additional you would like to share that would support your mental health at work?

## Summary

### To stay well at work I use/practice:

### The following help me stay well at work:

### Actions to be taken if warning signs are noticed:

### Adjustments needed to my work structure:

### Myself/ my manager /colleagues need to do the following to support me and minimise triggers:

### Additional comments on how to be supported to stay well at work: