

The background of the entire page is a photograph of an open, lined notebook with a silver pen resting on it. The notebook is open to two blank, lined pages. Above the notebook, there are several pink flowers, including a large, full bloom and two detached petals. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a gentle glow on the notebook's pages and the surrounding surface.

NAPA

For Activity Providers

WELLBEING JOURNAL

INTRO

It is my pleasure to introduce this Wellbeing Journal for Activity Providers and Professionals.

Life and work can sometimes feel overwhelming. Reaching out to others can feel like a challenge and knowing where to look for advice is not always easy. NAPA's wellbeing resources are designed to support you in developing skills and strategies to help manage stress, anxiety, loneliness and the pressures of everyday life.

This journal has been created following consultation with NAPA members. Thank you to everyone who shared their feedback, ideas and experiences to help shape this resource.

It is important that we take care of ourselves and each other so that we can reduce the negative impact stress can have on our wellbeing. We all experience stress differently and at times it can feel overwhelming. Self-care can help reduce stress, support emotional wellbeing and improve quality of life. It is not simply about taking part in hobbies or activities, but about building habits and approaches that support both mind and body.

We also recognise that some self-care activities may bring up feelings of emotional discomfort for some individuals, particularly those with past experiences of trauma or ongoing mental health challenges. If this happens, it is important to stop the activity and seek advice or support from an appropriate healthcare or mental health professional.

Within this journal you will find tips, ideas and templates designed to support self-care and wellbeing. We truly believe that in order to support people to live content, creative and connected lives, we must also ensure that our own wellbeing is prioritised.

This document may be freely downloaded and distributed provided that NAPA is credited. The information included within this journal is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

**ENJOY
EVERY
MOMENT**

**YOUR
POTENTIAL
IS ENDLESS**

NAPA

WELLBEING AND SELF-CARE FOR ACTIVITY PROVIDERS AND PROFESSIONALS

Why should we focus on Self-Care? What benefit does it have for us at work?

The Great Outdoors

In Victorian England, parks were built to be the "lungs of the cities", to help protect the health of the population. In other words, we don't need to live in the countryside to yield the benefits of some green space. Whether it's a garden or a local park, we can all reap the physical benefits of being outside.

For example, in 2020, researchers found that experiencing nature is particularly important for physical and mental health. This was the first study to show that wildness in urban areas is hugely important for our wellbeing. While a Stanford University study found that walking in nature yields measurable mental benefits and may reduce risk of depression.

While the study recommended 90-minute walks, the researchers found there were benefits from just 10 minutes of walking outside. It lowers our cortisol (stress hormone) levels and lowers our heart rate.

How great is that? Just 10 minutes outside each day could make a big difference for your health and wellbeing. And if there's anything the pandemic has done, it's got us thinking differently about how we get around – such as how we get to and from work. In 2019, researchers found that walking or cycling to work were associated with fewer heart attacks for more than 40 million adults in England. In other words, incorporating physical activity into our travel could really help our health and wellbeing.

The benefits of getting outside go beyond our physical wellbeing, it can help our mental ability and our job satisfaction too. For example, research from the University of Swansea, in 2019, found that as little as an hour a week of learning outside had significant positive benefits for children and boosted teachers' satisfaction in their jobs.



WELLBEING AND SELF-CARE FOR ACTIVITY PROVIDERS AND PROFESSIONALS

Sleep and relaxation

A diary study found that when we don't detach fully from work then work-related thoughts creep into our personal time which can, in turn, hinder us getting a good night's sleep. Subsequently, when we don't get a good night's sleep, we feel more fatigued and so, less able to be mindful at work. In other words, a vicious circle can end up being created.

Tactics that many of my clients have found helpful include:

- Going to sleep and getting up at the same time every day
- Avoiding sleeping in – even on weekends
- Short naps – anything between 10 and 30 minutes
- Exposing yourself to bright sunlight in the morning
- Spending more time outside during daylight
- Writing your to-do list for the next day the night before

But sometimes we can still get a good night's sleep and still feel stressed and anxious at work the next day.

One approach that researchers have found might help is to allow yourself a few minutes of downtime through massage could significantly boost mental and physical relaxation. The researchers found that even ten minutes of simple rest increased relaxation. Having somebody gently stroke your shoulders, or even just resting your head on the table for ten minutes, is an effective way to boost your body's ability to relax.

And finally, in 2019, a study from Portland State University who researched nurses working in care home environments found that being thanked more often at work predicted better sleep, fewer headaches and healthier eating, because it improved the nurses' work satisfaction. The big takeaway?

Express gratitude when you see someone doing a good job. A positive feedback loop impacts you and those around you and can shape a healthier and happier community.

Here are some questions that you might want to use in your own gratitude activity.

What have I done today to make someone else happy?

What has somebody else done today to make me happy?

What have I learned?

HOW TO GET OUT OF YOUR OWN WAY

How many of you start each year with good intentions? And how many of those good intentions fall by the wayside by about the 5th of January? Hey, I'm not judging. I fall into the same trap too and that trap is two-fold. First, we set ourselves too many unrealistic things to achieve and then when we don't see quick enough results we stop. Second, we don't think enough about the things that could get in our way to us achieving our aims – such as getting fitter. This is where the WOOP approach comes in useful. WOOP is a technique used by psychologists to help clients achieve their goals. Use these questions to help you clarify the goal you want to achieve.

Wish	What is an important wish you want to achieve? Your wish should be challenging but realistic.	Example: I want to complete the NHS Couch to 5k challenge.
Outcome	What will be the best result from achieving your wish? How will you feel? Imagine and then vividly describe the outcome.	I will feel fitter and healthier meaning I can do more things with my children. I'll sleep better. My heart won't race as much. Getting outside will help me feel better about myself.
Obstacle	What is the main obstacle that might prevent you achieving your wish? Imagine and then vividly describe the obstacle.	I really hate the rain so if it rains then I won't go for a run. The danger is that if I miss a run then I'll miss the next one and the next one...
Outcome	What's an effective action to overcome the obstacle? Make an If-Then plan.	If it rains, then I will do some cardio exercise at home. I won't use it as an excuse to do nothing.

Wellbeing at work isn't all yoga classes, or free fruit, or teaching people to meditate. That stuff is important, but it deals with symptoms not causes of workplace stress and wellbeing issues. Workplace wellbeing goes much deeper than that. It's about the culture of the organisation – the processes, workload, resources, unwritten rules, the behaviour that gets explicitly or implicitly rewarded or punished and it's about leadership and management behaviour. In The Shed NAPA Members will find a bundle of articles and resources, where I share evidence-based ideas and tools to help you and your teams make sense of this stuff and not just survive the ups and downs of work life but thrive".

Dr Hayley Lewis (she/her) CPsychol, AFBPsS, Managing Director Halo Psychology



NAPA'S TOP TIPS TO SUPPORT WELLBEING

Activity Providers work hard. Creative and committed Activity Providers need to make sure that their body and mind have time to rest and recharge.

Many social care professionals experience back, knee and other strain-related injuries. As an Activity Provider you do a significant amount of physical work. This is hard on your body and puts you at risk of illness and injury. Your mental health can be affected too, and burnout is common. It is important to focus on self-care so that you can continue to do the job with the same level of commitment and enthusiasm. NAPA are proud of the difference Activity Providers make every single day and we believe you deserve to be happy and well.

Wellbeing tips for Activity Providers and Professionals:

Sleeping well can be a challenge, especially if you're working varying shifts or irregular hours. Getting a regular 6-8 hours of sleep a night can work wonders for your physical and mental health, so do try to get an early night, at least a couple of times a week!

Drinking less caffeine, avoiding using your phone straight before bed and making the room dark can all help to support good sleep.

Drinking the right amount of water can make a huge difference to physical health. The physical aspect of an Activity Providers job can be dehydrating so make sure you drink little and often throughout the day. Drinking water improves digestive health, reduces the risk of infection, and helps concentration.

Eating a well-balanced diet is important for energy levels, mood, and physical health. Take your breaks and eat three meals a day.

Activity Providers are on their feet for much of their working day. Having an exercise routine is still important because it helps the brain and body unwind after a long day. Going for a run or joining a yoga or dance class will provide a good outlet and help build endurance.

Work/life balance is vital and having things outside of work to look forward to can help maintain a healthy balance.

Activity Providers more than any other professionals, understand the importance of meaningful engagement – and this applies to you as well as to the people you support!

NAPA'S TOP TIPS TO SUPPORT WELLBEING

Getting in touch with your artistic side can help you feel calmer and more relaxed. Try painting, drawing, making crafts, playing a musical instrument, dancing, baking, or sewing. Focus on enjoying yourself.

Spending time outside and in green spaces can be great for physical and mental health. Take a walk in a green space, take time to notice trees, flowers, plants, and animals. Spend time taking part in conservation, whether that's digging in your own garden or someone else's!

Staying in touch with the people that matter to us is vital to wellbeing and just like having things to look forward to and being creative, it is also important to stay connected with friends and family.

Activity Providers know the people they support well and often form special attachments and connections. When a person we support dies it can be upsetting and sometimes traumatic. It is important that you get the support you need to come to terms with the loss. Have regular supervision with your manager and ask for bereavement counselling, if you feel it might help.



Would you benefit from a new challenge?

Why not try something new?

Learn a new hobby or skill!



Make time to do nothing! Relaxation takes many forms and can mean different things to different people, set aside some time for yourself every week – even if it is just half an hour!

If you are feeling low or stressed, can't find motivation, or if you feel physically unwell it is important to talk to your GP.

Self-care is key to improving your wellbeing and providing relief from feelings of anxiety, stress or worry. Making a self-care action plan can help you make time to look after your own wellbeing.

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES FOR ACTIVITY PROVIDERS

Practice relaxation techniques when your stress levels are low, then you will know what to do when your tension is high.

Here are some examples of Quick Relaxation Techniques – use the ones that suit you and leave the rest behind.

1. Tense the whole body, hold it if you can without feeling pain, slowly release the tension and gradually feel it leave your body, repeat three times.
2. Open your mind and focus on your breathing, as your breathing becomes calm and more regular imagine that the air comes towards you, fills you up, and leaves your body, imagine the air as your favourite place.
3. With your head level and body relaxed, pick a spot to focus on, count five breaths backward, allow your eyes to close gradually, concentrate on every breath, and focus on your feelings.
4. Feel passive and indifferent, count each breath slowly from 10 to one, feel heavy and relaxed, with each exhalation, allow the tension to leave your body.

Consider the following:

What makes me feel good?
What helps me when I feel overwhelmed?
What are the signs I am feeling anxious?
Who can I ask for support?



Try the steps below when feeling overwhelmed, low, or anxious:

- Find somewhere quiet and comfortable to sit
- Try to relax your entire body
- Take slow, deep breaths, until you are breathing at a steady rhythm
- Become aware of your surroundings
- What can you see? Make a mental note of what you can see around you and what you can hear
- Bring your attention back to your breath. Try to notice your breathing, and the feeling of your body relaxing
- How do you feel now?
- Talking to other people can be difficult when feeling anxious. If you feel too anxious to speak to someone in-person, online, or on the phone, try texting or emailing.

MINDFUL WALK

One of the best ways to take care of your mental health is getting outdoors!

Why not try this simple Mindful Walk in your local area.

You will need:

- Mindful quotes or prompt words printed and laminated – see next page
- Hole puncher
- String
- Correct outdoor footwear and clothing
- A camera is optional
- Pen and paper

*Small
steps
every
day*



What you do:

- Print off the quotes or prompts; you can make your own, for example; stop and look around you, name something beautiful.
- Laminate the words to protect them and then using the hole punch, pop a hole at the top on each side.
- Before you start the walk, go, and assess your trail and take your cards with you. Tie them to spots along the route.
- Now you're ready to start your walk. Enjoy walking along the route and reading the prompts. You could use a camera to capture moments or even better, a note pad to jot down comments and notes to make into a poem.

Top Tip:

If you enjoyed this walk, then think about starting your own walking club.

You could change the images and use a theme for each walk, history on the local area, cakes, cars, or even famous singers, using technology to play a song at each point.

"Notice the little things. They are often the big things."

"Take a deep breath. You are exactly where you need to be."

"Slow down and enjoy what is around you."

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."

"One step at a time."

"Listen to the sounds around you."

"Feel the fresh air and notice how it makes you feel."

"Take a moment to pause and look up."

"Notice five things you can see."

"Peace can be found in simple moments."

"Every walk is a chance to reset."

"Notice the colours around you."

5 MINUTE JOURNALING

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER ABOUT TODAY

TODAY I FELT...

TODAY I'M GRATEFUL FOR

5 MINUTE JOURNALING

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER ABOUT TODAY

TODAY I FELT...

TODAY I'M GRATEFUL FOR

5 MINUTE JOURNALING

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER ABOUT TODAY

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5 MINUTE JOURNALING

ONE THING I WANT TO REMEMBER ABOUT TODAY

TODAY I FELT...

TODAY I'M GRATEFUL FOR

MY WEEK

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

MY WEEK

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

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FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

MY WEEK

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

MONTHLY GOALS

MIND GOALS







BODY GOALS







WORK GOALS







MONTHLY GOALS

MIND GOALS







BODY GOALS







WORK GOALS







MONTHLY GOALS

MIND GOALS







BODY GOALS







WORK GOALS







MONTHLY GOALS

MIND GOALS







BODY GOALS







WORK GOALS







MONTHLY GOALS

MIND GOALS







BODY GOALS







WORK GOALS







SELF-CARE JOURNEY

MONTH:

YEAR:

ACTS OF SELF-CARE

AFFIRMATION



TODAY'S MOOD



I'M GRATEFUL FOR

INSPIRATION:

SELF-CARE JOURNEY

MONTH:

YEAR:

ACTS OF SELF-CARE

AFFIRMATION



TODAY'S MOOD



I'M GRATEFUL FOR

INSPIRATION:

SELF-CARE JOURNEY

MONTH:

YEAR:

ACTS OF SELF-CARE

AFFIRMATION



TODAY'S MOOD



I'M GRATEFUL FOR

INSPIRATION:

SELF-CARE JOURNEY

MONTH:

YEAR:

ACTS OF SELF-CARE

AFFIRMATION



TODAY'S MOOD



I'M GRATEFUL FOR

INSPIRATION:

SELF-CARE JOURNEY

MONTH:

YEAR:

ACTS OF SELF-CARE

AFFIRMATION



TODAY'S MOOD



I'M GRATEFUL FOR

INSPIRATION:

SELF-CARE PLANNER

MONTH:

YEAR:

MY TOP PRIORITIES

GOALS FOR MY MIND:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

GOALS FOR MY BODY:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

REMINDER

MY NOTE

SELF-CARE PLANNER

MONTH:

YEAR:

MY TOP PRIORITIES

GOALS FOR MY MIND:

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GOALS FOR MY BODY:

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REMINDER

MY NOTE

SELF-CARE PLANNER

MONTH:

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GOALS FOR MY BODY:

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REMINDER

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YEAR:

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GOALS FOR MY BODY:

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REMINDER

MY NOTE

SELF-CARE PLANNER

MONTH:

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MY TOP PRIORITIES

GOALS FOR MY MIND:

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GOALS FOR MY BODY:

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REMINDER

MY NOTE

SELF-CARE INTENTION

MONTH:

YEAR:

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

SOCIAL SELF-CARE

NOTE TO SELF:

SELF-CARE INTENTION

MONTH:

YEAR:

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

SOCIAL SELF-CARE

NOTE TO SELF:

SELF-CARE INTENTION

MONTH:

YEAR:

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

SOCIAL SELF-CARE

NOTE TO SELF:

SELF-CARE INTENTION

MONTH:

YEAR:

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

SOCIAL SELF-CARE

NOTE TO SELF:

SELF-CARE INTENTION

MONTH:

YEAR:

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

SOCIAL SELF-CARE

NOTE TO SELF:

SELF-CARE JOURNAL

MONTH:

YEAR:

AFFIRMATIONS

I'M PROUD OF MY...

I'M GRATEFUL FOR...

NOTE TO SELF:

SELF-CARE JOURNAL

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AFFIRMATIONS

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AFFIRMATIONS

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I'M GRATEFUL FOR...

NOTE TO SELF:

SELF-CARE REMINDER

MONTH:

YEAR:

WHAT KEEPS ME GROUNDED?

WHEN AM I AT MY BEST?

SELF-CARE REMINDER

MONTH:

YEAR:

WHAT KEEPS ME GROUNDED?

WHEN AM I AT MY BEST?

SELF-CARE REMINDER

MONTH:

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WHAT KEEPS ME GROUNDED?

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SELF-CARE REMINDER

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WHAT KEEPS ME GROUNDED?

WHEN AM I AT MY BEST?

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