

Leadership Bites: Wellbeing Top Tips

LEADERSHIP LEARNING IN 20 MINUTES

NHS

Leadership Academy

South East

Introduction

Wellbeing is an important part of life; and we should pay attention to our sources of energy as often as we can. Listening to our bodies is the best way to understand what we need. To do this, we need to create time and space in our daily routines to 'check-in' with ourselves.

There are many sources of energy, but there are 4 key sources of energy which impact us more often than not;

- *Physical*
- *Emotional*
- *Social*
- *Mental*

Taking care of your own wellbeing

Difficult situations are stressful on us, and due to the nature of stress on us physically and emotionally, it's important to take care of your wellbeing afterwards. Everyone is different, so do the things that work for you. Here are some suggestions of how to take care of 4 sources of energy after dealing with stressful situations:



physical
wellbeing

- Go for a run or walk in fresh air
- Change your physical environment
- Rest up and get enough sleep
- Drink plenty of water/stay hydrated
- Breathe slowly and calmly (in for a count of 5, out for a count of 7)
- If you find it difficult to sleep, get up, walk around, write down what's on your mind
- Take 5 minutes to sit comfortably, close your eyes

- Use tools and techniques including meditation and mindfulness
- Keep perspective – this is a tough time and we'll get through it together

- Give yourself permission to spend 15 minutes doing something just for you
- Reflect on 3 things that you're grateful for today to keep you grounded



mental
wellbeing



emotional
wellbeing

- Calming your emotions doesn't take away the seriousness of a situation – be kind to yourself
- Acknowledge your own emotions, and realise that all emotions are temporary
- Absorb yourself in an activity that you enjoy
- Watch or listen to something funny
- Listen to your favourite music

- Call a friend or family member
- Reach out to your network and speak to others facing similar situations
- Get a hug from someone who cares for you, or even a pet

- Share stories of your day with those in your household
- Connect with family over dinner; cook a meal together



social
wellbeing

Emotional Energy and Wellbeing:

Engage the rational brain:

Messages pass through three parts of the brain– the reptilian brain (always on the lookout for danger), the emotional brain (responsible for feelings) and the rational brain. When you feel emotional, or are faced with one of your triggers, help the messages reach your rational brain before responding.

Try:

- Take deep breaths for a couple of minutes. This calms the effect of adrenaline which prompts a fight/flight/freeze response.
- Remove yourself from the source of the emotion. Go to a different room or go for a short walk if you can.

Keep an eye out for positive things:

Focusing on positive things helps to remind us to put things into perspective.

Try:

- The 10/10/10 rule – will this matter in 10 minutes, 10 weeks or 10 years?
- Keep a gratitude diary, or use an app such as Grateful. Each day, note three things you're grateful for, and in no time you'll have a wealth of ideas to look back on that will help you deal with difficult times.
- Share 'something that made me smile' as part of a team check-in.
- Think about what's important to you, and do one thing each day that links to your purpose.

Emotional Energy and Wellbeing



Calming emotions

Emotions are temporary. How you feel now is not how you'll feel later. Use different strategies to hook in to positive emotions.

Try:

- Use your support network to talk about how you feel.
- Write stuff down. No need to share it unless you want to – it just helps the brain to declutter with no other tech getting in the way.
- Take a break, and do something you enjoy.
- A hug with a partner, friend or pet may often help.
- Listen to music that makes you feel good.

Manage conflict effectively:

Flex your conflict resolution muscles. This helps reduce or avoid the stress associated with conflict, as we'll have strategies to help us manage it better.

Try:

- Identify the cause of the conflict – is it because one of your values has been challenged?
- Spot the areas that you both agree on.
- Be aware of any assumptions you may be making about their point of view.
- Ask questions of the other person so you understand their situation fully, and remember, just because you understand, doesn't mean to have to agree.
- Explain why it's important to you, and what an ideal outcome would be.

Humour:

Laughter releases endorphins and lowers blood pressure. It lightens your mood and creates social bonds with others. Humour is very personal, so find something that you find funny.

Try:

- Watching or listening to comedy, a funny film, or even funny cat videos!
- Share stories with your team of what made you laugh out loud
- Tell jokes, talk about amusing situations. Don't take yourself too seriously 😊

Social Energy and Wellbeing

Beliefs, Values and Traditions:

We're at our best when strongly rooted to a cause. Our intent, positive and authentic; our actions, assertive and tenacious.

Try:

- Following your energy. You're more likely to find new ways of solving problems, and to a high standard.
- Going with your gut. Trust your instincts; they're full of integrity. Say your piece when it needs to be heard.
- Knowing what drives you and striking a balance that feels good and healthy i.e. family, work, friends, finances/security.
- Reaching out to someone when you notice resonance. Tell them what they said or did that struck a chord with you.
- Sharing the funny family game you play around the dinner table or at Christmas. Break the ice and find common ground by bringing laughter and lightness to others through your own traditions.

Contribution:

Making a difference is what drives and motivates us. It's not about moving mountains or raising millions. It's about playing a part.

Try:

- Thinking about what you want people to remember you for. What do you need to do to be that person?
- Donating your time, skills, know-how and/or patience. You don't need to contribute money to make a difference. You're not valued at work because you pay the company money; you're valued for your ideas, expertise, compassion and connections.
- Phoning a vulnerable stranger – yours may be the only voice they hear all day.
- Using supportive and encouraging language. Feedforward to help someone grow and improve.

Social Energy and Wellbeing

Belonging:

Whether it's to a person, a group, a pet or a goal – we all want to feel connected, comfortable and completely at peace with ourselves. To feel included, is to feel like we matter.

Try:

- Saying yes to new invitations. If you always say no, you'll stop being asked.
- Putting yourself out there. Tell someone what you're interested in, and actively listen to what they're interested in. You're likely to find commonality.
- Making an effort with the people that show kindness, patience and reserved judgement. And show all those things to them.
- Be part of something bigger. And be clear about your part. E.g. Sports, Social Clubs, Quiz Teams, Board Membership.

Paying Forward:

Not with money (necessarily) but with compassion and care. Research suggests that making others feel good lasts 8 times longer than if we do something to make ourselves feel good.

Try:

- Buying the bargain hot sausage roll when you're in the supermarket and giving it to the rough sleeper. Or 'banking' a hot drink at the café for someone that needs it.
- Leaving a note of thanks on the windscreen of an emergency services vehicle.
- Smiling and saying hello rather than looking at the floor.
- Telling someone what you admire about them. Send them a text, email, or pass on your treat to them – their happiness will last longer than if you have it yourself.

Mental Energy and Wellbeing

Learning/Stretch:

Enhance mental capability and spark enthusiasm by stepping away from habit and doing something new.

Try:

- Making up a game/challenge the whole family can get involved/compete in.
- Learning a new recipe with the ingredients in your house. Learn to sketch/play an instrument/run with Couch to 5k/Design a website/Write a blog.
- Read up on plants/vegetables for your garden.
- Watch and replicate tutorials on DIY/Make-up/Baking.

Achievement:

Remind yourself, there's no such thing as a wasted day. You always achieve something, whether its being more informed, rested, joyful and connected, or taking the opportunity for quality family time.

Try:

- Notice the opportunities you took today, rather than the ones you didn't. What did you gain from them?
- Setting realistic expectations. Aim for 2-3 big work tasks for the day and congratulate yourself for each one.
- Reward yourself (and family) with playtime/dancing/lunch time walk/sweet treats/games/a kickabout.
- Swapping your 'To Do' list for a 'To Achieve' list; swap the sense of tiring chores for a meaty challenge.

Mental Energy and Wellbeing

Purpose

Feeling anchored and part of something bigger is important for self-esteem and prioritising time.

Try:

- Reframing. Notice the opportunities to be taken from this situation.
- Getting perspective. In 10 years time when you look back at this moment, what do you want to remember? What will you tell yourself about it?
- Do something for the greater good. What's the most valuable thing you can do for yourself and others right now?

Mindful:

Being mindful instead of mind-full means we are present, fully focused and absorbed in an activity. Therefore more fulfilled by engaging in it, and often producing high quality outputs.

Try:

- Dedicating time throughout the day to notice surroundings, nature, sounds and smells.
- Deep breathing. Counting/Naming objects out loud or meditating (with or without the family).
- Photographing the same natural thing everyday to watch it's growth.
- Describing the colour of the sky in 10 words.
- Walking/running/cycling/driving a different route to usual.
- Describing out loud, the taste of your end-of-day treat.

Engagement:

Very few people can be constantly 'on', interested and enthusiastic. To surge energy when it matters, we have to recharge the batteries and find ways to dial up tenacity.

Try:

- Getting ready for the day. Properly dress and style yourself for the day.
- 'Transition Rituals' – actions that you do as you move from work zone/time to relaxation zone/time e.g. stretching/switching off device notifications/nose to toes shake.
- Take the lead on a new task with new people.

Physical Energy and Wellbeing

Physical activity:

Physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits. Most importantly, regular activity can improve your quality of life.

Try:

- Instead of the gym, can you do an online workout? Could you 'commute' to work?
- Get up and move about. Try stretching exercises in between your calls and meetings.
- Do something physical with other members of your household? Walking, cycling, dog walk?
- Practice Chair Yoga from the videos on the Intranet when you need a stretch, or when you just need to refocus.

Nutrition:

A well-balanced diet provides all of the energy you need to keep active throughout the day, and the nutrients for growth and repair, helping you to stay strong and healthy.

Try:

- Keep to a fresh balanced diet where you can – fruit and veg, carbs, protein, dairy
- If you're at home with kids, find a nutritious recipe and make it as part of their food tech lesson together
- Have healthy snacks available for everyone, and encourage 'break time' where you all eat something nutritious.

Physical Energy and Wellbeing

Environment

Your working space is an important factor in how productive you can be, especially when you're sharing your space with a partner, kids and pets.

Try:

- Negotiate with the family over working/playing spaces. Try not to work from a bed or sofa too long. If there's limited choice, get up and move about more often. Have a routine where possible.
- Adjust your working day around your priorities – could you wake earlier, do a couple of hours of work, spend time with family, then work again later on?
- Having calls or meetings as walking meetings out in the fresh air.

Reset:

Rest and recovery are fundamental to our wellbeing, so be mindful of your balance of work and rest when working virtually.

Try:

- Stick to a regular bedtime routine and get plenty of rest
- Keep your working environment and rest environment separate – if you cannot do this, pack away as part of your end-of-day ritual
- It may be tempting to do longer hours as you're not travelling to and from work – be disciplined and turn off the phone/laptop to help you switch off. Make time for hobbies, mindfulness, exercise and sleep
- Do any outside jobs need doing? If you have a car or garden, how about washing the car or cutting the grass at lunchtime to create thinking space?

Drink:

Being hydrated is essential, as the human body is on average 50-60% water. To function properly, all the cells and organs of the body need water, so keep yourself topped up.

Try:

- Keep a bottle of water next to you, and top it up before each meeting
- Limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol, especially before bedtime
- Experiment with different types of fruit tea, or try water with lemon juice

Further learning ...

For further information and learning, as well as suggested activities, feel free to visit the [People.NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) website or our [South East Leadership Academy site](#).



Time to reflect...



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Take some time to note down your thoughts on what you've learned;

What resonated?

What has made you curious?

What small changes could you make to start having an impact differently and quickly?

What might you need to share with your team, and commit to 'testing and learning' together?

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for writing reflection notes.