



# The Wellbeing Line

SELFCARE IS NOT SELFISH

## Welcome Pack

# Welcome to your new role!

In your welcome pack, you will find...

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# Introduction



Welcome to your new role!

This pack includes:

- > information
- > resources
- > handy tips
- > contact numbers

To help you look after your health and wellbeing as you start your new role and beyond.



# Who we are

The Wellbeing Line is a mental health and wellbeing hub, set up in response to the coronavirus pandemic, to provide support to health and social care staff in a holistic and responsive way. We are now locally funded by the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

**No problem is too small.  
If you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, worried, anxious or low in mood - if you are not sleeping well or you just don't feel like your usual self - reach out.**

## Our purpose:

- **Unlocking confidential mental health and wellbeing support for anyone working in health and social care in Gloucestershire.**
- **Encouraging open discussions about mental health and wellbeing.**
- **Normalising people's experiences and helping them access the right support for them.**

The Wellbeing Line is FREE to access, and you can self-refer by calling **0300 421 7500**, emailing [hello@thewellbeingline.co.uk](mailto:hello@thewellbeingline.co.uk), or filling out the call-back request form on our website [www.thewellbeingline.co.uk](http://www.thewellbeingline.co.uk). There are no forms to fill-out or waiting lists.

Please note, The Wellbeing Line does not offer crisis support or ongoing 1:1 support.

# How The Wellbeing Line can support you

The Wellbeing Line is **independent** from your employer, occupational health, GP and HR. We offer a **confidential**, safe space for you to talk through any difficulties you may be experiencing, whether that is related to work, personal circumstances, emotional wellbeing/mental health concerns or the ongoing impact of COVID.



## What happens when you contact us?

We will give you time to discuss what has been happening for you, then work together to make sense of what is going on and think of ways to help you move forward.

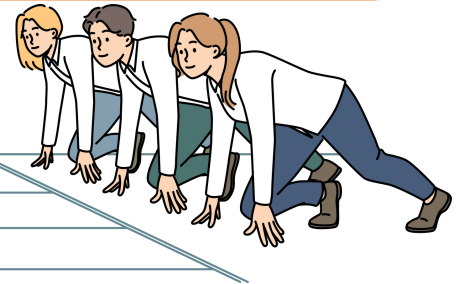
As well as individual support, we provide support for teams and team-leads too. We offer tailored support that is targeted to the specific needs of the team. Team leads are welcome to call or email if they are concerned about a colleague and/or if they would like to think about ways to support their team.

# How stress can build up

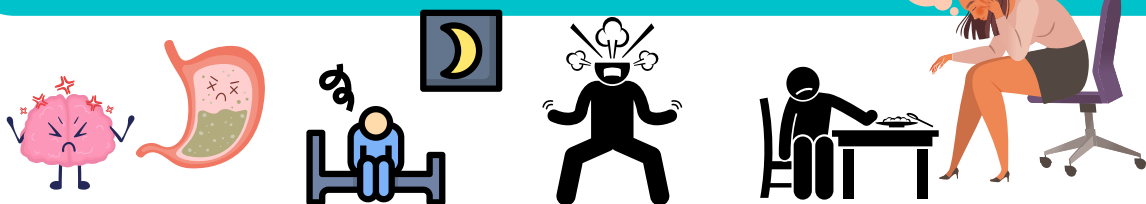
We know that working within health and social care professions can be rewarding, but challenging at times. Situations within our workplaces may cause us to feel stressed and anxious.

Stress is a normal physiological response and, in the short-term, can be helpful. It helps us assess risks, keeps us safe from danger, motivates us and helps us manage changes.

Like runners before a race, short-term adrenaline and stress can help us and we can thrive on it, provided we can rest and recuperate after.



However, when the feelings of stress continue, this can have a negative impact on us both physically and emotionally. We know that the feelings of stress can build up over time. Whilst there might be one event that causes us to feel stressed, it may also be the combination of a number of events that happen over time, which can ultimately lead us to feel burned out.



Stress can show up in many different ways and it is important to recognise when it might be showing up for you. What are your early warning signs?

# How stress can build up

We all have capacity or 'reserve' to deal with challenging or stressful situations.

As we go through life or a period of stress, this bucket gets filled and can get close to the top.

What fills up your stress bucket?



What helps you let it out?

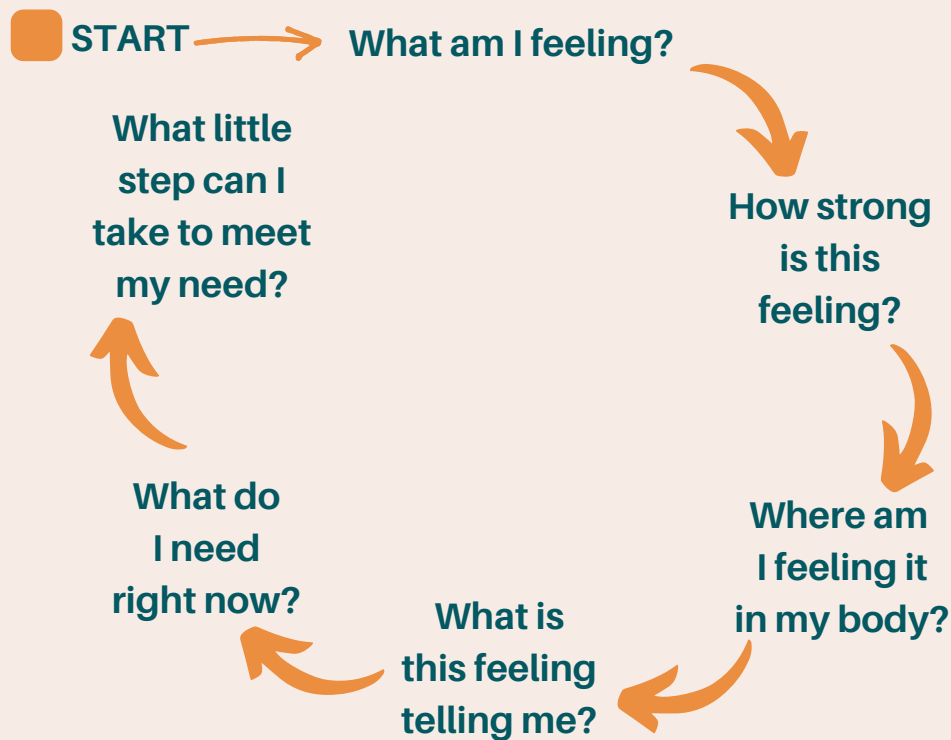
This can mean that our capacity or reserve to deal with new stressors or daily hassles is reduced.

What can then happen is the bucket 'over flows'. This overflow can result in feelings of anxiety, stress, low mood, irritability.

# Why it is important to look after you

We need to find ways to release the build up of stress by bringing awareness and compassion to our feelings. Recognise that we are struggling. We then need to connect with what soothes us and look after ourselves again.

## How to check-in with yourself



By understanding and bringing awareness to these feelings we can begin to recognise when we need to look after ourselves, when we need to treat ourselves with compassion, and when we might need to reach out to others for support.

# Developing Self Compassion

## What is compassion and why is it important?

Being part of a caring profession, a large part of our job involves offering care and empathy for others. Doing this without offering compassion for ourselves can leave us feeling stressed, and at risk of burnout. Developing compassion for ourselves can bring our emotions into a helpful balance that increases our sense of wellbeing.



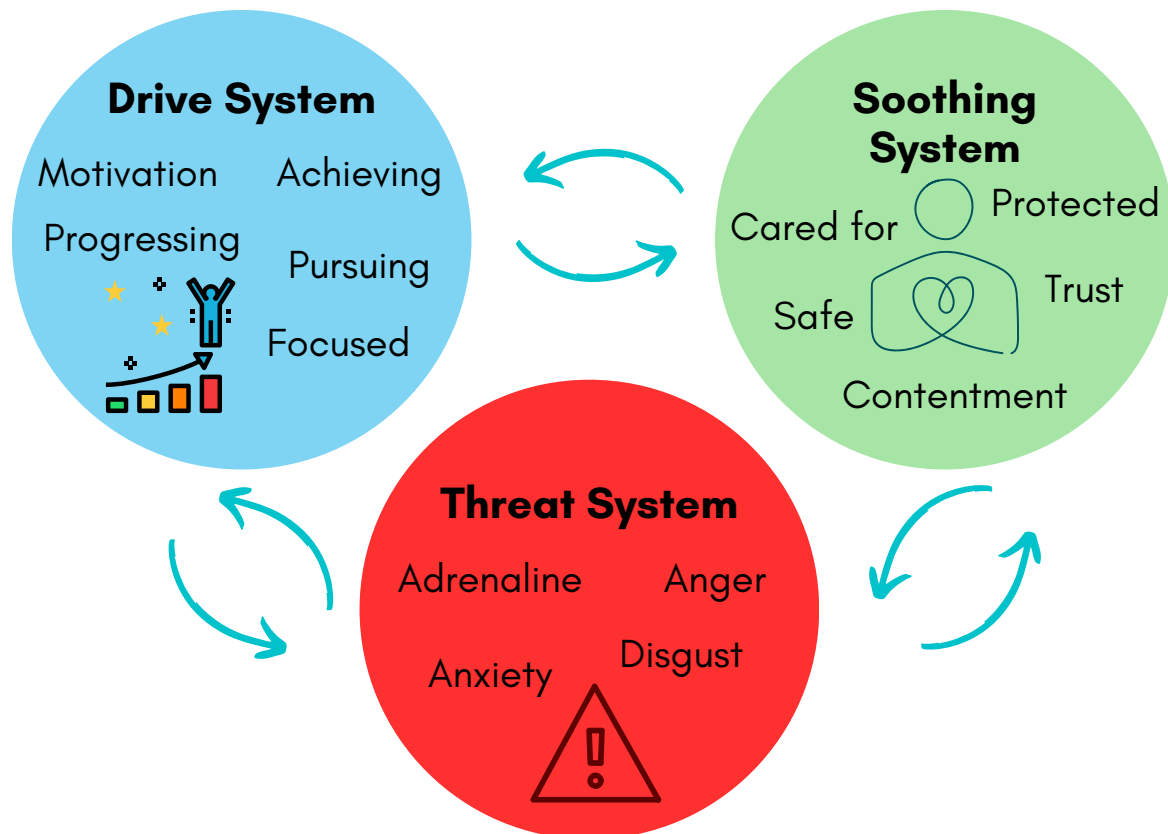
### The 3 Flows of Compassion



We are often very good at offering compassion and looking after others, but many of us have difficulty showing and feeling compassion towards ourselves. We might also struggle to accept compassion or help from others. This can mean that we don't always ask for help.

# Developing Self Compassion

Paul Gilbert's model suggests that we have three emotion regulation systems. These systems work together to help us manage life's ups and downs.



Although we might not realise it, a lot of us tend to spend our time in the threat or drive systems. In order to manage this, we focus on “doing”. This might lead us to respond reactively, not allowing ourselves time to slow down and think. The threat and drive systems are high energy systems. When we spend a lot of time in both, we may drain our energy reserves, and this can lead us to feel ‘burnt out’.

# Developing Self Compassion

When we notice we are struggling, we can: **REDUCE RED (our threat system)** by slowing down, recognising we are in our threat system and thinking about what we can do to remove stressors or ask for help.



# Looking after YOU in your new role

Whether you are starting a new role or you have been in your role for some time, work can sometimes feel overwhelming. Thoughts of '*am I good enough?*', '*what if I make a mistake?*' or '*there is so much to remember*', are all normal thoughts to have. However, our thoughts can also trigger our threat system, so it is important to make sure these and other unhelpful thoughts do not become common or comfortable in your mind, here are a few handy techniques to practice regularly:



Keep a note of things that are going well in your new role, such as if someone gives you good feedback. It can be really helpful to look back on these achievements when you are experiencing these thoughts.



Practice some quick and simple breathing or relaxation techniques, such as the examples on the next page. These techniques help us to clear our mind and think more clearly. This can help us to manage unhelpful thoughts and to cope in stressful situations.



Think about creating an after-work routine to help you switch off from work. Changing out of work clothes can be helpful. If you can, try to connect with nature, for example going for a walk or sitting outside with a cuppa. Perhaps do something you enjoy like listening to music, reading or making time to connect with friends/family.

# Looking after YOU in your new role

Below are a couple of helpful techniques that can help calm the mind and body. They only take a couple of moments, so practicing them regularly can maximise their impact:

Connecting with your breath and finding your own soothing rhythm can be a great way to slow things down and bring yourself into the present moment.



You might like to try a simple grounding technique which focuses on your 5 senses. In moments of stress or panic this can quickly & effectively slow things down & bring you back to the present moment.

## 5 Senses Activity

- 5 things you can SEE
- 4 things you can TOUCH
- 3 things you can HEAR
- 2 things you can SMELL
- 1 thing you can TASTE

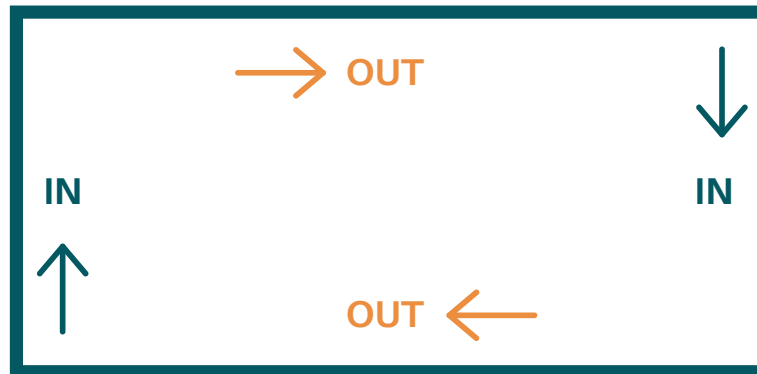
# Looking after YOU in your new role

You can also try a simple breathing technique called rectangular breathing, which involves looking for something in the room that is shaped like a rectangle. If you cannot see anything, simply close your eyes and imagine a rectangle in front of you.

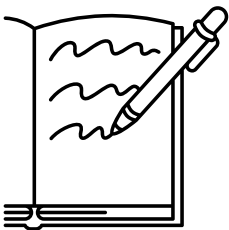
## Starting bottom left corner:

- Breathe in through the nose to the top of the rectangle
- Breathe out through the mouth along the top of the rectangle
- Breathe in through the nose down to the bottom of the rectangle
- Breathe out through the mouth along the bottom of the rectangle.

**Do this as many times as you need to feel calm**



## Rectangle Breathing



If you find your mind busy and not able to switch off, try keeping a note pad to write down what's on your mind. It can also be helpful to follow any unhelpful thoughts or worries you write down with 3 things you are grateful/thankful for.

# Looking after YOU in your new role

Taking a break during your working day is important. The science tells us that taking movement breaks has physical health benefits by reducing the negative effects of sitting. Taking breaks can also increase your motivation and productivity, and improve your learning.

Here are a few of our favourite effective break ideas:

## Exercise



A **regular stroll** can increase blood flow to the brain, enhance the connectivity of important brain circuits, combat age-related declines in brain function and improve memory and cognitive performance.

## Nature



**Noticing the sights and sounds of nature** can help you recharge. Natural environments reduce stress and can replenish your cognitive resources. Find plants, fresh air, a fish tank, or a fountain. Sit down, take a deep breath, and notice the details of nature.

## Eyes



Doing **20-20-20 eye breaks** is a straightforward way to alleviate eye strain and fatigue. Every **20 minutes**, stare at something **20 feet away**, for **20 seconds**. This requires blood flow to brain areas that are not related to sustained attention.

# Looking after YOU in your new role

Making sure you are getting enough quality **sleep** is vital for physical and mental health. This is especially true if your role involves **shift work**. Here are some of our favourite sleep tips:



If you are struggling to get to sleep, try not to lie there longer than 20-30 minutes trying to get to sleep. Get out of bed, keep the lights low, do something relaxing such as reading for a few minutes. This helps reset the bedtime cycle so that when you get back into bed, your brain can relax and allow you to fall asleep.



Our brains love routine and association and this is important for sleep. Even if you cannot sleep and wake up at the same times due to shift patterns, creating a consistent bedtime routine can be really helpful. Routines can help our brains learn a link between these actions and the fact that it's now time to sleep.



Avoid phones and screen use before bed as this can keep our brain's active and make it harder to fall asleep.



Avoid caffeine in the hours before bed as it can contribute to difficulty falling asleep by disrupting your circadian rhythm.

# Looking after YOU in your new role

When starting a new role, it is important to find out some key information about how your team/organisation will support your health and wellbeing:

- If you don't already have one, find a buddy who is also new or a newer member of the team - someone you can turn to as you settle in.
- Speak to other team members or your manager to find out what they might be doing to support staff health and wellbeing - see if there is anything you can get involved in which might help you get to know your new colleagues and/or your new role.
- Many teams have **Health & Wellbeing Champions** - ask your manager if your team has one and introduce yourself if you haven't already met them. You can ask them to point you in the direction of any support you might need.

Scan the QR code to find out more about Health & Wellbeing Champions:



It will take you time to settle in to your new role and it's important to look after yourself and be kind to yourself as you do. Please ask for help if you need it and remember that 'selfcare is not selfish'.



# The Wellbeing Line

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## Contact us

**Freephone: 0300 421 7500**

**Email: [hello@thewellbeingline.co.uk](mailto:hello@thewellbeingline.co.uk)**

**Our freephone support lines are open between 9am to 4.30pm, Monday - Thursday and between 9am to 12pm on Friday.**

If you prefer to email in the first instance, then we will aim to respond within two working days to arrange a telephone call.

**Prefer us to call you?** You can request a call back on our website: <https://thewellbeingline.co.uk>, and we will aim to get back to you within two working days.

# Other useful contacts in your organisation



# Other useful contacts in your organisation

