

Health & Wellbeing Bulletin Spring 2021

Sue Howard – Health & Wellbeing Champion

01803 762113 hr@thelink.academy



Welcome to the first issue of our new Mental Health & Wellbeing bulletin which will be published termly....

We pride ourselves on being a happy place to work and are keen to support staff's well-being and work life balance.

The Link Academy Trust acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote employee well-being as far as reasonably practicable. The Trust is committed to fostering a culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

The Trust recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees' well-being, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

Mental Wellbeing during the pandemic

Lots of people are finding it hard to maintain their mental wellbeing during Covid-19, but there are several ways to support yourself and others during this time.

Keep in touch digitally – we may not be able to meet up with our friends and family, so make plans to chat via Zoom, Facetime, Teams and WhatsApp or just keep in touch with simple phone calls, messages and texts. You could even plan to watch a TV show or live theatre, organize a quiz or set up a virtual book club.

Listen to your favourite music or read a book instead of turning on the TV.

Try and make time for you with breathing and relaxation techniques. These can help with difficult emotions, anxiety, worries and generally improve your wellbeing.

Physical Health – Take small steps to look after yourself to have a big effect on your mental health. Eat regularly, stay hydrated and improve your sleep pattern. Keep active by going for a walk or dancing round the house to music whilst doing the housework!

Find an online/offline balance – News stories can make you feel anxious or confused, so think about switching off or limiting what you look at. Whilst social media is a good way to keep in touch, be careful about the posts you may want to avoid.

Memories – Spend an afternoon looking back on all those family and friend photos, it will make you smile.

Remember: things might feel hard right now, but this situation is unusual, and it won't last forever.



Useful Apps for advice, guidance and resources



Happiful



MyPossibleSelf



The Mindfulness App

Five Strands of wellbeing

1. Connect – talk to someone instead of an email. Speak to someone new. Put aside 5mins to find how someone really is
2. Be active – Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety
3. Take notice – enjoy the moment and environment around you. Have a 'clear clutter' day
4. Learn – Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem. Sign up for an online course, learn a new word
5. Give – Be interested in helping others, it makes you feel happier

The healing power of gardens: boosting your mental health and wellbeing

– article by General & Medical Healthcare <https://www.generalandmedical.com/live-healthy/posts/2020/july/the-healing-power-of-gardens-boosting-your-mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

It's a well-known fact that gardening is good for your physical health, but gardens and open green spaces are also associated with better social and mental health. Gardens are special and peaceful spaces offering restorative qualities which do wonders for our mental health. There's nothing better than sitting out in the fresh air and feeling all our stress and troubles blow away. Here are a few reasons why gardening is good for our mental health.

What is Therapeutic Gardening?

Therapeutic Gardening is the use of garden space and taking part in gardening activities to help people boost their health and wellbeing while promoting physical, social and emotional health. It doesn't matter if you have a large lawn, a balcony or a courtyard, any garden space can be used as a place of relaxation, and gentle exercise by breathing in the fresh air.

What are the benefits?

Gardening provides a useful distraction from the pressures of everyday life, helping to relieve stress and anxiety. Having a sense of achievement is important for mental health as it boosts our self-esteem.

The nurturing and caring aspect of gardening encourages empathy, which helps us understand how others are feeling and helps regulate our own emotions.

How does it make us feel?

We all know exercise is good for our body and mind, but so is gardening! Gardening is classed as physical activity and this releases serotonin and endorphins, those happy, feel-good hormones which promote good mental wellbeing.

Unlocks our senses

Gardens are full of sights, sounds and smells which provides a treat for our senses! Natural sensory experiences have been shown to boost our wellbeing. Vibrant colours like reds, yellows and orange make us feel happy while greens, purples and blues help us to feel relaxed.

Gives us a routine

Tending to plants literally gives people a reason to get out of bed in the morning. Fitting gardening into your daily routine will help structure your day. Check out our blog to find out the [importance of routine for mental health](#).

Setting aside 20-30 minutes to pull up some weeds, water the plants or mow the lawn will get you outside and incorporates exercise. Gardening helps you build strength, stamina, movement and balance.

Improves our diet

Growing your own fruit and vegetables is one of the best ways to improve health and wellbeing for you and your family. Nothing beats the taste of fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs, or the satisfaction and enjoyment knowing you've done it yourself.

Being able to walk out to your vegetable patch and picking a lettuce or cucumber will save you the hassle of adding it to your shopping list, plus it's good for the environment!

Healthy Recipe idea for you!

Winter vegetable & lentil soup - When it's cold outside, treat yourself to a healthy homemade vegetable soup, packed with vitamin C and 4 of your 5-a-day

Ingredients

85g dried red lentils
2 carrots diced
3 sticks celery sliced
2 small leeks sliced
2 tbsp tomato puree
1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
3 large garlic cloves chopped
1 tbsp veg bouillon powder
1 tsp ground coriander

Method

1. Tip all the ingredients into a large pan. Pour over 1.5 litres boiling water and stir well
2. Cover and leave to simmer for 30mins until the vegetables and lentils are tender
3. Ladle into bowls and eat straightaway, or if you like a really thick texture, blitz a third of the soup with a hand blender or food processor

Goes really well with a hefty chunk of soda bread

Inspiring Quote

“Positive emotional energy is the key to health, happiness and wellbeing. The more positive you are, the better your life will be in every area”

Brian Tracy – Motivational public speaker and self-development author



National Days coming up.....

- Jan 24 – Compliment Day
- Jan 28 – Have Fun At Work day
- Feb 4 – Homemade Soup Day
- Feb 11 – Make a Friend Day
- Feb 21 – Sticky Bun Day
- Mar 2 – World Teen Mental Wellness Day
- Mar 5 – Dress in Blue Day
- Mar 19 – Let's Laugh Day