

Wellbeing Matters

We Care about your health & wellbeing



The last few weeks have been anxious and unsettling for everyone. We have to take time to support each other and find ways to look after our mental health.

During these challenging times, we will work tirelessly to support you. We are so very grateful to you, our frontline team, caring for our vulnerable residents in this time of crisis. We will get through this together.

Together with Occupational Therapist, Dr Rosie Gowran, we have put together this first bulletin to offer simple and doable actions that you can build into your daily life, at home and work.

By pulling together and taking simple steps each day, we can all be better prepared for the times ahead. So remember to offer care and compassion to yourself, and those around you.

Sue

Sue Shortt

Head of Clinical Care, Mowlam Healthcare

Be Well & Mind Yourself

You are caring for others at work, and at home, during this pandemic crises, therefore it makes good sense that you look after your physical and mental health.

Notice what you are feeling or experiencing. Take five minutes out to become aware of this. What are you feeling in your body? These uncomfortable feelings are a normal reaction to an extraordinary situation and life events in general. These feelings pass; they will not be there all of the time.

You are not alone. Others are feeling similar to you. People are different in how they interpret life events; therefore, each of us is unique in how sensitive we are. Be kind to yourself in how you are feeling.

You can do something (take action) to indirectly alter what you are experiencing:

- Take time out for yourself, go for a walk or run
- Do some gardening of any kind
- Read a good book that you enjoy
- Talk to someone about what you are feeling
- Do nothing if this helps you
- Lessen the amount of news you are listening to
- Establish a healthy sleep pattern
- Stay in touch with loved ones using video calls, on whatsapp or facetime
- Lessen the amount of social media that you are engaging in that might be increasing feelings, anxiety etc.

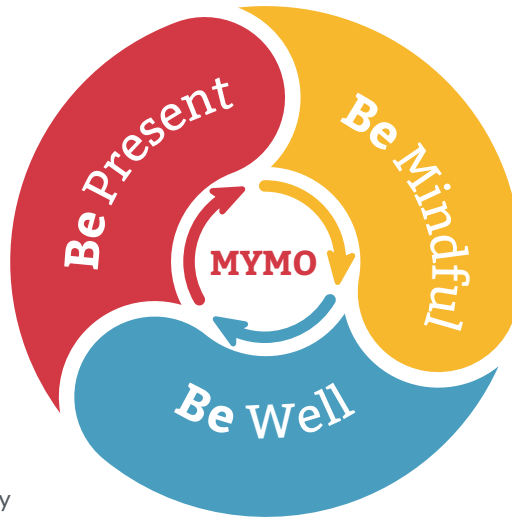
Think about what actions you have taken, that have helped you in the past. Whatever helped, as long as it is a healthy action, do more of it.

Mind Yourself Mind Others

The Mowlam Way To Wellbeing

Be Present

- Focusing on daily routines
- Supporting, caring for others
- Mindfulness as you move through the day – simple technique to focus the mind on the here and now
- Meaningful Activities for the residents and staff to enjoy together, singing, relaxation, dancing, exercise, painting (art exhibition), games, afternoon tea (with a theme perhaps), laughter.
- Make subtle changes to create a calming environment - turn off noisy radios and TVs, put on soothing music, avoid watching the news



Be Mindful

- Washing your hands
- Self-care hand massage
- Five minute mindfulness and meditation breaks
- Be compassionate towards yourself and others

Be Well

- Eat Well
Healthy snacks during short breaks
Good Meal Choices
- Movement in Open Spaces
Dancing, Yoga (laughter), Walking
Meditation
- Take a Rest – listen to music, read a book, guided relaxation, close your eyes

Be Mindful - give yourself a self-care hand massage

When you're feeling worn out, try giving yourself a boost with some hand massage. It is easy to take your hands for granted and neglect them after a hard day's work. People use their hands more than they realise, and just like your neck and shoulders, it is important that you provide the muscles in your hands a tension relieving massage. A hand massage can reduce hand or wrist pain, but it can also relieve headaches and help you sleep better. A hand massage can be as long or as brief as you'd like.



Tip: Hand massages are very easy to do almost anywhere, so you could give yourself a quick massage as you handwash at work, while talking with a colleague, or just sitting in the car.



Resource: Download Hand Massage Video

Watch a video on hand massage, kindly prepared for our team by Maeve Gell, Massage and Aromatherapy.

Watch on: www.mowlamhealthcare.com/wellbeingmatters

Moment to Moment

Choose a few simple tasks you enjoy doing for the coming weeks to support your health and wellbeing.

Each task should take a few moments to complete!



Focus on your breathing and stretch for 10 sec every hour.

Observe beauty: the flowers, leaves on a tree rustling in the wind, the moving clouds, birds singing.

Mindful eating: during meals or snacks you eat, pay attention to the sensory experiences - the texture, taste, smell, and appearance of the food, and the sounds when you bite into your food.

Take a moment to give your brain a rest, put the phone away, switch off the radio, and close your eyes for a few seconds.

and STOP!

S: stop what you are doing

T: take a few deep breaths

O: observe your body and smile

P: proceed with kindness and compassion

Deepak Chopra

Be Mindful Meditation can help you

Mindfulness meditation can help improve your health and happiness, beyond focus, stress, sleep and engagement.

Meditation works by helping people, primarily people working in healthcare, regulate emotions, changing the brain to be more resilient to stress, and improving stress bio-markers.

Learning and practising mindfulness can help us to let go of worries and bring ourselves back to the present moment. For example, focusing on the gentle movement of your breath or the sounds you hear around you, can serve as helpful 'anchors' to come back to the present moment and let go of worries.

Five Minute Meditation



- 1 Begin by making yourself comfortable on your chair, allowing your back to be straight but not stiff, with your feet on the ground. Let your hands rest on your lap.
- 2 Bring your awareness now to your breathing, is it fast or slow? Take several long slow deep breaths, breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Our breathing helps us focus and nourishes all the cells in our body. If you wish, you can gently close your eyes or pick an object in the room to focus on. Continue to focus on your breath.
- 3 You can begin to bring attention to your body. Notice your body seated, feel the weight of your body on the chair and take a few deep breaths.
And as you take a deep breath, your taking in more oxygen enlivens the body and as you exhale have a sense of relaxing more deeply.
- 4 Now notice your feet on the floor, their weight, pressure, vibration, heat.
- 5 Notice your arms, feel any sensations in your arms, let your shoulders be soft.
- 6 Notice your neck and throat, let them soften and relax.
- 7 Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft. And notice your whole body be present. Take one more breath.
- 8 Be aware of your body as best you can. Take a breath, and when you're ready, you can open your eyes.

Resource: Listen to Meditation Recording

Listen to a five minute meditation on our website and take five before the beginning of shift and at the end of shift.

Download from: www.mowlamhealthcare.com/wellbeingmatters

Wellness In Times of Uncertainty

Knowing that you are not the only one experiencing difficulty coping with this is important. **We're in this together.**

It can be helpful to take a moment to notice whatever it is your feeling or experiencing: This may be fear, anxiety, vulnerability, sadness, irritability. All of these are uncomfortable; however, these are normal reactions to extraordinary situations like this. Often our thoughts become exaggerated, which tends to increase these uncomfortable feelings. If you are aware that you may be exaggerating the thoughts in your mind creating a worse situation with your thinking, then it makes sense that doing something about this can help you feel better.

You have a lot of control over our thinking. What you choose to do (your behaviour) however we only have indirect control over our feelings (low mood, anxious feelings, fear) and our physiology (the actual sensations in our body when we feel anxious, fearful, low and irritable). It is by changing our thinking, and what we do (our behaviour) that can make a difference to these feelings and our physical sensations in our body.

Feeling some anxiety is appropriate in a situation like this because anxiety is designed as a protective measure. We need to feel this to motivate ourselves to take action, to keep ourselves and others safe. For example, we take action by increasing the amounts of handwashing, keeping our distance from others where possible, protecting our vulnerable people by helping them so that they can be as safe as they can be. This is an example where taking action (doing) can make a difference to how we are feeling.

Secondly, practice acceptance by saying 'I am anxious, this is what I am experiencing now'. Identify what you are experiencing; try not to debate with yourself around solving it. The benefits of doing this are freeing yourselves from the uncomfortable emotions our self-critical voice produces as well as freeing up your energy. In essence, it is draining to deny, argue with or avoid what is happening.

Taking action to do what we have been asked to do by the HSE. Being kind and compassionate towards ourselves along the way can also help us through this.

.....
**Be kind to yourself in this.
You are doing the best you can.**
.....

The effort of trying to free yourself of anxiousness or low mood can make things worse, especially if you are thinking critically about yourself feeling this way. 'I shouldn't be like this', 'What is wrong with me?' These self-critical thoughts compound these feelings. You can reduce this first by not adding to these thoughts.



Be compassionate towards yourself

You have a measure of direct control over your thinking. However, it is not too easy to stop self-critical or worrisome thoughts. Perhaps start by not trying to add to these thoughts if they are not helpful to how you are feeling. Try not to be self-critical and don't be critical of yourself for being self-critical!

Be your own best friend. Look at your failings with kindness and understanding. Adopt an attitude of

friendship toward yourself with all of the faults that you have right now knowing that no matter what you do, you will be a friend to yourself. You are good at having compassion for others who are pain. This is no different to having compassion for yourself when you are suffering. It involves acting the same way to yourself when you are having a difficult time. Life is a shared human experience. Doing the best that you can is all you can do.

Our Thanks To:

Dr Rosie Gowran
Occupational Therapy
University of Limerick

Clare Gowran
Psychotherapist

Maeve Gell
Massage and Aromatherapy

Published by:

Mowlam Healthcare Support Office
Gardner House, Michael Street
Limerick, V94 HT2Y
Phone 061 416099