

A black and white photograph of a young man with short dark hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a dark polo shirt and a lanyard with 'Hollybank' written on it. He is holding a white mug with both hands. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a kitchen or break area.

Developing resilience in practice

Examples from adult social care
employers

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ResiliencePractice

Introduction

Resilience is the ability to cope under pressure and recover from difficulties.

Being resilient will help staff to manage stressful situations, protect them from mental ill-health and improve their wellbeing. At work, this ensures that they continue to do their job well and deliver high-quality care and support.

It's not possible to take all of the stress out of care work, which is why it's important that everyone in adult social care is supported to develop their resilience, and that employers take steps to reduce work-related stress.

This guide is for team leaders and managers in adult social care organisations, and individual employers, to support them to build the resilience of their staff.

It explains what resilience is and shares examples of how other adult social care employers have developed the resilience of their workforce at an organisational and/or team level. It gives you templates and resources that they've developed, which you can use with your team(s).

We hope that reading the examples will help you to think about, and give you ideas about, what changes you can make in your organisation and/or team to build the resilience of staff.



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Learn from others: Care Management Group

Overview: resilience and mental health wellbeing programme

The Care Management Group provides specialist support to adults and children with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs in South East England, West of England and South Wales.

They identified that staff were facing situations which they found challenging every day, and that they needed to develop a culture that supports staff to develop their resilience. They hoped that this would reduce staff turnover and improve the quality of their service.

They worked with a consultancy company to develop and deliver a resilience programme to all staff across three services. The programme included:

- an organisational resilience course for senior managers, exploring ways to create a culture of resilience within their teams
- piloting new supervision and team meeting documents that included open questions relating to staff wellbeing
- exploring different ways to conduct supervisions, for example 'walk-and-talk', to encourage staff to be more open about how they're feeling and make supervisions more meaningful
- workshops for staff about mental health, wellbeing and signs of stress, including finding meaning in their role and what barriers they face
- mindfulness sessions at team meetings
- an enhanced focus on staff wellbeing at work, for example, managers encouraging staff to take regular breaks.

The Group set up a wellbeing steering group to support this programme, developed an organisation-wide strategy and action plan, and produced a practical toolkit on building resilience in a social care setting.

As a result of the programme, they reported an increased awareness of resilient behaviours amongst staff and managers, more productive supervisions, improved morale and productivity, reduced stress-related sickness and lower staff turnover.

Resources and templates to help

Template organisational action plan for resilience

The Care Management Group's steering group developed this organisational action plan to outline how they were going to develop staff resilience.

They used the Farmer review (2017) as a template. This review was commissioned by the Government to review how employers can improve the mental health of staff. It highlights a number of mental health core standards that can be adopted across all workplaces.

Read what actions the Care Management Group put in place to meet the standards, and use the template on page 9 to think about what you can do in your organisation and/or team.

Example: The Care Management Group action plan

Standard 1: produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan

Actions:

- work with people across the organisation to develop a plan which outlines actions to promote improved mental health and wellbeing
- communicate the plan to staff, for example, at staff rep meetings.

Standard 2: develop mental health awareness among employees

Actions:

- promote wellbeing messages through the intranet and posters
- launch a newsletter that highlights initiatives and promotes wellbeing
- produce a wellbeing toolkit
- deliver resilience workshops for teams
- deliver mindfulness sessions at team meetings
- deliver monthly mental health awareness workshops for managers and staff
- set up a resources hub that staff and managers can access.

Standard 3: encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling

Actions:

- ensure that supervisions give people the opportunity to discuss how they can be supported with their wellbeing
- look for ways to openly talk about mental health and wellbeing across the organisation
- launch a blog from the senior management team about how they remain well
- ensure that there are effective occupational health and employee assistance schemes in place that staff can use.

Standard 4: provide employees with good working conditions

Actions:

- implement shift planning training so that those running shifts realise the importance of allowing breaks (where possible) and providing effective delegation and handovers
- ensure that rotas are provided four weeks in advance.

Standard 5: promote effective people management

Actions:

- train managers on individual and organisational resilience
- include resilience training on the managers development programme
- explore, at managers meetings, how they can create a culture of resilience in their service.

Standard 6: routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing

Actions:

- review the staff survey so that it includes questions about how people are supported with their mental health and wellbeing
- monitor sickness trends across the organisation, in regions and services
- gain feedback from staff representative meetings and 'Driving Up Quality' days.

Use the template on the next page to start an action plan for your organisation and/or team.

Template action plan

Use this template to think about what you can do in your organisation and/or team to build and support resilience, and write your ideas in the boxes below. Download a copy of this template from www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ResilienceActionPlan.

Standard 1: produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan

Actions:

Standard 2: develop mental health awareness among employees

Actions:

Standard 3: encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling

Actions:

Standard 4: provide employees with good working conditions

Actions:

Standard 5: promote effective people management

Actions:

Standard 6: routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing

Actions:

Supervision questions about resilience, mental health and wellbeing

The Care Management Group wrote these questions for managers to ask staff in their supervision. They aim to encourage staff to be more open about how they're feeling and give managers a better insight about how they can support them.

You can use them to help you to identify what you're doing well and what you need to improve.

- What do you love about what you do?
- What stops you from having a good day?
- How do you protect yourself when you feel under pressure?
- How would you like to be supported if something does not go as planned?
- How do you think that you can work as a team to ensure that there's a culture that supports resilience and wellbeing?

Write any other questions that you can think of here:

.....

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Supervision discussion prompt

It's important to create an environment of support for staff, and to understand how they like to be managed and how they like to be supported if something doesn't go as planned.

It's also helpful to understand what's important to them, what helps them to remain resilient and what the signs are if they're not feeling mentally well. This will help you to support and manage them.

The Care Management Group developed these prompts and questions that managers can use in supervisions to help them to get to know staff. You can use it as a framework about how you work together.

Supervision prompts

<p>Values</p> <p>Values underpin our behaviour and how we approach things at work, and I'd like to understand what your values are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Please look at the values card (on the next page) and highlight the top six values that matter to you most. If it's a value that's not listed, please add that in as one of your top six.■ Define what each of your top six values means to you in practice? For example: honesty means saying what you mean, not telling people what they want to hear and/or being transparent about your motive for doing something.■ What value do you most appreciate in others?■ What drives you at work?■ What do you find most difficult to tolerate in others?■ What upsets you? What might I do that would upset you? How would I know that I'd upset you without you telling me that I have?	<p>Finding the best ways of working together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Do you prefer to come to me with problems and solutions?■ How do you like to be managed? For example, do you want lots of autonomy or would you prefer that I give more direction? What can I do in my day-to-day work to demonstrate that I'm managing you in the way that you prefer?■ Do you 'think to speak' or 'speak to think'? Would you like time to think before answering a question or to talk it through out loud?
	<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ How can I support you if things don't go to plan?■ What support do you need to remain resilient?■ What signs should I look out for if things aren't going well for you?■ Is there anything else that's important for our working relationship?

Values card

Here are some of the values that you need to work in social care. Look at the values and highlight the six values that matter to you the most. Download a copy of this template from www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ResilienceValuesCard.

Achievement	Connection	Fairness	Logic	Stability
Acknowledgement	Consistency	Flexibility	Loyalty	Selflessness
Accomplishment	Contribution	Freedom	Meticulousness	Simplicity
Adaptability	Cooperation	Friendliness	Modesty	Sincerity
Advancement	Courage	Generosity	Open-mindedness	Spontaneity
Adventure	Courtesy	Growth	Opportunity	Tact
Ambition	Creativity	Harmony	Organisation	Transparency
Amusement	Credibility	Honesty	Patience	
Approval	Daring	Imagination	Preparedness	
Assertiveness	Decisiveness	Inclusivity	Privacy	
Autonomy	Dependability	Independence	Proactivity	
Challenge	Directness	Innovation	Professionalism	
Clarity	Empathy	Integrity	Punctuality	
Collaboration	Encouragement	Intellect	Recognition	
Compassion	Enthusiasm	Kindness	Respect	
Conformity	Equality	Learning	Responsibility	

Highlight the top six values that matter the most to you. If it's a value that's not listed, please add it in as one of your top six.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Can you say what each of your top six values means to you in practice?

For example: Honesty means saying what you mean, not telling people what they want to hear and/or being transparent about your motive for doing something.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Resilience questionnaire

The Care Management Group developed this questionnaire to explore how resilient staff are.

You can use this questionnaire in your organisation and/or team. You could complete it about staff, or you can ask them to do it themselves, and use the answers to identify what you need to do and/or change to build staff resilience.

Read each statement and rate yourself, or the person you're assessing, on a scale of one to 10. One is the lowest score and means that you/they don't do the statement, and 10 is the highest score which means that you/they do the statement.

Download a copy of this template from www.skillsforcare.org.uk/ResilienceQuestionnaire.

Section	Statement	Points
Coping with pressure		
P1	Focuses attention on what's happening now, not what might have been	
P2	Looks forward, not back	
P3	Deals with pressure in a positive way so that it does not become stress	
P4	Understands themselves well enough to know what causes them stress	
P5	Sets achievable goals	
P6	Understands failure is an opportunity to learn and be creative.	
Realistic optimism (i.e. a positive approach)		
O1	Is realistically optimistic	
O2	Takes into account all of the facts to come to a balanced view	
O3	Focuses on what's happening now rather than thinking about the past	
O4	Knows their own strengths	
O5	Recognises the strengths of other people	
O6	Sees change as an opportunity rather than a problem	
Focusing on solutions		
S1	Enjoys solving challenging situations	
S2	Involves others in finding and implementing the solution	
S3	Gets on and sorts out difficult situations	
S4	Is a proactive planner and organiser	
S5	Takes decisions as soon as sufficient facts are known	
S6	Always wants to find out more	

Taking responsibility for yourself		
R1	Takes responsibility for those issues and people within their control	
R2	Influences situations and people that affect their work	
R3	Changes the things that they can and accepts the things that they cannot change	
R4	Knows when a piece of work is good enough	
R5	Recognises their own strengths	
R6	Enjoys resolving challenges and challenging situations	
Open and flexible		
F1	Thrives on uncertainty	
F2	Can see the benefits of change objectively	
F3	Listens and learns	
F4	Empathises with others whilst maintaining detachment	
F5	Changes their mind if they find a better way	
F6	Has close friends that they talk to about their feelings	
		Total

Look at the statements that scored low and think about how you can improve them. You could discuss the answers in supervision or team meetings, and use them to develop a learning and development action plan.

Tips to build resilience

The Care Management Group developed these tips around building resilience and shared them with staff. They share some of the everyday things that staff can do, and align to the five sections of the resilience questionnaire on page 16:

- coping with pressure
- developing 'realistic optimism' (i.e. a positive approach)
- focusing on solutions
- taking responsibility for yourself
- being open and flexible.

1. Coping with pressure

Focus on the here and now - notice the everyday and take the time to notice small sensations such as smells, sounds or even your own rhythm as you walk. This helps to break the autopilot mode that we often find ourselves in.

Don't fall into the trap of always thinking about the past or future. Reflection and planning are both important parts of achieving wellbeing, but don't neglect the focus on the present.

Do something differently, for example, take a different route to work, change how you make a journey or buy a different newspaper for a week. Breaking an existing routine can help you see the world differently.

Watch your thoughts and try to separate them from your immediate worries and concerns - treat them as events rather than issues for immediate action.

Activity: practicing mindfulness

Whilst by yourself, get hold of a raisin (or something that offers a similar size/shape/texture) and pay attention to:

- the way that the raisin looks
- its smell
- how it feels
- its taste.
- how your skin responds to its manipulation

Focus on the single object of the raisin. This will bring your mind to the present.

It's nearly impossible to avoid practicing mindfulness when you follow these instructions.

Try doing this as a team and feedback what you notice afterwards. Go for a walk and use the same technique when observing the world around you.

2. Developing 'realistic optimism' (i.e. a positive approach)

Being a realistic optimist means being optimistic whilst being realistic. It describes a particular way that you explain the events that happen to you, and choose actions to take in response to these events. Here are some of the behaviours and characteristics associated with being a realistic optimist.

- Selective focus: the pessimist sees problems, the optimist sees challenges - realistic optimists focus on the constructive.
- Set realistic goals and standards: don't try to be perfect.
- Strive to improve, not to achieve perfection.
- Keep events in proportion: when faced with a problem, challenge an obstacle and approach it with a calm, determined and problem-solving attitude.
- Emphasise the positive: realistic optimists celebrate both their own and other people's successes.
- Humour is critical.
- Rational: realistic optimists see reality as it is, not as how they want it to be. They apply reason to find ways of assessing and achieving goals.
- Self-improving: optimists constantly develop their skills.
- Experimental: realistic optimism creates novel approaches. The realistic optimist evaluates each idea and method on its merits, being quick to try new approaches.

Activity: learning how to become more optimistic

Even the most pessimistic thinker can learn to become more optimistic. These four steps will help you to develop a more positive attitude.

Step 1: Get into the habit of thinking with a positive attitude

Step 2: Become more aware of your self-talk

What stories do you tell yourself when things start to go wrong? Negative self-talk influences our subconscious mind. The more aware you become of the negative self-talk, the better chance you have of reframing and using more of a positive self-talk.

Step 3: Ask yourself better questions

One of the most effective and quickest ways to improve the quality of your self-talk is to ask yourself better questions.

For example, instead of asking yourself, “why does this always happen to me?” ask, “what do I need to learn from this situation, so that it doesn’t happen to me again?”

Regardless of the situation that you find yourself in, asking better questions will improve your attitude. It sounds simple, and it is simple.

Step 4: Always set positive goals

Goals can be used to create a positive attitude. Try to always set goals in the positive.

For example, say “I enjoy eating healthy, low calorie foods and will eat this way for the next month” rather than “I will not eat any unhealthy foods and will keep away from sweet things.”

3. Focusing on solutions

When problems surface we immediately express our frustration – some people vent to anyone who's willing to listen whilst others go quiet or get cross. This affects our thoughts, what we hear, what we say and how we interact with those around us.

When we focus on how unfair the situation is, complain about the disruption or show our dissatisfaction, then problems breed problems. This negativity is giving in to the problem and can even expand it. To counteract this, we need to gain control of how we approach the problem. We need to adopt a solutions-oriented mindset.



Activity: changing reactions to problems

Here are four steps to alter your reaction to problems and focus on solutions.

Step 1: It starts with our attitude

It's in that moment of choice, when a problem appears, that we decide to let the problem consume us or tackle the problem head on with the conviction to break through the barrier.

As soon as a problem surfaces, we must discipline ourselves to be hungry for solutions. The motivation to push past the obstacle in front of us should come from within.

Step 2: Adopting a solution-orientation requires focus and analysis

“When a problem comes along, study it until you are completely knowledgeable. Then find the weak spot, break the problem apart, and the rest will be easy.”

(Norman Vincent Peale)

Using critical thinking skills, we must break problems apart to understand the root cause of them. Focusing on the root causes and smaller elements of a problem enables us to tackle it without getting overwhelmed.

Step 3: We must employ creativity to surface solutions that break the boundaries of traditional thinking and surface differentiating solutions

“We are boxed in by the boundary of our thinking.”

(Albert Einstein)

We must commit to solution-thinking.

Word storm solutions that go beyond a short list of average ideas and instead push our thinking beyond our self-imposed limits to get to the ideas that are innovative.

Step 4: After we discipline ourselves to adopt the attitude of a solution-thinker, we must take action

Prioritise your solutions and make decisions on how to proceed.

Developing and evolving a solution-focused orientation takes time, discipline and practice.

4. Taking responsibility for yourself

	<p>Be accountable.</p> <p>You are always responsible for how you respond. Your behaviour is under your control.</p>
	<p>Stop blaming.</p> <p>When you stop pointing the finger, you have control over yourself. Just because the other person is acting a fool, don't be one yourself.</p>
	<p>Acknowledge mistakes.</p> <p>When you acknowledge, "yes, I forgot to call when I said I would," you eliminate the need to make up excuses.</p> <p>"I made a mistake" is the responsible sentence, and when followed with "how can I put this right?" it makes people willing to forgive. Your integrity earns respect.</p>
	<p>Accentuate the positive.</p> <p>Move through your day with a positive attitude.</p> <p>Have you ever noticed that people who don't take responsibility for their own behaviour are negative and cynical? Anything that goes wrong is always another person's fault. They're perpetual victims.</p> <p>Taking responsibility for having the life that you want switches your focus from what went wrong to what went right. A small shift makes a big difference.</p>
	<p>See yourself clearly.</p> <p>Taking responsibility means acknowledging both your weaknesses and strengths. It means acknowledging all that is great about you.</p> <p>A responsible person does not dismiss their own achievements. They know their good and positive qualities. They have a complete picture of who they are. A responsible person continues to grow emotionally.</p>
	<p>Say "thank you".</p> <p>Accept praise graciously. When someone acknowledges you, say "thank you."</p> <p>When someone is kind or gives you a gift, the responsible response is a sincere "thank you."</p>

	<p>Practice healthy self-focus.</p> <p>Thinking too much about our own problems, worrying about the future, regretting the past, and feeling sorry for ourselves can lead to indulgent self-pity.</p> <p>Instead, spend the time getting to really know what makes you tick – a gentle, reflective way to start taking personal responsibility.</p>
	<p>Within your boundaries at work, be willing to take charge, take decisions, stay on top of problems (not just assume that someone else will step in).</p> <p>This will help you to take a results-based view of the role and end unreasonable demands from others.</p>
	<p>Build your self-esteem.</p> <p>This is also a way to stop relying on external validation and praise from other people to feel good about yourself. Instead, you start building stable, positive emotions no matter what other people say or do around you.</p>
	<p>Don't stand in the way of your own success (by self-sabotage or holding yourself back in subtle or not so subtle ways).</p> <p>But do understand the limits of your responsibility.</p> <p>Taking responsibility for your life is great, but that is all that you have control over. You can't control the results of your actions. You can't control how someone reacts to what you say or what you do. That's why it's important to know where your limits are. It's a waste of energy and focus to assume responsibility for things that you can't control.</p>
	<p>Be honest with yourself.</p> <p>To take responsibility for your life, you must first give up all of the excuses – those old stories that you pass off as the 'facts of life' so that you don't have to make worthwhile changes, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I'm too old or I'm too young ■ I'm too busy ■ I can't afford it ■ those things don't happen for people like me.

5. Being open and flexible

	<p>Let go of control.</p> <p>Open your mind and free yourself from having to be in complete control of your thoughts. You allow yourself to experience new ideas and thoughts and you challenge the beliefs that you currently have.</p>
	<p>Experience changes.</p> <p>Opening up your mind to new ideas allows you the opportunity to change what you think and how you view the world. This doesn't mean that you necessarily will change your beliefs - in fact, the process may actually reinforce your current beliefs more strongly - but thinking with an open mind gives you the option of creating positive change and stronger results.</p>
	<p>Make yourself vulnerable.</p> <p>One of the scariest (and greatest) things about seeing the world through an open mind is that you make yourself vulnerable. In agreeing to have an open-minded view of the world, you're also admitting that you don't know it all. This vulnerability can be both terrifying and exhilarating.</p>
	<p>Learn from mistakes.</p> <p>If you make a mistake, reflect on it and decide what you will do differently in the future. You may want to talk to someone else about it so that you can see things from another perspective.</p>
	<p>Be honest.</p> <p>Being open-minded means being honest enough to admit that you aren't all-knowing. This understanding creates an underlying sense of authenticity that permeates the character of any person who lives with an open mind.</p>
	<p>Listen more than you talk.</p> <p>"Seek first to understand, then to be understood".</p> <p>We don't learn new ideas while our own mouths are moving. We learn when we listen intently, thoughtfully, and silently. Stop typing. Stop texting. Stop multitasking at all. Listen genuinely and deeply for at least 70% of the time that you're interacting with others.</p>

	<p>Avoid making snap decisions (first things first: get the facts).</p> <p>Typically, you react immediately. Imagine the possibilities that open if you suspend judgment until you've carefully, and without bias, got the actual facts and considered them carefully.</p>
	<p>Think and reflect before decisions.</p> <p>Ask yourself "what is it that I want to happen? Is what I'm about to do the best and clearest path to that outcome?"</p>
	<p>Thank people for their suggestions.</p> <p>And consider them. Then you'll get more ideas from that person in the future.</p>
	<p>Encourage frankness.</p> <p>One of the greatest traits that you can assume, and can teach others to assume, is the ability to speak the truth with high diplomacy and tact. The respect that you hold for another person should be evident, and with it, your motivation for sharing a strong feedback should be evident as well.</p>
	<p>Hunt for new opportunities.</p> <p>If you have an open mind, one of the most tremendous results of that trait will be your ability to perpetually seek and discover new opportunities, new ideas, and new approaches to solving the challenges that you face.</p>

Mental health: signs that someone may be struggling

Many cases of mental ill-health go unrecognised until they become severe.

Spotting the signs of mental ill-health at an early stage means that managers and staff can get the support that they need, before it becomes more serious.

The Care Management Group developed this list of signs that suggest someone may be struggling, and shared it with managers and staff. You could share it with your team, for example on a noticeboard or in team meetings.

Spotting one or two of these signs doesn't always mean that someone's struggling, but it's worth asking them if they're OK, especially if you know that they're going through a difficult time either inside or outside of work.

Emotional

Irritable, sensitive to criticism, loss of confidence, loss of sense of humour, tearful, mood swings

Cognitive

Making mistakes, difficulty making decisions, lack of concentration, unexplained drops in performance

Behavioural

Arriving late, not taking lunch breaks, taking unofficial time off, not hitting targets/deadlines, acting out of character

Physical

Constant cold, being tired at work, lack of effort with appearance, rapid weight loss or gain, headaches, sleep disturbance

Business

Increased absence or staff turnover, employees working longer hours, drop in motivation or productivity levels

Ideas and activities to use in teams

To create a culture of resilience within the team, managers need to give staff the opportunity to practice and develop their resilient behaviours in team meetings.

The Care Management Group developed these short activities that managers can use with their team(s). You can share them with your managers and encourage them to do the activities with staff.

Posture and exercise

A quick way to change how you feel is to change your posture.

The psychologist, Milton Erikson, used to ask his patients that were living with depression to count chimney pots on their way home, to maintain a healthy posture.

Ask your team to go out for a walk, look upwards, identify what is around them and report back to the rest of the team.

Interrupts

'Interrupts' are a good way of interrupting the negative thoughts that cause anxiety or stress.

As a team, discuss what interrupt strategies they have to help them to cope when they feel stressed.

Interrupts might include listening to music, going for a walk, taking five minutes out or talking to someone.

Breathe

Taking a few moments to breathe deeply can have a dramatic effect on stress levels, as it signals to the body that 'everything is ok'.

Run a breathing exercise in your meeting. Allow people to start breathing naturally. Ask them to give their mind permission to park all their day-to-day worries and put them in a box in their mind.

Ask everyone to take longer and slower 'in' and 'out' breathes, counting from one to five.

Challenges for the team

Set up a pedometer challenge and encourage staff to take part, for example, by walking up the stairs rather than taking the lift or parking their car further away and walking.

Emotional state: changing internal representations

Someone's 'state' is their emotional condition and includes their moods, thoughts and feelings.

Someone's state is affected by the pictures that they make in their head (their internal representations) and their posture.

The Care Management Group developed this activity to help people to change the pictures in their head, and improve their 'state'. You can use it in team or one-to-one meetings.

Ask staff to follow these steps.

1. Think of a time in the past when something happened that you weren't happy about.
2. Notice how you feel when you think about this experience.
3. Now, clear the internal picture screen.
4. Now remember a time in the past when you've felt happy or confident.
5. Notice how you're holding your body.
6. Notice how you feel as you remember what happened.
7. Now, notice how you are holding your body.

It's important to learn how you make positive and negative pictures in your mind and how this affects your body and state.

Changing either the picture or your body can affect how you feel about a situation and, in turn, your resilience when dealing with a situation.

Emotional state: changing inner dialogue

The Care Management Group developed this activity to help staff to feel confident in situations that they might feel nervous about. You can share it with staff and/or use it in team or one-to-one meetings.

Imagine that you're going into an important meeting or a situation that you feel nervous about.

- Think about a useful state to be in, such as feeling relaxed, confident, cheerful or happy.
- Rehearse the scene in your head.
- Visualise walking into the room, and state, out loud, how you'd like to feel (using positive language), for example, say "I would like to feel confident" rather than "I don't want to be nervous."
- Now think of a time when you felt this way (if you can't, just imagine what it would be like).
- Feel it, hear what you heard and see what you saw as if you were there now.
- You'll probably find that you have to adjust your body and expression to get into the right state. Practise it in your head and then actually do it on the day.



Emotional state: body scan

The Care Management Group developed this activity for staff to carry out a 'body scan' to help with relaxation. You can use it in team or one-to-one meetings.

Play some relaxing music, ask people to close their eyes and get into a comfortable position.

1. Ask the group to become aware of their breath, always breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth in even counts. Ask them to notice the rhythm and the experience of breathing in and out.
2. Now ask the group to give attention to their body and guide them through the different parts of the body.
 - Start with the toes and feet and ask the group how they feel, for example, can they feel them touching the floor. Tell the group to place their feet evenly on the floor and imagine that they're like the roots of a tree, grounded to the floor and unable to move or be swayed.
 - Tell the group to imagine that there's a warm feeling within their feet. Ask the group to focus solely on this warmth and slowly allow it to pass up their body, moving to their lower legs and thighs.
 - As this warmth moves up their body, ask the group if they have become aware of any sensations passing through them that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. Do certain parts of the body feel light or heavy?
 - Tell the group to acknowledge this sensation or presence, release any tension and then move on to the next part of their body. Focus on the thighs, tummy, chest, back, arms, hands, fingers, face and neck.
 - The purpose of this activity is to encourage the group to scan their body and focus on the moment, which will help them to deal more effectively with the day ahead.
3. Once you've finished the body scan, bring the group back to the room and ask them to open their eyes.

Learn from others: Partners in Care

Overview: creating mentally healthy workplaces

Partners in Care is a non-statutory partnership that supports workforce development in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

They wanted to explore what changes to culture, policies and procedures social care employers can make to create and sustain mentally healthy workplaces.

They formed an action learning set made up of managers and senior staff from a range of different care providers, to explore:

- how they understood mental wellbeing
- staff issues relating to mental wellbeing
- ways to respond and support the mental wellbeing of staff.

They developed a toolkit that highlights some of the pressure points that affect people's wellbeing and signposts to useful resources. Managers found this toolkit useful to help them to recognise the signs of stress and understand how to respond constructively.

The group also identified changes to organisational policies and procedures that would support mental wellbeing.



People are affected by stress and pressure in different ways. I asked the team to complete the self-awareness test in Skills for Care's 'Building your own resilience, health and wellbeing' guide.

By opening up the topic of mental health and actively seeking the teams views on their own pressures, I believe it has made it easier for them to discuss their mental health concerns and stress levels with the team and with me. Hopefully we have built some resilience.

Participating Care Manager

Resources and templates to help

Good Employer Charter

Partners in Care developed this charter which outlines the key things that affect staff mental health and wellbeing, and gives examples of what employers can do to support good mental health and wellbeing. You could develop something similar and share it with your team(s).

1. Work – life balance

What does it mean	How do you make it happen	What are the 'results'
Healthy staff Greater balance between time at work and time at home Personal wellbeing Motivation Engagement	Flexible working policies Family friendly policies Childcare support/vouchers Counselling Staff development Away days Support services, such as smoking/ alcohol reduction or healthy lifestyle support Gym membership Discount cards/vouchers One-to-one support Wellbeing support/training	Reduced sickness absence Reduced stress levels Increased motivation Commitment: go that extra mile Lower turnover Greater resilience at times of change

2. Employee learning and development

What does it mean	How do you make it happen	What are the 'results'
Well trained staff Competent staff Confident staff Engaged staff teams Providing best service Having the right staff	Strategies relevant to the individual's or team's needs Appraisals Reflective practice Evidence-based practice Implementing what you've learnt Following up issues Cascading knowledge In-house training/paid training Thorough induction Continuous improvement Good policies	Increased motivation Staff retention Happy staff teams Improved standards Resident/service user satisfaction Greater creativity Increased self-esteem Increased confidence

3. Employee involvement or engagement

What does it mean	How do you make it happen	What are the 'results'
Ownership Responsibility Accountability Consultancy Communication Partnership	Supervision Team meetings Surveys/consultations Information Meaningful action plans Building on peoples' strengths Good communication	Staff retention/lower turnover Happy staff teams Improved standards Reduced sickness absence Increased motivation Commitment Good relationships between the employer and employees

4. Health, safety and wellbeing

What does it mean	How do you make it happen	What are the 'results'
Standards Policies and procedures Competence Complying with legislation Responsibilities and ownership Providing a safe place to work in	Action plans Monitoring of incidents and accidents Audits Training Up-to-date policies and procedures Appropriate equipment One-to-one support All staff aware of best practice Health and safety leads or champions	Less incidents Happy staff teams Improved standards Healthy staff Retention Increased morale

5. Employee recognition

What does it mean	How do you make it happen	What are the 'results'
Staff feeling valued Rewards (monetary and non-monetary) Engagement Motivation	Staff appreciation days 'Employee of the month' Raffle tickets Gift vouchers Discount cards Milestone rewards Appraisals Celebrations Saying thank you	Greater engagement Increased motivation Loyalty and commitment Feel valued and appreciated Increased reputation Ownership and belonging

Employee prompt card

Partners in Care developed this prompt card to explain how they'll support staff under each area of the charter. It shows the organisation's commitment and could form the outline of an action plan. You could develop something similar and share it with your team(s).

Employee involvement or engagement

We will involve you in decision-making to empower you and increase your job autonomy.

Work-life balance

We acknowledge that you have responsibilities and a life outside of work, and we will help you to manage these multiple demands.

Employee learning and development

We will provide opportunities for growth and development to help to expand your knowledge, skills and abilities.

Health, safety and wellbeing

We will maximise the physical and mental health of our staff by identifying potential risks and supporting healthy lifestyle choices.

Employee recognition

We will recognise your efforts and contribution to our organisation and demonstrate our appreciation.

Good communications charter

Communication plays a key role in the success of any workplace programme or policy.

Partners in Care developed this charter to define how they'll communicate with staff, to keep them up-to-date about mental health and wellbeing activities.

- **Bottom-up communication**, from staff to management, which provides information about their needs, values, perceptions and opinions, helps organisations to select and tailor programmes and policies to meet the needs of their workforce.
- **Top-down communication**, from management to staff, ensures that staff know about programmes and policies and how to access and use them, which encourages them to get involved. It also demonstrates that management supports and values the programmes and policies.
- Here are some examples of communication strategies that can help you to deliver and promote the Good Employer Charter successfully:
 - assess the needs of staff and involve them in the development and implementation of wellbeing and resilience practices
 - make the goals and actions of the organisation and/or team clear to staff by communicating key activities, issues and developments and developing policies that facilitate transparency and openness
 - give staff the opportunity to provide regular feedback, for example, through surveys, suggestion boxes, team meetings, small group meetings or individual meetings with managers. This promotes a culture that supports open, two-way communication
 - reinforce key messages about the importance of wellbeing and resilience, and remind staff about the support available through prompt cards, electronic communications, induction, trainings and staff meetings
 - ensure that managers lead by example - encourage them to regularly participate in activities in ways that are visible to employees
 - tell staff about the outcomes and success of specific practices and/or programmes.

Learn from others: Suffolk Brokerage (now Care Development East)

Overview: wellbeing project for social care managers

Care Development East is an organisation that's dedicated to raising care standards in Suffolk.

They identified that managers and staff were feeling increasingly stressed, isolated, overburdened and had a poor work-life balance. They also found that some care staff felt unsupported and had an unsustainable work-life balance.

They wanted to develop a programme to help adult social care managers and aspiring managers to understand wellbeing and resilience in the workplace, so that they'd be better equipped to manage their own wellbeing and that of their staff.

They ran a six month programme of workshops, action learning sets, coaching and good practice sessions with managers of local care providers to increase their understanding of wellbeing and its relationship within the organisational culture. The sessions covered a range of topics including stress and resilience, team building and overcoming difficulties.

Managers also accessed one-to-one coaching sessions to reflect on their own resilience and wellbeing, and to teach them the skills to coach other managers.

The monthly sessions helped managers to understand some of the factors that cause staff to leave their job, and gave them ideas to make positive changes in their work settings to improve mental health and wellbeing.

The participants also constructed a staff survey to measure wellbeing, asked their staff to complete it and learned how to analyse the results. They used the findings to make informed changes in their workplaces.



Taking part in this course has helped me to strengthen my wellbeing and resilience. I have learned many new skills to help support me and my staff in what is a very rewarding but demanding sector.

The techniques I have developed have helped me to put things into perspective and think consciously about my own wellbeing, and that of my staff, as well as well as my residents.

Participating Care Manager

Learn from others: Woodford Homecare and Support Services

Overview: resilience training to strengthen leadership skills

Woodford Homecare supports people who live in their own home in Wolverhampton, Sandwell, Walsall and Dudley.

They worked with an occupational psychologist to develop a people management programme for managers, that promoted better communication, stronger teamwork and good decision-making.

The programme focused on resilience and 'good work', as key elements of personal wellbeing and effective stress management.

For the programme, resilience was defined as 'maintaining successful performance and wellbeing while under pressure and facing difficult/challenging times, including being able to recover from or adjust quickly to misfortune or change, whether at work or in one's personal life', and good work was defined as 'work that is healthy, safe, non-controlling and improves self-worth'.

The programme included:

- developmental assessments on personal resilience and on positive people management competences
- one day training course that focused on four aspects of resilience: adaptability, confidence, social support, purposefulness
- coaching and mentoring by an external provider
- programme of reflective learning.

Participants learned how role-modelling and cascading can help to build trust, autonomy and interdependence, to empower staff and enable them to better meet the needs and aspirations of the people they support.

The evaluation of the programme focused on behavioural impact. They found that the programme increased people's self-assurance, confidence and leadership capability, which led to an improved quality of care. Longer term outcomes included reduced sickness absence, improvements in recruitment and induction, and better working relationships between staff and the people they support.

Learn from others: Independent Lives

Overview: mindfulness training

Independent Lives is a user-led charity and social enterprise that works to change the lives of disabled people.

They recognise that social care staff need to take care of their own mental health and wellbeing to be able to support others with theirs, so they offered them training about mindfulness.

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment. It's increasingly being used as a technique for managing stress and improving wellbeing. It can be used almost anywhere, at any time, which makes it a great technique for busy care staff.

Independent Lives offered staff an 'Introduction to mindfulness' session, with the opportunity to do a further eight-week course, delivered by an experienced teacher.

19 staff attended the introduction session and 10 did the longer course, which was two hours long and run once per week for eight weeks.

Feedback from the course was positive - care workers reported that they felt calmer, more confident, more relaxed and better able to deal with stress in their role.



Really enjoyed the course. It has changed aspects of my life already. It has enabled me to want to be myself and look at issues that arise rather than ignoring them, thank you.

Participant

Resources and templates to help

What is mindfulness?

Independent Lives developed this handout about what mindfulness is. Download the handout at www.skillsforcare.org.uk/MindfulnessHandout.

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of focusing on and paying attention to what's happening in the moment and accepting it without judgement.

It's called 'practice' because it's not easy - it takes time and repetition.

By learning how to shift our attention to the present moment and increase our awareness, we can:

- see things more clearly
- be more present and focused at work and at home
- notice the small pleasures of everyday life
- be less caught up in routine-thinking patterns which can add to feelings of stress
- bring a kinder approach to ourselves
- appreciate things that really matter
- gain insight into our emotions
- boost our concentration
- manage and/or relieve pain
- be more aware of ourselves and our surroundings.

Mindfulness is not:

- relaxation
- religion
- being 'nice' and 'feeling good' all of the time
- getting rid of thoughts
- the answer to all our problems.

There are different ways to learn about mindfulness and how to practice it in your daily life, including face-to-face learning, group learning, one-to-one sessions, books, audios, videos and online courses.

Mindfulness won't suit everyone so we recommend that training is provided by a qualified teacher or learning provider. You can search for a local teacher or provider at:

- www.bemindful.co.uk/learn-mindfulness
- www.bemindfulonline.com.

Activity: practicing mindfulness

We do a lot of things in our daily life out of habit, for example, washing our hair or brushing our teeth, and often we don't really notice that we're doing it.

Next time you're doing a daily activity, try to focus on the activity and don't let your mind and thoughts wander off.

For example, when you're brushing your teeth, notice what you feel and experience:

- what does the toothpaste taste like?
- what is the texture - is it grainy or smooth?
- what is the colour of the toothpaste?
- what can you hear and feel - is the water running, how does the toothbrush feel against your teeth and gums, how is your arm moving, are you sitting or standing, how does that feel?

If your mind wanders off, just try to bring it back to the activity that you're doing at that moment. You might be surprised what you notice when you do the activity mindfully.

Conclusion

Supporting staff to have good mental health and wellbeing, and investing in building resilience, can bring lots of benefits.

Stress is a significant cause of mental and physical ill-health, and can contribute to errors and misjudgements, low morale, sickness absence, burnout and high staff turnover – which all undermine quality care and support.

It's not possible to take all of the stress out of care work, which is why it's important that everyone in adult social care is supported to develop their resilience, and that employers take steps to reduce work-related stress.

The examples in this guide show some of the ways that other adult social care employers have developed the resilience of their staff - all of the examples saw improved staff health and wellbeing, productivity, turnover and motivation, which results in a better service for people who need care and support.

We hope that you can take some of the learning and make similar improvements in your organisation and/or team. Some of the things that you can do are small, low-cost changes, and others require a bigger investment.

There's lots of information and resources online about resilience, mental health and wellbeing.

We recommend that you also read these Skills for Care resources. You can email us at marketing@skillsforcare.org.uk to request a printed pack of all three resources.

Greater resilience, better care

This guide is for adult social care managers to help them to reduce work-related stress and build the resilience of staff. It explains what resilience is and why it matters, states your responsibilities as an employer, and shares how you can reduce work-related stress and develop the resilience of your staff.

Download your free copy at
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/GreaterResilience.



Building your own health, resilience and wellbeing

This guide is for anyone working in adult social care and explains how you can build your own resilience. It shares practical tips and techniques to help you to manage stress and pressure at work, and has activities to help you to apply your learning to everyday practice.

Download your free copy at
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/BuildingResilience.



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