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ESTABLISHED IN 1999, everywoman works to advance all women in business.

Modern life is becoming increasingly hectic, and the demands of finding a work/life balance can be stressful. Most of us experience some stress and worry and in fact this can be beneficial. However, when stress tips over into anxiety or depression, it can be difficult to maintain a perspective on how we feel and the impact this has on our mental health. It will ultimately affect our wellbeing and that of those around us.

This workbook is designed to get you thinking about your own wellbeing – your mental, emotional and physical health – and what changes you may need to make to feel happier and more fulfilled.

We have drawn on research by the New Economics Foundation, an independent think tank, tasked with devising a set of evidence-based actions to promote wellbeing.

A series of exercises will give you the opportunity to assess your current state of wellbeing, and work on strategies to improve how you feel. At the end of the workbook you will find a personal action plan, where you can design your own strategy for managing your wellbeing going forward.

Part of the wellbeing assessment will include connecting with new people, and taking the time to listen to others. The section on recognising wellbeing in others will focus on understanding those around you and the impact you can have on their wellbeing.

“Health is more than the absence of disease. It is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing.”
SECTION 1.
WELLBEING
What is wellbeing and why is it important?

**IN ITS SIMPLEST FORM** ‘wellbeing’ is ‘the state of being comfortable, healthy and happy’. But how can this be measured? And more importantly, if you are not in a state of wellbeing, how can you achieve it?

There are no hard and fast rules to improving your wellbeing, and what works for one person won’t necessarily work for you. It is very important though to appreciate that the only person who can improve your wellbeing is you.

Wellbeing can also be frustratingly transient, so your state of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing can change depending on your experiences, your perception of those experiences and the methods you use to cope with their positive or negative effects. Sarah Stewart-Brown, Professor of Public Health at the University of Warwick and a wellbeing expert, says this:

“It’s useful to start with the idea that overall wellbeing involves both the mind and the body. And we know that physical and mental wellbeing are closely related.

“Of course, feeling happy is a part of mental wellbeing. But it is far from the whole. There is a deeper kind of wellbeing, which is about living in a way that is good for you and good for others around you.

“Feelings of contentment, enjoyment, confidence and engagement with the world are all a part of mental wellbeing. Self-esteem and self-confidence are too. So is a feeling that you can do the things you want to do. And so are good relationships, which bring joy to you and those around you.

“Of course, good mental wellbeing does not mean that you never experience feelings or situations that you find difficult. But it does mean that you feel you have the resilience to cope when times are tougher than usual.”

Source: www.nhs.uk/livewell/emotionalhealth

We’ve all been in a situation when we’ve felt unhappy, lonely or uncertain. It’s often the case that we are unable to pinpoint the reasons why we feel this way, or why these feelings repeat themselves.

With this in mind look at the exercises in this workbook as a process you undertake regularly, particularly when you are feeling unhappy. It may help you get a little perspective and reassure you that there are simple things you can do to improve how you feel.
So, what should you be looking to achieve?

**Happiness, Contentment & Enjoyment**
An awareness of positive feelings & the actions that trigger them.

**Positive Relationships**
Every relationship can teach us something. Positive relationships with yourself & others will help you to be happier, more fulfilled, feel more supported & supportive, and connected.

**Increased Resilience**
Being able to bounce-back after episodes of stress & adversity. Also, finding ways to cope with negative experiences.

**Engagement & Curiosity**
Being open to new experiences. Finding beauty & fun in the everyday.

**Positive Experiences**
Enjoying the world around you. Taking steps to find positive experiences & share them with others.

**A Sense of Purpose**
Finding a direction in life & setting goals. This will bring meaningfulness & help you live a fuller life.

**Wellbeing**
Comfortable, Healthy & Happy
SECTION 2.
MENTAL HEALTH
What do we mean by Mental Health?

MENTAL HEALTH is how we think and feel about ourselves and about our role in society; it’s also how we cope when times get tough. Mental health problems can range from everyday worries to serious long-term conditions.

Mental health affects our wellbeing and vice versa, but by improving our wellbeing we can often dramatically improve our mental health.

“Mental health problems are very common. About a quarter of the population experience some kind of mental health problem in any one year.”

“Anxiety and depression are the most common problems, with around 1 in 10 people affected at any one time. Anxiety and depression can be severe and long-lasting and have a big impact on people’s ability to get on with life.”

Source: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

If you are at all worried that you may be suffering with a mental health illness, it is extremely important that you see your GP or seek professional advice.

For online support and information try:

www.nhs.uk

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk
SECTION 3.
THE FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING
Why wellbeing and why now?

IN 2008 THE UK GOVERNMENT published the Foresight Project on Mental Capital & Wellbeing. Its ambition was to find out what challenges we would face over the next 20 years and their affect on our wellbeing.

It also set out to discover what needed to be done to ensure we have the mental wellbeing to face those challenges. Information and insight was gathered from over 400 scientists across the world.

The government then asked nef (New Economics Foundation) to develop the ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ to communicate its key findings.

The five ways proved to be a huge success and is regularly implemented by health organisations like the NHS, and charities such as Mind and The Children’s Society. Schools and community projects around the world have also used them to help people take action to improve their wellbeing.

How were the ‘five ways’ developed?

There have been many studies on wellbeing over the last 20 years, and scientists have worked towards finding ways to measure it. They often use a series of questions, asking subjects how they feel about themselves, their lives and the world around them.

"Some of this evidence comes from observational studies in which scientists look at the behaviour and wellbeing of certain sections of the population. Other evidence comes from trials in which scientists take a group of people and ask them to change their behaviour or participate in a treatment or other intervention, such as an exercise programme, and then watch what happens to their wellbeing."

Professor Stewart-Brown
(http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx)

The results from these studies showed what really improved mental wellbeing – nef shaped these results into The Five Ways to Wellbeing.
Below are the ‘five ways’. As you read through, begin to reflect on the statements in relation to your current situation.

**Connect**

Our relationships affect both our physical health and mental wellbeing. It’s important that we nurture those relationships as they help us to feel happier and more secure, and can give us a greater sense of purpose.

Do you connect with the people around you? With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours? At home, work, school or in your local community?

**Be Active**

What we do with our bodies has a powerful effect on your mental wellbeing. The evidence shows that there is a link between being physically active and good mental wellbeing.

Do you exercise? Do you get outside, go for walks, potter in the garden? Being active doesn’t mean a heavy duty exercise regime; it could be as simple as taking the stairs instead of a lift. The most important aspect of being active is to have a sustainable pattern of doing more rather than being active one day and not the next.

**Take Notice**

What we do and the way we think has a big impact on wellbeing. Becoming aware of the present moment means noticing the sights, smells, sounds and tastes that you experience, as well as the thoughts and feelings that occur from one moment to the next.

You may well have heard the terms ‘mindfulness’ or ‘present-centredness’; these practices can help us enjoy the world more and understand ourselves better.

Are you aware of the world around you – the sights, smells, temperatures? Do you take time to notice how you are feeling? Do you savour the moment?

**Keep Learning**

The evidence also discovered that learning new things can boost self-confidence and self-esteem. It also helps give you a sense of purpose, and allows you to connect with others.

When was the last time you tried something new? Have you set yourself a challenge recently? Sometimes just reflecting on your experience can be enough to learn something new.
Give

Helping and supporting other people, and working with others towards a shared goal, is good for our mental wellbeing. Even small acts of kindness can give you a sense of purpose and make you feel happier and more satisfied in life.

Do you see yourself and your happiness in relation to the wider community? Have you tried volunteering? When did you do something nice for a relative, friend or stranger?

The conclusion:

If we connect with other people, become more active and take notice of our surroundings and our feelings, we feel better about ourselves. Furthermore, if we take time to learn something new and give our support to others, we feel happier, more positive and better able to get the most out of life.

Does it work?

Yes! Many institutions, local governmental bodies and schools continue to implement the ‘Five Ways’ and are receiving positive feedback.

Check out:

www.leicestershire-wellbeing.co.uk/evidence-case-studies/

Coaching and training practitioners include the principles to support their clients, and of course individuals are experiencing the benefits every day.

“At least twice a week I arrange to meet a friend in town for soup over my lunch break. It’s been so good to catch up with people, and arranging it in advance means I can’t just work over my lunch hour like I used to.”

SARAH
Understanding your wellbeing - where are you now?

**TAKE A LOOK AT** the following statements, taking time to reflect on your current state before rating yourself 1-5 against each one, 5 being ‘doing great’, 1 being ‘not so brilliant’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Comments</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I connect?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am I active?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I take notice?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have I kept learning?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I give?</td>
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This is where you are now, but these can of course fluctuate throughout your life.

Note in the box below any of the ‘Five Ways’ that you scored 3 or below. These are the areas that need the most attention.
What’s working?

Now look at the Five Ways that score a 4 or 5.

Why have they scored so highly?

Make a note in the box below some of the reasons why you’ve done well in these categories. If you’ve not been able to score any of the Five Ways with a 4 or 5 don’t worry, just move on to the next exercise.

Remember, this is something you can come back to. In fact you should revisit this exercise periodically. If you haven’t scored yourself highly on this occasion, it’s likely this will improve over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIVE WAYS</th>
<th>SCORED WELL BECAUSE…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect</td>
<td>I call my mum every Sunday and we chat about our weeks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example: Connect
Awareness

**TRY AND REMEMBER** a particular point in time when you were feeling positive and happy. This doesn’t have to be focused around an event, more an era in your life when you felt comfortable, happy and healthy.

Briefly describe this time in your life:

Relating to what you have written above, finish the following sentences...

I felt connected at this time because...

I was active at this time because...

I took notice at this time because...

I was learning at the time because...
Don’t worry if you were not able to answer all these questions, in fact there may be sentences you can’t finish because you weren’t doing them, or you can’t remember doing them. The point is, you remember being happy, comfortable and healthy. Ask yourself the question: were you aware of it at the time?

Being aware is an important part of understanding your own wellbeing.

Consider making this promise to yourself...

“I will be aware of how I am feeling and I will take time to reflect on my wellbeing.”
SECTION 4.
WHAT NOW?
What now?

WE’RE GOING TO GO THROUGH each of the ‘Five Ways’ and make some suggestions on how to improve in each category. In each section write down any additional ideas you may have.

Connect

‘When it comes to wellbeing, other people matter. Evidence shows that good relationships – with family, friends and the wider community – are important for mental wellbeing.

Building stronger, broader social connections in your life can increase your feelings of happiness and self-worth.’

www.nhs.uk

• Spend time with those closest to you.
• Speak to someone new today.
• Take time to have lunch with a colleague or friend.

WHAT DOES CONNECT MEAN TO YOU?
Be Active

Many more of us are realising that physical activity can improve our wellbeing. Not only does it help us feel good about our bodies, but it can also protect us against depression and anxiety.

Being active can increase our self-esteem, self-control and ability to rise to a challenge. Just changing one feature of your daily routine can make a difference.

- Walk, run or cycle to work.
- Take up a new sport.
- Take the family on an activity based holiday.

WHAT DOES ACTIVE MEAN TO YOU?

Active Pension

Consider ‘being active’ like investing in a pension. Ideally you need to be investing a little into your pension every day. If you leave it, thinking you can drop in a lump sum later in life, you’re not likely to get much from it or have enough time to make a significant difference to your health in old age. There really aren’t that many people running marathons in their 80s!

Remember

NHS guidelines suggest adults aged 19 or over should do at least 150mins (2 ½ hrs) of moderate intensity aerobic activity – such as fast walking or cycling – every week.
Take Notice

“It’s easy to stop noticing the world around us. It’s also easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling and to end up living ‘in our heads’ – caught up in our thoughts without stopping to notice how those thoughts are driving our emotions and behaviour.

It’s about allowing ourselves to see the present moment clearly. When we do that, it can positively change the way we see ourselves and our lives.”

Professor Mark Williams
Professor of Clinical Psychology
Oxford Mindfulness Centre

Being aware of the moment will help you enjoy the world and understand yourself better.

- Practice slow breathing exercises a few times a day.
- Savour the taste of your meals.
- Take a 5 minute break at work to clear your head.

What does taking notice mean to you?
Keep Learning

It’s easy to associate learning with childhood or your student days, but evidence shows that continuing to learn throughout life can improve our mental wellbeing.

For some the idea of learning new things can be intimidating; remember that first driving lesson, or the first day at a new job? It’s important to see learning in its broadest sense. Any new task can give scope for learning.

• Re-tune the radio and listen to something new.
• Watch an interesting documentary.
• Ask a friend to teach you a practical skill. Perhaps teach them one too.

“Learning is like rowing upstream: not to advance is to drop back.”

CHINESE PROVERB
Give

Neurologists have discovered that giving your time, supporting others and being compassionate stimulates areas in the brain associated with reward. Acts of kindness, large or small, can give you a sense of purpose. You feel happier and more positive about life and this has a significant impact on your wellbeing.

We all ‘give’ to some extent, but it is important to be aware of the feelings associated with this act. It’s sometimes easy to associate this with feeling ‘put upon’. Take notice at these times and look at your motives for giving – did you give because you had to, or because you wanted to?

- Give compliments to those closest to you.
- Tell someone ‘well done’.
- Take some treats into work to share with colleagues.

WHAT DOES GIVING MEAN TO YOU?

Recognising When Others Need Support

Take a look at the ‘Wellbeing at Work’ section for indicators of stress and anxiety in others. You’ll find suggestions on what you can do to support those who may be struggling, be it colleagues, relatives or friends.
SECTION 5.
YOUR WELLBEING
ACTION PLAN
Your Wellbeing Action Plan

**AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS WORKBOOK** we mentioned your wellbeing action plan. Referring back to the ‘Five Ways’, take a look at your notes in each of the boxes with the heading ‘What does this mean to you?’

For each of the ‘Five Ways’ write down two or three new steps you intend to take to improve your wellbeing. Pay particular attention to those areas where you scored lowest in the ‘Understanding your wellbeing’ section.

Note there are no due dates; this is an ongoing process and not something to be achieved according to a set timescale. But do regularly invest time in revisiting the exercises and your action plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION 1</th>
<th>ACTION 2</th>
<th>ACTION 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Active</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Take Notice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Give</td>
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</table>
SECTION 6.
WELLBEING AT WORK
Wellbeing at work

YOU’VE NOW SPENT SOME TIME assessing and engaging in your own wellbeing. You may wish to take the opportunity to encourage positive wellbeing amongst your colleagues.

Whether you are starting your career, a new leader, someone in a senior position or an entrepreneur, you will be engaging with others, many of whom will be experiencing worries and anxieties of their own. How can you help?

Recognising Stress

There are lots of signs, symptoms and behaviours that are associated with stress; take a look below, you may recognise some of them in yourself. If you see these behaviours in others, remember they may be indicative of other conditions. But if you are concerned about a colleague, maybe have a chat with them. If appropriate recommend they go and see their GP.

Note there are no due dates; this is an ongoing process and not something to be achieved according to a set timescale. But do regularly invest time in revisiting the exercises and your action plan.

What to look for...

- Do they say negative things about themselves or their situation?
- Do they say they feel depressed?
- Are they tearful, sensitive or aggressive?
- Do they seem withdrawn or unusually quiet?
- Do they lack motivation or enthusiasm, or appear less confident than they used to be?
- Have you noticed an increase in mood swings?
- Do they seem confused or indecisive?
- Do they lack concentration or forget things easily?
- Have you noticed any changes in their eating habits?
- Are they smoking or drinking more? Do you suspect they may be taking drugs?
- Do they look tired or complain of not being able to sleep?
- Are they twitchy or nervous?
- Are there changes in attendance such as arriving later or taking more time off?

Health and Safety Executive

(adapted from www.hse.gov.uk)

REMEMBER stress is normal and we all experience it to a greater or lesser degree. It’s important to educate the people around you that there are simple steps they can take that can make a difference.
So how can you help?

Here are some suggestions:

- Can you take the time to listen to a colleague’s concerns and recommend the ‘Five Ways’ to support them?

- Are you able to organise a ‘Wellbeing’ workshop using this workbook as a basis for discussion?

- Can you download a ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ poster and post it on the office notice board? (See Further Reading)

Workplace Wellbeing Action Plan

Make some notes below as to what you could do to improve the wellbeing of others at work. On this occasion we have included a due date for each action. Having a goal and a deadline will encourage you to take the steps you’ve suggested – and remember these actions will support your own ‘Five Ways’ to wellbeing!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DETAILS</th>
<th>ACTION REQUIRED</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organise a lunchtime walk</td>
<td>Poster, email, plan route</td>
<td>By end of Sept</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The importance of reassessment

WE’VE MENTIONED throughout this workbook the importance of keeping an eye on your wellbeing. This shouldn’t be seen as a one-stop fix, more a life long process to maintain positive mental health.

It may be helpful to print this page and pin up somewhere at work or home as a reminder to take time to periodically reassess your wellbeing.

CONNECT
Talk and listen
Be there
Feel connected

GIVE
Your time
Your words
Your presence

BE ACTIVE
Do what you can
Enjoy what you do
Change your mood

KEEP LEARNING
Embrace new experiences
See opportunities
Surprise yourself

TAKE NOTICE
Remember the simple things that give you pleasure

How are you feeling today?
This workbook has been produced and edited by everywoman, with content commissioned from associate expert Sally Kettle. It is part of the everywoman portfolio of resources that have been specially created to support and develop women as they advance their careers and businesses.

everywoman Expert

Sally Kettle is an experienced adventurer, team leader and motivational speaker. As an ocean rower and yachtswoman she has faced many life-threatening situations. She is very frank about her own mental health demons, which in many ways contributed to her first (world record-breaking) Atlantic Ocean row. As a qualified personal trainer, Sally has also worked with international athletes during the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Further reading

- www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx
- www.fivewaystowellbeing.org
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Download the ‘Wellbeing’ app for android -

For iPhone -

‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ Poster -

‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ Post Cards -

Go to everywoman.com/development for more personal development workbooks, tools and a schedule of our online seminars.
Footnotes and Glossary

**GDP**

Gross domestic product – The total value of all final goods and services produced in a given year – effectively the overall monetary wealth of a country.

**Mental Capital**

This encompasses a person’s cognitive and emotional resources. It includes their cognitive ability, how flexible and efficient they are at learning, and their “emotional intelligence”, such as their social skills and resilience in the face of stress. It therefore conditions how well and individual is able to contribute effectively to society, and also to experience a high personal quality of life.

**Mental Wellbeing**

This is a dynamic state, in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to their community.

It is enhanced when an individual is able to fulfill their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society.