

Managing Your Wellbeing in the Workplace

In response to pressures brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Pharmacist Support - the profession's charity, launched the ACTNow campaign to raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing and encourage positive action.

The PDA is a proud sponsor of the campaign and has teamed up with their charity partner, Pharmacist Support, to bring you this self-care fact sheet that focuses on managing your wellbeing in the workplace.

The importance of your wellbeing

Working in a pharmacy setting can be stressful, especially during this pandemic. Now more than ever it is crucial that, in order to help patients and support your colleagues, you take some time to focus on your wellbeing.

When you fly on an airplane, the flight attendant instructs you to put your oxygen mask on first, before helping others. This is important because if you run out of oxygen yourself, you can't help anyone else. It isn't selfish to take care of yourself, it is necessary.

Although this is a common metaphor, when applied to healthcare professionals who instinctively want to help patients, some struggle to let go of the guilt of 'putting your own oxygen mask on first'. Well - it is time to let go of that guilt and make time to improve your own wellbeing.

Improving your wellbeing

In simple terms, wellbeing can be defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy, feeling good and functioning well. Invest in your wellbeing for sustained happiness, higher productivity, and good physical health.

Turn over for 7 useful tips for managing your wellbeing in the workplace.

7 useful tips for managing wellbeing in the workplace



1. CREATE A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The physical conditions at work determine the way in which you can carry out each task. A well organised and maintained workplace minimises the risk of trips, falls or any other type of injury. Take the time to arrange your work area to support a safe and effective way of working. Remember to also stay hydrated by having enough to drink throughout the day. If you are pregnant or have a medical condition, you should undertake a full review of your physical workplace.

2. TAKE ADEQUATE BREAKS

As highlighted in the PDA's [Safer Pharmacies Charter](#), pharmacists must be able to take at least their statutory and contractual breaks and rest periods, and additional breaks as required to meet their professional obligations. While on your break, making sure you disconnect physically and mentally is vital for your wellbeing. For example, you may wish to take this time to go for a walk so you can return to work refreshed.

3. SEEK CLARITY THROUGH MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a thought process that allows us to pay attention and see clearly what is happening in our lives. Whilst it cannot eliminate workplace pressures, it can be a good way to help you to deal with them in a calmer manner, which is beneficial to your overall wellbeing. Some people achieve mindfulness through completing an online course or using exercises such as Yoga and Tai Chi and others use meditation ([you can find apps](#) that provide guided audio meditation exercises that you can listen to while on the go) and breathing exercises.

4. PRIORITISE YOUR TIME

If you are feeling overwhelmed by your workload and can't see a solution, try listing all the things you need to do in order of priority. This may sound simple but creating a 'to-do' list is one of the easiest and most beneficial ways to manage your time effectively. The act of taking control by breaking your problems down and handling them one task at a time will help them to feel more manageable. If staff shortages or workloads are the issue, make sure you explain that to your manager so that you can try to find a solution. It is part of their job to help you succeed in yours.

5. BE ASSERTIVE WHEN NEEDED

Being assertive means expressing your needs and desires effectively, not allowing people to take advantage of you and your team, and standing up for your own/another's point of view without being aggressive or inconsiderate to others. As a responsible pharmacist it is important to find the confidence to explain things firmly, fairly and with empathy, with both colleagues and customers. It doesn't come easily to everyone, but being assertive can improve morale and help you reach amicable arrangements that leave all involved feeling their needs have been considered and that they are equally valued and important. This in turn can help you to feel less stressed and anxious. Knowing how to be assertive in an effective way can also help to avoid escalation and the risk of abuse.

6. DON'T ACCEPT ABUSE

Patients may have pressures of their own, but that does not make it OK for them to take their frustrations out on you. NHS and community pharmacy employers have commitments to zero tolerance of violence, which includes abuse. It is the employer who is primarily responsible for ensuring that risk reduction measures are in place, so it is important to ensure that you are aware of the procedures in your workplace and report any patient that is abusive. As with other causes of difficulty at work, unless concerns are highlighted, they can't be addressed.

7. BOOK TIME OFF WHEN NEEDED

We all have limits on our energy and output. In our busy lives, these limits can be tested the more we push ourselves to meet daily tasks, deadlines and objectives. If we continue beyond our fatigue point, performance is likely to drop and we can become affected by negative stress. We may begin to feel overwhelmed; we procrastinate, we can't make decisions and can even become sick. Errors may become more likely and so it is not wise to "soldier on" and risk the consequences. It is important to book annual leave when it is needed. It can also boost your mood to have something booked in the calendar that you can look forward to!

For more resources to help you take control of your wellbeing, visit:

<https://wellbeinghub.pharmacistsupport.org>