

This resource looks at simple ways to support your own and your teams' wellbeing. We hope that you find some useful ideas here to help you and your colleagues to maintain their wellbeing as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since March 2020, most of us will have experienced some change to our working arrangements and home lives due to COVID-19. Before the pandemic, some of us may well have experienced **workplace stress** at some point, regardless of whether we are paid staff, volunteers or trustees.

**Rapid change, communication difficulties and feeling unprepared** for what we need to do to fulfil our responsibilities can all have an impact on wellbeing. Despite several public campaigns, acknowledging and talking about workplace wellbeing can still be difficult. Those working in the arts and heritage sector are not immune from this.

**There are ways to support ourselves and others to develop resilience to cope in challenging times.** Approaches not need to be costly, or time-consuming: it's often about reviewing our attitude to health and wellbeing in the workplace.

### Fulfilling your responsibilities as an employer

Employers need to do **whatever is 'reasonably practicable'** to protect the health of staff, customers and others who may be affected by their business (such as volunteers).

To do this, employers need to **assess the risk of stress in the workplace.** Leaders, managers, supervisors, staff and volunteers have different roles to play in supporting workplace wellbeing.

Remember, **it is not an employer's role to diagnose and treat mental illness.**

#### Helpful Toolkits

You can find a lot of easy-to-use resources to help you as an employer on the [Mental Health At Work website](#), including a stress risk assessment, conversation toolkit and adjustments for those experiencing poor mental health.



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### Top tips:

- Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic we have created [various resources to provide support and advice](#) during this time.
- Please [get in touch](#) if you require any further support or advice.

## Wellness Action Plans

The charity Mind has produced [three guides to Wellness Action Planning](#), including a guide aimed at employers and another for a personal action plan for working from home.

In the same way that we are encouraged to **mend the roof when the sun is shining**, Mind advises us to make wellness plans even though things seem to be going smoothly in terms of our wellbeing – **so we can be ready for times when this might change**.



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### Small actions can make a big difference: Five Ways to Wellbeing

This guidance from the NHS and Mind emphasises the fact that improving our **wellbeing is not about committing to new, time-consuming or expensive changes in our lives**.

Instead, we could think about doing things that can, fairly easily, fit in with our current lifestyle. Take a look at the available resources from NHS and Mind on improving mental wellbeing:

The [NHS resource includes the 5 steps to Mental Wellbeing](#) to 'help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life'.

Additionally, Mind have a detailed [Five Ways to Wellbeing resource](#) with tips and further links on improving wellbeing.

The 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' resources referenced above, are based on the following principles, researched and developed by the [New Economics Foundation](#):

- 1. Connect**
- 2. Be active**
- 3. Take notice**
- 4. Learn**
- 5. Give**

## Mindfulness activities and creativity supporting wellbeing

Breathworks is a charity that focuses on mindfulness for stress, illness and pain.

It has some free resources aimed at workplaces on its website, like [these short guided meditations](#). One of the meditations is a coffee break session – 'The Coffee Meditation' that could be introduced into a work day.

## Case Study: One museum's approach to wellbeing in the workplace

The Museum in the Park in Stroud was awarded one of our Small Grant Big Improvement grants in 2019 to **improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce**.

Their activity involved a Mindfulness Photographer, Ruth Davey from Look Again, leading two workshops with staff and volunteers. Participants used photography, mindfulness and connecting with nature as a way to **slow down, reduce stress, and to build stronger connections with themselves, each other as a team**, and with the natural and built environment of the museum, the walled garden and surrounding park.

### The project activity:

- Focussed on mindfulness as a technique to support health and wellbeing, leading to improvements in wellbeing.
- Helped participants focus on what the museum and its setting offers, supporting future museum activity.
- Supported organisational resilience by bringing the most senior and junior staff, along with volunteers, together, building stronger connections between the workforce.
- Culminated in a small public exhibition of photographs, selected by staff and volunteers, from the activity.
- Involved social media, to extend the audience – resulting in 3,295 impressions/views and 84 engagements or clicks/likes.



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### “ “ Top tips from Kevin Ward – Museum Development Manager, Museum in the Park

Consider working with an artist or practitioner who is experienced in proven mindfulness techniques and make sure you take time to discuss your aims with them before you start.

Ensure you work with someone who can tune in with your organisation and that their approach will work for your team.

Make sure you schedule and time your activities so that everyone has the opportunity to attend;

- Budget to cover for staff in front of house roles;
- Hold more than one session, at different days/times
- Invite volunteers well in advance
- Stagger the sessions to give you time to learn from the first and make any changes.

We concluded that activities focussing on individual wellbeing are likely to improve organisational wellbeing more effectively than trying to design activities for a combined impact.

Think about capturing feedback and measuring impact in relevant and sensitive ways. ” ”

## Feedback straight after the workshops:

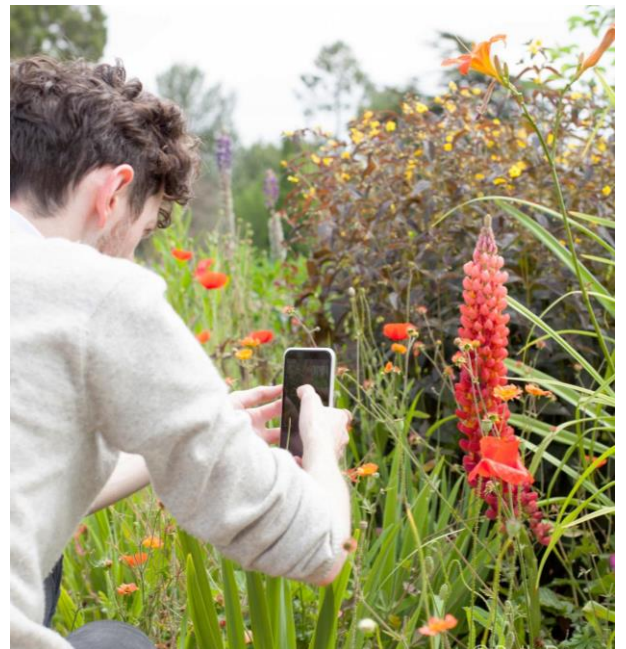
- *'It was therapeutic to leave my work head to one side and look at things in a purely visual and creative way'*
- *'(The workshop) engendered companionship between all'*
- *'Nice to be able to work independently in the morning and then come together in the afternoon'*



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## Feedback two months later, at the end of the project:

- *'The workshop and exhibition helped me to get to know some of our volunteers better. I enjoyed working with other staff and volunteers in a relaxed way'*
- *'I loved taking photographs that I wouldn't usually have taken, both indoors and outdoors, and it was a real experience to study a tree in depth'*
- (Manager) *'It has shown staff and volunteers that we are an organisation that values their wellbeing'*



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