

THE LITTLE BOOK OF

# Wellbeing

Tips from people working in healthcare on how  
we can take care of ourselves and each other



ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS AND  
SURGEONS OF GLASGOW



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# Professionalism



## **Role model**

We can change the world and it starts with changing ourselves. Role modelling is more powerful than you know.

## **Earn respect**

Respect is earned and not a given. While a professional position may carry a degree of respect in itself, personal respect from others can take a long time to build up and yet be lost in seconds by a disrespectful or rude comment.

## **Provide opportunities**

Don't look down or be dismissive to more junior staff, or indeed anyone. Instead, try to ensure your junior colleagues are given every opportunity to learn.

## **Culture change now**

Culture change takes time. The best time to start was 20 years ago. The next best time is now.

## **Justice and fairness**

Work together to ensure your voices are heard and you play a key role in influencing decisions in your organisations, and ensuring cultures are characterised by justice and fairness.

## **Use your privilege**

It's easy for some people to preach about change, due to their multiple privileges. With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility – if you have power and privilege, use it!

## **Have purpose**

Constantly revisit this – what contribution can I bring, how would I look back on this situation afterwards with pride? I often have a reaction to things then ask myself “what would the leadership response to this be?” They aren't always the same. Developing ‘meta-awareness’ is a life's work and worth every minute.

## **Remember your professional responsibilities**

Remember your professional responsibilities. It's all too easy to make a flippant or other comment on social media or to be unprofessional with others which could be taken the wrong way, or even land you in trouble.

## **Write it down**

Always write down what you've told or discussed with patients. In legal terms, if it isn't written down, it hasn't happened or been said. This is a very useful thing to remember and safeguards you for the future, especially in this increasingly litigious climate.

## **Change the world**

Changing healthcare culture will improve patient care and the lives of healthcare staff. This isn't a tip – it's a reminder. We can change the world, just by how we are at work.

### **Work together**

The only way the system will change is if we all work together to change it.

### **Set the tone**

If you lead a team you set the tone, if you are kind to your team, your team will be kind to each other.

### **The best version of yourself**

We cannot all be great, but we can all be good, and we can aspire to be the best possible version of ourselves.

# Team working



## **Trust each other**

It's important for a team to trust their leader will support them when things go wrong, and they should be encouraged to make decisions and plans safe in this knowledge. Seniority and leadership is about responsibility and accountability. Similarly, a leader needs to trust the team rather than scrutinising every decision.

## **We all matter**

Undermining is about making people feel small and worthless – nobody deserves to be made to feel that way. We all matter.

## **Value your colleagues**

Value everyone in the team, from most senior colleagues to clerical support staff. That way, team members look out for each other and will go the extra mile when needed.

## **Know what you're asking**

Change is good, but it can also mean loss. Recognise what you are asking people to give up and you might find it easier to get them on board.

## **Play to our strengths**

Some people don't fit well into teams. There is a danger they will be shunned by the group. But everyone has a talent or skill. Find out what people love doing and try to incorporate that into their role. Play to people's strengths rather than criticise their weaknesses. Some people who think differently have amazing skills. Abraham Lincoln said, "I don't like that man. I must get to know him."

## **Reduce hierarchical gradients**

The way you see yourself might not be the way other team members perceive you. Always look for ways to reduce hierarchical gradients. Using first names, going for coffee, regularly telling junior staff that they can and should speak up if they have any concerns whatsoever, without fear of retribution.

## **Build trust and integrity**

Our careers are long and varied – don't try and race to the top. Build trust and integrity in varied and rich relationships, and opportunities will come. When seeking to influence others, don't force the "right answer" on them: Bond, Bridge then Broker. You progress at the speed of trust and this takes time.

### **Ask for help**

Difficult conversations are difficult. If you don't think you can have one, try and find an ally who can help. Use the Vanderbilt "Cup of Coffee" model.

### **Learn constantly**

Approach your career as a constant learner and don't limit yourself to your specialty – go and see how other services/sectors work. Set out to learn as much about yourself as possible – we all have blind spots and deaf spots. You may be surprised how little you knew!

### **Rota fairness**

Work schedules and rotas should be managed in a fair, responsive and transparent way that everyone in the team is generally content with.

### **Tackle rather than endure**

Excessive workload is constantly addressed as an issue to be tackled rather than endured, and solutions are found.

### **Find two minutes**

Find two minutes for a pre-brief at the beginning of the day with your team. Who are you working with today? What do they want to get out of the day? What does success for the day look like? Then find two minutes at the end of the day, check in and reflect on what you achieved.

### **Get to know each other**

Take time to learn one non-work related thing about each colleague and one non-illness related thing about each patient. Share something similar with them to open up a conversation.

### **Connect the system**

'Connect the system to more of itself' Myron Rodgers. We tend to work in silos. We can learn so much from other areas of the system- particularly about wellbeing and support. Innovation is all around us so get out and learn about it.



# Civility

## **Learn from stupid**

Being stressed doesn't excuse awful workplace behaviours. But, we are all human, so when you do say or do something stupid, apologise and learn from it.

## **Check in on each other**

People who are rude are often stressed. Don't get upset. Do the right thing. When it's appropriate to do so, check if they are alright.

## **Find your voice**

Bullying is about power and silence – so we can change that by recognising our own power and finding our voice

## **Be kind**

Be kind, be civil: saying please, thank you, sorry and listening will change the way your entire team acts and feels.



## **Compassionate culture**

Your leadership and that of your organisation should encourage compassionate, supportive cultures where all staff voices are heard and valued.

## **Have perspective**

Work and life can be hard, punishing and unfair at times. Wherever you work though, remember that there are people all around us who are less fortunate (and not just the patients). Try and see the world through their experience as much as possible.

## **Deep reservoirs of empathy**

No-one is perfect. Be driven and professional, but be kind to yourself also. Patients and colleagues will remember how you treated them far more than what you did for them. Try and develop deep reservoirs of empathy.

## **Be kind to yourself**

Be kind to yourself. Would you be so harsh on other people? If the answer is no, try to recalibrate and treat yourself with the same compassion with which you would treat others.

## **“Are you okay?”**

Make sure you ask colleagues if they are OK. While there is no excuse for treating each other badly, there is always a reason people behave the way they do, none of us are bad people. Sometimes the person who you see being angry all the time is carrying trauma you don't know about. If you ask about it it might just give them the chance to tell someone and start the journey towards getting help.

# Work life balance



## **Say yes, and no**

When offered a new project or role, ask: what will I give up? Unless we are actively looking to increase our responsibilities, we should 'change our role' rather than 'adding a role' when new opportunities arise. Otherwise we do both the previous and new roles a disservice – and stress ourselves into the bargain. But, whatever we do, what we mustn't give up is our own personal or family time to a new role. Remember – saying yes to one thing, means saying no to something else.

## **Switch 'off' on**

Being constantly at the mercy of emails and messages is a major stressor and disruptor. Former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said "if you're working from your inbox, you're working to other people's priorities". It's quite easy on a smart phone to temporarily disable work emails, and definitely worth switching work account mail to 'off' when you go on holiday.

## **Enabling work conditions**

Working conditions (IT, rest facilities, availability of food and drink and basic amenities) must be of an appropriate standard and enabling of your work.

## **Manage your emotions**

You bring your whole self to work. Relationship problems, or troubles in your personal life can impact on your work and/or working relationships. Learning how to manage emotions is essential. When emotionally liable, something small can trigger an outburst or anger which you might later regret. Ever seen someone lash out for no apparent reason? They probably had something else going on.

## **Eat, drink sleep**

Make sure you look after yourself as well as you can, and then you will look after your patients better. Don't neglect taking regular breaks, eating and drinking, and ensure you get enough sleep.

## **Something to look forward to**

In busy times or when rotas are bad with lots of on calls or shifts, always have something planned to look forward to. It's a good idea to try and have the next holiday booked so you've always got something nice to think about when work seems to take over. A good work-life balance is really important.

## **Breathe and focus**

Take a few seconds at the door on the way out to process the day and leave it behind you. What three things are you grateful for today? What could have been better? What will you do differently next time you're in? Then breathe and focus your attention onto your life outside work.

## **Say no with gratitude**

Practise saying no with gratitude. You can't do everything. Choose opportunities that interest you and will benefit you, not just ones that tick a CV box.

## **Compassion for yourself**

Treat yourself with the same compassion, that you would a patient. Make sure you have the work life balance you need.

With thanks to all who contributed:

Peter Brennan

*Consultant maxillofacial surgeon,  
Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth*

David Caesar

*Head of Leadership and Talent  
Management, Scottish Government  
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Cicely Cunningham

*Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellow,  
Royal College of Physicians and  
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*Orthopaedic Registrar  
Past President, British Orthopaedic  
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Christine Goodall

*Senior Clinical Lecturer and  
Lead Clinician in Oral Surgery,  
University of Glasgow*

Alastair Ireland

*Consultant in Emergency Medicine,  
Glasgow Royal Infirmary*

Jackie Taylor

*President, Royal College of  
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Michael West

*Professor of Organisational  
Psychology, Lancaster University  
Senior Visiting Fellow,  
The King's Fund*

Making Life Work Better **#MLWB**

Some of the content in this booklet has been edited for consistency.



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SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

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ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

232-242 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5RJ

+44 (0)141 221 6072

***rcpsg.ac.uk***

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