

Staffordshire University Academies Trust

# Mental Health & Wellbeing Newsletter



## Vision and Intent

“To provide a working and learning environment whereby individual and organisational wellbeing is embedded in everything that we do. Creating a healthy, happy, supportive, resilient, and productive workforce who are able to thrive, personally and professionally.

To collectively maximise the positive impact for the children in our care, supporting them to flourish, and to improve their life chances.”

### Key Dates

International Self  
Care Day - Friday  
24th July

National Grief  
Awareness Day -  
Sunday 30th August

World Suicide  
Prevention Day -  
Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>  
September

National Inclusion  
Week - Monday 14<sup>th</sup>  
to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>  
September

World Mental Health  
Day - Saturday 10th  
October



# International Self-Care Day

Source: [The Global Self-Care Foundation](#)

It may sound quite obvious, but we all need to look after ourselves. International Self-Care Day is being held on 24<sup>th</sup> July and offers an annual chance to consider our own self-care and the benefit this can bring as a consistent, daily practice.

Self-care is a foundation of health and wellbeing and the day promotes education and personal responsibility in health maintenance. That applies to all ages and communities, pupils and teachers.

Ways you can proactively take steps to manage your own health in self-care include:

- Healthy eating - plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Regular physical activity
- A consistent sleep routine
- Yoga and meditation
- Having a relaxing drink
- Reading a good book
- Taking a walk
- Listening to music
- Setting a goal to aim for
- Focusing on positivity
- A long soak in the bath
- Time away from your phone
- Cooking your favourite meal



International Self-Care Day was established by the [International Self-Care Foundation](#) in 2011. Though the concept of self-care has been prevalent, the day promotes an emphasis on wellness.

To get involved in International Self-Care Day:

- Reflect on your daily habits and set simple goals that are achievable. For instance, aiming to drink more water or ensuring you take a walk every day.
- Share your self-care routine with others.
- Take the time to unplug and reset to prevent burnout.

By investing in your self-care, you can help improve your mental health, raise your confidence, prevent illnesses, and, eventually, reduce the strain on our NHS.

# National Grief Awareness Day

Unfortunately, everyone will experience grief at some point. National Grief Awareness Day looks to educate people about the grieving process. It also promotes support services to those who are grieving and helps raise awareness of how to help those in mourning.

## The Effects of Grief

Those in mourning can suffer in several ways, both physical and mental. Physical effects can include weight change, sleep issues, and tension felt throughout the body. The stress can cause tightening of the shoulders and it may prove difficult to get out of bed.

Emotional effects can range from depression and anxiety to guilt and even anger. Loneliness is also a common emotion to those who feel they have lost someone, or something, important to them.

For anyone suffering from grief then there are ways to help.

- **Acknowledge grief.** Accept what you are feeling is natural, even if it does seem difficult. Allow those feelings of sadness and anger, even relief, without judgment.
- **Seek out support.** That can come from friends or family, yet there are specific groups such as the [Health Assured Assistance Programme](#), [Sue Ryder](#) and [Cruse Bereavement Support](#).
- **Take care of your own health and wellbeing.** That can from be eating well, making sure you get enough sleep, and partaking in exercise.
- **Allow for time and space.** Grief can take its toll so have patience while emotions are navigated and the healing gradually takes place.
- **Take part** in meditation or journaling to help process grief.

If you know someone who is currently suffering from grief, there are ways to help them.

- **Find out what support you can provide.** [Grief Kind Classes](#) provide video tutorials with advice from bereavement experts.
- **Listen. Don't Judge.** Be an ear to those in mourning so they can freely express their emotions.



- **Have some patience and understanding** to let an individual work their way through the grief they're suffering from
- **Offer practical help** - drop by with a cooked meal, run a few errands or perform some jobs around the house to ease some of those daily pressures
- **Remain present** so check in regularly, either in person or on the phone

# World Suicide Prevention Day

Source: [The World Health Organisation/The International Association for Suicide Prevention](#)

Suicide remains a global issue and World Suicide Prevention Day looks to move from a culture of silence to one of support. The theme for 2024-2026 is 'Changing the Narrative on Suicide' and aims to encourage an open and honest discussion about how to create a world where fewer individuals die by suicide.



## How to 'change the narrative' in your setting

**Training and Education** - Facilitate access to workshops or training sessions for employees to recognise the signs of suicidal thoughts and mental health issues, and to seek help. For mental health first aid and suicide prevention support, there may be expertise available locally or your organisation can also provide access to online courses and certifications.

**Promote support** - Promote policies that support mental health, such as flexible working hours, flexible working arrangements, mental health days, and employee assistance programs. In addition, encourage an organisational culture where employees feel safe to discuss their mental health without fear of stigma or retribution and link them to additional support if needed.

**Social responsibility** - Encourage employees to volunteer their time and skills to awareness-raising campaigns and community initiatives.

# Suicide Prevention School Resources

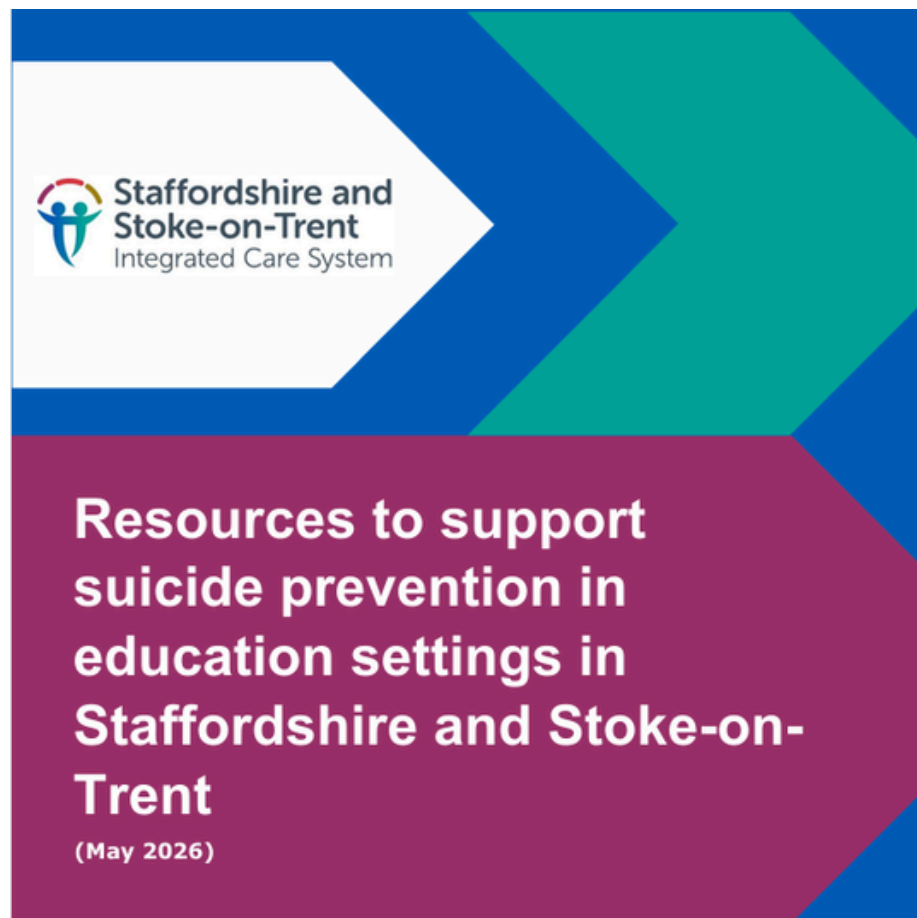
Source: Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire County Council has produced a set of resources designed to support suicide prevention in educational settings. This follows their release of publications in 2025 that support headteachers, principals, and safeguarding leads to provide ongoing support and communication.

These publications include:

Education Setting Postvention Guidance (December 2025), and  
Postvention Protocol Summary (August 2025).

Both publications include specific contact numbers, website links, email addresses and pointers on what action to take and the timescales in which to take it. From notification and coordination and responsible communication with the family to communication within the setting, communicating with the media, and moving forward.



Created by members of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent-wide CYP Suicide Prevention subgroup, the resources aim to signpost towards key guidance materials, online training opportunities, and system-wide support to reduce the risk of suicide.

Importantly, there's also advice on how schools can address suicide through the PSHE curriculum. These resources are also designed to increase knowledge and understanding around suicide prevention while supporting staff so they know what to do should situations arise.

# National Inclusion Week

Source: [Inclusive Employers](#)

To celebrate inclusion and building inclusive workplaces, there's [National Inclusion Week](#). This is an annual event that is now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year and offers a chance to spark conversations about what inclusion means in your setting.

National Inclusion Week aims to ensure that workplaces are both diverse and inclusive, with the overall aim for them to be mentally healthy and sustainable. Over 1800 organisations registered for last year's edition, highlighting the effort across the country. It could prove to be an ideal time to bring the setting together to discuss intersectional issues, from gender to race, religion, disabilities, LGBTQ+, and social mobility.



## How you can celebrate National Inclusion Week

### Create an Inclusive Calendar

Make sure you don't miss out on celebrations that could be recognised. Alongside Christmas and Easter, consider including Diwali and Hanukkah. There's also [International Women's Day](#) (8<sup>th</sup> March), [Black History Month](#) (1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October), and LGBTQ+ Pride Month (1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June).

### Lead by Example

Senior figures can drive inclusion by reflecting on their own stance. That could include how they have managed reports of bullying and discrimination, as well as how they have applied diversity and equality policies effectively.

### Establishing a Safe Space

Settings can be home to plenty of different cultures, religions, and identities, all pulling together. By creating a safe space, you can allow for confidential discussions, prayer sessions in seclusion, and have a quiet zone for the neurodivergent to focus.

# Stay Well Service

Source: Staffordshire County Council

Staffordshire's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service, Stay Well, is jointly commissioned by Staffordshire County Council with Staffordshire and the Stoke on Trent Integrated Care Board. The service acts as a Children and Young People's Mental Health Service, or CYPMHS if you prefer an acronym.

Stay Well is provided by Changes Health and Wellbeing, North Staffs Mind, and The Dove Service. Its aim is to offer an effective blend of group support with one-to-one support. Demand has continued to rise so the service has expanded its reach to become an established responsive and accessible mental health service. Not just for children and young people, but adults too.

In order to meet demand, the service has:

- opened new delivery venues in Cheadle, Leek, and Tamworth.
- created a new website so users can make new referrals while accessing new information and resources.
- expanded their social media presence to inspire and inform young people on how to enhance their wellbeing. This includes videos of staff discussing wellness tools and grounding techniques.
- improved access to their psycho-educational programmes and peer-support groups.
- added one-to-one cognitive behavioural therapy to address simple phobias.



Referrals can be made through Single Points of Access, Staffordshire's central hubs for children and young people's mental health services.

For North Staffordshire, you can call them on 0800 0328728 or make a referral online at <https://combinedwellbeing.org.uk/da-our-services/>

For South Staffordshire, you can call them on 0808 1780611 or email them at CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk to make a referral

# The Self-Esteem Key Summary

**Source: Staffordshire County Council**

Staffordshire County Council has also teamed up with the Staffordshire's [Educational Psychology Service](#) to create a Self-Esteem Key Summary. The summary uses [Michele Borba's model](#) which recognises five distinct areas that contribute to self-esteem.

These areas are detailed below:

	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Steps to Follow</b>
<b>Security</b>	A feeling of strong assuredness. Involves feeling comfortable and safe; knowing what is expected; being able to depend on individuals and situations; comprehending rules and limits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Build a trusting relationship with the child.</li><li>2. Set reasonable limits and rules that are consistently enforced.</li><li>3. Create a positive and caring environment.</li></ol>
<b>Identity</b>	A feeling of individuality. Acquiring self-knowledge, which includes an accurate and realistic self-description sources of influence on the self.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reinforce more accurate self-descriptions.</li><li>2. Provide opportunities to discover major sources in terms of roles, attributes, and physical characteristics, perhaps involving family heritage.</li><li>3. Build an awareness of unique qualities.</li><li>4. Enhance ability to identify and express emotions.</li></ol>
<b>Purpose</b>	A feeling of purpose and motivation in life. Self-empowerment through setting realistic and achievable goals and being willing to take responsibility for the consequences of one's decisions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhance the ability to make decisions, seek alternatives, and identify consequences.</li><li>2. Aid in charting present and past academic as well as behavioural performances.</li><li>3. Teach the steps to successful goal-setting.</li></ol>
<b>Belonging</b>	A feeling of acceptance or relatedness, particularly in relationships that are considered important. Feeling approved of, appreciated, and respected by others.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Promote inclusion and acceptance within a group, clubs are an ideal method.</li><li>2. Provide opportunities to discover interests, capabilities, and backgrounds of others with friendship lessons.</li><li>3. Increase awareness and skills in friendship making.</li><li>4. Encourage peer approval and support.</li></ol>
<b>Competence</b>	A feeling of success and accomplishment in things regarded as important or valuable. Aware of strengths and able to accept weaknesses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Provide opportunities to increase awareness of individual competencies and strengths.</li><li>2. Teach how to record and evaluate progress.</li><li>3. Provide feedback on how to accept weaknesses and profit from mistakes.</li><li>4. Teach the importance of self-praise for accomplishments.</li></ol>

# The Whole School/College Approach to Mental Health & Wellbeing

Source: UK Government

According to the UK government, a child's emotional health and wellbeing influences their cognitive development and learning. This has a further effect on their physical and social health, as well as their mental wellbeing, all the way into adulthood.

The Whole School/College Approach looks at eight principles to promote mental health and wellbeing. From leadership to learning, ethos and targeted support.

Along with the diagram, the government has produced comprehensive descriptions of how each principle is to be applied. This includes directives and working examples which can be found at - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing>



According to The Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey (2020), 16% of children aged between 5 and 16 years have a probable mental health disorder. That's up from 11% from 2017's survey.

Of course, the coronavirus pandemic disrupted the learning of children and young people. The Public Health England COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Report indicated that children and young people generally coped well. However, there was also evidence that suggested those children and young people with certain characteristics, who are disadvantaged economically, those with pre-existing mental health needs, and females in general, suffered more with their mental health and wellbeing.

Schools and colleges have an important role to play to support the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils and students. These eight approaches should help.

# Five Steps to Mental Health & Wellbeing

Source: [Anna Freud](#)

To support your Whole School/College Approach, Anna Freud, a mental health charity, have come up with [Five Steps to Mental Health and Wellbeing](#). This is a free, evidence-based framework to support a holistic, sustainable approach to mental health.

The framework is built flexibly so you can start with the most relevant step for your setting and current focus.

These steps include:

**Leading Change** - how to demonstrate commitment and signpost information

**Working Together** - establishing a Mental Health Action Group, collaborating, engagement, and decision-making

**Understanding Need** - identifying pupils at risk, measuring their wellbeing, developing and measuring interventions

**Promoting Wellbeing** - integration across curriculum and culture, establishing a Peer Support Programme, and creating a safe environment

**Supporting Staff** - Measuring, monitoring, and promoting staff wellbeing, providing training, identifying and signposting support structures



## Strengthens your approach

Encourages collaboration so wellbeing becomes a shared priority.



## Builds confidence for staff

Provides clear, practical guidance to help staff feel supported.



## Tailored to your setting

Can be adapted to fit your context, priorities and existing work.



## Easy to get started

Designed to be practical, accessible and achievable.

You can even register with the service to access an action planning tool to work with your framework so you can reflect on how each step is performing and to track your setting's progress.

Register at - <https://www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/5-steps/>

# Five Ways to Wellbeing

Source: New Economics Foundation

You've heard of the Five Steps to Mental Health & Wellbeing, now there are the Five Ways to Wellbeing. Research undertaken by the New Economics Foundation has found there are five specific ways to wellbeing. These revolve around five themes that can be prioritised in day to day routines - social relationships, physical activity, awareness, learning, and giving.

## Connect...

With the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.

## Be active...

Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

## Take notice...

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

## Keep learning...

Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

## Give...

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.

# Five Ways to Wellbeing

Source: *New Economics Foundation*

To support the Five Ways to Wellbeing, Twinkl has also provided resources that can be used in schools and colleges. This includes a toolkit that provides information, techniques, and tips on how to look after your wellbeing.

## How to incorporate the Five Ways to Wellbeing into daily life

These don't have to be ground-breaking changes, each way represents a small, helpful adjustment. Something as simple as talking to a friend, heading out for some fresh air, taking time out for a crossword, or doing some gardening can have a positive effect on wellbeing.

Try to pick actions, however small, that you can work into your daily routine. If you don't feel that they're working, seek guidance from a mental health professional, such as one locally from the mental health charity, [Mind](#).

Each of the five ways has been given a resource that brings the suggestion to day-to-day life.

## Connect

Those social relationships we have are crucial for promoting wellbeing. They even act as a buffer against mental illness to remind ourselves that we're important and valued.

Ways to stay connected include:

- regularly arranging to meet up with friends
- reaching out to someone you've lost touch with
- getting to know your neighbours
- calling someone instead of texting or emailing
- forming a relationship by speaking to someone new
- asking a colleague how their weekend was
- offering a lift to or from work



# Five Ways to Wellbeing

Source: *New Economics Foundation*

## Be Active

The evidence persists that regular physical activity combats depression and anxiety. That's not just for children and young people but across all age groups and remains a critical part of promoting wellbeing. Not even strenuous exercise either, walking while chatting can encourage those vital social interactions.

If your setting has a Twinkl account, there's a handy three-page worksheet entitled 'Get Moving for Positive Mental Health' available [here](#).

Simple suggestions include:

- taking the stairs instead of the lift
- going for a walk during your lunchtime or after work
- walk to work, even with a colleague if you'd like to connect
- organise a sporting activity with your colleagues, this could even be a team building exercise
- perform some stretches during the day

## Notice

Remind yourself to 'take notice' as being aware in the present has been shown to directly enhance your wellbeing. This can help reaffirm your priorities and appreciate what you have. Heightened awareness also enhances your own understanding of yourself and make positive changes. Some ideas include:



- taking up a mindful hobby, such as journaling or sewing
- writing down what you're grateful for
- reflecting on your day during the evening
- having a clearout, even of your desk
- pay attention to those around you, how they're acting and how they might be feeling
- changing it up, visiting new places or having lunch in a new location

# Five Ways to Wellbeing

Source: *New Economics Foundation*

## Keep Learning

Every day is a school day and learning has been proven to be effective in boosting your self-confidence. You can also meet new people while you learn something new.

How to keep learning can include:

- joining a club, wellbeing course, or training session
- trying a new recipe
- learning a musical instrument, some DIY, or even a new language
- reading a book that you wouldn't normally go for
- setting up a book club for you and your friends
- learning a new word and trying to incorporate it into conversation or an email.

Those with a Twinkl account can access a helpful resource entitled 'Keep Learning for Positive Mental Health' which is available [here](#).

## Give

The act of giving undoubtedly has a positive effect on an individual's wellbeing. Wellbeing research has shown that those who report a greater interest in giving and helping others are more likely to define themselves as happy. Giving need not be structured, it can be a series of random acts of kindness that help boost your self-esteem, happiness, and wellbeing.

Random acts of kindness include:

- making a colleague a cup of tea or coffee
- helping someone carry their bag
- giving a compliment
- tipping a server in a bar or restaurant
- sending a handwritten letter
- picking up and disposing of litter
- creating a playlist for someone
- posting a positive review on a local business
- volunteering your time for others



# World Mental Health Day

**Source: World Federation for Mental Health**

World Mental Health Day is co-ordinated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and also supported by the World Federation for Mental Health. It's observed on 10<sup>th</sup> October and raises awareness of mental health issues globally and mobilises efforts to improve access to mental health care.



The day also looks to educate the public about mental health, reduce the stigma and advocate for improved mental health services. With individuals from over 150 countries involved, that's a huge reach that looks to bring together charities, healthcare providers, and governments.

## **How to get involved in World Mental Health Day**

- take the time to check in on someone - a friend, colleague or family member
- wear some green as it's the international colour of mental health awareness
- organise an event in your setting such as setting up a wellbeing corner or having a lunch and learn session
- donate to a mental health charity or volunteer your time
- educate yourself: look into taking a Mental Health First Aid course or consider becoming a Mental Health Champion

# World Mental Health Day

Source: World Federation for Mental Health

Every year, WHO chooses a theme to focus in on a specific challenge. Previous examples include 'Mental Health at Work' from 2025 and 'Mental Health in Humanitarian Emergencies'.

This year's focus is on how repeated exposure to coverage of crises and conflicts can have an impact on mental health. Even if you are not directly affected by the wars in Ukraine and Iran, it can still feel like a lot, even overwhelming.



## Tips to manage overwhelm during global events and relentless bad news

Constantly hearing about negative news from around the world can feel like a lot to take in – **and that's because it is.**

Feeling overwhelmed by current events, no matter how big or small, can take a toll on our mental health. Here are some tips to help you cope with global news overwhelm and find your way back to balance.

- **Set boundaries with the news**  
Ask yourself how much news content you're happy to take in, and how often.
- **Use grounding exercises**  
Grounding yourself in the here and now can ease your stress response.
- **Have phone-free times**  
If you often find yourself doomscrolling, having set phone-free times or zones could help break this habit.
- **Talk with others**  
When you feel overwhelmed, it can help to connect with other people. You could spend some quality time with loved ones, family or friends.
- **Give yourself permission to rest**  
Taking time to look after yourself doesn't mean you've stopped caring about anything else; it means that you are looking after yourself so that you can keep on caring.
- **Focus on what you can control**  
Small actions still matter. Taking positive action can help shift feelings out of helplessness and into purposefulness.

# World Mental Health Day

Source: World Federation for Mental Health

## Tips for Healthier News Consumption

While the bad news may seem to be relentless, there are methods to make it easier to consume. Many of us have smartphones and it can seem second-nature to find yourself scrolling from bad news to even more bad news.

The practice is known as 'doomscrolling' and is a natural, human response to a world that feels increasingly unstable. Online content is there for us to feel more informed and reassured yet, in the absence of good news, doomscrolling can raise anxiety and sadness.

## Why we doomscroll



We can find ourselves checking our phone and wondering where the time goes. The act of doomscrolling often begins innocently enough, simply try to find out more information so we can feel more prepared.

Part of this is natural, our brains are naturally wired to be on alert for threats so preparation is key.

Doomscrolling can help us feel more in control and remain connected with whatever's happening in the world. The fear of missing out (FOMO) also comes into it.

It can become easy to be feel overwhelmed; 24/7 news updates at your fingertips can do that. Negative story after negative story means some information gathering turns into an unconscious habit, one that leaves up with ramped up anxiety.

## Spotting the signs of doomscrolling

You may not even know you are suffering the effects of doomscrolling as checking the news on your phone seems almost automatic. There are some common signs which include:

- feeling tense, anxious, or low after you have checked the news
- scrolling for a far longer time than you wanted to
- checking for more news updates, sometimes several times an hour
- feeling numb when you have stopped doomscrolling
- a struggle to switch off from the outside world

Remember, these are natural responses to being constantly exposed to distressing news.

# World Mental Health Day

Source: World Federation for Mental Health

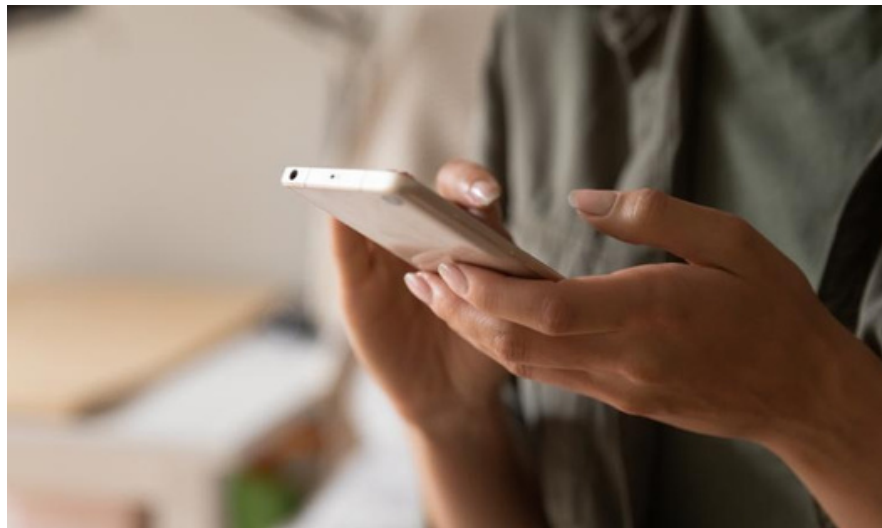
## Practical tips to manage your doomscrolling

### Turn off push notifications

Turning off instant alerts for social media or news apps can give you a break from anxiety-provoking information.

### Use a watch or an alarm clock

If you often doomscroll in bed, it may be because your phone doubles as your alarm clock. Switching to using a watch or a physical alarm clock may help and improve your sleep.



### Manage your social media feeds

Your social media feed is like having a personalised newspaper – you get to decide what content you see. Make changes to what appears on your feed by blocking or hiding certain profiles, allowing you to limit the negative content you are exposed to.

### Set a time limit

Try setting an alarm to restrict time spent on news apps. Or, try limiting your scrolling to the time it takes to make a cup of tea.

### Consider phone-free zones

If you use the phone at mealtimes or in bed, you could consider making the bedroom or dining area a phone-free zone. Allow yourself some quality time that isn't interrupted by notifications every few minutes.

### Balance the negative with a positive

For every doomscrolling session you have, you could choose to balance it out by doing something positive for your emotional health.

# Mental Health Awareness Week

Source: [The Mental Health Foundation](#)

Mental Health Awareness Week ran from Monday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May. This year's theme was Action – promoting real change when it comes to mental health.

That action looks to have come directly from the UK Government as it has invited clinicians, frontline workers, and mental health experts to shape its cross-government mental health strategy. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform mental health care and includes a key shift towards prevention, ensuring that people are treated earlier and faster.

Mark Rowland, CEO of The Mental Health Foundation said, *“This is a big moment for England’s mental health. For many years, we’ve been calling for a radical shift towards a cross-government approach with a focus on prevention, and we look forward to contributing to the plan’s success.*

*Our nation’s mental health has gone downhill over recent decades due to things like the Covid-19 pandemic and the legacy of austerity. But change is possible, and we are pleased that the government is taking action.”*

If you have participated in Mental Health Awareness Week, try to make sure that you keep promoting mental wellbeing. That could be a conversation, though it could extend to support for those who may be experiencing mental health challenges.

To become a workplace supporter, visit the Mental Health Foundation [here](#).

You can also download their toolkit, including posters and tipsheets.

