

Self-Teach Workbook

Resilience

Supporting Your Team - Holding Effective Wellbeing Conversations

Resilience: Wellbeing Conversations - Watch the Self-Teach

Durham University Leadership Programme

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How To Use This Workbook

This workbook is intended to support the 'Self-Teach' modules and will provide additional activities, explanations and resources you can use in your leadership role.

Work through the self-teach video and, where directed, or as you feel appropriate, pause the video and refer to the workbook. In the video there will be opportunities for you to take a '60 second thought capture,' (indicated by a 🕒 symbol). Feel free to use the space provided in this workbook to jot down your thoughts. Alternatively, you can pause the video at any point to allow more time to consider the questions.

Take away resources (i.e. those that you can use separately as a 'tool' or resource in your leadership role) will also be highlighted by a 📁 symbol. This will prompt you to copy the resource for later use if you wish.

What to expect from the Module (video and workbook)

- Models, Tools & Tips - 🔧
- Reflective Questions - 🕒
- Post-session Resources and Exercises 📁

How to Use the Self-Teach Module

- Block out the time (sufficient time to watch and complete the activities)
- Download the PDF workbook
- Complete the exercises
- Pause/ rewind/ revisit any time
- Complete the post session activities
- Drop into the Q&A sessions planned

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What do we mean by a wellbeing conversation?

A wellbeing conversation is one which centres around enquiring about an individual's wellbeing, sign-posting and supporting as necessary.

Thought Capture Exercise



What does a wellbeing conversation look like with a member of your team? Jot down some examples or experiences (be careful not to reveal the identity of anyone involved as you write down your thoughts.

Jot down your thoughts here:

What do we mean by a wellbeing conversation? (continued)

Key Points *(watch the self-teach video for more detail):*

- Team activity does not happen in isolation
- Ideally wouldn't start with a problem (showing a general interest)
- Remaining alert to signs of a wellbeing challenge - physical, emotional, psychological
- Not avoiding it and planning & having the conversation

What is my role as a leader?

Your role is to support the wellbeing of your team by checking in on them, being vigilant to signs of poor coping and being willing to engage in wellbeing related conversations when needed.

Your role is NOT to become the team counsellor, fixer or psychologist. Your role is intended to encourage team members to feel safe to say when they are struggling and then sign-post to the most appropriate support.

Part of the wellbeing conversation is to encourage the individuals themselves to identify the potential solutions or support they feel would best help them.

What are the potential benefits?

In holding a supportive and 'interested' conversation you can help to:

- Improve their health and wellbeing
- Early intervention and sign-posting
- Better teams and more engaged individuals
- Fulfilling the legal obligations required of the organisation you represent and your own as a leader

The Wellbeing Warning Signs

In order to alert ourselves to the need for a wellbeing conversation, it is important to know the warning signs of someone not coping.



Thought Capture Exercise

What do you think are some warning signs indicating someone may be struggling to cope? Jot down your thoughts.

Consider your own personal experience as well as things you may have observed in others:

What are the different types of signs?

Physical (body and appearance)

Behaviour & Actions

Feelings and Emotions

Thinking/ Cognitive

The Wellbeing Warning Signs (continued)

Physical (body and appearance)

- *Headaches*
- *Appearance*
- *Feeling unwell*
- *Tense*

Behaviour & Actions

- *Avoidant*
- *Slamming doors*
- *Withdrawn*
- *Distracted*

Feelings and Emotions

- *Irritable*
- *Angry*
- *Tears*
- *Coldness*
- *Feeling flat/ low*

Thinking/ Cognitive

- *Unable to focus*
- *Can't switch off*
- *Multi-tasking*
- *Poor decision making*

The list is by no means exhaustive, so it is worth getting to know your people well enough to be able to spot:

- *Changes in behaviour: This can be challenging if they are new to the team and you haven't had the chance to get to know them or they have been struggling for so long you have no previous observations to compare against.*
- *The Swans: Those of us (the author is one), who manage to keep it in - well hidden. Like the swan - looking calm and smooth on the surface, yet underneath (inside) it is all happening - tension, angst, etc*

The Wellbeing Warning Signs (continued)



Thought Capture Exercise

Take a moment now - does anyone you know come to mind - someone who may have been displaying some warning signs?

Jot down your thoughts here:



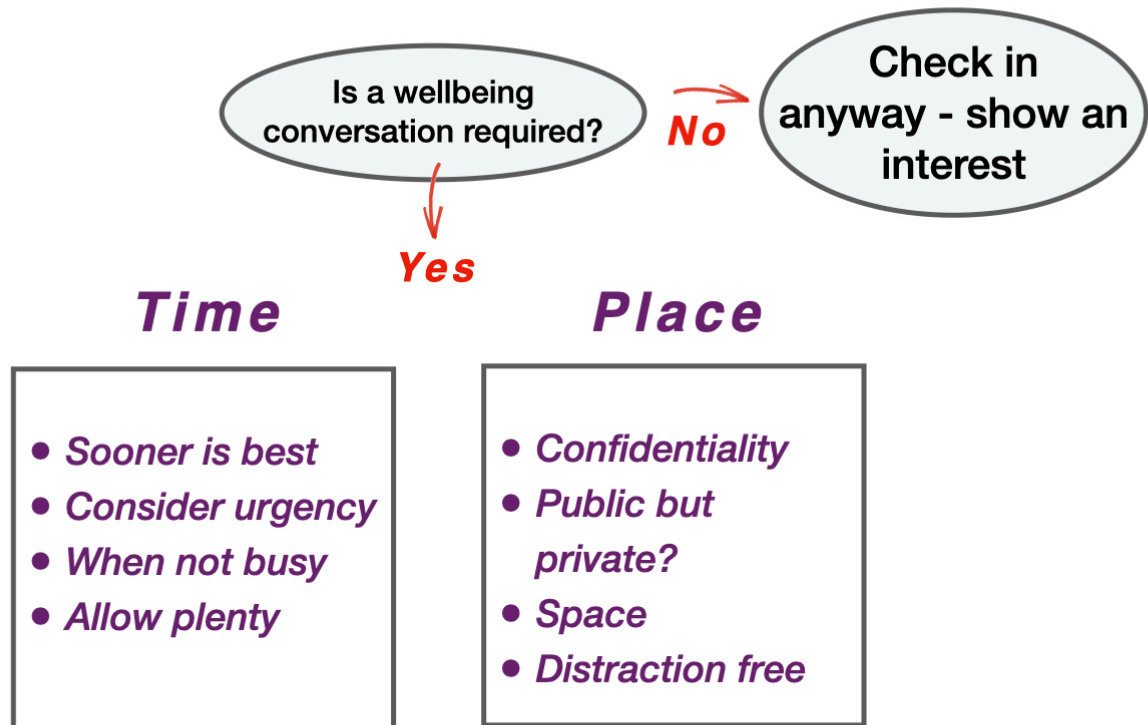
Thought Capture Exercise

What do you think are some of the practical things you can do to prepare for having a wellbeing conversation?

Jot down your thoughts here:

A process and a conversation model

What's my Approach? (watch the self-teach video)



My role - a reminder:

- Spot the signs/ Check in
- Have the conversation
- Safeguard for now
- Signpost/ refer to support
- Escalate if needed

A process and a conversation model (continued)

How you can support

- Plan to have the conversation
- Listen
- Opportunistic events or reasons to initiate conversations.
- Supporting 'self-help' rather than advising or directing



Thought Capture Exercise

How comfortable are you actually initiating a wellbeing conversation? What are your reasons?

Jot down your thoughts here:

A process and a conversation model (continued)

The Ask, Ask, Tell 1&2 Model

Getting a conversation started can be the most challenging part of the process. The Ask,Ask,Tell 1&2 model can help you get started and guide you through the process:

Ask: Start wide. Ask a broad general question and/ or use an opportunistic event to kick things off (have you seen this wellbeing event, etc?)

Ask Again: If you don't get into the area of your concern, ask again, this time a little more focused. Narrow in on the area (don't tell yet) - how are you getting on with? Hows things with the (family, relationship, finances, etc)

Tell 1: If you still haven't aired the concern through conversation and several 'asks' then never leave the conversation without having actually stated your concern; 'Can I just let you know, I've been a bit worried about you because, etc'

Tell 2: Nobody is under a duty to open up and talk to you. If you feel you have genuinely given the person an opportunity to do so, and still feel there are concerns, make it clear that you respect that choice, but remind them that going it alone isn't the best option and that you are available for conversation in the future. Let them know who else they can approach for support if they don't feel you are the right person.

Thought Capture Exercise



Think of a member of your team and consider how you would apply the 'Ask, Ask, Tell1,2' to get a conversation underway

Jot down your thoughts here:

Encouraging Self-Directed Thinking

How can you encourage self-directed thinking?

It is important to encourage the individual concerned to identify their own options and the actions they could take to improve things. You can suggest and sign-post, but it is important to support feelings of control and empowerment in the individual.

Tips (watch the self-teach video)

- Listen intently
- Don't default to offering answers
- Ask How, What, Where, Who questions
- Focus them in on key actions - what seems like the best option to you?

Case Study

A member of your team has been a late to a number of pre-arranged event planning sessions. When they arrive, they appear flustered and distracted throughout. Another member of the team tells you 'in confidence' that they know the other team member has been struggling with course work and has had a recent relationship breakdown.

You decide to check in with them. After an initial 'Ask, Ask, Tell' conversation they open up saying they are ok but just feeling a little overwhelmed. You are satisfied they are not in any significant distress but do want to support them.

What questions could you ask to encourage them to consider their options and identify some practical action they could take?

Jot down your thoughts overleaf:

Encouraging Self-Directed Thinking (continued)

Jot down your thoughts regarding the case study here:

Remember the questions you ask and the way in which you encourage the individual can have a dramatic impact upon the ideas and actions they come up with.

Overleaf are some suggestions depending on whether you are encouraging them to generate options and ideas or focus down on specific action to take.

Encouraging Self-Directed Thinking (continued)

Encouraging options

Some examples:

How are you
feeling about
this?

What
are you doing at
the moment to
help?

What do you
think you could
do?

Have you
experienced this before - what
did you do then?

Who could you speak
to about this?

Focusing in on Action

Focusing them in on action - with your questions:

Which option would
help the most?

What one thing
could you do right
now?

What's the
next step?

When is a good
time for me to catch up with
you to see what progress you
have made?

When will you have
it done?

Action Planning

Now take some time to identify:

- 1. Who might you have identified as your next conversation?*
- 2. What University support resource do you need to get to know?*
- 3. What one aspect of wellbeing conversations do you need to develop first?*
- 4. Consider dropping into one of the planned online (or in-person) Q&A sessions where you will have the opportunity to explore specific questions or issues.*

Further resources

Consider the following self-teach modules to support your development:

- Adaptability To Change - Safe Uncertainty
- Resilience - Understanding Strain
- Listening Skills
- Time Management - Delegation and Manager as Coach

Further Reading:

- Rogers, Gilbert, & Whittleworth, (2012) 'Manager as Coach: The New Way to Get Results.' McGraw-Hill Education (UK)
- Edmondson A, (2019) The Fearless Organisation, Wiley & Sons, Hoboken NJ
- Clark TR, (2020) The Four ~stages of Psychological Safety. Berrett-Koehler, Oakland