

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

We are all responsible for how we act, no matter how we feel, and we all have a duty of care for looking after our mental health and wellbeing.

ASD Family Help are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This policy will apply to everyone in the charity. Managers are responsible for implementation and the company is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

Policy

- The charity will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- The charity will consult with the Committee on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress.
- The charity will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices.
- The charity will provide details of local counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.
- The charity will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company's agreed stress management strategy.

Managers Responsibilities

- Conduct and implement recommendations of risk assessments within their jurisdiction.
- Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Managers Responsibilities – cont.

- Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g., bereavement, separation, PTSD, anxiety, or other.
- Provide advice and awareness training on stress.
- Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- Referral details to staff for counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.
- Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to counsellors where appropriate.
- Managers must immediately report, to their line manager, any staff member whose ability to work effectively is being affected by what you believe may be mental health. This could reduce poor performance by the staff member and prevent any disciplinary action.

Committee Responsibilities

- must be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- must be able to consult with members on the issue of stress, including conducting any workplace surveys.
- must be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.
- The Committee will oversee monitoring of the effectiveness of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Employees Responsibilities

You have a duty of self-care to ensure that you recognise your health, and wellbeing, needs. Do not delay getting help and therefore risking your own health.

- Raise issues of concern with your line manager regarding your health.
- Accept opportunities for counselling, or medical practitioner, when recommended, or at the point of needing advice/assistance.
- Follow the instructions of medical/psychological professionals, including taking medication as required/prescribed.



Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Local Counselling Available:

1. Talking Therapies - provided by NHS services (self-referral process available, or via your GP) <https://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health-and-wellbeing/talking-therapies-berkshire/> (WOKINGHAM OR WEST BERKS)
2. ARC counselling - <https://arcweb.org.uk/adult-counselling/> (WOKINGHAM)
3. <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/m/article/mentalhealthandwellbeing> (PEMBS)
4. <https://nhswales.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/> (PEMBS)
5. <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/38956/Mental-Health-Sources-of-Help-and-Support> (WEST BERKSHIRE)

Wellness Action Plan - (see separate Wellness Action Plan document and a copy on the last page)

The first step in developing your own Wellness Action Plan is to develop a Wellness Toolbox. These are things that will help you to feel better when you are feeling low but they will also help you to stay well.

Some examples can be things like:

- Talk to a friend or your line manager.
- Meet someone for a coffee.
- Listen to your favourite music.
- Peer counselling or exchange listening
- Relaxation and stress reduction exercises
- Journaling–writing in a notebook.
- Creative affirming activities like painting, singing, dancing, cooking
- Exercise/go for a walk.
- Surround yourself with people who are positive, affirming and loving.
- Wear something that makes you feel good.
- Spend ten minutes writing down everything good you can think of about yourself.
- Do something that makes you laugh.
- Do something special for someone else.
- Repeat positive affirmations!!
- Focus on and appreciate what is happening right now.
- Talk to a health care professional.
- Attend a support group.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

5 4 3 2 1 – Grounding Technique

This is a sensory awareness method that helps to relax and you can easily move through difficult situations. It connects you to your present moments and reduces your anxious responses.

5 – notice 5 things you can see around you

4 – notice 4 things you can feel

3 – notice 3 things you can hear

2 – notice 2 things you can smell

1 – notice 1 thing you can taste

Make your Wellness Toolbox unique to you – what makes you feel good??

More ideas to help you cope and build your wellbeing using the 30-3-30 approach.

Things you can do in about 30 seconds.

- **3 deep breaths** Breathe in (count to 3) breathe out (count to five) and repeat.
- **Squeeze and reassure** Put one hand into the other, squeeze gently and keep telling yourself that you will 'get through' this.
- **Feel the floor** Focus on feeling the floor through your feet, even better if you can take off your shoes.
- **Counting down** Count from 20 down to 0
- **Hug yourself** Wrap your arms around your torso and give yourself a big hug.
- **Lower your shoulders** or 'roll' them a few times - we often hold tension in our shoulders and neck.
- **Stretch and shake** Reach your fingertips as high as you can standing on tip toes, then drop your hands and loosely shake your head and arms.
- **'Let it go'** If something is annoying, unhelpful, or unkind, 'let it go' and remind yourself that you are saving your limited emotional energy for important things, including yourself.
- **Connect with 'What is OK'** Think of one or two things that are 'just about OK'. Focus on them for 30 seconds.
- **Repeat a personal 'mantra'** Choose something reassuring and say it silently or out loud, for example:
 - 'I can do this, I'm going to get through this, I've got this'.
 - 'This is really tough right now so I'm just going to focus on this one task'.
 - 'This is a marathon not a sprint: I don't have to do everything today'.

Things you can do in about 3 minutes.

- **Go to your virtual 'safe' place in your mind** Create in your mind or remember a soothing, calming, or happy place. It could be somewhere you have been, somewhere you would like to go one day, or it could even be a made-up place. The more detail you can give, the easier it will be to 'go there' when you need to.
- **Box breathing:** Breathe into the count of 4, hold for 4, out for 4 and hold for 4. Keep doing this for 3 minutes.
- **Feet on Floor, Bum on Chair** - Focussing attention on your feet, legs, bottom and breath.
- **Climb an indoor hill or walk an indoor trail** Go up and down the stairs a few times or walk back and forth or around the room for 3 minutes.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

Things you can do in about 30 minutes.

- **Keep socialising** Arrange virtual coffee meetups or shared meals using an online platform (there are lots to choose from including FaceTime, WhatsApp, Skype, Zoom)
- **Connect with isolated elderly relative or friend** chat to them about their life - they will really value your time.
- **Who can I help?** Join a local volunteer group to check in with elderly or vulnerable people who are self-isolating (but please remember that this is not necessarily for everyone – do not feel guilty if you do not feel able to do this)
- **Write a letter or postcard** to a friend, loved one or to someone you want to thank. To avoid having to go out and post it, you could hand write it, take a photo with a smartphone and send it by email or text.
- **Catch up with your neighbour** Have a chat sitting or standing by your front door maybe with a drink, and do not forget to keep your distance from each other.

More tips and ideas about building your wellbeing and helping you cope can be found on this link: <https://wellbeingandcoping.net/>

Managing feelings about lockdown easing

Lockdown has been difficult for many of us, for lots of different reasons. In full lockdown things might have felt more certain or predictable, as the rules were clearer. But now that lockdown restrictions are easing things might feel less clear, and there may be new challenges. It can feel stressful when things are changing.

Below are some links with tips on managing these feelings and where to get more support.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/managing-feelings-about-lockdown-easing/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coping-with-mental-health-problems-during-coronavirus/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/accessing-treatment-and-support-during-coronavirus/>

Wellness Action Plan

Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

	Name:	Job Role:	
1	What will help you to stay healthy at work? (Take a proper break, get some exercise during the day, keep a to-do-list, a lighter/spacious workspace)		
2.	What could your manager do to support you to stay mentally healthy at work? (Give feedback, have regular catch ups, flexible working, explain developments in the organisation)		
3.	Are there any work situations that can trigger poor mental health for you? (Conflict at work, organisational change, tight deadlines, things not going to plan)		
4.	How could poor mental health impact your work? (Make decision-making difficult, make you confused, give you headaches, make you tired, make concentration difficult)		
5.	Any early warning signs we might notice if you are experiencing poor mental health? (Changes in normal working patterns and routines, withdrawal from social interaction with colleagues)		
6.	What could be put in place to minimise risks of poor mental health or help manage the impact? (Extra catch-up time with manager, guidance to prioritise workload, consideration of adjustments)		
7.	Is there anything in your preferred work style or temperament that we should be aware of? (Preference for more or less face to face or email contact, need for quiet reflection time before or after meetings, clear deadlines/expectations for a task, high/low energy levels in morning/afternoon)		
8.	If we notice early warning signs, what should we do? (Talk to you discreetly about it, contact a named person)		
9.	What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at work? (Take a break from your workspace, go for a short walk, ask your manager for support)		
10.	Is there anything else that you would like to include in this plan?		
	Employee signature: Today's date:		Line Manager signature: Date to be reviewed: