



Working from home: Wellness Action Plan (WAP)

How to support your mental health
when working from home



EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL





Many of us now work from home due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and the usual support we access in our workplaces may not be there for us at the moment.

Therefore, it's more important now than ever before to reflect on what keeps us well and identify what can impact our wellbeing during this time.

The Wellness Action Plan (WAP) is a useful tool to help us identify what keeps us well and what impacts our mental health that we have been recommending for many years. This revised WAP is designed to support you when you're working from home during the COVID-19 outbreak.

As we all adapt to new ways of working and learn what works best for us in our new working environments, the WAP provides a personalised, practical tool we can all use to support our wellbeing whether we have a mental health problem or not.



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WAP: a tool to support your mental health at home

How to get started with a WAP

Plan some time in to fill in your WAP and think about the current pressures you're facing when working in this new way, the impact they're having on your mental health and wellbeing and what you can put in place to deal with these. It's useful to think about what support your manager can put in place to support you during this time and discuss these topics with your family or friends too.

Once you've completed your WAP, it's helpful to review it every week. This can help you log any learning or helpful practices from the week. It's also beneficial to understanding your triggers and to make sure you're adapting to your new work environment. Things can change daily so it's important to keep on top of identifying what keeps you well and check the things you've put in place are working.

Sharing your WAP

If you think it would be helpful, you can share your completed WAP with your manager to support conversations about your wellbeing. However, as this is a very difficult time it might also be beneficial to share with a family member or friend in your household if that's possible. Your manager and the people in your household can help identify when you may be becoming unwell or help you put things in place to help you stay well. You could also share it with colleagues to promote openness and understanding so you can work effectively with each other and offer support.

You own your WAP. It can only be read and shared with your permission.



Here are a few top tips on how to support your wellbeing at home

Identify your triggers

We're all different. What affects someone else's mental wellbeing won't necessarily affect yours in the same way. Whether it's challenges in work or the current circumstance we all find ourselves in, we all have times where we feel stressed, upset or find it difficult to cope, especially at the moment.

Working out what triggers poor mental health for you can help you anticipate problems and find solutions. Whether it's taking in too much negative news and media regarding the current circumstance or a heavy workload. Finding out your triggers can help.

Take time for yourself

Spending time on yourself is essential for your wellbeing, and helps you be more resilient. It's vital to prioritise your own needs sometimes, rather than the demands of your work. Ignoring your needs can lead to stress and burn-out.

Take short breaks throughout the day as well as at least half-an-hour to get some food. A short break can help you feel recharged and refreshed. It can also give you a different perspective on any work problems.

Quick tip: Simple self-care

Not having to get formally dressed for work can be great. But if you feel low, putting on some nice clothes or having a five-minute grooming session is an easy boost for your self-esteem that can help you feel work-ready.

Be kind to yourself

In our current climate, we're all going through a difficult time. It's important to be kind to yourself and remember it's okay to not be okay. We may feel different from one day to the next as situations change so it's important to be kind to yourself.

Quick tip: Create a home workstation.

It's important to try create boundaries if your home is your office and having a dedicated area of the house or your room for you to work from can help delineate your work time from your leisure time.

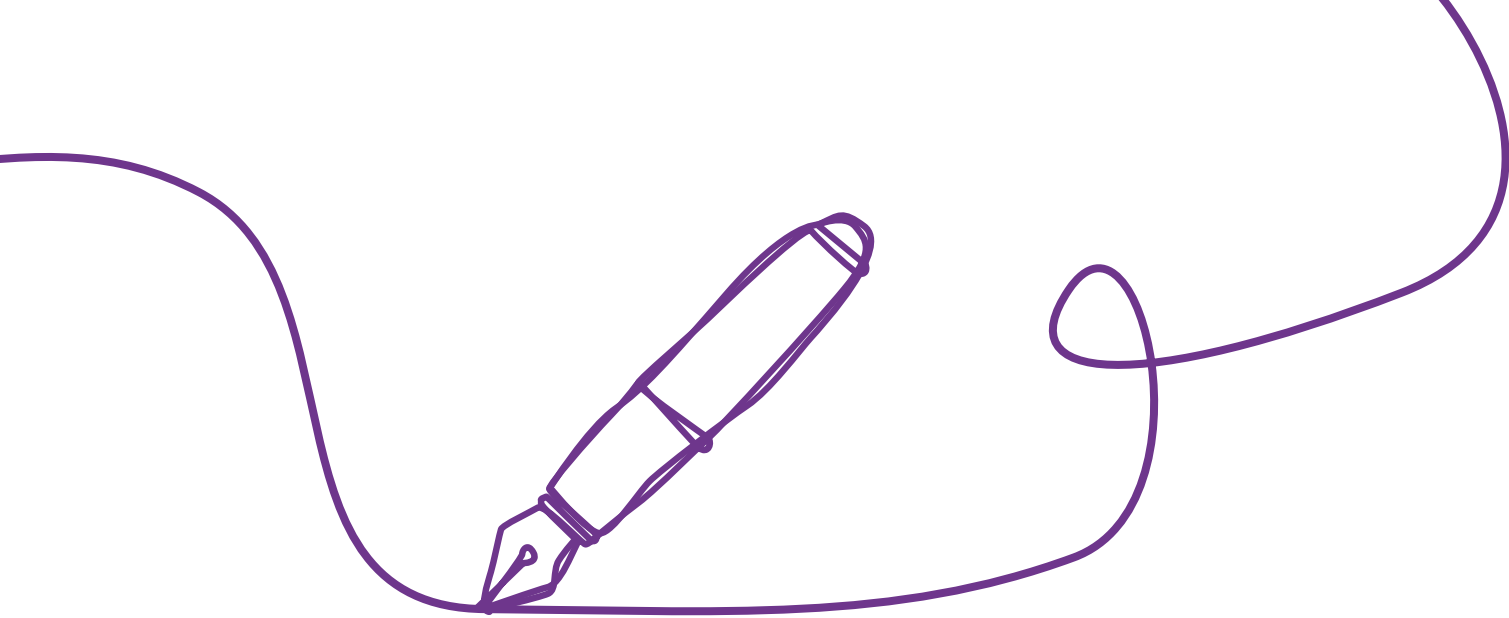
Connect with others

Depending on the circumstance, working from home right now can be a lonely job. Evidence suggests that feeling close to, and valued by other people is a basic human need. Good relationships are important to our wellbeing.

Try joining morning or evening online exercise classes, joining Facebook groups or even starting your own.

Celebrate the small successes

We all want to contribute and make a difference to the things we work on, we want to feel accomplished and that we've achieved something. So it's important to celebrate the successes, big and small. Some days that might mean a great piece of work, other days it could mean doing housework or making the bed. Try to identify one small thing each day that you can accomplish.



Wellness Action Plan Template

A WAP reminds us what we need to do to stay well when we are working from home and details what we can do to look after our own mental health and wellbeing.

Working from home may be new to you so you should use this opportunity to reflect on your current working style, think about what you did to support your mental health when you were able to go to work and what you can do now.

The questions below can help you identify any behaviours, thoughts or actions that may be affecting your mental health when working at home. They can help you think about how you can support your own mental health and identify how to stay well and maintain good mental health in work.

What details would you like to share with your manager about your current working situation?

(For example, it might be helpful to highlight if you are working in a shared space with housemates, or that you're working from your bedroom)

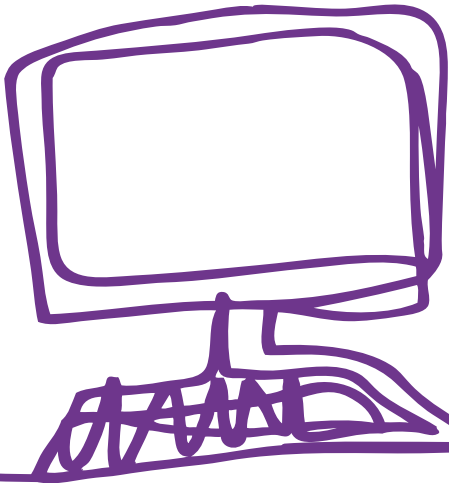
In your usual working environment, what helps you stay mentally healthy at work?

How might you adapt these to your new working environment?

What are the triggers that you're facing in your new working environment?

Given your experience of working from home to date, what helps you stay mentally healthy?

(For example taking an adequate lunch break away from your workspace, regular wellbeing catch-ups with your manager, getting some exercise before or after work or in your lunchbreak, having a routine, or simply having a clean and tidy workspace)



How might experiencing poor mental health impact on your work?

(For example you may find it difficult to make decisions, struggle to prioritise work tasks, have difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches)

Are there any early warning signs that you, your manager or colleagues might notice when you are starting to experience poor mental health?

(This could include things like changes in your normal behaviour or becoming disengaged in video calls, remote team meetings or work platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Slack)

What support can your manager or colleagues put in place to minimise triggers and/or support you during this difficult time?

(These could be things like taking adequate breaks, reducing your amount of information intake or getting away from work for a little while)

Are there any early warning signs that your family or members of your household might notice?

(This could include things like changes in your normal behaviour, withdrawing from the people you live with or becoming agitated or angry)

What support can members of your family or household put in place to minimise triggers and/or support you during this difficult time?

If you would like to share your WAP with someone - this could be your manager in the first instance but also a family member, a member of your household or a friend - then you can write them a message here on how you would like them to support you.

Any other comments

Signature _____

Date _____

Date of review _____

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