

STAFF WELLBEING PLAYBOOK



Created by
Big Education



Welcome

The purpose of this playbook is to share our insights and ideas about how to support staff (and your own) wellbeing at this time.

It sets out a way of taking stock, having conversations, considering ideas and starting to form a plan for the coming months.

It is a free resource and we warmly invite you to share it with your own teams and networks.

We want to help use this moment to bring about lasting change.



How full is your bottle?

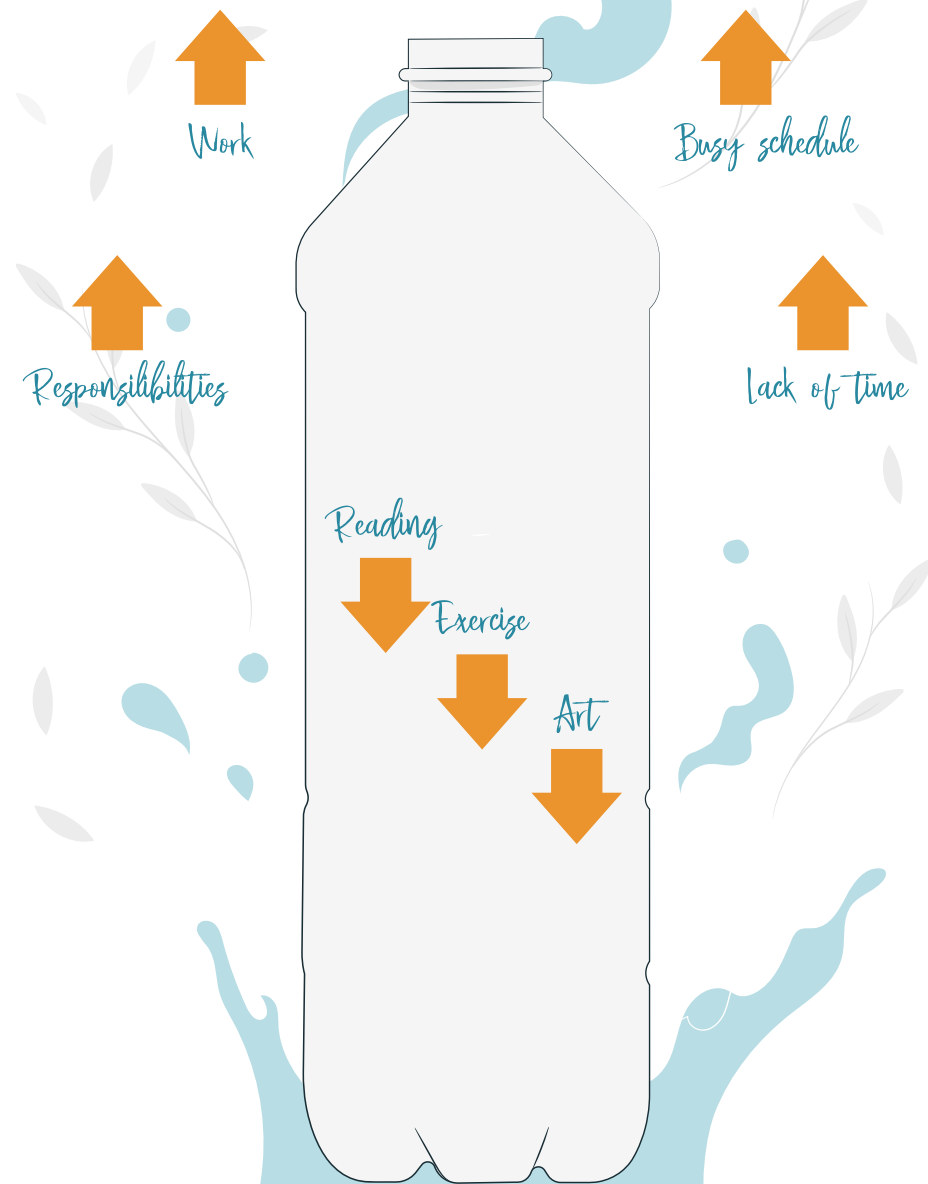


Think about what is taking things out from your bottle (eg work, family responsibilities)



What are you doing that tops up your bottle? (eg time for self, reading, exercise etc)

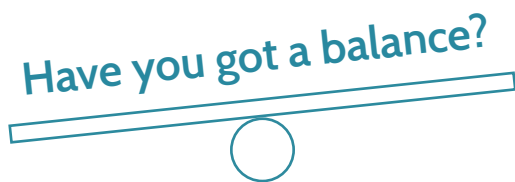
Take a moment now to draw your own bottle.
What is topping up? What is taking out?



Holistic approach to wellbeing

This is one way of thinking about the different aspects of our wellbeing.

Look at your bottle. Use different colours to circle which elements are 'Pleasure', 'Achievement' and 'Connection'.



Reflection

What positive intentions do you need to have regarding your own wellbeing?



Lesson 1: Wellbeing starts with yourself

“I’m okay, you’re okay.”

Thomas Harris, in his 1967 book *I’m OK, You’re OK*, sets out an important idea - if we are to be in a state to help others, and respond in ways that enable, support and empower, then we have to be OK in ourselves. Looking after the staff, so that they can look after the community, has never been so important.

In other words, put your own oxygen mask on first.





**At this moment it has never
been more important to look
after ourselves.**

**But never has it been more
difficult to do so.**

Why is this so important at the moment?

Everyone is affected. Never before has an individual's personal and domestic situation become an area of focus for employers. Circumstances vary widely and impact massively on personal capabilities, capacity and wellbeing.

The crisis has triggered underlying mental health challenges for many people, and others who have not struggled before, are now.

Schools are places which give out energy - they are of course in reality a group of people, and each of those people has to give out energy. They have to overcome their own issues and be of service to others. That is hard at the best of times, and can feel impossible if you don't feel ok yourself.



Why is this so important at the moment?

The loss of control, with reliance on decisions from central government, is a real source of stress for leaders. It makes planning and making decisions for our community that much harder.

The duty of care to our staff continues; we have a role to play in avoiding isolation and understanding the issues people have.

We need to be in a good state to do our best work. As well as being part of our legal 'duty of care' as an employer. It is also directly linked to standards and performance.



So what can we do?

Connect @ntain

Flex



Connect

Ensure that everyone feels connected, engaged and heard. This time calls for us to re-establish professional relationships in a new way.

How can we genuinely engage with where people are at, and avoid the 'I'm fine' when they are not?

Contain

We have a role in creating psychological safety for our teams. There is so much that is unknown, novel and continuing to change. This is unsettling. We have a role as leaders in creating a space within which staff feel more confident and safe.

How can we convey the message that 'we got this' despite all the uncertainty?

Flex

Individual needs and circumstances have never been more relevant. Everyone is different - they find different things challenging and need different help and support. Finding ways to be flexible and responsive to what individuals need is a powerful way of supporting their wellbeing.

How can we adopt a win/win mindset and find solutions that work for everyone?

What can that look like?

Stop and reflect on your own practice.

Where have you been able to respond to the needs of staff in these 3 ways?

Make a note of what you have already done.
You might want to discuss this with colleagues.

Connect

Contain

Flex



What else might we do?

Connect

Weekly check-ins with each staff member with line manager starting with the question - what can we do to help?

Additional team meetings and opportunities to connect.

Variety of social opportunities at different times of day.

Continuation of CPDL - we are still a group of learners.

As leaders, properly accepting and hearing where people are at.

Contain

Set of principles driving response - good communication.

Air of calm - consistent messages - making it feel safe - psychological safety - it's going to be ok! We got this!

High levels of staff feedback with specific focus on wellbeing- to help understand where they are at and to listen hard.

Script to support staff having difficult conversations.

Shared celebrations and rituals - somethings stay the same and you are part of something bigger.

Non managerial supervision for key pastoral staff and leaders.

Flex

Adopting flexible practices to support individual circumstances and choice

Seeking to understand personal circumstances/needs and seeking to accommodate and support those.

Open offer to engage in Place 2 Think (Free, self referral service for staff).

Glving a level of choice to staff about ways of working at this time - finding a win/win solution.

What else might we do?

Connect

Recognising the value in everyone not just the select few.

Consideration of those staff least able to engage and how to reach them.

Staffroom google hangout, allowing people to drop in during break times and chat with SLT informally.

Google classroom - for staff only
-focus on CPDL - interesting learning and resources for staff .

Workout / keep healthy challenge.

Reading the same book together.

Contain

Reflecting on the external factors (e.g. Black Lives Matter) and coordinating a response and space to have these discussions - giving staff and students time to air frustrations.

Acknowledging the anxiety - and encouraging sense of community.

Avoiding comparison - giving a message that everyone is in different circumstances - there's a challenge in communicating this to the wider staff team without some resentment.

SLT sharing their vulnerability and modelling this and inviting testimonials and creating a space for staff to share their experiences (despite this being nerve-racking).

Flex

Delivering postcards of praise which are handwritten and can be read out - acknowledging the different contributions (Keeping a record of colleagues who are receiving praise and certificates, to avoid this having the opposite effect) - looking out for everyone.

Variation in workspaces - understanding and accommodating different needs.

Staff Wellbeing Committee, making meaning from actions.

Gift of time - Being intentional about giving staff their own time back, e.g. invite to a workshop and allow them to spend half a day doing something they love instead - element of surprise.

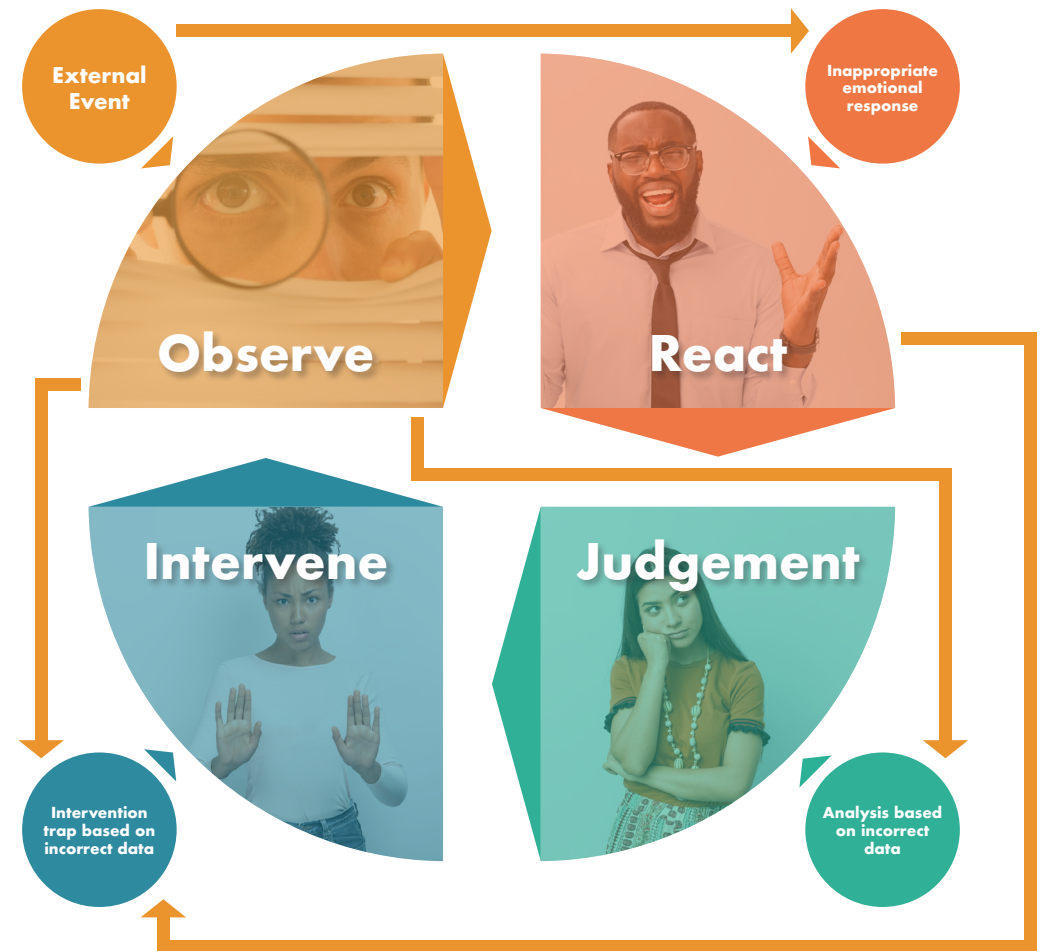
O.R.J.I Model

It can be really hard to empathise with others when we are not in a great state ourselves...

We have a model to help with this - we call it ORJI. It is a model to support emotional intelligence - noticing and acknowledging our emotional reactions and then using them as part of thinking.

This model shows our internal processing of events. The O is where we start - we observe something happening - an external event. We can then have two responses, an emotional one (React) or a purely intellectual one (Judgement). We then move into action (Intervention).

The model shows it is helpful for us to go around each stage, i.e. to acknowledge, feel and recognise the emotional response (react) and then use that insight (oh, that thing made me feel really angry/upset/excited) as a piece of information alongside other rational pieces of information.



We can then make a balanced decision about our action (intervention) using the information about the effect the event had on our emotions, as well as the wide range of other information we also have access to. It means we are not acting whilst in the grip of the emotion, but are being informed by our emotions and so acting in an 'emotionally intelligent' way.

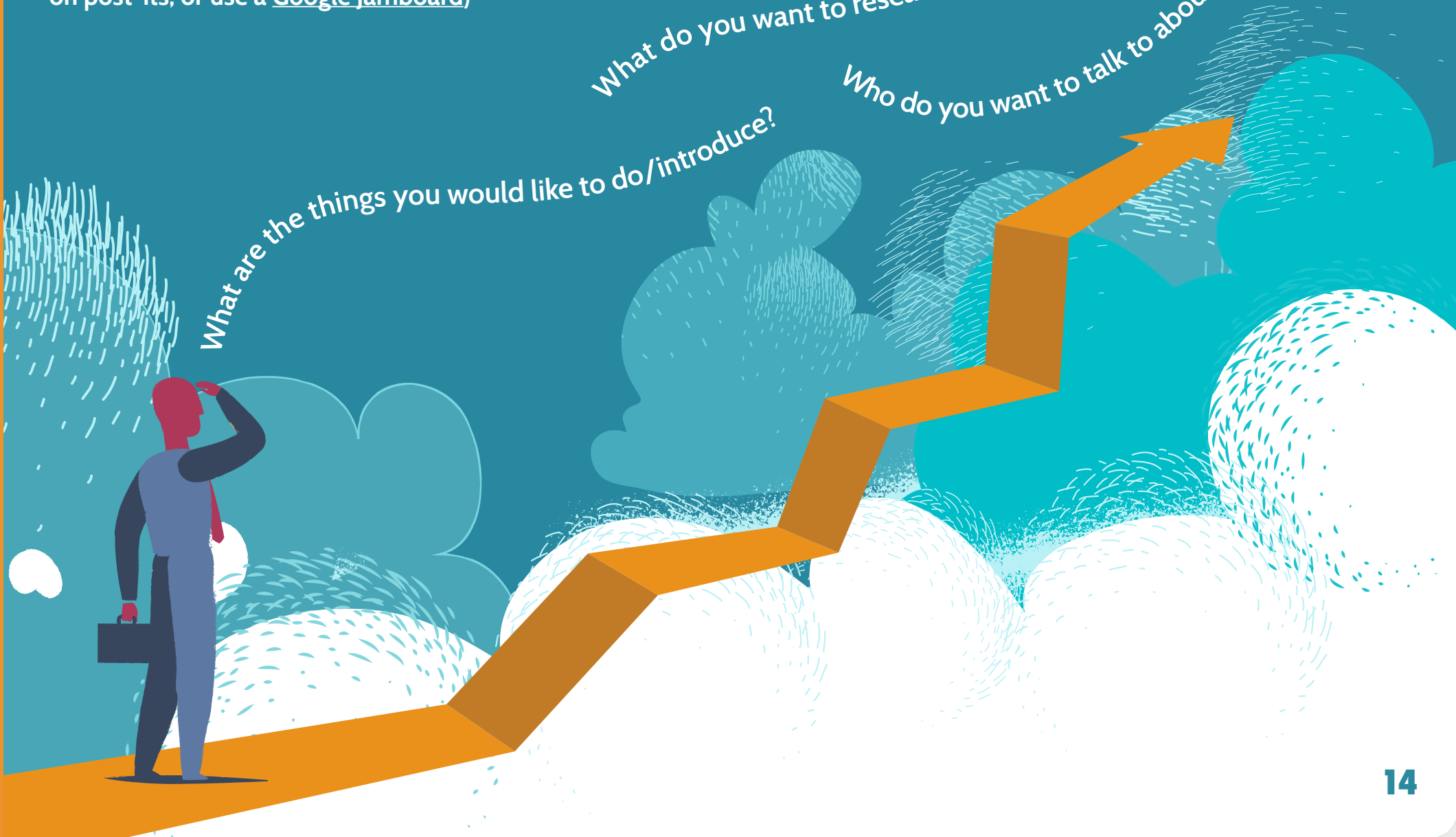
What are your next steps?

Take 5 minutes to write them down (ideally on post-its, or use a [Google Jamboard](#))

What are the things you would like to do/introduce?

What do you want to research further?

Who do you want to talk to about these ideas?



Prioritisation grid

Prioritisation grids are a way of making sense out of a lot of ideas.

By forcing you to put your findings – normally using post-it notes – into four quadrants you are able to sift your ideas.

One commonly used grid is to compare effort and impact – this gives you a way of prioritising ideas so that you can work on the ‘quick wins’ first.



Are you clear on where to start?



- 1 What is the first thing you are going to do?
- 2 Who do you need to talk to?
- 3 What questions do you need to wrestle with?
- 4 When are you going to check in on your plan?

Did you remember to think about yourself in that plan?

How does that plan help you to rebalance your 'bottle' and prioritise your own wellbeing?

What can you add to your plan to help ensure that?



Embedding this work

Our approach to wellbeing has other dimensions.

These are based on what we know about the root causes of stress, and conversely, what we know about motivation and wellbeing.

DeVeloP
EmpoWer
inspire



Some food for thought...

DeVeloP

Developing all staff in ways that are motivating and systematic. Designing ways of working that promote continuous professional learning and reflection.

Do staff feel they are growing? How do you know?

How effective are the appraisal and quality assurance processes in encouraging a candid, trusting dialogue between colleagues about the effectiveness of their practice and their development needs?

Empower

Having autonomy over aspects of your work has a direct link to wellbeing and contentment at work.

Being able to make decisions and be creative are important parts of our professional identity.

Do staff feel they can use their initiative? How do you know?

Do leaders see their role as to give answers, or ask questions?

Is there an appetite for risk taking and trying new things?

inspire

Wellbeing and engagement with staff teams is also linked to their buy-in and commitment to an aspirational shared vision. A clear set of values, which are lived and exemplified in the way the school works, can play a key role in this.

Do our values as an organisation support a strong focus on staff wellbeing?

How clear is the mission of the school and does it transcend the needs of exams and Ofsted?

If you are interested in learning more, let us know...

We are committed to working with schools and leaders to help share our learning, as well as learning lots ourselves of course!

If you want more information or are interested to dive a bit deeper with us into this work, please get in touch - info@bigeducation.org

We are also collating ideas, thoughts and reflections in our Learning from Lockdown website. Have a look, and maybe contribute - but definitely sign up to stay in touch!



Learning
from Lockdown

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