

Coaching Wellness

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Caring for ourselves with kindness and compassion involves paying attention to our bodies and minds as well as to our environment, including connections with other people. This plan provides a structured approach to strengthening relational aspects of the mind but **regular exercise and balanced nutrition as well as quality sleep are also core parts of coaching wellness.**

Understanding the mind as both embodied and relational brings balance and helps us understand the value of connecting with others and mindful moments.

[Mindful Emotion Coaching](#)

understanding the mind as both embodied and relational, building skills in insight, empathy and integration, building connecting time and mindful moments into the day, developing our sense of connection with others

[Education about Positive, Tolerable and Toxic Stress](#)

understanding how toxic stress effects integration – attachment theory and ACEs data

[Quality sleep](#)

grows the brain, cleans the brain of toxins

[Coaching, Counselling, Healing](#)

[Boing Boing Interactive Resilience Framework](#)



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Your Six Step Coaching and Wellness Plan

This Plan is best completed with someone you feel at ease and safe with (a close friend, a member of your family or a trusted person at work). It will take about half an hour to complete. Try and do it when you are feeling OK – then keep it somewhere you can easily find it so that you can refer back to it when you're not feeling OK. If you start to experience your warning signs you can work through the plan.

You may find it helpful to listen to [Dr Sarah Temple talk about emotions and feelings](#) and make the link between neuroscience and mindfulness. You can find out more through [our elearning portal](#) or [streaming our ebook](#) -the video clips referred to are all on the homepage of [our community website](#).

Too scientific for you? Try [watching Amy talking about Dan Siegel's Hand Model](#).



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1: Warning signs

Warning signs are changes in thoughts, feelings, moods, behaviours or physical symptoms that suggest you are starting to feel stressed or becoming unwell. [In Dan Siegel's Hand Model this is when you notice your lid is starting to wobble.](#) Knowing your warning signs can help you take action early (and prevent your lid flipping).

At Alpiri we support you to understand what happens in your brain when you're getting stressed out– [take a look at 'Dan Siegel's Hand Model' and 'John Gottman's Emotion Coaching'](#).

If you're having trouble working out your own warning signs, it can help to work with an Alpiri Coach or with a GP, trusted adult, psychologist or psychiatrist. Your close friends and family are also in a good position to spot any changes that you might not be aware of. Some of you might find [these emotion literacy resources](#) help you find the words to describe how you feel when you are getting stressed.

SUGGESTIONS :

withdrawing from family and friends, conflict with people, dramatic mood changes, struggling to keep up with my usual routine, worrying about little things, more fussy than usual about my food, heart rate up, sweaty, head aches, tummy pains, binge eating, feeling unusually tired, feeling anxious about everyday things, difficulty getting organised or planning ahead, feeling like a burden, feeling hopeless, feeling like I've hit rock bottom, feeling trapped, having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much, drinking alcohol or taking drugs to cope.

Write down your warning signs

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2: My moments of calm (when I'm feeling good and my lid is down)

When you're having thoughts or feelings that overwhelm you, it's easy to get caught up in the pain you're feeling and forget the positives in your life. Thinking about moments when you feel calm, happy and 'tuned in' may help you 'bring your lid down'. [Find out more about 'Flipping Your Lid'](#)

My moments of calm

SUGGESTIONS:

When I'm with a special friend, a special family member, my pet, my parents, when I'm being creative, my faith or spirituality, helping others, painting, sitting still, walking slowly thinking about my feet on the ground, yoga, massage, meditation, mindful breathing

3: Make my environment safe

Having a safe space is important. This includes making the environment around you safer, or taking yourself out of unsafe situations or stressful situations (especially if it's stress that goes on and on).

Things I can do

SUGGESTIONS

Lock up or get rid of anything that could be used to harm myself, Avoid people who upset me, Avoid driving when I'm feeling stressed out, Talk with a key adult at work, my GP, my trusted friend (see step 6)

4: Things I can do by myself (to help bring my lid down)

Work through the activities that you identified below. If an activity isn't helping you, try another one.

You might also like to try some activities that other people found useful like doing some exercise, taking a shower or watching a favourite movie.

Things I can do by myself

SUGGESTIONS

'Name it to tame it' [Dan Siegel](#)

Work through the Wellness Wheel (page 9)

Go for a walk outside, Do some exercise, Play with a pet, See a movie, Watch a favourite film, YouTube clip or TV show, Listen to music, Be creative (e.g. drawing, painting), Write something, Get outdoors, Do some gardening, Practice relaxation techniques like breathing exercises, mindfulness and meditation Take some time out to treat myself to a small thing I usually enjoy, Take a shower or bath

If you are super sensitive to taste, smells and you get anxious easily or have difficulty sleeping you may want to find out about sensory integration – try things like a weighted sock on your lap or over your shoulders



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5: Connect with people and places

It can be hard to socialise when your emotions are all over the place or your lid is jammed up, but just being around other people can improve your mood.

Remember that connecting with others doesn't necessarily have to be about talking and interacting. You could try going to a busy park or café, or invite a friend over to do an activity where you don't have to make conversation, like watching a movie or playing sport.

Make a list of people you could spend time with or social places you could go

SUGGESTIONS

Go to a busy park, Invite a friend over to watch a film, Spend some time in a café, Go to the library, Go to a sports match, Go to a concert or live show

“Much of today's popular advice ignores the world of emotions. Instead, it relies on child-rearing theories that address the children's behaviour, but disregard the feelings that underlie that behaviour” [Professor John Gottman](#) (1997)



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6: Friends and family I can talk to

Write down here the names and contact phone numbers of people you feel really safe with – the people you go to when things are really tough. This may be your partner or your Mum or Dad, but it may be someone completely different. It can be really helpful to share this plan with them and give them a copy.

My supporters

Professional support

Professional support is always available when things become too much. If one service doesn't work for you, try another. In an emergency, always [call triple nine \(999\)](#).

- Improving Access to Psychological Therapies – IAPT- this is a service that is provided by all Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) as part of a National Programme. You are able to self refer and can usually access mindfulness groups or EMDR. Search the internet for details of your local service or ask at your GP surgery.
- Samaritans - Whatever you're going through, free any time, from any phone on 116 123
- [Papyrus Suicide Prevention](#) Hope Line UK – call 08000684141 or text 07786209697

Make a list of contacts you can use- it's important to work through this when your lid is down

The Three Types of Stress and how they affect our bodies

Positive Stress Response – this is a normal part of healthy living and means we get things done. Often characterised by brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in hormone levels.

Tolerable Stress Response – this is when the level of stress you experience activates your body's alert systems to a greater degree. An example might be the loss of a loved one, a natural disaster or a frightening injury. The important thing here is that the stress activation is time limited and buffered by relationships with other people- friends, colleagues and family.

Toxic Stress Response – this happens when the level of stress activates your body's alert systems to a greater degree over a longer period of time and without adequate support from relationships with others. This kind of prolonged activation of the stress response systems in a baby or child can disrupt the development of brain architecture, affect immune systems, hormonal systems and how DNA is read and expressed. In other words it changes how the child's cells work together and may result in a greater risk of physical illnesses such as ischaemic heart disease, chronic obstructive airways disease or diabetes.

Trauma involves a set of experiences that are overwhelming to our ability to respond. It leaves us feeling that our resources do not match the threat in front of us and we become overwhelmed leading to emotional dysregulation (lid firmly up in Dan Siegel's Hand Model). Almost everyone has experienced trauma at this level to some degree – toxic stress is the body's response to prolonged trauma without adequate support from relationships with others. The trauma may be an experience like a car accident, or it could be abuse or bullying or marginalisation.

If you experienced toxic stress as a baby or child you may find that you are more easily triggered or 'reactive than people who did not have this experience. Acknowledging the context of our own trauma and giving ourselves permission to have had these experiences can in itself be healing. You may also need to think about asking for support building your Emotion Intelligence and self management skills through your local Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Team (IAPT) or by accessing Wellness Coaching.

For information about the latest [UK research into how toxic stress effects health and wellness click here](#)

Dr Sarah Temple MRCGP

September 2019



The Mindful Wheel

Practice focusing attention – sit upright in a chair with both feet on the floor. Focus firstly at a distant wall, then a middle space and then close as if reading a book. Bring your attention to your breath and breathe slowly in and out. You may find it helpful to put a hand on your tummy while doing this.

Now imagine a wheel where the hub is you in your River of Wellbeing with your lid down and the rim is the outer part of the wheel beyond the spokes where the many parts of you exist. Take your mind through the different areas on the rim of this wheel practicing shifting focus to more positive rim points until you find yourself in the hub of wellness. Breathe and relax.

Rim suggestions

Body Sensations- the first five senses- touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing

Images – memories of past experiences, dreams

Feelings – developing an expanding language of emotions

Thoughts- learning to pay attention to thoughts understanding that you don't have to believe every one of them

Dan Siegel - Wheel of Awareness

Wellness Wheel Game

Resources –

Flip Chart, Paper and Pens

Large dice

Plenty of space

Explain the activity to everyone.

Ask for a volunteer to start – he or she throws the dice and what ever number it lands on he/she then describes one of the steps of the wellness plan.

1 – Warning Signs- describe how you feel when your lid is flapping – try and notice before you flip!

2 – Moments of calm (your lid is down and you are in your [River of Wellbeing](#))

3 – What you do to make your environment comfortable and safe

4 - Things you can do by yourself to bring your lid down e.g. SBNRR Stop, Breathe, Notice, Reflect, Respond

5 - People and places you enjoy connecting with- joining up with others, friends, community, world, interconnectedness – includes professionals

6 – Family, friends, colleagues and professionals you feel you can talk with

