

Components of the plan

Centre for
Mental Health



Plans for keeping on an even keel at work

1. A work health and well-being promotion plan
2. A work health and well-being first aid kit
3. Plan for managing things that get to you at work

Plans for managing ups and downs

4. Plan for what to do when you are having an off day
5. Plan for what to do when everything is getting too much for you

Little things can make a big difference!

1. A work health and well-being promotion plan

‘Prevention is better than cure’:

The things that are important to me in my life outside work

The things I need to do every day or week to keep myself feeling on top of things

- Read to the boys each night
- Don't take work home with me
- Don't use the computer after 8pm
- Have a lie in at least once a week
- Take a lunch break out of the workplace
- Get some exercise every day
- Meditate once a day
- Clean the house at the weekend
- See friends for coffee once a week

The things that my manager can do to help me stay on an even keel at work

- Help me to prioritise when I have too much to do
- Say 'thank you' when I have done something he/she asked
- Encourage me to tell him/her when I am having difficulties
- Make any adjustments I need because of my health condition, impairment or responsibilities outside work
- Recognise my need to have quiet days after a conference/speaking engagement

2. A work health and well-being first aid kit

'Don't let stress escalate'

Things that I can do while actually at work when I feel upset, discouraged, hopeless, angry, anxious or stressed out

- Have a cup of tea
- Use Bach rescue remedy
- Talk to colleagues about my feelings
- Get outside for fresh air
- Explain my worries to my boss
- Look at a picture of my kids

Things I can do after work so that I don't take the troubles of the day home with me

- Talk through the events of the day with colleagues
- Take a walk
- Get some exercise
- Listen to music
- Meditate
- Read a book
- Have a long hot bath

3. Plan for managing difficulties that arise at work

'Understand your triggers'

Things relating to my job and things my colleagues and managers do

- Extra work is put on me, when I feel already at capacity
- I can't resolve an issue
- I have bust a gut to do something and no-one says 'thank you'
- A colleague promises to do something and fails to do it
- Colleagues or managers act in a way that seems unfair
- Someone complains about my work

Things that happen outside work which have a detrimental impact at work

- I row with my husband or kids
- Childcare problems
- School problems

3. For each thing that knocks you off balance

'Manage your triggers'

Things that I can do for myself that help stop what has happened getting to me too much

- Remind myself that other people are busy / or stressed too – maybe that is why they behaved the way they did
- Talk to my colleagues or my manager about how I am feeling
- Relax after work
- See what is in my 'first aid kit' that would help'

Things I can ask my manager to do to help me get back on an even keel

- Ask me how things are going when he/she notices I am not looking myself
- In supervision, ask me about jobs I am finding challenging, empathise with the difficulties I am having and help me to think of ways forward
- Make a point of noting successful pieces of work in team meetings
- Remember to thank me when I have done something they have asked

4. Plan for what to do when I'm having an off day

'Don't get on the rollercoaster'

How do I know I am having an off day? What are the tell-tale signs?

Thoughts, feelings, behaviour
... for example:

- Ruminating on something that has happened
- Finding it unusually hard to get up and get going in the morning
- Feeling agitated and unable to relax
- Getting irritable and oversensitive
- Feeling restless and unable to relax

Things that I can do to get back on top of things

- Start a painting
- Talk to my Dad
- Go out for a breath of fresh air
- Have a glass of wine
- Plan my next holiday

What in my 'first aid kit' that would help'

Things that my manager can do to help

- Try to notice when I am not my usual self and ask if there is anything they can do to help
- Encourage me to approach him/her when I am having problems ... and respond to my requests for help
- Help me prioritise what really needs to be done today
- Encourage me to leave work on time

5. Plan for what to do when everything is getting too much

'Stop the rollercoaster' I want to get off

Tell tale signs that things are really getting too much

Thoughts, feelings, behaviour ...
for example:

- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Thinking that there is no point in what I am doing
- Over-eating to comfort my self
- Drinking too much
- Bursting into tears or flying off the handle at the slightest provocation
- Avoiding my husband and children
- Reclusing from work colleagues

Things I can do to help cope and get back on top of things

- Confide in my family and friends and ask for help
- Cut down on social activities
- Try to get some regular exercise – even just a bit
- Talk to my manager about how I am feeling and ask for relief of some responsibilities
- Ask for some leave so I can get away for a bit
- Go and see my psychiatrist
- Check my first aid kit

Things that my manager can do to help

- Make time for me to talk about the difficulties I am having
- Allow me to work from home
- Arrange for me to take a few days off
- Help me to reduce my workload for a while/work at home some of the time
- Make sure that I only work my set hours
- Remind me of all the good work I have done/that I am a valued member of the team

Going back to work after a period of absence:

'making work easy to come back to'

Keeping in touch

- Keep in touch with my husband about my progress
- Don't expect me to speak to you on the phone until I feel better
- Email me to assure me:
 - that someone is monitoring urgent aspects of my work
 - that it is ok to take time to recover
 - that you are looking forward to my return when I feel better

Preparing to go back to work

- Address my worries and concerns
- Put together a plan for my first week back to reduce my anxiety

Plan a graded return

Consider:

- Working from home
- Specific time to catch up on what I have missed before launching in to new tasks/projects
- Starting back with more limited duties/responsibilities for a while and gradually increasing them
- Having extra support to do parts of the job I find particularly challenging
- More frequent supervision and support for a while
- Working particular shifts to start off with
- Working alongside someone and then gradually doing more independently
- Not working over-time