



THE BURNT CHEF PROJECT

Wellness Action Plan (WAP)

What is this guide about?

The Wellness Action Plan is a framework which enables staff to identify awareness of their ideal working style, their triggers of stress and helps you to work closely with your team to develop an effective approach to overcoming distressing symptoms, and unhelpful behaviour patterns.

WRAP was originally developed by Mary Ellen Copleland and a group of mental health service users who wanted to work on their own recovery.

I've taken inspiration and extracts from Mind who have shortened the document to a WAP which, as you develop, can become a practical support for you and your staff which you refer to daily, as a reminder and guide, and also turn to at times of difficulty.

This guide is designed to be a helpful starting point in your journey as a line manager towards supporting your team members with their mental health at work. You might be:

- managing someone who is experiencing a mental health problem and want to know more about how you can support them
- interested in using the WAP with staff who are currently well, as a proactive tool to promote and maintain their mental health at work
- an HR professional looking to promote this guide to managers, to help them support the mental wellbeing of their teams.

When this tool is worked through confidentially with individuals in your workforce it will allow you to demonstrate your commitment to the shared goal of mental wellness and allow your staff to gain better control over their stressors and ultimately flourish within the business.

Legal disclaimer

Mind and The Burnt Chef Project is not providing legal advice but practical guidance – employers and employees may also need to obtain their own legal advice on the approach to take in any particular case.

Having clear policies and approaches for managing mental health helps organisations ensure consistency, but in practice this may look different in different workplaces and contexts. For example, small businesses may not have formal policies for every situation but can still develop a clear positive approach to mental health and communicate this effectively to staff.



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Supporting Staff Wellbeing

The WAP is not only a tool to support staff when they are experiencing problems - it also helps identify how an individual's wellbeing can be proactively improved. Take a look at Mind's tips below on how you can support staff wellbeing.

Your managerial style

- How people are treated and managed on a day-to-day basis is central to their mental wellbeing and to how motivated and engaged they feel, so it is important to reflect on your managerial style and tailor it to suit the needs of each team member and task.
- A good approach is to proactively ask your staff what support they need from you.
- Develop an atmosphere of trust by regularly asking for feedback about the support you provide.
- Weave wellbeing into your catch-ups with staff, ensuring that you regularly ask how they are and how well they feel their work is going.
- Encourage positive relationships with colleagues and provide mediation where necessary.
- Be supportive, approachable and responsive, ensuring that you are available for regular work-related conversations and increasing the frequency of supervision or catch-up time with the team member if required.
- Proactively support staff to monitor their workload and encourage healthy working hours and a positive work/life balance.
- Provide your team with meaningful work and opportunities for personal development and growth.
- Make sure that deadlines are reasonable, that work is clearly defined and well matched to each employee's abilities and that people understand their role in the bigger picture.



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Supporting someone with a mental health problem at work

If someone in your organisation or team discloses their mental health problem to you, you may wish to read up on it a little so that you have a basic understanding of what they might be experiencing.

For information on a wide range of mental health problems, have a look at have a look at the information about types of mental health problems on Mind's website.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/>

Focus on what you as a manager can do to support the individual, rather than offering advice. Mind very helpfully listed some tips below:

- Encourage staff to be open about problems they are experiencing.
- Ensure confidentiality and provide an appropriate place for confidential conversations.
- When talking about mental health, listen, be respectful and do not make assumptions.
- Be positive – focus on what employees can do, rather than what they can't, providing training, mentoring or coaching if there are skills gaps.
- Work together and involve people in finding solutions as much as possible.
- Support staff to develop personal resilience and coping strategies.
- Involve staff in dialogue and decision-making and remember that people are often the expert when it comes to identifying the support or adjustment they need and how to manage their triggers for poor mental health.
- Recognise and praise good work and commitment, providing regular opportunities to discuss, review and reflect on positive achievements – this helps to build positive self esteem and develop skills to better manage triggers for poor mental health.
- Encourage staff to seek further advice and support (for example from buddying or mentoring schemes), and seek advice and support yourself.



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Wellness Action Plan template

A WAP reminds us what we need to do to stay well at work and details what our line managers can do to better support us.

It also helps us develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables us to communicate these to our manager.

The information in this form will be held confidentially and regularly reviewed by you and your manager together. You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing and that relates to your role and workplace. This form is not a legal document but it can help you and your manager to agree, together, how to practically support you in your role and address any health needs.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that data gathered in this form will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone without the permission of the member of staff.

1. What helps you stay mentally healthy at work?

(For example taking an adequate lunch break away from your desk, getting some exercise before or after work or in your lunchbreak, light and space in the office, opportunities to get to know colleagues)



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2. What can your manager do to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work? (For example regular feedback and catch-ups, flexible working patterns, explaining wider organisational developments)

3. Are there any situations at work that can trigger poor mental health for you? (For example conflict at work, organisational change, tight deadlines, something not going to plan)



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4. 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, difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches)

5. Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to experience poor mental health?

(For example changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues)



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6. What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or help you to manage the impact? (For example extra catch-up time with your manager, guidance on prioritising workload, flexible working patterns, consider reasonable adjustments)

7. Are there elements of your individual working style or temperament that it is worth your manager being aware of? (For example a preference for more one to ones, having access to a mentor for questions you might not want to bother your manager about, having a written plan of work in place which can be reviewed and amended regularly, tendency to have particularly high or low energy in the morning or in the afternoon)



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8. If we notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health - what should we do? (For example talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have asked to be contacted)

9. What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at work? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them? (For example you might like to take a break from your station and go for a short walk, or ask your line manager for support)



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10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Employee Signature

Date

Manager

Date

Date to be Reviewed