

National Ambulance
LGBT Network



Supporting Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual, Trans staff,
patients and communities

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Our Wellbeing Framework



How do we make sense
of wellbeing and how can
we promote it?

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Introduction



Welcome to our first information resource that looks at wellbeing within the Ambulance Service, and specifically for LGBT staff.

Wellbeing, and some of the words that are connected with this, are relatively terms and concepts within our services. This means it is an excellent time to focus on them and maybe even influence how this works.

Most Ambulance Trusts are developing Health and Wellbeing services and it is worth finding out what is happening within your service. Once again, it may be a good time to get involved in shaping services and support mechanisms.

Finally, as two people passionate about supporting mental health and promoting wellbeing, please take time to read on and find out more. You, or a colleague, might need this information one day!

Jules and Alistair

The 'big three' words we are considering in this resource are:

Wellbeing

What does wellbeing mean and why is this so important to LGBT ambulance staff?

Resilience

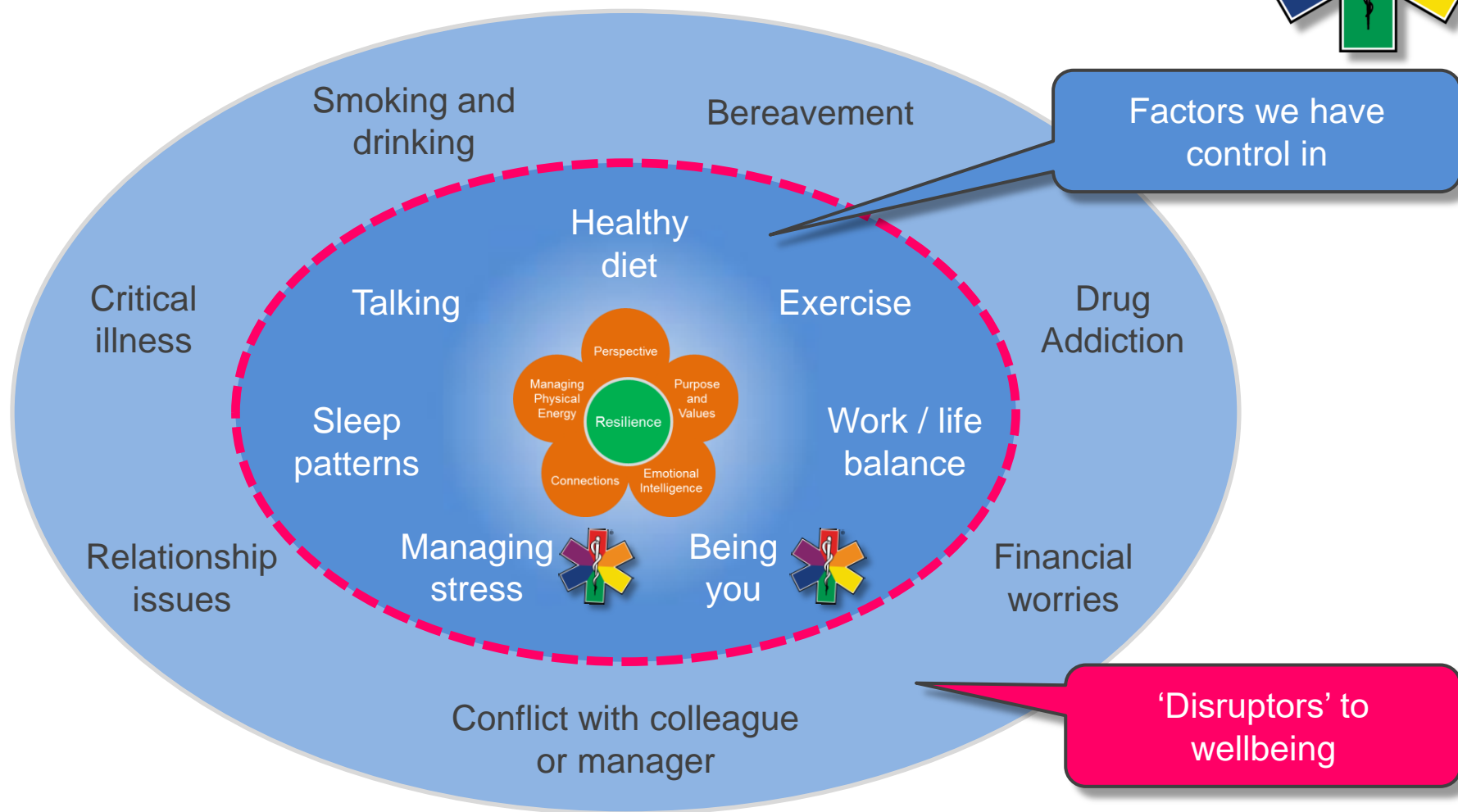
Our own personal resilience is at the centre of wellbeing, but what does it include and how can we take control of it?

Mindfulness

Can taking a few minutes each day to relax and experience mindfulness can really make a difference?

Read on and find out more!

Our Wellbeing Framework



Resilience



At the heart of the wellbeing framework is understanding our own personal resilience. For many this is a relatively new concept but is really important. It helps to explain why two people, who encounter exactly the same experiences, may have a differing response. Before going further it is important to understand what we mean by personal resilience.

One definition:

Personal Resilience. Resilience is a capacity which helps people and organisations respond well to challenge, setback and even crisis. It describes the ability to ‘bounce back’, to recover and respond with commitment and optimism. It is not an innate quality which people either have or don’t have, it can be learned and developed in anyone.

(Barry Winbolt website)



**The
Resilience
Flower**

One model suggests there are five facets to personal resilience and these are set out in the resilience flower shown here. These are facets that can affect each of us to a varying degree, yet many of which we have some control over. On the next slides there is more detail on each facet and we will also look at how each can be developed.

The Resilience Flower [1]



Perspective

- Are you able to positively reframe negative experiences?
- Can you accept what you cannot change, and focus your efforts on those things you can?
- Are you solution-driven or do you tend to get stuck in your problem?
- Are you good at facing fully negative information while not dwelling on it?



Purpose and Values

- Do you have a clear sense of purpose at work?
- Do you know your personal strengths and make the opportunity to use them regularly in your work?
- Do you have a clear sense of your own values and act in a way consistent with those values?
- Does your work fit with your personal values and beliefs?

Emotional Intelligence

- Do you acknowledge your feelings and express them appropriately?
- Are you able to change your mood when you need to?
- How intentional are you about providing support to others?



The Resilience Flower [2]



The Resilience Flower has been adapted from an article which appeared in HR magazine entitled **Five Steps to Personal Resilience**. This was written by Dan Lucy in July 2015.

Managing Physical Energy

- Do you make time for exercise?
- Do you ensure you eat a healthy diet?
- Do you make time in your schedule for the pursuit of activities that give you joy and / or help you relax?
- Do you get enough sleep?

Connections

- Do you have a strong and reliable network of colleagues inside and outside of work that will help you through difficult times?
- Are you able to meet your varied needs though a diverse support network?



Developing Resilience [1]



Individuals can build and develop their capability for resilience by taking practical steps in each of the five facets of the resilience flower.

Perspective

- Recognise that perceptions and the way we think about challenges drives feelings, not the situation. Practice uncovering and challenging negative beliefs, empowering new, more positive beliefs.
- Step into your successes and acknowledge what you have done well.
- Focus on what you can change rather than on what you can't.

Author note: "Someone once told me there are two kinds of problems. Those you can do something about and those you can't. Don't worry about the ones you can't influence and in doing so you've halved the number of problems." AG

Purpose and Values

Take some time to reflect on the following:

- What is the purpose at work / outside of work?
- What one thing could you start doing / do more of that would help you focus on your purpose at work / outside of work?
- What one thing could you stop doing / do less of that would have minimum negative impact but would release time so you could focus on achieving your purpose at work?
- What is most important to you? What do you value? How does work fit / not fit with your personal values?
- What are your strengths? How could you use more of your strengths at work?

Author note: "There's nothing more demoralising than feeling undervalued at work. Taking time to appreciate the people around you costs nothing." JL



Developing Resilience [2]



Emotional Intelligence

- Acknowledge your own feelings and express them appropriately. An easy way to say this is: feel it, name it, express it.
- Find ways to help you become more aware of, and process, your emotions. Practicing mindfulness is one of the ways in which we can become more aware of our emotions.

Author note: “Check out my recommendations for mindfulness sites later in this pack. There are a few good ones to choose from!” JL

Connections

- Make time to network with colleagues and develop an extensive set of relationships that will help you through difficult times.
- Invest time in mutually supportive relationships.

- Help others, in or out of work.
- Think about both who is in your support network and what types of support they offer. Are you getting the different types of support that you need and, if not, where could you get that support?

Managing Physical Energy

- Exercise regularly.
- Manage boundaries between work and home life. Find ways to ‘switch off’.
- Take regular breaks when at work. Eat lunch away from your desk.
- Get enough sleep.
- Eat healthily.

Author note: “The phrase ‘healthy body, healthy mind’ is proven to be true. People who eat healthily and exercise regularly are proven to have greater resilience.” AG

Understanding the Framework



The framework we have put together looks at the wider concept of wellbeing. Around our own resilience is a number of factors that we think are particularly relevant to ambulance staff. For many people in our services exposure to difficult situations and even shift work are all factors we should consider.

There are two factors we have put the Network star against and would like to consider these in more detail.

Managing Stress



Managing stress might seem like an obvious thing to say, but when your job involves frequent exposure to managing others people's stressful situations, some of which may impact on you, it takes on a whole new significance. It is important that we recognise the signs that something is wrong and that we have been personally affected

by something we have encountered.

There are a number of different organisations that can support and every Trust has things in place to help. Take some time to find out what these are in case you, or a colleague, needs this at some point.

Being You



Once again, this can seem like the most obvious thing to say, but it is proven that people who do not take their 'whole self' to work are more likely to suffer from stress and poor mental health. Many LGBT people prefer to 'leave a part of themselves at the door' for fear of what people might say or not be treated fairly at work.

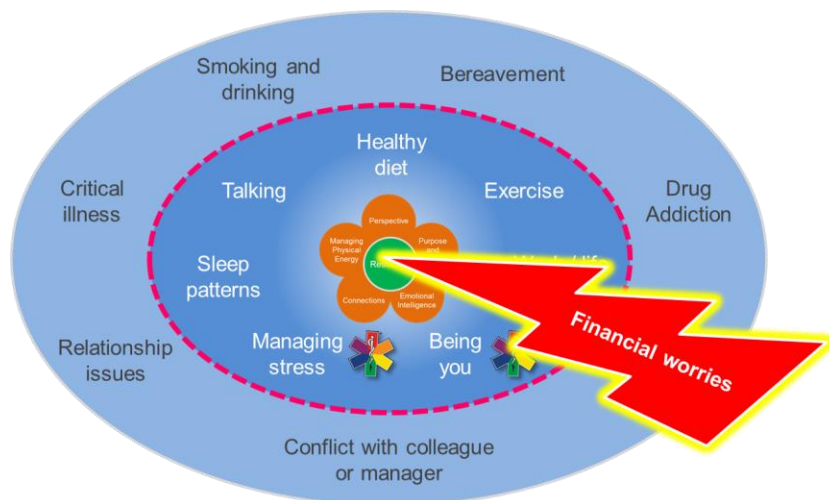
Everyone can help to make our Ambulance Services LGBT friendly and show we really care about everyone, irrespective of someone's sexual orientation or gender identity.



'Disruptors' to Wellbeing

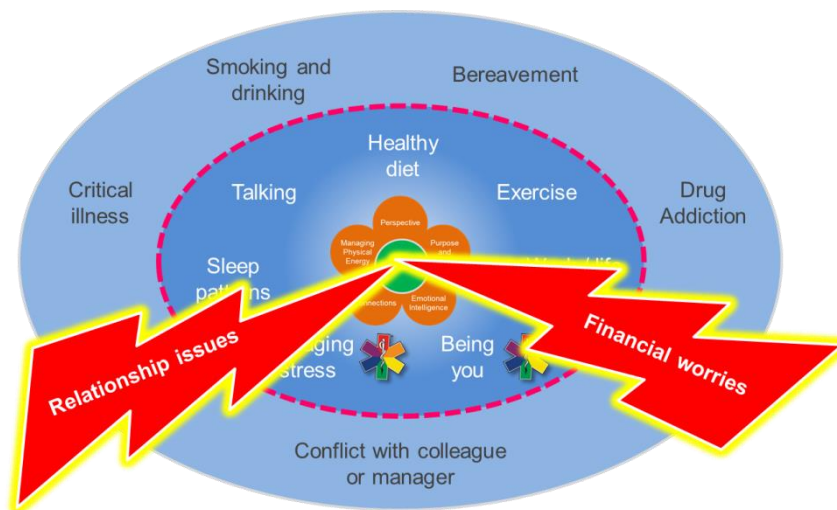


The outer ring of our framework are some of the factors that can have a negative impact on our wellbeing. Some of these can have devastating effects on people, regardless of the resilience of the person involved.



First thing is to understand that any one of these (and many other things) can challenge our whole sense of wellbeing. This is represented by the

lightning strike on the framework. Sometimes one issue can be manageable but often several 'disruptors' can come into play at the same time, or a second is a consequence of the first.



The old adage of 'one problem feels like one, two problems feels like two and three problems feels like a thousand' comes into play here.



Mindfulness



What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a technique you can learn which involves making an effort to notice what's happening in the present moment, around you, in your mind, body and surroundings, without judgement.

The roots of mindfulness comes from the Buddhist and Meditation movement. You do not have to be spiritual, or have any particular beliefs to try it, just an open mind and some free time.

How could it help me?

It can allow you to become more self-aware, feel calmer, less stressed. It allows you to feel more able to choose how to respond to your thoughts and feelings. It can help you cope with difficult situations and contribute to you being kinder towards yourself.

How long does it take?

There is no time limit, however a recommendation of ten minutes per day is a great place to start and you can decide to build on that.

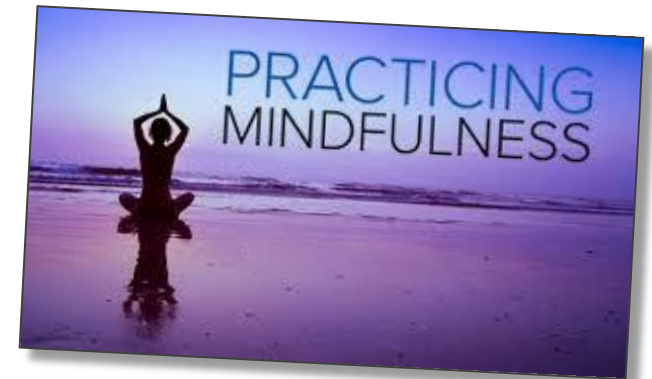
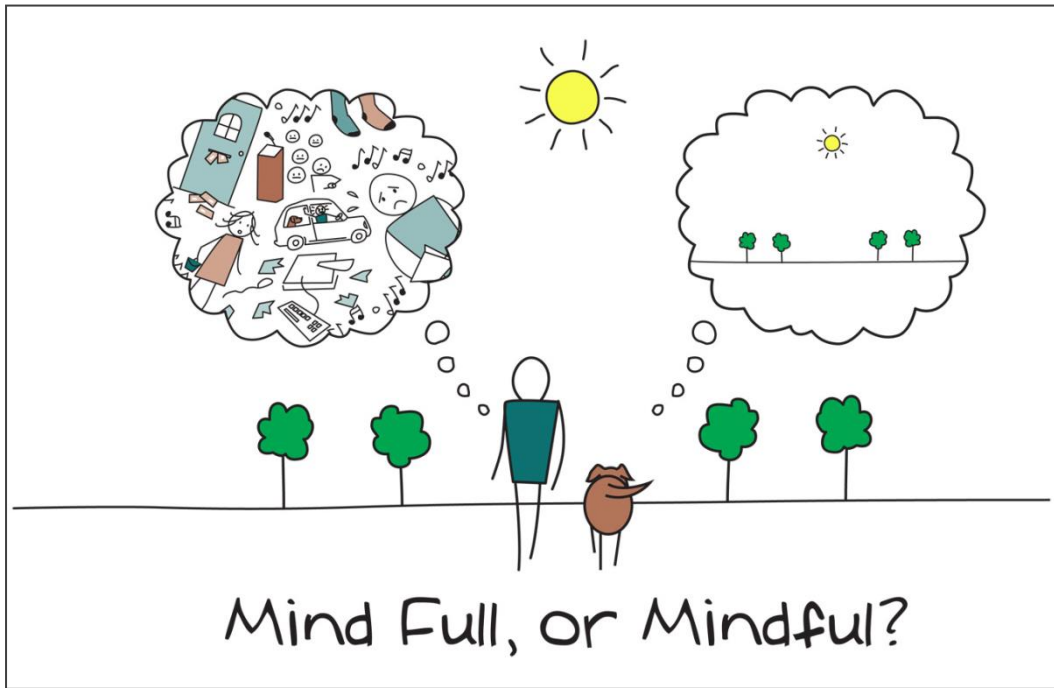
Benefits for me?

- ✓ feel less overwhelmed
- ✓ improve your sleep quality
- ✓ positively change the way you think and feel
- ✓ increase your ability to manage difficult situations
- ✓ reduce levels of anxiety
- ✓ reduce levels of depression
- ✓ reduce levels of stress
- ✓ reduce the amount you overthink situations
- ✓ have greater self-compassion

Mindfulness / Meditation Websites

- **Headspace**
www.headspace.com
- **Calm**
www.calm.com
- **Mental Health Foundation**
www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/m/mindfulness
- **Be Mindful.co.uk**
bemindful.co.uk

Mindfulness



Weekly Wellbeing Check



WEEKLY WELLBEING CHECK-UP

Try using this list each week to check in with your mental health

**#ADDRESS
YOUR STRESS**



Where's my mental health today?

How do I feel today?

Mentally?

Physically?



Looking after my wellbeing

Am I drinking enough water and eating a balanced diet?

How did I sleep last night?

Did I feel rested when I woke up?

Is there anything I can improve?



How's my thinking today?

How are my thoughts making me feel?

Am I having unhelpful thoughts?

Check out getselfhelp.co.uk or moodgym.com.au for free resources on spotting and challenging unhelpful thoughts



My Stress Container

How full is my container?

Am I using helpful coping strategies?

Are they working?

Learn about your stress container here: mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/campaigns/mhaw2018



MHFA England

There are simple steps you can take to **#AddressYourStress**. Check out our resources at mhfaengland.org



Remember, You Matter



Five Ways to Wellbeing

Connect...

With others, your family, your friends, your community

Be Active...

Exercise, dance, play, move your mood

Take Notice...

Be curious, be aware of what is going on around you

Keep Learning...

Try something new, sign up for that course

Give...

Your time, your presence, your appreciation



Further Support



The Mental Health Foundation produce an excellent series of self help guides that are easy to read and full of useful tips. They are free to download from their website.

Six titles worth having a look at are:

- Look after your mental health
- Manage and reduce stress
- Overcome fear and anxiety
- Sleep better
- Look after your mental health using mindfulness
- Look after your mental health using exercise

www.mentalhealth.org.uk



Mental Health
Foundation



Introducing...



National Ambulance LGBT Network Conference 2019

This years National Ambulance LGBT Network conference will be held at Tally Ho Conference Centre near Birmingham on Thursday 10 October. This conference is the first of two events that will explore intersectionality and how LGBT issues are complicated by other factors.

Replicating the registration process introduced last year, a number of places have been allocated to each Ambulance Trust in an attempt to draw equal representation from across the country. We expect demand for places to be high so please contact your local LGBT Network to get information on how to secure a place.

www.ambulanceLGBT.org/conference/conference-2019



Bringing People Together

