

# RECLAIM YOUR WELLBEING

JANUARY 2021

# Welcome...

## Aims:

- Learn alternative methods to looking after your wellbeing
- Question and discuss the role of the Wellbeing Industry
- Relearn authentic self-compassion

# What is wellbeing?

What does modern-day wellbeing mean to you?

Please write it in the chat or turn on your mic now to begin a quick discussion.

This will lead us nicely on to our talk later where we'll question the sincerity and meaning behind the Wellbeing Industry

# Physical Activity

Post in the chat-box or write down for yourself how you are feeling this morning. Use the scales for inspiration. Write any words or feelings.

Grumpy Frustrated Anger Disgust Afraid Vulnerable  
Mournful Pessimistic Dismayed Shocked  
Abandoned Lonely Thankful Comfortable Relaxed  
Confident Content Excited Relieved Trusting Happy

How are you feeling?



Happy



Sad



Angry



Worried



Silly



Bored

How strong is that feeling?

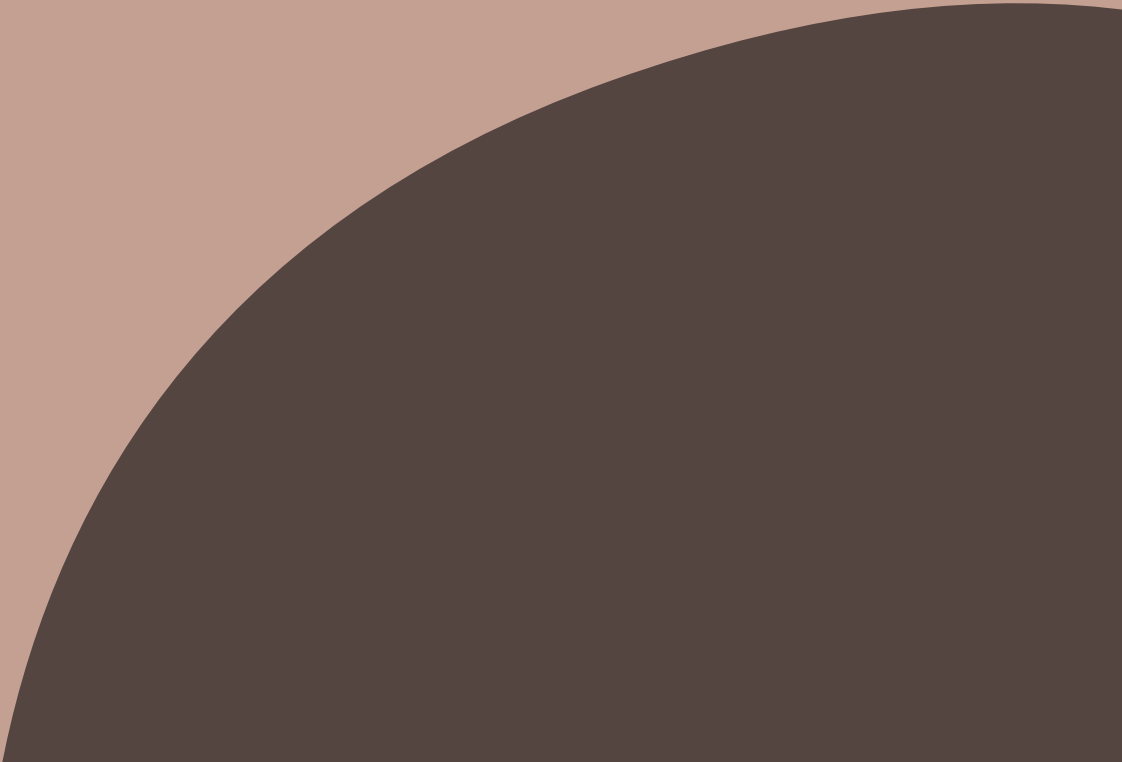





# Physical Activity: Why do it?

- Treatment and prevention of mental illnesses and disorders
- Alternative to traditional therapies (or in combination e.g. medication and exercise)
- Low cost, inexpensive
- Free of serious side effects
- Therapeutic and preventive (manage)
- Benefits for physical and mental health
- More energy and improved sleep quality
- Sense of achievement
- Less stress, more relaxed
- Improves bone health
- Learn something new and the social aspect
- Confidence and concentration

Now please take part in the 20 minute  
work-out session and afterwards  
take note again of how you're feeling



# Journaling and The 5 Ways to Wellbeing

## The 5 Ways to Wellbeing (G.R.E.A.T)

- Giving
- Relating (connect with others)
- Exercising
- Awareness (live life mindfully)
- Trying out (learn new things)

# Giving

- Say thank you
- Ask friends, family or colleagues how they are and really listen to their answer
- Spend time with friends who need support or company
- Offer to help someone with work or DIY
- Volunteer in your community
- Help at a school, hospital or care home
- Take old belongings to second-hand shops

# Relating

- Talk to someone instead of texting
- Speak to someone new
- Put 5 mins aside to find out how someone is
- Give a colleague a lift to work
- Arrange a day out with friends you have not seen for a while
- Switch off the TV to talk or play a game with your house-mates, children, friends or family
- Have lunch with a colleague
- Visit a friend or family member who needs support or company
- Share journeys

# Exercise

- Find your local tennis courts
- Take a short stroll every hour
- Interval jog
- Schedule a swimming session
- Find some hoops and play basketball
- Kick a ball around
- Do some starjumps to your favourite song
- Go to a local taster session
- Join a gym
- Visit your local park
- Go for a walk
- Take up table tennis
- Try a youtube workout video
- Join a sports team
- Invite a friend to a class
- Learn a new yoga pose
- Find a new place on a run
- Do some stretching
- Do some pushups
- Try boxing

# Awareness

- Try mindfulness
- Go for a walk and really take in your surroundings
- Focus on the place you are and empty your mind for 2 minutes
- Download a meditation app
- Adopt a positive outlook
- Reflect at the end of your day or week and note down your achievements
- Write worries down as they come to you and then leave them aside. Then appoint a 10-minute slot to reflect on the worries and how they can be fixed or dealt with.

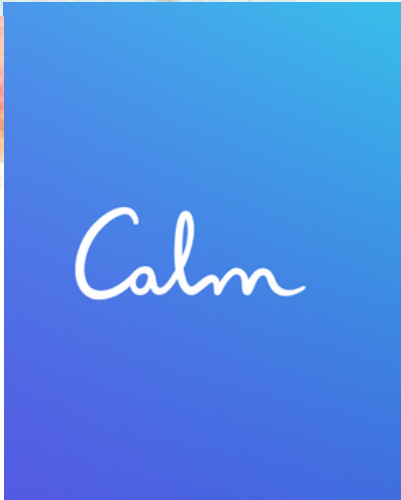
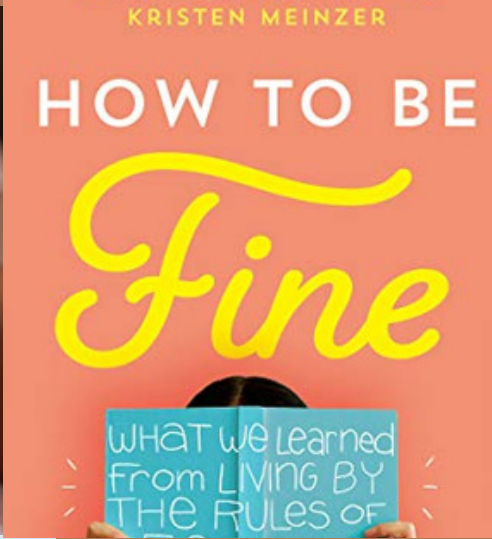
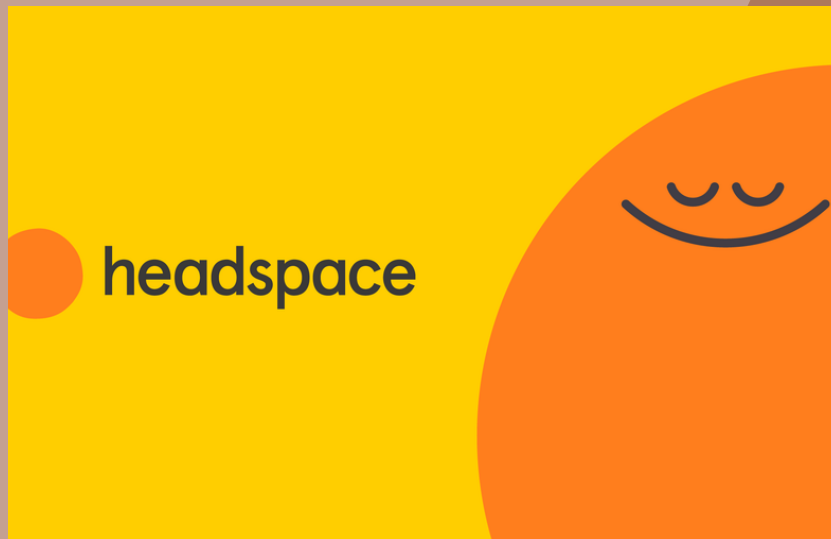
# Try out new things

- Learn to cook something new
- Try to take on a new responsibility at work
- Work on a DIY project
- Take on a new sport
- Consider signing up for a course at a local college.
- Learn a new language
- Try a new hobby that challenges you
- Start a blog or learn to paint
- Look for new places in your community to walk
- Bake once a week
- Improve your work skills such as presenting or mentoring



# What is self-care and wellbeing to you?

Cold pressed juices, eating plant based only, natural products, pills, herbal remedies, quick fixes, clicks, payments, spa days, celeb secrets, therapy, coffee trips and shopping trips, expensive trusted experts and professionals, £100 yoga sessions, mindfulness apps, lavender pills, massages, expensive journals



# The Wellbeing Industry

- We buy, we try, we buy more
- Dependent on “mood boost”
- Who says sadness and anger are a bad thing?
- “The risk is that the science ends up blaming – and medicating – individuals for their own misery and ignores the context that has contributed to it.”



# Let's reclaim our wellbeing

- We need to relearn how to apply compassion to ourselves in a non-materialistic way without commercialised treatments and practices
- It is an internal and individual process
- There's nothing wrong with goods themselves. It's how we use them, how we make decisions around them, how comfortable we are with them

# Mindfulness and Meditation



Let's discuss your responses and feelings following today's practices and please feel free to offer other suggestions, perspectives and thoughts on how as individuals we can and should reclaim our wellbeing.

**Thank you for  
listening!**

# RECLAIM YOUR WELLBEING

RETREAT SCRIPT, FOLLOW ALONG WITH POWERPOINT

---



## CHALLENGE THE WELLBEING INDUSTRY

---

Aims:

- Find your own approach to Self-Care
- Teaching an alternative to the current materialistic and commercialised wellness
- Question and consider the Wellbeing Industry



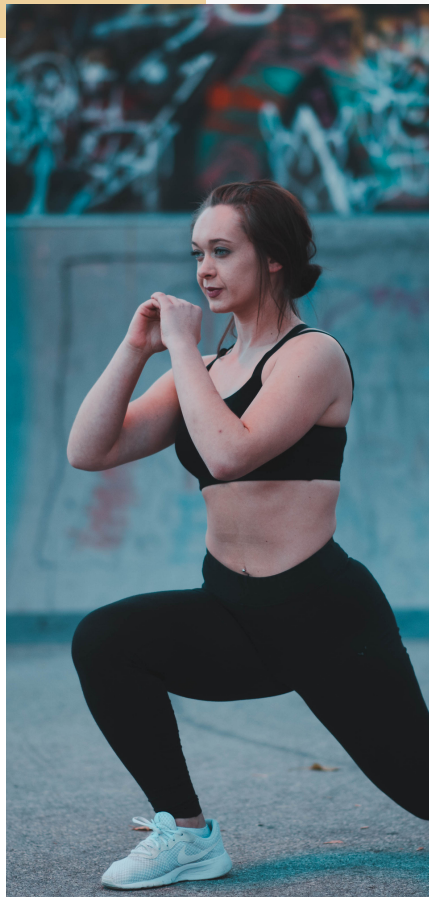
## SDA Proposal:

To design and organise a retreat, featuring workshops, activities and talks which explore and teach non-materialistic self-care and analyse the interests of the Wellbeing Industry.



## Retreat plan:

- Introduce the retreat and lay out the information.  
Difference between fixing Wellbeing and managing it.
- Active part: fitness circuit (20 mins)
- Journaling, teach 5 Ways to Wellbeing
- Talk (discussing the interests of the Wellbeing Industry, incorporating these practices into life!)
- Yoga + Mindfulness
- End: Discussions and close



# PART 1: INTRODUCTION

---

Introduce the retreat and lay out the information:

Propose the aims of this retreat and the difference between fixing wellbeing and managing it.

Hello and welcome to this retreat all about wellbeing and pursuing the authentic aim of teaching ourselves ways to look after ourselves. Since you're all here you're probably interested in this topic or maybe you've never even thought of the idea that it's our job as individuals to improve and care for our own wellbeing. Perhaps you're here because you represent an aspect of the Wellbeing Industry and have come to hear what we have to say. Whatever your reason for being here you're very welcome and I hope you get something out of today.

The main aims of today's retreat are to teach you all alternative methods to looking after your wellbeing and secondly to question and discuss the role of the Wellbeing Industry in today's society. The goal of today is to help all of us attending to learn how to reclaim our wellbeing, our wellness and our self-compassion. I want to clarify that I don't believe wellbeing is something that you can fix. I believe you manage your wellbeing and that it is something to be up-kept, looked after and managed.

Let's start by  
asking ourselves  
what is  
wellbeing?

See powerpoint and  
take part in the discussion  
of what modern-day  
wellbeing means to you.

# PART 2: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

---

Before we begin can you all use the scale that you see posted in chat and on the powerpoint? Write down, or make a note in your head of how you're feeling now. Make a note of your mood and emotions when you woke up today.

Before we begin our fitness circuit I'm going to talk for a minute about the importance of physical activity for our physical and mental health.

Why should we do it? Not only is it extremely beneficial for our body but it is an effective treatment for those with mental illnesses and those without. Physical activity is a natural and very accessible practice for everybody which can prevent mental illnesses and disorders.

Here's a quick science lesson: the hippocampus is the part of the brain that influences emotion and cognitive regulation. As we all know, when we do physical activity there is an increase in blood flow, and this therefore means that there is more energy and nutrients being delivered to parts of our body. The genes that occur during physical activity present themselves in the hippocampus and this particular type of gene is involved in neuroplasticity. What this means is that these genes allow this part of the brain to repair itself and maintain optimal brain function. It means that our brain can develop whether adult or child. Furthermore, this part of the brain produces more levels of plasma  $\beta$  endorphin which is the feeling often associated with runner's high. Basically, the hippocampus is very sensitive to the effects that doing physical activity has on our body and has lots of positive effects thanks to the physical activity.

Now let's start our workout...

# PART 3:

# JOURNALING &

# 5 WAYS TO WB

---

We've all been told to eat our 5 a day in the past. Make sure you eat your 5 fruit and veg each day! It's hammered into us in school and at home. Well, the New Economics Foundations came up with their own strategy and equivalent of 5 a day for mental health and wellbeing.

It's called 5 Ways to Wellbeing and its aim is to improve mental health at a population level with the public being encouraged to undertake certain behaviour that they can control and incorporate in order to improve mental health.

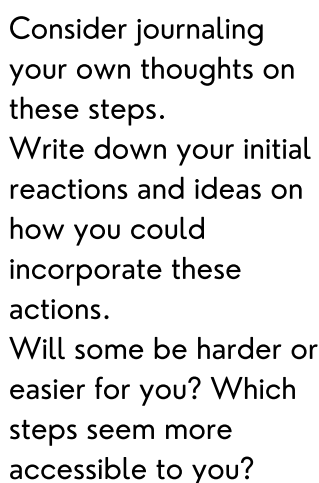
It is important to recognise that the opposite of mental ill-health is not the absence of mental illness, but rather the presence of positive psychological states. These states can be achieved by incorporating these simple actions and easy steps laid out as The 5 Ways to Wellbeing.

## The 5 Ways to Wellbeing (G.R.E.A.T)

- Giving
- Relating (connect with others)
- Exercising
- Awareness (live life mindfully)
- Trying out (learn new things)

Take a look at the powerpoint to see how you can easily fulfil the steps in your life.

Feel free to share in the chat-box or in our discussion later any other ideas you have on incorporating these actions.



Consider journaling your own thoughts on these steps. Write down your initial reactions and ideas on how you could incorporate these actions. Will some be harder or easier for you? Which steps seem more accessible to you?

# PART 4: The Wellbeing Industry TALK

---

We started today by asking what kind of things come to mind when you hear the words "self-care" or "wellbeing"? (see the powerpoint for your ideas and more.)

In today's society working on one's own wellbeing has become an external, expensive and must-show-it-off-on-Instagram kind of thing. Take a look at some of the self-care activities and treatments that now a days are closely linked with self-care. (see powerpoint)

The problem with all these treatments is that they are overall very hedonistic, in pursuit of pleasure. The majority of these things of course make us feel better and make us feel good, but it has to be admitted that they are fleeting pleasures. They help us in the moment to feel a rush or feel happy. Buying a new outfit, treating yourself to a cake in a café, purchasing some new products that will help you sleep better. They are all examples of commercialised treatment options to help "improve" our wellbeing and mood. This has become a problem because it is creating a materialistic society that obsesses over goods. The Wellbeing Industry is feeding us with the idea that we need to purchase these goods such as mindfulness apps, lavender pills and massages. We then find ourselves in a loop of needing to keep repurchasing the goods when they run out and a desire to pay for this "mood boost". **We buy, we try, we buy more.** This so-called mood boost that the industry is profiting off isn't long-lasting nor effective in the long run. Like I said it helps us to feel good in the moment. Technically, with this industry **we are handing our mental health over to professionals who take the reins on our wellbeing** when in fact I consider it an individual and more personal thing.

The other side of the problem is not just the fact that this industry has become so overcrowded and commercialised, it's that it also seems that they are screaming at us that sadness, anger, jealousy and all these "negative" states of minds are a bad thing.

This is something that I don't believe to be true. The industry keeps telling us we should be happier, we should be more content, we should pursue laid-back approaches and let go of all anger. They tell us to pursue every avenue until we've reached this state of perfect wellbeing. Which of course is unattainable. **We're striving for an unattainable thing but remain in the loop of needing to consume more and more until we get there.**



# PART 4:

# CONTINUED

---

In fact, whilst this utopia of “perfect positive wellbeing” is being reinforced all over social media and in apps and books, I don't think it says anywhere that sadness or lack of being content is a bad thing.

With this ideology there is the risk that the context which provoked and caused such sadness, stress or misery is never addressed. The corporate world for example is a toxic work environment which produces and romanticizes unhealthy routines and perpetuates high levels of social and peer pressure. Rather than observing and addressing the work environment itself, modern day employers in these situations may prescribe 30 minutes of meditation to their employees and put the burden on them to “feel better”. I guess this expresses why some are now calling it McM mindfulness.

So, how authentic can the interests of the Happiness and Wellbeing Industry really be while they're profiting off the public's understanding of their own wellbeing?

At this point it is important to acknowledge that this industry is also helpful and necessary. It's clear that some people need support and direction in this venture to maintain their wellbeing and this industry really helps with that. The novels, apps and websites that exist to guide the public through the vast array of treatments and activities available are bountiful and very useful. Without doubt, the in-depth apps and books which lead users through exercise, meditation or craft workshops are all positive and helpful. They can provide an option into accountability by sharing progress with peers. They can be a way for us to learn new things that bring us peace and that give us moments to reflect on life.

# PART 4:

# CONTINUED

---

However, I believe we need to reclaim our wellbeing and relearn how to help ourselves. We need to **relearn how to apply compassion to ourselves in a non-materialistic way** without the need for commercialised treatments and practices.

This is possible by finding extremely simple methods to incorporate into our regular lives that are free or almost free and actually have a long-lasting effect. Wellbeing and our state of mind is a personal thing. **It is an internal and individual process that all of us have.** It isn't something that a celebrity secret from a glossy magazine can fix or maintain.

Of course, there's nothing wrong with goods themselves but it is important to look at how we use them, how we make decisions around them and how comfortable we are with them. We need to educate ourselves by researching what we are engaging with. It is important to realise that we don't need certain things and do need other things. There is a difference between self-care and the Self Care Industry.

So, hopefully from today's retreat you will have learnt a few practices that you can incorporate into your daily lives in order to protect and maintain your wellbeing. A few other ideas include research and education on who you vote for in your government as this is how you can change the focus and intentions of the organisations who are making money off the public's wellbeing. Nicola Sturgeon highlighted that it is **the responsibility of governments to help people towards reclaiming their wellbeing.** Furthermore, it is in everyone's interest to promote and support a self-approach to wellbeing.

Consider who you are buying from when you decide to purchase particular products, apps or books. Research the organisation or the author in order to know where their interests lie and how authentic their advice or product is.

Finally, attending this retreat is already a great first step to relearning self-compassion...

# PART 5: YOGA & MINDFULNESS

---

Now we are going to do a short session of yoga and then 10 minutes of meditation.

Both of these are ancient practices and have roots in Buddhism and the East. They are useful for numerous reasons and like most of the practices we have seen today are personal to the individual. (see PowerPoint.) You may really enjoy one of these and dislike the other or you may get a lot out of a short session or really benefit from an hour-long meditation. It's easy to find what you prefer and what works for you. **Be open to both the practices and remember to pay attention and notice the moment.** Don't forget to take note of how your mind and body feel during it.

One thing that is very important to remember about meditation and mindfulness is that it is a transformational technique that takes time to develop. Doing as little as 10 minutes a day for 8 weeks will help you notice a difference in your perspective and or reactions to situations in your life. But it's also possible that it takes longer or that exploring other types and variations of mindfulness is necessary for you.

\*After the session have an open discussion of how attendees found the yoga and meditation. Encourage their personal thoughts on it, whether positive or negative. (15 minute discussion)\*



# DISCUSSION AND CLOSE



Let's discuss your responses and feelings following today's practices and please feel free to offer other suggestions, perspectives and thoughts on how as individuals we can and should reclaim our wellbeing.

-----

Now that we have had our discussion take time to make notes of what you have enjoyed, benefited from and learnt from today. What will you take away from this retreat and what will you change on your front-line? Now take time to plan how you'll reclaim your wellbeing this year...

# NEXT STEPS

Click [here](#) to download this script and the powerpoint in order to keep a copy of all the ways you can incorporate your own wellbeing methods into daily life!

Click [here](#) for a list of phone numbers for urgent support and guidance.

## Journal recommendation:

The Living Workshop,  
UK

## Instagram accounts to follow:

- i\_weigh
- the.notetoself
- thisgirlcanuk

## Books to read:

The Happiness Industry  
(William Davies)

It is not always Depression  
(Hilary Jacobs Hendel)

## The 5 Ways to Wellbeing:

- Giving
- Connect with others
- Exercising
- Live mindfully
- Try out new things

## Free apps to download:

- Smiling Mind
- Stop, Breathe and Think
- Insight Timer
- CalmHarm
- Action for Happiness
- Happiful