

Managing Stress MOT

Be self-aware to give good care

With the second wave of Coronavirus underway, now more than ever, it is vitally important that we as healthcare staff prioritise our own wellbeing and mental health. With our busy roles and caring for others it can be hard to recognise or take time to notice what we need for ourselves. It can also be easier to think 'I'm ok' because adding “take action to look after my wellbeing” to our already long To Do List can feel burdensome on top of everything else.

Unfortunately, if we don't do this, we can get exhausted, stressed and worn out. A bit like a car which hasn't had a regular MOT.

If you are a leader, it is even more important that you demonstrate how you are taking care of yourself and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Managing Stress MOT

We have designed a 'Managing Stress MOT' to help you identify key areas of your life that you need to pay attention to in order to stay well. We are asking you to regularly check in with yourself using the steps below. This can be done on your own, with your colleagues and within teams. Please set aside some time to do this, either in your own time, within team meetings or during supervision. Remember that everyone's Managing Stress MOT is likely to look different and to change over time.

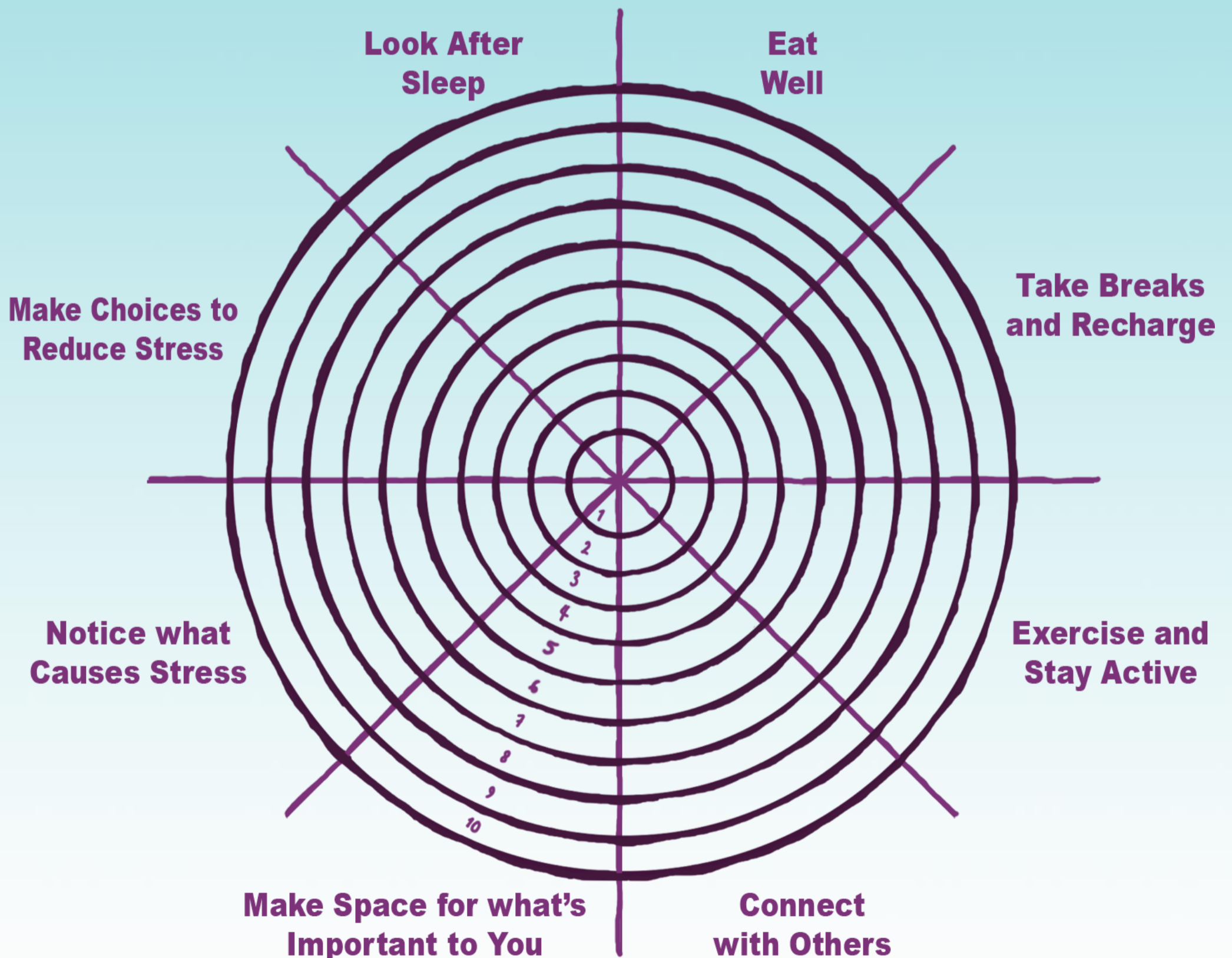
Click [here](#) to watch a video of the stress management wheel being completed.

The road to better wellbeing starts here...

Step 1. MOT Check In

Take some time to check in with yourself using the Stress Management Wheel. It highlights eight key areas that we need to consider when maintaining our wellbeing and reducing stress. Using the Stress Management Wheel below, rate each area on a scale of 1-10.

A score of 1 suggests that you're not being active in managing this area and it needs some attention. A score of 10 suggests that you're managing this area very well.



Step 2. Managing Stress MOT results

When you've scored each area, use the MOT scoring chart to see which areas need attention.

1 2 3	R ED ZONE	Stop. Give this area immediate attention and priority.
4 5 6 7	A MBER ZONE	Pause. Think of adjustments to improve this area for the long run.
8 9 10	G REEN ZONE	Keep going. You're doing well in this area. Keep it up!

The areas that fall in the Red Zone (1-3) need immediate attention and you should aim to prioritise those ones. If you don't have any in the Red Zone, then work on those in the Amber Zone (4-7). Those areas in the amber zone show that you are doing some things to maintain this area, but you could do more.

Well done if any are in the Green Zone (7-10)! The Green Zone suggests that you are being active in this area to maintain your wellbeing and reduce stress. Keep going with this!

Remember it's ok to not be in the green zone for each area, all the time.

Step 3. Let's Break It Down

Now you've chosen one key area to work on (Red or Amber zone scores), it's important to take some time to identify any roadblocks getting in the way of you maintaining wellbeing in that area. Also, try to identify things which might accelerate you towards the Green Zone and better wellbeing.

We know that our environment can add roadblocks or barriers as well as offer solutions and it's important to be aware of these. Take your time to navigate your way through the Towards and Away table and to respond to all the questions.

TOWARDS better stress management

What in your environment supports this area of stress management?	What do you do that moves you towards being able to manage stress better in this area?
What could you add into your environment to support this area of stress management?	What could you do that moves you towards being able to manage stress better in this domain?
What in your environment interferes with you being able to manage stress well in this area?	What do you do that takes you away from managing stress well in this area?

AWAY from good stress management

Step 4. Take Action

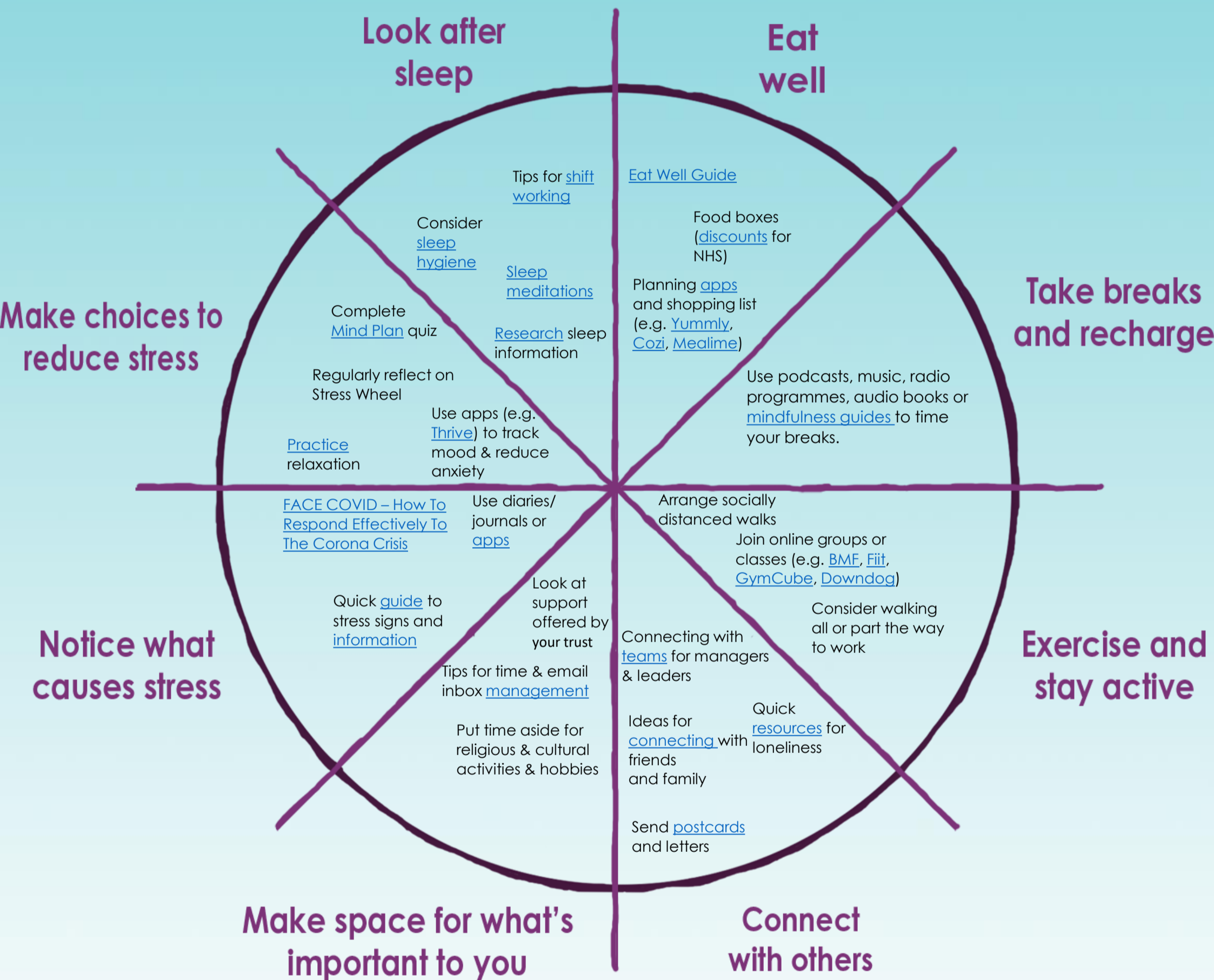
You're now aware of any roadblocks or paths leading you away from maintaining your wellbeing in this area. It's time to take action and do things that will accelerate you towards better wellbeing.

The Wheel of Wellbeing (next page) and further pages on Sleep, Eating, Exercise, Connecting and Taking Breaks will help to steer you in the right direction with suggestions, apps and links to further support wellbeing within each key area.

Additionally, staff has shared their tips on specific areas. You can access these videos on the SLaM [YouTube channel](#). Click [here](#) for a video of staff sharing her tips on eating well and staying hydrated.

Remember that managing stress and improving wellbeing is a continuous process. Try to carve out time each week to reflect on the previous week. Continue to use the steps above to check in with yourself and find out what works for you, and what you could do differently. Try to work on a new area each week.

Wheel of Wellbeing



Looking After Your Sleep

We know sleep is important, but a lot of things can impact it, from working shifts, a busy mind, and many more perhaps we didn't think of before. This page is here to help you find the resources you need to look after your sleep.

Videos

Listen to how Shamilah overcomes sleep obstacles that come with shift work and having a toddler at home: <https://youtu.be/kb5EQ-AtdMs>

Find out how Nushra made changes to her after-work habits to have a good night's sleep and meet the demands of her role:

<https://youtu.be/HsyXUByVxmc>

Apps



[Downdog](#): free for healthcare workers until **July 1, 2021**. Choose a passive style of yoga, like Restorative, to relax and stretch to prepare you for a good night's sleep.



[Headspace](#): Take the Sleep course to help you create conditions for a restful sleep. Use Sleepcasts for a short wind down and transport yourself to a mountain or a garden as you drift off to sleep.



[Pzizz](#): Use Pzizz to quickly calm your mind, fall asleep fast, stay asleep, and wake up refreshed! A mix of music, voiceovers and sound effects designed using the latest clinical research will get you snoozing in no time.

Social Media To Follow

Dr Julie Smith shares fun Tik Tok Videos around mental health and keeping well. Follow her on Instagram [@drjuliesmith](#)

She also hosts a podcast about sleep called [The Sleep Lab](#)



Helpful Reads

An NHS self help guide to [sleep problems](#)

[Sleepstation](#): How to get good sleep, even if you're a shift worker

[Why We Sleep: The New Science of Sleep and Dreams](#) by Matthew Walker

[Better Sleep Darebee Yoga Workout](#)

[Sleepio](#) for NHS Staff



Eating and Drinking Well

Are you eating and drinking well? As busy healthcare professionals eating nutritious meals and drinking enough water can be hard. Below you will find videos of your SLAM colleagues with tips on how they have managed to eat and drink well, as well as other useful resources including podcast, books, and food subscription boxes.

Videos

Check out the steps Molly takes to eat and drink well even without a regimented eating schedule: <https://youtu.be/FXKFESZx1gU>

Each year, everyone in Nikky's team brings food of different cultures. How does this impact the team? <https://youtu.be/Of3E2CNnDW0>

Useful Resources



[NHS Eatwell Guide](#): The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.



Browse through a list of [UK Meal Planning Apps](#). Play around with the different apps and find out which app can best help you on your journey to better eating.



[Nine books](#) that will change your relationship with food.

Social Media

Follow Kimberley Wilson @[foodandpsych](#) – Psychology, brain health & Nutritional psychology. She is a Chartered Psychologist who has worked for the NHS as well as in a private practice. She hosts a fortnightly podcast called 'Stronger Minds' where she discusses topics related to food, lifestyle, psychology and mental health

Food Subscriptions



Thinking of eating more plant-based foods?

Check out [Pick Up Limes](#), [Madeleine Olivia](#) and [Avantgardevegan](#) for nutritious, delicious, easy and exciting vegan recipes.

Exercising and Staying Active

We all know the importance and benefits of being active and exercising, but that doesn't always equate to taking action. To inspire you to get active, we have pulled together videos from your fellow colleagues on how they juggle their busy jobs and keep active and some useful resources and tips.

Videos

In the middle of lockdown where almost everything is remote and our role changes, it's easy to forget to stay active. Listen to how Lucy got back into exercise after a month in bed!

<https://youtu.be/mUwM6x38EUA>

Listen to how Charlotte gets creative and builds up her netball team cohesion through zoom and fun challenges.

<https://youtu.be/TKNw4wn22sM>

Useful Resources



[NHS Get Fit for Free](#): Suggestions for free workouts including Couch to 5k, Strength and Flex exercise plans, and more.



[Fiit](#) is offering free membership for 3 months to NHS workers in the UK. This offer is valid for new members only.



[Get active with a disability](#): an NHS guide to getting active if you have a disability or long-term health condition.

Social Media

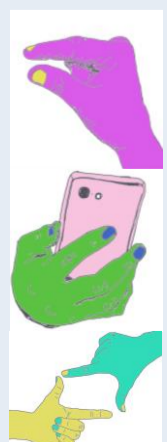
[@nez_healthhub](#) is a Nike trainer, weight-lifter, and Muay Thai expert. She posts workout ideas and updates on her own fitness journey, fitting workouts into her busy lifestyle.

Youtube: there are plenty of free workouts and yoga classes on YouTube! Check out [Yoga With Adriene](#) for example.

Fancy a walk?

Find beautiful walking routes near [London](#) and [beyond](#).

Tips on Exercising and Staying Active



Start small and work your way up! No need to join a 30-day challenge. What is feasible right now? Small walks? 5-minute yoga?

Find a buddy! No more "Oops I forgot" or "I'm really not in the mood today!" and many other variations.

Reframe: Exercise can feel daunting or too hard or you feel like you don't have time. How about reframing these thoughts?



Connecting with Others

We know that social connection improves physical health and psychological wellbeing. The pandemic, enforced social distancing and lockdown mean that it is more important than ever to consider how we are connecting with others.

Videos

Annie's team changed the nature of their WhatsApp group and Teams messages from normal contact to birthday messages and well wishes! Listen for more tips here: <https://youtu.be/c6JpiD2D0U0>

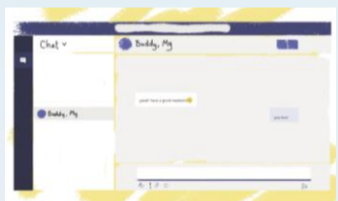
Tips for connecting at work



Try to recreate/maintain informal social support in teams (face to face and remote). We suggest coordinating lunches /tea breaks/cake breaks with colleagues – virtual or social distanced if on a ward.



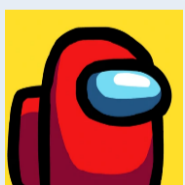
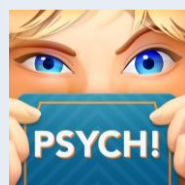
Use team meetings and existing structures such as emails, WhatsApp groups and Teams, not for normal work chat, but to wish each other happy birthday or ask how so and so is doing.



Try a buddying system where team members are paired up in order to check in on each other's welfare. There is strong evidence that Buddy Systems help build team resilience and protect staff.

Tips for connecting at home

There are plenty of ways to connect other than a zoom call! [Spice it up](#) by playing games and watching movies together, but remotely.



Check out [200 questions to get to know someone](#), or join a reading group and get ideas from [Sarah Cox](#)

Struggling with loneliness?

"We all feel lonely from time to time. Feelings of loneliness are personal, so everyone's experience of loneliness will be different." mind.org.uk



Here is an [NHS page](#) to help with feeling lonely.



[Mind](#) also has some resources to help with loneliness.

Join Mind's online community: [Side by Side](#)



Taking Breaks & Recharging

Work can get so busy with back-to-back meetings, caring for service users, and urgent requests. Before we know it, we are exhausted, checking emails at 10pm and boundaries between work and home life start to get blurred. With breaks in place, we can ensure we are giving the best care to our service users, colleagues, families and ourselves.

Videos

Martin has been on the front line since the pandemic hit. Listen to how he copes with the pressure through breaks, exercise and eating well:

<https://youtu.be/671mCbrZSXA>

Find out how Esther learns and adjusts what works to slow down her fast-paced work and mark the start and end of her workday:

<https://youtu.be/JAOHf1nL90Y>

Taking breaks during work at home

- Spend half an hour preparing and eating lunch away from your desk.
- Take a short walk around the block. Even better if you can find a park!
- Set reminders on your computer or phone for break times.
- Put your lunch break on your calendar so to avoid lunch meetings.
- Stretch! Here are some [NHS desk-based exercises](#).
- 2-5 minute break? do a breathing exercise.
- 15 minutes? Get up and make tea, the kind that goes in a pot, and savour every sip!
- 30 minutes? Endless possibilities! How about read a book that is not on your screen to give your eyes a much-needed break? Find something to listen to that is the same length as your break.

Take a mindful break with these mindfulness apps:

- **Inscap**: All-purpose meditation app for a variety of scenarios where you may just want to stop and breathe.
- **Smiling Mind**: Developed with psychologist & health professionals, 5 to 15-minute sessions organised into sections like Mindful Foundations, Sleep, Relationships and Workplace.
- **Calm**: Award-winning app with calming exercises, breathing techniques & a sleep stories section.

Starting and ending your workday

Have a physical boundary between office life and home life, whether it be a designated space, wearing different clothes, ID badge, or even an exercise that equates to your work commute.

At the end of your workday, turn off your computer and tidy up.