Wellbeing

GUIDELINES

How can we do our best to ensure that our staff are happy, inspired and motivated?

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CHAB DAI COALITION

Contents:

Our Vision

Our vision is that staff know that they are cared for, valued and resourced. They are then empowered to perform to the best of their ability and in accord with the actual and real resources available to them.

"Healthy and resourced staff makes for a healthy organization; and a healthy organization makes for a healthy staff team!"
(Sor Sara, White Doves)

"We believe that meaningful and informed care for all creates the best possible working environment and brings out the best in people"
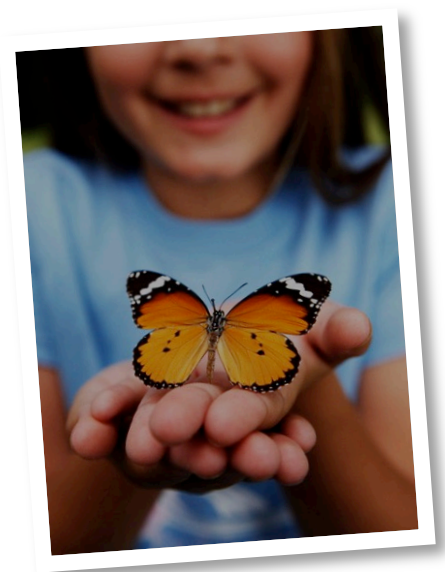
The Aim

The purpose of these guidelines is to guide you through the process of creating a Staff Care and Wellbeing policy and protocol and putting it into action!

The guidelines don't write the policy and protocol for you, but gives you all the information you need to create your very own.

Holistic, integrated care …
We understand wellbeing to include: mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health. These are in dynamic interaction and vital to effective and efficient functioning.

The wellbeing of individual staff also needs to be considered in the context of a number of influential '*systems'* including: the organization, culture, community, family, political, economic, environmental and global.

Duty of Care

Organisations have an inspirational duty of care for their staff. These guidelines aim to assist an organization in the creation of a bespoke policy and practice.

Culture of Care for all

How can we establish and maintain a Culture of Care within our organisations; one where each aspect of it is understood by all, and where everyone takes responsibility for its maintenance at every level and in every human interaction to create a Circle of Care and reciprocal support? How can we resource and motivate staff to perform at their optimum level in the service of each other and their clients?

A policy written on our hearts…

Our aim is not to just have a written policy, but for us all to be a living policy. People will then be able to read each one of us 'like a book' with the principles of the policy written on our hearts,

"If you want to know about our staff care policy then watch me or watch my colleagues!"

1. Creating your Policy Foundations:

- Vision Statements

- Organisational Culture of Care

- A New Role: Staff Care and Wellbeing Officer

Vision Statement: What is your vision for the wellbeing of your staff and organisation?

ACTION 1:

Create your vision statement for staff wellbeing:

- Consult with staff (focus group discussion, creative exploration, workshop)
- Identify values
- Identify the key points in your statement make it inspiring and motivating, realistic and representative of your core organisational values
- Create a draft statement
- Review and finalise

Google's vision statement is a good example and straight to the point:

"We want our staff to be the healthiest and happiest on the planet!" (Google 2011)
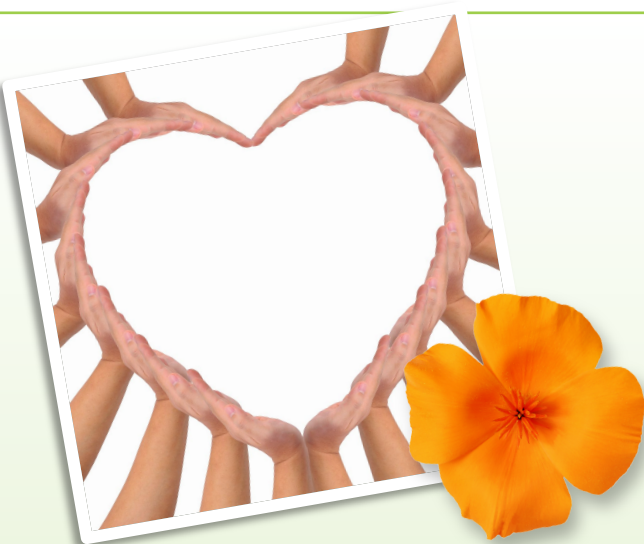
ACTION 2:

- Share and display your vision
- Be creative engage your team in making a symbol, logo, poster, banner, flag, t-shirt.

Below is a Staff Care logo created by M'Lop Russey staff team:

Review

1. Create your vision statement

2. Display it in your organization

3. Ensure all staff know and understand it and have ownership of it.

Organisational Culture of Care

ACTION:

How will you go about defining, describing, applying and nurturing a culture of care in the context of your organization and its mission?

Get the whole staff team together to explore and define the culture of care. Try using a mind map to consider this. Areas may include: beliefs, values, trust, respect, effective communication, sharing, supportive relationships, power, organizational structure, challenges, resources, conflict management, effective productive team working, care for self and others, staff safety, caring for those you support, community, culture and cross culture...etc. Make a list relevant to your organization as points of discussion for your mind map.

SUGGESTED TOOL:

- Create a culture of care poster and charter.
- Use it as a tool to explore both the challenges you face and how the organization can best nurture the culture of care.
- Consider the **Culture of Care** at a personal, relational, organisational, institutional and systemic level.

"We recognise that for staff care to be effective, the fear of losing face, or being perceived of as failing, must be replaced by a belief that acknowledging our needs makes possible a response that increases capacity and resilience. There is no shame in knowing our limits, only pain in pretending that we're doing just fine. No one will risk speaking honestly about their capacity in terms of skills and in terms of workload, along with overall wellbeing, unless everyone knows it's OK to do that".

A New Role: Staff Care & Wellbeing Officer

A specific role

The appointment of Staff Care & Wellbeing officer is crucial to this whole endeavor.

ACTION:
Who will this be in your organisation? Will this be someone new or someone already on the staff team?

It will be their job to ensure that the Staff Care & Wellbeing Policy & Protocol are upheld and that Staff are effectively cared for in the ways described in the policy. This can only be done with the support and cooperation of everyone.

THINGS TO CONSIDER: The priority of the Staff Care & Wellbeing Officer is the wellbeing of staff. As a by-product and benefit productivity may increase, but their *focus* is on staff care and wellbeing.

Conflicts of Interest?

The Staff Care & Wellbeing Officer is there to support staff and ensure that staff get the support they need to deliver their best at work. A conflict of interest would exist if the Staff Care & Wellbeing Officer were to be the 'ear' or 'spy' of senior management (especially important if management were to penalize or judge a member of staff who needed support). No member of the staff team would feel safe enough to share their worries and concerns with the Staff Care & Wellbeing Officer if that were the case.

In the interests of developing the overall culture of care, assessment of staff member's needs would be made. This would help ensure their needs were met and that clients are professionally and consistently served.

We include an example of an assessment tool that can be used.

Confidentiality

The Staff Care & Wellbeing Officer adheres to the confidentiality policy (have you got one?!) and does not share personal information entrusted to them by members of staff with others (within the exemptions of the Confidentiality Policy, and Child Protection Policy).

This information remains confidential and whilst general information on wellbeing and needs can be shared with those who *need* to know, more personal information is NOT public property and not to be shared in detail with management. The potential for any conflicts of interests must be understood and clearly discussed.

Action points:

1. Create the terms of reference and job description for your Staff care and well-being officer
2. Appoint your Well-being Officer
3. Ensure this role is supported and understood by *everyone* in the organisation including the Board, CEO, Director and all staff / include a pay scale assessment
4. Ensure there is informed, meaningful and effective support for this person too!

2. Creating your Staff Care & Wellbeing Policy & Protocols

Creating your Staff Care & Wellbeing Policy & Protocols

The Staff Care & Wellbeing policy will directly address the below:

- Holistic health! Mental, physical, emotional, spiritual health - Heart, mind, body, soul – all interconnected
- Happiness!
- Stress management
- Psychological trauma
- Therapeutic care
- Feedback – communications generally – facilitating effective two-way communication
- Conflict mediation/transformation
- Supporting capacity building & professional performance
- Supervision and debriefing

PLEASE NOTE:
This manual doesn't tell you everything. Your policy and protocol needs to be bespoke tailored by you to meet your organisation's needs. There will be considerable detail relating to your organisation's needs and remit for you to add. The very process of thinking things through and creating this material will help you establish a sense of ownership and contextualized intelligence in relation to each clause.

Neither is this a *training* manual per se. It is an information manual. You may well realize as you're reading this through that there are some things you either don't understand or have never come across before.
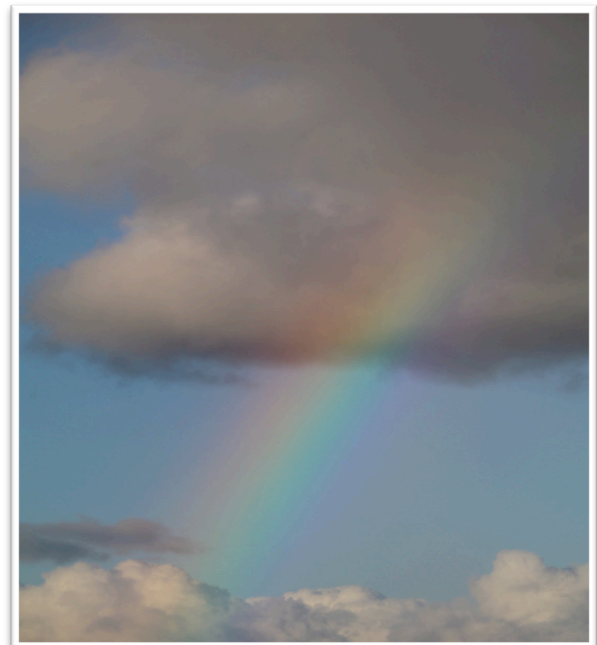
What's to be included in the Policy…?
We believe that the following clauses (see page 11) matter most and are to be part of your functioning Staff Care & Wellbeing Policy.

ACTION POINT: Identify where further training from external providers will be required to ensure capacity and effectiveness.

Suggested Structure for your Policy:

- Director's / CEO's / Board statement of endorsement
- Vision Statement
- Introduction – your organisation's vision, aims and values
- Scope – what the policy will cover
- Clauses – each area identified, explained and justified.
- Action and implementation plan to enable ownership across the whole organisation
- Identifying areas of risk and challenge in staff and organisation wellbeing.
- Monitoring and evaluation – what is your review system?
- Key People
- Conclusion
- References

Ensure that the document is positive and supportive, informed, relevant and a pleasure to read!

What needs to be included in the policy?

Each clause below is to be complimented by an explanation of what it means. Take time to go through the list below in detail and consider the following as relevant: When is it needed and how often? Why it matters? How it will be provided? Where - location? How will it be monitored and evaluated? This will inform your protocols in relation to clauses as applicable.

1. **Vision Statement**

2. **Organizational culture of care** described, and to be applied and nurtured.

3. **The Role of the Staff Care & Wellbeing Officer**

4. **Workload assessment and monitoring** - capacity, resources, tasks, time and its management. Informed by something like a 'Time and Motion Study' (i.e. how long will it take and what will be needed to complete a task, with contingencies considered) and periodically reviewed.

5. **Staff consultation** procedures generally, and especially when there are big changes ahead – what do you do to ensure this takes place? How do you facilitate this?

6. Regular **De-briefing and Case/Managerial Supervision** prioritised and not neglected.

7. **Assessment** and **referrals** to internal / external providers as required (e.g. Therapy, External Critical Incident Staff De-briefing and Therapeutic Clinical Supervision, Training…) How do you and how will you assess these needs? What tools do you use? See example of Creative Assessment tool in this Manual.

8. **Staff reviews and appraisals** with an emphasis on encouragement, inspiration, understanding and motivation as well as well-reasoned and clearly defined areas of development or difficulties (2-way feedback to be encouraged: staff have the opportunity to comment on and assess themselves and their experience of management performance /management assessing and reviewing staff performance)

9. **Training/Capacity building** - Adequate qualification and training to ensure that tasks are within capacity (ongoing review and update) and in accordance with job description

10. **Ergonomics, Health & Safety, First Aid** – To include: a member of staff who is the on-site trained First-Aider, your HIV Policy, relevant physical and mental health related policies, temperature control, adequate seating, desks at the optimum height to reduce eye, back and shoulder strain that can cause headaches and discomfort etc.

11. Reporting procedures for **incidents and accidents** – what are yours? Are they known by all staff?

What needs to be included in the policy continued…

12. **Staff Safety and Risk Assessment** - especially of high risk on-site and off-site activities

13. **Stress Management and Education** on the impact on staff of caring for others especially those with, for example, complex trauma, addictions, violence, mental health issues. Stress management is to include an assessment of stressors within the organisation itself. To ensure that the wellbeing of the organization supports the wellbeing of the individual.

14. **Personalised Staff-Care Plans & Peer Support Systems** - These are itemised plans that are made with each individual. These care plans are relevant to stress management. Please see section on personal care plans below.

15. **Retreats** – agree Terms of Reference (TOR) for these retreats with staff – what are they for? What activities will take place? Is it for restoration and recuperation, team building, relaxation and fun … or is it essentially work orientated?

16. **Critical Thinking, Individual Responsibility and Initiative**. To include taking responsibility for one's own care and wellbeing and committing to seeking help and support when needed. N.B. For this to be possible a no shame, no blame culture needs to be established.

17. **Code of Conduct** - what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior (see staff handbook)

18. **Communication/Cross-Cultural Communication**

ACTION:

1. Create your staff care and wellbeing policy, action and protocol using the list above and anything else you can think of.

2. Ensure everyone within your working community reads, understands and is mutually responsible for putting this into practice.

All are responsible for the fulfillment of the policy

3. Key Areas To Consider & Tools for Practice:

- Personal Care Plans

- Assessment of Wellbeing – A Creative Tool

- Supervision and De-briefing

- Personal Therapy

- Conflict Transformation / Equal Opportunities

- Stress Management

- Retreats

- Systemic Issues

You Come First – Personal Care Plans

Personal Vision:
Identify personal values and beliefs – consider them, re-consider them. Are they beliefs that make you feel good? Are they beliefs that leave you feeling fearful or bad?

Develop your personal and professional vision, mission statements and life/work philosophy. Make a contract with yourself, for example: *"I will take responsibility for my wellbeing and care. When I need help I will seek it".* Consider these two statements what do they mean for you and how would you expand on this and create your own personal contract?

Look at each of the categories below, highlight anything you already do, see if you can think of anymore that you might add. Create your very own personal care plan:

- **Exercise**! Fresh air and nature are good for you – real exercise releases endorphins that make you feel good, supports your overall fitness and reduces stress. Find an exercise you enjoy? How can you put it in your diary so that it becomes a normal part of your week? What can you do if you are very busy?

- **Nutrition** – overview your daily eating and drinking habits. Do you eat a well balanced diet (regular nutritious meals three times a day? Do you eat too much or too little? Consider the underlying reasons if so (for energy? for comfort?). Are you satisfied with your weight and body image? What changes do you feel you need to make to your diet? Set some realistic goals. Create a positive message for yourself, that affirms your body and ability to care for it. Seek additional support if you are struggling with any issues in relation to body image or diet.

- **Sleep** - the quality of your sleep will affect your whole wellbeing. Review your current sleep patterns. Identify if this is an area you are struggling with. If so, consider why you may not be sleeping well, and strategies to improve your sleep patterns. This could include: going to bed early, relaxation techniques, exercise, short daytime sleep (10—20 mins), and nutrition. Please seek professional support before taking medication for sleep challenges.

- **Physical Health** – all the areas here support a strong immune system and good physical health. Consider how your overall health is. Do you suffer stress related symptoms (see Stress Management page below)? How you care for your physical health when you are sick? Do you ensure that you get support from a qualified medical practitioner if you have any health concerns? Do you need to take sick leave if you are unwell? How does your physical health affect your emotional health and work productivity?

- **Sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing** – how do you feel about this area of your health? Identify any challenges you may have and what may support what you need? Seek additional support if this is an area of concern or difficulty for you.

You Come First – Personal Care Plans continued…

- **Play, creative and leisure activities** – fun and games! What brings you joy and makes you laugh!? Reading, TV, movies and social media – what do you watch and why? Is it good for you and your family? Reflect on what you listen to, read or watch – does it lift you up or bring you down? How many hours a day do you spend in these activities? Note anything you feel you might need to change. What alternative activities could be more uplifting for you? What are the positive ways of expressing ourselves and our feelings – expressing rather than suppressing or trying to ignore. (Note for some of use research and education requires us to look at material that can be distressing. Be aware of the effects this has on you and what you need to restore a sense of inner peace).

- **Family time** – what do you do together? Consider the communication and relationships in the family. Do you have time together that is nourishing and supportive? What would you like to see happen that could strengthen this area of your wellbeing. Seek professional support if there are things that are very challenging.

- **Friendships**: What do you understand by the phrase - conscious socialising? Do you have reciprocal friendships that are mutually enriching? How would you like to see this area of your life grow. What is your peer support?

- **Spiritual Health & Well-being – What is your belief system? What supports this? Do you use any activities such as:** meditation, mindfulness, and prayer. What impact does this have on your life? Do you have a spiritually nourishing community? In what ways would you like to that develops your spiritually?

- **Economic Wellbeing -** budgeting and money management – what is your financial health like? What do you need to strengthen this area? What or who may support you? Consider your savings plan and your financial future and post retirement plan.

- **Substance use and misuse** – pharmaceuticals, drugs, alcohol, smoking,? Are any of these areas of concern? Do you self-medicate or self–prescribe? Do you know the underlying reasons for this? Do you need to seek professional support?

- **Job satisfactions and career planning** – review how you feel about your current employment and identify anything that is stressful, challenging or needs development. Set some realistic goals for your work life. Consider your career plan.

ACTION POINTS:
1. Create your personal self-care plan in peer support groups or in a team workshop.
2. Share and explore your plan with your peer support group or peer support buddy.
3. Ensure that it is realistic and identify any challenges or resources required.
4. Create an agreement with a designated peer to help support its implementation.
5. Ensure your peer relationship is mutually supportive.
6. Set up a regular supportive review of your progress.
7. Explore areas that you can also do together or with your team.

Assessment of Wellbeing: A Creative Tool

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF STAFF NEEDS

Assessment of Wellbeing: A Creative Tool. This tool can help you, and help you help others consider emotional, spiritual, psychological and physical wellbeing. It can also identify levels of stress and what is needed to reduce the impact of stressors in your work and personal life and increase wellbeing. (Note you may have your own assessment tool in place)

It assesses:

- YOU AND YOUR EMOTIONS – this explores how you feel and why? Are you suppressing or acting out emotions in ways that are unhealthy for you or others. Include worries and concerns about your mental health (please seek professional support if you do for assessment and support). It helps you identify what you need to maintain wellbeing.

- YOU AND YOUR THINKING – is your thinking clear, chaotic, or confused? Why might this be? What positive or negative influences are impacting cognition?

- YOU AND YOUR RELATIONSHIPS. Family and friends, what are these relationships like, are they supportive or are they causing suffering? What do you and they need?

- YOU AND SLEEPING – consider healthy sleep patterns and any interruptions to sleep and why that might be.

- YOU AND EATING - ensuring a healthy balanced and nutritious diet – identifying any challenges (eating too much/ too little, an eating disorder).

- YOU AND YOUR BODY / SEXUAL HEALTH – Review these areas and consider are you feeling strong and healthy or identify specific problems such as muscle tension, headaches, back pain, stomach pain

- YOU AND PLAY / LEISURE / CREATIVITY – what do you do in these areas?

- YOU AND EXERCISE   - what is your experience of exercise in your life?

- YOU AND SPIRITUALITY - the status of this and what nurtures this?

- YOU AT WORK – The Working Environment. What's it like? Relationships, morale, confidence, competence … etc. How does this affect you and how do you affect it?

- YOU AND YOUR CLIENTS – what happens inside you when you think of them and when you are working with them? How do you manage this and recognise and understand its impact? What supports you? E.g. Supervision, therapy, de-briefing, training and support.

- YOU AND MOTIVATION/ PERFORMANCE (level of) you and your level of motivation… what level is that at? What is your performance like at work in specific areas? What do you need to strengthen or change and why?

Assessment of Wellbeing: A Creative Tool

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL:

It's essential that the person feels absolutely safe with you and that the environment is safe and confidential. You will also need to have some training in exploring the symbolism and meaning in a creative image. Importantly, a person who fears that what they tell you may undermine them will likely tell you what they think you want to hear, and what they believe will preserve their position and standing in your eyes.

Proper training to ensure the responsible use of this tool and ensure that congruent and true information is gathered is highly recommended.

In the absence of training then do your very best to create a non-judgmental environment and ensure that you as facilitator are deeply listening. With guidance this tool can be used for self-assessment too.

On a piece of Flipchart paper ask a member of staff to draw a circle in the middle with an image in it (either symbolic or literal) representing themselves

1. Within circles around the central image ask them to create images that represent each of the categories above.

2. These images will then form the basis of a conversation about each category.

3. The outcomes from these conversations will inform an assessment of the individual's wellbeing.

(N.B. This assessment does not constitute a professional medical, psychological, or mental health assessment. It acts as a guide to overall health and wellbeing and informs a referral process as required. Please seek professional support as required)

4. Identify your resources and strengths, what enables you to be resilient.

5. Identify any challenges, needs and specific areas to strengthen. Create an action plan.

6. Follow-up and review by reviewing the action plan and/or repeating the exercise.

Supervision and De-briefing

What is supervision?
Supervision falls into a number of different categories for example:

- Managerial Supervision
- Case Management Supervision
- Therapeutic Clinical Supervision

Supervision can have educational, supportive, protective, informative, therapeutic, cross-cultural, relational, systemic, organisational elements.
Consider your depth of understanding of each of these areas of supervision. What type of supervision do you require for your professional role? Do you have sufficient supervisors with the requisite skills within your organization or contracted as external providers?

De-briefing and Critical Incident De-briefing – this is a specific opportunity for processing an incident or crisis individually, in teams or with the whole organization. It is typically facilitated by a trained or qualified professional either based in the organization or an external provider. Can you give an example of when you have needed this? Does your organization have a designated facilitator for de-briefing?

ACTION POINT:

1. Do you have a relevant supervisor for your work? If not get one?
2. Is supervision fully supported by your manager/director? Does the organisation have adequate resources to provide consistent supervision?
3. How often do you meet? Do you feel adequately supported and take responsibility for bringing important and critical issues to your supervisor?
4. Do you feel able to talk openly and honestly about areas of challenge?
5. Do you know who to contact should there be a critical incident or crisis?
6. Identify any areas from the above questions that need attending to and set a realistic action plan with your manager or supervisor to review.

Supervision is both understood and misunderstood. It can seem to imply that the supervisee is inadequate and inferior. The experience then is rarely affirming and empowering; rather it can be humiliating rather than supportive. Therapeutic Clinical Supervision is designed to empower and enrich. It identifies areas where the supervisee/practitioner is struggling and refers accordingly (either for further training and/or for therapy). It never seeks to humiliate or undermine. It honours the efforts of the supervisee as sincere and to the best of their existing ability. Whilst it never loses sight of the needs of the client, it deeply understands the impact that such work with trauma can have on a practitioner.

Vicarious/Secondary Trauma is where the trauma of another significantly impacts your wellbeing. It can cause similar symptoms to those of the person/people you are working with, and/or arouses symptoms of your own trauma. You then begin to experience their trauma as if it were your own. It becomes extremely difficult to maintain a personal professional boundary as you are taking home your work in your own heart, mind, soul and body.

Personal Therapy

Personal Therapy / Counseling

What do you understand by this term? Have you ever had therapy or counseling? Do you know when to contact a therapist or counselor? Does your organization understand and support the importance and need for personal therapy/counseling?

WHAT IS THERAPY? Healing, psychological and/or physical, is required when there has been an injury, whether it be physical or emotional. Sometimes, in physical injuries, this is spontaneous, as is the case with a cut to the hand. Sometimes professional help is needed, as is the case when there has been severe brain or heart injury. Just as is the case with a physical injury, so it is the case with an emotional or psychological injury. We need to heal.

Psychological Therapy is where a trained professional will help you recognise and consider the depth of the injury, its impact on you (spiritually, emotionally, behaviourally, cognitively and somatically), and the support and resources you have to aid the healing process. According to their practice modality, they will guide you through a process that will facilitate healing and nurture personal development.

Therapy provides a safe, confidential and non-judgmental context in which to address issues important to you that are impacting your wellbeing. Grief, relationships, trauma, abuse, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, mental health, stress, bullying, conflict, depression, positive communication, addictions, anxiety and panic attacks, sexuality, eating disorders, violent behaviour, anger management and a range of diagnosed mental health conditions are all examples of issues that people bring to therapy. Therapy is for everyone of any age.

> *"It is as normal to see a therapist with a psychological issue as it is to see a medical doctor with a physical issue".*

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA: An event is traumatic when we are presented with a terrifying or extremely challenging experience that we do not have the resources to manage and cannot escape from. Such experiences can leave an indelible mark on our psyches and severely impact functioning in both our professional and personal lives. A resilient person may recover from a single event, and, although it is likely to never be forgotten, they can function effectively and manage the memory of the event/s without suffering psychological triggering (e.g. flashbacks of the traumatic experience 'triggered' by a place, smell, colour, sound, fragment memory etc.) and consequent flooding of feelings and somatic responses commensurate with the experience.

Not everyone is resilient. Although it is impossible to generalize, those who lacked security and safety as children may well lack this inner sense that they are good and strong and will be OK. Additionally, the trauma of an event and associated symptoms can be considerably compounded when there are repeated incidences with the same feelings of helplessness on each occasion. Things are unlikely to improve without support in the form of Therapy, Therapeutic Clinical Supervision (TCS) or Critical Incident De-briefing.

Conflict Transformation / Equal Opportunities

Conflict transformation (aka Conflict mediation/collaboration)
Conflicts are common, inevitable, natural and normal! Conflicts can provide an opportunity for relationship building and ever deepening insights into ourselves and others. They have the potential to transform us, those around us and the whole environment!

Everyone has their own perception of things and preference. My experience of something might be very different from yours and each experience constitutes a reality. My description of an event will likely be very different from yours, as will be the feelings roused. My 'reality' and yours may therefore be quite different!

Many flounder when there are conflicts and seek to avoid them. In so doing we avoid the underlying issues that cause them. A culture where blame persists will exacerbate conflicts. In an environment where individual blame is replaced by collective responsibility it is possible to bring people together in collaboration to assess what has given rise to a conflict.

Conflict can be a key to understanding an underlying issue that can have endemic impact and so undermine the functioning of an entire team and/or organization. Experiencing such conflict transformation can be such a joy and bring deep healing, and thus greater efficiency and effectiveness. When we know how to manage conflict we can engage with it with humility and confidence. The skills of a trained conflict mediator will make all the difference to this.

Equal opportunities/Inclusion (aka non-discriminatory practice). This may well be a familiar term. You maybe able to list those to whom it applies: no discrimination on the grounds of gender orientation; sexual preference; HIV/AIDS status; nationality; religion; 'differability' (aka disability). But, a policy is one thing, its embodied practice is quite another.

Our universal propensity for prejudice can be immediate, powerfully felt and visceral. This needs to be acknowledged and discussed. We are, regardless of denial, all prejudiced and biased in favour of what we favour! And we favour the familiar and similar.

Inclusion challenges our capacity for grace and humility. It lies at the heart of Staff Care and Wellbeing too. Anyone who has experienced the sense of isolation and loneliness of non-inclusion; of not belonging where they belong as a member of the staff team, will know that discrimination is an act of anti-love and is antithetical to care. Once exposed and deconstructed it is possible for us all to see why such latent antagonisms exist within us. The conflicts and ensuing wounds of the past born of injustice and callousness for example, do not simply disappear with time or generation. They linger in the individual and collective consciousness, and are easily aroused and triggered.

This is why the inclusion of '*Inclusion*' in the Policy matters so much; but not as much as the *practice* of it matters, and this not as much as our understanding, honouring and believing of it matters. Amongst our so-called 'enemies' are good Samaritans, kindly neighbours, and this is because they are human too; they may too have been victims of prejudice. They empathise rather than victimise and have a humility and consciousness that transcends prejudice. This aspect of the policy is principle; it is based on this principle of care, respect and consideration of all.

Stress Management

There is good stress - challenge stress, and not so good or bad stress - chronic stress. Good stress can inspire and invigorate! You feel confident and emboldened. You are resourced, ready and able to fulfill the tasks at hand - and it's exciting! Bad stress exhausts and undermines, as well as having a very significant impact on compromising the immune system, upsetting the digestive and reproductive systems, raising blood pressure, increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke, and speeding up the aging process, as well as leaving you vulnerable to many mental and other physical health problems. NOT GOOD!! Stress must be taken seriously by yourself and your organsiation. Is the work culture within your organization responsible for creating chronic stress? It is not OK to drive yourself into the ground or to cultivate a culture where status is afforded those who regularly work late and don't take their breaks or holidays. There is a time to go the extra mile and all pull together to support each other! But this is not the case when overwork is the result of a lack of resources or an expectation that to prove yourself you must sacrifice yourself and in so doing sacrifice time with your family too.

The following factors might indicate that you are suffering from chronic stress (you can use this list as part of the wellbeing assessment tool above, please note that many of these may be a result of trauma or secondary trauma and a thorough professional assessment may be required by a qualified professional to identify the causes and formulate a treatment plan).

- Low self-esteem, low self-worth and negative self-talk
- Having difficulty sleeping, waking in the night with worries or physical symptoms.
- Loss of appetite or over eating (comfort eating)
- Physical symptoms of stress e.g. headaches, back pain, stomach problems, palpitations (note please check with a qualified doctor if you have concerns or any ongoing health problems before self-medicating)
- High levels of anxiety or possible depression.
- Challenges regulating and managing emotions – for example: crying without apparent reason, frustration, easily irritated, angry outbursts, aggressive behavior, feeling overwhelmed or feeling numb.
- Withdrawal and isolation from supportive relationships
- Relationship conflicts or breakdown
- Self-medication – pharmaceuticals, alcohol or drug abuse

A responsible and wise organisation seeks to support the wellbeing of their staff. It is in their own interests to do this. Healthy people (physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually) are more creative, motivated and productive.

Retreats

Consider your Terms of Reference for a retreat. What's the point of it? What do people conceive of when they hear that word? What does your staff team need?

Something worth considering?
In the view of a number Cambodian participants at a recent training event, a Retreat was not to be a time for work (albeit out of the office) but essentially a time for play. One only has to witness children at play to realize its manifold benefits. In 'play' relationships deepen and cooperation enhanced. There is much learning through play and it is never a waste of time. These benefits have a very real impact on the quality of problem solving and effective, efficient working together. This was the view of Cambodian people. It was contrasted with the expectations that some expats had that a retreat should be for more formalized teaching and training. The Cambodians found this misleading and confusing. It damaged morale and dampened motivation. They had gone expecting a break and relief but found themselves in what was more like a work situation.

ACTION:

1. What do you want your staff team to feel when they hear the word 'Retreat'?

2. How do you want them to feel after the retreat?

3. Design your retreat with these things in mind.

The Bigger Picture - Systemic Issues

Recognising the Contextual Systemic issues that impact Staff Care and well-being

1. Legal – employment legislation/ labour law
NGO law, Health & Safety, impact of justice systems.

2. Political stability and safety

3. Funding – stress of securing and sustaining funding, resources allocated for staff care programmes, levels of commitment to staff care from funders, donor NGO liaison and communication systems, reporting and M & E requirements, donor ethical code and principles of practice.

4. Cultural – cross cultural issues, hierarchical structures, language & communication, integrity of education systems

5. Legacy of collective trauma

6. Social infrastructure and development

7. Regional and Global issues / priorities

ACTION

1. Consider each of these areas in relation to your organization

2. Create your own detailed diagram

3. Identify the impacts and any action points for each area.
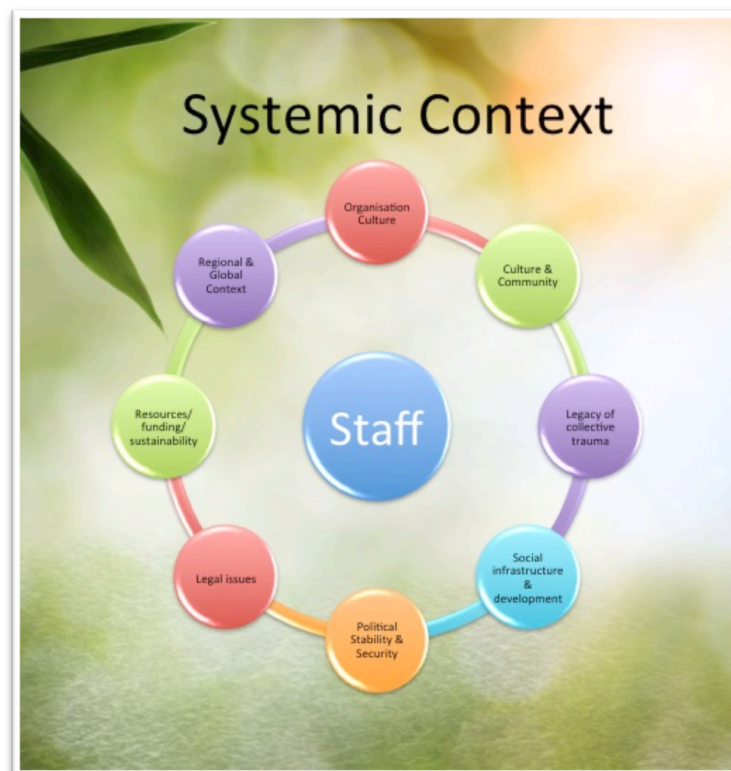
3. Checklist of Broader Policy and Practice Relevant to Staff Care and Wellbeing

EVERYTHING BELOW *SUPPORTS* THE STAFF CARE AND WELLBEING POLICY AND HELPS CREATE A CLEAR & SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF:

1. Contract and job description
2. Staff handbook containing information relating to:
   - Employment terms & conditions
   - Employer/employee relationship (adherence to policies & procedures – supportive, affirming work environment
   - Pay, sickness pay, benefits & pension arrangements;
   - Hours of work/flexible working,
   - Annual leave;
   - Maternity/paternity leave;
   - Compassionate leave, time off for dependents (unpaid?);
   - Attendance & absences;
   - Criminal record checks; pre-employment screening
   - Medical & Mental Health Policy (statement on HIV/AIDS)
   - Personal Safety & Security
   - Accidents & Incidents
   - Whistle Blowing rights/responsibilities
   - Expected standards of performance, accountability, personal appearance, presentation & behavior;
   - Internet and & telephone use;
   - Smoking & other substances at work;
   - Receiving gifts from 'customers', partners and contractors,
   - Conflicts of interest;
   - Bribery & corrupt behavior;
   - Training & professional and personal development;
   - Notice period, Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, Conditions of Dismissal;
   - Redeployment, Redundancy, Retirement;
   - Who's who & important contacts & contact information
   - Lines of communication
   - Confirmation of receipt of an dreading of handbook form to sign

3. Confidentiality Policy
4. Child protection Policy
5. Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Harassment Policy
6. Conflict Mediation/Transformation Policy – Conflicts arising are addressed not avoided.
7. Data Protection & access to personal information Policy
8. Health & Safety Policy/Personal Safety & Security
9. Training & Professional & Personal Development;
10. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
11. Risk Assessments/emergency Procedures

ACTION:

1. Which of these policies/ documents do you already have in place. Do they need review and further development?

2. Identify which policies you need to create.

3. Consider how staff are currently impacted by these areas.

4. How will you identify and address practices, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour that undermine staff feeling valued, understood, resourced, affirmed and respected?

5. Identify any further support or training required to achieve this.

4. Concluding Thoughts

EVERYTHING BELOW *SUPPORTS* THE STAFF CARE AND WELLBEING POLICY AND HELPS CREATE A CLEAR & SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR STAFF:

There's so much!!!
It may already feel a bit overwhelming, especially if you're a relatively small organization that's just about managing to deliver your primary function. Acknowledge that and try to stick with this policy creation and remain committed to its aim …

I think we're all set up…?
A large organisation will have much of the above in place already. Smaller organisations will recognise the areas they have covered and those they are yet to address in the form of policies and handbook development

THE place to work! A Place you love to work in…
Having all these in place will help create a secure working environment and ensure that staff know what's expected of them in every circumstance and what they can expect from you the employer.

CONCLUSION

This manual is of little real use UNLESS you use it! It is designed to guide you through the process of creating a Staff Care & Wellbeing Policy and implementing it. It provides descriptions and explanations of resources that support wellbeing. It prompts discussion and deep thought into what constitutes a healthy organisation and staff team, and what can be done to nurture and develop that. It relies on you to create your bespoke policy and then to implement it.

We know that it is yet another job to do and it could so easily be just too much for some. We know that there is a very real cost implication to all this. We know that this may start with a vision, an intention, a commitment to seeing the gradual and inexorable advance toward realising your organisation's vision in relation to Staff Care & Wellbeing (remember Google's Vision Statement that we quoted above!). It will likely require that you write Staff Care & Wellbeing into your funding applications in future. You will need to provide a persuasive rationale for it and link it directly to quality outputs that are consistent and sustainable. Sustaining staff to do their job well is a key theme and priority when considering this.

What will you do with all this? Yes, it is yet another manual; but, it speaks for you. It speaks for your staff team. It speaks for your clients and beneficiaries. It speaks of Love, of Care, of Honouring what it means to be a human being and not a machine. It speaks of listening to your body, your heart, and your soul. It speaks of being tender and compassionate toward yourself. It speaks of being all you can be and doing all you can, of your calling and raison d'être in the world. It imagines and envisions what can happen when you are effectively resourced, and when you are deeply respected and cared for - just as you deeply respect and care for others. It speaks of a work ethic that is humane and has humanity at the heart of it.

"Lets create such a culture of working practices that has staff well-being at its heart together, and see its benefits for us now, our clients, and those who will follow in our footsteps!"