



WELCOME

Welcome to the first Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) newsletter. Feedback from the 2016 CSEAS survey suggested that you would welcome more communication from us. Many of you said that you would welcome a newsletter covering practical topics and health and wellbeing issues. This is the first in a series of newsletters that will do just that. We hope you'll find it interesting.

Comments on this issue and suggestions for items for future issues are most welcome. You will find our contact details below and on the back page. Don't forget there are many more resources on our new look website www.cseas.per.gov.ie

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many staff members who responded to our recent survey. Highlights will be available shortly on our website.

Issue 1

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GOOD MENTAL HEALTH



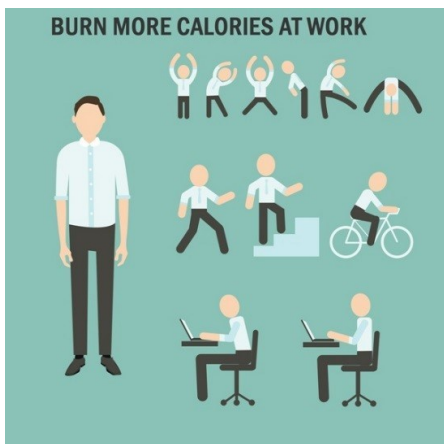
Good mental health and wellbeing is something we all strive for. It allows us to live a balanced life, enjoy meaningful relationships, pursue interests and hobbies, engage with society and work in a constructive manner. It is our responsibility to mind our mental health in the same way as we do our physical health. Here are some tips for **GOOD MENTAL HEALTH**:

- G**et active and take regular exercise that you enjoy
- O**bserve a good bedtime routine
- O**ccasionally and when appropriate say no to demands others make on your time and energy
- D**evelop good relationships with family and friends based on respect and love
- M**eet up with friends as often as you can and make the effort to broaden your social circle
- E**at a healthy and nutritious diet and drink alcohol in moderation only
- N**ote the positives in your life. Make a list each day of three things for which you are grateful
- T**alk to someone you trust about any concerns you might have
- A**llow time for rest — your body and mind need time to unwind and replenish
- L**earn some new relaxation techniques and put them into practice on an ongoing basis
- H**ave a sustainable work/life balance
- E**ngage in activities which challenge your mind as this will help to keep it sharp
- A**ctively participate in your local community if possible
- L**ook at ways to manage stress and cope with the challenges life inevitably brings
- T**ap into all resources available to you when faced with an issue or problem
- H**ave plenty of fun



EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES TO BURN CALORIES — EASY WAYS TO SNEAK THEM INTO YOUR DAY

We all know that exercise is important. Staying fit has a knock-on effect on so many aspects of our general health. It keeps our hearts and lungs healthy and improves our mood and energy levels. Sometimes we can



find it hard to fit in a daily exercise regime, so we have to be creative as we go about our daily lives to increase our physical activity. We exercise throughout the day without knowing it! Walking to the bus/train, moving about at work, walking up the stairs, doing household chores all help us to remain fit.

We all burn calories during these daily routines. There's even a catchy name for it: **Non—Exercise Activity Thermogenesis (or NEAT)**. With a little imagination we can change our habits to become more active and enhance our health. So here are some ideas on how activity can burn these

calories — no gym required!

INACTIVE	Calories	ACTIVE	Calories
5 minute phone call sitting	5	5 minute phone call standing	25
Send an email to a colleague one floor away	5	Walk to a colleague one floor away if appropriate to work situation	30
Drive, take bus or train to or from work	15	Walk for 10 minutes of the journey each way	120
Sit for 30 minutes while eating lunch	30	Eat lunch (15 mins) and take a 15 min walk (excludes calorie intake of lunch)	135
Take lift for three flights of stairs	5	Walk up 3 flights of stairs	15
Park car next to entrance	5	Park car at the far end of the car park	30
Spend 30 minutes sitting at an of-fice meeting	30	Have a 30 minute walk meeting if suitable/acceptable at work	180
TOTAL	95	TOTAL	535

When you add up the difference over a year, these small habits use an average **178,850 calories a year!** Of course, these are by no means the only ways to get moving day-to-day.

For more information see the Irish Heart Foundation website <http://www.irishheart.ie/iopen24/index.php>

MINDING YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH — 10 TIPS



1. **Spend less than you earn** — No matter how much or how little you are paid, prudent cuts to your spending can help balance the books and may even provide a surplus, however big or small.
2. **Stick to a budget** — A budget will show where your money is going. Depending on when you are paid, you may decide on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly budget. You need a budget regardless of how much you earn a year.
3. **Examine your impulse spending** — An issue for many of us is impulse spending. If it is not a planned spend it can knock your budget off course. Impulse buying can be facilitated by easy access to credit. While a credit/store card can be useful at times, it might be financially wiser to save for what you want to purchase.
4. **Pay off the credit card** — Credit card debt is generally very expensive. If you don't pay off the outstanding balance quickly, you could end up paying a lot more for things than you would have if you paid in cash.
5. **Have a savings plan** — Get into the habit of saving money and treating it as a non-negotiable monthly "expense". If possible, set aside a minimum of 5-10% of your net salary for savings. Having adequate savings for a rainy day can really help keep you out of trouble financially.
6. **Review your insurance** — It is important to have enough insurance to protect your life home and assets. Shop around close to renewal dates to ensure you are getting the best value.
7. **Review your utility costs** — Shop around for the best deals. Check out comparison websites to ensure you are getting the best offers available. Ask yourself if you really need the current level of service provided or if a more cost effective solution is available.
8. **Make/Update your will** — A will is important to protect where your wealth goes when you die. If you have dependents, no matter how little or how much you own, make sure your will is up to date. If you are unsure about any legal issues, talk to a solicitor.
9. **Join "The Public Service Friendly Society"** — Consider becoming a member of The Public Service Friendly Society. It's there for members experiencing financial difficulties. For more details check out their website www.psfs.ie
10. **Save early for retirement** — Think of this money as a nest egg for the fun and opportunities retirement can offer. What kind of life do you want to live in your golden years? Start saving for it now!



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ABOUT THE CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE (CSEAS)

Who We Are

The CSEAS is a centralised service within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). Services and supports are provided on a regional basis to civil servants across Government Departments/ Offices. The aim is to positively enhance their wellbeing and promote an ethos of employee wellness, resilience and organisational effectiveness.

Contact us:

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www.cseas.per.gov.ie

On-duty Employee Assistance Officer available

Mon – Thurs: 9am to 5.45pm Fri: 9am to 5.15pm
(except bank/public holidays)

MINDFULNESS



“The very first and most important step in breaking free from a lifetime of stress reactivity is to be aware of what is actually happening while it is happening” (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

When we think of the “gym” we automatically think of looking after the physical body. Mindfulness can be described as a gym for the mind. Our minds tend to wander a lot. Every time we practise being mindful we exercise our attention “muscle” and become mentally fitter.

Mindfulness is about being more aware in every waking moment. It is about intentionally paying attention

and being fully engaged in whatever is happening around and within us. When we are not deliberately paying attention to something, our brain clicks into “default mode” which is characterised by “mind wandering”, thus operating on auto pilot. Through mindfulness, we learn how to focus on, and live in, the present moment.

Mindfulness practice is always deliberate and intentional. We observe our thoughts and feelings without judging them. One of the most popular mindfulness exercises is mindfulness of breath. It is a very simple practise which involves bringing attention and focus on the breath.

Why not give it a try!

Become aware of your breathing. No need to change anything, just feel the sensation of your breath as it enters and leaves your body. Feel it in your nose, your throat, your chest

and in your tummy. *If possible, try and feel the breath in your tummy as it is more grounding and more likely to make you feel relaxed.* When your mind wanders into thoughts – as it will – gently bring your focus and attention back to your breath. *This mind wandering will happen again and again and is a normal part of a mindfulness practice.*

You can do this exercise for as short as a minute or longer if you wish.

“Mindfulness allows us to see that our negative thoughts and emotions are just that – thoughts and emotions – not necessarily reality. They are therefore given less weight – they are observed, but not necessarily believed.”

Kristin Neff, Self Compassion.