



Positive Psychology has been chosen as the theme of this Newsletter! We have gathered some information, tips and resources to help you improve your personal awareness, emotional intelligence, and wellbeing.

Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play. <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/>

BEING PERSONALLY AWARE

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Becoming personally aware and looking after your physical, emotional and social health/needs are important strengths and skills to be nurtured. How can you do this within your working week?

Disconnect It can be difficult to unwind in this “always on” world. Are there too many files open on the desktop of your mind? It may be time to close or minimise some so you can free up the space to compute. The quickest way to refocus is to change your thinking, at least temporarily. Remind yourself that you are not a robot and that you need to treat yourself with care. You may be just too busy to be grateful. Remind yourself of the little things that bring you joy without causing harm to others.

Using your commute time to work Use your commute time to good effect. It is possible to take the strain out of travel by thinking it through in advance. Be prepared. Dress for the weather. During travel you might opt to listen to audio books or music. Do whatever suits you. Make use of time.

Good day - Bad day We all want and aim to have good days. However, anyone can have a bad day. Too many bad days could test your mental health. Maybe you are just muddled or overwhelmed. It can feel very scary but it can be changed. Take a minute to write your thoughts down on paper. Take time to unravel them and to figure out a strategy. List the important things you must do. Postpone what can wait until you have more spare capacity. This will allow you the time and space to regroup. You may feel drained and exhausted; yet you cannot relax. You can walk off the extra energy. A hot bath may work. Find what works best for you!

Harmony at work “*The standard you walk past, is the standard you accept*” (David Morrison). How would you want to be treated? How do you treat others? Is that the same thing? If not why not? Be kind to all you encounter...including yourself. Be the best you can be and allow others the space to do the same. The Civil Service has a policy that states that everyone is entitled to a safe working environment. It is important that we all adhere to this policy. <http://hr.per.gov.ie/dignity-at-work/>

Social Intelligence - Neural Wi-Fi We tune in to those around us consciously or unconsciously, in what some refer to as neural Wi-Fi. Italian neuroscientists found brain cells that mimic or mirror what another person does. This allows us to get a sense of what is happening so that we can fit in. It explains how we automatically and unconsciously come to be on the “same wavelength” as others. It may also explain why an uneasy feeling is mirrored and may need to be addressed at home or in the office. Further information on the subject is available: <https://hbr.org/2008/09/social-intelligence-and-the-biology-of-leadership>

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

At its simplest, Emotional Intelligence (EI or EQ) is defined as the ability to recognise, understand and manage your emotions and that of others. This means being aware that emotions control your behaviour and can have a positive or negative impact on people. EI can naturally develop during your life, however, it is also something you can work on developing. Learning how to manage EI can positively affect your workplace performance and personal life – especially when under pressure.



5 main EI components, and how they can be seen in the workplace:

Self-awareness – being able to understand your emotions and how they affect others

Self-regulation – controlling disruptive moods or thoughts when interacting with others

Motivation – passion, energy and persistence about work for reasons beyond money or status

Empathy – understanding the emotional makeup of others

Social skills – managing relationships, building rapport and being persuasive

There are numerous benefits to developing EI in the workplace:

- Employees with high EI may be better equipped to master the various interactions in the workplace more effectively
- High EI is linked to greater levels of job satisfaction, better attitude and performance
- Organisations experience better retention rates when they are mindful of staff wellbeing and EI development
- Leaders with high EI use supportive behaviour with their staff members, resulting in increased job satisfaction and staff participation

Tips to get your EQ development started:

Practice observing how you feel – Reconnect with your emotions. Set a timer for various points in the day - when it rings, take a couple of deep breaths and notice how you're feeling emotionally and how it can be felt physically.

Pay attention to your behaviour – Think of how you react when you experience certain emotions. Managing emotions becomes easier once you're conscious of how you react.

Question your opinions – Explore ideas contrary to your own, have your views challenged. This will help to better understand others and be open to new ideas.

Take responsibility for your feelings – Understand that your feelings and behaviour come from you alone. Once you do this, you'll see a positive impact on all areas of your life.

Celebrate the positive – Being emotionally intelligent is about reflecting on positive moments in life. Doing this will likely increase resilience and strengthen relationships, which will help in times of adversity.

Don't ignore the negative – It's also important to reflect on negative moments. This allows you to understand your emotions and to reflect on your reaction to them, which allows for the development of better coping skills.

Breathe – Life can throw stressful situations your way, do something practical to delay a reaction and manage your emotions better. Take some deep breaths to help control your thoughts and respond appropriately.

Look at yourself objectively – Get input from people you know and trust about your strengths and weaknesses. Does this compare to what you think of yourself?

Maintain a schedule – To help you self-manage, create a schedule and stick to it. This will allow you to take responsibility for your behaviour, plan for the situation, predict how you'll feel and protect against reactive behaviours.

Listen – To communicate effectively, try to understand what the other person is saying, let them talk without interruption and consider how they feel before you respond.

Body language – Think about how you are physically coming across to people. Tone of voice and eye contact etc. can let others know how you're feeling emotionally.

Lifetime process – Developing emotional intelligence is an ongoing process and there is always room for improvement.

SELF CARE - POSITIVE STEPS TO WELLBEING

Positive psychology is all about promoting meaningful and fulfilling lives - following a positive psychology regime can help build resilience. We've compiled some suggestions below to help you achieve this!

Everyone can find their own ways to relax, unwind and live better lives. Different things work for different people, consider what suits you best!

Be kind to yourself – Encourage rather than criticise yourself. Treat yourself the way you would treat a friend in the same situation. Make time for yourself!

Balance Sleep – Get into a healthy sleeping pattern. Prepare for sleep by having a healthy night-time routine, avoiding anything that will keep you too alert.

Exercise regularly – Being active helps lift our mood, reduce stress, reduce anxiety and improve physical health and gives us more energy.



Be it hiking, football, yoga, running, the gym or even dancing! Find an activity you enjoy doing, and just do it.

Planning Ahead – Forward planning can bring a sense of achievement. Knowing you have something to look forward to is essential for work/life balance. It takes little effort, whether it is calling a friend, arranging a night out, booking a flight, meeting someone for coffee - it can be worth it!

Help others – As well as benefiting others, getting involved with a community project, charity work, or simply helping out someone you know will be worthwhile and can help you feel better about yourself.



Connecting – The greatest friend of depression is solitude. Know your supports – stay in touch with family, friends and /or

social supports.

Accepting: 'It is as it is' – We tend to fight against distressing thoughts and feelings, but we can learn to just notice them and give up that struggle.

Some situations we just can't change. We can surf those waves rather than try to stop them.

Allow those thoughts and sensations just to be – they will pass.

HOBBIES CAN HELP US RELAX AND FEEL GOOD ABOUT OURSELVES. WHY NOT TRY SOMETHING NEW?

Reading – If you want to escape and forget everything going on in your life, reading might help. Reading can be pleasurable, it can bring you somewhere else, let you peek into someone else's life or take you on an adventure.



Colouring – is now very popular with adults. There is a great range of colouring books for the 'older child'. You may feel a sense of satisfaction in completing your picture.

Baking – As well as learning/improving skills you can also indulge your creative side. Think of the satisfaction in seeing your family and friends enjoy your creations.

Knitting – If you are someone who has to keep your hands busy while watching TV or while relaxing or chatting, then knitting might be for you. Knitting can be enjoyed on your own or in a knitting group.

Gardening/Nature – Gardening can be a way of exercising. It can be interesting and a



pleasure. Getting your hands dirty, watching things grow and being productive can bring a sense of satisfaction. If gardening is not for

you, just being outside in the fresh air can have benefits and help with relaxation.

Music – Listening to music that you enjoy, either in the car, outdoors or lying on the sofa etc, can be pleasurable and relaxing. For some, reflecting on the lyrics of a song by an artist they admire is part of the experience. For others dancing to music is a way of unwinding.

USEFUL REFLECTIONS



“When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.” Dr Wayne Dyer

“Happiness is a side effect of a nicely organised life.”

Mikail Litvak

“The pursuit of happiness undermines happiness.” Viktor Frankl

“Happiness is when what you want, can and must do are the same thing.” Gandhi

Jon Kabat-Zinn describes healing as a “coming to terms with things as they are.”

“The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.” William James

ONLINE SELF-LEARNING

The following are popular online talks on personal awareness and development.

Positive Psychology: www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_on_the_state_of_psychology

Happiness: <https://www.ted.com/talks?sort=newest&q=happines>

Mental Health: <https://www.ted.com/talks?sort=newest&q=Mental+health>

SELF-CARE

Hunger

Anger

Loneliness

Tiredness

HALT—take a moment to see how you are. Assess your physical and emotional state. If you feel hungry, angry, lonely or tired your decision making may not be as you would like. You may not operate to your optimum.

CSEAS NEWS

On May 10th, the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service (CSEAS) was delighted to welcome Minister Donohoe to CSEAS HQ to launch the CSEAS Activity Report 2017. David Cagney, Chief Human Resources Officer for the Civil Service, was in attendance also. Attendees at the launch included the CSEAS team, members of the Civil Service HR Community and other Civil Service colleagues. The Minister commented on the level of detail contained in the report and commended the transparency with which the information was presented. He also spoke of the importance of focusing on staff health and wellbeing and how the CSEAS ably supports this on an ongoing basis. In this way, the CSEAS significantly contributes to the aim of the Civil Service to be an employer of choice.

CSEAS Activity Report Key Facts 2017:

- 14% of serving civil servants availed of the CSEAS
- 12,732 engagements with service users
- 230 health and wellbeing presentations delivered across Government
- Departments/Offices; to a total audience of approximately 5,000 staff



David Cagney, Chief Human Resources Officer for the Civil Service and Lorus Collum, Manager, CSEAS

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On-duty Employee Assistance Officer available:

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

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