

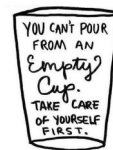


T&L Times

Well Being Edition 5— 10th July 2020

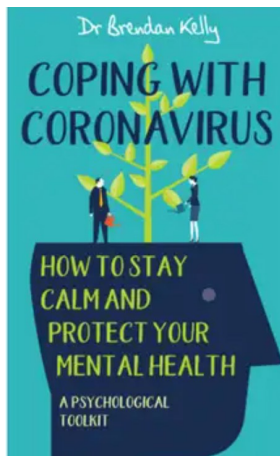
Welcome

As we head into the final push towards the end of term and start to think of a little break over the Summer, it is really important that we use this time to refocus, take stock and consider our well being. Hopefully our newsletter this week will give you plenty of ideas and tips. As our quote this week is one that we have considered before but at this time when we are feeling extra tired, it is even more apt:



Covid Concerns

If you have particular concerns around the Covid-19 pandemic and your mental health and well being then we may have the book for you.



Coping With Coronavirus: How to Stay Calm and Protect Your Mental Health by Dr Brendan Kelly

We're living in unprecedented times and as such, we're looking for answers and solutions to questions and dilemmas most of us couldn't have even dreamt up a year ago. Step in Dr Brendan Kelly, consultant psychiatrist and Professor of Psychiatry at Trinity College Dublin, with this informative and helpful book, which aims to provide a 'psychological toolkit' of practical tips and anxiety management techniques.

If you have a million questions about the pandemic racing around your head, then a download of this book, with its calm and clear answers could just be what you need. You'll also be supporting the invaluable front line work happening around the world, as royalties from the book are being donated to medical charities assisting with the global response to coronavirus.

You've Still Got Mail

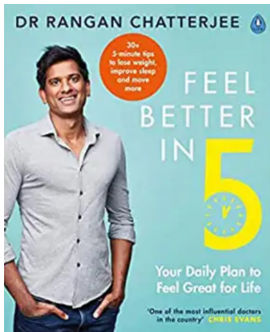
Sadly we were unable to undertake our remaining two 'You've got mail' drops due the current pandemic. What we will do is extend this into next year keeping the same partners to share gifts with. We will send out early in the new academic year a chance for anyone who would like to join the group and also a chance to replace anyone who either does not want to continue or has left one of our provisions.



Keep an eye out for the update during Term 1 and a massive thank you to those who participated in our one mail drop this year and put such big smiles on their partners faces.

Recommended Reads

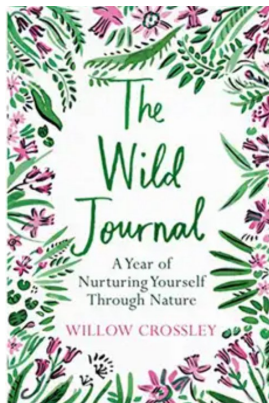
We look at three books recommended by the Evening Standard which you may want to take a moment to consider reading to improve your mental health and well being.



Feel Better in 5: Your Daily Plan to Feel Great for Life by Dr Rangan Chatterjee

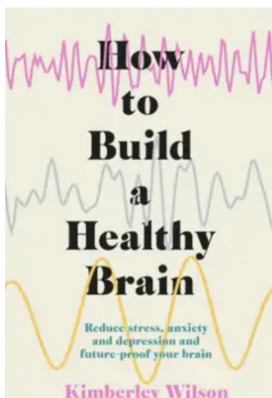
There's a reason the charismatic Dr Rangan Chatterjee is so beloved. He dispenses useful, research-backed advice in bitesize chunks. Following the success of *The 4 Pillar Plan* and *The Stress Solution*, Chatterjee's latest book, *Feel Better in 5*, is all about a daily programme that incorporates a five minute 'snack' for your mind, body and heart.

Among the snacks (that sadly don't have anything to do with food) are simple acts such as calling a friend, a morning wake-up flow exercise and simple breathing techniques. While this book promises a lot, the manner in which Chatterjee has organised it does feel like reaching into the cupboard for a quick satisfying snack. It's not overly complex or overwhelming and it may well go some way to making you feel great in exchange for those five minutes.



The Wild Journal by Willow Crossley

By now, we should all have figured out the importance of nature to our wellbeing, as we moon out the window at the trees and buds in the spring sunshine. In this beautifully illustrated book, florist and nature writer, Willow Crossley takes us through the four seasons, peppering each section with sweet anecdotes, craft ideas, recipes and suggestions on how to incorporate a little more nature and calm into our lives. Having suffered post-natal depression after the birth of her first son, Crossley found therapy in nature. Her book is a pleasing entry into the transformative and healing power of the outdoors, inviting readers to slow down and appreciate the beauty of a wildflower, or the soothing effect of a long walk, and its impact on our mental health and wellbeing.



How to Build a Healthy Brain by Kimberley Wilson

If you want a real deep-dive into the inner workings of your brain and its effect on pretty much everything, then this is your book. Nutrition trained chartered psychologist Kimberley Wilson brings together science and practical tips on a series of lifestyle topics, such as sleep, nutrition, and exercise. It's pretty all encompassing as she also tackles subjects including finance, fasting, social media and building psychological resilience. Not a quick and easy read but a crucial one. It will certainly leave you with a whole load of interesting facts to relay to your pals at your next virtual pub quiz.

Verdict:

How do you choose just one book out of this selection, when each so perfectly serves a different purpose? Well, if you're looking for something beautiful to soothe and make you feel joyous, then I'd happily settle down with the Wild Journal and a cup of tea. For something more challenging and to understand mental health at a deeper level, Kimberley Wilson's book is a must, whilst for those who are time strapped? It's got to be Dr Rangan Chatterjee's Feel Better in 5.



Top Tips

It is really important that you use the summer break to recharge those batteries and reflect before we go again in Term 1. We provide you with four top tips to help you recharge over the summer break whatever your role in school.

1. Limit the Work You Bring Home

Even before the last day of school, begin thinking about what tasks you would most like to complete and have ready for when you return back to school. Prioritize the 2-3 tasks that need your attention over the summer. The temptation to bring lots of things home is strong, but it's shown that the more things you bring home, the more overwhelmed you feel, and the less likely you will work on any of it.

This includes any organization projects you want to complete for the first day of school. Changing your classroom or office, adding new seating options, preparing folders, or printing and labelling,

2. Relax

This seems obvious, but even the most super human amongst us can overdo it if you don't make time for yourselves. Those tasks mentioned earlier might be considered by some to be relaxing. If that's the case, then go for it! Others might choose a slightly less active endeavour, such as reading for pleasure, crafting, doing sports or going to the movies. (if they are open!)

You may be tempted to give in to naysayers who claim that we all have the summer off. Our school lives are emotionally demanding and challenges even the most experienced among us. We sometimes use the summer months to take professional development courses, catch up on webinars and workshops, devise management techniques, and plan for the upcoming school year. The window to relax becomes limited, so be sure to make time for it

3. Reflect

Each afternoon, once the learners have left and the buzz settles, you may often stop to think about the day. (In all honesty, you may have little energy left for much else!) You may consider what went well, and just as importantly, what didn't. You may make a note of what changes you need to make next time and what you need to follow up on later. And you probably usually check your email, which can be time-consuming but necessary.

However, the hustle and bustle of the school year leaves little time to think broadly about your job role. Summer is the perfect opportunity to do that. Ask yourself questions such as, Why do I do my job? and Would I want to be a visitor in my school? Answer honestly. Develop a personal philosophy if you don't already have one. Consider whether you are open to learning new things that will enhance your role and whether you're the learners' needs are at the front of everything you do. Strive to be a better than you were yesterday. Our genuine responses may surprise us, but they're imperative to our growth as professionals.

4. Get organized

There are a plethora of ways to organize your work area this summer, and just as many ideas of what organized means. You know yourself best. This could mean cleaning out that closet I mentioned earlier, weeding through the filing cabinets you inherited from someone before you (or tossing them out entirely!), gathering ideas from other colleagues on social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter or Pinterest, and even starting some forward planning.

Regular Reminder

As part of the Trust we buy into the **Care First Package**.

How do I use the service? The service is free of charge for you to use and you don't need to ask your manager to use Care first, just call **0800 174319** and you can speak to a professional counsellor or information specialist in confidence. Care first is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by phone or online.

Digestible Documents

'Teachers need to know how to look after themselves. This may seem a simple and easy task; however, when faced with a multitude of teaching tasks, one of the areas all teachers can miss, is taking care of themselves.' (Turner and Braine, 2016)

Teaching is a privilege! What other job enables you to transform lives? All the hard work put into preparation, planning and assessment are forgotten during those 'lean forward' moments in the classroom when your pupils are so engaged in learning that they physically move towards you, or their peers, to participate more. And once your pupils are engaged, they can develop and flourish, with a whole world of potential opportunities unfolding before them. This said, pupils can only blossom if the ground that is feeding them is well nourished and refreshed. Teaching is a challenging job that can impact negatively on teacher wellbeing (Briner and Drewberry, 2007); (Turner and Braine, 2016). Understanding and supporting teacher wellbeing in schools, and enabling teachers to support themselves, is essential for a sustained healthy learning environment.

Teacher wellbeing has been described as involving three core elements (Humes, 2011):

Mental and Emotional / Physical / Social

As teachers, we need to manage these elements. Taking care of our mental and emotional wellbeing can be hard in a busy school, where we experience the demands of others (pupils and other teachers/leaders) and respond to these on a personal level. The physical demands of moving and talking all day can take their toll – as can the social requirement to engage with other teachers, pupils and parents, while remaining professional at all times. These personal demands to wellbeing should not be underestimated for teachers, trainee, NQTs or otherwise.

'... happier, motivated teachers may make pupils feel happier, motivated and more confident. Happier teachers may also be able to concentrate better on the job of teaching.' (Briner and Drewberry, 2007, p. 4)

So what can be done to support you as a new teacher in managing your workload as you enter this amazing profession? Here are just a few suggestions that demonstrate ways in which you can help yourself, as well as how you can work with your school leaders, mentor and initial teacher

training (ITT) provider

Speak up about different expectations in relation to workload

As a trainee teacher or NQT, you are required to be aware of your professional role and master a number of complex skills quickly, which can be stressful. Those supporting you in school, and in particular your mentor, should hopefully share realistic expectations in relation to your workload. Typically, the ITT provider of a trainee teacher will agree specific task requirements with the school, such as the requirements of lesson planning, and an NQT mentor will set out what is expected of the NQT. The challenge for you comes if these expectations are not clear between those overseeing your training or NQT year.

Examples of these mixed expectations can include:

You are asked, as a trainee, to use a specific pro forma for lesson planning by your ITT provider and a different pro forma by your school placement mentor

Your department head asks you, as an NQT, to use the department scheme of work, but the NQT mentor expects you to write your own.

You may feel uneasy about addressing different expectations that impact on your workload, especially if they are being set by people that appear to have the 'power' to determine the outcome of your training or NQT year, but hopefully, knowing that this is not how it should be will give you the confidence to address the problem. Be professional; explain to your mentor in the first case that there are different expectations in relation to the same task. No mentor would ever intend to duplicate a task, and therefore your speaking up will highlight an issue that would not have been realised.

Know when to stop working

When do you stop working on developing teaching resources, lesson plans, etc.? As trainee teachers and NQTs, it can be hard to recognise when you need to stop working. It is great to have high expectations of yourself in your new role as a teacher, but sometimes this leads to unnecessary pressure and excessive workload. Learning that there are times when 'good is good enough' and that work has to stop is important to your wellbeing. Savage and Fautley suggest that establishing a balanced approach

to work is one of the most important things for a teacher to recognise (Savage and Fautley, 2013).

An example of how you might end up working excessively long hours is lesson planning. You may write your lesson plan and then spend hours refining and honing it, concerned that one element may result in your pupils not progressing. You need to remember that if the evidence base suggests that the tasks in your lesson plan will support student progress then that is good enough. Stop there. Bubb and Earley highlighted the negative impact on children, and on learning, when teacher workload becomes impossible to manage (Bubb and Earley, 2004). Seek guidance from your school mentors if you feel that you are spending too long on particular tasks.

Seek support to manage school Systems

School systems, processes and tools can all seem overwhelming when you first encounter them as a trainee or NQT. If you consider that many teachers commit an average of 33 hours a week to non-teaching tasks (a DfE, 2016), it is imperative that you understand how school systems work to enable you to manage your time more effectively.

So how do I manage my workload?

Ideally, you will be supported as a trainee teacher in understanding how to manage your workload, being shown practical and real ways to undertake the essential tasks required by our profession. This support should extend into your NQT year, with your mentor enabling you to discuss your wellbeing and workload. The Department for Education (DfE) recently produced a report, 'Reducing Teacher Workload' (2016a), which not only highlighted concerns across the profession for the long hours that teachers are working, but also suggested ways to improve the situation:

'Teachers should not be spending their time on bureaucracy that does not add value. Teachers' time should be protected and used to make a difference.' (b DfE, 2016)

The DfE is working with schools through a variety of projects, such as those funded by the School Strategic Improvement Fund and the Teaching and Leadership Innovation Funding, to establish an evidence base of best practice to support changes in working for teachers.