

## Dear Trainees,

As we all know, ARCP is in the air!

The annual review of competence progression (ARCP) is an assessment that all postgraduate trainees in the United Kingdom are required to take in order assure competence progression. Although evaluations and perceptions of the usefulness, validity, and reliability remain widely challenged, it continues to facilitate curriculum coverage, as well as homogenise and incentivize broader clinical, academic, quality improvement, and interprofessional working. What ARCP also is for the trainee, is an extensive multi-faceted process of (but not limited to) collecting evidence, getting competencies signed and gathering multi source feedback from colleagues.

As we approach the ARCP deadlines and juggle through WPBAs and ILOs, it is critical to emphasise the impact that this process has on the trainees' health and well-being. According to studies, the months of April and May are among the most challenging for trainees in the UK, predisposing them to experience work related stress and burn out, lack of morale, motivation and productivity. This also makes them more susceptible to taking time off work and overall decline in health and wellbeing. It is therefore imperative that we continue to prioritise our health and wellbeing on a proactive basis. While wellness is, once again, a highly subjective notion, evidence suggests that simple initiatives can facilitate coping with day-to-day micro and macro stressors and also help prevent the gradual build-up of stress and anxiety that may lead to more severe stress-related biopsychological repercussions.

## TIPS FOR REDUCING WORKPLACE STRESS

EXCESSIVE STRESS CAN LOWER OUR PRODUCTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE. IT CAN ALSO CAUSE ANXIETY, IRRITABILITY, AND DEPRESSION, AMONG OTHER ISSUES.

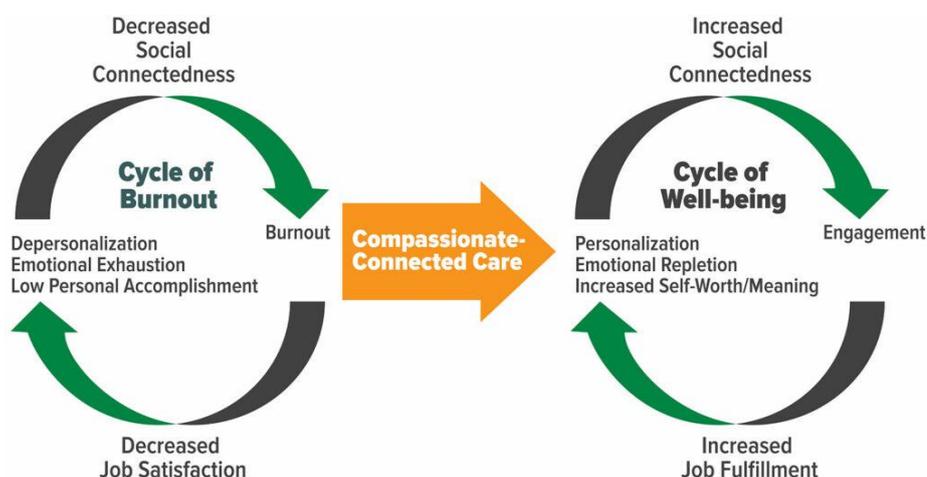


## 7 Evidence based strategies to deal with stress and anxiety

- <https://www.intentionalgenerations.com/blog/7-evidence-based-strategies-for-completing-the-stress-cycle>

I find the connected cycles of burnout and well-being quite thought-provoking, as I often find it difficult to acknowledge, understand, or conceptualise how simple measures can help us pendulate from one end of the spectrum to another. I have linked the article below, that talks specifically about doctors and shares some case studies, that may be quite relatable.

<http://anesthesiaexperts.com/uncategorized/hiding-plain-sight-compassion-antidote-burnout-post-covid-era/>

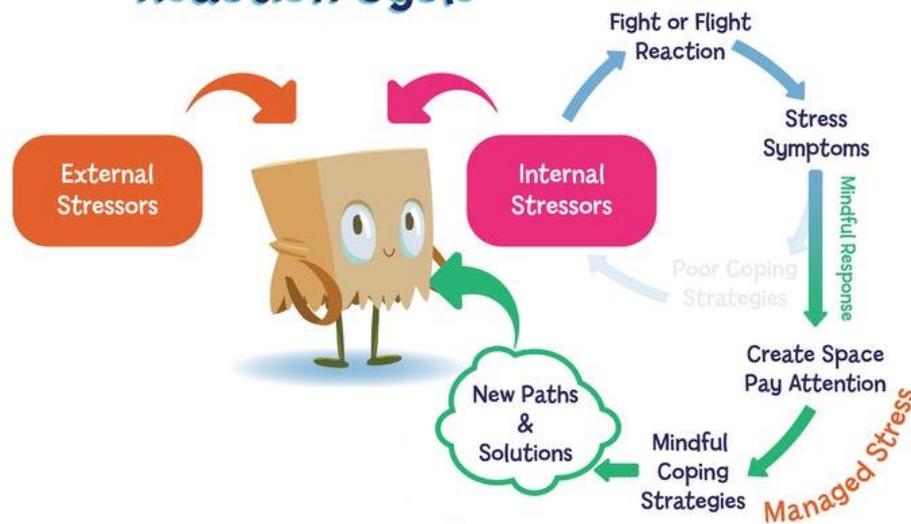


HEEYH has put together a list of links to Wellbeing Resources, many of which you may have come across already, however just thought it will be timely to share them once again to refresh our memories:

- <https://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/ophthalmology/trainee-resources/wellbeing>

Additionally, many trusts have dedicated Workplace Wellbeing initiatives which may be beneficial to know about, so do have a look at your trust intranet pages.

## The Mindful Stress Reaction Cycle



- <https://www.brownbagfilms.com/labs/entry/changing-the-stress-cycle-StressAwarenessMonth>

Once again, it is important to highlight that 'Wellbeing' is not a mutually exclusive term, and this is something we all, as trainees are eager to convey to decision makers and stakeholders, particularly through the TEF platform. We need to continue to strive to make training holistic, realistic and sustainable. The considerations range from curriculum development to plausible goal setting, protected time and pastoral support. The importance of integrating and prioritising A, B,C of core work needs need to be considered and met in order to ensure wellbeing and motivation at work, and to address occupational stress and associated challenges.

In conclusion, we need to be cautious, weather we are using 'wellbeing' as a term and an initiative to plaster onto the glaring, gaping, realities of the highly pressured system we work in, something that Michael West and Dame Coia continue to talk about and is summarised in their work 'Caring for doctors Caring for patients' which is a detailed practical proposal in form of a report and provides almost a road map to health service leaders who are faced with the challenge of developing healthy and sustainable workforces – I found it quite insightful and I feel it helped me think and learn more about our intricate needs as individuals and professionals, and how this links with wider health, productivity, and wellbeing of healthcare workers (Pdf attached).

Lastly, it remains a key realisation that ensuring psychologically safe, practically well equipped, workplaces with compassionate environment, realistic workload and supportive colleagues can help, if not mitigate the burn out epidemic amongst healthcare work force.

## Hiding in Plain Sight: Compassion as an Antidote to Burnout in the Post-COVID Era

- <http://anesthesiaexperts.com/uncategorized/hiding-plain-sight-compassion-antidote-burnout-post-covid-era/>

I wish we all get through this, safe and sound and thriving!

Best Wishes

*Sana*

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