

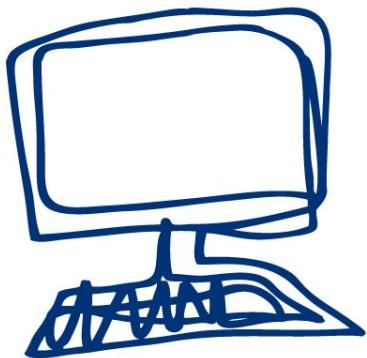


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Working from
home, furlough,
redundancy and
your wellbeing



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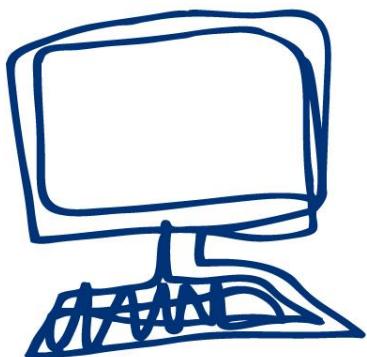




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This guide explores the effects that changes to the way you work, uncertainty and job loss can have on your mental health and wellbeing.

Many people are experiencing some unexpected uncertainties in relation to their jobs. We'll take a look at some of the circumstances people may find themselves in, how it can affect our mental health and wellbeing and things we can do to keep ourselves well through uncertain times.





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Home
working

Positive wellbeing when Home working

If you are able to do all or part of your job from home instead of attending your usual workplace, your employer may ask you to work at home. This might be on certain days or on a full time basis, and may be for a few weeks or possibly longer.



It's important we recognise how working from home may affect our mental health and ensure we are taking care of ourselves and our colleagues.

Working from home is something many people can adapt to, however there are specific worries and wellbeing concerns that can crop up, often without us realising.

Being at home more can have some benefits, for example many people will not be missing their daily commute! But it can also bring feelings of isolation, loneliness and lack of motivation.

Some people may feel the opposite and become anxious about getting enough work done, meaning they work more intensively and for longer hours than they would normally in their usual place of work.

Positive wellbeing when Home working

I. Maintain a positive work/life balance

It's easy to work longer hours and take fewer breaks when working from home. Why not put a reminder in your diary when you plan to finish working? You can also make sure you take regular breaks and at least a 30-minute lunch break. If you can, try to get some fresh air and go for a short walk.



2. Check in with colleagues regularly

Working from home can be isolating; ensure you and your colleagues have regular check-ins virtually. Find an online tool that works for your team whether it's Microsoft teams, a conference call facility like Skype or by phone. Make sure these regular check-ins are scheduled in advance; have some daily scheduled chat time and regular time in the diary.

Positive wellbeing when Home working

3. Establish new ways of working

Working remotely will require consideration as to how you will deliver work as a staff member or team member - what collaborative working platforms will be used, how you will communicate and how you support each other through challenges. Some of it might be trial and error so it is also important to think about how you will reflect on what's working and what isn't.



4. Manage your workload

You might find that whilst working, some of your colleagues may be on furlough. This can sometimes mean having less contact with them and picking up extra work. Keep in touch with your manager regularly so that you can manage your workload effectively and you are not feeling under pressure to do lots of extra tasks. If there are members of your team on furlough, connect with other colleagues or temporarily join another team. Stay connected so that you don't feel isolated.

Positive wellbeing when Home working

5. Create a Wellness Action Plan

This is an uncertain and worrying time for many and you may need additional support. Why not complete a Wellness Action Plan (WAP) and share this with your manager. If you already have one then it would be helpful to review in light of recent developments and changes. This can be looked at and kept up to date during 1-2-1s.

Everyone can complete a WAP, you don't need to have a mental health condition in order to feel the benefits. It just means that you already have practical steps in place to ensure you are supported when you aren't feeling great.

6. Take advantage of technology

Use Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Skype or other communication/collaborative working platforms to connect with colleagues and work together. It can also be good idea to use a range of technologies so you're not always typing or looking at a screen – switch things up with a telephone call or video call so you can see someone face to face.

7. Use the support tools available

Whatever wellbeing support your organisation has available, make sure you know about it and how to access it.



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Furlough

Positive wellbeing during

Furlough

If your employer is in a position where they temporarily have less or no work for you to do, they might be able to keep you on the payroll if they're unable to operate and put you on temporary leave instead. This is known as being put 'on furlough'.



Being furloughed might represent an opportunity for taking a break from working in challenging conditions but you may also face some other challenges during this time.

These may include feeling that daily life lacks structure or that you lack purpose and motivation. This could lead to a decrease in your levels of self-esteem and self-worth.

In the short-term, you may have financial concerns due to your income being reduced or have longer-term fears of being made redundant.

Here are some ideas and suggestions for ways you can look after your wellbeing and get support if you are on furlough.

Positive wellbeing during **Furlough**

1. Establish a routine

Your employer may be able to help you to create a routine action plan to plan your time while on furlough. This can help you to identify any personal or professional goals that you may want to focus on and steps you can take to stay well.

2. Talk to colleagues

It is important to keep in regular contact with your colleagues (whether they are also furloughed or not). With 60% of people saying that loneliness is currently making their mental health worse, keeping in touch with your colleagues will help you feel more connected and less isolated.

3. Create shared goals

Consider teaming up with your workmates to achieve shared goals. This can give you something to work towards and help create a sense of community with your colleagues as well as being some fun to occupy your time. Think about setting a creative or physical challenge or starting a virtual book or film club.

4. Create a budget

Consider creating a budget, particularly if being furloughed means you have taken a cut in pay. Financial concerns can seriously affect your mental health so a budget may enable you to manage both your money and your wellbeing.

Positive wellbeing during Furlough

5. Look at your personal development

Doing online training to achieve personal or professional goals could help you to feel more motivated and boost your self-esteem. For personal development, you could check out YouTube or the Open University for free tutorials and courses. Volunteering to help your community during this difficult time can help you develop skills and experience as well as give you a sense of purpose.

6. Seek support from your employer

Your employer can help you stay connected to the organisation and support your wellbeing while you are furloughed. Consider asking about:

- regular one-to-one wellbeing check-ins, ideally via video call and virtual team catch-ups;
- keeping you informed of any company developments;
- being available to discuss any work-related concerns you may have about the current situation and the future.

7. Seek support from other areas

If you have developed a routine action plan, you may want to share this with friends, family and workmates who can provide support when you need it. Don't be afraid to ask for help or support with your wellbeing.



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Redundancy

Positive wellbeing following **Redundancy**



It is recognised that being made redundant is likely to be in the top ten most stressful events that can happen throughout your life. However it can also be seen as an opportunity for change, a chance to re-evaluate what is important to you, and what direction your career might take in the future.

Most of us will be made redundant more than twice in our working life, although if you've been made redundant that won't feel like any consolation to you. Being a statistic doesn't help. This is real for you right now.

The most important element to being made redundant is that you preserve your self confidence, however hard that might feel. The situation you are in now is not your fault.

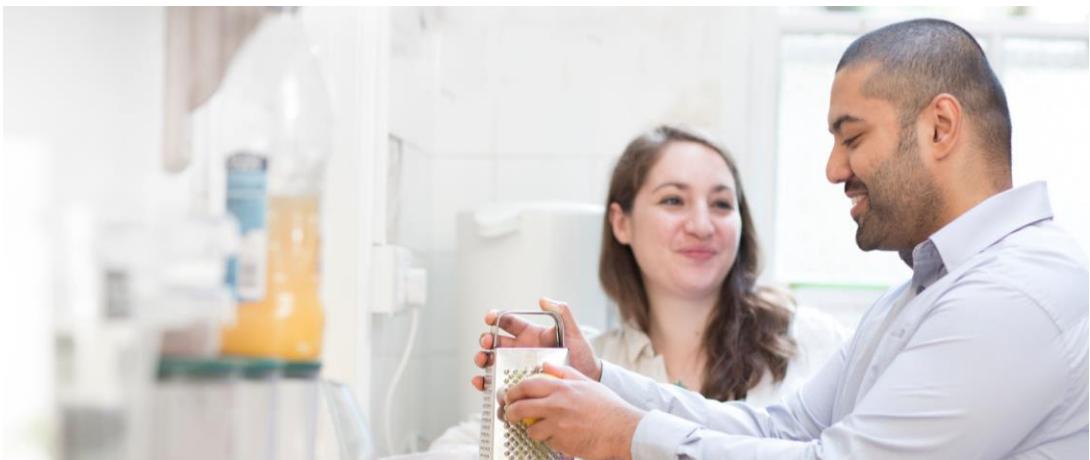


Positive wellbeing following Redundancy

Your friends and family are likely to be able help you stay positive. They know your strengths and value you whether you are at work or not.

Human dignity is not defined solely by our ability to work and be employed, but it is a big part of life. But that's hard to do when you are experiencing all kinds of emotions: shock, grief, loss.

If you have been in your job for a significant time, then it is natural to struggle when that job is taken away from you, especially when this wasn't your choice.

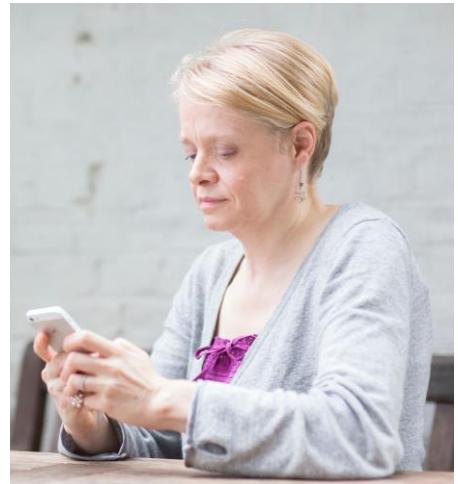


Acknowledging the emotional impact of sudden redundancy is the first step in looking after our wellbeing.

Knowing that many friends and colleagues are in the same situation may make you feel worse, but also there is camaraderie in knowing that you are there for one another.

Positive wellbeing following Redundancy

There will be plenty of people that you can speak to in the weeks and months to come who can offer practical support, advice and guidance, about what new opportunities you might consider, even though looking for a new job may feel like a step too far.



Stick with it, because there will be new opportunities on the horizon, although they may challenge you and be different to what you are used to.

Some people call mental health ‘emotional health’ or ‘wellbeing’ and it is just as important as good physical health. It doesn’t matter what you call it. The important thing is that you look after it!

We all have times when we feel down or stressed or frightened. Most of the time those feelings pass. But sometimes they develop into a more serious problem that doesn’t go away easily.

This could happen to any one of us. Everyone is different. You may bounce back from a setback while someone else may feel weighed down by it for a long time.

Positive wellbeing following Redundancy

Your mental health doesn't always stay the same. It can change as circumstances change and as you move through different stages of your life. Some people think there's still a stigma attached to mental health problems, although this has changed a lot in recent years.

Although we're talking more about how we feel, some people can find it uncomfortable to acknowledge anxiety and depression and don't talk about them much. Many people don't even feel comfortable talking about their feelings at all.

But it's healthy to know and say how you're feeling, especially at times like this.



Positive wellbeing following Redundancy

Right now, you will be going through all kinds of feelings: shock, anger, despair, fear for the future – these are just some of the things you may be feeling. All of these feelings are perfectly natural. Everyone is different and will work through their feelings at a different pace.

It's when those feelings go on for a long time that you may need help to work through them. There's no magic solution to redundancy. You may feel as though everything you have known has been taken away right now.



But, glib as it sounds, tomorrow really IS another day. You will find another future, albeit different. But you are a valuable human being with lots of skills. Remember that!

Positive wellbeing following Redundancy

1. Keep talking

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled. Talking can be a way to cope with a problem you've been carrying around in your head for a while. Just being listened to can help you feel supported and less alone. And it works both ways. If you open up, it might encourage others to do the same.

2. Keep in touch

Strong family ties and supportive friends can help you deal with the stresses of life. They can offer different views from whatever's going on inside your own head. They can help keep you active, keep you grounded and help you solve practical problems. Surround yourself with positive people who can be there for you and understand you well.

3. Ask for help

None of us are superhuman. We all sometimes get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel or when things go wrong. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help. Your family or friends may be able to offer practical help or a listening ear. It's quite OK to say "no" when people make demands of you. You just need to be polite and firm.

Positive wellbeing following Redundancy

4. Allow yourself space

In the aftermath of losing your job there is usually a very busy time: filling in lots of forms, working out how to pay your bills, telling your loved ones about your situation, and then endless job applications. Often you will apply for things that you don't really want to do, but if successful, the right job will fill an immediate gap and give you breathing space for a little while. During this time try to take a few minutes for yourself every day. Turn your phone off. Go for a walk. Or just close your eyes and take time out.

5. Keep active

Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, look and feel better. Exercise also keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy. Walking the dog, gardening or housework can keep you active, as well as going to the gym or playing sports. Make physical activity that you enjoy a part of your day.

6. Eat well

There are strong links between what we eat and how we feel – for example, caffeine and sugar can have an immediate effect. But food can also have a long-lasting effect on your mental health. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well, just like the other organs in your body. A diet that's good for your physical health is also good for your mental health.

Positive wellbeing following Redundancy

7. Take a break

A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health, so give yourself some 'me time'. Listen to your body; If you're really tired, give yourself time to sleep. Without good sleep, our mental health suffers and our concentration goes downhill. Sometimes the world can wait.

8. Do something you're good at

Enjoying yourself helps beat stress. Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it and achieving something boosts your self-esteem. Concentrating on a hobby like gardening or the crossword can help you forget your worries for a while and change your mood.

9. Accept who you are

We're all different. It's much healthier to accept that you're unique than to wish you were more like someone else. Feeling good about yourself boosts your confidence to learn new skills, visit new places and make new friends. Good self-esteem helps you cope when life takes a difficult turn. Be proud of who you are. Recognise and accept what you are not good at, but focus on what you do well. Work out if there's anything that you still want to change. Are your expectations realistic? If they are, work towards the change in small steps.



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