

Get ready for the pharmacy

Simple ways to prioritise your wellbeing
as a newly qualified pharmacist.



PHARMACIST
SUPPORT

#ACTNOW

2024

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Who is Pharmacist Support?

Pharmacist Support is an independent charity providing a variety of free and confidential support to those working and studying in pharmacy. We're dedicated to championing the wellbeing of our pharmacy family and that's why we're encouraging pharmacy trainees to #ACTNow.

What is #ACTNow?

We know it can be difficult to find time to prioritise wellbeing, especially if you're working whilst studying for the assessment. In our dedication to support you, Pharmacist Support is proud to run our annual ACTNow wellbeing campaigns. ACTNow encourages individuals to:

Allow time for wellbeing **Consider the needs of others** **Take action**

During the campaign, you will have access to a multitude of resources and events to help you become familiar with wellbeing and support you to prioritise wellbeing in your everyday life. Please visit our website to find out more and to sign up to the next ACTNow campaign.

What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing is the state of having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and the ability to manage stress. It's important to realise that wellbeing is a much deeper concept than moment-to-moment happiness, and we must actively invest in it if we want to have sustained happiness, control of our emotions, higher productivity, and good physical health.

 [PharmacistSupport.org](https://www.PharmacistSupport.org)

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 [Pharmacist-Support](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Pharmacist-Support)

 [Pharmacist Support](https://www.youtube.com/PharmacistSupport)

Wellbeing when at work.

Making the transition from being a trainee to working full time as a qualified pharmacist is an exciting time. You may have mixed emotions – people often experience excitement and nervousness and even some anxiety as they experience major life changes like moving into professional life.

Feeling nervous or anxious when experiencing change is natural, as you will be confronting new situations and bearing new responsibilities.

This pack aims to give you some useful tips and tools as you move from being a trainee to a fully qualified pharmacist, and to be a source of guidance on coping with challenges you might encounter when in the pharmacy.

We will explore ways to look after your wellbeing and mental health as you start your journey in your new career, with tips on managing worries, overcoming stress and avoiding burnout. We hope you enjoy this pack and find it useful on your journey to sustained wellbeing at work.

At times, working in a pharmacy setting can be stressful, so to help patients and support your colleagues, it's important you take simple steps to focus on your wellbeing.

1. Create a safe and healthy working environment

Take the time to arrange your work area to support a safe and effective way of working. Remember to also stay hydrated by having enough to drink throughout the day.

2. Take breaks

As highlighted in the PDA's Safer Pharmacies Charter, pharmacists must be able to take at least their statutory and contractual breaks and rest periods, and additional breaks as required to meet their professional obligations.

While on your breaks, making sure you disconnect physically and mentally is vital for your wellbeing.

3. Prioritise your time

If you are feeling overwhelmed by your workload and can't see a solution, try listing all the things you need to do in order of priority. This may sound simple but creating a 'to-do' list is one of the easiest and most beneficial ways to manage your time effectively.

You can find a free *Time Management* workshop on our [Wellbeing Learning Platform](#).

4. Be assertive when needed

A responsible pharmacist finds the confidence to explain things firmly, fairly and with empathy, with both colleagues and customers. It doesn't come easily to everyone, but being assertive can improve morale and leave everyone feeling their needs have been considered.

You can also find a free *Assertiveness* workshop on our [Wellbeing Learning Platform](#).

6. Don't accept abuse

NHS and community pharmacy employers have commitments to zero tolerance of violence, which includes abuse. It is the employer who is primarily responsible for ensuring that risk reduction measures are in place, so it is important to ensure that you are aware of the procedures in your workplace and report any patient that is abusive.

7. Book time off when needed

We all have limits on our energy and output. In our busy lives, these limits can be tested the more we push ourselves to meet daily tasks, deadlines and objectives.

If we continue beyond our fatigue point, performance is likely to drop and we can become affected by negative stress. Errors may become more likely and so it is not wise to "soldier on" and risk the consequences.

This guide was developed with ACTNow sponsors, The PDA.



Understanding your worries can help you to manage any unwanted or unhelpful thoughts and maintain a sense of control over your situation.

Use this flowchart to examine your worries and find a path for dealing with them. Print it off, write down your worry, and follow the chart to try and find a solution.

Keep calm.

It's common to experience feelings of anxiety when stressful events occur in your life such as sitting the assessment or adapting to a new workplace.

Making the transition from being a trainee to a qualified pharmacist is, for many, the beginning of a whole new stage in life.

The responsibility can be overwhelming, and for some trainees it can be hard to control their worries on a daily basis.

Talking to others can help. Anxiety is a condition that can cause some of us to self-isolate and close off to others, but talking to people really can help. You may be surprised to find how many newly-qualified pharmacists share your concerns and how eager family, friends and colleagues are to help.

Educate yourself. You may find that reading about anxiety can help you to understand what is happening and manage your triggers. Visit our website for more support with anxiety.

Get active. Exercise can help manage physical and mental stress by reducing levels of stress hormones. Exercise also releases endorphins, which create feelings of happiness and euphoria. Studies have shown that exercise can even alleviate symptoms of clinical depression and anxiety.

Listening Friends. Our Listening Friends service provides you with the opportunity to talk anonymously and confidentially to a pharmacist about any work-related or personal stresses you are facing. Visit our website for more information about our Listening Friends service.

Challenge your worries. Understanding your worries can help you to manage any unwanted or unhelpful thoughts. In turn, this can help you to focus your energy on other priorities or simply to relax.

Try our flowchart on the opposite page to have a go at challenging your worries. Counselling can also be a great help. If you are struggling to access counselling, we can help. Find out more here.

Breathe to reduce stress.

Stress is the feeling of being under too much mental or emotional pressure.

We all need a certain amount of pressure to function well, as pressure helps people to reach their peak efficiency, increase drive to meet deadlines and achieve targets. However, when pressure becomes too intense and prolonged, this can lead to more serious symptoms and problems such as anxiety, depression, headaches, weight gain/loss, sleep disturbance, sweating, abdominal pain, chest pain and panic attacks.

When we're stressed, the sympathetic nervous system is triggered. This then activates a chain of reactions in the body. By learning breathing exercises to create calm,

these intentional breaths can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which calms down the stress response. To relieve stress, some people find a technique called box breathing useful.

With box breathing, you imagine the pace of your breath following the outside of a box.

This involves inhaling for four seconds, holding air in your lungs for four seconds, exhaling for four seconds then holding your lungs empty for four seconds. To feel the full benefits, repeat the pattern at least three times.

Breathe in for 4 > > >

Hold for 4 > > >

< < < Breathe out for 4

Hold for 4 > > >

This is an excerpt from our video *How to reduce stress through the way you breathe*. [Sign up to our free Wellbeing Learning Platform](#) to access this and many other mental health and wellbeing workshops and videos.

How Pharmacist Support can help you with stress.

If you are struggling with stress, there are many ways we can support you.

You aren't alone.

A Listening Friend

If you're having an issue at work or home and would like some peer support, Pharmacist Support's Listening Friends are here to help. You can [fill out an application form on our website](#), and we will arrange for a trained volunteer pharmacist to give you a call.

Counselling

Pharmacist Support offers counselling to students, trainees and pharmacists who are experiencing mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, a change in family circumstances, bereavement, and other psychological difficulties. Please visit our website for more information and to complete the self-referral form.

Wellbeing Learning Platform

Our free Wellbeing Learning Platform is for individual wellbeing learning and training. It contains workshops which are specifically tailored to meet the needs of those in the pharmacy profession, such as the science of stress and anxiety and its effect on you; techniques to use when you're feeling under pressure; and tools like cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), plus much more. To sign up and access a range of online wellbeing workshops at a time that suits you, please visit pharmacistsupport.clcmoodle.org.



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Trainee Pharmacists

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Membership of the PDA gives you:

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- A dedicated team of pharmacists and legal experts on hand to provide support and advice
- A PDA Plus benefits package of discounts and special offers
- Membership of the PDA Union - the only independent trade union in the UK exclusively for pharmacists
- Each year you are a member, we will donate £1 to the charity that helps pharmacists



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| **supporting your career** |



Your journey to wellbeing starts **today.**



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more wellbeing support and stay up
to date with our latest charity news.



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