PHARMACIST SUPPORT

The Pharmacy Wellbeing Guide.

Practical ways to take care of yourself and support people around you.

#ACTNOW 2026

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#ACTNOW

Free wellbeing resources and support for you and your team!

Why the focus on wellbeing?

87% of pharmacists are at risk of burnout*. Top factors attributed to burnout include inadequate staffing, lack of work-life balance, insufficient protected learning time, absence of colleague or senior support and long working hours. As the profession's charity, we're at the forefront of encouraging workplaces, pharmacy teams and individuals to prioritise wellbeing to help counter the negative effects of burnout, stress and pressure that our pharmacy family experiences.

ACTNow and the Essential Eight

Our annual Pharmacist ACTNow campaign is open to the whole pharmacy team and encourages individuals and organisations across all pharmacy settings to take positive action for their wellbeing, create supportive working environments and make wellbeing part of everyday practice. By signing up to our free digital newsletter, ACTNow participants will receive support to help them look after their wellbeing. This includes practical resources and inspirational stories and advice from across the pharmacy profession, as well as opportunities to explore the Essential Eight: Your Script for Wellbeing – Pharmacist Support's holistic approach to wellbeing, tailored to our pharmacy family.

Sign up to ACTNow!

*Figure from our 2024 Workforce Wellbeing Survey ran jointly with the Royal College.

Supporting colleagues through difficulties.

We have a collective responsibility (as colleagues, managers and employers) to support each other through challenging times.

Why is it important?

Knowing we are, or will be, supported at work if we're going through difficulty can help us to thrive in our roles. This is because it increases our levels of trust, reduces stress and boosts our sense of belonging within the team.

With good working conditions, there is more chance the pharmacy team will have the capacity to respond to unforeseen challenges and the resilience to bounce back from difficult events.

What are challenging times?

Everyone faces adversities throughout their lives. Some challenges may be easier for some people to manage, however there are common challenges which are more likely to impact us, including:

- Addiction
- Bereavement
- Financial difficulties
- Mental health difficulties
- Physical health problems
- Relationship breakdowns
- Workplace issues.

How to spot if someone is struggling.

People who work closely with one another are often the first to spot changes in someone's mood or behaviour. As everyone is different, it's important to understand what *their* signs are that something could be wrong. What may be normal personality traits or habits for one person, might be an indication of going through adversity for someone else. Certain behaviours could indicate that a colleague may be struggling, and these often happen gradually. These include a drop in their productivity, focus, and motivation, changes in how they interact with their colleagues and patients, appearing down, withdrawn, detached, tired, anxious, and displaying other unusual or unpredictable behaviours.

How to give support.

Even when you can see someone's struggling, it can be difficult to know what to do. You might be concerned about causing upset or offense, or simply having misread the situation. However, it's usually better to offer help to someone, than do nothing at all. Here are some tips on how to offer support:

1. Recognise who the most appropriate person to help your colleague is. This may be you, or it may be their line manager, HR or a close friend/colleague.

2. If it isn't you, you could then approach the best person who is and, in a way which is respectful to the colleague you're worried about, let them know about your concerns.

3. If you are the most appropriate person to support a colleague and you're in a position to open up a dialogue, remain positive, empathetic and supportive.

4. If your colleague decides to open up to you, it's important to listen with intent and let them explain their struggles in their own words. Often, allowing someone to offload is the biggest act of support you can give.

5. If needed, direct your colleague to support available to them. This could be through your own employer, or through our charitable services, some of which are outlined below.

6. Consider long-term support from you and your organisation if appropriate. This could be through regular informal check ins, through creating an action plan together, or through more formal support.

This is an extract from our webpage *Supporting colleagues through challenging times.*

Get more colleague support

How Pharmacist Support can help.

Pharmacist Support is the profession's independent charity, providing trusted information, practical resources and confidential support to pharmacists and their families, former pharmacists, trainees and pharmacy students across Great Britain.

Our mission is to champion the wellbeing of our pharmacy family. We're here throughout their pharmacy journey, helping people look after their wellbeing and navigate life's challenges.

Our support is brought together across four key areas, making it easy to find what's right for you:

Mental health and wellbeing – supporting mental and physical health through trusted guidance and self-help.

Financial health – helping people build financial confidence and positive money habits, with practical guidance, financial assistance and specialist debt and benefits advice.

Workplace wellbeing – providing information, practical resources and learning to help people look after their wellbeing at work and create healthier, more supportive working environments.

Study and training – helping students and trainees navigate the pressures of studying and training, look after their wellbeing and prepare for the next stage of their pharmacy journey.

Please visit our website for more information and to access our free and confidential support.

Visit the Pharmacist Support website



Daily habits to manage stress.

Stress is the feeling of too much mental or emotional pressure. While some pressure can boost motivation and performance, excessive or prolonged stress can lead to more serious physical and mental issues.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, there are daily actions you can do to help manage your stress.

Prioritise tasks.
List all the things you need to do, rank their priority and then write a plan with small, easy steps, focusing on dealing with one task at a time. By breaking your list down, it'll feel more manageable.

Connect with others.
Talking to a friend, family member or trusted colleague can be a great way to seek support and gain perspective.

Be active.
Exercise won't eliminate stress, but it can reduce its intensity, clear your mind and help you handle problems more calmly. It also releases built-up stress hormones and outdoor exercise, like a walk in the park, can be especially beneficial.

Prioritise wellbeing.
Making time to unwind and enjoy life is an important part of improving and maintaining positive wellbeing. It not only relieves stress and anxiety, but also lowers blood pressure, relieves chronic pain, and improves your immune and cardiovascular systems.

A DOSE OF WELLBEING
The Pharmacist Support Podcast

For more guidance on everyday self-care strategies and workplace wellbeing initiatives, tune into our podcast, A Dose of Wellbeing.

Watch A Dose of Wellbeing!

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 (WELP) offers practical learning tailored to the needs of people working and studying in pharmacy. Explore online workshops and bite-sized learning videos covering topics such as understanding stress and anxiety and how they can affect you, techniques to help when you're feeling under pressure and tools based on 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 our Wellbeing Learning Platform.

Create a free WELP account!



Money and mental health: ten tips to ease the stress

As a charity we understand how overwhelming and stressful money worries can be on someone's mental health and wellbeing. We've worked with our specialist debt and benefits advice partner, Citizens Advice Manchester, to bring you our top ten tips to help you to organise your money and balance your books.

1 Prioritise essential bills

Essential bills include things like your utility bills, mortgage or rent, and council tax payments. Expenditure on travel costs for work, registration renewal, and your insurance should be included in your priorities as these are essential for you to work. If you have outstanding balances on credit cards and loans you might want to think about paying more than the minimum monthly amount due if possible, but never at the expense of the essentials. Looking for good deals on interest for credit cards can be useful but be careful as interest rates on these cards is often high once the interest free period expires. If things get out of hand seek advice.

2 List incomings and outgoings

Now you can begin to plan your budget. Make a list of all the money you have coming in and all the essential bills and expenditure. This will include items such as food, clothing, and other household essentials. If there is a shortfall rather than an excess, you will need to think about other ways of maximising your income. You could also consider using a budget planning tool.

3 Track where your money is going

Have a look at your bank and credit card statements over the last twelve months. Are you spending any money unnecessarily? Take a look at your direct debits. Keep an eye on any monthly subscriptions; if you know when they are going to end, you might be able to negotiate a better deal.

4 Avoid wasting money

If you spend £4 a day on a hot drink at work, this amounts to over £1,000 every year. Investing in a flask means you can still enjoy a much-needed pause whilst saving yourself a lot of money! These savings could be increased further by making your own lunch to take to work. Before you make a purchase, be it large or small, ask yourself whether you really need it. If you don't need it, don't buy it. Keep a money diary for a period of time to track those little payments we don't think about in our daily lives. It can give you detailed insight into your spending habits.

5 Shop around

If you have an essential purchase to make, it is always worth shopping around first to make sure you have the best deal before you lay out any money. If you don't have time to look locally, you can take a look online and sort out the best deal from there. You could also use price comparison sites to be sure you are getting value for money.

6 Open a savings account

You should always try to plan for the unexpected. Your washing machine may need replacing or your car may need repairs. You never know when this might happen. Open a savings account and try to save a regular amount every month to help you to plan for such eventualities.

7 Maximise your money

Have a look at whether you can increase your monthly income. Can you take on a couple of extra shifts at work? Are you claiming all benefits that you might be entitled to? If there are any benefits due to you, you should make a claim as soon as possible. If you are not sure whether there are any benefits that you can claim, we can help. Contact our team and, where appropriate, we can refer you to our specialist benefits adviser for a full benefits check.

8 Deal with your debts

Don't avoid your debts. If you are struggling to pay you can try contacting your creditors to see if you can negotiate a reduced payment rate. Telling them that you are having financial difficulty allows them to look at options to help you. You might also find it helpful to seek some debt advice. For Citizens Advice information and guidance see our webpage on help with debt.

9 Set a savings goal

Saving money every month can be hard, so it helps to set yourself a goal. This could be saving the deposit for your first home, home improvements, or a holiday. Having a goal will encourage you to set some money aside every month for something that you really want. For further information about saving see the Money Helper website.

10 Stick to your budget

Once you have organised your money and know what you must spend each month, make sure you stick to it. Don't be tempted by impulse buys and don't go food shopping without making a list of items you need first. If you stick to your list, you are less likely to waste your money on non-essential food buying.

This information is taken from our webpage ***Top ten tips for money management***. More guidance and support on managing your finances can be found on our website.

Get more support for managing finances

Improve wellbeing through giving.

Altruism can support mental health and wellbeing in several ways.

It helps us to create a sense of purpose, build social connections, reduce focus on personal worries, strengthen self-esteem and boost positive emotions (often described as the 'helper's high'!).

Some scientific studies also say that people who volunteer are more resistant to depression.

How to start your giving journey:

- do something you love for a cause you love and you're more likely to stick to it - even an hour a week makes a difference
- go digital - social media, apps and the internet are all useful places to search for volunteering opportunities
- it isn't just about your professional skills - housekeeping, DIY, driving, fundraising and organisational skills are very useful
- get the whole pharmacy team involved to help strengthen work morale and relationships, and have a bigger impact
- remember that giving isn't just about money. Visit our website to check out our resource on alternative ways to give back to the community with easy acts of giving.

Examples of volunteering activities:

- peer support, including self-help groups, peer-led education and organising and/or participating in environmental projects
- volunteering in health settings, particularly when involved in the direct care and education of patients
- mentoring and teaching programmes
- social support of older people
- providing palliative/hospice care
- running or supporting clubs within the local community (such as Scouts/ Brownies, sports clubs and other recreational clubs)
- volunteering in a religious or local community centre, charity or Community Interest Company.

At the end of each week, reflect on the kind, giving acts you have accomplished. Simply taking stock of the things you've done for others can result in feeling happier, and experiencing this boost in happiness can then potentially create a positive cycle whereby you want to continue giving and doing kind things.

This information is an extract from our webpage ***Improve wellbeing through giving***:

Read more on giving



Become a Pharmacist Support volunteer ambassador!

Ambassadors play an important role helping us to raise awareness about our charity. By becoming an ambassador, you could represent us at events, give short talks or presentations about our work, contribute to and share our resources, campaigns and communications with your networks, support fundraising activities or help us to build connections with pharmacy organisations. If you're a pharmacist, retired pharmacist or trainee, and keen to champion pharmacy wellbeing, we'd love to hear from you!

What you'll gain:

- The opportunity to make a positive difference to pharmacy wellbeing
- Experience supporting a national charity
- Opportunities to develop skills and expand your professional network
- Ongoing support, training and resources from the Pharmacist Support team
- A chance to help shape future campaigns and activities.

Find out more and apply!



For pharmacy managers & leaders!

Embracing a Workplace Wellbeing Culture.

A Pharmacist Support course for managers, supervisors and leaders to help you make practical and positive changes to your workplace and how you manage and support employees. The aim of the training is to create healthy working environments with wellbeing at the core.

Modules you will cover:

1. Introduction to wellbeing in the workplace.
2. Understanding mental health and wellbeing.
3. The role of the manager in creating a positive workplace culture.
4. Communication tools to support team wellbeing.
5. Workplace adjustments and structures to support team wellbeing.
6. Building resilience and a growth mindset in your team and across the organisation.

Visit our website to find out more

NEW: Help make wellbeing a more natural part of your workplace with our Embracing a Workplace Wellbeing Culture scheme for pharmacy employers.

the essential eight your script for wellbeing

The Essential Eight: Your Script for Wellbeing

We believe in looking at wellbeing as a whole. The Essential Eight: Your Script for Wellbeing is our holistic approach to wellbeing, tailored to our pharmacy family. Building on the New Economics Foundation's Five Ways to Wellbeing, we've expanded the approach to include three further areas that have become an important part of our wellbeing support:

- Connect
- Be Active
- Take Notice
- Keep Learning
- Give
- Sleep Well
- Eat Well
- Build Financial Wellbeing.

The Essential Eight recognises that our wellbeing is interconnected ... how we sleep can affect how we feel and function ... what we eat can influence our energy, focus and mood ... financial worries can affect our wellbeing and make it harder to switch off.

It isn't another wellbeing checklist. You don't need to focus on all eight areas at once and there's no expectation to get everything 'right'. It's about noticing what could support your wellbeing right now and finding small, realistic steps that work for you.

Through the Essential Eight, you can explore practical ideas, information and free resources to help you look after your wellbeing in ways that work for you.

Explore the Essential Eight



"We're delighted to be supporting Pharmacist Support because building wellbeing means the world to us."

ORION PHARMA



"Pharmacists across the UK provide vital services for healthcare and they are frequently the primary interface between the patient and NHS. As a pharmaceutical company dedicated to putting patients at the heart of everything we do, we recognise the importance of the pharmacy profession in helping us to help patients. For this reason, Orion Pharma (UK) Ltd. is delighted to be supporting Pharmacist Support, because building wellbeing means the world to us."

- Ian Wariner, Country Manager UK at Orion Pharma (UK) Ltd.

Orion Pharma UK is a leading developer, manufacturer and distributor of pharmaceuticals specialising in women's health, cancer, respiratory diseases and neurological diseases. Across their focus areas, their work is guided by a single commitment: building well-being with Nordic excellence in innovation and healthcare.

For further information, please visit orionpharma.co.uk

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Our partnership with the Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA)

The PDA and their members donate a minimum of £1 per membership each year to the charity. Since 2017, the PDA has committed to making this contribution on an ongoing basis; these donations now exceed £340,000. As well as this financial support, the PDA helps us raise charity awareness through their vast network and develop charitable activities. Without their continued partnership, vital support and activities like our ACTNow campaign wouldn't be possible.

About the PDA

The PDA is a not-for-profit membership organisation and independent trade union which aims to act upon and support the needs of individual employed and locum pharmacists, pharmacy students and trainees.

For further information, **please visit the-pda.org**

You can help us to make good things happen.

As the profession's charity, we provide vital assistance to people in our pharmacy family facing challenges like burnout, depression, financial struggles, and more. With your help, we can ensure that no one faces tough times alone.

Please make a donation today

Thanks to your generosity, you are helping to make sure support is available for your colleagues, peers and future pharmacists whenever they need us. Take a look at our case studies to see how your donations have already helped people across our pharmacy family.

The impact of your donation

PHARMACIST SUPPORT

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Pharmacist Support is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 9237609 and charity number 1158974.