

Principal Social Worker's Practice and Learning Bulletin

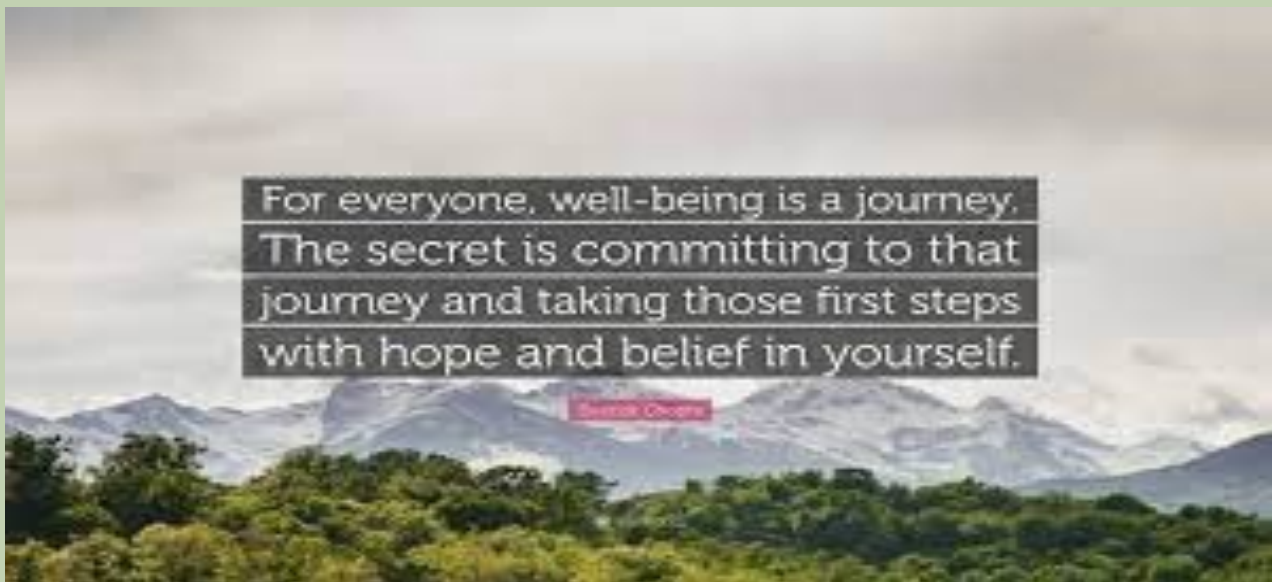


Welcome to the Septembers edition of the bulletin

Hello everyone; in this edition I have focused on your wellbeing and ways to look after yourself and where to access additional support.

Our Focus on Practice this month is Relationship Building.

As always we have learning from complaints and on the back page there is a list of the training and development events available to you.



As always, please let me know if you want to see something in the bulletin or want to contribute an article.

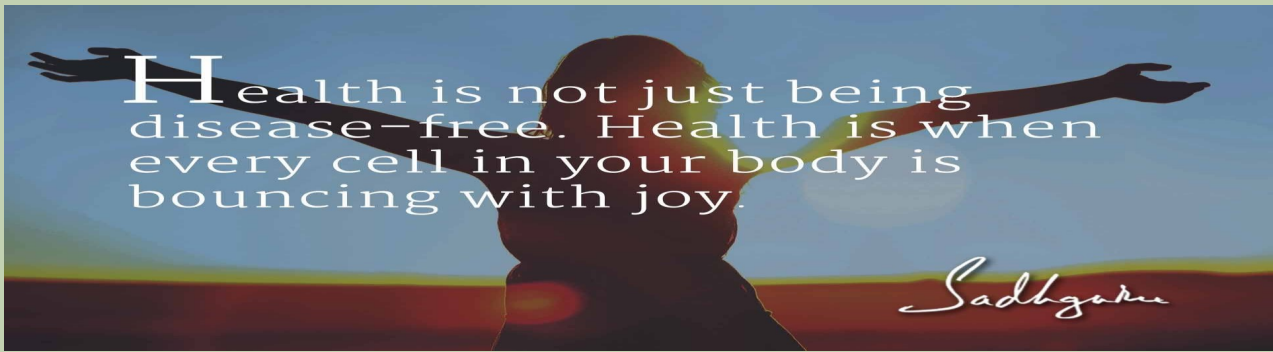
Just a reminder that reading this bulletin can contribute to your CPD record which is especially vital for those of you who need to register your CPD with Social Work England. Additionally, I hope that you are discussing the contents of this in your team meetings; this may generate interesting conversations about practice and learning.



Best wishes

Traci Taylor

Principal Social Worker/Service Manager



What is wellbeing?

Simply put, it's about 'how we're doing' as individuals, communities and as a nation, and how sustainable that is for the future. It is sometimes referred to as social welfare or social value.

Wellbeing is personal and we can experience it differently depending on what is important to us and the experiences we have through our lives. Wellbeing can fall into lots of different categories such as financial, health, education, work environment but it also includes the aspects of our lives that we can determine for ourselves such as we feel about ourselves, the quality of the relationships we have with other people and our sense of purpose and achievements.

These psychological needs are an important part of what makes us human, along with our ability to feel positive and negative emotions. It matters how often, and for how long, we experience positive emotions – such as pleasure and a sense of purpose – or potentially negative emotions, like anxiety.

What matters for wellbeing?

This is a summary of wellbeing factors that matter taken from the research from the What Works Centre.



Workplace and employers

We spend a lot of our time at work and employers can have a major influence on wellbeing. Our feelings of wellbeing at work are influenced by day-to-day experiences with colleagues and management; how purposeful we feel; and the work that we do.

Sometimes, especially when we feel under pressure to complete things we can focus on everything else but not take time to listen to ourselves and how we are feeling. Whilst our employer does have a duty of care we also have a personal responsibility to take steps to look after ourselves.

Supervision



In every role within CSC personal supervision is offered on a monthly basis, our supervision policy is stored within Tri-x (you should have an icon on your desktop to access Tri-x).

Your personal wellbeing is the first question asked and relates to both inside and outside of work, obviously it is up to you how much personal information you share but it is important that you manager is aware of anything which is or could be impacting on you at work to make sure that they get the right support for you.

Employee Wellbeing Service



If you feel, or your manager feels that a referral to our Employee Wellbeing Service would be useful then this can be arranged

The Employee Wellbeing Service is not just for when you have already gone off work but to help prevent you needing to go off work; the triage process will help identify what support would be of the most use.

It may be that you need a referral to help you to do your job by providing reasonable adjustments, such as specialist software for dyslexia or for a specialist chair for example.

Your mental health matters

Life can be difficult, there is a cost of living crisis creating a lot of external worries but also our day jobs can be very emotionally demanding; Bradford Council has lots of initiatives to support mental health.

If you feel stressed, anxious, have low mood or feel overwhelmed then you can access virtual, confidential one-to-one appointments available. You can access the website for this through Bradnet under Health and Wellbeing or you can ring 0300 4568 114

Your manager will not be informed if you access this service unless you want them to be.

The session can help you to:

- Feel happier again
- Cope better at work
- Improve your health

Mindfulness courses and drop-in sessions



We have a dedicated Mindfulness trainer, Mark Anslow SM who offers 8 week courses, 4 week courses and twice weekly drop in sessions.

Mindfulness is about bringing a **kind awareness** in the **present moment** to physical sensations, thoughts and feelings, **without judging them harshly**. Then you can feel **choice in how you respond** to what is happening.

Put simply **Mindfulness** is the ability to **know** what's going on in your head at any **given moment** without getting **carried away** with it.

A number of people have now had the opportunity to undertake these courses and these are some of the comments made:

'Mindfulness stops me overthinking; I am using mindfulness in my professional and personal life , being kinder to myself and others sharing practices in my team with others'

'I understand the neuroscience behind mindfulness which has reinforced to me the importance of being mindful through practicing. I have noticed that I am calmer, living more in the moment and not quite as self critical'

'I have learnt the importance of being in the moment and taking time for myself allowing myself to show kindness to myself'

NHS TOP TIPS FOR A HAPPIER YOU

- **Manage your stress:** introduce exercise and time for yourself, do things you enjoy.
- **Boost your self-esteem:** treat yourself well and think positively about yourself
- **Have a healthy lifestyle:** limit alcohol use, get fresh air, eat a well balanced diet.
- **Exercise:** Even moderate exercise releases chemicals in your brain that lift your mood.
- **Sleep:** aim for 7—8 hours per night, write a to do list before bed for uninterrupted sleep.
- **Talk and Share:** don't hold on to problems talk with people.



The Importance of Relationships

Relationships are so crucial when you are working with children, young people and their families at a really vulnerable time for them. You want to support people to have the best outcomes during this tough time in their lives.

Sometimes in our roles we have to make some really difficult decisions that families don't agree with; however, it is easier to have difficult conversations if you have been open and honest from the beginning.

An important part of building a relationship with a family is asking what you could do that they would find helpful or unhelpful. This demonstrates that you have an active role in that relationship and it is not only them who may need to make changes.

Research from the Harvard Centre on the developing child found the most important factor in the success of services provided by a care professional is the quality of their relationship with the family in question. When practitioners know how to connect with families, are able to listen and discover what's really going on beneath the surface, build trust and find ways to explore solutions together, then life outcomes for children can be transformed.

In **Bradford** we have a strong focus on building relationships with families, introducing a restorative way of working with families to repair harm by offering them good quality support but also respectful challenge. We are going to strengthen family network meetings so that we focus on what families want to happen rather than professionals making decisions for them and without them.

We will not be asking you do anything radical, it's about a balance between risk management and relational support by enabling professionals to do what they do at their best: to see and build on people's strengths, head off problems before they become crises, show empathy, and offer creative and flexible support, focused on the long term.

Summary:

1. Building relationships with individuals start with respect and rapport building.
2. When rapport is established, individuals feel that they can be open, trust and rely on you to do what you say you will do to support them.
3. Empathy is also important as you are able to put yourself in the individual's 'shoes' and understand their world. It paves the way for a social worker to look beyond stereotypical views and judgements. Instead, people are seen as individuals with strengths and abilities.
4. Focusing on positive attributes in a person enables you to form good relationships. You can also put in effective interventions by working together.



Our practice evolves from learning from what we do well but also when we have had a complaint about our practice and this has been looked at to see whether the complaint was valid. Stage 2 complaints are completed independently and there is usually an action plan for practice development if it is considered that any part of the complaint can be upheld after investigation. This month we have learning from two Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints.

Our Learning this month is from a Stage 3 complaint. The points for discussion in your teams are:

For Education and Children's Social Care a reminder that our Children in Care need support to achieve better education standards. Their role is that of responsible parent and this applies equally to older teenage children especially those transitioning to senior school, college or university.

Care Planning: All care plans need to have been signed off by management prior to them being submitted to court to avoid including over optimistic or unachievable aims. It is important that the availability of resources should always be determined prior to the final hearing and evidence made available to the court that this is achievable. If no appropriate resources are available that should be made clear to the court.

It is also important that we learn from the things that we do well, we celebrate good practice in the Newsletter that comes from the Deputy Director, David Johnston. Please send good news and things to celebrate to Tracy.ryan@bradford.gov.uk

"...it's not just learning that's important. It's learning what to do with what you learn and learning why you learn things that matters".

- Norton Juster



Here are some of the learning and development opportunities in September available to you.

5th September – Assessment, Analysis and Planning

6th September – Children's Services Induction

13th September – Early Help Assessment & SMART Plans

14th September – NEW Risk & Safety Planning

15th September - Professional Curiosity

15th September – Voice of the Child

19th September - Professional Curiosity

20th September - Assessment, Analysis and Planning

21st September – What is Trauma & Trauma Informed Practice

22nd September – Neglect & Poverty

23rd September – Engaging Families

28th September - Early Help Assessment & SMART Plans

28th September - NEW Risk & Safety Planning

28th September – Workplace Supervisor training (for those supporting student Social Workers)

28th September - Professional Curiosity

29th September – Team Around the Family & Impact Measurement

29th – 30th September – Adoption Law and Practice

Practice Educator training – 13th, 15th, 20th, 22nd & 27th September.

All courses can be booked via Evolve unless otherwise stated.

You can access lots of useful resources and development opportunities by setting up accounts with the links below.

Research in Practice: www.researchinpractice.org.uk

Children's Social Work Matters: www.childrensocialworkmatters.org

Feedback is really important to us to make sure that we are getting things right. Please have your say about the training and development being offered via your evaluation forms as we are using this feedback to

**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR FEEDBACK
THANK YOU!**