ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

Looking after your health and wellbeing

A guide for doctors

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Introduction

Wellbeing relates to your physical, social and mental state. Our wellbeing depends on six main domains:

1. Economic resources
2. Work and participation
3. Relationships and care
4. Community and environment
5. Health
6. Democracy and values

Wellbeing requires that basic needs are met, that you have a sense of purpose, and that you feel able to achieve important goals, to participate in society and to live the life you value and have reason to value.

Your wellbeing is enhanced by conditions that include financial and personal security, meaningful and rewarding work, supportive personal relationships, strong and inclusive communities, good health, a healthy and attractive environment (to live and work in) and values of democracy and social justice.

Why does physician wellbeing matter?

The evidence is clear: Doctors who enjoy good mental health and are 'engaged' achieve better patient outcomes. The wellbeing of an individual doctor, aside from being desirable in its own right, is essential in maintaining high standards and safety in medicine.

Doctors are not immune to illness and mental distress. Some studies even suggest that doctors are more prone to mental ill health than the general population.

In Ireland, doctors are becoming more vocal about the high prevalence of mental health disorders in the profession and the challenging working conditions that contribute to this.

The importance of self-care is evidenced by the fact that the Medical Council has included it as one of its Eight Domains of Good Practice.

Our advice to you

We recommend that you take note of the advice and resources in this booklet and on the RCPI website under Physician Wellbeing. We are committed to supporting physician wellbeing throughout doctors' working lives and this web resource is designed to help you look after your own wellbeing.

We advise you to monitor your physical and emotional wellbeing, and to seek assistance early if you have any concerns or feel you are experiencing significant stress. It is important to adhere to the medical advice and management plans of doctors who treat you.

> *You have a responsibility to yourself, your family, your patients and the healthcare system to take good care of your health.*

Being a patient can be difficult for doctors. Likewise, caring for other doctors requires particular sensitivity and skill. Doctors who treat other doctors might make assumptions about the doctor patient's knowledge and might ask them to organise and interpret their own investigations.

We encourage doctors to provide support and assistance to colleagues in a confidential, sensitive and professional manner. This means reiterating the importance of the GP role, ensuring it is not by-passed and discouraging the casual or 'corridor consultation'.

The practice of medicine is complex and challenging, but also rewarding and immensely personally satisfying. In order for doctors to provide the best possible care to patients and to derive optimum levels of job satisfaction, the health of the individual doctor must be maximised, both in terms of physical and mental wellbeing.

Caring for the Care-givers

Our position paper on Physician Wellbeing

Physical Health

We encourage healthy behaviours such as regular exercise, a healthy diet, no smoking and moderation with alcohol. Compliance with guidance on appropriate health screening determined by your gender and age is also important.

Lack of adequate sleep, as well as long hours, can contribute to fatigue. Advice may be needed from your GP or an Occupational Health Physician on managing sleep deprivation in the context of long hours and shift work.

While certain physical attributes such as height and weight may be genetically determined, many diseases are determined by lifestyle, which is linked to healthy behaviours, which can be modified.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as cancers and diabetes are chronic diseases of slow progression which impact on physical health and wellbeing for many years. Lifestyle is a very important risk factor for all of these conditions (e.g. behaviours such as smoking, alcohol intake, diet and exercise). Stress can also be a factor. Making time for exercise in a busy working week can be challenging but also rewarding for both physical and mental wellbeing.

Doctors frequently impart lifestyle advice to patients but looking after oneself and seeing oneself as a role model for others (including patients) can be more powerful than words of advice!

Eating Healthily

Busy doctors often skip meals and rely on a quick fix of high carbohydrate food or drink for energy, often supplemented with caffeine. It can be hard to motivate oneself to prepare a nutritious meal at the end of a long stressful day.

There are many resources now available on the web and elsewhere that will help you achieve a healthy diet without spending hours preparing food.

Knowledge of the food pyramid is important. The Nutrition and Health Foundation's interactive food pyramid is a useful tool to remind you of what constitutes a healthy diet.

Healthy lifestyle habits of exercise and diet established during school and college are often abandoned during the early years of training due to long working hours and lack of availability of good quality food when on call. We recommend bringing healthy food/snacks with you to the hospital, especially when on call.

Sleep

We now know that sleep is an active state and that quality sleep is essential for high level cognitive function as well as motor function, mood and physical health.

Sleep can be elusive for doctors working long hours on shift or on call. This is particularly the case when you need to combine work with social life, family life (and small children) and/or the academic demands of a training post (research and exams).

Lack of sleep is significantly associated with depression in doctors but whether by cause or effect is unclear. The relationship between sleep loss and cognitive performance in doctors is well documented, as is its impact on motor performance. Long term sleep deprivation associated with shift work is associated with physical ill health, particularly affecting the cardiovascular and gastrointestinal systems.

Sleep deprivation also has a negative impact on accident rates with needle-stick injuries being more likely in doctors who are sleep deprived. Weight gain and reduced libido are also common.

Here are some facts about sleep:

- Generally speaking, humans require 7 to 9 hours of sleep but some require as little as 4 and as much as 12!
- A short (10 minute) nap of REM sleep can improve problem solving ability.
- You may need to ask your GP or an Occupational Health Physician for advice on managing sleep deprivation. For more tips have a look at the twelve simple tips to improve your sleep.

Exercise

Maintaining optimal health through exercise brings benefits both to physical and emotional health. It is essential to make time for it, especially when life is busy and stressful.

The Nutrition and Health Foundation's interactive exercise pyramid along with their exercise diary is a helpful aid to incorporating an appropriate exercise level into the working week.

Work and the body

Work is generally good for us. According to this consensus statement by health professionals, work can promote good physical and mental health, help to prevent ill-health and play an active part in helping people recover from illness. But in order for this to be achieved, hazards in the work environment need to be appropriately controlled.

The main physical health problems encountered in work are musculoskeletal in nature (i.e. back pain and injury, neck pain etc). These are less common in doctors than in other health professionals (e.g. nurses) who are more engaged in patient-handling activities. You are encouraged to contact your GP or Occupational Health Department (OHD) for guidance in managing these problems if they arise. Frequently, work-based physiotherapy programmes, accessible through OHD, are provided by employers.

Frequent hand washing, which is necessary for safe patient care, can sometimes impact on skin health and occupational health staff can advise you on the prevention and management of occupational dermatitis.

Protection against potential occupational infections (e.g. hepatitis, influenza, TB) can be achieved by appropriate vaccinations which should be available on site through OHD. Advice is also available on management of potential exposures to infection e.g. needle-stick injury. For more information, visit the HPSC website. https://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Hepatitis/EMIToolkit/

Psychological Health

Medical careers can be stressful

Modern medical careers combine the stresses and demands of professional life (patients, their families, and the ever-present threat of legal challenges and complaints) and the pressures of interpersonal relationships both at home and at work.

During training, the demands of work on top of the need to pass examinations and complete research and audits can be overwhelming. Individuals respond differently to pressure and in a variety of ways. While some exhibit resilience and are able to focus under pressure, others might feel lost, disconnected and stressed.

Doctors Can Be More Vulnerable to Mental Illness

According to the Medical Council, the number of referrals to the Health Committee is rising. Doctors are not immune to mental illness and in some aspects, can be more vulnerable.

According to the UK Department of Health (Mental Health & Ill Health in Doctors, 2008), research suggests that doctors have higher rates of mental disorders than the general population.

Problems with alcohol, drugs and depression are particularly common. Up to 7% of doctors will have a substance use problem during their lifetime.

Suicide rates have also increased, particularly in female doctors. Doctors' access to prescription drugs plays a part in their risk of substance use and suicide, as well as making it easier to treat themselves rather than seeking appropriate channels of help.

Doctors find it more difficult to access help

Research in Ireland and internationally indicates that doctors do not access the same supports or in the same way as non-medics in relation to mental and physical health care.

Doctors feel immense pressure to 'not give in' to ill health and do not take time off when they are unwell (known as 'presenteeism'). In an Irish study of GP trainees' attitudes to self-health care, 61% of whom worked in hospitals, nearly half (49%) admitted to neglecting their own health.

Doctors can find it more difficult to access help either because of practical (time, access, available confidential resources) or psychological issues (fear of consequences, shame) which in turn leads to availing of self-care and self-medication routes. Doctors are more likely to talk to peers or family members about problems and not to seek the help of professionals. When they do seek professional help, then confidentiality is paramount.

Doctors generally tend to be perfectionists, overly conscientious, approval seeking, and need to be in control. They may be self-doubting and uncomfortable with praise. While these qualities may be good for patient care, they are counterproductive to optimal management of one's own health.

How do I know if there is a problem?

Generally speaking, our body tells us if there is a problem. The body will send us messages that something might be off track and it is important to listen to these cues, and consider that they may be more than the normal reaction to sleep deprivation.

The difficulty for many doctors is that most of these signals are also found in sleep-deprived conditions, which is a reality for most doctors in training. Some examples might be:

- Difficulties with sleep
- Difficulties with food (eating too much/too little, eating unhealthily)
- Pain and discomfort (headaches, neck and back pain, bowel and stomach issues)
- Intellectual difficulties (decision making, problem solving, memory, concentration)
- Emotional 'flooding' (crying easily, feeling angry and frustrated, feeling stressed all the time)
- Feeling anxious (pain in the chest, difficulty breathing, dizziness)
- Getting sick easily
- Feeling sluggish and generally not yourself and not well
- Withdrawing from relationships and from social interactions
- Self-medicating
- Missing work or other commitments
- Taking longer to complete work
- Excessive alcohol intake
- Use of recreational drugs
- Excessive exercising or withdrawal from exercise

The importance of a healthy mind in maximising the benefits of a healthy body cannot be underestimated. Have a look at Dr Dan Siegel's Healthy Mind Platter for further information and advice.

The Healthy Mind Platter

Developed by Daniel Siegel and David Rock, the seven activities on the Healthy Mind Platter provide a 'well-balanced diet' for wellbeing.

The Healthy Mind Platter for Optimal Brain Matter

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Seven daily essential mental activities to optimize brain matter and create well-being

1.	Focus Time	When we closely focus on tasks in a goal-oriented way, we take on challenges that make deep connections in the brain.
2.	Play Time	When we allow ourselves to be spontaneous or creative, playfully enjoying novel experiences, we help make new connections in the brain.
3.	Connecting Time	When we connect with other people, ideally in person, and when we take time to appreciate our connection to the natural world around us, we activate and reinforce the brain's relational circuitry.
4.	Physical Time	When we move our bodies, aerobically if medically possible, we strengthen the brain in many ways.
5.	Time In	When we quietly reflect internally, focusing on sensations, images, feelings and thoughts, we help to better integrate the brain.
6.	Down Time	When we are non-focused, without any specific goal, and let our mind wander or simply relax, we help the brain recharge.
7.	Sleep Time	When we give the brain the rest it needs, we consolidate learning and recover from the experiences of the day.

Bullying and Harassment

We encourage doctors who experience harassment or bullying to make use of their employing organisation's policies and procedures around such behaviour.

Many employers now have formal and informal avenues for seeking support and advice. Your Medical Manpower Manager or a human resources (HR) professional can advise you on the appropriate steps to take.

Where such supports are unavailable, a confidential discussion with a peer or colleague who is not involved in the situation may also be helpful.

Adapting to stress and adversity

Psychological resilience is defined as your ability to properly adapt to stress and adversity.

Wellbeing literature asserts that resilience is a component of our make-up that can be harnessed given the right conditions.

This understanding derives from the notion of human flourishing, which embodies autonomy, self-determination, interest and engagement, aspiration and motivation, and whether people have a sense of meaning, direction or purpose in life. Resilience can be advanced through the acknowledgement and development of people's capabilities.

Stress Relief Tips – Breathing Exercises

Since breathing is something we can control and regulate, it is a useful tool for achieving a relaxed and clear state of mind. Below are three breathing exercises to help relax and reduce stress. Try each of these breathing techniques and see how they affect your stress and anxiety levels.

1. *Bellows Breath*

The Stimulating Breath is adapted from yogic breathing techniques. Its aim is to raise vital energy and increase alertness.

- Inhale and exhale rapidly through your nose, keeping your mouth closed but relaxed. Your breaths in and out should be equal in duration, but as short as possible. This is a noisy breathing exercise.
- Try for three in-and-out breath cycles per second. This produces a quick movement of the diaphragm, suggesting a bellows. Breathe normally after each cycle.
- Do not do for more than 15 seconds on your first try. Each time you practice the Stimulating Breath, you can increase your time by five seconds or so, until you reach a full minute.

If done properly, you may feel invigorated, comparable to the heightened awareness you feel after a good workout. You should feel the effort at the back of the neck, the diaphragm, the chest and the abdomen.

2. Relaxing Breath Exercise (4-7-8)

This breathing exercise is utterly simple, takes almost no time, requires no equipment and can be done anywhere. Although you can do the exercise in any position, sit with your back straight while learning the exercise. Place the tip of your tongue against the ridge of tissue just behind your upper front teeth, and keep it there through the entire exercise. You will be exhaling through your mouth around your tongue; try pursing your lips slightly if this seems awkward.

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.
- Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.

- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.
- This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

Note that you always inhale quietly through your nose and exhale audibly through your mouth. The tip of your tongue stays in position the whole time. Exhalation takes twice as long as inhalation. The absolute time you spend on each phase is not important; the ratio of 4:7:8 is important. If you have trouble holding your breath, speed the exercise up but keep to the ratio of 4:7:8 for the three phases. With practice you can slow it all down and get used to inhaling and exhaling more and more deeply.

This exercise is a natural tranquilizer for the nervous system. Unlike tranquilizing drugs, which are often effective when you first take them but then lose their power over time, this exercise is subtle when you first try it but gains in power with repetition and practice. Do it at least twice a day. You cannot do it too frequently.

Once you develop this technique by practicing it every day, it will be a very useful tool that you will always have with you. Use it whenever anything upsetting happens – before you react. Use it whenever you are aware of internal tension. Use it to help you fall asleep. This exercise cannot be recommended too highly. Everyone can benefit from it.

3. Breath Counting

If you want to get a feel for this challenging work, try your hand at breath counting, a deceptively simple technique much used in Zen practice.

Sit in a comfortable position with the spine straight and head inclined slightly forward. Gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Then let the breath come naturally without trying to influence it. Ideally it will be quiet and slow, but depth and rhythm may vary.

- To begin the exercise, count “one” to yourself as you exhale.
- The next time you exhale, count “two,” and so on up to “five.”
- Then begin a new cycle, counting “one” on the next exhalation.

- Never count higher than “five,” and count only when you exhale. You will know your attention has wandered when you find yourself up to “eight,” “12,” even “19.”
- Try to do 10 minutes of this form of meditation.

Key strategies to build and maintain resilience

Build Strong Relationships

From medical school onwards, you need to appreciate the nature of a career in medicine and how stressful it can be. While you are busy building a career, working long shift hours, changing locations through rotations, little time is left over for developing strong relationships.

Good relationships with close family members, friends and others are important. Accepting help and support from those around you who care and will listen to you strengthens resilience. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit you.

In addition to your friends and family, try to have one or two people at work who you feel you can call on for support. This is particularly important if you are doing acute call. If you are having difficulties it is important to remember that you can inform your Trainer without disclosing the details to him/her.

Challenge Your Language and Your Thoughts in Difficult Situations

Pay close attention to words like “this is awful” and “this is terrible” and “I can’t cope” or “I have had enough”.

You can't change the fact that highly stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to these events. Try instead to say “this is difficult, but I am resourceful enough to be able to cope” or “this is not the end of the world, however difficult this is for me right now. I have what I need to get through this”.

Note any subtle changes whereby you feel a bit better as you deal with difficult situations. This will build your confidence in your own coping abilities in the future.

Challenge Perfectionism

Perfectionism is a personality trait characterised by a person's striving for flawlessness and setting excessively high performance standards, accompanied by overly critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations.

There are two types of perfectionism, adaptive and maladaptive. Adaptive perfectionism can also be called “striving for excellence”. This drive can motivate you to reach goals, providing they are realistic in the context of the resources available to you.

Maladaptive perfectionism drives people to attempt to achieve unattainable ideals, and because these are unattainable, the person internalises failure which can lead to inaction, self-criticism and at times, depression.

Set Goals and Plan to Attain to Them

Develop realistic goals and consider using the BSMART method.

Benefits– clarify the benefits of attaining this goal.

Specific– be specific about what you want to achieve.

Measurable– your goal has to be something that you can ‘see’. This could be a number, a title, a position, a location or any measurable aspect you can think of.

Aligned– make sure that you align your goal to your values. If you value being fit and healthy, then your goal of being fit is aligned your values.

Realistic- once you have set your goal you need to ask yourself what you need to do in order to achieve it. You will need to consider your task list and your existing schedule and assess if it is realistic for you to undertake this goal. If the answer is yes, then do something regularly — even if it seems like a small accomplishment — that enables you to move toward your goals. Instead of

focusing on tasks that seem unachievable, consider breaking big tasks into small achievable tasks that will get you closer to your goal.

Time Bound– a goal is not a goal unless you set a realistic timeframe to achieving the goal. This will help you in setting your realistic plan to achieve it. You can either set your timeframe first and then align your tasks accordingly or you can write down all your steps, consider your current workload/life style and adjust the timeframe accordingly.

Accept That Change is a Part of Living

Certain goals may no longer be attainable as life takes a different course. Accepting circumstances that cannot be changed can help you focus on circumstances that you can change, and will allow you to recover quicker and re-set your goals.

Act

Act on adverse situations as much as you can. Take decisive but considered actions, rather than detaching completely from problems and stresses and wishing they would just go away.

Look For Opportunities for Self-Discovery

People often learn something about themselves and may find that they have grown in some respect as a result of their struggle with loss. Many people who have experienced tragedies and hardship have reported better relationships, greater sense of strength even while feeling vulnerable, increased sense of self-worth, a more developed spirituality and heightened appreciation for life.

Develop Your Self-Confidence

The working environment of doctors can potentially expose them to bullying and harassment, legal challenges, complaints from patients, examination failure, and any other personal failures that could potentially make you doubt yourself.

Developing confidence in your ability to solve problems and trusting your instincts helps build resilience. Ask yourself where you might feel lacking in confidence and address this by considering your goals. Achievements and succeeding in attaining your goals can greatly enhance your confidence and self-esteem.

Keep Things in Perspective

Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Avoid blowing the event out of proportion. It might help to ask yourself, "Will I remember this in a year's time? What impact is this current situation going to have in the long term?"

Foster Hope

If you notice that your brain is attracted to all the negative consequences that can potentially impact on your life, try to entertain the opposite. Consider all the positive and good things that might come your way. An optimistic outlook enables you to expect that good things will happen in your life. Foster hope and trust that whatever will come your way – it will be ok.

Look After Yourself

Pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly but try and find an exercise that you enjoy. There is little point in selecting an exercise that does not meet your needs.

Selecting an activity that both challenges you and that you look forward to, will make you more likely to stick with it. It is a great feeling to notice progress in your fitness level, flexibility and strength. Taking care of yourself helps to keep your mind and body strong and primed to deal with situations that require resilience.

Help and Advice

Where to go for help and advice if you suffer emotional or physical ill health

We know that doctors suffer emotional and physical ill health from time to time but that generally speaking, they find ways to bounce back with little to no assistance.

However, if problems are persistent, we recommend that you take action to restore your wellbeing. Please see our self-referral guide at the back of this booklet for reference.

Find the Right General Practitioner

Register with a GP who is neither friend nor family and who will ensure that professional boundaries are maintained in all decision making.

Though you will have your own thoughts on diagnosis and appropriate interventions, bring an open mind to the consultation and just 'be a patient'.

An Irish study on GP trainees found that 57% had informally consulted a colleague regarding their health needs and 35% had referred themselves directly to a consultant, bypassing their GP. Furthermore, 92% had self-prescribed on at least one occasion. This is ill-advised as it results in compromised level of care.

Most GPs are very comfortable with treating doctors as patients and are registered with the HIP Network (http://www.icgp.ie/go/in_the_practice). You may contact the network to find the name of such a GP in your area if you have not already registered.

Occupational Health

All public hospital employees in Ireland now have access to occupational health services. These are based on site in the larger hospitals or accessible off-site in some areas. Each is clinically led by a specialist / consultant occupational physician who provides a service with a team of nurses and administrative staff. All work closely with physiotherapists who can 'fast-track' access to treatment for musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and also have access, directly or indirectly, to counselling support services, which may or may not be on site.

Occupational health deals with the interface between health and work but encompasses a broader remit of work and work environment (including psychosocial environment), health and ill-health as well as life and lifestyle.

A very strict code of ethics underpins occupational health practice, augmenting the Medical Council's Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics (7th Edition). Occupational health professionals are mindful of the importance of respecting confidentiality. They have a particular skill in communicating effectively with employers and managers on fitness for work issues without disclosing confidential health details.

Free Counselling For Doctors

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a national initiative that offers confidential counselling and referral services to hospital staff experiencing psychological stress.

The EAP gives you access to trained, experienced counsellors who will help you to develop coping strategies in a non-judgemental confidential environment.

You can contact your local Employee Assistance Programme directly - self-referrals are accepted.

Some Employee Assistance Programmes offer a 24-hour helpline, depending on the hospital group.

If you contact an Employee Assistance Programme, you can avail of prompt confidential referral to a counsellor independent of the Occupational Health Department in your hospital.

The Occupational Health Department in your hospital will only ever be contacted by the Employee Assistance Programme if there is a concern for your safety or patient safety.

A wide range of issues are dealt with by EAP, including:

- Stress at work
- Difficult relationships in work (including bullying)
- Traumatic events (e.g. assault, suicide)
- Addictions
- Personal issues outside of work (e.g. bereavement, relationships)
- The service provides, on a confidential basis:
- Professional assessment
- Personal support
- Counselling
- Referral onwards to other professional resources where appropriate
- Trauma support

Access to the service

If you wish to access the service for information or an appointment, you can contact your local HSE Employee Assistance Programme Manager. Contact details for Employee Assistance can be found at the link below or by contacting your local HR department. The Occupational Health Service can also refer clients with their consent.
http://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/safetywellbeing/eap/EAPcontsMay16.pdf

HSE National HR Employee Helpdesk

The HSE's National HR Employee Helpdesk went live on 4 January 2016. It is there to provide support to HSE employees.

You can contact the Helpdesk regarding benefits, terms and conditions of employment and advice on the operation of the grievance and disciplinary processes.

Contact the Helpdesk on 1850 444 925, Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm or email ask.hr@hse.ie. They are also on Facebook – search for *HSE HR SAYS*.

Confidential Feedback Line for RCPI Trainees

We have a confidential feedback line so that Trainees can report issues of concern relating to training, for example training programme violations, concerns relating to their curriculum, or concerns about the quality of supervision, training or clinical experience at their training site.

To report an issue call 01 863 9660. The feedback line is manned by trained professionals who are not RCPI employees and is available 8.00am – 8.00pm, seven days a week.

If you make a call, you will be asked for your name, email address and training programme details. You will also be asked to outline your concerns. All calls will be handled in a confidential manner.

Practitioner Health Matters Programme

Any doctor, dentist or pharmacist who has a concern about a mental health or a substance misuse problem can receive confidential help from experts at the Practitioner Health Matters Programme.

The Practitioner Health Matters Programme operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded primarily by voluntary contributions and professional associations. It has replaced the former Sick Doctor Scheme.

See http://practitionerhealth.ie/ or call 01 297 0356.

Medically Induced Trauma Support Services

www.mitss.org is a non-profit organisation that supports clinicians and patients who have been involved in clinical errors or adverse medical events. They also have good support tools for organisations hoping to implement support services.

Bibliotherapy and Self Help

The use of books for therapeutic purposes is known as bibliotherapy. Self-help books have been used in this way for many years and are now being recommended as a means of providing psychological therapy for people experiencing emotional and psychological difficulties. The effectiveness of bibliotherapy has been well established in clinical trials.

Bibliotherapy has been recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) UK as a useful start in treating mild and moderate depression, anxiety and panic and some other mental health problems.

Self Help Groups

Aware is a national organisation which, through various media, provides information, education and support to the community on depression.

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international organisation dedicated to providing support to individuals and families affected by alcohol misuse.

Bodywhys is the national support group for people affected by eating disorders.

Pieta House provides support to those who are contemplating suicide or engaged in self-harm.

The 3Ts works in suicide prevention and funds the 1Life Suicide helpline.

The Samaritans provide one to one telephone support to people who are emotionally distressed.

Online Wellbeing Tools

Beaumont Hospital's Mindfulness and Relaxation Centre has good information and downloadable apps. http://www.beaumont.ie/marc

This is an interesting training programme from the US for Anaesthesia trainees using Pearlin and Schooler's hierarchy.
http://www.anesthesiology.uci.edu/education_residency_wellness.shtml

Psychologists at the Australian National University have developed MoodGYM, an online resource that teaches cognitive behavioural techniques for the management of depression and anxiety. This is available free of charge to registered users. https://moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome

Counselling or psychotherapy can help to improve coping abilities and reduce stress. Information on local services is available from your occupational health department.

Money Advice & Budgeting Service

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) is the State's money advice service, guiding people through dealing with problem debt for more than twenty years.

They have a proven track record in helping people get back on their feet. All kinds of people, with all kinds of debt go to MABS. Their expertise is with personal and consumer debt; while they can give some limited help with debt arising from a sole trader or partnership business and also make referrals to CAVA, they cannot advise on company debts or on the accounts of a business.

Using MABS

You can use the many valuable tools and resources on their website (https://www.mabs.ie/) if you think that you would prefer to manage things yourself.

Their Helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm (0761 07 2000) if you would like to have a chat. Many of their clients use a combination of web and Helpline to negotiate themselves with their Creditors, whilst others use these as a first step to attending at one of their offices.

Their face-to-face service is available in more than 65 locations nationwide. Due to heavy demand, from time to time, there may be a waiting list; in truth, no one in crisis ever has to wait.

When you call the Helpline, or call one of the offices, you will be asked for a little information about your situation. This is done to help them determine how best to help you, and how urgent your situation is, so you see, if you are in the middle of a crisis, you will not be left waiting.

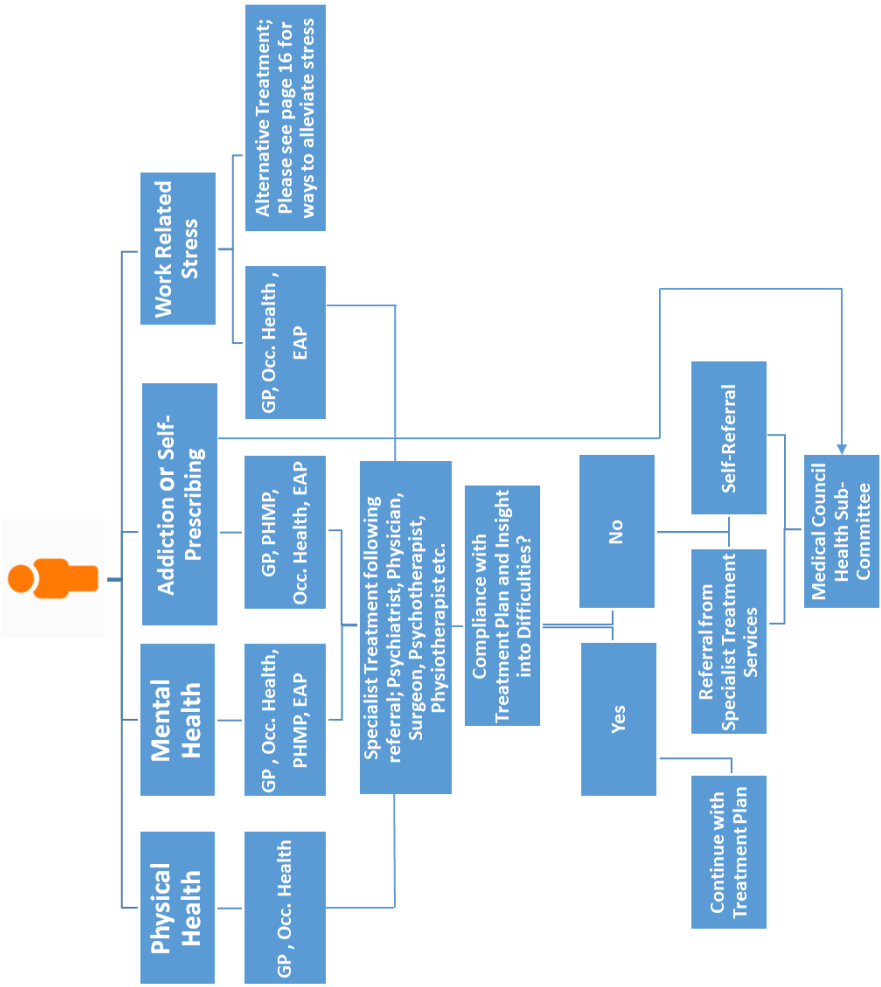
Mortgage Concerns

If you're behind in your mortgage payments, you may be worried about losing your home. Talk to your lender. If you can't - talk to MABS.

MABS now has a dedicated confidential, free, and independent mortgage arrears service. No matter what your situation is, MABS will help you work out the next steps.

Take control of what happens next. Call MABS today on 0761 07 2000 for independent information, advice and referral.

Self-Referral Algorithm



Employment Assistance Programme (EAP) Contact Lists

Ireland East Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital	Contact local HR Department			
Mater Misercordiae University Hospital	Abate Counselling	24 hour freephone 1800 222833	abatecounselling@hotmail.com	www.abatecounselling.ie
Midland Regional Hospital - Mullingar	Bernie Brady	Freephone - 1800 240414, 057 9328033, 086 806919	berniem.brady@hse.ie employee.assistance@hse.ie	
National Maternity Hospital - Holles Street	Contact local HR Department			
Our Lady's Hospital Navan	Staff Care Confidential Counselling Service	24 hour Freephone 1800 409388	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net	www.staffcare.org
Royal Victoria Eye & Ear Hospital Dublin	Contact local HR Department			
St Columcille's Hospital Loughlinstown	Ray Maloney	01 6352393 or 087 9120085	ray.maloney1@hse.ie	
St Lukes Hospital Kilkenny	Mary Lyng or Eithne Cody	056 7785709 087 9847183, 056 7751786	mary.lyng@hse.ie	

Ireland East Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
St Michael's Hospital Dun Laoghaire	Contact local HR Department			
St Vincent's University Hospital Elm Park	Ray Maloney	01 6352393 or 087 9120085	ray.maloney1@hse.ie	
Wexford General Hospital	Contact local HR Department			

RCSI Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Beaumont Hospital including St Joseph's	Barbara Lynch	01 8092865	staffcounsellor@beaumont.ie	
Cavan General Hospital	Staff Care Confidential Counselling Service	24 hour Freephone 1800 409388	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net	www.staffcare.org
Connolly Hospital	Staff Care Confidential Counselling Service	24 hour Freephone 1800 409388	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net	www.staffcare.org
Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital Drogheda	Staff Care Confidential Counselling Service	24 hour Freephone 1800 409388	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net	www.staffcare.org
Rotunda Hospital	Contact local HR Department			

University of Limerick Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Croom Hospital	Ann Donohoe	24 Hour Freephone 1800 409388 087 9979467	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net ann.donohoe@hse.ie	
Ennis Hospital	Ann Donohoe	24 Hour Freephone 1800 409388 087 9979467	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net ann.donohoe@hse.ie	
Nenagh Hospital	Ann Donohoe	24 Hour Freephone 1800 409388 087 9979467	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net ann.donohoe@hse.ie	
St John's Hospital	Contact Local HR Department			
University Hospital Limerick	Ann Donohoe	24 Hour Freephone 1800 409388 087 9979467	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net ann.donohoe@hse.ie	
University Maternity Hospital	Ann Donohoe	24 Hour Freephone 1800 409388 087 9979467	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net ann.donohoe@hse.ie	

Children's Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Children's University Hospital Temple Street	Staff Care Confidential Counselling Service	24 hour Freephone 1800 409388	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net	www.staffcare.org
Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children Crumlin	Ray Maloney	01 6352393 or 087 9120085	ray.maloney1@hse.ie	
National Children's Hospital, Tallaght	Ray Maloney	01 6352393 or 087 9120085	ray.maloney1@hse.ie	

Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital	Work Place Options	Freephone - 1800 490390	eap@workplaceoptions.com	www.workplaceoptions.com
Midland Regional Hospital - Portlaoise	Bernie Brady	Freephone - 1800 240414, 057 9328033, 086 806919	berniem.brady@hse.ie or employee.assistance@hse.ie	
Midland Regional Hospital - Tullamore	Bernie Brady	Freephone - 1800 240414, 057 9328033, 086 806919	berniem.brady@hse.ie or employee.assistance@hse.ie	
Naas General Hospital	Ray Maloney	01 6352393 or 087 9120085	ray.maloney1@hse.ie	
St James Hospital	Abate Counselling	24 hour feephone 1800 222833	abatecounselling@hotmail.com	www.abatecounselling.ie
Tallaght Hospital	Ray Maloney	01 6352393 or 087 9120085	ray.maloney1@hse.ie	

South/South East Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Bantry General Hospital	Rosarii Murphy or Nancy Finucane	021 4922019, 087 2849015, 087 4175317	rosarii.murphy@hse.ie nancy.finucane@hse.ie	
Cork University Hospital	Rosarii Murphy or Nancy Finucane	021 4922019, 087 2849015, 087 4175317	rosarii.murphy@hse.ie nancy.finucane@hse.ie	
Kerry General Hospital	Mary O'Donnell	066 7184089, 087 6347082	maryp.odonnell@hse.ie	
Lourdes Orthopaedic Hospital Kilcreene	Mary Lyng or Eithne Cody	056 7785709, 087 9847183, 056 7751786	mary.lyng@hse.ie	
Mallow General Hospital	Rosarii Murphy or Nancy Finucane	021 4922019, 087 2849015, 087 4175317	rosarii.murphy@hse.ie nancy.finucane@hse.ie	
Mercy University Hospital Cork	Contact Local HR Department			
South Tipperary General Hospital	Mary Lyng	056 7785709, 087 9847183	mary.lyng@hse.ie	
South Infirmary University Hospital Cork	Contact Local HR Department			
Waterford Regional Hospital	Dorothy McCarthy	051 842786	dorothy.mccarthy@hse.ie	

Saolta Hospital Group	Contact	Phone	Email	Website
Galway University Hospitals	Maura Harte or Ann Callanan	24 Hour Freephone - 1800 409388, 087 6858037, 091 775966	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net maura.harte@hse.ie ann.callanan@hse.ie	www.staffcare.org
Lettekenny General Hospital	Carline Crowe	24 Hour Freephone - 1800 409388, 091 775965	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net caroline.crowe@hse.ie	www.staffcare.org
Portiuncla Hospital General & Maternity Ballinasloe	Maura Harte or Ann Callanan	24 Hour Freephone - 1800 409388, 087 6858037, 091 775966	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net maura.harte@hse.ie ann.callanan@hse.ie	www.staffcare.org
Mayo General Hospital	Maura Harte or Sonia Murray	24 Hour Freephone - 1800 409388, 087 6858037, 087 9682195	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net maura.harte@hse.ie sonya.murray2@hse.ie	www.staffcare.org
Roscommon General Hospital	Maura Harte	24 Hour Freephone - 1800 409388, 087 6858037	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net maura.harte@hse.ie	www.staffcare.org
Sligo General Hospital	Carline Crowe	24 Hour Freephone - 1800 409388, 091 775965	staffcare@belfasttrust.hscni.net caroline.crowe@hse.ie	www.staffcare.org

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