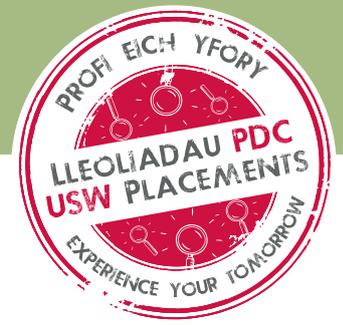


EXPERIENCE YOUR TOMORROW



DO YOU NEED WELLBEING SUPPORT ON YOUR PLACEMENT?

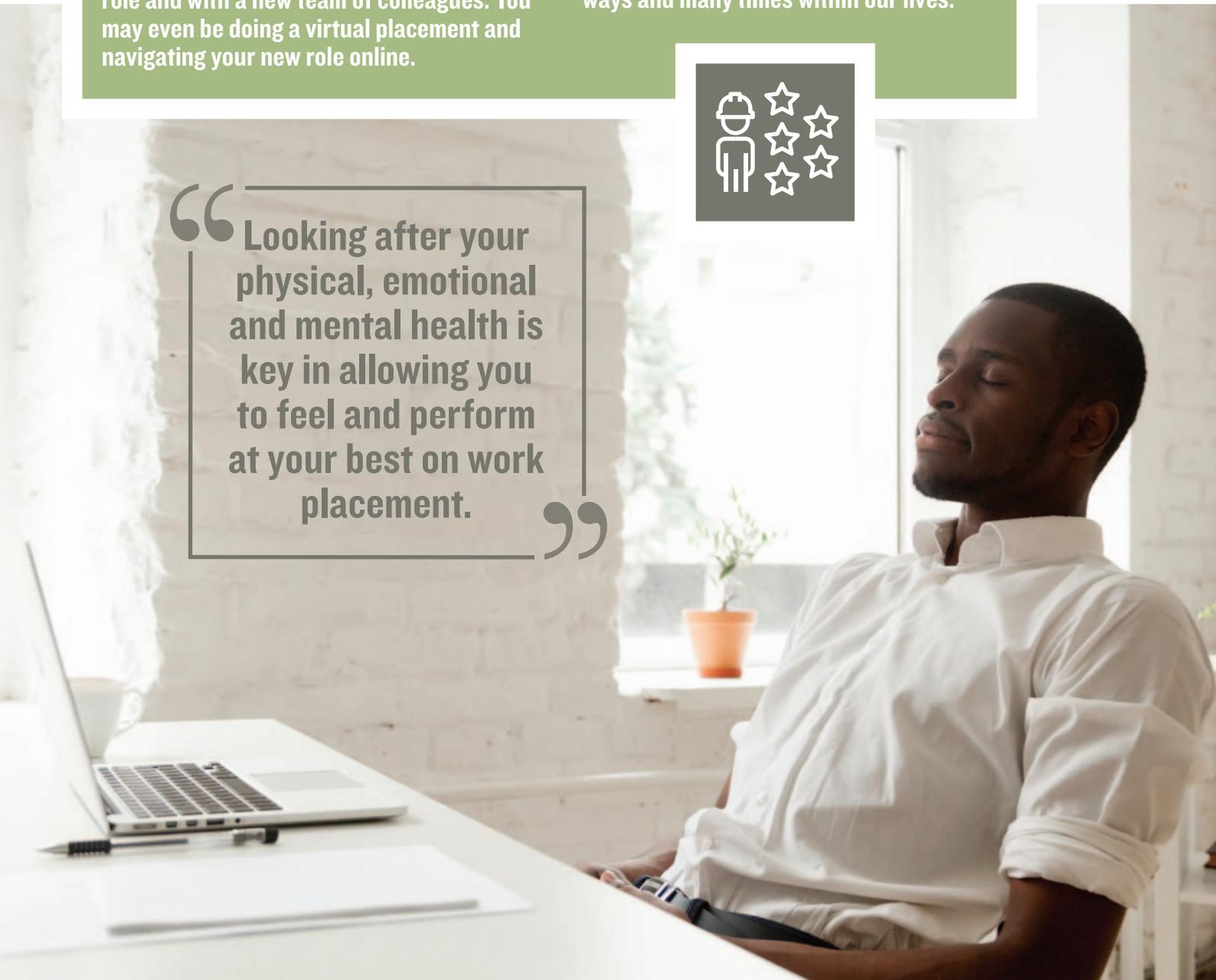
PLACEMENT WELLBEING

Being on a work placement can be an exciting time, but sometimes it can also be difficult. You might be in a different city, starting a new role and with a new team of colleagues. You may even be doing a virtual placement and navigating your new role online.

This new environment can feel daunting, but this is completely normal and is an experience all of us go through in various ways and many times within our lives.



“Looking after your physical, emotional and mental health is key in allowing you to feel and perform at your best on work placement.”



TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR WELLBEING ON WORK PLACEMENT

TIP 1 - COPING WITH STRESS AND PRESSURE

A survey by British charity Mind identified work as the number one cause of stress. Stress can manifest itself in a number of different ways, from racing thoughts to a strong sense of dread. To cope with stress, you need to first of all understand what's causing it. For example, is your workload too heavy? Taking practical steps like identifying your priorities with your manager will help. On top of that, focus on nurturing healthy habits: practising mindfulness can help to relieve stress, for example, while cutting out caffeine-high drinks such as coffee can also help reduce feelings of anxiety.

TIP 2 - BUILD BRIDGES

Start by getting to know the people you work with. Don't let company or departmental divisions prevent you from making those all important connections. The more genuine friends and contacts you make, the more options and support you'll have available should you need it.

TIP 3 - DON'T FEAR MISTAKES

Mistakes are a crucial element of the learning process and a natural accompaniment to challenging yourself. Whatever happens, don't berate yourself too much or let it stop you from moving forward and trying new things.

TIP 4 - WORK LIFE BALANCE

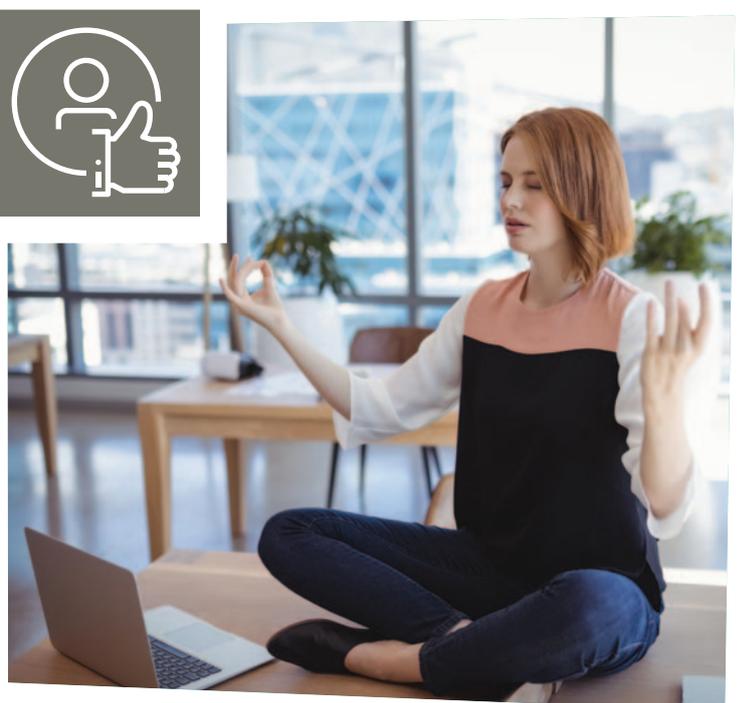
Ultimately, what we do in work will only go so far in determining our long term success and wellbeing. Friends, family, exercise, nutrition and outside interests are equally important parts of the jigsaw and essential in maintaining a healthy mind and body.

TIP 5 - LOOKING AFTER YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

Eating healthy, getting enough sleep and exercising regularly won't just improve your physical but also your mental health. By regularly eating healthy foods such as wholegrains, nuts or eggs you avoid a drop in your blood sugar levels that could cause feelings of irritability or even depression. Getting enough sleep, around seven to eight hours a night, will also help keep stress hormone levels low. On top of that, you can give your mood a boost through exercising as this causes the release of feel-good hormones as well as cortisol, which can help manage stress. This includes taking regular breaks during your working day. Move away from your screen/work place periodically and make sure you have a proper lunch break. Link up with some work colleagues or take a walk to refresh your batteries.

TIP 6 - BECOMING MORE RESILIENT

Resilience is about your ability to cope with challenges and change and to adapt to new circumstances. Building your resilience comes back to some of the things above: understanding your stress responses and learning how to manage them; taking care of your relationships and looking after your health. It's also about having a positive inner voice, focusing your energy on the things you can change and being truly committed to your role.



TIPS FOR WORKING EFFECTIVELY FROM HOME



For your own productivity and well-being, it's important that you work on cultivating healthy working from home habits. Here are our top tips for remote working success:

1. Increase communication

Use video conferencing tools like Google Meet, Zoom or Microsoft Teams to stay in the loop with your supervisor and workplace colleagues and get much-needed 'face time' throughout the week. Daily catchups can help increase transparency in terms of individual and team priorities.

2. Get into a routine

A lack of structure will have even the most motivated and productive of employees reaching for the TV remote. Start off by establishing a standard workday routine: for example, get the big task out the way first thing in the morning, check emails mid-morning and set a regular time for lunch and breaks throughout the day.

3. Set clear boundaries

Keep your work life as separate from your home life as you can. Ideally this means setting aside a housemate/ child/ partner-free room of the house for working. Keep it clutter-free to help you think clearly and maintain a professional environment, particularly when you are on video conference calls. Set specific 'office' hours for work and make sure these don't encroach on your personal time.

4. Avoid distractions

Being in charge of your own workflow risks opening you up to a whole series of off-limits distractions. Manage your predilection for social media, day-time soaps or sports sites by setting aside regular (limited) windows in the day for indulging them.

5. Optimise your workspace

We all have different ways of working and different requirements when it comes to our working environments. For example, you may be more productive in a quiet room, while someone else may need music to keep them going. Make sure you have a proper desk and a good chair to sit at - balancing your laptop on your lap for the foreseeable future will not do your body any favours. Consider what you need to be comfortable and focused and try to set up your workspace in accordance with that.

6. Stay on top of your goals

When you're working remotely you may find that the only one there to motivate you and help you stay on track is you. Strong self-management skills are key in allowing you to stay on top of your goals: you need to be conscientious, take initiative and know how to manage your time well, including setting deadlines and prioritising tasks. A strong awareness of your preferences and working style, for example, knowing what times of the day you are most productive, will also help you be as productive as you can be.

7. Protect your well-being

If you're not used to working remotely, you may find the change quite hard to get used to. Make sure you listen to your needs: if you're starting to feel a bit lonely, reach out to a friend or colleague; if you're feeling cooped up, go out for a walk. As a general rule, work on keeping your body and mind healthy by taking regular breaks, eating healthily, getting enough sleep and exercise and ensuring you fully switch off from work at the end of the day.

Full-time remote working may not be something you're used to, but, with a little organisation and self-discipline, you'll soon establish a routine that works for you. And with more and more of us working this way, there's lots we can learn from one another so don't hesitate to reach out!



SERVICES THAT CAN SUPPORT YOU

Many of us find it hard to talk about our struggles with mental health at work, which can lead to feelings of isolation. However, it's important to remind yourself that help is out there if you need it, and there's nothing wrong with asking for it. So, if you feel like it's impacting your ability to thrive on your work placement, speak to your supervisor about it. Moreover, if you notice your mental health worsening significantly, consider speaking to a professional.

Here is a list of services that can support you with your wellbeing (it is important to note that all these services are available to you as a student even when you are on work placement): -

USW Wellbeing

Free advice and support relating to health, mental health and counselling to all USW Students.

USW Disability Service

Confidential service where you can discuss your individual requirements and get advice on what support is available whilst you study, including help to apply for it.

MyCareer

Utilise the supportive resources on the MyCareer platform. Wellbeing topics include; Resilience explained, What is career wellbeing, Looking after your mental health at work and many more.

USW Counselling Service

The Counselling Service is impartial, confidential, non-judgmental and available to all current students of the University.

Showcase Your Talent

This webpage is focused on overcoming barriers, finding your strengths and presenting those to employers. Poor mental health can result in lack of confidence and anxiety so it can be more difficult to focus on strengths without support and guidance.



Student Minds

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity.

Mind

Provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

CALM

The Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) is leading a movement against suicide.

Shout

Shout 85258 is a free, confidential, anonymous text support service. You can text from wherever you are in the UK

Samaritans

If you need someone to talk to, Samaritans offers a free support service.

Remember, please regularly check in with your academic staff and/or your work placement partner if you would like to discuss anything that is concerning you - we are here to help. You will also need to let us know if you are not feeling well and unable to attend your placement.

CAREER WELLBEING PROGRAMME

Visit the Career Wellbeing Programme on MyCareer to learn about topics such as: finding the right work-life balance, developing emotional intelligence, positive relationships and resilience.

