



## **Four domains – maintaining wellbeing in turbulent times**

Recent geopolitical events, notably the new American administration and the Brexit vote, can lead us to ever more uncertainty about the future. Facing this type of uncertainty can lead to anxiety about what the future may hold. Alternatively, we can experience despair and ultimately, depression about our powerlessness to affect what may happen in the future. While we may not be able to predict or have a big impact on what may be coming, we can do a lot to look after our wellbeing. This may enable us to face the future with a degree of equanimity.

The concept of wellbeing is much spoken about, and can be viewed from a complex academic perspective. At the other end of the spectrum, it can become a rather glib, throwaway term. However, we can look after our own personal wellbeing by paying attention to four important domains in our lives. Putting a bit of effort into each can help us to feel better in ourselves and maintain a positive worldview.

### **The Physical Domain**

Looking after our physical health is a key part of wellbeing. For some, this is a part of everyday life. Going to the gym, running or playing team sports are great ways to increase physical fitness, and all enable us to feel more rooted in our body. However, this level of physical effort is not for everyone. We can do a lot to increase our physical health by simply walking a little more than we might do normally. This is promoted actively by the NHS, which outlines the positive physical and emotional benefits of being more active each day.

It may seem daunting to reach the desired goal of 10,000 steps per day. However, merely increasing how much we walk each day takes us a long way towards increasing our physical health and fitness. For example, we might choose a longer route when we have to walk, stroll around the block after dinner, or walk up stairs rather than using the lift.

Of course, increasing our physical activity is only part of the matter. We also need to consider our diet and aim to eat as healthily as possible, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

### **The Emotional Domain**

Looking after our emotional health is also very important in improving our overall wellbeing. This can be as easy as having open and honest conversations with those who are close to us, which is a great way to deepen our relationships.



Alternatively, writing a daily journal to explore our deepest thoughts and feelings can help us understand ourselves better and make sense of our inner world. Seeking professional help from a therapist is also an important step if our emotional world becomes overwhelming, or if we are unable to make sense of what is going on for us.

## The Intellectual Domain

Our intellectual health is another very important area. It can often be overlooked once we have finished with formal education. However, keeping our minds sharp and alert to new ideas can be very inspiring and satisfying. It also helps us to approach the world from a fresh perspective. We can look after our intellectual health by taking a course (there are many free online courses available), reading an inspiring book that gives us new knowledge, or even by watching some of the short, powerful talks we can find on websites such as TED.

## The Spiritual Domain

The spiritual domain can often be overlooked, but can be hugely important to our overall wellbeing. For those who are religious, this can consist of spending a little more time in contemplation or prayer. For those who are not religious, spending a few moments each day in quiet meditation or practicing mindfulness (or even taking one of the many available mindfulness courses) can be very beneficial and can help to attain greater inner peace and an enhanced perspective on the world. If none of these appeal, you could simply spend a few moments each day noticing the beauty of the natural world around us.

Actively working for a short while in each of these domains every week can do a great deal to improve physical and mental energy levels. It can also give a sense of control of one thing we can have a huge impact on...our own wellbeing.

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