

In order to be the secure base for our school communities and to make good quality decisions at this extraordinary time we need to:

1. Take action for our own wellbeing – to return from a sensitized stress response to a more neurotypical stress response.
2. Build regular (brief) physiological breaks into our daily routine – to manage our level of physiological arousal throughout the day.
3. Be aware of decision fatigue and analysis paralysis and take action to avoid these.

Evidence-based action	Strengths in current practice	Areas for further development
<p>Take action for our own wellbeing – to return from a sensitized stress response to a more neurotypical stress response i.e. What we probably already know but may not do.</p> <p>Five ways to wellbeing (meta-analysis):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be physically active • Connect with others • Keep learning • Give to others • Take notice – press pause and be curious. Including Mindfulness which leads to increased calmness, focus and resilience <p>Other actions worthy of an honourable mention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with nature • Be creative • Play - have fun, do things you enjoy and that make you laugh • Have some ‘me time’ – self-care (Hygge) • Be grateful – remind yourself of the things in your life that mean the most to you and the things that you are grateful for • Get your basic needs met (eat, drink and sleep) • Avoid unhealthy habits – don’t rely on alcohol, smoking or caffeine as ways of coping • Take a break from the stressors but don’t avoid them completely • Reflect or talk it through with someone you trust and make a plan • Reflect on the positives too including recognising our achievements • Regular (brief) activities to calm, sooth and ground our bodies (see physiological regulation breaks below) <p>NB. There isn’t a one size fits all. We need to find what works best for us.</p>		

<p>Build regular (brief) physiological breaks into our daily routine – to manage our level of physiological arousal throughout the day i.e. What we may not know and definitely need to do.</p> <p><u>Regular (brief) physiological regulation breaks:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calming breathing activities – for example 7-11 breathing (deep and even breathing in to the count of 7 and out to the count of 11) 2. Somatosensory activities – physical and sensory activities to calm, sooth and ground our bodies and minds (e.g. rhythmic movements: <i>muscle tensing and relaxing</i>, grounding ourselves: <i>5-4-3-2-1</i> or a soothing activity: <i>hand massage</i>). Slow and heavy movements to down regulate and fast and light movements to re-energise. 3. Social connection – relational regulation (e.g. a two minute check-in) <p>NB. These ‘bottom up’ brain activities are far more effective at regulating our physiology than ‘top down’/cognitive activities. Even a couple of minutes of the above actions can make a significant difference.</p>		
<p>Be aware of decision fatigue and analysis paralysis and take action to avoid these.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Being aware of the possibility of decision fatigue and analysis paralysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision fatigue is the deterioration in the quality of decisions made by an individual after a series of decision making. • Analysis paralysis is when the time spent analysing the decision outweighs the importance of the decision. 2. Know that we need to be rested and physiologically regulated in order to make the best quality decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action for our own wellbeing (see above) • Regular (brief) physiological breaks built into your day (again see above) • ‘Marinate’ major decisions - ideally do the analysis and then finalise the decision the next day 3. Distribute leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delegate decisions where appropriate with clear vision and values to inform decisions • Provide ongoing support and accountability for those making decisions – ideally in the form of coaching / reflective supervision to guide the 		

<p>decisions and avoid the temptation to micro-manage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value the voice of the group and listen to their views by involving them in the analysis for a decision but minimise the size of groups making each decision • Routines and structures to minimise less important decisions • Be comfortable with ‘no decision yet’ as an outcome in some circumstances 		
<p>And finally, we need to remember that:</p> <p>“Unless we incorporate these concepts we are going to make stupid decisions.” Bruce Perry</p> <p>“Self-care is not selfish. We cannot serve from an empty vessel.” Eleanor Brown</p> <p>“We need to put our own emotional oxygen masks on first.” Louise Bomber</p>		

For further information please see the free online staff training re understanding and supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma at www.sigmateachingschool.org.uk/online-training/

In particular the course session re self-care and organisational care at www.sigmateachingschool.org.uk/online-training/#tab-id-3

And the session re Mindfulness at www.sigmateachingschool.org.uk/online-training/#tab-id-4

For a website of evidence-based wellbeing guidance see www.actionforhappiness.org/

If you’d like to learn more from me (Ian) about evidence-based approaches and interventions to support children and young people who have experienced trauma, then sign up for a PACE+ course which I will be presenting online in the next academic year.

- The PACE+ Approach courses are 6 x 1.5hr live webinar sessions
- There is an online course running in the Autumn term and another online course running in the Spring term
- For more details and to book a place, visit our website <http://www.sigmateachingschool.org.uk/cpd-leadership/>

