



International  
**Wellbeing Insights**  
People, Culture & Wellbeing



Stress Management Society  
from distress to de-stress

# WANO

## Mental Health Awareness

### Session Handbook 2024

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W A N O



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## WELCOME

Stress is the driving force that keeps us on our toes and ensures that we push to be the best we can be. However that is only valid up to a certain point. If we have too much stress and endless wear and tear, it can drive us into physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.

Certainly we can't avoid the problem. Situations arise on a day-to-day basis, which make physical, mental and emotional demands on us. There may be decisions that need to be made, deadlines that need to be met, and lessons to be learned.

Unreasonable stress affects one in five of the working population and after acute medical conditions it is the most common cause of long term sickness absence from work (CIPD Absence Management 2014).

Stress undoubtedly makes people ill. It is now known to contribute to heart disease, hypertension and high blood pressure, it affects the immune system, is linked to strokes, IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain, miscarriage, allergies, alopecia and even premature tooth loss.

Therefore it is imperative to strike the right balance. As individuals, we must take stock of all aspects of our life and situations and learn to cope better.

Treat it early, and your prospects are good. Ignore the problem, and there is a risk that 'burnout' may become a permanent state of affairs.



# UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is more important than ever and very much in the zeitgeist. Many of us feel under pressure to meet demands, perform life duties and maintain a certain lifestyle.

It is essential at both a personal and organisational level to promote and support wellbeing and mental wellness. Providing the right foundations will help create a more engaged, happy and high performing culture.

## MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

- **Mental health problems is a growing public health concern. The likelihood is that we all know someone who is affected by mental ill health – this could be a family member, friend or colleague**
- **Mental ill health in the workplace: 1 in 6 of us will experience depression, anxiety or problems relating to stress**
- **In the US, almost half of adults will experience a mental illness during their lifetime –**  
Source: MHFA
- **Prevalent not just in the US, but around the world**
- **Mental ill-health naturally leads to absence, but Presenteeism (turning up to work whilst either physically or mentally unfit) accounts for double the losses of absences**
- **Working conditions and working environment can have a huge impact on mental health and equally, someone's mental health can have a significant impact to perform well in their job**
- **As part of an annual Gallup Poll the 2020 was officially the most stressful year in recent history, with a record-high 40% of adults worldwide saying they have experienced lots of stress**
- **Although work is good for mental health, a negative environment can lead to physical and mental health problems**
- **According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Moreover, untreated mental health conditions cost the economy \$200 billion every year.**

Source: Centre for Mental Health, WHO, Gallup

# MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION EXERCISE

Before we begin looking at mental health, it may be helpful for you to think about your own, how it affects your life and to share this with a partner. <https://mentalhealthevaluation.questionpro.com>

## 1. WHAT DOES MENTAL HEALTH MEAN TO YOU?

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## 2. WHEN YOU HAVE POOR MENTAL HEALTH—WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

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## 3. HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU:

### A. MENTALLY? (HOW YOU THINK)

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### B. EMOTIONALLY? (HOW YOU FEEL)

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### C. PHYSICALLY?

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## 4. HOW OFTEN DOES IT AFFECT YOU?

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## 5. HOW HAVE YOU BEEN DEALING WITH IT UNTIL NOW?

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## 6. HOW COULD YOU DEAL WITH IT?

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# THE BRIDGE ANALOGY



The Health & Safety Executive defines stress as ‘the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them’.

This links very closely to one of our definitions of stress; a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that:

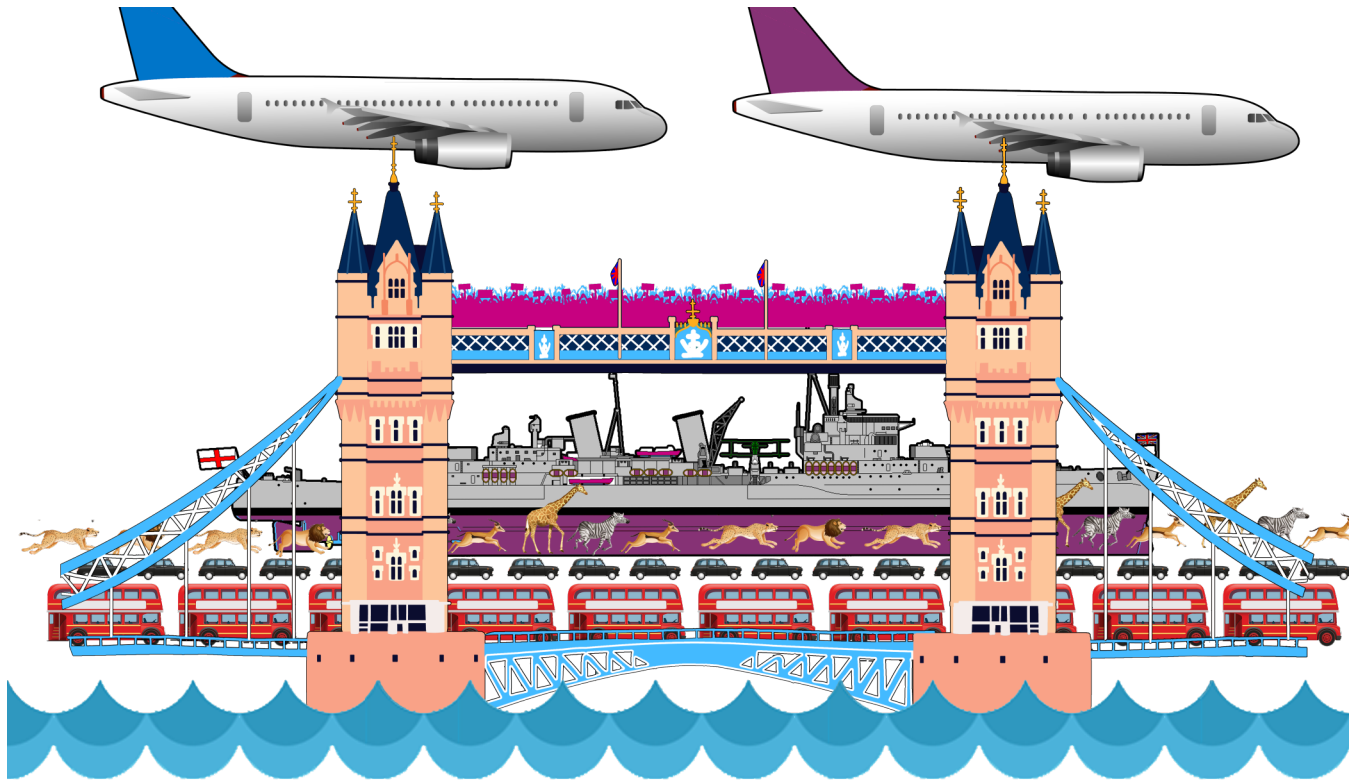
**“DEMANDS EXCEED THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESOURCES  
THE INDIVIDUAL IS ABLE TO MOBILISE.”**

International Wellbeing Insights uses ‘The Bridge’ analogy to approach the topic of mental health, wellbeing and stress. When a Bridge is carrying too much weight, it will eventually collapse. It is possible to see the warning signs before this happens, ‘The Bridge’ would bow, buckle and creak.

The same principle can be applied to human beings, with excessive demands and challenges placed on our bridges. There may be early warning signs. However stress can creep up on some of us, resulting in an unexpected breakdown.

‘The Bridge’ analogy can also be applied to a team or organisation as a whole by looking for more general signs such as team deadlines not being met or a decrease in team morale.

# WHAT'S ON YOUR BRIDGE



1. We don't have a Work Bridge and Personal Bridge, it all goes to the same place and we tend to carry it around with us. Take a moment to think about what is on YOUR Bridge.

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2. What are the signs and symptoms that you display when your Bridge is bowing and buckling. Take a moment to think about what that means for YOUR Bridge.

## GUILT AND SHAME

# WHAT IS WORSE: GUILT OR SHAME?

'Guilt' and 'shame' actually have two very different meanings. They are often used interchangeably, but understanding the difference can help us tackle mental health problems. 'Guilt' is the awareness of having made a mistake and can be seen as a nudge to rectify this. For example, missing a deadline at work might leave you feeling guilty, and as a result you work harder the next time to make sure you meet the next deadline in good time. 'Shame' on the other hand is when we internalise those feelings and begin to doubt our self-worth as a result. Rather than thinking *'that was bad of me to miss my deadline'*, someone experiencing shame might think *'I am a terrible person because I made this mistake'*.

Unlike guilt, which focuses on a specific action, shame encompasses your entire sense of self-worth. Guilt propels us towards positive change; it challenges us and motivates us to improve. Shame, however, convinces us we're fundamentally flawed and makes us question who we are. Shame undermines our self-worth and belonging, deterring us from being as fantastic as we can be. Guilt can be beneficial, whereas shame can feed into a variety of mental health problems.

Next time you make a mistake remember...

Guilt says, "you did something bad", whereas shame says, "you are bad".

Can you re-frame your thoughts and experience something more productive?

# DE-STIGMATISATION

There is still often a stigma attached to mental illness, often resulting from the stereotypes and prejudice that result from misconceptions about mental illness. Stigma is two-fold:

## PUBLIC STIGMA

The reaction that the general population has people with mental ill-health

## SELF-STIGMA

The prejudice which people with mental ill-health turn against themselves

There are three components to both public and self-stigma: stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

	PUBLIC STIGMA	SELF-STIGMA
STEREOTYPE	Negative belief about a group. i.e. incompetence	Negative belief about self. i.e. incompetence
PREJUDICE	Agreement with belief and/or negative emotional reaction. i.e. anger, fear	Agreement with belief and/or negative emotional reaction. i.e. low self-esteem
DISCRIMINATION	Behaviour response to prejudice. i.e. avoidance, with-holding employment/housing opportunities or generally just withholding help	Behaviour response to prejudice (fails to pursue work/housing opportunities)

It may be helpful for you to think and reflect on your own experience of self and public-stigma.

### PUBLIC-STIGMA:

For example, men are often more likely not to reach out for help with their mental health. Why do you think this is?

WHAT IDEAS CAN YOU THINK OF TO HELP DRIVE PEOPLE TO START REACHING OUT FOR HELP?

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### SELF-STIGMA:

WHAT HAS STOPPED YOU FROM ASKING FOR HELP?

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# WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

## RESILIENCE

We may have many different approaches to tackling a problem but there is one thing we all have in common whilst we are tackling the problem

**'RESILIENCE'**

## WHAT DOES RESILIENCE MEAN TO YOU?

## HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE RESILIENCE?

# UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE

## RESILIENCE

We may have many different approaches to tackling a problem but there is one thing we all have in common whilst we are tackling the problem

### 'RESILIENCE'

Resilience is a term very often used these days. Our definition for resilience is

### THE ABILITY IN WHICH WE DEAL WITH ADVERSITY

Examples of adversities:

SMALL DAILY STRESSORS	CONCERNING STRESSFUL OCCURRENCES	SIGNIFICANT STRESSING EVENTS
TRAFFIC JAMS OR DRIVING DELAYS	MOVING TO A NEW CITY	TRAUMATIC INJURIES
MISPLACING EVERY DAY ITEMS (PHONE, KEYS, WALLET)	DEMANDING WORKLOADS AT JOB	SEVERE ILLNESS
NOISY NEIGHBOURS OR DISRUPTIVE ENVIRONMENTS	CONSTANT CHANGES IN AN ORGANISATION	WEATHER DISASTERS

## HOWEVER...

There is more to the definition!

Resilience is also about:



### OUR CAPACITY TO RETURN TO SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION AND FUNCTIONING EVEN AFTER A PERIOD OF DISORGANISATION AND DISRUPTION



This final section of the definition almost alludes to us being naturally resilient, that something within us is already trying to balance us in the midst of whatever adversity we're facing.

In the face of what we are used to, the daily patterns that we adhere to, our brains do not necessarily need to adapt to a situation. However, when it is called upon to begin to adapt, it is already adapting without us noticing! It is building its own personal resilience for us!

# PROACTIVE AND REACTIVE RESILIENCE

## REACTIVE RESILIENCE

REACTIVE RESILIENCE IS ABOUT BOUNCING BACK AND ADAPTING TO CHALLENGES OR SETBACKS AFTER THEY'VE ALREADY HAPPENED. SO, WHEN SOMETHING BAD OCCURS, YOU REACT TO IT BY FINDING WAYS TO COPE, RECOVER, AND MOVE FORWARD.

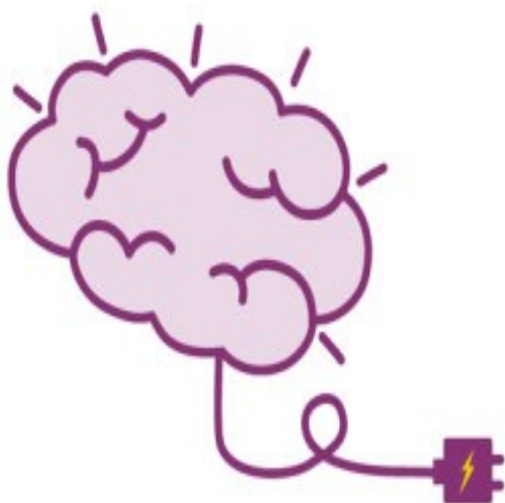
IMAGINE YOUR COMPUTER CRASHES, AND YOU DIDN'T BACK UP YOUR FILES. REACTIVELY, YOU'D WORK TO FIX THE COMPUTER, SALVAGE WHAT YOU CAN FROM YOUR FILES, AND HOPEFULLY LEARN TO BACK UP YOUR DATA IN THE FUTURE



## PROACTIVE RESILIENCE

PROACTIVE RESILIENCE INVOLVES TAKING STEPS BEFOREHAND TO ANTICIPATE, MITIGATE, OR EVEN PREVENT POTENTIAL CHALLENGES OR DISASTERS. IT'S ABOUT BUILDING UP YOUR RESOURCES, SKILLS, AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS TO HANDLE WHATEVER COMES YOUR WAY.

INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR YOUR COMPUTER TO CRASH, YOU REGULARLY BACK UP YOUR FILES AND INVEST IN ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE. SO, IF SOMETHING DOES GO WRONG, YOU'RE PREPARED AND CAN MINIMIZE THE IMPACT.



In simple terms, reactive resilience is about dealing with problems after they happen, while proactive resilience is about preparing for them before they occur. Both are important skills for navigating life's ups and downs. Both are excellent examples of our resilient mind and neither should be considered the negative to the other. We want to achieve having both of these aspects of resilience working in whatever way they can in the face of anything that may come to us or we want to manage before it may happen.

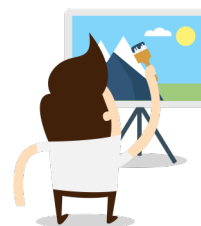
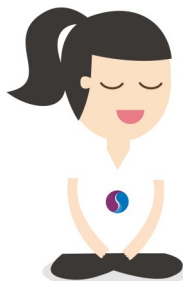
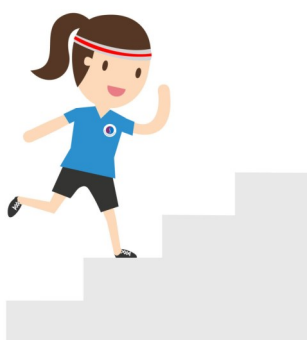
# GROUNDING

## WHAT IS GROUNDING?

We've spoken a lot about how we need to be centred well for our resilience to enter its full effect and limit our internal distractions as best as we can. One technique known very well for bringing us more centred and focused is grounding.

In simple terms, grounding means being **CONNECTED TO REALITY OR FEELING STABLE AND BALANCED**. It's like having your feet firmly planted on the ground, both physically and mentally. When someone feels grounded, they are often calm, centered, and aware of their surroundings. Grounding helps people feel more anchored and less overwhelmed, especially during stressful or uncertain times.

We can use grounding techniques to help us in any situations that we want to use them! The next two pages detail some of the different techniques you can use to help focus on a task at hand.

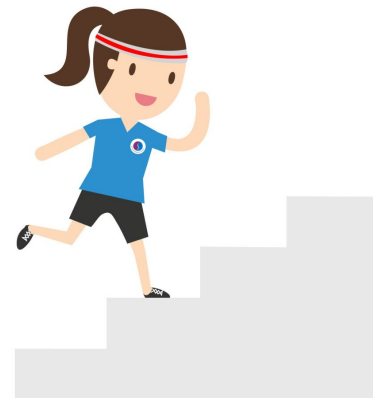


# GROUNDING

## EXAMPLES OF GROUNDING:

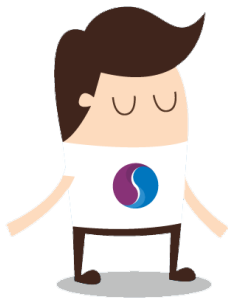
### PHYSICAL EXERCISE

This is a pretty simple one! Taking a bit of time to be in nature in a run, or taking the time to do a homework out acts as a sensory grounding tool: we need to engage in multiple senses simultaneously for us to do our exercise. Even a simple walk we can focus on our breathing, what is around us and so on.



### (EARTHING) BAREFOOT GROUNDING

This, simply put, means walking or standing barefoot on natural surfaces like grass, sand, or soil. It's believed to connect you directly with the present you are physical in, providing a sense of balance and calmness. This practice allows you to feel the textures and temperature of the ground beneath your feet, which can help you feel more rooted and connected to the present moment.



### '54321' GROUNDING

The 54321 grounding technique involves focusing on five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste, which helps bring your attention back to the present moment and reduce anxiety.



# GROUNDING

## EXAMPLES OF GROUNDING:

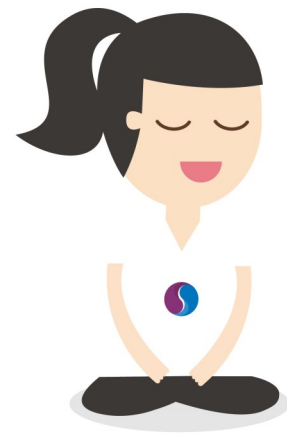


**Visualisation grounding is like creating a mental picture to help you feel more calm and centred. You imagine a peaceful place or scenario in your mind, focusing on the details to distract from stress and bring your attention to the present moment at that higher level of thinking.**

### VISUALISATION

### MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

**Mindfulness meditation is like training your brain to focus on the present moment. You sit or stand quietly, paying attention to your breath, thoughts, and sensations without judging them. It helps you become more aware of your feelings and surroundings, reducing stress and increasing clarity.**



**Rational analysis is the process of carefully examining a situation or problem using logical thinking and evidence. It involves breaking down the issue, gathering relevant information, and making decisions based on facts rather than emotions or biases. It's like taking a step back to look at things objectively and weighing the pros and cons before making a decision.**

### RATIONAL ANALYSIS

# SIGNPOST & SUPPORT

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (Peninsula)

Available 24/7 to everyone in the London Office  
Health Assured

### Perkbox:

Mindfulness Sessions

[A global employee benefits and rewards platform | Perkbox](#)

### Kieran Heron

Senior HR advisor, mental health first-aider.



**PENINSULA**  
**Your Wellbeing Services**  
BROUGHT TO YOU BY health assured

- 

#### Home Life Support

If you're having trouble balancing your budgets, debt or even require assistance with civil disputes, we have expert advisors here to offer the support you need.
- 

#### Work Life Assistance

Our work-life advice is dedicated to supporting you through professional issues, whether it be returning to work or coping with a change in structure.
- 

#### Physical & Emotional Health

A little information goes a long way. That's why we have a suite of resources aimed to support you both physically and emotionally, from managing anxiety to simple breathing techniques.
- 

#### Wellbeing Resources

We recognise the value of self-help tools, which is why we provide a range of wellbeing modules, factsheets and invaluable video counselling.
- 

#### 4 Week Self-Help Programmes

Whatever your goals, our 4-week programmes are designed to help you through those small, but important, lifestyle changes. Covering everything from sleeping better to changing habits such as smoking and alcohol consumption.
- 

#### Mini Health Checks

Our Mini Health Checks are a great way for you to assess your own wellbeing. They only take a minute or two and you'll be provided with instant guidance, based on your answers.
- 

#### Health Calendar

The health calendar raises awareness of different health concerns each month, such as heart disease or dementia, providing information on early detection and how to help prevent issues occurring.
- 

#### Wellbeing Videos

BrightTV – powered by Health Assured is a monthly series, featuring well-known personalities talking about their personal experiences with mental health. Our monthly webinars also provide topical information and coaching to guide and educate on a range of issues.
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#### My Healthy Advantage app

My Healthy Advantage offers a variety of bespoke wellbeing features exclusive to Health Assured clients and partners. Within the app, users will have access to a library of learning materials personalised to their preferences, including wellbeing articles, videos, weekly mood trackers, 4-week plans and mini health checks.

Don't forget, you can always call our FREE 24-hour Confidential Helpline:

**0800 047 4097**

Download 'My Healthy Advantage'

Unique code:

[healthassuredeap.com](http://healthassuredeap.com)

Username:  Password:

Take personal responsibility to get the individual support you need

# SIGNPOST & SUPPORT

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

- **Morning coffee breaks:** a short morning break where we can casually connect over a cup of coffee
- **Lunch time walks:** A brief walk during our lunch breaks to exercise, relax and spend some time together
- **Language Exchange:** Having short sessions during the month where team members can teach and learn basic words like “hello” and “good morning” from each other’s language
- **Pet sharing and Halloween Fun:** Sharing pictures of our pets with the team and even dress them up for Halloween
- **Awareness session with The Stress Management Society**– A session with the aim to raise awareness on the topic which will take place on Friday 11 October virtually
- **McMillian coffee morning** – Organising a coffee morning in support of the biggest fund-raising event across the UK happening to raise money for people living with cancer

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Lunchtime Walk	3	4	5
6	7 Quiz Evening	8	9	10 Macmillan Morning Coffee	11 Mental Health Awareness Session	12
13	14 Lunchtime Walk	15	16	17	18 Language Exchange	19
20	21 Quiz Evening	22	23	24 Morning Coffee	25	26
27	28	29 Session on supporting staff who are supporting/ caring for others	30	31 Pet sharing and Halloween Fun	Language Exchange	

Take personal responsibility to get the individual support you need

# MY 30 DAY ACTION PLAN

## ACTION ONE

What I am going to do...

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How I am going to do it...

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How I will know if it's been successful...

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## ACTION TWO

What I am going to do...

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How I am going to do it...

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How I will know if it's been successful...

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## ACTION THREE

What I am going to do...

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How I am going to do it...

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## BUDDY SYSTEM SUPPORT

To implement positive behavioural change, we must form new habits - it takes at least 28 days to form a new habit. We must decide our actions, carry them out, support and be accountable to ourselves and each other.

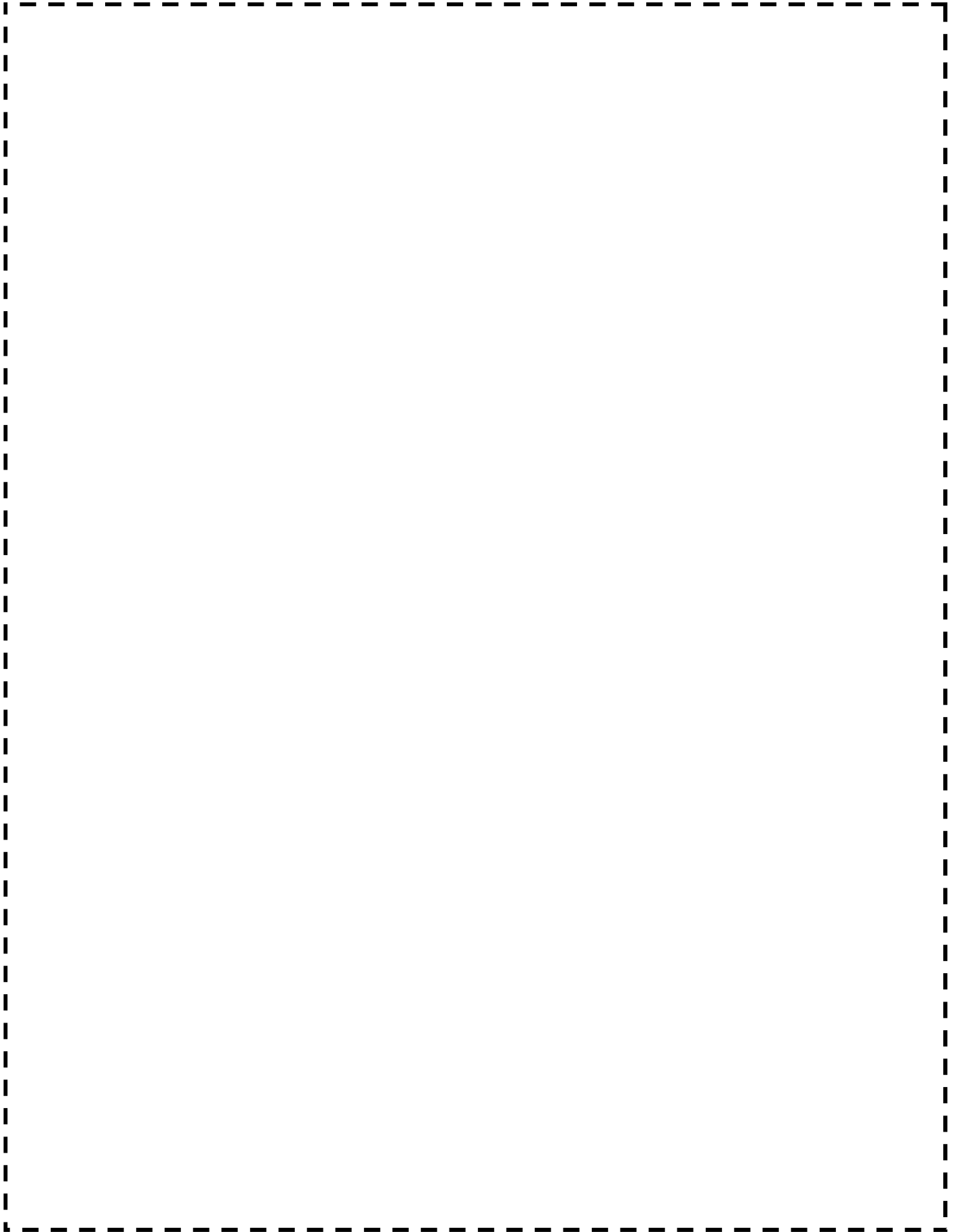
Who will you make yourself accountable to over the next 30 days?

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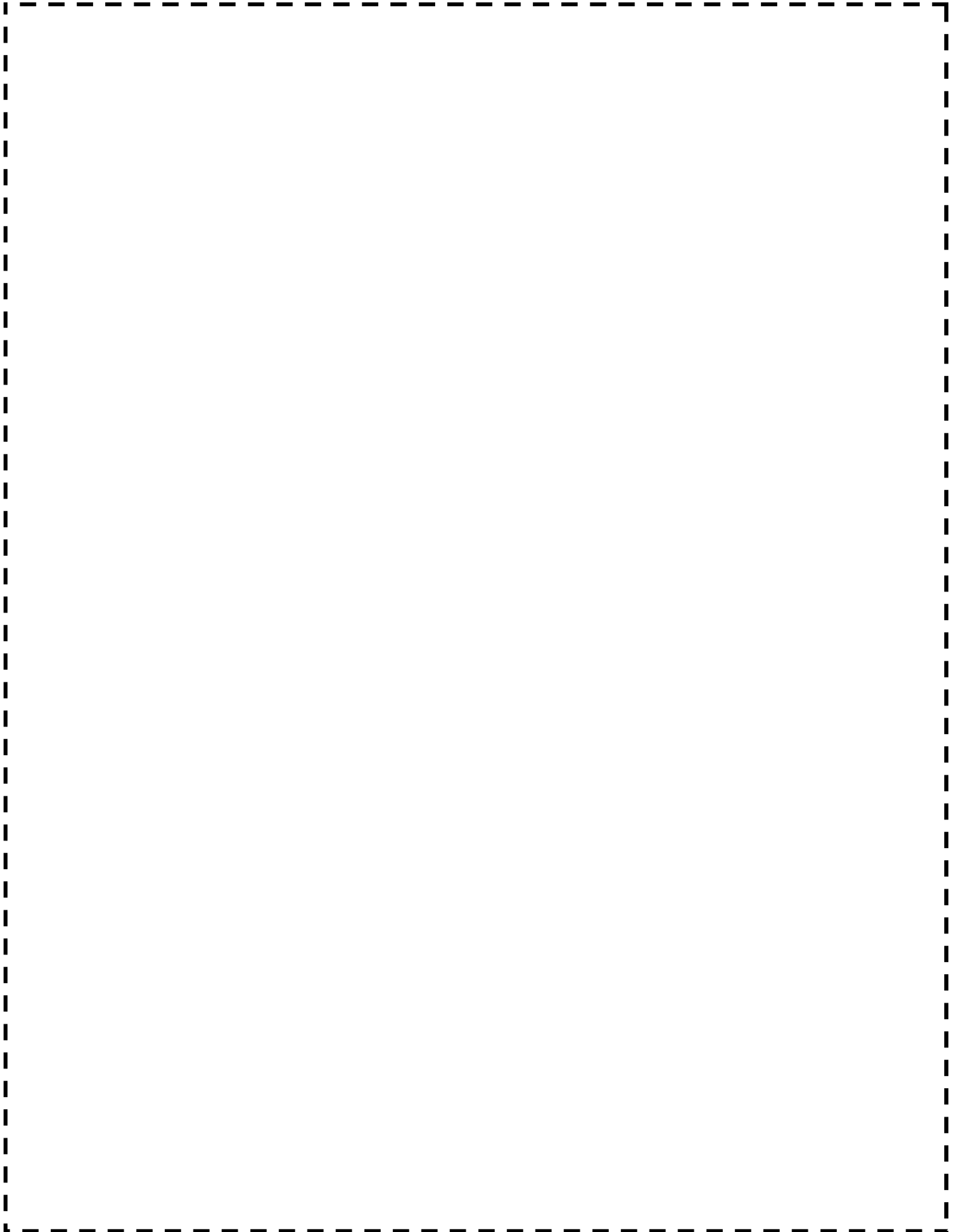
How will you stay in touch? How many times over the next 30 days?

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# NOTES



# NOTES





We provide a range of services across the UK and internationally. We are always happy to discuss how we can support you.

*We look forward to supporting your wellbeing journey.*

**Find Us Here:**

The Lighthouse  
Suite S, Quay West  
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**Visit Us On:**

[www.stress.org.uk](http://www.stress.org.uk)  
[www.wellbeing.work](http://www.wellbeing.work)

**We have supported many organisations, including:**

