

Wellbeing,

all the support you
could possibly want

The links between wellbeing and people being engaged and productive at work are well documented. We are simply at our best when we are healthy and happy. With that in mind, this month we have taken a look inside the Civil Service Learning core curriculum to provide you with a guide to available learning that can help you manage team and individual wellbeing.

In terms of L&D support to help people maintain a balance between productivity and taking proper care of themselves, it's tempting to focus in on a single topic – [resilience and wellbeing](#).

However, that really would be to miss out on broader considerations. This isn't just about individual self-care regimes, being mindful when work looks set to overwhelm you and knowing how to respond accordingly. It's also about being able to acknowledge and contribute to the wellbeing of people around you – which brings a large number of leadership considerations into play. For leaders and managers, it's about creating an environment and modelling behaviours which build, rather than threaten, the resilience and wellbeing of your team members.

“ Once you begin to think of the subject in these broader terms, four areas emerge in which CSL support is available; change and uncertainty; team tensions; personal effectiveness; and empathy and inclusion. ”





Change and uncertainty

Stress, discomfort, anxiety; these are all perfectly natural reactions to change and uncertainty. Being able to lead team members through such times, easing nagging fears and concerns that might otherwise eat away at their wellbeing is a crucial leadership competency. CSL topics such as [managing reactions to change](#); [engaging people with change](#); and [engaging people through storytelling](#) are therefore all in play here.

The first of these two consider the value of strong leaders who can provide direction and motivation to make change less unsettling, while also predicting, managing and minimising any negative impact that it might have on their team members. Knowing how to use storytelling to provide a compelling narrative for change, ensuring no-one gets left behind, is an important complementary skill.

The [leading in ambiguity](#) topic is slightly different, considering the effect that performing this role can have on leaders themselves. Ambiguous, uncertain times can be challenging for leaders, sowing the seeds of self-doubt in even the most capable individuals. This topic assesses your tolerance for ambiguity. It considers how to manage the tensions that ambiguity can create within your role, with a particular focus on maintaining personal resilience throughout.

Team tensions

If change can be a stressful experience, so too can working in a team environment which feels tense and uncomfortable. Undesirable behaviours and an inability to see eye to eye can quickly render a team dysfunctional, creating an unhealthy work environment. The [resolving team tension](#) topic looks at how to combat the kind of tension that can sap morale and wellbeing while encouraging the healthy, creative tension that characterises a productive, innovative team.

Such a team is likely to be diverse and able to embrace new ideas and views, translating diversity into improved performance. The consequence of understanding how to [lead inclusive teams](#) is creating a workplace where people feel able to bring their full self to work, operating confidently and effectively.

Two other managerial topics with a part to play include giving feedback and coaching skills. The former acknowledges that there is a definite skill to [giving feedback](#) in a way which leaves people feeling both empowered and motivated. It's an important factor in helping build authentic and trusting relationships which help you get the best from the people you work with.

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[Coaching skills for managers](#) recognises that there has been a shift from pushing people to behave in certain ways, in favour of coaching them to develop solutions of their own. Done properly, coaching is about pulling someone towards a desired outcome – such as helping them to take charge of their resilience and wellbeing.



Personal effectiveness

[Running effective meetings](#) is unlikely to have made many people's shortlists for topics with a resilience and wellbeing aspect. However, its inclusion here acknowledges how being unproductive at work can be a cause of stress. That unproductivity could stem from having to deal with a never-ending stream of emails, being distracted by unimportant activities – or being forced to endure ineffective or pointless meetings.

It therefore follows that being able to run effective meetings is not just workplace best practice; it could (albeit indirectly) have a very real impact on people's stress levels and productivity.

As a topic, [conducting high quality conversations](#) is one which – rightly or wrongly – is often associated with conducting challenging conversations. This needn't be the case. In fact, this skill is just as valuable for discussing emotive or personal issues with a team member. When it comes to issues affecting our health and wellbeing, too many people prefer to suffer in silence, sometimes out of choice but sometimes because there's no-one to talk to. A manager who can make sensitive conversations easier to broach will be incredibly valuable to a colleague who is struggling to remain resilient.

Empathy and inclusion

Thankfully, there are now some signs of fewer people being prepared to suffer in silence. A growing willingness to openly discuss issues connected to mental health is a prime indicator of this.

Allowing a culture of fear and silence to develop around this issue can prevent employees with mental health conditions from realising their full potential. It's this that makes CSL's [mental health at work](#) topic so valuable from an employee wellbeing perspective.

On a related note, [becoming disability confident](#) has a wellbeing aspect to it as well. A manager (or colleague) who can improve their awareness of disabilities in the workplace can actively contribute to the creation of a work environment in which colleagues can thrive.

The final topics in this section are [emotional intelligence](#) and [unconscious bias](#), two of the great all-rounders in the CSL line-up. Simply put, the two relate to making better decisions, free from ingrained bias, and using emotional intelligence to tailor your behaviour to any given situation. Both of these contribute to creating a more inclusive environment where all employees should enjoy a greater sense of wellbeing while doing their jobs.



Related reading:

- To read about how DIT are using our resilience and wellbeing learning, click [here](#).
- To read more about resilience and wellbeing in our newsletter, click [here](#).