

## Good Breaks Toolkit - *What can I do for myself and others?*

### Introduction

We all need to take regular breaks during our working hours to work at our best. We need to use this time well, to eat, drink, rest and recover, and re-energise. Where staff are able to rest and recover from the demands of their work, they are less likely to make mistakes, less likely to suffer from burnout and feel more engaged.

Taking a good break is a shared responsibility. We need to look after ourselves, look out for each other and have the right management and organisational support to make this happen.

This toolkit encourages you to think about your own break behaviour and guides you through a series of exercises to help you take a good break.

1. What is my 'break behaviour' and how can I make small changes to make a big difference?
2. What does a Good Break look like for me?
3. What can I do for my colleagues to support them to have a Good Break?
4. How can I have a conversation with my manager about Good Breaks?
5. Rest and recovery from work using the DRAMMA model
6. WOOP your Break

## 1. What is my 'break behaviour' and how can I make small changes to make a big difference?

As a first step it is helpful to reflect on your current 'break behaviour' and to reflect on how well this is working for you. It can be very powerful to identify small changes you could make that may well make a big difference.

Current break behaviour	Is this working well for me?	Small changes I could make to have a better break	Possible impact on others	Possible solution	To discuss with line manager
<i>E.g. I eat my lunch at my desk</i>	<i>Not really, I don't switch off from work</i>	<i>Go outside to eat and have a short walk</i>	<i>Me being away from my desk for 15 minutes</i>	<i>Mark my break in my calendar so others know when I am back</i>	<i>Explain the plan to my manager and why it is important to me. Let them know that I am happy to be reminded when I take meetings over lunch</i>
<i>E.g. I don't take a lunch break, just 15 minutes</i>	<i>No, I grab a coffee and a snack bar, but I feel guilty if I take more as I know I am needed</i>	<i>Take a daily break, at least 30 minutes, and sit outside to eat a healthy lunch</i>	<i>Me being away from the ward for an additional 15 minutes</i>	<i>Agree break rota with team, remind each other that breaks are important</i>	<i>Discuss and agree break rota</i>

## 2. What does a Good Break look like for me?

Having a good break at work will look different for different people, depending on personal preferences and the type of work. For example, if you have been on your feet most of your working hours, you will benefit from sitting down; but if you have been sitting down in an office behind a computer you will benefit from moving around.

Think about the WHEN the WHAT and the HOW of your breaks to help you design a good break. Look at the webinar for background and ideas and try the exercise below.

	What would work well for me?	Impact on others/team	Possible solutions
<b>WHEN</b>  <i>When do I need a break during my working day and for how long?</i>			
<b>WHAT</b>  <i>In order to switch off from work during my break and recover what do I need to do?</i>			
<b>HOW</b>  <i>How can I make this happen?</i>			

### 3. What can I do for my colleagues to support them to have a Good Break?

To change the culture around break taking everyone needs to play a role. This means we can help each other by:

- **Role Modelling** Take a break yourself, block time in your diary, share with colleagues where you have been for lunch, invite a colleague out for a walk.
- **Have conversations about breaks** e.g. Have you taken a break today? Bringing up Good Breaks at a team meeting or have it as a regular agenda item
- **Notice** signs and signals that colleagues need a break
- **Plan** for good breaks and ensure that work schedules include regular breaks and provide cover

### 4. How can I have a conversation with my manager about Good Breaks?

Having a conversation about taking breaks with your manager can have many benefits. It can help you discuss how you and/or your colleagues work at your best and the support you need to be able to take regular breaks and flourish at work. It is helpful to take time to think through the conversation first. And, although you may find it uncomfortable, some people find it helpful to role-play or talk out loud, to test out different ways of getting their message across clearly.

#### Before the conversation:



- Questions to ask yourself:
  - What do I want to say? What is my message?
  - What do I want (to gain) from this conversation?
- You choose what you want to discuss and whether you want to disclose anything about your wellbeing at work
- Think through the potential impact on you, your team and your manager and how to mitigate it when requesting a change in your break schedule
- Arrange a suitable time and place to talk

#### During the conversation:



- Try to be as honest and specific as possible about your thoughts
- Focus on how your wellbeing and ability to rest and recover impacts your work and what adjustments you feel could help
- Check that you and your manager are on the same page
- Be confident to steer conversations in ways you think are best for your needs
- Take notes if this is helpful for you
- Agree a plan
- Make sure you end the conversation with a clear understanding of next steps

#### After the conversation:



- You may find it helpful to email a summary of your conversation to your manager

## 5. Rest and recovery from work using the DRAMMA model

Detaching, 'switching off' or recovery from work is important. It reduces stress, allows for physiological recovery, brings us positive emotions and a greater sense of overall wellbeing. People who rest and detach from their work experience improved relationships and less conflict between work and life demands.

For many people detaching from work is not easy – we can become preoccupied with things that need to be done, or conversations had earlier in the day. Newman and colleagues developed the DRAMMA model to help us think about how we can improve our chances of recovering from work.

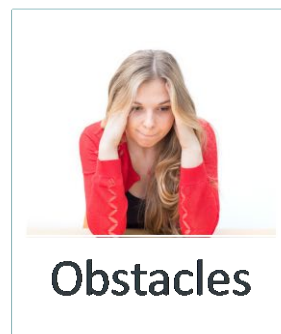
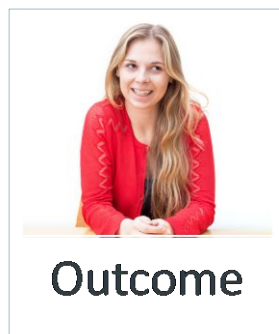
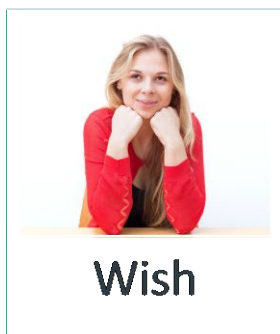
Work through the exercise below to think about how you detach from work. Could you take any other actions to give you the best chance of recovering from work?

	Meaning	How Do I Do This?	Actions I can take to recover?
<b>D</b>	<b>Detachment</b> <i>recognising that outside of your working hours, thinking about work should be minimal</i>		
<b>R</b>	<b>Recovery</b> <i>taking a break and doing something different to your work (i.e. not using your leisure time for having calls)</i>		
<b>A</b>	<b>Autonomy</b> <i>doing something you choose to do, rather than something you are told to do or feel you 'should' do</i>		
<b>M</b>	<b>Mastery</b> <i>doing something that you are good at</i>		
<b>M</b>	<b>Meaning</b> <i>doing something that is important and valuable to you and which has real purpose for you</i>		
<b>A</b>	<b>Affiliation</b> <i>building social relationships and gaining a sense of love and belongingness</i>		

## 6. WOOP your Break

WOOP stands for Wish, Outcome, Obstacle and Plan. It is an imagery tool and can be used for any wishes, long term or short term. It will give you perspective and clarity on your everyday life. WOOP is based on the finding that the obstacles that we think most impede us from fulfilling our wishes can actually help us to realise them.

WOOP instructs us to dream our future dreams but then to imagine what obstacles inside ourselves prevent us from achieving this dream. It has been shown in many research studies to be an effective tool to reduce stress, increase work engagement, find solutions to problems and improve time management. This tool is something that you can use to support yourself.



Before you start with the WOOP exercise, please be aware that WOOP is different from other exercises: it involves thoughts and images rather than rational or effortful thinking. It involves going slow, creating time and space for thinking and imagining.

It is critical that no interruptions occur during the exercise. Start the WOOP session when you feel calm and comfortable. This is your time now. Everything else has to wait. Clear your mind and create space to imagine.

**Wish:** What is your wish, a wish that is challenging, but feasible?

Think about the next four weeks (or a better suited timeframe): What is the one wish you would like to fulfil in relation to breaks at work? Pick a wish that feels challenging to you but that you can reasonably fulfil within the next four weeks.

Note your Wish in 3-6 words:

**Outcome:** What would be the best outcome of fulfilling your wish?

What would be the best thing, the best outcome about fulfilling your wish? How would fulfilling your wish make you feel?

Note your best Outcome in 3-6 words: Imagine....

**Obstacle:** What is your main inner obstacle that holds you back from fulfilling your wish?

What is it within you that holds you back from fulfilling your wish? What in you might stop you? It might be an emotion, an irrational belief, or a bad habit. Think more deeply - what is it really? Identify your main inner obstacle.

Note your main inner Obstacle in 3-6 words: Imagine...

**Plan:** What can you do to overcome your obstacle?

Identify one effective action you can take or one effective thought you can think to overcome your obstacle.

Note your Plan (action or thought) in 3-6 words:

Now make a plan by filling in the blanks below:

If \_\_\_\_\_, then I will \_\_\_\_\_

(obstacle you named)

(action or thought you named)

Slowly repeat and imagine this if-then plan one more time.