

How to stay well in the classroom: being mentally fit

-
- PHIL LONGWELL
 - THE ENGLISH UK ACADEMIC CONFERENCE
 - CLASSROOM PRACTICE DAY
 - SATURDAY 19 JANUARY 2019

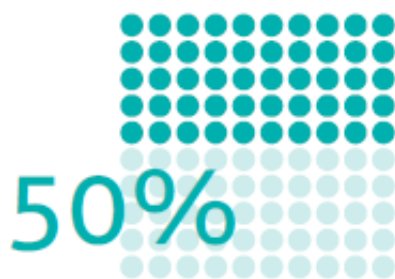


Introduction

- English Language Teacher since 2006
- Qualifications – NILE 2009, Warwick 2012
- Personal Experience of Poor Mental Health
- Interview for Time to Talk Day - Feb 2017
- Research – December 2017
- IATEFL Brighton 2018 + Webinar + Q&A
- Article in El Gazette – 2018
- Mind Volunteer and Associate
- Time to Change 'Champion'
- 'Wellbeing' service (Norfolk)



Background

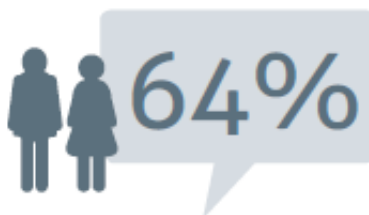


said they had experienced depression, anxiety or panic attacks due to work.



36%

A third of those who said they had experienced problems said they feel it had a negative impact on their student's studies.



would not feel confident in disclosing mental health problems or unmanageable stress to their employer.



Close to half feel that their organisation does not support people who experience mental health problems well.



of people working in education do not feel that they receive sufficient guidance about their health and wellbeing at work.

Source: Education Support Partnership / YouGov. (2017) Health Survey 2017.
Available at:
<https://www.educationsupportpartnership.org.uk/resources/research-reports/2017-health-survey>

The well-being talking shop



“I’m worried that too much of a focus on the psychology and well-being of teachers detracts from the broader systemic issues that cause these issues in the first place.”

(anonymous)

2 Definitions of Wellbeing

well-being 

NOUN

[mass noun]

The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

'an improvement in the patient's well-being'

+ More example sentences

+ Synonyms

Professional 'subjective well-being' comprises:

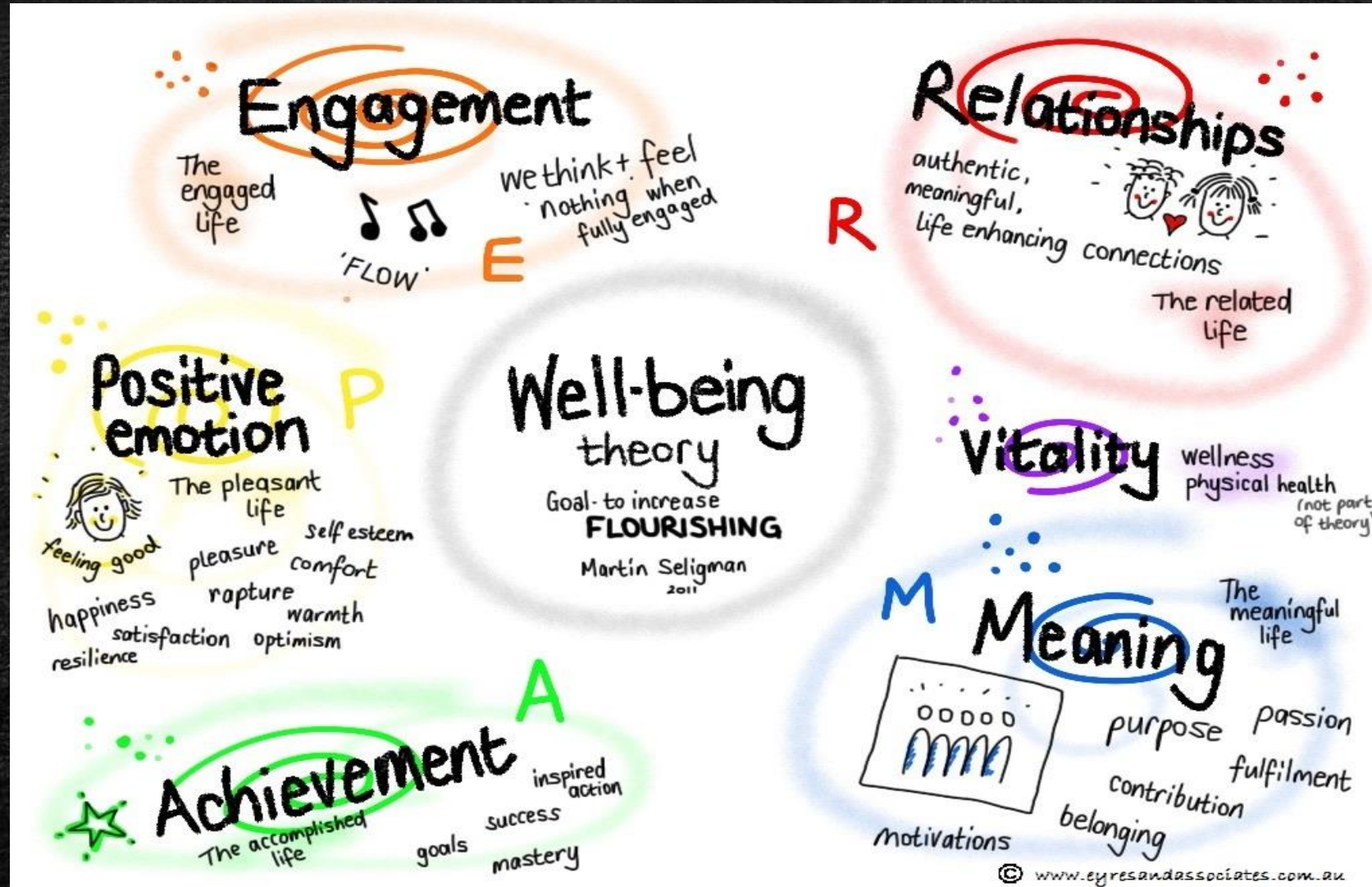
- having job satisfaction
- a lack of negative emotions
- and presence of positive emotions at work

(Kahneman, Diener & Schwartz (1999) cited in Mercer, S (2018).

Question:

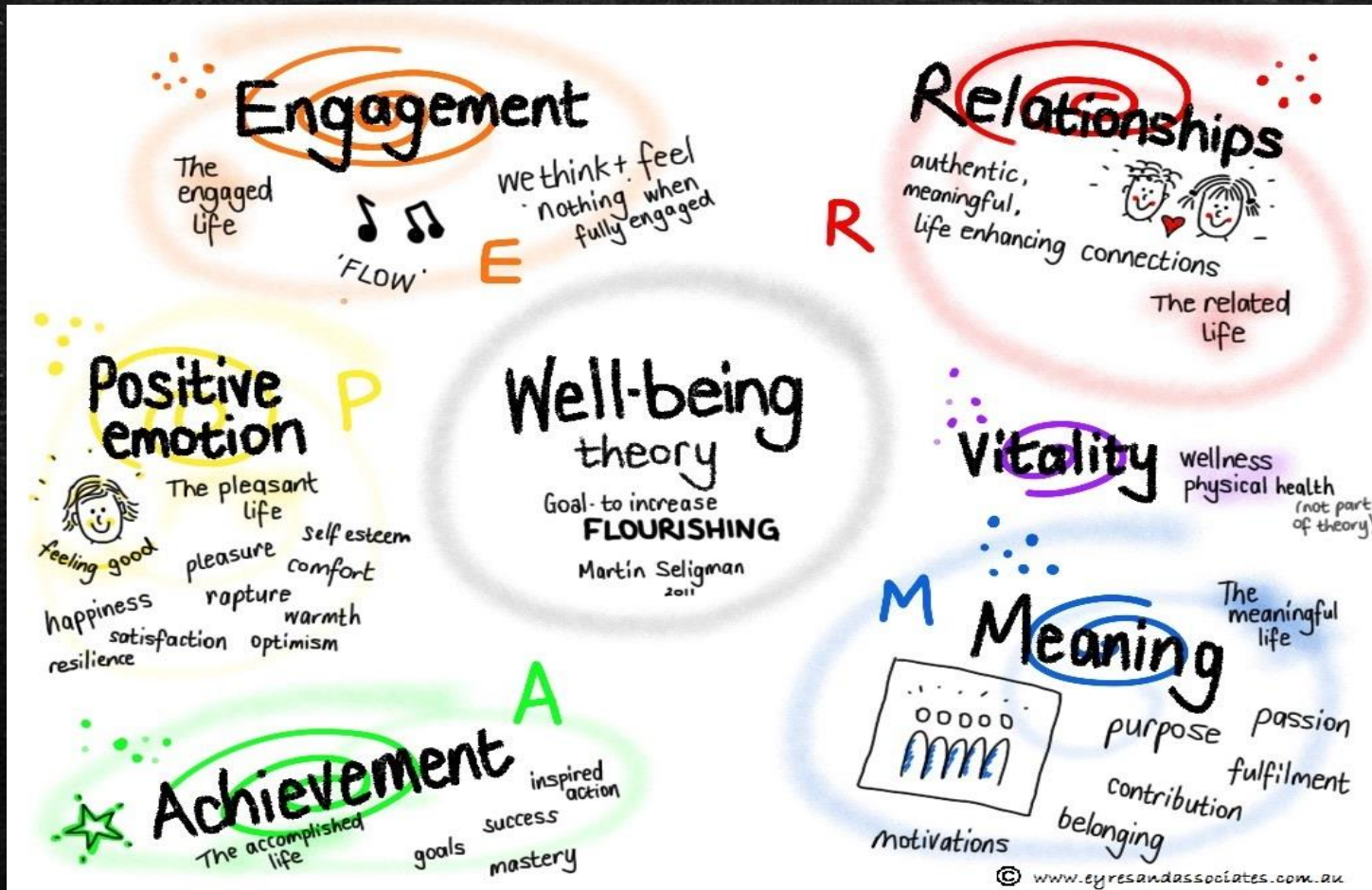
What would be your definition of wellbeing be?

Wellbeing theory: the PERMA+V model (Seligman, 2011)



Source: <https://www.discoveryinaction.com.au/latest-news/wellbeing-and-the-perma-model/>

How much explicit attention do you pay to your own wellbeing?



- A large amount
- Quite a lot
- Some
- Very little
- None at all

the PERMA+V model (Seligman, 2011)

Source: <https://www.discoveryinaction.com.au/latest-news/wellbeing-and-the-perma-model/>

Question:

If you have suffered any mental health issues, do you have any tactics or coping mechanisms to deal with any symptoms you might have suffered with?

Medication

Therapy or counselling,
e.g. CBT

Meditation. Mindfulness.

Breathing techniques.

Exercise. Yoga.

Swimming.

Walking away from the
situation.

Talking to friends.

Alcohol, smoking, other
drugs.

"I try to walk away from situations if I can and tell people I'll come back to them later when I'm calmer/more able to deal with situations. If I notice myself getting stressed I give myself a talking to and tell myself to focus on positives or on breaking down the things I need to do so that they're more manageable."

"Lots of self awareness practices... Shadow work... Rituals... Music... Calming things... And I know it sounds bad but a glass of wine at the end of a hard day doesn't hurt"

"Drugs. Rest. Therapy. Ultimately for me though, the most effective treatment was to quit that company. I feel much better now!"

Question:

**In what ways do you
look after your own
wellbeing?**

Exercise

Diet

Time Management

Meditation

Mindfulness

Embrace Imperfection

Time Off

Self-Care

Work-life balance?

"Meditation, yoga, exercise, leaving work on time, don't look at emails at the weekend, talk to other teachers."

"I try to eat right, I try to get enough exercise (fitness trackers are helpful) I try to get all my work done before spending quality time with my partner (long distance relationship) so I can focus on that aspect of my life."

"My wellbeing depends on long walks and meditation, plus time to myself for reading, massage, cooking, binge watching on Netflix"

"Trying to have time off, for example by going to the cinema [or] dance classes once a week – it's something completely different. Trying to plan food and cook for myself whenever possible so that I'm eating healthily. Making sure I have routines in the evening to calm me down so that I can get a good night's sleep ... mental and physical health are so intermingled."

‘Stress’

Brabban and Turkington's stress bucket model (2002)



◆ Image source: <https://www.mentalhealth-uk.org/stressbucket>

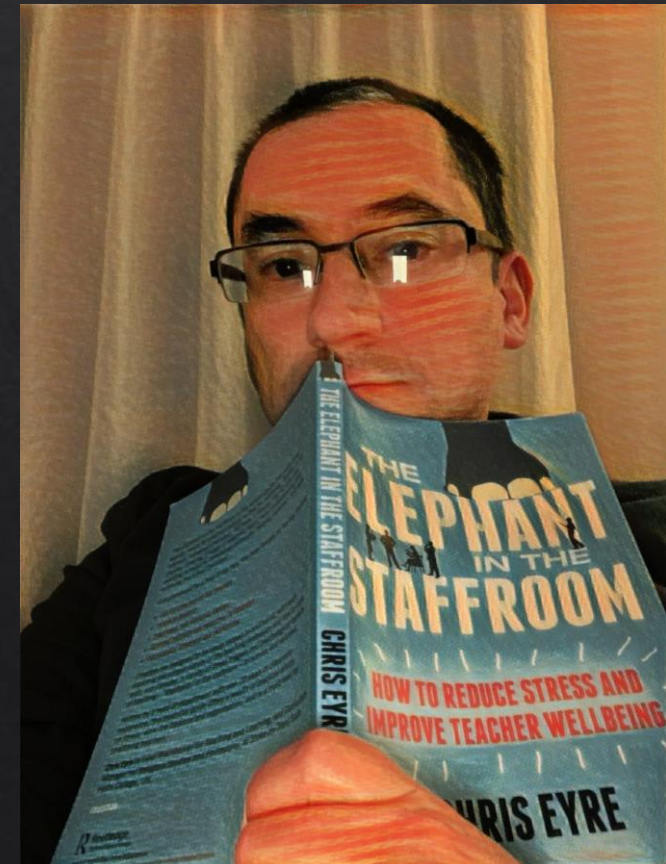
Factors that cause stress



- ◆ Workload
- ◆ Perfectionism
- ◆ Job Insecurity
- ◆ Poor Pay
- ◆ Zero hour contracts
- ◆ Demanding parents
- ◆ Misbehaving students
- ◆ Homesickness
- ◆ Working environment
- ◆ Lack of support
- ◆ Lack of appreciation
- ◆ Meeting deadlines
- ◆ Culture shock
- ◆ Excessive responsibilities
- ◆ Unrealistic expectations
- Constant observations
- Threat of inspections
- Imposter Syndrome
- Harassment / Bullying
- Peer pressure
- Administration Duties
- Individual Learning Plans

Stress occurs “when there is a mismatch between perceived pressures of the work situation and the individual’s ability to cope with it.”

(Education Service Advisory Committee, 1990, cited in Eyre, p.12)

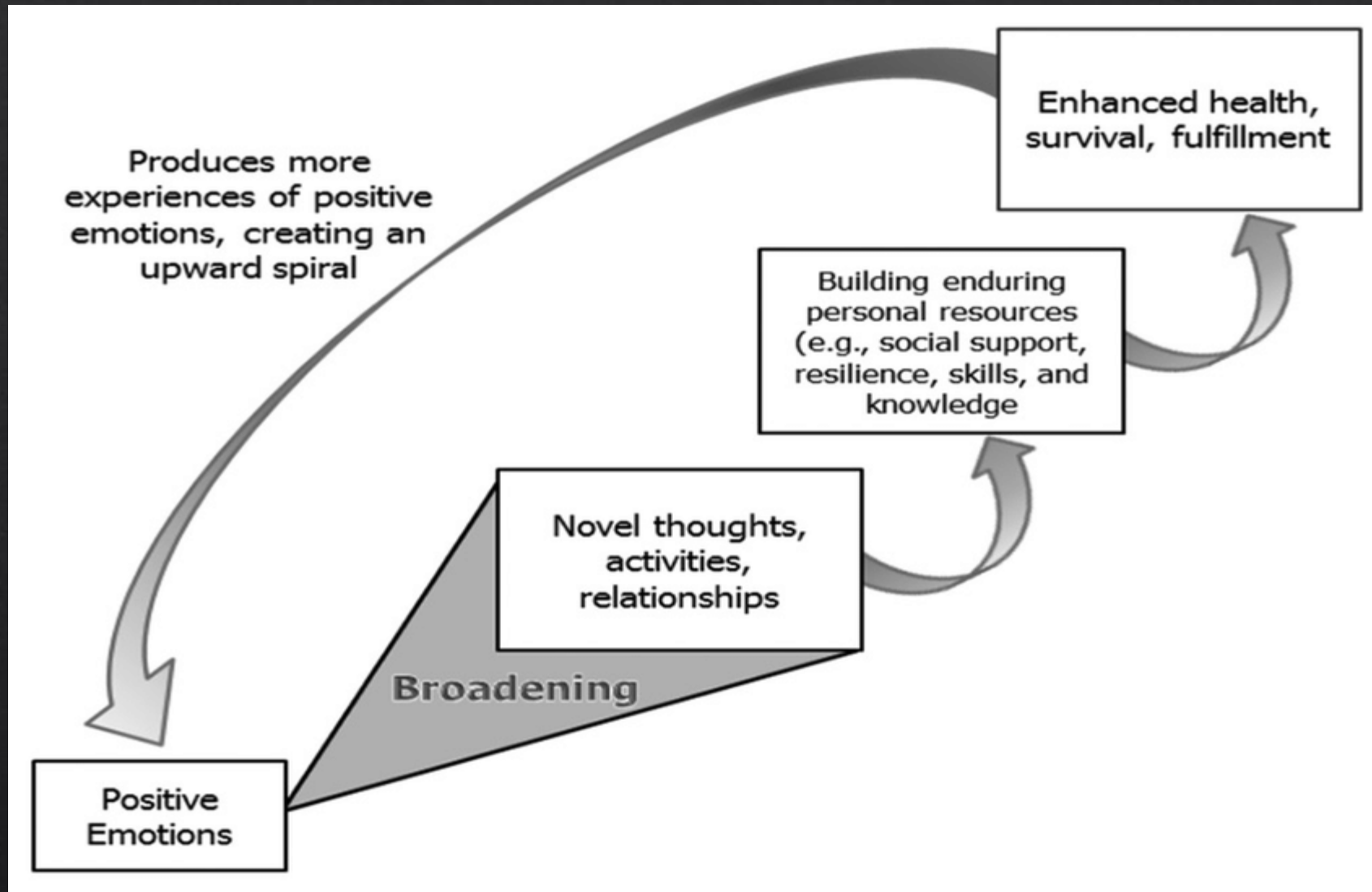


Cognitive Reappraisal A positive effect only occurs when it is out of our control.



Image source: <https://pixabay.com/en/tube-london-underground-station-1209419/>

Positive Emotions: Broaden and Build Theory



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Broaden-and-Build-Theory-of-Positive-Emotions-Source-Cohn-Fredrickson-2010_fig1_323518965

Question:

What are some of the reasons you love your job?

- Helping people reach their goals
- Being creative in thinking and designing materials
- Giving back to society and community
- Engaging in meaningful social relationships
- Sharing my enthusiasm for English or other subject
- Being a spark that ignites passion in others
- Love for language
- Enjoying a varied work life
- Flexible working hours
- Being autonomous
- Responsibility



Question:

How do you recharge yourself away from work?



Image source: <https://pixabay.com/en/battery-recycling-energy-batteries-22119/>

A-Z Self-Care for Teachers

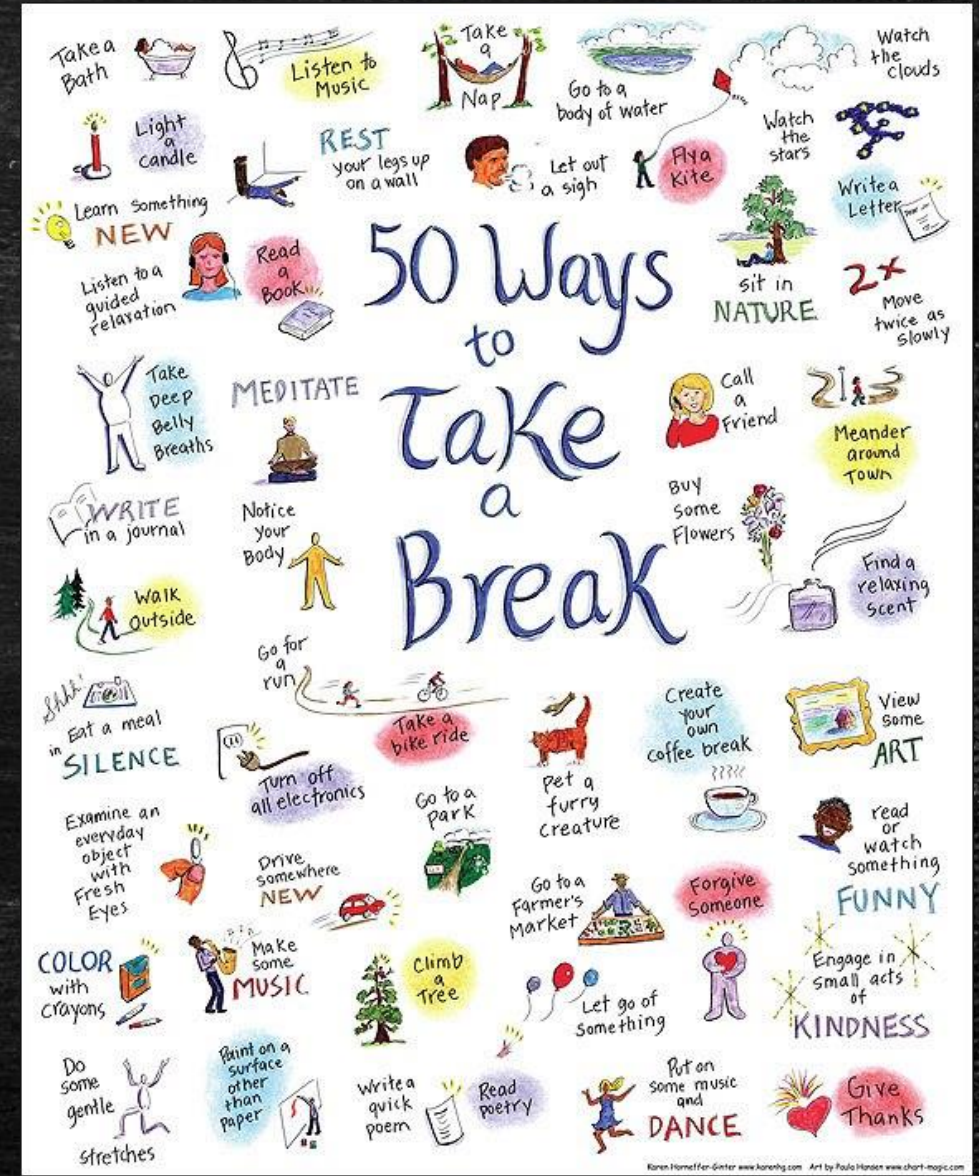
Awareness – Teaching is not an easy job, and EFL teaching, whilst in a different context and with different challenges to teaching in a mainstream school

Breathe – If, like me, you're prone to anxiety, your breathing is one of the first things to go out of the window if you're stressed or worried. It's worth taking a

Compassion – I've written about **self-criticism** before, but I really do think it's important to be kind to yourself. Even if you've had a terrible day at work, you're

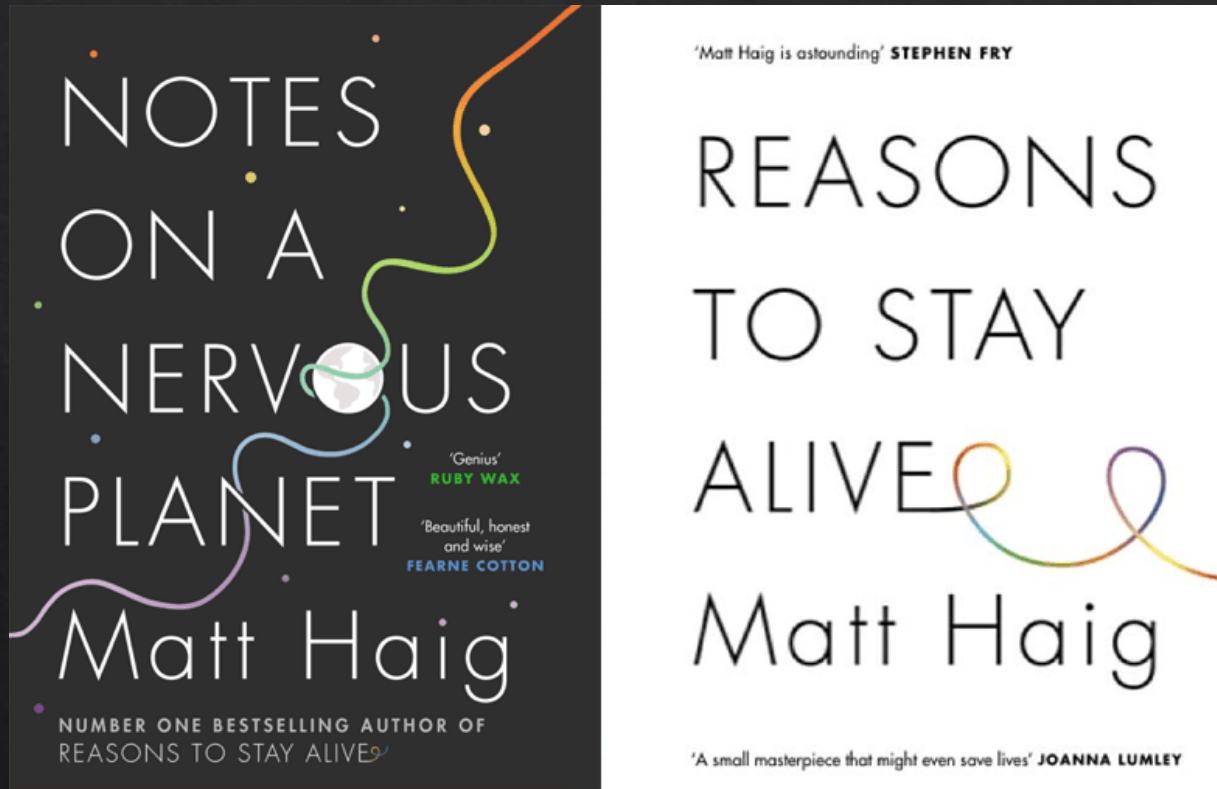
Daydream – I think, as teachers, we often have rather a negative view of daydreaming – we often associate it with that student who never pays

Exercise – We all know we need to exercise... and it's true, if you're working with young learners teaching alone tends to keep you active. Outside of work,



Source: Setterfield, E. (2017) - <https://thebestticher.wordpress.com/2017/02/03/a-z-of-self-care-for-teachers/>
Original Image by Karen Horneffer-Ginter: <http://www.fullcupthirstyspirit.com/posters.php>

Matt Haig



How to own a smartphone and still be a functioning human being:

1. Don't feel you always have to be there.
2. Turn off notifications.
3. Have times of the day when you're not beside your phone. Don't keep it with you at all times.
4. Don't keep checking the screen every two minutes to check if any messages.
5. Don't tie your anxiety levels to how much power you have left.
6. Don't swear at your phone or plead or bargain with it.
7. Don't put your phone by your bed.
8. Minimise the number of Apps you use.
9. Don't try to multitask.
10. Accept uncertainty.

Time Management:

Question: What is the purpose of it?



Question:

What are your Time Management strategies?

		URGENCY	
		High	Low
IMPORTANCE	High	1 Urgent and important Do it now	2 Important not Urgent Decide when to do it
	Low	3 Urgent not important Delegate it	4 Not Important not Urgent Dump it

Image source: <https://lifehacker.com/use-firefighter-codes-and-the-eisenhower-matrix-to-sort-1615618749>

Prioritising your time
Planning vs Effectiveness
Reject the perfectionism illusion
Taking time for family
Break down tasks into manageable chunks
Time Quadrants / Eisenhower Matrix
Knowing your most productive time of day
Taking time for family
Avoiding Distractions
Snoozing notifications
Avoiding procrastination - worst thing first!
Timeboxing!
Learning to say 'No'

Vitality



Image source: <https://pixabay.com/en/walk-path-walking-feet-trail-2635038/>

Mental Health Resources: MHFA England

WEEKLY WELLBEING CHECK-UP

Try using this list each week to check in with your mental health

#ADDRESS YOUR STRESS



Where's my mental health today?

How do I feel today?

Mentally?

Physically?



Looking after my wellbeing

Am I drinking enough water and eating a balanced diet?

How did I sleep last night?

Did I feel rested when I woke up?

Is there anything I can improve?



How's my thinking today?

How are my thoughts making me feel?

Am I having unhelpful thoughts?

Check out getselfhelp.co.uk or moodgym.com.au for free resources on spotting and challenging unhelpful thoughts



My Stress Container

How full is my container?

Am I using helpful coping strategies?

Are they working?

Learn about your stress container here: mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/campaigns/mhaw2018



MHFA England

There are simple steps you can take to #AddressYourStress. Check out our resources at mhfaengland.org

Mental Health Resources

Teacher Phili
English Language Tutor – originally from London but now living and working in Norwich, UK.

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APRIL 4, 2018 BY TEACHERPHILI

The Mental Health of English Language Teachers: Research Findings

This is an extensive summary of the **original research** I carried out in December 2017. It is published to coincide with a 30 minute talk at the **IATEFL** (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) conference, in Brighton on 10 April 2018. It is my first ever presentation at any ELT conference.



Longwell, P. (2018) *The Mental Health of English Language Teachers: Research Findings*.

[A-Z of Self Care for Teachers | The Best Ticher \(Elly Setterfield\)](#)
[Agi Enyedi - How to avoid teacher burnout \(BC webinar\)](#)
[BAAL Recommendations for Good Practice - full.pdf](#)
[Be kind to yourself! | Neil Millington - TeachingEnglish | British Council | BBC](#)
[Beating Burnout & Avoiding Stress: Top Tips from/for Teachers – Clare's ELT Compendium](#)
[Beneath the surface - EL Gazette](#)
[BESIG Blog > Five great ways to boost Language Trainer wellbeing](#)
[Bonus task: Self-talk and teacher confidence \(ELT Playbook 1\) | Sandy Millin](#)
[Bullying, harassment and workplace abuses: Kieran's story | ELT Advocacy Ireland](#)
[Burnout in ELT | iTDi Blog](#)
[Employable Me | All at C](#)
[Five Great ways to boost Language Trainer wellbeing - by Phil Nash - BESIG Blog](#)
[FreeBook: Flipping the System - Routledge](#)
[How Many Times Do You Have To Start Again, Again, Again...? | howtofailatlifesuccessfully](#)
[How should I deal with workplace anxiety? - denise cowle editorial services](#)
[I'm a 1st Year Teacher and I'm Burned Out – Edmodo – Medium](#)
[IATEFL webinar recording - Mental Health Awareness for Employers within ELT](#)
[Identifying and tackling teacher burnout | MET](#)
[Interview for Teachers as Workers SIG by Phil Longwell](#)
[June issue 2018 – Cover | Elgazette](#)
[Language Teacher Psychology – Achilleas Kostoulas](#)
[LGBTQ mental health | Mind, the mental health charity - help for mental health problems](#)

[Mental Health in ELT – Lizzie Pinard](#)

[Mind Wide Open | Feet firmly on the ground](#)

[Minds Matter: Psychology of language learning | Q&A - Oxford University Press](#)

[New figures released on Time to Talk Day reveal the “devastating” human cost of mental health stigma | Time To Change](#)

[Not surviving but thriving: Teacher psychology and professional wellbeing: A conversation with Sarah Mercer | ETAS Plenary session by Sarah Mercer | IATEFL Online](#)

[Sarah Mercer Macmillan Webinar -Strategies to promote and protect language teacher well-being Advancing Learning \(Dec 2018\)](#)

[Secret Teacher: Class, I wish I'd told you the truth about my mental health | Teacher Network | The Guardian](#)

[Stress Awareness Discussion Points #teacher5aday – Clare's ELT Compendium](#)

[Supporting workplaces to be mentally healthy | Mind, the mental health charity - help for mental health problems](#)

[Teachers are at breaking point. It's time to push wellbeing up the agenda | Teacher Network | The Guardian](#)

[Teachers' well-being and mental health: an #ELTchat summary – Muddles into Maxims](#)

[Teaching can also support your mental health. Here's how \(Tom Rogers\)](#)

[The Elephant In The \(Staff\) Room - Why We Need To Talk About Teacher Wellbeing | The Huffington Post](#)

[The Pool | Health - How to support a friend who is struggling with their mental health](#)

[The Well-Being Talking Shop – Teachers as Workers Special Interest Group](#)

[Time to talk about ... mental health: Interview with Phil Longwell – Teachers as Workers Special Interest Group](#)

[Useful links on Mental Health in ELT | Sandy Millin](#)

[What to do when you can't stop criticising yourself | The Best Ticher](#)

[Why mental health matters | ELTjam](#)

[You don't have to be mad to work here « The Secret DOS](#)

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