

# THE WELL-BEING TOOLKIT FOR DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

**A Unilever mini-series on how  
to flourish, thrive and avoid  
burnout in dentistry**

In collaboration with Dr Mahrukh Khwaja,  
Dentist and Positive Psychologist

Brought to you by  **zendium**<sup>®</sup>





Occupational stress is a common issue amongst dental professionals.<sup>1,2</sup> Unfortunately, sources of stress are diverse and ingrained in the job. They include working under strict time constraints, high workload, targets set by governing health bodies, dealing with anxious patients, threat of litigation and even the physical demands associated with clinical practice.<sup>3,4,5</sup> When experienced in small amounts, stress can have a positive impact on motivation and productivity.<sup>5</sup> However, chronic work-related stress is a key driver of poor mental health, anxiety, depression and burnout.<sup>5,6,7</sup>



---

**The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals:**

A Unilever mini-series on how to flourish, thrive and avoid burnout in dentistry

Brought to you by  zendium.



# WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Burnout is defined as a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment.<sup>8</sup> It can have serious consequences and is a major concern of global organisations, including the World Health Organization, Dental Protection and the World Dental Federation.<sup>9,10,11</sup> Burnout was first described in the 1970s and first recorded in dental professionals in the 1980s.<sup>12</sup>

1

## EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

- Feeling tired or drained most of the time
- Feeling helpless, trapped and/or defeated
- Feeling overwhelmed

2

## DEPERSONALISATION

- Having a cynical/negative outlook
- Impersonal or cold in interactions with others
- Loss of compassion

3

## REDUCED PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

- Self-doubt
- Procrastinating and taking longer to get things done



# HOW DOES BURNOUT IMPACT THE DENTAL PROFESSION?

Burnout causes poor well-being for dental professionals and can contribute to them leaving the profession through early retirement or a career change.<sup>13</sup> Emotional exhaustion experienced by burned-out dental professionals may be responsible for irreversible clinical errors in up to 28% of individuals. These are due to either technical errors during procedures or lack of concentration.<sup>11</sup> The fear and anxiety that comes with making such errors can result in dental professionals modifying their practice by abandoning, delaying, deferring or avoiding the provision of treatments – or practising ‘defensive dentistry’.<sup>13</sup> As a result, working in fear of making an error and being sued is alarmingly common. Up to 9 in 10 dentists are in fear of being sued by their patients, over half make more referrals as a result and 74% feel like their fear led them to modify the services they believed they could offer.<sup>14</sup>

There are also significant negative impacts on patients, with the knock-on effects of burnout compromising dentists’ performance, reducing quality of care and increasing the risk of clinical errors.<sup>13</sup>

With between 8-36% of dentists experiencing burnout and a further 18.5% at risk of burnout, as well as the compounding effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on practitioners,<sup>15</sup> the situation is serious. Therefore, it’s essential for industry organisations and the companies that operate in oral health to provide, and for dental professionals to know, the tools and techniques available so they can help themselves.



---

## The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals:

A Unilever mini-series on how to flourish, thrive and avoid burnout in dentistry

Brought to you by  zendium<sup>®</sup>



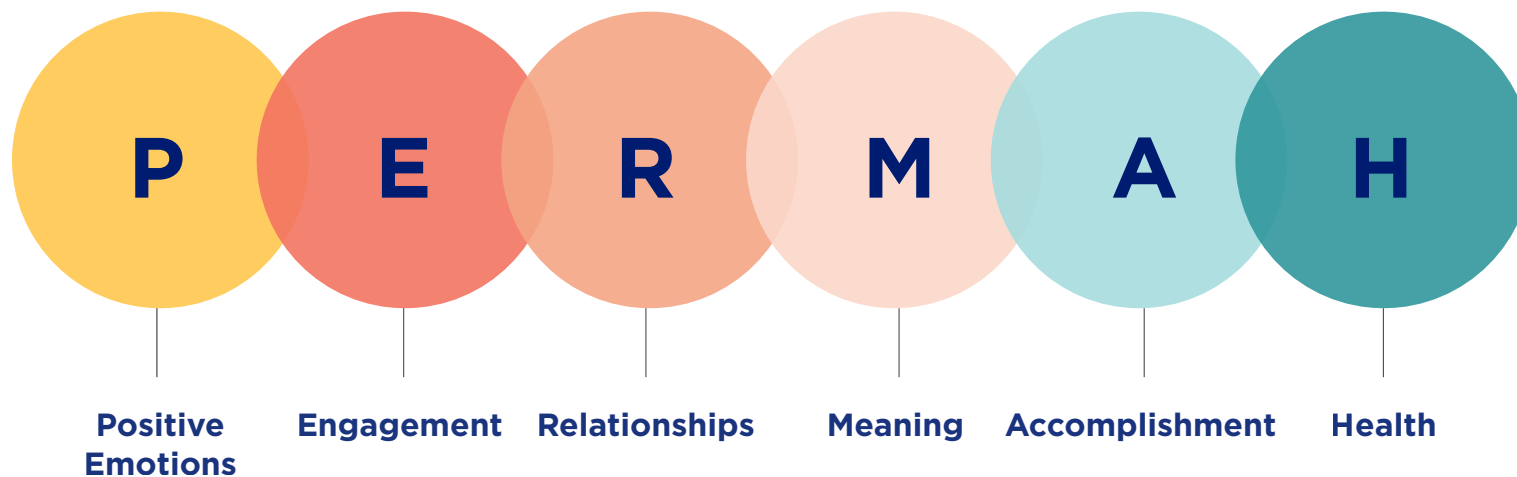
**DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA,  
DENTIST AND POSITIVE  
PSYCHOLOGIST**

The prevalence of burnout amongst dental professionals may sound disconcerting, but fortunately there are evidence-based tools that can be utilised to help dental professionals not only cope with stressors, but to move beyond baseline to optimal states, such as flourishing. Chief among these strategies is the PERMA-H model, originally created as 'PERMA' by Professor Martin Seligman and later developed to PERMA-H by Man Lai and colleagues.<sup>16,17</sup> PERMA-H champions six components of well-being to help you feel happier, energised at work, connected to others, have a sense of purpose and accomplish goals that align with what matters to you the most. The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals can be thought of as a self-intervention: your guide to help you integrate the different ingredients of well-being, and increase positive feelings, positive thoughts and positive actions in the process.

**The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals:**

A Unilever mini-series on how to flourish, thrive and avoid burnout in dentistry

Brought to you by  **zendium**



PERMA-H has been dubbed the ‘scientific theory of happiness’ and is currently used with success in the military, a wide range of organisations and schools.



# A TOOLKIT BUILT ON THE PRINCIPLES OF PERMA-H

Using Professor Seligman's PERMA-H model and in collaboration with Dr Khwaja, this series of articles and worksheets aims to help dental professionals avoid burnout by focusing on these six pillars with a view to building resilience.

Stress management strategies adopting elements of these pillars have been shown in clinical trials to significantly reduce stress levels. Implementing them in daily life and clinical practice may help to manage the stressful aspects of dentistry, avoid burnout and increase general happiness and well-being.<sup>18</sup>

## Further resources

**This meditation, from Dr Khwaja, helps you explore your energy and emotion levels, spotlighting burnout in order for you to take positive steps forward.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpLwtPKyh2w&t=3s>

**Read part 1 of this content series about positive emotions here:**

[link](#)



1. Kay E et al. Br Dent J. 2008; 204: 19-23.
2. Myers H et al. Br Dent J 2004; 197: 89-93.
3. Moore R and Brødsgaard I. Community Dent Oral Epidemiol. 2001; 29: 73-80.
4. Pop-Jordanova N et al. Pril (Makedon Akad Nauk Umet Odd Med Nauki). 2013; 34(2): 135-41.
5. Collins V et al. Br Dent J. 2019; 226(1): 40-9.
6. Schonfeld I and Bianchi R. J Clin Psychol. 2016; 72: 22-37.
7. Rada R and Johnson-Leong C. J Am Dent Assoc. 2004; 135: 788-94.
8. Maslach C et al. Measuring burnout. 2008. Available at: <https://www.wilmarschaufeli.nl/publications/Schaufeli/298.pdf>. Accessed: June 2022.
9. International Labour Organization 2018. Decent Working Time for Nursing Personnel: Critical for Worker Well-being and Quality Care. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS\\_655277/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/sector/Resources/publications/WCMS_655277/lang--en/index.htm). Accessed: June 2022.
10. World Health Organization 2019. Occupational stress, burnout and fatigue. Available at: <https://www.who.int/tools/occupational-hazards-in-health-sector/occup-stress-burnout-fatigue>. Accessed: June 2022.
11. DPL. (2019) Breaking the burnout cycle. Available at: [https://www.dentalprotection.org/docs/librariesprovider4/pdf/1907310561-au-dp-burnout-policy-paper-web.pdf?sfvrsn=c30e4ac\\_2](https://www.dentalprotection.org/docs/librariesprovider4/pdf/1907310561-au-dp-burnout-policy-paper-web.pdf?sfvrsn=c30e4ac_2). Accessed: June 2022.
12. Calvo J et al. J Patient Saf. 2021; 17(5): 398-404.
13. GDC Mental health and well-being in dentistry: a rapid evidence assessment. June 2021.
14. DPL. (2018) Dental Protection survey reveals 9 in 10 dentists fear being sued by patients. Available at: <https://www.dentalprotection.org/uk/articles/dental-protection-survey-reveals-9-in-10-dentists-fear-being-sued-by-patients>. Accessed: June 2022.
15. Denton D et al. Br Dent J 2008; 205: 382-3.
16. Seligman M. Flourish. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; 2011.
17. Lai M et al. Front Psychol. 2018; <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01090>.
18. Slavin S et al. Acad Med. 2012; 87: 1481.

## The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals:

A Unilever mini-series on how to flourish, thrive and avoid burnout in dentistry

Brought to you by  zendium.



## ABOUT DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA



Dr Mahrukh Khwaja is a dentist, positive psychologist, accredited mindfulness teacher and the founder of Mind Ninja, a first-of-its-kind wellness start-up dedicated to improving mental health and resilience among dental professionals.

With over 12 years of clinical experience “at the chair-side,” Dr Khwaja has an insider’s perspective on the unique stressors affecting dental professionals. She also has first-hand knowledge of the lack of industry-specific mental health tools and support — something she discovered during her own bout with burnout. With nothing of its kind currently available in the dental industry, she envisioned a system of support that, just like daily flossing and brushing, took a preventive maintenance approach to mental health. Drawing on the neuroscience of well-being and positive psychology, she developed Mind Ninja as a solution that would help fellow dental professionals build mental resilience, foster connection and meaning and thrive.

Mind Ninja offers a comprehensive range of training, coaching and wellness products that go beyond reducing symptoms of stress to generating a solid foundation of positive well-being. These tools are designed to help dental professionals thrive in any environment, ensuring that their own bright smiles

come from a place of genuine mental health. Dr Khwaja has delivered Mind Ninja’s bespoke workshops and well-being programmes to bring transformative change to a diverse range of organisations, including NHS Oxford Health, King’s College London, Acteon, British Dental Association and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. Mind Ninja received Global Health Pharma’s 2022 Award for Excellence in Innovation and was a shortlisted finalist at the Private Dentistry Awards in 2021 and 2020.

Mind Ninja’s flagship wellness product is the Mind Flossing Toolkit. This multi-purpose deck of well-being cards features positive psychology interventions that inform and inspire dental professionals to build on their strengths and develop a growth mindset as well as practise mindfulness, self-compassion and gratitude, both in the dental clinic and at home. The verdict is already in: 100% of users report an improvement in their mental well-being after using the toolkit.

Dr Khwaja has been named in the Top 50 in Dentistry two years in a row (2022 and 2021) by FMC for her work on Mental Health in Dentistry. She is also the author of the upcoming book ‘Resilience and Well-being for Dental Professionals’, scheduled for release in autumn 2022 by Wiley-Blackwell.

---

### The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals:

A Unilever mini-series on how to flourish, thrive and avoid burnout in dentistry

Brought to you by  zendium<sup>®</sup>



# POSITIVE EMOTION TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN DENTISTRY

## Part of The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals

In collaboration with Dr Mahrukh Khwaja,  
Dentist and Positive Psychologist





# POSITIVE EMOTION TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN DENTISTRY

Do you ever feel anxious or overwhelmed by your work? Do you ever feel frustrated that you are not meeting your own high standards? You're not alone. Stress is common amongst dental professionals<sup>3</sup> and it goes without saying this stress may have been amplified in recent years.

This article discusses how the PERMA-H model can be used as a strategy to help build resilience and combat stress and burnout in dentistry, with

expert tips from Dr Mahrukh Khwaja: dentist, positive psychologist and author of the book 'Resilience and well-being for Dental Professionals'. It focuses on the first component of PERMA-H; 'positive emotion'.

At the end of the article you will find activity sheets which have been specially designed to be printed so that you can work on them for yourself.



# POSITIVE EMOTION: A KEY COMPONENT OF RESILIENCE

Positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, optimism, self-compassion, serenity, interest, hope and love all contribute to our happiness and wellbeing. They make us feel good in the moment but also have longer-lasting effects. The 'broaden and build' theory explains how positive emotions expand our mindsets to improve our ability to cope with and thrive during stressful situations.<sup>4</sup>

Positive emotions broaden our thought-action repertoire. For example, joy sparks the urge to play, interest sparks the urge to explore and contentment sparks the urge to savour and integrate. This 'broadened' mindset helps us 'build' a collection of long-lasting physical, intellectual, psychological and social resources which can be drawn on in times of stress.

It is important we nurture and cultivate positive emotions to help us achieve long-term psychological and physical wellbeing.<sup>4</sup> Simple ways to do this include making time for activities that bring us joy or spending time with the ones we love. However, in reality, when negotiating the challenges of daily life and dentistry work, nurturing and cultivating positive emotions can seem hard. Therefore, it is important to have strategies and techniques to integrate into our everyday lives.





## BOOSTING POSITIVE EMOTIONS

One way of growing positive emotions is through practising self-compassion. Compassion involves recognising someone's suffering and responding with kindness. Self-compassion is simply applying this to yourself. That is, responding to your own experiences with kindness to yourself rather than being critical or judgmental.<sup>5,6</sup> It is common for dental professionals to be 'perfectionists' or feel personally responsible for unmet goals or difficult patient encounters.<sup>7</sup>

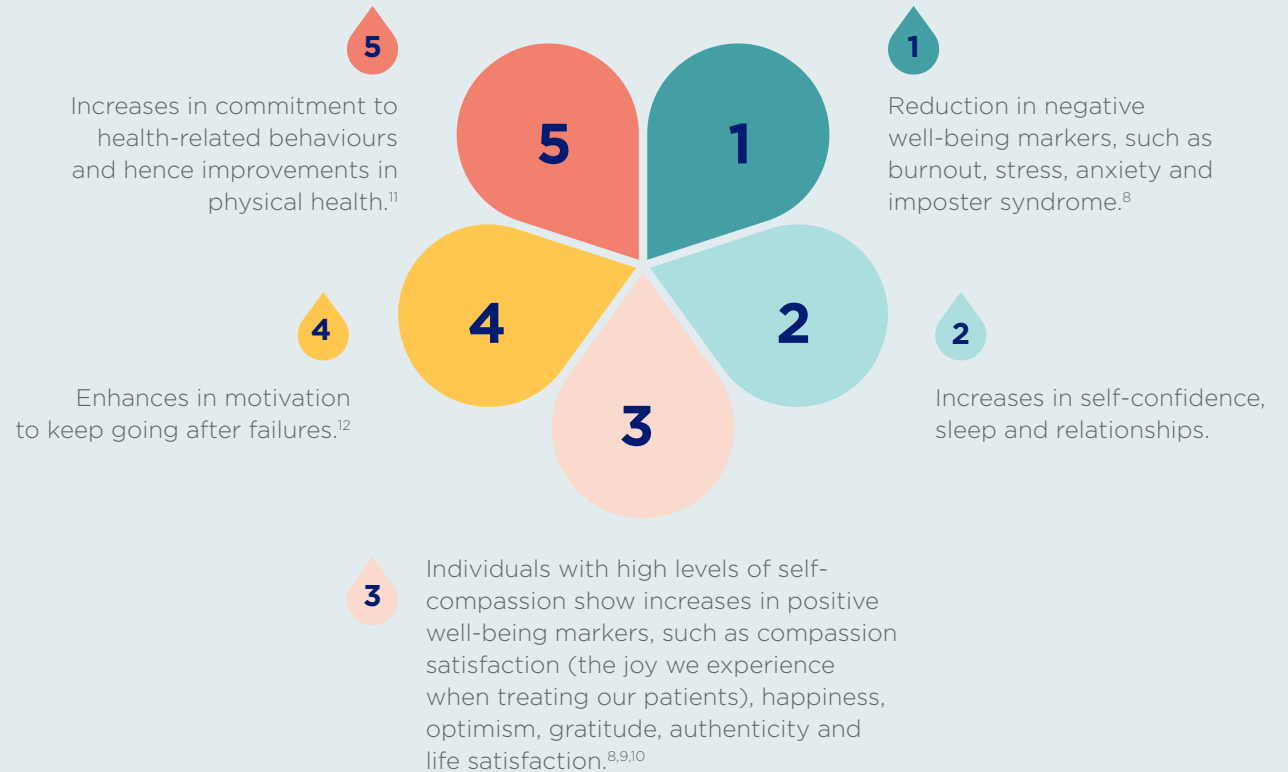
There are numerous life-changing impacts of self-compassion for dental professionals. In the box on the next page, Dr Mahrukh Khwaja summarises the latest scientific findings.





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

# TRANSFORMATIVE BENEFITS OF SELF-COMPASSION FOR DENTAL PROFESSIONALS





# THREE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SELF-COMPASSION

Dr Kristen Neff outlines self-compassion, breaking it down into three elements:<sup>6</sup>

1

### Mindfulness

Focusing on the present moment in a non-judgmental way, and taking on an observer role, rather than getting lost in the story of our thoughts.



2

### Common Humanity

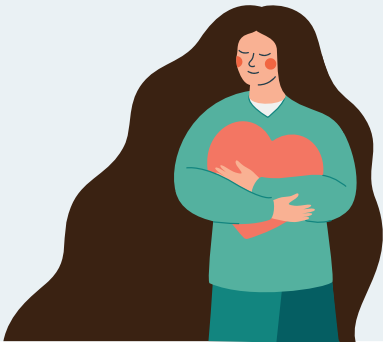
Suffering and mistakes are part of a shared human experience. Remind yourself that you are not alone in your experience of challenges and stress at work.



3

### Self kindness

Treating yourself with the same understanding and kindness you would if you were responding to a friend or colleague.





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

## PUTTING SELF-COMPASSION INTO PRACTICE

When you notice stress, or a harsh critical thought pop up, use Neff's 3 components to practise self-compassion in the moment.

1

Take a mindful deep breath, ensuring the exhale is longer than the inhale to trigger the parasympathetic nervous system and invite positive emotions, such as serenity and calm. Mindfulness helps us to take a step back and not fuse with these thoughts. It may help to say to yourself, "I notice I'm having a thought that..." Labelling our thoughts helps to create some distance and take on an observer role with our thoughts.

2

Remind yourself that you are not alone in your experience of dental stress or negative thoughts when with patients. In fact, these are common and natural, albeit not often discussed openly. Remind yourself how, as dental professionals working so closely with patients, we are all connected by these similar experiences.

3

Talk to yourself with warmth, kindness and generosity as you would a friend. You may say to yourself, "I'm so sorry you're experiencing this. I'm here to support you. What do you need right now to feel better?". Offer yourself physical touch, such as squeezing your arm, to self-soothe in the moment.



**DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA**

# MORE TOP TIPS FOR EXERCISING THE MUSCLE OF SELF-COMPASSION

Here are some tips to integrate self-compassion practices when with patients and at home:

**1**

Find ways to infuse mindfulness into your work day. Use the Mindfulness Well-being Tool at the end of this chapter to help with this.

**2**

Journal on your self-talk to note common thinking traps and reframe thoughts in a compassionate way.

**3**

Remind yourself that perfection does not exist, and focus on your progress instead.

**4**

Work on setting boundaries at work and home. Say no when you have reached your full capacity.

**5**

Prioritise rest, regular self-care and nutritious food.





Self-compassion is just one positive emotion we can amplify. Making time for joy, gratitude, optimism, serenity, interest, hope and love in your own way is really important too. Your ability to experience happiness and feel positive emotions is something that can be learned and will improve with practice – and what a great thing to practise!

To get started on your own resilience training and developing positive emotions, try some of Dr Khwaja's activities on the following pages. These exercise pages have been specially designed to be printed so you can complete them for yourself.

### Further reading

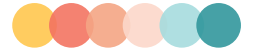
**Barbara Fredrickson: Positive emotions open our mind**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7dFDHzV36g&t=37s>

**Dr Kristen Neff: Self-compassion**  
<https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/>

**Dr Khwaja's gratitude meditation**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cmm6Suvhwk>



1. Seligman M. 2011. Flourish. 978-1-4391-9075-3. 2. Lai M et al. *Frontiers in Psychology* 2018; 9: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01090> 3. Kay EJ and Lower JC. *British Dental Journal* 2007; 204: 1-10. 4. Fredrickson B. *Am Psychol.* 2001 Mar; 56(3): 218-226. 5. Neff K. Self-compassion: what self-compassion is not. 6. Available at: <https://self-compassion.org/what-self-compassion-is-not-2/>. Accessed: May 2022. 7. Neff K. Self-compassion: definition of self-compassion. 8. Available at: <https://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/>. Accessed: May 2022. 9. Rada R and Johnson-Leong. *JADA.* 2004; 135: 788-94. 10. Neff K et al. *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 2020; 76(9): 1543-1562. 11. Yang et al. *Child Indicators Research* 2019; 1-15. 12. Zhang et al. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 2020; 46(2): 228-242. 13. Biber, D. D. & Ellis, R. *Journal of health psychology* 2019; 24(14): 2060-2071. 14. Neff et al. *Self and Identity* 2005; 4: 263-287.



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY 1

## DEVELOPING THE SELF-COMPASSIONATE INNER VOICE

Self-compassion helps us to respond to ourselves with self-kindness as opposed to self-criticism.

Research shows this to be a much better motivator in helping us to create sustainable positive habits, to keep trying after setbacks and reduce negative states, such as depression, anxiety, stress and shame.<sup>1</sup> Try these journaling prompts to help you reflect on your inner dialogue and develop a kinder, loving inner voice in the face of dental stressors.



## DEVELOPING THE SELF-COMPASSIONATE INNER VOICE

Reflect on a recent time at work where you experienced stress or a challenge; for example a difficult dental procedure, running late or managing a complicated case; and you responded with a critical inner thought. Write down the thoughts that popped up for you and reflect on how this impacted your feelings and actions that day e.g. "I'm not good enough", this made me feel upset and I ended up chewing over this thought for a long time. I didn't end up going to the gym.

Imagine the same situation happening to a loved one or close friend. What types of things would you say to them? What non-verbal responses would you show to comfort them?

What words of self-kindness can you use instead when you experience stress at work? Which physical gestures can you use in the moment you feel that stress, to soothe yourself? Eg. say to myself "I'm so sorry you're going through this. What do you need right now to feel better?" Take a mindful deep breath, squeeze my arm, remind myself that I'm not alone in experiencing challenges.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Is there a difference in how you responded and the types of things you would say to a loved one?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

1. Neff, K. and Germer, C. 2018: The mindful self-compassion workbook: A proven way to accept yourself, build inner strength, and thrive.



**DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA**

**ACTIVITY 2**

# MINDFULNESS WELL-BEING TOOL

Mindfulness is an evidenced-based tool that can be used to invite positive emotions to our everyday: from gratitude, to self-compassion, serenity and calm.

The research amongst healthcare professionals spotlights further transformative benefits, including compassion satisfaction (the joy we get from treating our patients), resilience, meaning, improved interpersonal relationships and enhanced self-care behaviours.<sup>1</sup> Use the table below to consider which mindfulness activities you can try when with patients, team members and at home.

1. Kunzler A M, et al. Psychological interventions to foster resilience in healthcare professionals. Cochrane Database Syst Rev 2020; 7: CD012527.



## MINDFULNESS WELL-BEING TOOL

- Practise eating with presence rather than mindlessly eating
- During lunchtime, when you take your first 3 bites of food, hone into the experience of eating by slowing down and noticing all your 5 senses: What do you see? Note the textures, shape and colours in your food. What can you smell? What lastly can you taste? Notice all the different flavours of your food.
- Spend 5 minutes outdoors concentrating on the sensation of walking. Slow down. Hone into as many senses as possible: what can you see? What can you hear? What can you smell? What can you taste? What does it feel like to slowly take mindful steps? If you notice your mind wander, gently nudge it back to the present by honing back to your senses.
- Enhance self-compassion through using Neff's 3 step process.
- Here is a link to an audio file to guide you through this activity.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSVh7MuJYuk&t=99s>
- Increase the mind-body connection.
- Here is a link to an audio file to guide you through this activity.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4V1JpzTnz1A>



- Enhance emotional awareness through this check-in. Use this before bringing your patient in or at different points in your day.
- Here is a link to an audio file to guide you through this activity.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=806GMo7XLZI&list=UUmz1fFqcCLhIB-8N6ZVV0KQ&index=13>
- Bring presence and awareness during moments of stress using this short mindfulness micropractice.
- Place a couple of aromatherapy drops, such as lavender, onto a tissue and take 3 deep breaths. Anchor to the scent as you take a deep inhale and exhale. If you notice your mind wander, gently nudge it back to the aroma.
- Improve your listening and empathy skills through this mindful listening practice.
- For the next 5 minutes you are with a dental colleague, give your entire attention to them. Listen not to answer back, but to truly understand what they are saying. Exercise self-compassion and non-judgement.
- Enhance self-compassion.
- This meditation combines imagery with positive affirmations (mantras).
- Here is a link to an audio file to guide you through this activity.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY83woD3mIM>

Adapted from: Khwaja, M. The transformative benefits of mindfulness in dentistry. VOL 35 | ISSUE 6 | BDJ IN PRACTICE



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY 3

## GROWING GRATITUDE

The practice of gratitude is a scientifically proven way to boost our positive emotions and build our resilience.<sup>1</sup>

This muscle can be exercised by us actively hunting for the positives in our work day. In this way, as dental professionals, we are also building kinder, positive work cultures that make us feel good and impact the well-being of others too. Try these journaling prompts in the evening to help you grow gratitude. Start by reflecting on your day with patients and your dental team.



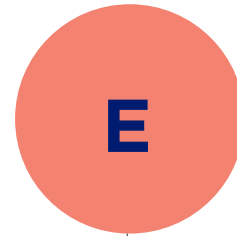
# BOOSTING ENGAGEMENT TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN DENTISTRY

## Part of The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals

In collaboration with Dr Mahrukh Khwaja,  
Dentist and Positive Psychologist







Engagement

# BOOSTING ENGAGEMENT TO BUILD RESILIENCE IN DENTISTRY

Long hours, a heavy workload and demanding patients are challenges that you might face in dentistry. You may relish these challenges but if they become overwhelming, they can lead to stress and burnout.<sup>3,4</sup> This article discusses how the PERMA-H model can be used as a strategy to help build resilience and combat stress and burnout in dentistry, with expert tips from Dr Mahrukh Khwaja: dentist, positive psychologist and author of the book 'Resilience and well-being for Dental Professionals'. It focuses on the second component, 'engagement'.



# FLOW IS A STATE OF EFFORTLESS ENJOYMENT, AND IS A PATHWAY TO ENGAGEMENT

Flow occurs when you become fully immersed in an experience — when you are “in the zone”. It is common when you are doing enjoyable activities or those that require your full attention.<sup>5,6</sup> Outlined below are certain conditions that must be met to achieve flow<sup>5</sup>.

Finding flow in your work and at home comes with many potential benefits. Living in the moment and engaging fully with a current task or activity promotes a range of positive emotion, from joy and happiness to satisfaction and interest, all of which contribute to your overall well-being.<sup>1,7</sup>

1

Clear, measurable goals



2

Immediate feedback



3

A sense of control



4

A sense of self-  
confidence



5

An optimal level of  
challenge

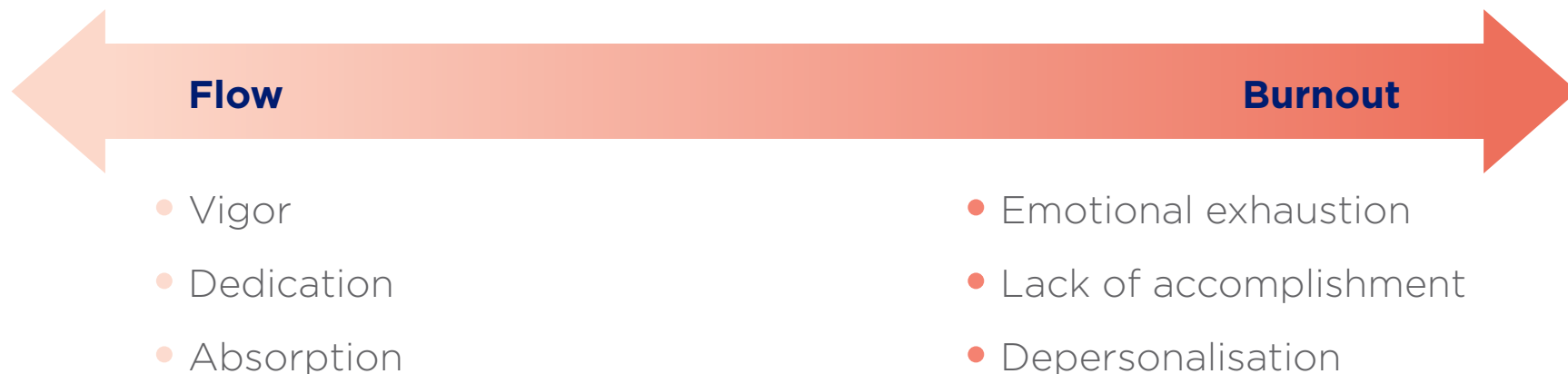




## BURNOUT AND FLOW LIE AT OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM<sup>8,9</sup>

Whilst flow relies on the perfect combination of vigor, dedication and absorption, burnout occurs when these factors are out of balance:<sup>9</sup>

High levels of engagement therefore correlate inevitably with less work-related burnout. Dentists who are highly work-engaged are more committed and satisfied with their jobs, have increased mental and psychosomatic health, demonstrate proactive behaviour and learning motivation and experience lower job turnover.<sup>3</sup> Burnout, meanwhile, leads to more errors and safety incidents.<sup>3,10</sup> Engagement is therefore not only important to the well-being and resilience of physicians, but also the safety of patients.<sup>10</sup>





## ACHIEVING FLOW AT WORK

It might not be immediately apparent how to bring about a state of flow during your working day, but there are several scenarios within dentistry that present opportunities. Complicated procedures that require uninterrupted attention as well as engaging fully with individual patient's experiences, beyond physical symptoms and examinations, can enhance flow.<sup>4,5</sup> Exploring new, efficient approaches to problems and paying close attention to adding value to a job can turn a mundane activity into a meaningful and enjoyable one.<sup>5</sup> Another powerful way to achieve flow is by identifying and honing in on your character strengths.<sup>2,11</sup>





## CHARACTER STRENGTHS: THE PRECURSOR OF FLOW

Personal character strengths are known to influence psychological well-being and positive emotions whilst counteracting negative feelings.<sup>11</sup> Acknowledging your character strengths and using them to overcome challenges by deploying them in new ways stimulates professional satisfaction and ultimately helps you achieve flow throughout your working day.<sup>2,11</sup> You can use the VIA survey at the end of this article to take the first steps in identifying and implementing your strengths.





DR MAHRUKH  
KHWAJA

## BRINGING OUR STRENGTHS TO DENTISTRY

Understanding and applying your strengths in novel and engaging ways, may help invite greater meaning, connection to others and get you to 'flow' states. The table to the right shows how you can activate your key strengths at work, when with patients or team members, as well as outside the clinic.

### Character Strength

### Examples of how to activate your key strengths

#### Teamwork

- Consider new ways you can help support your team. This may involve asking your team members what they need, offering to mentor a colleague or completing a task together
- Reflect on how the well-being of team members could be improved. Organise team well-being training and consider becoming a Mental Health First Aider
- Organise events outside the clinic to better understand and connect with each other away from the pressures of Dentistry e.g. team bonding days, dinners, theatre
- Work on a joint vision board to visually illustrate the teams goals for the upcoming year

#### Gratitude

- Before starting a team meeting, ask each team member to share one thing, big or small, that they are grateful for today
- Consider three tough moments in dentistry and three good things they led to
- Share your gratitude with a colleague
- Have a gratitude board at work for written gratitude notes acknowledging wins, patient cards and team 'thank yous' to specific team members



<b>Kindness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do a small act of kindness at work today. This could be making a cup of tea for a work colleague, bringing treats to a team meeting or offering to do someone's least favourite task at work</li><li>• Remember birthdays</li><li>• Organise a special occasion collection</li><li>• Practise the Loving-Kindness Meditation (<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MY83woD3mIM&amp;t=3s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MY83woD3mIM&amp;t=3s</a>)</li><li>• Offer yourself kindness by asking yourself daily, what small thing can I do that will bring me joy today</li></ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practise 'strengths-spotting' by focusing on seeing and appreciating the strengths of your team members</li><li>• Consider different ways you can improve your leadership style. Ask your team for their input</li><li>• Lead an activity, encouraging team members who rarely share opinions to share their thoughts</li></ul>
<b>Love of learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arrange a 'lunch and learn', sharing knowledge on a topic with your dental peers</li><li>• Begin a new course</li><li>• Take breaks in your day to learn something new</li></ul>



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

## WORKING OUT YOUR STRENGTHS SWEET SPOT

Overusing our strengths can lead to negative well-being impacts, such as overworking. The key is to find our optimal strengths sweet spot: that is the right combination of strengths, the right amount and in the right situation. This can take some practice and mindful attention to achieve. Consider the below reflection prompts to help to discover what this may look like for you.

1

Consider a situation where you overused your key strengths. What were the impacts on your well-being or others?

2

Are there situations where you have underused your strengths? How did this impact you and others?

3

Reflect on a recent stressor at work. Which strengths were you underusing and which were you overusing?





# ENGAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE AT HOME

Achieving engagement in your personal life is equally important as it too promotes well-being, productivity, happiness and motivation.<sup>6,7</sup> Tips for achieving flow at home:

**1**

## Activities

Find time for activities with clear goals that fully engage you, for example teaching, learning an instrument, cooking, painting, drawing, gardening or physical activities such as running, swimming or playing sport<sup>5,6</sup>

**2**

## Mindfulness

Practise mindfulness to increase your connection and engagement with others and your surroundings — ignoring distractions by living in the moment means you're more likely to achieve flow<sup>12,13</sup>

**3**

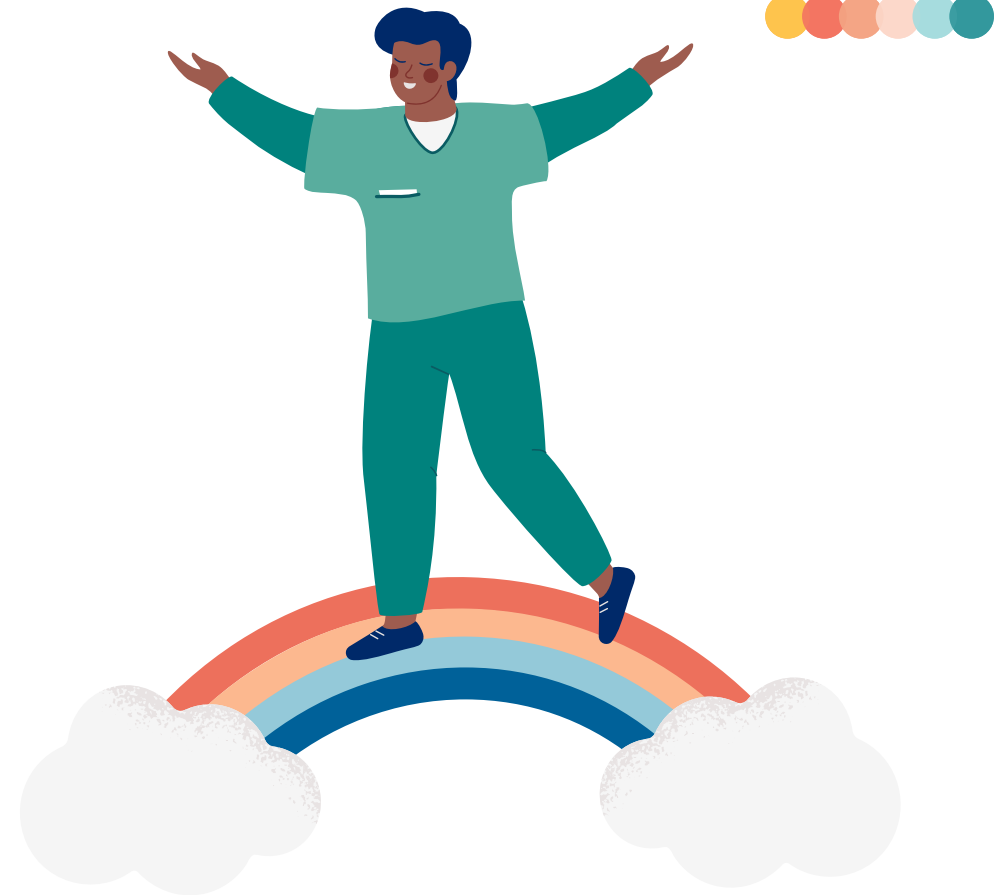
## Little achievements

Approach typically mundane jobs with this new mindset — focus on the small details of the task to prevent distraction whilst allowing yourself to be satisfied by little achievements such as hanging the washing out<sup>5</sup>



## E Engagement

To start your journey of discovering your strengths, and honing them at work, try Dr Khwaja's exercise on the following pages. You can also take the VIA character strengths survey by following the link below in the Further Reading list.



### Further reading

#### A theory of well-being

<https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/>

#### VIA character strengths survey

<https://www.viacharacter.org/>

#### Dr Khwaja's 'Strengths' meditation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY83woD3mIM>

1. Seligman M. 2011. Flourish. 978-1-4391-9075-3.
2. Lai M et al. Frontiers in Psychology 2018; 9: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01090>
3. Calvo JM et al. J Patient Saf 2021; 17(5): 398-404.
4. Slavin SJ et al. Acad Med 2012; 87: 1481.
5. Csikszentmihalyi M. Finding flow: the psychology of engagement with everyday life. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200026151\\_Finding\\_Flow\\_The\\_Psychology\\_of\\_Engagement\\_With\\_Everyday\\_Life](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/200026151_Finding_Flow_The_Psychology_of_Engagement_With_Everyday_Life). Accessed: June 2022.
6. Khwaja M. BDJ in practice. 2020; 33(3): 26-7.
7. Seligman M et al. Oxford Review of Education. 2009; 35(3): 293-311.
8. Stewart M et al. Curr Probl Pediatr Adolesc Health Care. 2019; 49(11): <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cppeds.2019.100658>
9. Schaufeli W. Work Engagement. 2014. Available at: <https://www.wilmarschaufeli.nl/publications/Schaufeli/414.pdf>. Accessed: June 2022.
10. British Dental Association. The mental health and well-being of UK dentists: a qualitative study. 2017. Available at: <https://bda.org/about-the-bda/campaigns/Documents/The%20Mental%20Health%20and%20Well-being%20of%20UK%20Dentists.pdf>. Accessed: June 2022.
11. Positive Psychology. Seligman's PERMA+ Model explained: A theory of well-being. <https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/> Accessed June 2022.
12. Jazaieri H et al. J Clin Psychol. 2012; 68(7): doi:10.1002/jclp.21863.
13. Seppala E et al. Social Research: an international quarterly. 2013; 80(2): 411-30.

### The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals:

part 2 of 6 of a Unilever mini-series on how to flourish, thrive and avoid burnout in dentistry



**DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA**

**ACTIVITY**

## **DOUBLING DOWN ON STRENGTHS**

Our strengths are positive aspects of our personality that allow us to bring our authentic self to our every-day lives.

Research is growing in this area amongst medical professionals, spotlighting that understanding and using our strengths could boost engagement at work, foster meaning and greater mental well-being<sup>1,2</sup>. Try these journaling prompts to help you discover your greatest qualities and start using your strengths in dentistry and at home, to build your most fulfilled life.






1. Hausler Melanie, Strecker Cornelia, Huber Alexandra, Brenner Mirjam, Høge Thomas, Höfer Stefan (2017). Associations between the Application of Signature Character Strengths, Health and Well-being of Health Professionals. *Frontiers in Psychology* VOLUME 8  
2. Huber Alexandra, Strecker Cornelia, Kachel Timo, Høge Thomas, Höfer Stefan (2020). Character Strengths Profiles in Medical Professionals and Their Impact on Well-Being. *Frontiers in Psychology* VOLUME 11 3. The VIA Classification of 24 character strengths - Via Institute on Character - [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org)



# THE VIA CLASSIFICATION OF 24 CHARACTER STRENGTHS



Adapted from <https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths>

<b>WISDOM</b>	<b>Creativity</b> Showing originality, adaptability and ingenuity	<b>Curiosity</b> Openness to new ideas and keenness to explore	<b>Judgment</b> Open-mindedness and the ability to think critically	<b>Love of Learning</b> Mastering new skills and gathering knowledge	<b>Perspective</b> Providing wise counsel and taking a big-picture view
<b>COURAGE</b>	<b>Bravery</b> Acting with conviction in the face of challenges despite doubts or fears	<b>Perseverance</b> Showing tenacity in achieving goals despite obstacles, discouragements, or disappointments	<b>Honesty</b> Acting with authenticity and integrity	<b>Zest</b> Approaching life with vitality, enthusiasm and energy	
<b>HUMANITY</b>	<b>Love</b> Experiencing and valuing close, loving relationships with others	<b>Kindness</b> Showing generosity, compassion and altruism			<b>Social Intelligence</b> Understanding the motives and feelings of self and others
<b>JUSTICE</b>	<b>Teamwork</b> Demonstrating loyalty and social responsibility; collaborating with others to achieve a goal			<b>Fairness</b> Treating everyone equally and fairly, without bias	<b>Leadership</b> Organising and encouraging others to get things done and achieve a shared vision.
<b>TEMPERANCE</b>		<b>Forgiveness</b> Acceptance of others' shortcomings and being willing to give people a second chance	<b>Humility</b> Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves, without seeking attention or recognition	<b>Prudence</b> Being careful and cautious; not taking unnecessary risks	<b>Self-Regulation</b> Showing discipline and self-control
<b>TRANSCENDENCE</b>	<b>Appreciation of Beauty &amp; Excellence</b> Feeling awe and wonder about the world and the skill of others	<b>Gratitude</b> Feeling blessed and expressing thanks	<b>Hope</b> Optimism for the future	<b>Humour</b> Showing playfulness and lightheartedness	<b>Spirituality</b> Feeling a sense of purpose and meaning in life and acknowledging your place in the universe



# RELATIONSHIPS AS A STRESS BUFFER IN DENTISTRY

## Part of The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals

In collaboration with Dr Mahrukh Khwaja,  
Dentist and Positive Psychologist





R

Relationships

# RELATIONSHIPS AS A STRESS BUFFER IN DENTISTRY

Do you ever feel lonely or isolated at work? Over the last few years relationships, both personal and professional, have been put under immense strain, a known factor that contributes to stress and burnout among dental professionals.<sup>3</sup> Add to the challenge short appointment times, solo practice (sometimes in remote areas), or the simple fact that it's difficult for patients to talk back, it's easy to see how dentistry can be lonely, and why building relationships as a dental professional can be challenging.<sup>4</sup> But as we emerge from the effects of the pandemic, what are some of the things we can learn from how we coped with isolation,

quarantine and social distancing? And how can we use those to improve our relationships as we re-enter a normal way of life?

This article discusses how the PERMA-H model can be used as a strategy to help build resilience and combat stress and burnout in dentistry, with expert tips from Dr Mahrukh Khwaja: dentist, positive psychologist and author of the book 'Resilience and well-being for Dental Professionals'. It focuses on the third component of PERMA-H; 'relationships' and how building quality social connections can help.





# RELATIONSHIPS: THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR ASSOCIATED WITH HAPPINESS, HEALTH AND LONGEVITY

Social connectedness through relationships is a measure of how much we feel a sense of belonging or closeness to other people in our life.<sup>5</sup> Quality relationships are a fundamental human need and play a major role in enhancing our health and well-being.<sup>3,5,6</sup> They help us avoid anxiety, depression and burnout.<sup>3</sup> The best way to have quality relationships is to seek out people in your personal and professional life who bring you joy, peace and support. If this feels a little daunting or unachievable, there are strategies you can employ to help you nurture and grow positive relationships.





## POSITIVE CONNECTIONS AT WORK CAN HELP TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF BURNOUT BY:<sup>5</sup>

1

**Increasing well-being and buffering against stress**

2

**Improving emotional regulation and mental health**





# BUILDING HIGH-QUALITY CONNECTIONS AT WORK



Despite the inherent obstacle to building relationships at work in the dental health environment, even short moments of ‘high-quality connection’ have numerous benefits and can contribute to relationships over time.<sup>7</sup> They improve how you function, recover from loss or illness and adapt to difficult situations. You can achieve these high-quality connections by being mindful of negativity, focusing on positives and being empathetic.<sup>7,8</sup>

In particular, focusing on good news and events can strengthen relationships and have a positive impact on well-being above and beyond the effects of the event itself.<sup>8,9</sup> They can help establish commitment, satisfaction and trust. This can be as simple as asking a colleague how they felt after receiving positive news, or getting them to talk you through an experience so you can re-live it with them. This is known as an ‘active-constructive response’ and it’s a strong driver of higher quality relationships.<sup>9</sup>



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

# MAKING EVERY INTERACTION COUNT! – PATHWAYS TO HIGH QUALITY CONNECTIONS IN DENTISTRY

Drawing from the fascinating research from Jane Dutton and others on strengthening High Quality Connections, we can deepen our relationships and create positive work cultures in the process – built on respect, kindness and helpfulness to our team members and patients. In dentistry, we may do this through:

1

## Positive communication

This focuses on using communication styles that are framed around increasing positive emotions. One way we can do this is through posing questions to our patients and team members that unearth a common ground and convey genuine interest, for example: in the next 3 months, what are you most excited about? What's your favourite hobby outside of work? What has been the most meaningful part of your week?

**DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA**

2

**Lean into gratitude**

One easy way to build positive relationships is to share thanks with our patients and team. Prioritise gratitude through having regular gratitude conversations with all members of your team, sharing your thanks and what that means to you. You can do this with patients also – celebrating moments of connection by letting them know how grateful you are for their sense of humour, interesting anecdotes and acknowledging their patience, generosity and kindness. Notice the beautiful upwards spiral of positive emotions when you share your gratitude!



**DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA**

3

**Mindful listening**

This involves listening to our patients and team members without judgment, interruption or criticism. Listening with our full attention and with the intention to understand the perspective of the other person rather than respond is not easy. However, with practice we can hone our abilities. Try this mindful listening activity to start exercising your mindful muscle: For the next 10 minutes, when speaking to a team member, place your entire focus on them. Rather than thinking of immediately responding, encourage your colleague to continue to express their thoughts using non-verbal gestures, such as smiling, nodding and maintaining eye contact. Reflect words and emotions expressed back to your colleague. When you notice your mind wander (this is quite natural!), gently nudge your attention with loving kindness back to what is being said.

4

**Seeking mentors**

All the features of a High Quality Connection (positive emotions, feeling energised and sense of common ground) are fostered through interactions with a mentor or coach. Teams can also build a mentoring culture through senior staff talking through clinical cases and sharing their challenges and how they navigated them.





# STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS IN YOUR DAILY LIFE:<sup>7-11</sup>





Loneliness or professional isolation is something that many dental professionals experience at some point in their career.<sup>4</sup> There are many things that you can do to combat these feelings, such as sharing issues and problems with colleagues, your employer or mentor, but it may be difficult to know where to start. This podcast, from Dr Khwaja, contains evidence-based strategies to combat loneliness:

<https://www.practiceplan.co.uk/loneliness-and-isolation-in-dentistry/?cn-reloaded=1>



1. Seligman M. 2011. Flourish. 978-1-4391-9075-3. 2. Lai M et al. *Frontiers in Psychology* 2018; 9: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01090> 3. Yildirim M et al. *Curr Psychol* 2021; 40(11): 5763-71. 4. Dental Practitioner Support. Loneliness, isolation and stress. 11 November 2020. Available from: <https://www.dpsupport.org.au/news/loneliness-isolation-and-stress>. Accessed June 2022. 5. Seppala E et al. *Social Res* 2013; 80(2): 411-30. 6. Southwick SM, Southwick FS. *JAMA Psychiatry* 2020; 77(5): 449-50. 7. Stephens JP et al. High-Quality Connections. In: *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship* (pp.385-399) Chapter: 29 Publisher: Oxford University Press 2011. 8. Khwaja M et al. *BJJ in Pract* 2020; 33: 26-7. 9. Gable S et al. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 2004; 87(2): 228-45. 10. *Psychology Today*. 5 ways to add more moments of social connexion to your life. Available from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/flourish-and-thrive/201907/5-ways-add-more-moments-social-connection-your-life>. Accessed June 2022. 11. Moore C. Ed *Psych Insight*. Flourishing in stressful times: ideas for self-care using PERMA. June 2020. Available from: <https://www.epinsight.com/post/flourishing-in-stressful-times-ideas-for-self-care-using-perma>. Accessed June 2022.





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY

# NURTURING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



# FINDING MEANING IN EVERYDAY PRACTICE

## Part of The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals

In collaboration with Dr Mahrukh Khwaja,  
Dentist and Positive Psychologist





M

Meaning

## FINDING MEANING IN EVERYDAY PRACTICE

How often do you find yourself doing activities you find meaningful? You may not have given it much thought. But it is worth thinking about because spending time on activities that don't feel meaningful is the largest predictor of burnout amongst healthcare professionals.<sup>3</sup>

This article discusses how the PERMA-H model can be used as a strategy to help build resilience and combat stress and burnout in dentistry, with expert tips from Dr Mahrukh Khwaja: dentist, positive psychologist and author of the book 'Resilience and well-being for Dental Professionals'.

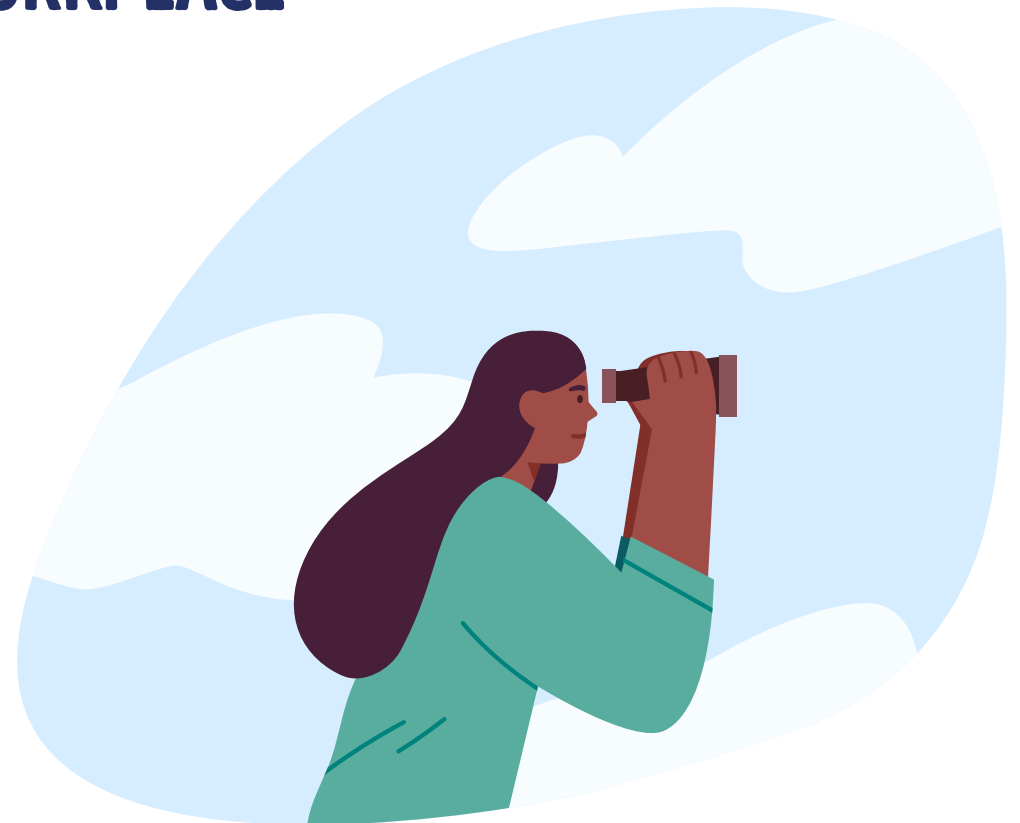
It focuses on the fourth component of PERMA-H; 'meaning'.



# MEANING CAN HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON HAPPINESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Meaning is an important psychological phenomenon that helps reduce depression and increase resilience.<sup>4,5</sup> It means having a sense of purpose as a dental professional and as a human being. What you do in your day-to-day practice, and your sense of purpose while doing it, has an impact on your risk of burnout.<sup>1</sup> Tasks that feel like they lack meaning, such as filling out documentation and other tasks that are not directly helping patients and the practice, can contribute to burnout.<sup>6</sup>

Finding meaning is personal and different for each individual. For dental professionals there is an inherent level of meaning that comes with a job in healthcare and simply remembering why you got into dentistry can help you realise the meaning of your daily work.<sup>7</sup> There are also opportunities in clinical practice, research and teaching that may bring meaning for you.<sup>7</sup>





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

## THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF APPLYING OUR VALUES IN DENTISTRY

Understanding our core values as a dental professional may help us invite purpose, makes us feel more energised at work and also connected to something bigger than we are. Values we often use with our patients include compassion, kindness, support, service, teamwork, growth and integrity. These values can help transform our experience of working with patients, through guiding us in our actions when we come across challenges at work. Having coached dental professionals who experience lack of day-to-day meaning, reconnecting with their 'why' for this career, has helped to remind them that they are making a genuine difference to their patients' lives. This in itself encourages a spiral of positive emotions and gives a sense of greater purpose.

To help identify your own values, use my worksheet at the end of this article and the table of values from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy<sup>8</sup> (ACT) which accompanies it.

You can also use my 'Values' meditation, which helps you to tap into your authentic self through exploring your values.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCFnZWCgAVw>





# TIPS ON FINDING MEANING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF WORK



6

Teach the next generation: passing on your wisdom and helping them to find meaning as well. Dentists who see their work as a form of giving consistently rank their job as more meaningful<sup>9</sup>

5

The concept of 'meaning' is highly individual, so don't worry if what drives you is different to your colleagues<sup>7</sup>

1

Small acts of kindness at work can bring you a lot of meaning

2

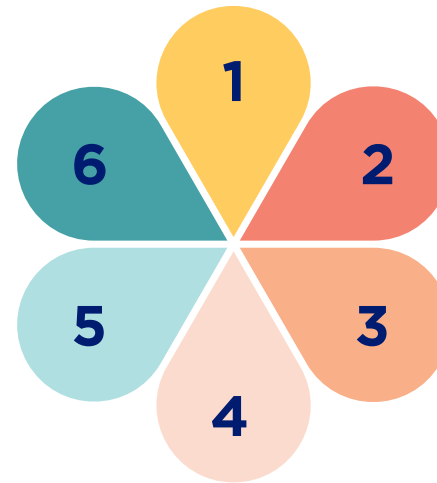
Be prepared for what you find meaningful to change with time - you aren't the same person in your 20s as you are in your 50s, and what drives you won't be the same either<sup>7</sup>

3

Try creating meaning in activities outside of work — it's okay for purpose to come from multiple sources<sup>7</sup>

4

Volunteering, taking a sabbatical or working with humanitarian aid organisations to take your skills to less privileged parts of the world can be a great way to find meaning in dentistry





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

# SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS – BIG IMPACTS ON MEANING

We can all be active creators in building a positive work culture in dentistry. Here are some suggestions on how we can utilise small acts of kindness to bring happiness and greater meaning to the dental team.

1

Offer a helping hand to a team member struggling with a difficult task

2

Make a cup of tea for your colleague

3

Offer your entire attention to your colleague and listen to learn more, rather than to respond

4

Be thoughtful in how you respond to others and mindful of their perspective

5

Leave a note of gratitude

6

Ask your team member what's going well in their life

7

Send an encouraging message to a colleague

8

Forgive mistakes and look for ways you can help colleagues improve

1. Seligman M. Flourish. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; 2011. 2. Lai M et al. A Multidimensional PERMA-H Positive Education Model, General Satisfaction of School Life, and Character Strengths Use in Hong Kong Senior Primary School Students: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Path Analysis Using the APASO-II. *Front Psychol.* 2018; Jun 29;9:1090. 3. Shanafelt T et al. Career fit and burnout among academic faculty. *Arch Intern Med.* 2009;169: 990-5. 4. Gander F et al. Positive Psychology Interventions Addressing Pleasure, Engagement, Meaning, Positive Relationships, and Accomplishment Increase Well-Being and Ameliorate Depressive Symptoms: A Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Online Study. *Front Psychol.* 2016;May 20;7:686. 5. Wong P. Viktor Frankl's Meaning-Seeking Model and Positive Psychology. *Meaning in Positive and Existential Psychology* pp 149-184. 6. West CP et al. Physician burnout: contributors, consequences and solutions. *J Intern Med.* 2018;283:516-529. 7. Knežević M. Dentistry as a passion. *Essentials of Dental Medicine.* 2018. 8. Hayes S et al. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Contextual Behavioral Science: Examining the Progress of a Distinctive Model of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapy. *Behav Ther.* 2013;44(2):180-198. 9. Grant A. In the company of givers and takers. *Harvard Business Review.* 2013;91(4):90-7.





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY 1

## IDENTIFYING YOUR VALUES

One key way we can bring our values into action as a dental professional, is to align our values with our goals. When we create value-aligned goals, we are honing into a type of motivation called 'intrinsic motivation'. This type of motivation helps us stick to our goals long-term because the reason behind the goal aligns fully with what matters to us the most. Try the following worksheet to help you delve into your values further.



**M** — **Meaning**

**ACTIVITY 1**

# IDENTIFYING YOUR VALUES

Look at the ACT table and list below the 10 values that immediately resonate with you. Think of values that link directly with working with patients, the team and also your personal life.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Looking through the 10 values, chose the top 5 that resonate the most. To help you select your top 5, think of how these values have directed you during challenging times, or helped you feel more energised.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Reflect on one or two of your values. Consider examples of how can you bring this value into an action with patients, your dental career, in relationships, hobbies or your personal life. E.g. if growth and leadership are top values for you, you may want to consider exploring a leadership course, or if health is a top value, then consider ways you can prioritise good nutrition.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**M** — **Meaning**

**ACT Table**



Accountability  
Accuracy  
Achievement  
Adventurousness  
Altruism  
Ambition  
Assertiveness  
Balance  
Belonging  
Boldness  
Calmness  
Carefulness  
Challenge  
Cheerfulness  
Commitment  
Community  
Compassion  
Competitiveness  
Consistency  
Contentment  
Contribution  
Control  
Cooperation  
Correctness  
Courtesy  
Creativity  
Curiosity

Decisiveness  
Dependability  
Determination  
Devoutness  
Diligence  
Discipline  
Discretion  
Diversity  
Dynamism  
Economy  
Effectiveness  
Efficiency  
Elegance  
Empathy  
Enjoyment  
Enthusiasm  
Equality  
Excellence  
Excitement  
Expertise  
Exploration  
Expressiveness  
Fairness  
Faith  
Fidelity  
Fitness  
Fluency

Focus  
Freedom  
Fun  
Generosity  
Goodness  
Grace  
Growth  
Happiness  
Hard Work  
Health  
Helping Society  
Holiness  
Honesty  
Honor  
Humility  
Independence  
Ingenuity  
Inner Harmony  
Inquisitiveness  
Insightfulness  
Intelligence  
Intellectual Status  
Intuition  
Joy  
Justice  
Leadership  
Legacy

Love  
Loyalty  
Making a difference  
Mastery  
Merit  
Obedience  
Openness  
Order  
Originality  
Patriotism  
Perfection  
Piety  
Positivity  
Practicality  
Preparedness  
Professionalism  
Prudence  
Quality-orientation  
Reliability  
Resourcefulness  
Restraint  
Security  
Self-actualization  
Self-control  
Selflessness  
Self-reliance  
Sensitivity

Serenity  
Service  
Shrewdness  
Simplicity  
Soundness  
Speed  
Spontaneity  
Stability  
Strategic  
Strength  
Structure  
Success  
Support  
Teamwork  
Temperance  
Thankfulness  
Thoroughness  
Thoughtfulness  
Timeliness  
Tolerance  
Traditionalism  
Trustworthiness  
Truth-seeking  
Understanding  
Uniqueness  
Usefulness  
Vision  
Vitality



**M** — **Meaning**

**ACTIVITY 1**

# IDENTIFYING YOUR VALUES

Write down your goals for the next year in relation to the 4 life quadrants below: work, relationships, health and leisure. Consider how your top values align with these goals. If there is a mismatch, consider new goals that sit more closely with your values.

<b>Work</b>	
<b>Relationships</b>	
<b>Health</b>	
<b>Leisure</b>	

What small steps can you take in achieving your top value-based goals? Consider when you can schedule this in, rewards to celebrate your progress and how you can enlist support from friends and family to keep you accountable.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY 2

## FINDING THE SILVER LINING

Finding the hidden positives in certain challenges we face in dentistry can help us become more resilient, as we recognise the growth that occurs despite the stressful time. This is also another practical way we can invite more meaning. This journaling worksheet helps us to reveal the hidden benefits of our challenges.



# ENHANCING OUR SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

## Part of The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals

In collaboration with Dr Mahrukh Khwaja,  
Dentist and Positive Psychologist



**A****Accomplishment****A****Accomplishment**

# ENHANCING OUR SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

What have you accomplished today? High-achieving professionals such as those who work in dental health can be susceptible to stress and burnout if they feel a low sense of accomplishment in their daily lives and career.<sup>3,4</sup> This article discusses how the PERMA-H model can be used as a strategy to help build resilience and combat stress and burnout in dentistry with expert tips from Dr Mahrukh Khwaja: dentist, positive psychologist and author of the book 'Resilience and well-being for Dental Professionals'. It focuses on the fifth component of PERMA-H; 'accomplishment'.

---

**The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals:**

part 5 of 6 of a Unilever mini-series on how to flourish, thrive and avoid burnout in dentistry

Brought to you by  **zendium**





# ACCOMPLISHMENT IS A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Given the level of dedication required to pursue a career as a dental professional, 'accomplishment' is a very relevant topic. However, after qualification and the first few years of working in the field, reduced levels of personal accomplishment may contribute to stress and burnout.<sup>3,4</sup> This can be especially relevant to more senior dental professionals who reach a point in their career where new achievements become less frequent. As a result, it's important to consider how you can improve your daily perception of personal achievement throughout your career and in your personal life.





# A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT IS HIGHLY PERSONAL, AND DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ABOUT YOUR OWN ACHIEVEMENTS

Accomplishment can mean many things. It includes concepts that can be adapted to any situation like 'goal-setting'. It also doesn't have to be all about you — accomplishment can include appreciating and celebrating the achievements of colleagues, friends, your spouse or children.<sup>5</sup>





# THE VALUE OF GOAL-SETTING IN EVERYDAY ACHIEVEMENTS

Pursuing goals that are important to you is associated with your personal sense of well-being and positive psychological functioning.<sup>6</sup> It's something that can be easily adopted using the 'Goal-Striving Reasons Framework', SMART goals and the GROW model.<sup>6-8</sup> The framework notes the four main goal-striving reasons as pleasure, altruism, fear of self-esteem loss and necessity.<sup>6,7</sup> This encourages people to reflect on and modify what is driving them to achieve a given goal, and given that 'fear of self-esteem loss' and 'necessity' are not ideal long-term motivators for dental professionals, that leaves 'pleasure' and 'altruism'. Altruism is a relevant goal-striving reason for dental professionals, as it aligns with the core values of healthcare (i.e. a focus on helping others). It has been demonstrated to have a

positive impact on one's own happiness.<sup>6,7</sup> But as long as goals are aligned with our personal values and what matters to us the most, we will achieve the right type of motivation - intrinsic motivation, where we strive for goals because of the pleasure they naturally bring.<sup>7</sup> Goals pursued because of the pleasurable emotions associated with them are ultimately more sustainable, as they've been shown to coincide with improved subjective well-being.<sup>7</sup>

Once the reasons behind pursuing the goal are better understood and aligned with your core values, you can start to use more practical methods to achieve them, such as the well-known SMART goal-setting criteria, or the GROW model.<sup>8,9</sup>



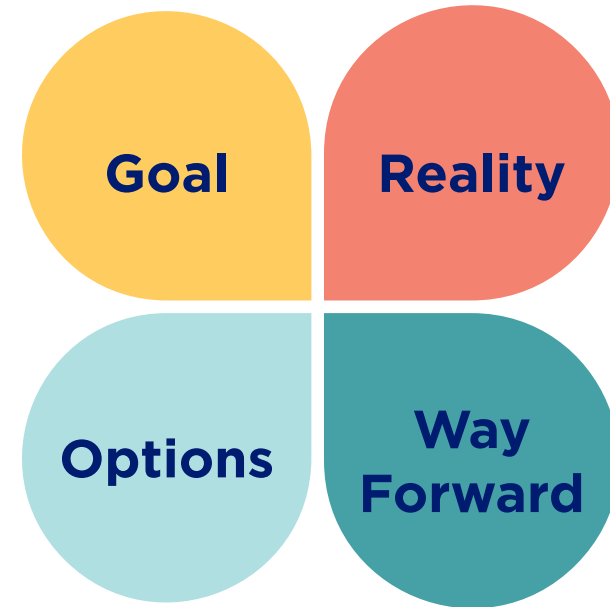


GROW is a coaching model and acronym developed in the 1980s by Sir John Whitmore and colleagues at Performance Consultants International, and stands for:<sup>9</sup>

- Goal (aspirations)
- Reality (current obstacles or situations)
- Options (strengths, resources)
- Way Forward (accountability and personal actions – what, when, by whom, and the will to do it)

GROW is a simple and effective framework that can be used in any coaching setting, including as an individual, enabling the pursuit of growth-related goals in any area where obstacles need to be overcome.<sup>9</sup>

The 'Goal' section of the framework can help you to realise your strengths and align these with your objectives. The 'Reality' aspect can help you to find perspective and explore new possibilities. The 'Options' section of the framework can help you to choose one of these new possibilities to move forward with. The 'Way Forward' can help you to plan specific actions for your next steps and develop a commitment to your goal.<sup>9</sup>



**To start applying the GROW model to your own life, try Dr Khwaja's activity at the end of this section. You can also find more information about the GROW model here:**

<https://positivepsychology.com/grow-coaching-model/>



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

# TOP TIPS IN CREATING HABITS THAT STICK

1

## Inject fun along the way

Consider ways you can make whatever new habit sustainable through making the process more enjoyable

2

## Keep your goal as small and realistic as possible

If you are likely to achieve the goal, you're chances of persisting are increased. If your goal is to start a mindfulness practice for example, practise meditation for 30 seconds to begin with. You can slowly grow this to 2 minutes and so on.

3

## Break a large goal into smaller subgoals

This prevents us feeling overwhelmed

4

## Stack habits together

For example if you already jog in the park every week, add an element of mindfulness to your experience by honing into your 5 senses

5

## Ask a friend to act as an accountability buddy

6

## Celebrate your wins along the way

7

## Lean towards a growth mindset approach



## NURTURING THE 'GROWTH MINDSET' FOR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Individuals who believe their talents can be developed, either through hard work, strategy, or input from others, have what is called a 'growth mindset'. Those who believe their talents are innate gifts have a 'fixed mindset'.<sup>10</sup>

Having a 'growth mindset', as opposed to a 'fixed mindset', can lead to feelings of greater empowerment and commitment, which can be incredibly helpful to personal development and gaining a sense of achievement. 'Growth mindset' individuals tend to achieve more than those with a 'fixed mindset'.<sup>10</sup>





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

## DEVELOPING A GROWTH MINDSET IN DENTISTRY

The skill of developing a growth mindset is highly relevant to dental professionals. To have a long, thriving career in dentistry requires us to be constantly upskilling — whether that be in short-term orthodontics, bonding, managing complex cases to sedation. A growth mindset approach helps us in this journey of learning through encouraging us to:

- explore the positives from setbacks or ‘failures’ along the way
- unlock a loving inner voice that supports us through the discomfort of difficult emotions
- receive feedback without feeling as though our sense of self is under attack



## DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

Our thoughts all sit on a spectrum, where fixed and growth mindsets are on opposing sides. All of us, shift up and down this continuum. The good news is growth mindset, no matter what age, can be strengthened. Here are some key strategies from the pivotal research by Carol Dweck.<sup>11</sup>

1

### Place emphasis on progress over perfection

When we focus on our experience of learning and positive shifts in clinical and non-clinical skills, we can see more clearly how we are on the right track. Just as we can nurture children to focus on how much they have improved, we can use the same principles to help motivate us to continue learning.

2

### Reframe our relationship with 'failures'

Dweck talks about 'failures' as a stepping stone to success. Just acknowledging this may dramatically shift our response to inevitable challenges along the learning pathway. If we know that, in order to be successful in cementing a new skill in dentistry we will come across obstacles, those events during treatment with a patient don't upset us in a way they could otherwise. One practical application of this is asking ourselves at the end of our clinical day: what did I 'fail' at and what did I learn from today?





## DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

3

### Use positive language to shift towards a growth mindset approach

The words we use have profound impacts on how we feel and act. Use Dweck's 3 step approach to help create a kinder inner voice:

- Label the fixed mindset thought. For example you may say to yourself, 'I notice I am having a thought that if I avoid challenges, other's won't doubt me'
- Acknowledge that mindset is a choice
- Reframe the fixed mindset 'inner dialogue' to a growth mindset approach, for example saying to yourself 'With every challenging case, I keep growing and improving my skills', 'If I don't succeed this time, I learn for the next time' or 'I'm not there yet, but with time and effort I will be'

4

### Seek support from a mentor or coach

Choosing the right coach for us can help role model positive language we discussed above.



1. Seligman MEP. Flourish. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; 2011. 2. Lai MK et al. Front Psychol 2018; <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01090>. 3. Calvo JM et al. J Patient S. 2021; 17(5): 398-404. 4. Singh P et al. Occu Med 2016; 66: 27-31. 5. Khwaja M et al. BGJ in Prat. 2020; 33: 26-7. 6. Ehrlich C. Psychol Rep 2022; 0(0): 1-23. 7. Ehrlich C. J Pos Psych 2012; 7(6): 493-503. 8. University of California. SMART Goals: A How to Guide. 2016. Available from: [https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/\\_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf](https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf). Accessed June 2022. 9. Miller K. What is the GROW Coaching Model? (incl. Questions + Examples). Available from: <https://positivepsychology.com/grow-coaching-model/>. Accessed June 2022. 10. Harvard Business Review. What having a 'growth mindset' actually means. Carol Dweck 2016. Available from: <https://hbr.org/2016/01/what-having-a-growth-mindset-actually-means>. Accessed May 2022. 11. Dweck, Carol S. Mindset: The New Psychology of Success. New York: Random House, 2006.



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY 1

## TAKING POSITIVE ACTIONS FORWARD

Working out the first steps to taking positive action on our goals can be challenging. Try the following worksheet to start applying the GROW model to your own life. This could be to work out the initial steps in accomplishing a goal that matters to you greatly. The GROW framework can also be a useful aid in problem solving.



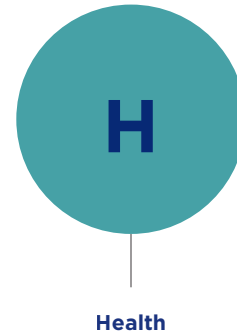


# MAINTAINING A **HEALTHY LIFESTYLE** TO INCREASE RESILIENCE

## Part of The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals

In collaboration with Dr Mahrukh Khwaja,  
Dentist and Positive Psychologist





# MAINTAINING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE TO INCREASE RESILIENCE

Positive health has gained a great deal of focus in recent years. Well-being models show how we can practise sustainable habits for optimal physical and psychological health, and key governing bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) recognise the importance of health in learning environments.<sup>3</sup> Now more than ever we are aware of the importance of looking after our own health, and how maintaining good health through exercise, nutrition and quality sleep can help to reduce exhaustion and even the risk of burnout.<sup>4</sup>

This article discusses how the PERMA-H model can be used as a strategy to help build resilience and combat stress and burnout in dentistry with expert tips from Dr Mahrukh Khwaja: dentist, positive psychologist and author of the book 'Resilience and well-being for Dental Professionals'. It focuses on the final component of PERMA-H; 'health'.



# HOLISTIC HEALTH ENCOMPASSES BOTH THE BODY AND THE MIND

The five original elements of PERMA were initially derived from Professor Martin Seligman's components of 'Authentic Happiness'.<sup>1</sup> Since PERMA's initial development, there has been an increased focus on holistic health,<sup>1</sup> leading to the adoption of this sixth element. The health aspect of PERMA-H focuses on improving well-being through sustainable habits for better physical and psychological health.<sup>2</sup> It is a broad addition to the model, including aspects of holistic health such as sleep, exercise and nutrition.<sup>3,4</sup>





# BE AWARE OF THE LIFESTYLE SIGNS OF BURNOUT

Dental professionals may encounter professional stress more than other occupations, beginning in medical school and continuing throughout their careers.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, they may be prone to anxiety disorders and clinical depression,<sup>6</sup> and are more likely to experience burnout symptoms than any other medical profession group.<sup>4</sup> Developing positive health behaviours to counter this can carry a beneficial impact throughout life, not only reducing the risk of burnout, but also preventing other adverse health conditions such as diabetes or heart disease.<sup>3,4</sup>







# LIFESTYLE FACTORS TO BOOST WELL-BEING

There are many things that dental health professionals can do to help improve their health and reduce their risk of burnout

## 1

**Firstly, get a good night's sleep.** Given the links between burnout and sleep deprivation, and the long working hours and demanding clinical situations faced by healthcare professionals, it is especially important to find a lifestyle balance that allows for good sleep hygiene. Getting adequate sleep is a key pillar for improving health, with findings suggesting that optimised sleep may be a core component dictating the reversibility of burnout syndrome.<sup>7</sup>

Given that achieving recommended levels of sleep quality and quantity are key components linked to burnout recovery, finding ways to naturally improve your sleep is an important factor for reducing burnout.<sup>2,7</sup> Some helpful tips include:<sup>7</sup>

- Aim to achieve adequate sleep at night (7 to 9 hours)
- Go to bed only when you're tired, and if you're not tired, get out of bed
- Set a fixed wake-up time
- Avoid napping during the day
- Avoid alcohol before bed
- Limit exposure to bright light in the evening, such as on your phone, computer or TV
- Exercise regularly
- As well as the above, it's important to make sure your bedroom is quiet and relaxing. Keep your room comfortable and cool, and avoid using your bed for anything other than sleep.<sup>7</sup>
- With regards to light, although even a small amount of light exposure in the evening can disrupt the circadian rhythm, it's important to be exposed to natural light throughout the day, but especially in the morning, to maintain a natural circadian rhythm in line with the 24-hour day.<sup>7,8</sup>



2

**Shake up your diet.** Studies have demonstrated that a healthy diet is protective of burnout, whereas regularly eating fast food is related to burnout. A simple change like incorporating a Mediterranean diet into your lifestyle brings with it well-documented cardiovascular and glycaemic benefits, but may also protect against depression.<sup>9,10</sup> The nutrients from foods and dietary supplements implicated in the processes related to mental health include omega 3 fatty acids, amino acids and carbohydrates, and have a variety of beneficial effects.<sup>11</sup>

For example, omega 3 is known to interact with the central nervous system to support serotonin and dopamine neurotransmission, as well as playing a role in the hypothalamus-pituitary adrenal axis. Including foods high in omega 3 into your diet, such as salmon, tuna, mackerel, nuts and seeds, and plant oils, may therefore have a lowering effect on corticosterone levels, which are indicative of inflammation and stress.<sup>11</sup>

Amino acids found in meat, poultry, eggs, legumes and nuts, such as tryptophan and ornithine, are also important for brain and mental health, and can help to improve sleep and modulate stress.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, including adequate carbohydrates ensures the brain has enough of its preferred fuel substrate, glucose. However, you should try to eat this in the form of complex carbohydrates from foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains, which fuel gut bacteria to produce short-chain fatty acids that have an anti-inflammatory effect on the brain.<sup>11</sup>

Some of the latest evidence suggests that it may be beneficial to adopt a plant-based diet, as this has been shown to result in short-to moderate-term beneficial effects in terms of weight, energy metabolism and systemic inflammation. However, whether these benefits extend to cognitive function, or mental and neurological health remains to be seen, but it can't hurt to try!<sup>12</sup>



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUTRITION, GUT HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Did you know that keeping your gut healthy may aid in keeping your brain healthy as well? Recently medical literature is increasingly shining a light on the important relationship between our brain and the gut microbiome (microorganisms). Eating poorly may affect the brain through causing symptoms that are similar to anxiety,<sup>13,14,15</sup> depression<sup>16</sup>, autism or Parkinson's disease. It does this through preventing us from getting key nutrients to keep healthy. Additionally, a poor diet may damage the composition of the gut microbiome and cause an inability to properly breakdown nutrients. Stress also greatly contributes here — and the more stressed we are, the more damage we may cause to the gut microbiome. Contrastingly, eating well contributes to creating a healthy gut, with a diverse gut microbiome. We are more likely to get sick less often, be more productive and have greater emotional well-being.





As with all our body systems, a combination of a diet rich in gut-friendly foods, stress management, (for example regular mindfulness practice) and physical exercise as well as targeted supplements, may all aid in creating a gut and brain that are healthy. With regards to positive nutrition, consider increasing these gut-healthy foods on a regular basis:

1

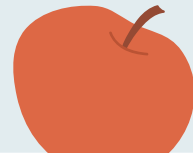
### Wholegrains

Such as brown rice, barley, oatmeal.



2

### Fresh fruits and vegetables



3

### Foods rich in polyphenols

Such as grapes, almonds, broccoli, blueberries.



4

### Beans and pulses

Such as chickpeas, kidney beans and yellow, brown, red and green lentils.



5

### Nuts



6

### Probiotics

Such as yoghurt



7

### Fermented foods

Such as sauerkraut, kefir and kimchi.



8

### Spices

Such as turmeric and ginger.





## 3

**Move your body!** Physical activity has a huge potential to enhance health and well-being, and any kind of physical activity is a great way to protect against burnout. For example, sport can reduce all three dimensions of burnout, with dental professionals who reported playing sports regularly showing reduced emotional exhaustion, reduced depersonalisation and greater personal accomplishment.<sup>4</sup>

Exercises such as running, training on an elliptical machine, rowing or cycling (in the gym or outdoors) have all been shown to reduce perceived levels of stress in the workplace, even if only done for short periods over a lunch break.<sup>17</sup> Even really light exercise, like walking outside in the park or amongst nature has shown benefits, such as lowering blood pressure.<sup>18</sup> Simply immersing yourself in nature or 'forest bathing' has also been shown to be good for your health, with numerous studies demonstrating reduced heart rate, lower blood pressure, increased relaxation and a general sense of well-being, which can be more pronounced in those already suffering from depression.<sup>19</sup>





DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

# MINDFUL RUNNING

Did you know that you can exercise your muscle of mindfulness even when you are moving your body? A type of mindfulness practice, known as mindful running, brings together movement with anchoring to the breath with kindness and non-judgment. Here are my top tips for mindful running:

1

## Notice sensations in your body

Are there any areas of discomfort? Do you need to take a break, slow down or keep going?

2

## Observe your thoughts with non-judgment and kindness

If you do notice a critical thought pop up, gently nudge your attention back to your breath.

3

## Bring your awareness to your breath

4

## Invite a moment of gratitude

For having made time for running today, savour the joy you get from running and celebrate your body for being psychically able to run.

5

## Stimulate all your senses through honing into all 5 senses

What can you see, hear, smell, taste or feel? If you can, leave your headphones at home and engage with the sensory experience of running.





**Look after your mind.** Meditation and mindfulness, particularly when combined with yoga, can be practised and integrated into spare moments in your day, and have numerous mental health benefits:<sup>20</sup>

- Balance of autonomic function
- Increase in alpha rhythm, interhemispheric coherence and homogeneity in the brain
- Improved sleep quality and cognitive functions
- Alteration in brain blood flow and brain metabolism
- Modulation of the neuroendocrine axis

Remember to be mindful of your current circumstances and your own risk for burnout, as it could creep up on you before you realise it. Look out for the signs of stress and burnout and act before you have to react.

Yoga is a great starting point for burnout prevention, as it covers both mindfulness and physical activity. There are even specific yoga resources for dental health professionals, such as the instructional paper by Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani 'Yoga for Dental Professional: Scope and Simplified Practices', available here:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320615682\\_YOGA\\_FOR\\_DENTAL\\_PROFESSIONAL\\_SCOPE\\_AND\\_SIMPLIFIED\\_PRACTICES](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320615682_YOGA_FOR_DENTAL_PROFESSIONAL_SCOPE_AND_SIMPLIFIED_PRACTICES)

1. Seligman MEP. Flourish. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; 2011. 2. Lai MK et al. Front Psychol 2018; <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01090>. 3. Norrish JM et al. Int J Well-being 2013; 3(2):1 47-61. 4. Slabšinskien E et al. BMC Health Serv Res 2021; 21: 1098. 5. Rada RE, Johnson-Leong C. JADA 2004; 135: 788-94. 6. Naidoo S. SADJ 2015; 70(9): 388-9. 7. Naidoo S. SADJ 2015; 70(9): 388-9. 8. Wams EJ et al. Sleep 2017; 12(40): 1-13. 9. Parletta N et al. Nutr Neurosci 2019; 22: 474-87. 10. Jacka FN et al. BMC Med 2017; 15: 23. 11. Esquivel MC. Am J Lifestyle Med 2021; 15(2): 126-9. 12. Medawar E et al. Transl Psychiatry 2019; 9(1): 226. 13. Messaoudi M, Lalonde R, Violle N, et al. Assessment of psychotropic-like properties of a probiotic formulation (Lactobacillus helveticus R0052 and Bifidobacterium longum R0175) in rats and human subjects. Br J Nutr. 2011;105(05):755-764. 14. Messaoudi M, Violle N, Bisson JF, et al. Beneficial psychological effects of a probiotic formulation (Lactobacillus helveticus R0052 and Bifidobacterium longum R0175) in healthy human volunteers. Gut Microbes. 2011;2(4):256-261. 15. Hilimire MR, DeVlylder JE, Forestell CA. Fermented foods, neuroticism, and social anxiety: An interaction model. Psychiatry Res. 2015;228(2):203-208. 16. Akkashah G, Kashani-Poor Z, Tajabadi-Ebrahimi M, et al. Clinical and metabolic response to probiotic administration in patients with major depressive disorder: A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. Nutrition. 2016;32(3):315-320. 17. Diaz-Silveira C et al. Int J Environ Res Public Health 2020;17(8): 2839. 18. Torrente P et al. Scandi J Work Org Psych 2017; 2(1): 1-15. 19. Hansen MM et al. Int J Environ Res Public Health 2017; 14:851. 20. Bhavanani AB. J Sci Dent 2017; 7(1): 1-11.



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY 1

## YOGA ON THE DENTAL STOOL

As a busy dental professional, it can be difficult to make time for movement. The good news is that we can incorporate small amounts of movement into our clinical day. The illustration below captures simple yoga poses we can do on our dental stool, in the morning prior to starting our clinical session, in between calling the next patient into our surgery or at lunch.





## YOGA ON THE DENTAL STOOL



Sun salutations



Seated spinal twist



Chest opener



Cat-Cow pose



Warrior II. pose



Reverse warrior pose



Extended side angle pose

Khwaja M (2021). Mind Flossing Toolkit.



DR MAHRUKH KHWAJA

ACTIVITY 2

## BOOSTING SERENITY THROUGH SELF-CARE

As dental professionals, we spend so much time looking after our patients, we don't always give the same care towards ourselves.

Self-care activities are ones that make us feel nourished, allow us to recover, and boost our levels of the positive emotion: serenity. Try this journaling exercise to help you prioritise regular 'me' time.





# BOOSTING SERENITY THROUGH SELF-CARE

We often have quiet moments during our days. Reflect on when you can schedule your self-care activities on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Even a minute here and there adds up to filling our cup! Fill the table below with examples from your answers from 1, 2 and 3, writing down a time you can do this self-care activity, any cues that can help, and the duration.

Daily	Weekly	Monthly

Visual reminders can also nudge us to take some time for self-care. Write down each activity from your table, on a separate bit of paper and fill a jam jar with these ideas. Place this in your home in a visible position. For the next week, try this experiment: when you next have a spare moment, reach for your jam jar and do the activity. Reflect below on which activities you have enjoyed the most and why.

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---



# DISCLAIMER

The information provided in the “The Well-being Toolkit for Dental Professionals” guide (the “Guide”) is an opinion and provided “as is” for guidance purposes only. While Unilever Oral Care Professional strives to make the information in this document accurate, Unilever Oral Care Professional makes no claims or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness or adequacy of the contents of the Guide and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the content. Unilever Oral Care Professional does not endorse or guarantee software, information, products or services provided by or at a third-party website and disclaims any and all liability for the acts, omissions or conduct of any third party resource. You assume total responsibility for your use related to the document and your sole remedy against Unilever Oral Care Professional in the case of dissatisfaction is to stop using such content. All content is subject to copyright and may not be reproduced in any form without express written consent of Unilever Oral Care Professional.

© Copyright 2022 produced by Unilever Oral Care Professional. All rights reserved.

Unilever House, 100 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y

