

Lloyd's Wellbeing Centre

Your dedicated **Lloyd's Community** health,
fitness and wellbeing newsletter

AUTUMN/WINTER 2021 ISSUE

Keeping you **fit for business** and **fit for life**

RETURN TO
THE WORKPLACE
EDITION

WELCOME BACK!

WE'VE MISSED YOU

Inside this issue:

Special Offers
on Massage Treatments

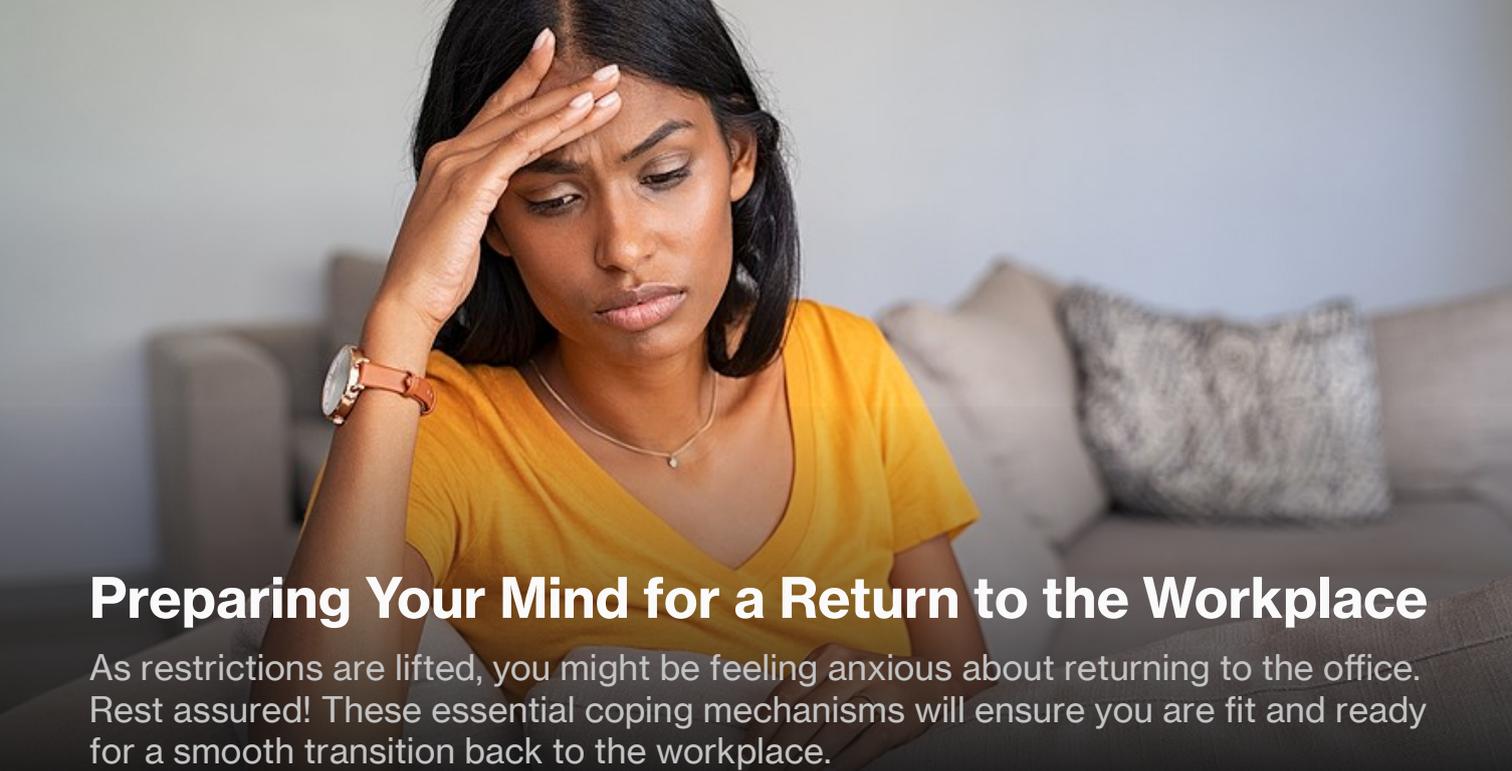
**Preparing Your Mind for a
Return to the Workplace**

Tips to ensure a smooth
transition back to the office

**Tackling "Pandemic Brain"
and Improving Your Focus**

Don't let brain fog get you down





Preparing Your Mind for a Return to the Workplace

As restrictions are lifted, you might be feeling anxious about returning to the office. Rest assured! These essential coping mechanisms will ensure you are fit and ready for a smooth transition back to the workplace.

The return to the office is a topic that is currently occupying many people's minds and conversations, along with all the other uncertainties of these times.

If you worked in an office pre-pandemic, you will of course be familiar with what office life is all about. But we all know it will be different going back. The environment both in and outside of our offices will have changed considerably since we left it all those many months ago. It's not surprising that many of us are feeling a little anxious.

Be prepared for changes. Inside the office, there will be a whole set of new health and safety rules to get our heads around, what we can and cannot do, where we work, and how we are allowed to meet and interact. Outside the office, be prepared for a changed landscape with the disappearance of many of our favourite watering holes, go-to lunch stops, and handy amenity stores. Whilst we were all banished to working from home, many of the trusted businesses that thrived on us being around during

the working day have been forced to shut, as there's simply been no customers around to serve!

Creating new habits

As we change our routine, we will shortly have to create new habits and adapt to a very different environment to the home working setup we have become accustomed to over these many months of lockdown.

There will of course be some great positives, like spending less time on Zoom and having real people interactions. However, for some of us, the change back to the office environment after working from home for so long may be a jolt to the system.



Nurturing a flexible mindset

If you find yourself feeling anxious and getting a bit 'stuck' about the whole return to the office issue, try and support yourself by developing techniques for nurturing a flexible mindset.

Nurturing flexibility in the way you think is known to be one of the key 'pillars' in building personal resilience. Being a flexible thinker enables you to be more positive and creative in navigating any difficulties you feel you have to face regarding working back in the office.

Developing a flexible mindset relies on two key areas of psychology: Positive Reframing and Open-mindedness.

Positive Reframing is a thinking technique that changes the way you view situations that may be causing you worry and anxiety, such as returning to the office, and re-framing it with a new positive perspective. Research has revealed that positive reframing results in reducing our personal sense of threat, which has the effect of lowering our stress and anxiety levels. This process allows us to channel our thoughts positively towards influencing a good outcome.

Re-framing any negative thoughts we have about returning to the office will positively influence how we feel about it, how we prepare for it, and handle it when it happens. In effect, we become less emotionally charged, and become more mindful of handling the change in a constructive and self-supporting way.

Use the re-framing technique to view the 'return' as just a short-term period of transition allowing your mind to take the broader perspective or longer view. This will help you feel less threatened and more accepting of the return to the workspace.

Open Mindedness – Developing an open and optimistic outlook when you are considering the logistics of returning to the office will help you all round. Being open minded will give you the flexibility to consider multiple different ways of viewing a situation, and how you can react to it. Charles Darwin's "survival of the fittest" is now widely interpreted as being about adaptability.

"It is not the strongest that survives, but the species that survives is the one that is able best to adapt and adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself."

Professor Leon C Megginson

You only have to look at the last year to realise that humans are amazingly adaptable. Have the confidence to know that just like you managed lockdown, you will manage the change back to the new working environment.

Connect to your Inner Courage

For many, fear has been a dominant emotion since the start of the pandemic. Fear can hijack the mind, preventing us from thinking clearly and evaluating risks in a balanced way. When we are anxious, we might focus exclusively on threats and blow them out of proportion. The fear we experience may become a source of suffering and distress in itself.

If you feel fearful, try to analyse the risks you face in a calm, clear, and logical way, and ensure that you aren't confusing justified dangers with less significant concerns.

To help relax and calm you, try deep-breathing techniques whenever you feel your fears arising. Breathing exercises have been shown to help reduce stress and anxiety and, if practised regularly, will help your mental and physical wellbeing. Once you become aware of how to harness the power of your breath through simple exercises, you will be able to call on it as an invaluable 'go to' tool that you can use anywhere as part of your stress and anxiety relieving armoury.



BREATHING EXERCISES

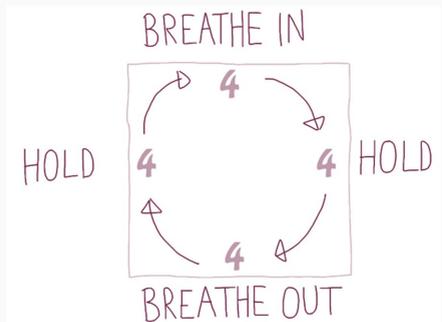
Simple breathing techniques could help you find internal courage and calm your mind. As you settle your nervous system, see if you can let go of your fear and focus on the positive opportunities and positive outcomes that lie ahead. You'll find many breathing exercises by searching the internet, but here's a simple breathing technique to get you started:

Sama Vritti ('Box' or 'square' breathing)

This is a very simple exercise that can be used to focus your mind and cut out mental chatter. The aim of this exercise is to breathe for the same count for each step of the breathing process.

Get into a comfortable position while sitting up straight. Be sure to relax your face, jaw, neck and shoulders. Try to keep your upper body still through the whole exercise and expand your stomach as you breathe in.

Breathe in through your nose, inhaling for the count of 4, hold your breath for the count of 4, exhale through your nose for the count of 4, and then hold again for the count of 4. Repeat this process for a minimum of 12 rounds, as long as you feel comfortable to do so.



Focus on the positives of returning to the workplace

To support your mindset, try and focus on considering all the things that you do want and what you are looking forward to about returning to the workplace. Focusing on the positives over this transitional period, such as more freedom, a good return to the office and reconnecting with your colleagues in-person, will help you navigate through these times of change.

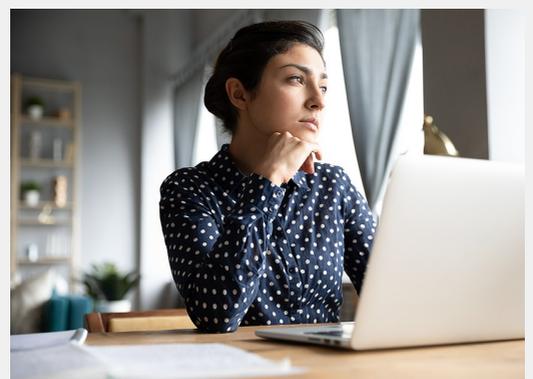
It is likely that there will be some good things about going back to the office that you have not yet considered. Safety guidelines will be in place to help protect you and make sure you can work successfully. For many there will also be more flexibility for commuting times.

Many of your colleagues may share your reservations around returning to the office; you will not be alone if you are feeling anxious. Connecting positively with your co-workers about emotional challenges can bring a sense of camaraderie and boost the emotions of yourself and others.

Be mindful of how you have changed over this year away, and reflect that your colleagues may also have changed

Over a year has passed since the pandemic began. Changes to the way you perceive your life and the world around you are to be expected and it's important to reflect on this. Perhaps this year away from the office has made you more tolerant of 'what is', more grateful of what you have, more accepting of uncertainty, and more aware of your surroundings? Whatever the changes in you are, be mindful of them.

Your colleagues will have experienced a completely different set of personal circumstances that will be unique to them. Reflecting on your own experiences, and sharing these, can be a meaningful and supportive way of re-connecting with colleagues.





Tackling 'Pandemic Brain' and Improving Your Focus

Do you feel lately as if life is just happening to you?

Each day you wake and go about your daily tasks with the same amount of dulled normality as the day before. It may feel like you are half awake as you try and navigate the world in its current unreliable state.

If you feel like this, then don't worry – you are not alone!

Over the past 18 months, we have been pushed to near breaking point as we've been forced to alter our habits and lifestyles to stop the spread of COVID-19. From multiple lockdowns to social isolation and social distancing, our brains have been re-wired to function in our new dystopian reality.

What scientists are calling 'pandemic brain' is just one lasting side-effect leaking into our lives in the late pandemic.

What, you may ask, is 'pandemic brain'?

Poor focus, lack of concentration, forgetfulness and loss of social skills are just some of the symptoms – and most of us have experienced at least some. Pandemic brain has indeed affected everyone who has been through the last year of turmoil. For many it might feel like an inescapable downward spiral as things feel increasingly out of our control.

There is, however, light at the end of the tunnel. No matter how severe your case of pandemic brain is, whether you can't remember how to order a coffee or if you have forgotten how to stay focused in a business meeting, hope is not lost!

There are many things you can do to ease yourself back into your old routines, making the necessary alterations as you adjust to this 'new normal'.



The science behind the saying

Pandemic brain is the loss of some cognitive abilities due to the dramatic lifestyle changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As society locked themselves in their houses, working from home in their pjs, changing their daily commute from their bed to the home desk, our brains have automatically filed away the information for one version of our lives and created a new one – a pandemic-themed one!

In an article from the Huffington Post, Jessica Gold, Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychiatry at Washington University of Medicine, discussed the definition of pandemic brain. Gold described it as a lingering sense of exhaustion, confusion and lack of concentration caused by the dulling of the senses over a prolonged period, but these effects should be recoverable over time.

Natural adaptation to our surroundings is a key part of evolution. Just like the moths who evolved to darker colours to hide from prey during the rise of smog in the industrial revolution, our brains have been clouded with a fog of forgetting to survive the pandemic.

In an article from The Atlantic, it was observed how many cannot fathom their old lives and have forged new habits and routines which are less demanding of their time and brain. It is too early to produce any thorough research on the long-term effects of pandemic brain, but its symptoms are certainly a tangible reality for many.

Whilst we learn how to function in the late-pandemic world, there is another pandemic brewing on the horizon.

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There is no vaccine for the mental health crisis

The pandemic will have a longer lasting effect on our mental health than our physical health, although the severity of these effects will differ depending on your circumstances and mental health prior to the pandemic.

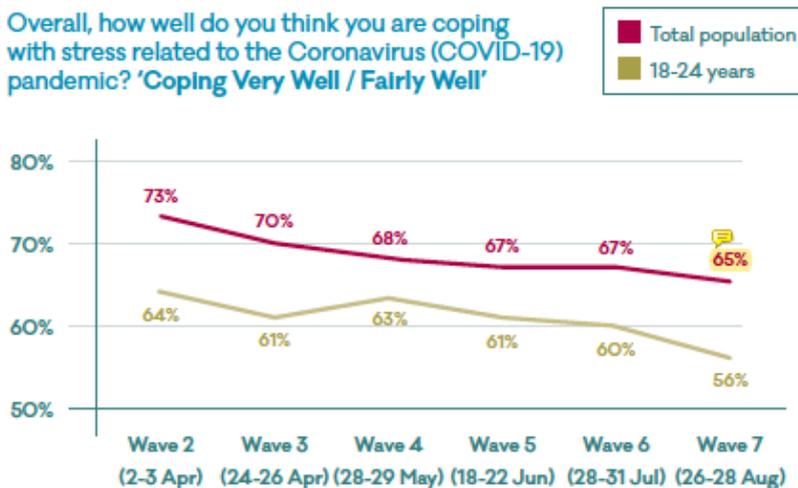


The Mental Health Foundation has dedicated a section on their website to providing information, advice and stats for dealing with your mental health in the late pandemic. Whether you are coping with the loss of a loved one, economic difficulties, loneliness or depression, there is much advice tailored to people from different backgrounds, including those of the LGBTQ+ and BAME communities.

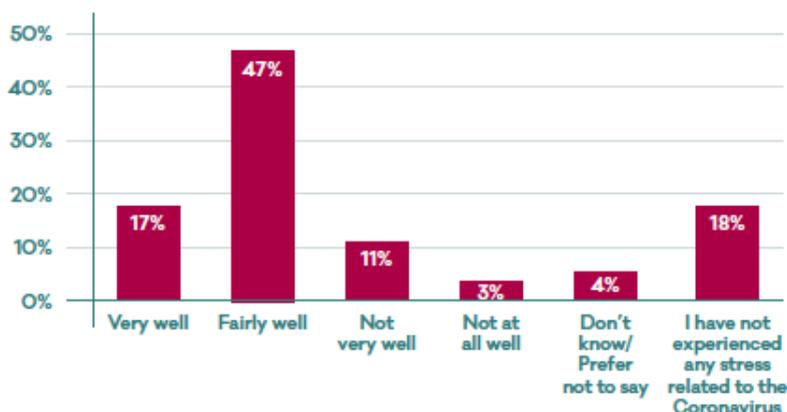
Looking at some of the stats from late February 2021, there has been a rise in levels of positive wellbeing in recent months. Whilst there was an initial rise in suicidal thoughts in single parents, young adults and the clinically vulnerable during the first few months of the pandemic, these figures have declined.

In March 2020, 62% of the British population felt anxious/worried, but this has now declined to 42% in the late February 2021 stats. These figures are gathered from various surveys provided from research groups and are designed to gather information on the mental wellbeing of the population.

Overall, how well do you think you are coping with stress related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? 'Coping Very Well / Fairly Well'



Overall, how well do you think you are coping with stress related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?



Top tips to tackle Pandemic Brain fog

No matter what your circumstances are, if you are feeling the effects of 'pandemic brain', the following tips will help you on your journey to improving your focus and finding your new 'normal':

- 1. Take it easy**
First and foremost, take it easy on yourself. There is no race to get yourself back to where you used to be. No one is going to be the same, everyone will be dealing with the same aftermath as you – the best advice anyone can give you is to be kind to each other.
- 2. Take regular breaks**
Especially between work – this will help you ease back into the working routine and give your brain a moment to recharge.
- 3. Get support**
Surround yourself with supportive friends and family to increase your positivity and contentment.
- 4. Remember to rest**
Get lots of sleep. Readjusting will be exhausting, so give your brain the break it needs.
- 5. Seek professional help where needed**
Speak to a professional if you are struggling – as discussed, we're on the brink of a mental health crisis. The first step is admitting it is okay to need help.
- 6. Be bold**
Spontaneity – step away from the basic and boring; awaken your dormant side of risk and madness to break the fog, although do so safely!

It is time to wake up from the pandemic brain fog. Remember how amazing it feels to be alive, stay safe, be sensible, and live.

These graphs show the decline in people's ability to cope well, as the pandemic and its associated restrictions continued.

In particular, young people (aged 18-24yrs) were coping less well.

Source: mentalhealth.org.uk

MASSAGE SPECIAL OFFER

25% off any of the following massage treatments:

- ◆ Cellulite reduction
- ◆ Cupping therapy
- ◆ Lymphatic drainage

* Standard fee for 30 mins is £40 / 45 mins is £55 / 60 mins is £70.



Book online at
lloydswellbeingcentre.co.uk

or phone us on
020 7327 5341

WELCOMING YOU BACK TO THE LLOYD'S WELLBEING CENTRE

Our Wellbeing Centre is conveniently located in the Lloyd's Building (Upper Basement level) and is open to everyone – whether you are a Lloyd's pass holder or not. We provide a range of wellbeing and healthcare services dedicated to improving the lives of people working in the City of London.

Janice Kaye
Director, Lloyd's Wellbeing Centre



Meet some of our team



Simon Chafer
Osteopath

Simon takes a holistic (whole person) approach to the evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of his patients. He has special expertise in alleviating pain, with a master's degree in pain management. In addition to osteopathy, Simon is qualified in Western Medical Acupuncture.



Dorothy Kovacs
Massage therapist

Dorothy provides a wide range of relaxing and remedial massage treatments including Swedish, Sports, Indian Head, Foot, Cupping Therapy, Pregnancy Massage, Lymphatic Drainage, and Cellulite Reduction massage treatment.



Jack Lidyard
Podiatrist

Podiatrists (also known as Chiropractors) are experts of the feet and are able to diagnose and treat a wide range of toe, foot, ankle, and lower limb problems. Jack is also able to analyse gait and body mechanics, to improve your walking or running posture.

How to find us

We're in the Lloyd's building!

The Lloyd's Wellbeing Centre is conveniently located in the heart of the City of London, in the Lloyd's building, at 1 Lime Street.

If you don't have a pass for the building, then we can arrange one for your pre-booked appointment.

We are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, so you can access the treatment you need at a time and place that suits your working day.



**Lloyd's
Wellbeing
Centre**

Upper Basement, Lloyd's Building,
One Lime Street, London, EC3M 7HA
Phone 020 7327 5341 | Email info@lloydswellbeingcentre.co.uk
www.lloydswellbeingcentre.co.uk | www.thrive4life.com

Brought to you by the Lloyd's Wellbeing Centre and Thrive4Life; we believe that mental and physical health in the workplace has never been more important. Let our corporate wellbeing services help your employees thrive!