SMALL STEPS CAN LEAD TO BIG CHANGES.....

HOOK HYPNOTHERAPY PRACTICE WELLBEING AND RELAXATION GUIDE

.....AND A MORE BALANCED LIFE

Introduction

My name is Suzanne, and I am a solution focused hypnotherapist and the face behind Hook Hypnotherapy Practice. At Hook Hypnotherapy Practice my goal is for you to not only live your life in a way that gives you joy and happiness but also enable you to manage your wellbeing when we hit those inevitable bumps in the road. I hope you will find this guide useful in helping you find balance in your life, reduce stress, and enhance your overall health.

What do we mean by wellbeing?

Wellbeing is a holistic concept that includes physical, mental, emotional, and social health. It's about feeling good and functioning well in all areas of our life. At Hook Hypnotherapy Practice the focus is on mental and emotional wellbeing, but we know that when we address our physical and social health as well, then we create more balance in all areas of our lives.

Let me introduce you to the 3 Ps:

POSITIVE ACTIONS	POSITIVE INTERACTIONS	POSITIVE THOUGHTS

POSITIVE ACTIONS

A positive action is any action that makes you feel good, whether that is going for a run, or doing a jigsaw puzzle. We know, however, that our physical wellbeing is greatly enhanced through exercise. Here are some tips to improve your physical wellbeing:

Regular Exercise: Try to engage in at least 20 minutes of physical activity every day.

Activities like walking, running, yoga, or swimming can boost your energy levels, stimulate endorphins and reduce stress.

As we get older, resistance or strength training with weights can improve strength and balance, decreasing your risk of injury and falls. This doesn't mean you have to join a gym, just using your own body weight as resistance is a great place to start, or using tins you may have at home, or a bottle of water. For more advice either join a local gym or maybe consider a private personal trainer.

POSITIVE INTERACTIONS

We are essentially tribal beings, working better in social groups and families. The fallout from COVID meant that we lost a lot of the positive interactions that are so important to our wellbeing, both at work and socially. When we build and maintain healthy relationships and support networks, we feel happier, energised and can tackle things that maybe before seemed too challenging. Here are a few tips for enhancing your social wellbeing:

Connection: Make time for friends, family, and community. Spending time with loved ones can boost your mood, stimulates our feel-good hormones, including serotonin and can provide a sense of belonging. Being part of your community can help to provide a sense of purpose and fulfilment, easier when we have young families, but maybe even more important as we get older.

Communication: Communication is key to a healthy relationship, but it's not always easy to express ourselves as clearly as we would like. Practice pausing before speaking – once it's said, it's out there and can't be taken back. Good communication is a 2-way process. Listening consciously and actively is as important, if not more important, as speaking. We've all had those moments when the person we are speaking to seems disengaged and responds in a way that is irrelevant to the conversation. Feeling and being heard is so important to our self-esteem and wellbeing.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

While it isn't as easy as just choosing to think positively and expecting any internal negative chatter to disappear overnight, we can, over time, retrain how we think. This starts by noticing our thoughts in a kinder way.

Our brain has a negative bias that in years gone by was important for our safety, so those internal words of negativity are fundamentally a natural reaction to something that potentially in the past may have been dangerous. It is important to understand that when life's stresses increase, this safety mechanism can overreact, increasing the negative internal chatter leading to worry and anxiety. Having tools to manage and defuse this internal noise is important.

Mental wellbeing involves maintaining a healthy mind and managing stress effectively. Here are some strategies to enhance your mental health:

Focus: Focus on your strengths and achievements. When you do this, you realise that the 'negative' thought you had was really just that, one thought. You have a choice to allow it to colour your whole day or see it for what it is.... just one thought.

Listen and reframe: Is the negative chatter really the truth? Ask yourself what is the reality here? Gently challenge your thoughts and reframe them in a kinder way. It's ok to listen to the thought, but by gently asking yourself where has this thought come from, or how helpful is this thought, and then seeing how you can change the thought to something more helpful, you can slow down the release of cortisol and calming your parasympathetic nervous system.

Look for the positive: At the end of the day jot down 3 positives from your day – 3 things that have sparked some joy.... you may realise that the 'awful' day you just had, wasn't quite as bad as you thought it was, and only really 20 minutes of an 8-hour working day.

BUT WHAT ELSE?

While building the 3Ps into your daily life will certainly make a difference, our emotional wellbeing is complicated and can be influenced by a myriad of experiences, including challenges with work, school, relationships, home life, changes in health, loss of loved ones, retirement, and other major life events.

Understanding and managing your emotions effectively can feel a bit like the yellow brick road at times and leave you wondering when it will end. Here are some suggestions to help you improve your emotional health:

Self-awareness: Taking time to reflect on your feelings and understand what triggers them is key. Journaling can be a helpful tool for self-reflection. There will always be times in your life when accepting that it is perfectly normal to feel the way you do, and giving yourself permission to grieve, for example, is the way forward.

Expressing Emotions: Many of us find it difficult to express how we feel but communicating your feelings openly with trusted friends or family is a step in the right direction. Talking about your emotions can be a great stress reliever and can also strengthen relationships at the same time.

Mindfulness: Meditation and practicing breathing techniques can help you feel grounded and help reduce anxiety in the moment too.

SELF AWARENESS	EXPRESSING EMOTIONS	MINDFULNESS

Remain curious: Read, enrol on a course, explore a new hobby, show interest in a new acquaintance.... or an existing one. Keeping your mind sharp, stimulated and motivated is important to your wellbeing.

And finally...

So, I am not a nutritionist, but I'm sure we have all heard the saying 'you are what you eat', so it makes sense to ensure you also eat a balanced diet. Ensuring that your mind and body receive all the necessary nutrients it needs through a variety of foods that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats can only be beneficial.

And it would be remiss of me not to mention getting adequate and effective sleep. Try not to compare yourself to others...some people function brilliantly on 6 hours a night, while others need 8-9 hours. Some of us are early risers, while others are night owls. Focus on what you can control – your environment, regularity of sleep, how much caffeine you consume, making sure you are well hydrated and restricting screen time, will all be beneficial.

Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation is essential for reducing stress and improving wellbeing. We are all individuals, and relaxation can mean different things to different people. Here are several techniques that may help you relax:

Deep Breathing: Practice deep breathing exercises to calm your mind and body. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly through your mouth. The out breath is known to be the one that calms your heart rate and lower your blood pressure, so, if possible, make this longer than your in breath. However, any conscious breathing practice will help you feel calmer.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation: Tense and then relax different muscle groups in your body. Start at the top of your head, tension often starts in the tiny muscles of the scalp, and then gently work down your body, not forgetting your face, teeth, jaw and tongue, and finishing with your toes. This technique can help you reduce any

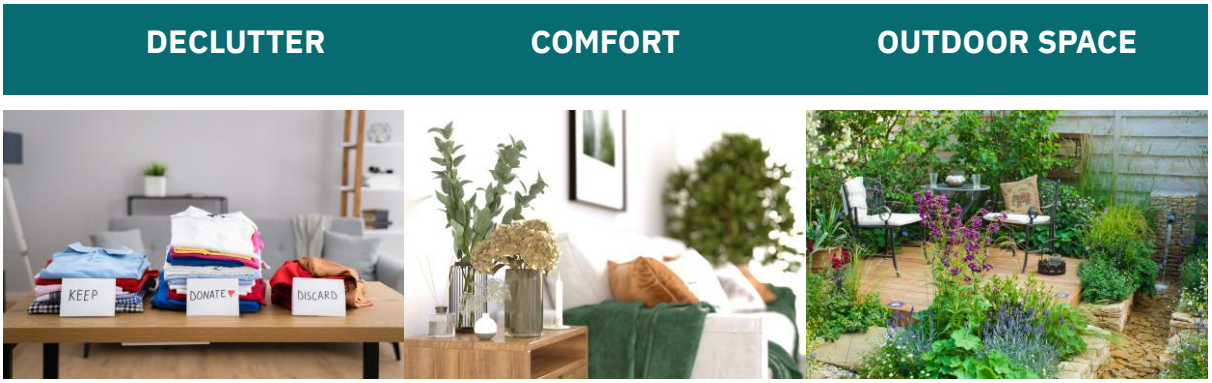
physical tension you may be holding in your body while promoting a sense of deep relaxation.

Meditation: This doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as simple as sitting quietly with your eyes closed and focusing on the sounds around you. There are also many Apps available such as Headspace, Aura and Calm, all of whom offer free options. Or you can simply just focus on your breathing or an image or place that you find calming to help you quieten your mind and consequently reduce stress.

Nature Walks: Spending time walking in nature is always good for us. Fresh air and natural surroundings can be incredibly soothing and rejuvenating. While some people may enjoy a 10-mile hike, a 20-minute gentle amble in the countryside, through a wood or along a river can be all that is needed.

Listening to Music: Music can be a powerful tool that enhances mood and promotes relaxation. Depending on your need, take time to listen to relaxing music or sounds that you enjoy. Alternatively, jack up the volume and enjoy your own kitchen disco.... whoever said relaxation had to be quiet!

Creating a Relaxing Environment



Home means different things to different people, but first and foremost it needs to be somewhere that you feel comfortable and can relax. Here are some tips that may help you to create a peaceful and calming space that is right for you:

Declutter: While I wouldn't advocate that minimalism is right for everybody, keeping your living space clean and free from clutter certainly helps reduce stress.

Start small, no need to address everything in one go. It might be one drawer, inevitably the underwear one 😉, that is so topsy turvy and full of odd socks, that when more orderly can help you start your day on the right foot...so to speak 😉

Comfort: We all love our homes to feel comfortable with cosy furniture, soft lighting, and colours that either calm or uplift us. Choose colours that you love, not that are in fashion.... but be conscious how colour can affect your mood. Blues and greens are known to be more restful, so ideal for bedrooms and living rooms. Shades of yellow can be invigorating and welcoming, and pops of terracotta, red and orange can be inspiring. And it doesn't have to cost a fortune either. There are some amazing high street brands that offer real value for money, and upcycling something you have sourced online can bring a great sense of satisfaction – unique, purposeful and good for the environment. A win win!

Outdoor Spaces: We are not all lucky enough to have a personal outdoor space where we can relax. If you are, then treating your garden, patio or balcony as another room can provide you with a tranquil retreat morning, noon and night.

Don't forget, you can always bring the outside in with houseplants too. When present in the home they have been known to improve mood, reduce stress levels and blood pressure. In one study fatigue and headaches were found to have been reduced by 20–25 percent while patients in hospital rooms with plants reported decreased post-operative pain. As a minimum remember to throw your windows open and allow the fresh air to move through your home.

Choosing therapy

Choosing which type of therapy is right for you can be confusing and I would always recommend you visit your GP if you are struggling. Here are some other organisations that may help you find out more:

Hypnotherapy Directory	• Hypnotherapy Directory - Find a Hypnotherapist Near You
Counselling Directory	• Counselling Directory - Find a Counsellor Near You
BACP **Professional Standards Authority**	• How to find a therapist: BACP Therapist Directory • Check a Practitioner | PSA

Conclusion

Achieving wellbeing and relaxation is a continuous journey and something that is integral to our lives. Some days it may feel like it takes more effort and commitment. Normal life is not linear; it has its ups and downs. Learning what works best for you and by choosing which practices to incorporate into your daily life, is what makes us the unique individuals that we are. We can all improve our overall health, reduce stress, and find balance. But we are all human and as such is it important to remember to be patient with yourself and celebrate your progress along the way.

Sometimes we may find we need a little bit of extra help. If this is you, then don't hesitate to seek professional help if you need it. There are many excellent therapists and counsellors who can provide valuable support and guidance.

As a Solution Focused Hypnotherapist, I use practical, modern, and well researched strategies to help my clients make significant, positive changes in their lives, in a relatively short period of time. Together, we look at what you want to achieve rather than focusing on the 'problem' that has prompted you to seek change. With a future focused approach, I will ask you to consider your preferred future...what would be better if the problem had improved? Possible solutions become more apparent and because you identify them, you are better able to embrace change that works for you. This is then reinforced and supported using hypnosis, a state of deep relaxation and focused attention that actually gives you control.

But there is more to me than what I do. I am also a daughter, sister, mother, and grandmother. I am a partner, friend, confidant, and neighbour. I love sport and music. and have a soft spot for Harry Styles. I'm known as Nanny Cupcake by my gorgeous grandsons.... because I love to bake. I can be quiet, loud, sensible, and silly...but most of all, supportive.

Solution focused hypnotherapy can help with many conditions and symptoms including stress, burnout, low mood, anxiety, IBS, OCD, PTSD, fears and phobias, weight management, confidence and improved performance, to name a few. If you would like to know more, please get in touch for a free 20 -minute discovery call, or to book an initial consultation.

Contact

For further information, or to book an initial consultation please feel free to contact me at suzanne@hookhypnotherapy.co.uk

Hook Hypnotherapy Practice

Small steps can lead to big changes.

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