

ELFA's Autumn Wellbeing Newsletter

I am delighted to launch ELFA's first quarterly wellbeing newsletter, designed to support your mental health and wellbeing. Sabrina Fox, ELFA's CEO, was inspired to develop a wellbeing strategy for ELFA members off the back of a Financial Times article titled "[The UK mental health crisis coming in Covid's wake](#)". It occurred to her that although many members would have access to some sort of wellbeing programme with their current employer, that in fact it was important for ELFA to provide some additional support and resources for its members after what has been, and continues to be, a time of uncertainty, overwhelm and exhaustion.

It was then that the partnership between ELFA and [Rise Well](#), an employee wellbeing and happiness consultancy, was born. We launched the first event back in May, with a workshop on managing anxieties around returning to the office with Dr Rob Archer. Over the coming months we provide workshops, periodic trainings, and this quarterly ELFA wellness newsletter to support ELFA members' mental health and wellbeing.

Rise Well's slogan 'Introducing happiness in the City' now needs a few extra words... 'and at home', as the era of hybrid working has commenced in the world of employee wellbeing. Confinement to four walls of the office are now also the four walls of your house / bedroom / lounge / any room with a surface you can fit a laptop on.

Two years ago, the idea of working from home on a regular basis for most people sounded like a dream, but over the course of the pandemic, this has turned into a nightmare for some - burnout is on the rise, productivity is decreasing, and a complete lack of boundaries is creating a fuzziness around any sense of work / life balance.

Fortunately, this has precipitated a huge increase in investment into employee wellbeing as businesses look to support their employees as we transition to the 'new normal'. Having worked with a range of clients over the last couple of years, many businesses are seeing the positive effects of increased wellbeing education (like webinars and workshops) and the introduction of improved support services (like meditation and, health & fitness apps, and EAP upgrades). The companies leading the way have focused their leadership on empathy, the ability to listen and an openness to display

vulnerability, which then cascades through the business. Fostering an understanding of how employees really feel emerges, allowing a tailored wellbeing strategy to show measurable, evidence-based results.



Jen Christie
Founder & Director - Rise Well

Through our specialist wellbeing recruitment arm ([Rise Well Talent](#)), we have seen a surge in businesses hiring in-house wellbeing roles to manage these strategies, with financial services at the forefront of this trend. From a recent study of ours, 6 of the top 10 companies for hiring wellbeing and D&I positions are from the financial services industry. In an industry with a lot of stigmas around struggles with mental health at work, concrete spending and investment into this area is a huge step in the right direction.

So, as we return to the office, what does your business have in place to ensure employees are supported in every aspect of their wellbeing? Coming out of the pandemic, everyone has a very different story to tell. With 1 in 3 people struggling with mental health, 33% of your fellow colleagues are not at their best today. Whilst empathetic leadership, company-wide mental health initiatives and line manager training all contribute to company culture and wellbeing, it's important to remember that we can all make a difference on an individual level.

It is a challenge to maintain the social element of the workplace amidst endless Zoom meetings and phone calls from our home offices. It is part of our make up to need connection with another human being. So regardless of whether you're joining a meeting on Zoom or in person, don't immediately put yourself on mute (physically or via a mouse click) or go straight to the first point on the agenda. Just take a moment to ask your colleagues,

'How are you really feeling today?'

It can really make all the difference!

Jen



RISE WELL

Introducing happiness in the city

Shining a Light on Mental Health & Wellbeing with... Diversity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chair Senan Kiran

Each quarter we meet a member of the ELFA network to shine some light on mental health and learn how they look after their wellbeing whilst working in a high-pressured job.



Senan Kiran – Director of Research – Europe, Muzinich & Co.

How are you feeling today on a scale of 1-10 and why?

Today I'd say 8, but this is a tough question, why have I said 8?! I am healthy and everyone around me is healthy and that is what matters to me most in life. There's nothing I can complain about, I feel very grateful.

What does wellbeing mean to you?

I think it is both mind and body, I don't separate them ever. It is being healthy physically and having a relaxed mindset.

“I think it is normal to stress about things, but it is important not to dwell on them for too long, that is the key I think.”

I get upset, scared at times, and frustrated, but I think it is very important to see them for what they are and not start creating stories in your mind.

How have you found working over the past 18 months in a different way due to the pandemic?

My situation might not be very representative as I was able to stay in the countryside with my family. I had a strong support system, more than I did before the pandemic, it was a blessing for me. Despite appearances I'm a bit of an introvert so I didn't mind not socialising or seeing many people. For example I had to do a couple of self-isolations which I didn't mind very much, maybe also partly because work was keeping me occupied.

During the pandemic I lived in a very green area next to a forest and I didn't have any problems with my work-from-home set up. I am used to communicating online and electronically because I have been living away from my home country for a very long time. It was a bit difficult in the first 2 weeks to get the set up properly, but it got much easier after that from a technological perspective. That said, moving from three-screens and a proper desk set up to a tiny lap top on the kitchen table meant everything took a little longer to do. But other than I had no issues.

Having said this, my workload increased dramatically. It was nonstop from March to June when the pandemic first started, and I was working 18 hours a day because the market tanked. Sometimes I didn't even have time to eat. I have never worked that hard in my life. In one way it gave me a huge adrenaline rush as we were putting out fires everywhere, similar to 2008. However, I knew things were going to be alright in the end. I guess my way of dealing with everything was thinking of what is the worst that can happen. Maybe because I have seen crisis before, especially the 2008 crisis, so I was ok with this. Also I think as you get older you are able to put things into perspective more easily. Life shows you many of its faces and you are not that surprised any more.

What are your day-to-day stressors?

I get interrupted a lot during the day so I can be working on something and then I get a question or inquiry about something completely different and I have to leave what I am doing and focus on that. But that was a problem even before covid, whereby I sometimes closed my emails for a couple of hours, so I didn't get interrupted. We worked in an open space, and I used to always have my headphones on which isn't very sociable, but it was the only way I could concentrate and get things done sometimes. Also

“I never say no and try to make everyone happy which isn't possible.”

From a more personal perspective, coming from an Eastern culture I personally sometimes find London individualistic and the people untrusting at times. Maybe it is an issue for every big city.

What are the early warning signs you, your colleagues, and your family and friends look out for when you are starting to struggle with your mental wellbeing?

As a Research Analyst my job requires me to look for trends while analysing companies. I look for things that are out of character or changes in behaviour, so I pick up on this with people as well. I am also very self-aware.

“I know when something is wrong because I feel down or it just doesn't feel right, it is difficult to explain.”

I also don't feel like talking to anyone. I don't have energy to meet anyone. During those times my immune system also goes down and I get sick a lot even if it is just a cold or flu.

How do you try and look after your mental health and wellbeing?

I went through a tough patch when one of my close friends died in an accident in 2018.

“I was depleted both physically and emotionally and then came a point where I realised I had to start taking care of myself.”

So, I started doing sports which I know is a short-term fix but it really helped me. I started socialising more with people that lifted me. I tried to strike a better work/life balance. Music always helps me, so I started listening to more cheerful music. As soon as the summer came, I started travelling to sunny places. Being on the beach, near the sea, in the sun, I know it helps me. It lifts me up. I tried lots of different things during this time and luckily some of them worked.

What motto do you live by?

It is actually a line from the movie Vanilla Sky, “good things will happen if you're a good person with a good attitude”.

Upcoming ELFA Wellbeing Event

How to set conscious boundaries between home and work for high performance and happiness

Friday 15th October | 12:30-1:30pm | Sign up [here](#)

With hybrid working as the now normal, boundaries between home and work have become increasingly blurry. Maintaining a healthy work-life-balance is hard and it is easy to burn the candles on both ends. Setting clear boundaries is key, yet it is one of the hardest things for many employees. This workshop explores why it is so hard to set clear boundaries and how to make conscious choices of when to switch on and when to switch off. We will explore how to manage your energy and how to set clear boundaries for a better work life balance.

Palma Michel is the co-founder of Profuse29 which introduces mindfulness to organisations. She is a sought-after mindfulness teacher, healer, executive & life coach and mindful leadership advisor. Palma is a qualified lawyer and the author of The Authority Guide to Mindful Leadership. Palma offers meditation and mindfulness as a way to hack your brain and increase self-awareness, which is the first step to self-mastery. Her aim is to empower her clients to work smarter not harder, increase mental wellbeing and find lasting happiness and fulfilment by living with more authenticity, presence, zest for life and meaning. Palma's clients include Deutsche Bank, Facebook, Clifford Chance and Yahoo.

Wellbeing Lab

Click on the image below to watch a short video that will teach you simple techniques to transform your mental health and wellbeing



Wellbeing in the News

Key workplace wellbeing articles, hand-picked for you

Defeat Stress And Burnout Using Red, Yellow, Green 'Zones'



Kevin Kruse Contributor
Careers
CEO of LEADx and author of *Great Leaders Have No Rules*.

In a 2019 study, 70% of 20 to 40-year-olds said they experienced the signs of burnout within the last year. Carey Nieuwhof overcame personal burnout and shares his advice in a new book titled, *At Your Best: How to Get Time, Energy and Priorities Working In Your Favor*.



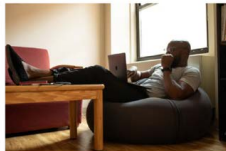
Health 10 Common Return-to-Work Concerns You Might Have Right Now

And how to deal with each.
By Jennifer A. Quirk, M.D., M.S.
September 25, 2021

As Dr. Bernstein says, "Perfect is the enemy of the good." In these circumstances, it's okay to do your best and accept that sometimes "good enough" is good enough. "Sometimes we do better than at other times, and that's okay because we're human."

Guide to creating a great employee hybrid working experience

ARTICLE BY: Grainne Elliott, Chief Marketing Officer - Thriveapp | Published: 13 SEPTEMBER 2021



Hybrid working has always existed, and has been supercharged by the pandemic with the aggressive shift to remote working which was forced upon many organisations due to the pandemic. As a result, many employees and organisations are now experiencing the hybrid working environment for the first time.

About Rise Well:

Rise Well is a workplace wellbeing and happiness business, partnering with organisations to transform the culture and health of their employees through consultancy, talent acquisition and wellbeing programmes.