

ELFA's Winter Wellbeing Newsletter

Hello everyone!

Winter has officially arrived! A time that's full of excitement both personally and professionally; for the approaching festivities, for end-of-year award ceremonies, seeing big projects wrap up, and for a well-earned winter break.

But alongside all the excitement, we must acknowledge that our mental health (using the royal 'our' here) is more vulnerable at this time of year; what with the reduced daylight hours affecting serotonin production; increased talk of family and organised-fun intensifying feelings of loneliness for some; and often expensive 'festivities' impacting our sense of financial wellbeing during an already financially precarious time. And so, we encourage you, to prioritise self-care where you can.

Taking one task at a time, prioritising rest and good nutrition, and dedicating a bit of time each week to something you find nourishing (exercise, time with family, a creative pursuit) will all be important over the coming weeks.

This month in particular brings men's mental health to the foreground, with the moustachioed campaigners at Movember driving conversations about suicide prevention and International Men's Day (an initiative that champions better health for boys and men) occurring on the 19th of the month. In recognition of these campaigns, Adil Khan from Muzinich, Bertie Bamber and Michael Damoah from ELFA kindly spoke to us about their relationships with their own mental health and what they do to keep well.

Creating more conversation around these subjects can go a long way to diminish the shame and stigma surrounding men's mental health and to create more psychologically safe workplaces for all genders.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and can take away a few tips here and there to support your own and your employees' wellbeing this chilly season.



Here's wishing you and your loved ones a winter of wellness!

Mel

Melissa Crate - Founding
Director, LUMINATE



Shining a Light on Mental Health & Wellbeing with... Nicole Downer- Managing Partner MV Credit

Every quarter we speak to ELFA members about their wellbeing dos, don'ts and how they manage their mental health whilst working in high-pressure roles.



**Adil Khan at Muzinich,
Michael Damoah at ELFA
Bertie Bamber at ELFA**

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

Adil Khan:

7 - overall well. It's a busy period with end-of-year workloads - there's lots to get over the line before the winter break and preparation to be done to set us up for a good start in January - but I have been able to keep my head above water.

As I occupy an 'overseeing' role within Muzinich, understanding my team's and the wider team's shifting priorities and working towards these, managing expectations, and not letting myself get overwhelmed (i.e. even if I am unable to tick anything off my to-do list that day - due to these shifting priorities - I don't beat myself up or register that as unproductive), all helps me manage.

Michael Damoah:

I'm a 7/10 today. The reason being we just had our ELFA Conference and its successful conclusion made me feel fulfilled.

Also, my general wellbeing has been good recently because I've made more of an effort to do things solely for the benefit of my wellbeing, such as exercise, eating better food, creating time to play my favourite video game (football manager), and - even in busy times - making more time to meet my friends.

Bertie Bamber:

Today I am feeling 7 out of 10, I had a pleasant weekend but normally the start of the week is the most stressful period.

What has been a turning point for you in regards to how you approach your own mental health?

Adil Khan:

Meeting my wife. It provided some much-needed context/perspective to everything.

When we began dating, I realised that there was more to life than work. My priorities shifted, in that I gave (and continue to give) myself a hard stop at 6pm so me and my wife can hang out, I was excited about and gave more importance to elements of my life outside of work, and I re-focused my energy on my relationships and the eventual planning of wedding!

None of which, I think it's important to note, affected my output at work - it was simply a change in mindset: to stress less about the small stuff at work, and re-distribute this saved energy into my life outside of work.

Michael Damoah:

I'd say the start of 2021 is when that turning point came for me, during my time at university. I realised that, since the first lockdown, I had become far more isolated from others and didn't have much motivation to go out and keep in touch with people (due to the lockdowns). Coupled with the lack of daylight, my wellbeing was not great at the end of 2020. And, being at university and away from my family made this much harder. However, one of my resolutions was to try and reconnect as much as possible with the people that I care about, and just doing this more consciously post-lockdown has made me far happier.

Bertie Bamber:

I think, along with lots of other people, lockdown was probably the biggest catalyst for changing how I approached my mental health. I am lucky enough to never have had any serious struggles with this issue but seeing the number of people and especially close friends who have dealt with these issues sparked me to make sure I check in on myself and actively reflect on how I feel with my friends and loved ones.

What are 3 things you do to keep mentally well?

Adil Khan:

1. Prioritise tasks efficiently at work
2. Keep up with hobbies
3. Listening to non-work-related audiobooks and podcasts

Michael Damoah:

1. Exercise and sport - I try to keep this up as much as possible
2. Keeping up my social relationships - these help me feel empowered and energised - helping me keep up my energy to deal better with a hectic work schedule
3. Sleeping more (as hard as it is) but, since my days at university, I try as much as possible to get 8 hours of sleep a day.

Bertie Bamber:

1. Reflection - I think this takes different forms for different people, some people like to write stuff down or do mindfulness/meditation, I just like to think about the good things, whether they be specific to that day or more general e.g health.
2. Activity - I try to get out of the house in an active way for at least 30 minutes a day. When I'm at home this can be as simple as walking the dog, whilst at uni, I normally go to the gym or play rugby.
3. Talk - I make a point of messaging friends and calling loved ones once a week or once a month depending on how close I am to them. Dialogue is important and you need to be there for others as much as you need to be open about your own experiences.

Wellbeing quote

“You don't have to be positive all the time. It's perfectly okay to feel sad, angry, annoyed, frustrated, scared, and anxious. Having feelings doesn't make you a negative person. It makes you human.”

- Lori Deschene, Author

Wellbeing Lab

Financial Wellbeing Toolkit | Free resource from Luminare

Money can contribute to our worries at the best of times. But this winter, supporting our employees' sense of financial wellbeing will be more important than ever as the rising cost of living is set to profoundly impact the sense of security and mental health of many. The following document is designed to help individuals take some small steps, and consider making some larger changes (where possible), to support their sense of financial wellbeing.

[Download the toolkit here](#)

Happy Place Podcast | Interview with Roman Kemp on men's mental health

An interview with Capital DJ FM and men's mental health advocate, Roman Kemp, about the loss of his best friend to suicide, why we need to remove the taboo from the word and normalise suicidal ideation as an incredibly common and human set of thoughts - not something to be kept in the dark.

Please note this podcast contains content that may be distressing - please take care of yourself and consider whether now is the right time for you to listen.

[Listen to the podcast on Spotify](#)

About Luminare:

Luminare are a corporate mental health consultancy, helping businesses to create happier, healthier workplaces through bespoke employee wellbeing programmes.

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