

HEALTH, LIFESTYLE & MENTAL WELL-BEING

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Focus: Mental health awareness, social expectations, workplace support, lifestyle pressures and community responsibility.

A. Warm-Up – How Does Society Define Well-being?

Discuss:

1. Is mental well-being discussed more openly today than in the past?
2. Why do some people find it difficult to talk about emotional struggles?
3. Can someone appear successful while feeling overwhelmed?
4. Does modern society place too much pressure on people to be happy and successful?
5. Should mental well-being be treated as seriously as physical health?

B. Social Pressures – What's Behind the Problem?

Read the situations.

1. The Success Pressure

Young professionals are constantly exposed to images of successful people travelling, earning high salaries and achieving impressive goals.
Some begin to feel that their own lives are inadequate.

2. The Workplace Expectations

An employee feels unable to refuse additional work because they fear being seen as uncommitted. They regularly work late and rarely take holidays.

3. The Perfect Image

A person carefully presents an ideal version of their life on social media. They worry that admitting to difficulties might affect how others perceive them.

4. The Caregiver's Burden

Someone is responsible for supporting an elderly relative while also working and raising children. They feel guilty whenever they take time for themselves.

Discuss:

1. What pressures are affecting each person?
2. Which problems are individual and which are connected to society?
3. What support might make a difference?
4. Are people sometimes expected to cope with more than is reasonable?

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C. Useful Language – Discussing Sensitive Issues

Showing understanding

- I can understand why someone might feel that way.
- It's important not to underestimate the pressure involved.
- People don't always feel comfortable discussing these issues.
- We shouldn't assume we know what someone is experiencing.

Discussing social expectations

- Society often places unrealistic demands on individuals.
- There's a growing expectation to...
- People may feel pressured to maintain a certain image.
- We need to reconsider what we define as success.

Suggesting support

- Employers could introduce more supportive policies.
- Access to professional help should be improved.
- It might help to create a more open working environment.
- People should be encouraged to seek support when they need it.

Expressing a balanced opinion

- Although awareness has improved, there is still a long way to go.
- We need to distinguish between everyday stress and more serious difficulties.
- Individual responsibility matters, but social support matters too.
- There isn't a single solution that works for everyone.

D. Workplace Well-being – The Responsibility Debate

A company has noticed that employees are increasingly reporting high levels of stress and dissatisfaction.

Management is considering several changes:

- Flexible working hours.
- Better access to professional support.
- More realistic workloads.
- Mental health awareness training.
- Additional paid leave.
- Regular meetings between managers and employees.

Task 1: Rank the six initiatives from most important to least important.

Task 2: Discuss which initiatives would have the greatest impact.

Task 3: Decide whether responsibility for workplace well-being belongs mainly to employers, employees or both.

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E. Role-Play – A Conversation That Matters

Work in pairs.

Situation 1: The Overloaded Employee

Student A: You manage a department. An employee's performance has changed, and they seem increasingly overwhelmed. You want to discuss the situation without making assumptions.

Student B: You are the employee. Your workload has become difficult to manage, but you are worried that admitting this might affect your career.

Goal: Have a constructive conversation and agree on practical support.

Situation 2: The Unhelpful Workplace Culture

Student A: You are a manager. Your department has a culture of working late and responding to messages outside normal hours. You believe this demonstrates commitment.

Student B: You are an employee representative. You believe the expectations are unreasonable and damaging to staff well-being.

Goal: Agree on realistic workplace boundaries.

F. Critical Thinking – Who Should Take Responsibility?

Discuss the statements.

1. Companies should be legally required to protect employees' mental well-being.
2. Social media platforms should do more to reduce harmful lifestyle comparisons.
3. Schools should teach young people how to manage stress and emotional challenges.
4. People should not be expected to sacrifice their well-being for professional success.
5. Mental health awareness campaigns are useful, but practical support matters more.

Choose one statement and defend your position.

G. Final Reflection

1. Has society become more understanding of mental health difficulties?
2. Can workplaces genuinely improve well-being without changing workloads?
3. Why is it important to listen rather than immediately offer advice?
4. How can communities reduce the stigma surrounding mental health?
5. What would a mentally healthier society look like?

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