

# Your Health

 Health Partners

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



**ACCESSIBILITY,  
& INCLUSION  
WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

In this issue of *Your Health*, we focus on celebrating inclusion in the workplace, with tips on how to get involved with this year's National Inclusion Week. We also look at work-life balance – how it impacts our physical and emotional health, and strategies to find the "right" balance.

## Celebrating Inclusion

Inclusive Employers is a leading authority on workplace inclusion, dedicated to fostering environments where every employee is respected and their contributions are recognised. They introduced National Inclusion Week (NIW) in 2012 to encourage organisations to prioritise their inclusion and diversity efforts. This year, NIW is scheduled to take place from September 23rd to 29th, with the theme Impact Matters.

### 'IMPACT MATTERS'

This year's theme, 'Impact Matters' builds upon 2023's 'Take Action, Make Impact.' This year's event emphasises the need for meaningful action to ensure lasting change in the workplace, with a focus on taking steps that will make a true impact on the inclusion mindset and diversity efforts of yourself and those around you. 'Impact Matters' prompts organisations and their employees to actively consider real opportunities for sustainable change.

### HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Participating in the 'Impact Matters' movement in a meaningful and sustainable manner is straightforward. Inclusive Employers outlines strategies that



individuals can adopt to contribute effectively to this important cause. Some of the steps below have links to additional information on the Inclusive Employers website or to relevant signposts.

#### 1. Take the inclusion and diversity champion: Self-assessment

Completing the personal assessment provided in the link above will assess your current inclusive practices, identify opportunities for your personal growth and determine actionable steps for further development.

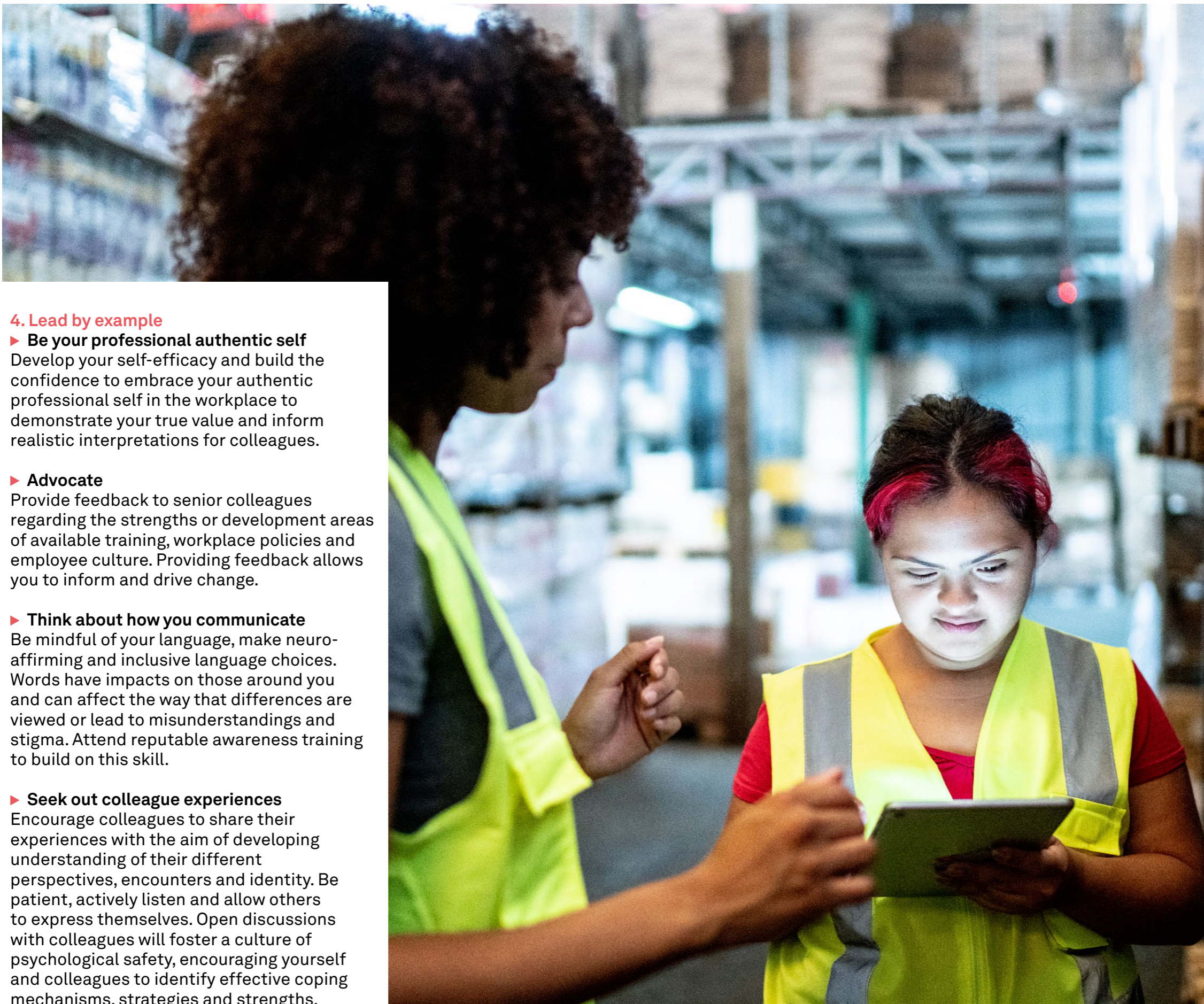
#### 2. Raise awareness:

Sign up for the free tool kit from Inclusive Employers to access branded materials. Consider sharing these on social media to help raise awareness among colleagues and bolster the momentum for achieving successful cultural change.

#### 3. Attend Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) events

Grow knowledge and understanding of the growth of diversity and inclusion groups. For example, the LGBTQ+ Webinar here. Actively listening to authentic experiences will enhance your comprehension of real actions that will lead to positive change for yourself and those around you. [Inclusion and diversity events | Inclusive Employers.](#)

*“We launched National Inclusion Week in 2012 to give organisations the opportunity to celebrate inclusion and place focus on their inclusion and diversity agendas.”*



**4. Lead by example**

► **Be your professional authentic self**  
Develop your self-efficacy and build the confidence to embrace your authentic professional self in the workplace to demonstrate your true value and inform realistic interpretations for colleagues.


► **Advocate**  
Provide feedback to senior colleagues regarding the strengths or development areas of available training, workplace policies and employee culture. Providing feedback allows you to inform and drive change.

► **Think about how you communicate**  
Be mindful of your language, make neuro-affirming and inclusive language choices. Words have impacts on those around you and can affect the way that differences are viewed or lead to misunderstandings and stigma. Attend reputable awareness training to build on this skill.

► **Seek out colleague experiences**  
Encourage colleagues to share their experiences with the aim of developing understanding of their different perspectives, encounters and identity. Be patient, actively listen and allow others to express themselves. Open discussions with colleagues will foster a culture of psychological safety, encouraging yourself and colleagues to identify effective coping mechanisms, strategies and strengths.

*“Build the confidence to embrace your authentic professional self in the workplace.”*

► **Consider your ways of working**  
For example, do your colleagues prefer verbal discussions vs MS Teams messages? Do they prefer to work alone or would they like to be included in social chat more often? Explore the diverse needs within your team and find the best ways to work with one another. Encourage colleagues to make necessary adjustments to promote fairness and equality among team members. Conduct further research to explore additional strategies for fostering a balanced work environment.

► **Volunteer**  
Explore local charities to see how your unique skills can support marginalised groups. Volunteering is not only a rewarding and powerful way to give back to society, but it sets the tone for your workplace and actively encourages inclusivity and equity. 

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- It's time to make meaningful steps towards inclusivity.
- There are practical steps that individuals in the workplace can, and should, take to support equity, inclusion and diversity.
- You can raise awareness of this event for free and improve understanding and drive meaningful change in those around you.

## Achieving the ideal work-life balance

In our fast-paced, technology-driven 21st-century world, the lines between work and personal life blur, making it increasingly difficult to disconnect and relax. The implications for our health are significant, with insufficient rest and a chronic state of stress linked to imbalance of bodily inflammation and an elevated risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular ill health.

The concept of work-life balance encourages us to thoughtfully distribute our time, energy and resources between our careers and personal lives, considering how one influences the other.

The significance of work-life balance is paramount, acting as a cornerstone for overall wellbeing, impacting not only ourselves but also our families, colleagues and work performance. Life encompasses more than just our occupations; it requires time to cultivate relationships and engage in personal interests. Achieving a good balance is essential for preventing stress and burnout, ultimately leading to increased productivity and a more rewarding life.

### Key advantages of work-life balance

- ▶ Weight loss
- ▶ Better sleep quality
- ▶ Higher productivity
- ▶ Enhanced resilience
- ▶ Lower levels of stress and anxiety
- ▶ Improved focus.

Striking the right balance improves productivity at work and allows for distinct separation between our job and personal life. It's about learning how to unwind and recharge, minimising stress and fostering happiness and satisfaction.

The "right" balance is not a one-size-fits-all solution; it's a unique blend that varies from person to person, shaped by the ever-evolving circumstances of our lives. It may shift towards work during times of career growth or towards home with the arrival of a new child.



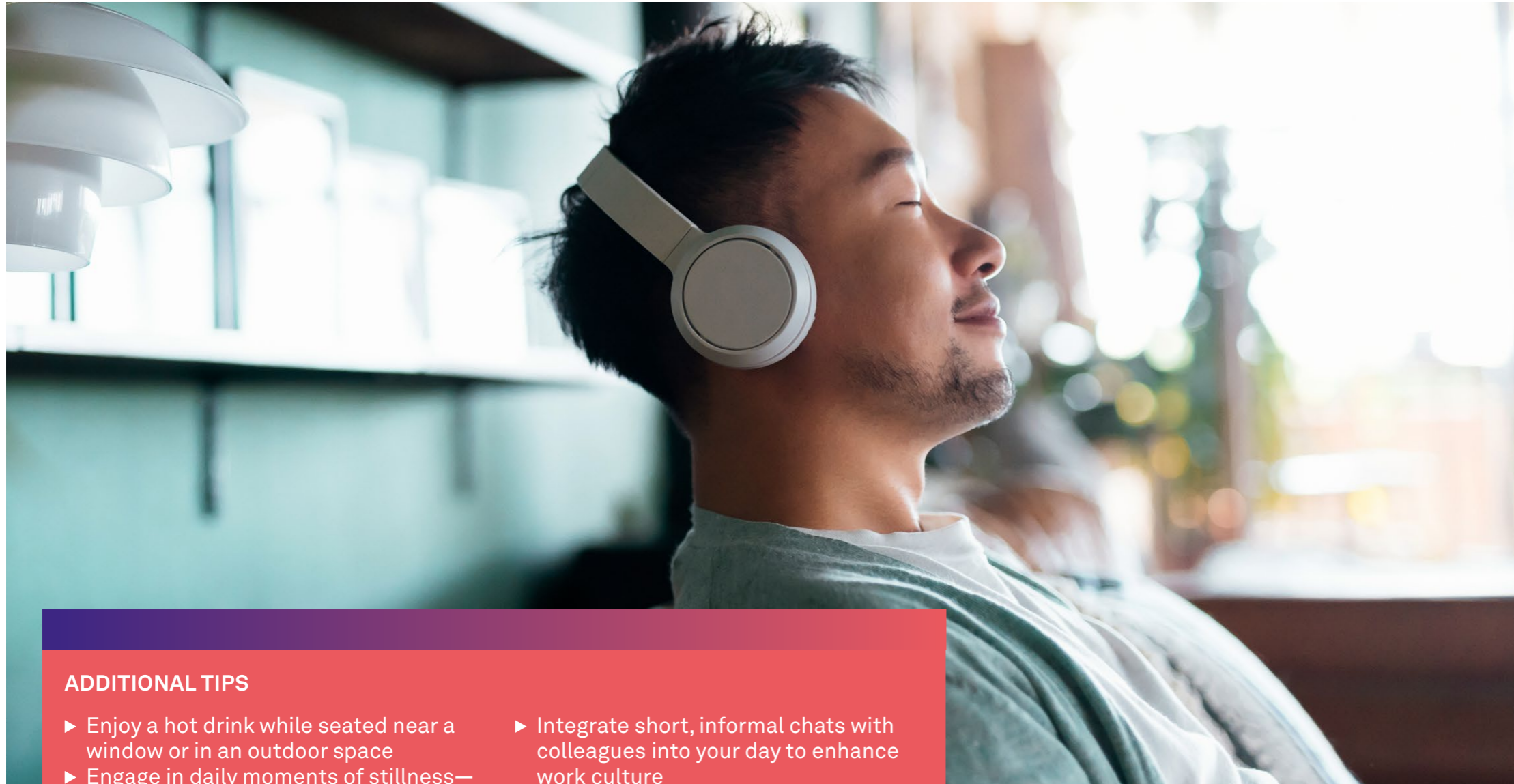
*“Work-life balance encourages us to thoughtfully distribute our time, energy and resources between our careers and personal lives.”*

Flexibility is crucial in maintaining this balance, allowing us to adapt and recalibrate as our needs and life situations change. Overall wellbeing encompasses various facets, including physical, financial and emotional health, social connections and job satisfaction. With the rise of remote working, distinguishing between office and home has become more complex, often leading to a crossover of stress from one to the other, which can diminish productivity and increase susceptibility to stress and burnout.

### Psychological symptoms associated with inadequate rest

- ▶ Low mood and self-criticism
- ▶ Lack of self-confidence, motivation and energy
- ▶ Less interest in usual activities.


Neglecting relaxation and downtime can result in insomnia, burnout and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. Unfortunately, many only consider the impact of an imbalanced work-



*“A one-hour plan can help regain a sense of control”*

to us and tracks progress towards these goals.

Mindfulness in the workplace can sharpen our focus on current career objectives, aid us in managing changes and ensure we don't lose sight of our personal desires and necessities. Intention, attention and attitude are key – contemplating goals, aligning tasks with values and nurturing a positive work atmosphere.

In stressful times, a one-hour plan can help regain a sense of control by listing urgent tasks, addressing quick wins, concentrating on more demanding tasks and taking strategic breaks to refresh. This approach can help alleviate stress and improve focus. 

**ADDITIONAL TIPS**

- ▶ Enjoy a hot drink while seated near a window or in an outdoor space
- ▶ Engage in daily moments of stillness—listen to music, take a soothing bath or read
- ▶ Share at least one meal per day at the table without electronic devices
- ▶ Aim for a minimum of 10,000 steps per day
- ▶ Organise your daily tasks, including 'me time'
- ▶ Use 'NNR: No Need to Reply' at the end of emails where appropriate to conserve energy
- ▶ Cook while listening to your favourite tunes or podcast
- ▶ Spend time gardening
- ▶ Take a tech-free lunch break of at least 20 minutes for increased calm and productivity
- ▶ Implement a 'No Email' rule in the evening if you work standard office hours
- ▶ Integrate short, informal chats with colleagues into your day to enhance work culture
- ▶ Twice a week, indulge in a beloved hobby
- ▶ Make monthly plans with friends
- ▶ Incorporate deep breathing exercises
- ▶ Practice mindfulness or meditation for at least five minutes each day

Additional resources such as stress worksheets, guided relaxations and meditation practices can be found online, such as: [www.cntw.nhs.uk/resource-library/relaxation-techniques/](http://www.cntw.nhs.uk/resource-library/relaxation-techniques/)

In essence, work-life balance is a personal endeavour of self-exploration and continuous adjustment, aiming to cultivate a life that is as fulfilling as it is effective.

life after it has taken a toll on their health, often due to self-imposed pressures to remain productive.

To adapt to this new reality, it's helpful to set clear workday boundaries, protect personal time and partake in activities that separate work from home life. It's beneficial not to save breaks solely for weekends but to intersperse them throughout the week, use annual leave strategically and build a robust support network. Mindfulness, or the practice of being fully present, can guide us towards achieving a harmonious balance.

To attain a suitable work-life balance, it's important to evaluate your current situation, identify priorities and introduce small, sustainable changes. The concept of valued living helps outline what is essential

**NEXT ISSUE:**

- ADHD Awareness
- Menopause
- World Mental Health Day

At Health Partners we offer a full range of tailored health and wellbeing services.

**Our thinking is innovative.** We constantly develop new responses and tools designed to address the health and wellbeing challenges that face your business and people.

**Our commitment is total.** We invest in our services, creating new ones and keeping in step with every client. We constantly explore new ways of working and make no compromises in the quality of our services.

**Simply put, we are here to help people be their best.**