

20
STORIES
HIGH



State of Mind

wellbeing in everything we do

Hints & Tips

Introduction

What is State of Mind?

Since 2018, we at 20 Stories High, a Liverpool-based theatre company, have been funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to explore how, as an arts organisation, we can place mental health and wellbeing at the heart of our work and what it means for:

- the young people we work with
- the professional artists and practitioners we co-create with
- the audiences that see our work
- the team that makes it all happen

We've developed frameworks to guide our work, helping us to integrate mental health awareness and wellbeing into our practices, policies, and partnerships. You can access them [here](#). We focus on creating an environment where everyone is respected, recognised, engaged, and valued, fostering a culture of care and support. This approach helps us understand and respond to mental health challenges, break stigma, and promote healthier, more inclusive creative spaces.

Our State of Mind journey has profoundly changed our organisation and leadership, influencing all aspects of our work. We're always evolving and learning and now we are keen to share our discoveries and to share the transformative results of our experience with other organisations. 20 Stories High also received an OFFIES One Off Special Award for our 'Commitment to care for all' as part of the State of Mind project.

For more detail on our State of Mind journey click [here](#), and to watch our our State of Mind film highlighting key elements of the journey click [here](#)

In this document, we are sharing helpful hints and tips around working as a team that we have discovered and developed on our State of Mind journey. This document offers options for cost free actions and paid actions, allowing for short and long term goals. Hints and tips for other areas of our practice are coming this April 2025 and will be uploaded to our website - [click here](#) to see any updates.

Working as a team

Free Actions

- Create social moments by choosing a monthly activity and having weekly team lunches.
- Regular check-ins with open, honest line management sessions for progress.
- Clear meeting invitations with titles, agendas, and expectations ahead of time.
- Encourage reflection with journaling/reflection time during work hours.
- Grievance policy with a clear, updated process for reporting issues with leaders.
- Optional Equity & Inclusion involvement, ensuring informed decisions on participation.
- Wellbeing Trustee recruitment to contribute to wellbeing plans.
- Learn from the team through reverse mentoring and feedback to bring learning back.
- Wellbeing offer with internal support and highlighted external options.
- Stress relief list with three strategies to ease stress (e.g., fresh air, tea, laughter).
- Celebrate victories by recognising achievements in person and displaying them annually.
- Tree person assignment to offer fresh perspectives outside the project.
- Respect working hours by maintaining boundaries around communication and leave.
- Project initiation plan collaboration to define success, purpose, and expectations.
- Team development through a shared reading list, including Trustees and the wider team.

Working as a team

Paid Actions

- Create and promote a wellbeing offer for teams, including individual wellbeing allowances and paid external support opportunities.
- Protect a budget for training and development, including Mental Health First Aid training for the team.
- Schedule regular quarterly reflection days for the team to review key areas through a wellbeing lens, with external facilitators where possible.
- Invest in an Artist Wellbeing Practitioner, Dramatherapist, or clinical supervision for the team to utilize individually or as a group.
- Commit to best practices around fair pay, pension, annual leave, and flexible working.
- Build a wellbeing budget into all projects to ensure wellbeing support is available across teams and programme areas.
- Review knowledge gaps and share learning by joining consortiums or forming partnerships to grow skills and confidence.
- Arrange wellbeing interventions and social activities to give teams time away from work, focusing on relaxation and fun.
- Offer coaching and mentoring opportunities for team members where appropriate.
- Collaborate with Occupational Health organisations to ensure team members have the support they need from the workplace.
- Provide online wellbeing tools, like Headspace, for the team and Trustees.
- Conduct ethnographic evaluations with researchers, using storybuilding techniques to review your work.

