

# Re-imagine Medical

## Mental Wellbeing Toolkit

Principles and practices inspired by Dr Jennifer Wild and Dr Merika Tsitsi.

- Find new perspectives and get practical, innovative ways to approach challenges in your medical career.

Toolkit courtesy of The New School and WITS Healthcare Innovation.

*Get out of your head!  
Chewing over the past or  
solving unrealised hiccups  
in the future fuels over-  
thinking, which delays  
decision-making and taking  
action.*



PRINCIPLES

### Adopt a principle

Principles establish the underlying logic for why we do the things we do. Drawn from Dr Jennifer Wild's research and latest book are principles to help you transform your mental wellbeing practice.



PROMPT

### Spark a mindset change

By leading with questions we are encouraged to challenge our assumptions about how we see the world, even as specialists. Dr Wild and Dr Tsitsi inspire questions for contemplation to help you move toward a healthy future and away from dwelling and ruminating on what might have been in the past.



PRACTICE

### Try a new practice

Find practices for developing resilience inspired by Dr Wild's research and Dr Tsitsi's experience. The practices require little effort and the pay-off for repetition is a healthy state of mind.



PROCESS

### Integrate a process to re-imagine mental wellbeing

If you're ready to start combining practices into a repeatable process we've assembled a process based on Dr Wild's 'Be Extraordinary' framework to help you make time for your mental wellbeing every day.



# PRINCIPLES



## Clean Up Your Memories

People who transition from ordinary to extraordinary clean up their memories. They scoop up their difficult times, dust off the dirt, and change their painful meanings. No matter what they live through, they create a meaningful relationship to their past that ensures an extraordinary future. They re-create their memories, re-write the bad times, not by changing the facts of what happened, but by changing the meaning of their challenging times.

## Plan Ahead

Planning ahead keeps you focused on goals. Reduces psychological distress and improve wellbeing. Thinking about your plan for tomorrow, rather than dwelling on a critical reflection of yourself today might might help you live an extraordinary life.

## Show Compassion to Your Future-Self

If we can weave a compassionate mindset into our path to success, we approach our future with kindness rather than criticism, which reduces pressure linked to expectations.

Give yourself permission to try a new behaviour (which could even be focusing on the task at hand) for just three minutes then re-assess how you are feeling, giving yourself permission to carry on for another three minutes if you choose to, or to stop.



## Inspiration

# ON FEELING STUCK



### The School of Life: Getting Unstuck

Many of us feel 'stuck' - wishing we could escape a job or relationship, while being incapable of doing so. Coming unstuck involves examining unhelpful messages we internalised in childhood

Find out how you might come unstuck with The School of Life's short video.

[Click to Watch](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ku9gabtzmX8)

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# PROMPT



## How might we weave compassion into the stories we tell ourselves about an unpredictable future?

We seem to be predisposed to telling ourselves stories about “what might have been”. Often in our recounting of stories we critique our actions; but what if we started with compassion first?

*Explore this prompt by thinking through a difficult memory and instead of asking what might have been, move out of your head and focus on what was happening around you at the time.*

## How might we slow down and deliberately plan for tomorrow when work is always-on?

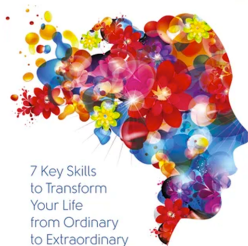
Time to really think is hard to come by. We know that many medical professionals feel like they’re always-on. Dr Tsitsi advocates for time out for self-care for medical professionals as a way to move from being reactive to adaptive to uncertain and unpredictable future conditions.

*Explore this prompt by assessing your diary for two weeks. Think about which tasks (meetings, demands for your time) which can be removed and replace them with time-outs. Even 5 minutes of mindfulness a day trumps no mindful practice at all.*



## Inspiration

### Be Extraordinary



Jennifer Wild

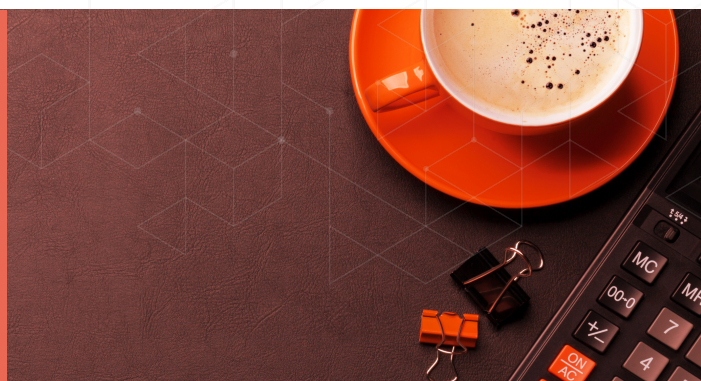
### ***Be Extraordinary, by Jennifer Wild***

Based on her scientific research, Dr Wild reveals seven processes to supercharge resilience and gives inspiring real-life examples of how ordinary people have used them to come through astonishing adversity.

*Complimentary copies have been distributed to attendees of the webinar.*



# PRACTICE



## Extraordinary Thinking

Extraordinary Thinking (which is not the same as overthinking) is about how to move forward as opposed to dwelling on why the past happened and in the way you may feel it happened.

Dwelling traps you in an unhelpful cycle that leads to no plan or action. The more we dwell, the more it reinforces the neural networks in the brain to make it the default mode of stress when dealing with stress or disappointment.

Reframe your thoughts: ask questions to help you determine how you can move forward (e.g. 'why does this always happen to me?' could be 'what is my next best action to get to a more desirable situation?').

*'Why?' must become your cue to think 'how can I move forward?'*

**Repeat: As needed**

## Overcoming Avoidance

A lot of us procrastinate, avoiding what we would rather not deal with at the time which can lead to anxiety. In those instances, it is useful to think about what's best rather than what is easiest.

Dr Wild has a tool she calls the '3 Mins Carrot', which encourages you to start a task with the permission to decide after three minutes whether you want to stop or continue. You are likely to discover that the task is not as undesirable as you had thought and decide to keep going.

Breaking down the task into smaller steps gives a sense of accomplishment with completion at each turn and becomes a source of motivation for upcoming steps.

*Smart tip:* Be guided by how you want to feel in the future (e.g. relief, pride, etc. rather than how you may feel currently (e.g. don't feel like it).

**Repeat: As needed**



## Inspiration



### ***GTD (Getting Things Done) and the Medical Community***

In this podcast episode, two physicians engage GTD originator, David Allen, in a lively and heartfelt discussion about how GTD has helped their stability, clarity and focus.

[Listen](https://gettingthingsdone.com/2016/05/gtd-and-the-medical-community/)

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# PROCESS



## Step 1

Note with a beginner's mindset how you and your colleagues behave in times of adversity.

Generate questions that will help you explore further.

## Step 2

Use your questions to help you find out more about the drivers of those behaviours, what conditions in the environment support them, etc. Speak to your colleagues and relevant experts to gain richer insight and also note your observations.

## Step 3

Communicate your findings to your colleagues and other stakeholders. Engage them in exploring possible solutions to the challenges you have uncovered. Collectively decide on what to prioritise and decide on a plan of action.

## Step 4

Gather everyone every 2 weeks to reflect on progress and decide on how to proceed (e.g. getting clinical psychologists involved, tweaking the original action for the next cycle, focusing on a different department, etc.).

## Tips

- Start small. Trying to solve for everything at once is overwhelming and ineffective.
- Your initial attempts at trying something new may feel uncomfortable at first as you stretch past your zones of familiarity. Persist in your efforts while keeping a watchful eye on the feedback data.
- You may not get the results you anticipated. This is expected as you explore the unknown.
- Work with others. The solo experience is not nearly as enriching as having colleagues act as a sounding board or as co-enablers of the process.



## Inspiration



### *How Health Care Workers Can Take Care of Themselves*

David Fessell and Daniel Goleman set out four areas that workers and leaders in the industry should pay attention to: self-awareness (giving themselves a moment to recognise their own emotional and physical needs), self-management, social awareness and relationship management.

[Read more](https://hbr.org/2020/05/how-health-care-workers-can-take-care-of-themselves)

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