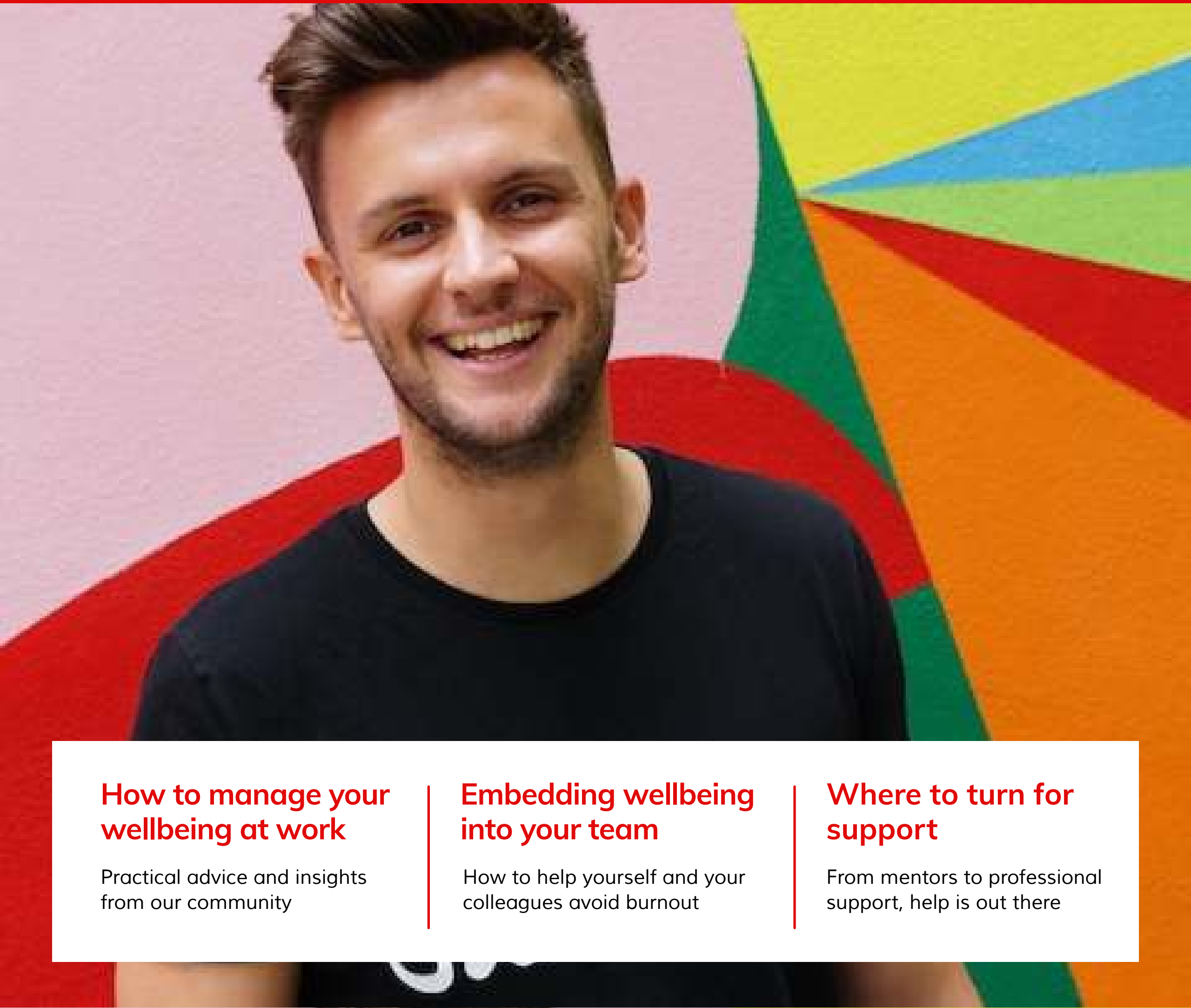




NO. 2 | OCTOBER 2021

A Founders' Guide to Wellbeing

MONEY



How to manage your wellbeing at work

Practical advice and insights from our community

Embedding wellbeing into your team

How to help yourself and your colleagues avoid burnout

Where to turn for support

From mentors to professional support, help is out there

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Featuring



Sandra de Monte

Founder of MindBerry



Charlie Spokes

Founder of My Friend Charlie



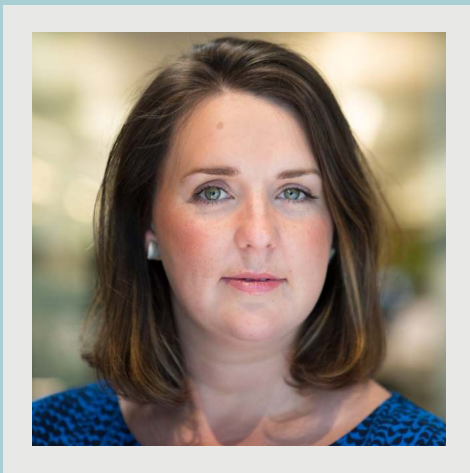
Barnaby Lashbrooke

Founder of Time etc



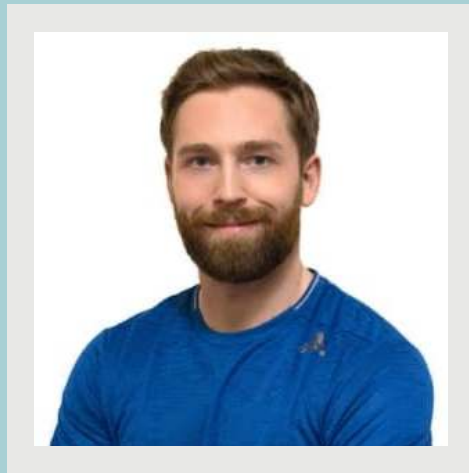
James Routledge

Founder of Sanctus



Gillian Roche-Saunders

Non-Executive Director at Breathworks



Keith McNiven

Founder of Right Path Fitness



Pip Jamieson

Founder of The Dots



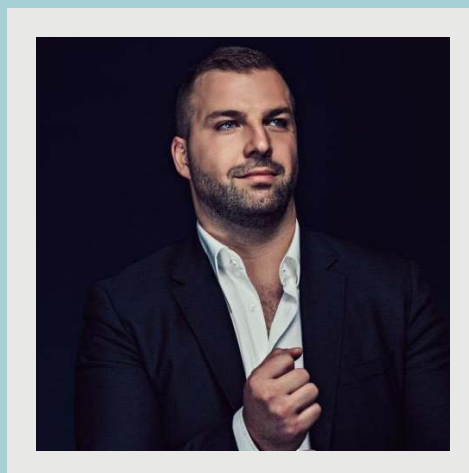
James Talbot

Co-founder of Pobi Bakery



Ollie Collard

Virgin StartUp Business Advisor & founder of Enterprise Orchard



Joe Gaunt

Virgin StartUp Mentor & founder of Hero Wellbeing

01.

Introduction

A business is only as good as the people that run it.

And if you're not able to come to work and be effective, supportive, dedicated and true to yourself, then your team, customers and, ultimately, your business will suffer.

We need to start looking after our wellbeing - and not just for the sake of our startups - but for ourselves. Without the physical and mental wellbeing of yourself and your team in check, nothing else matters.

As startup founders, without you, there is no business. So it's time to focus on yourself.

Stress, anxiety, exhaustion and burnout at work is becoming a regular experience for so many of us. Ever struggled to concentrate on a task? Have you noticed your team's productivity drop? Felt exhausted at the thought of sitting down and doing a day's work? You're not alone.

79% of British adults in employment in 2020 revealed they commonly experience work-related stress (20% higher than 2018's findings) and over a third of employees stated that they feel “disengaged and less productive at work when stressed”.

01. INTRODUCTION

For employees at bigger companies, they are starting to see their employers improve workplace support for wellbeing, but for founders and small teams it can be difficult to access the help you need, or provide it to your team in an effective way.

Culturally, whilst it's becoming easier to talk about managing stress and anxiety at work, people still feel apprehensive about coming forward with their challenges, which can exacerbate symptoms. The more we're able to be honest about the real struggles of managing a fast-paced job in a growing startup, the better placed we can be to support ourselves and colleagues through them.

So how, as a founder, can you look after your own wellbeing, whilst committing to safeguarding your workforce and running a thriving startup? Let's find out.



Jennifer and Stacy, Co-founders of [Myrror](#)

02.

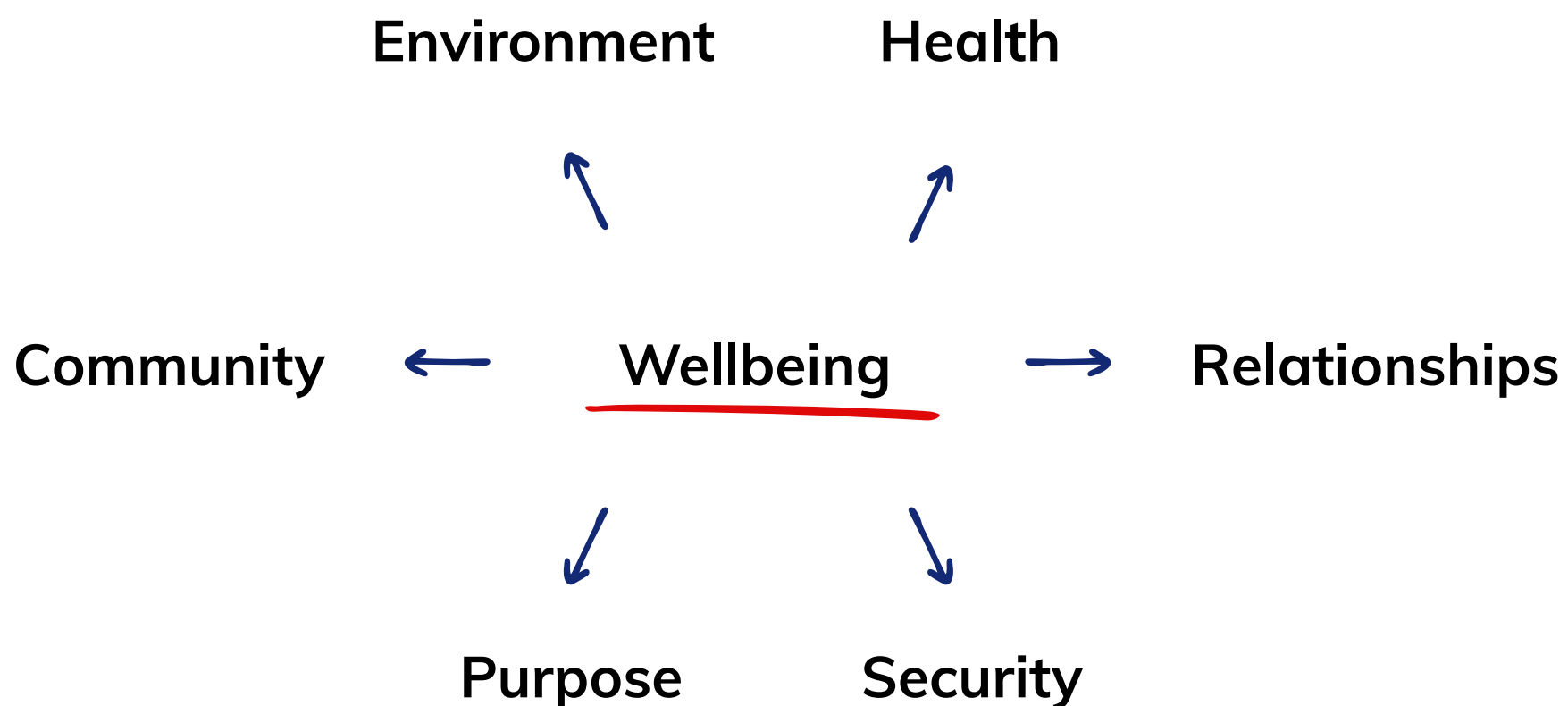
What is founder wellbeing?

Wellbeing encompasses your own experiences of day-to-day life.

It is much broader than moment-to-moment happiness. While it does include happiness, it also covers other things, such as how satisfied you are with life as a whole, your sense of purpose, and how in control you feel.

Whilst there are many different models of measuring wellbeing, it can be impacted by your experiences across the following parts of your life:

Work is a significant part of all our lives, and so any measure of how you're feeling needs to include how you feel at work. It will be difficult to balance your wellbeing exclusively outside of your job, so any steps you take to manage how you feel should include what happens at work.



03.

Founder focus: Sandra de Monte, founder of MindBerry

- Who?
Sandra de Monte
- What?
MindBerry, 1-1 coaching
and counselling
- Where?
London, UK

Sandra de Monte,
founder of
MindBerry



MindBerry

Why I started up in the mental health industry

Sandra started MindBerry, a platform connecting people with qualified counsellors when and wherever they need them. Sandra was inspired to start up after decades on her own journey processing the loss of her father.

Why did you found MindBerry?

My dad had a heart attack in our garden when I was 14. Life was never the same since.

There was no mental health service in place and the term PTSD did not exist - I wish a platform like MindBerry had been available then. Only decades later, during my studies, I had therapy and could process what I had been through. This is what personally inspired me to found MindBerry. Mental wellbeing support should be available 24/7.

Why is mental health important for founders and in business?

It's true that being a startup founder is incredibly stressful. Mental wellbeing is an important factor for every founder. It helps preserve your talents as an innovator and visionary storyteller, and helps you optimise your performance as a leader. As a founder, you have to make some tough and challenging decisions at every stage of your business, and if you have a good mental wellbeing, you will be able to tackle these decisions with more confidence and ease.

In the investment space, I see more founders working with coaches as part of raising money from Venture Capital. The metrics are important when chasing new rounds of investment, however there can be too much emphasis on them in the short-term - without looking to the long-term. There needs to be a return on coaching and therapy and support, not just return-on-investment. We have a choice here to create a better future. In the end, good health equals good business, and investors and VCs need to understand that, too.

What do you think has changed about mental wellness in business recently?

The workplace has forever changed. COVID-19 has put mental health front and centre for businesses, as the safety of employees is paramount for survival. Employees are in need and are demanding better care. Companies are investing much more in making mental health services more accessible in the workplace. Committing to better wellbeing practices is a good return-on-investment as it improves employee outcomes and overall company performance.

How do you manage your own wellbeing running a new business?

I have a therapist and a great team. As with all founders, my own journey has had its ups and downs. Over the years, I have been able to develop a mindset that enables me to look at the dark times as just a period I have to work through. There is mostly a solution for any problem, and even though it might not be the best one, it is a step forward.

I have learned from my mistakes and have grown from them immensely as a person and as a business owner. And I have learned to listen to my inner voice and trust my instincts.

What can founders do to help themselves, and their teams, with their wellbeing?

I strongly believe that founders should have outside interests to help with their wellbeing. Active diversity is very effective for our brain functions. The best way for both founders and their teams to switch gears is to focus on something completely different. It can be individually, or with team-building events.

I took up upholstery; a craft which is over a hundred years old. It is both grounding and humbling. It is about functionality, about identity, about conceptual thinking, and about fun. I have had some of my best ideas through my outside interests.

What reading, listening or watching would you recommend for founders looking for extra resources?

As a founder, it's critical to learn fast, minimise mistakes and look around corners of your business, industry and customers. Great books, podcasts and YouTube channels can help you do that.

At first, I was reading so many startup books that, after a while, I felt more frazzled and full of self-doubt than before. Good reads with a human touch are:



TED Talks, another fantastic resource, as founders can relate to them



'Screw It, Let's Do It: Lessons in Life' by Sir Richard Branson



'Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World' by Vivek H. Murthy

04.

Life as a founder: What to expect

As a founder, your work does take a toll on your mental and physical wellbeing.

Starting your own business comes with unique and real challenges which you won't get in any other job. Fundamentally, you're putting yourself on the line, emotionally and financially. You're taking on a risk that others don't, whilst working twice as hard and getting paid half as much as if you worked elsewhere.

You are doing this because, for you, work is about more than just a paycheck. It's about creating something from nothing, and building something of value that lasts.

And it's because of this that you will find yourself in moments of stress, anxiety - and relief - more regularly than you should. Managing the impact of work on yourself and your team is the key to making sure you can do the best for your business.

In the beginning, starting up a business demands a lot of energy. Long work hours, instability when it comes to a regular paycheck, and other demands such as balancing a full-time job with your venture on the side all ask a lot of us.





"You're doing most of the things yourself without a lot of support and there's always the next thing to do."

Charlie Spokes | Founder of [My Friend Charlie](#)

Starting up feels like diving in at the deep end - after which, the hard work begins. Being a founder can include learning to become comfortable with the uncomfortable nature of uncertainty. Understanding those expectations as you delve into the startup world means you're mentally preparing yourself for its challenges.

Whilst your passion and excitement can drive you through the long hours, you'll still have your limits. Sustaining a high pace at work without a break will impact your health and wellbeing in the long run, and whilst you expect a certain level of challenges when running your own business, you can't always take them on with unwavering determination. At some point, something has got to give.

04. LIFE AS A FOUNDER: WHAT TO EXPECT

Barnaby Lashbrooke, founder of startup Time etc, used to work up to a hundred hours a week when launching his business.

“I believe that we are all victims of what I call ‘The Hard Work Myth’. It’s drilled into us from school age that to achieve more, you must work harder and longer. It is hurting us and our business productivity.

“What I’ve learnt – the hard way – is that business success hinges on your ability to intelligently solve problems and implement changes with speed and has nothing to do with working harder.”

Barnaby Lashbrooke | Founder of [Time etc](#)



Understanding when to release the accelerator and activate the breaks for a bit is key to managing your physical and mental wellbeing as a founder. James Routledge stepped down as CEO of his company, Sanctus, when he realised his identity was becoming solely about his work.

“I was putting so much of myself into [the business] that it was my whole life. You don’t want to over-identify with your startup, because when it’s going good, you’ll be good - but when it’s going bad, your mental health will suffer.”

James Routledge | Founder of [Sanctus](#)



When we talk about work / life balance, we often separate the two entities and believe that separation is the key to leading a fulfilled life. But a well-balanced life, both in and out of work, should be at the heart of wellbeing.

What if it was possible to bring both wellbeing to our working practices and allow work to bleed into our life, if that’s what brings us passion?

04. LIFE AS A FOUNDER: WHAT TO EXPECT

As the founder of Sanctus, a company on a mission to offer safe spaces in the workplace for employees through 1-1 mental health coaching sessions, James believes we can bring our full selves to work:

“I really don’t believe you have to leave your humanity at the door at work and, in fact, I believe when we bring more of ourselves to work, we create lots of potential for diversity, challenge and creativity.”

James Routledge | Founder of [Sanctus](#)





"Your entire existence is a balancing act between growth, fundraising, day-to-day operations and innovation."

Charlie Spokes | Founder of [My Friend Charlie](#)

There's a common misconception that startup founders thrive on stress and chaos, but being an entrepreneur is about balancing this with time out.

Charlie Spokes, the founder of offline dating specialist, My Friend Charlie, believes mental health as a founder is all about balance:

Modern society often promotes a work-first mentality, and glamourises pushing ourselves to the limit at work. The clichés of pulling an all-nighter to get something finished, burning the candles at both ends and the 'hustle' are unhelpful and sometimes do more harm than good. Whilst we all want to work hard and feel confident that we're achieving what we need to, it shouldn't come at the expense of our health. It's time to change the record.

05.

Warning signs: What to look out for

We all experience health and wellbeing individually, and each have our own warning signs to watch out for when our wellbeing is in decline.

Listen to your body and your mind, and watch out for signs of stress and burnout. There are common factors, whether that's related to mood or external aspects, which may alert us to work starting to affect our wellbeing.

Burnout, now a recognised 'occupational phenomenon' by the World Health Organisation, can negatively impact our mental wellbeing.

As a busy founder, it's all too easy to neglect your body by not listening to what it needs, so we spoke to five entrepreneurs to find out what their warning signs are:

01. Lack of motivation

“For me, if my motivation and drive is dropping, I know that something is up.”

Gillian Roche-Saunders | Non-Executive Director at [Breathworks](#)

02. Decline in physical health

“I know, for me, if I get sick - and I rarely get sick - I know I'm burning out.”

Pip Jamieson | Founder of [The Dots](#)

03. Lack of concentration

“Burnout can leave you feeling exhausted, unable to focus or even get out of bed, as well as present other physical symptoms like a fuzzy head and trouble concentrating.”

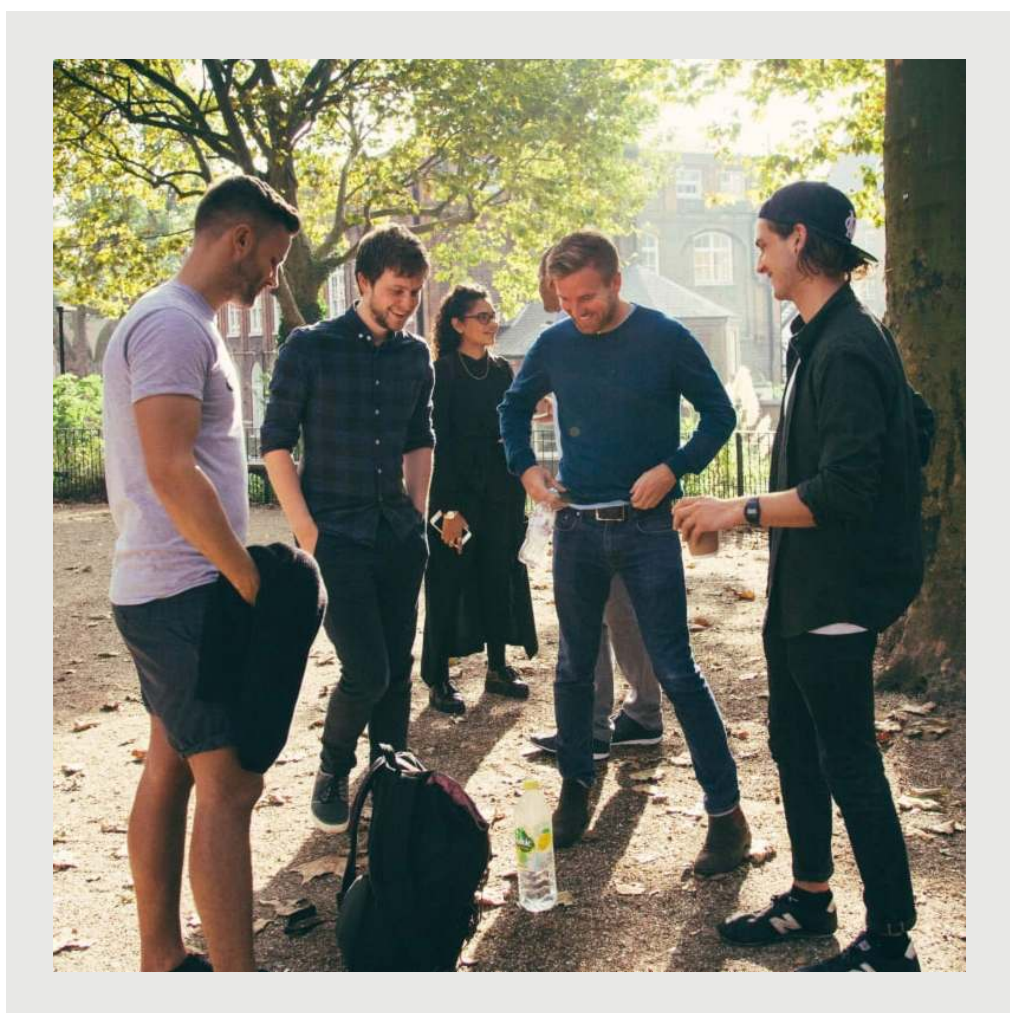
Keith McNiven | Founder of [Right Path Fitness](#)



04. Changes in sleep pattern

“If I’m waking up in the middle of the night with my heart pounding, or if I wake up buzzing on a Saturday morning at 7am, something is on my mind. It’s about distinguishing between real passion and something that is actually causing detriment to your mental health, and catching it early.”

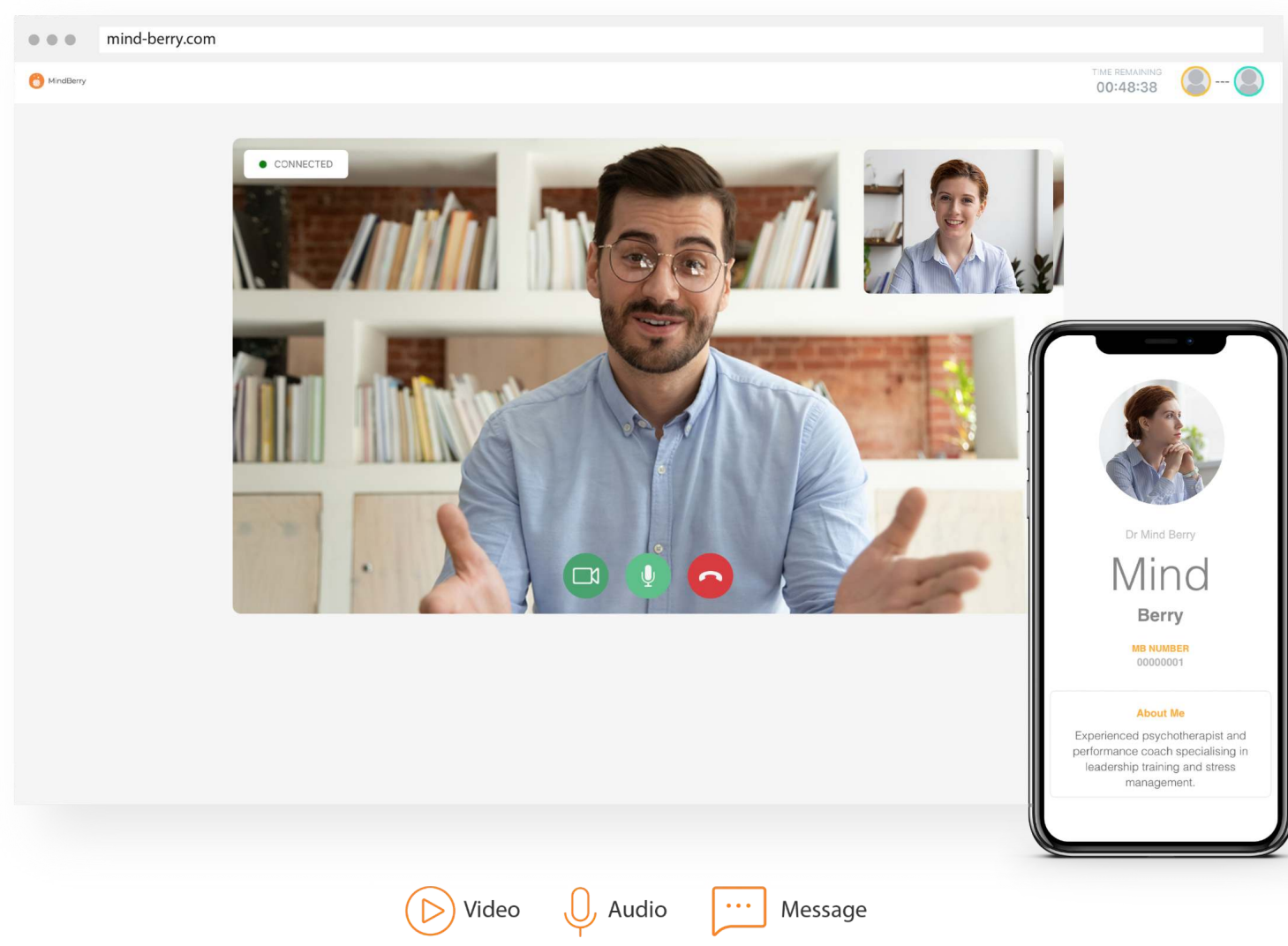
James Routledge | Founder of [Sanctus](#)



05. A change in lifestyle rituals

“It’s when you start feeling out of sync. You feel isolated because you don’t feel you have time to meet your friends; your diet or appetite changes; those lifestyle rituals and patterns go out the window. When you start feeling like a hamster in a wheel, those are the signs where I know I need to take a step back.”

Sandra de Monte | Founder of [MindBerry](#)



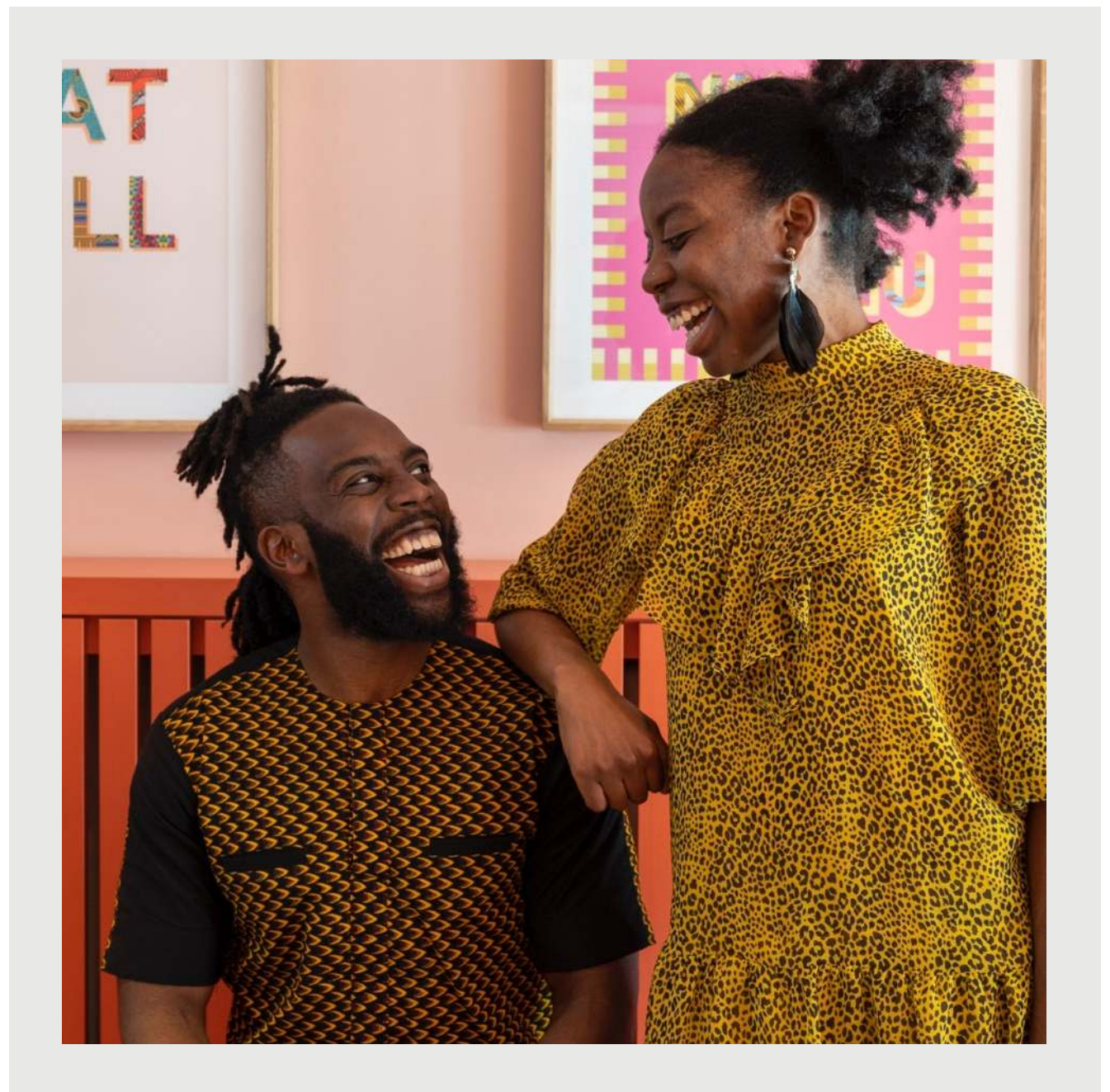
06.

Managing your wellbeing as a founder

Our physical health is deeply intertwined with our mental wellbeing, and you won't perform your best at work if you're not feeling on top of both.

And when it comes to managing a team, you need to help yourself before you can support others.

Here are steps you can take to help manage your wellbeing:



Sleep

As humans, we're hard-wired to need rest, and can last for longer without food than sleep.

We all know how difficult working can be after a poor night's kip and this is because sleep isn't a passive task. It's proactively restoring, repairing and enhancing ourselves, helping us recover from the previous day.

The better sleep we can get, the better working day we'll experience.

Of the lifestyle rituals Sandra de Monte, founder of MindBerry, noted, sleep was one of the biggest factors in enabling us to get back on top of our wellbeing.

“When your sleeping pattern changes, everything goes out of sync.”

Sandra de Monte | Founder of [MindBerry](#)



Taking breaks

Taking regular breaks away from our devices and desks can help maintain a healthy balance during the working day. Try and leave your laptop every hour, even if it's for a few minutes of walking round the block - or your flat - and giving your eyes a break.

Ensuring that you're able to log off in the evening and detach from work, even when working at home, will help build boundaries and enable you to focus on the non-work parts of life, like hobbies and spending time with people who care about you.

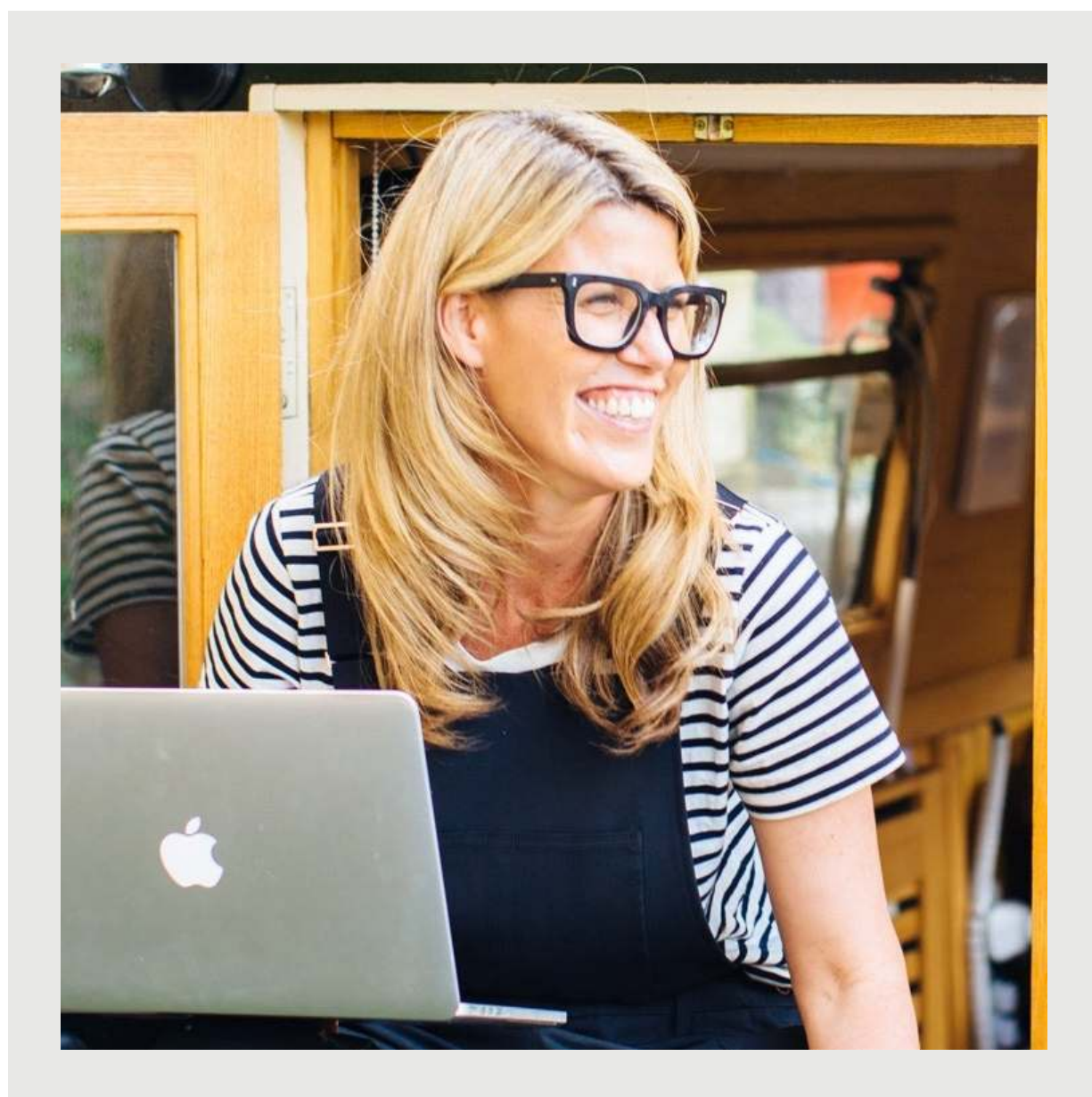
“Having other hobbies, interests and passions makes me much more centred and rounded. It also provides me with a sense of safety to help me realise that if my business dies, I'll still have all this other stuff in my life.”

James Routledge | Founder of [Sanctus](#)

For Pip Jamieson, taking breaks to safeguard her mental wellbeing comes in the form of a digital detox.

“Every Sunday, I put my phone on ‘airplane mode’. I also boomerang all non-essential emails so I only have to deal with the pressing ones. Once I shift my mindset and physically detach myself from work for a rest every week, I find it easier to clear the clutter in my life.”

Pip Jamieson | Founder of [The Dots](#)



And Charlie Spokes understands that taking a break, for her, means reconnecting.

“I’m lucky to have a good support network in my family and boyfriend. That network is a game changer.”

Charlie Spokes | Founder of [My Friend Charlie](#)

Reflection

Reflecting helps you to develop your skills and review their effectiveness, rather than just carry on doing things as you have always done them. It is about questioning, in a positive way, what you do and why you do it, rather than to just carry on behaving in familiar patterns.

How often do you power through day after day at work, not giving yourself the time and space to understand the impact of what you're doing - both on yourself and your business?

The practice of reflecting takes 3 stages:

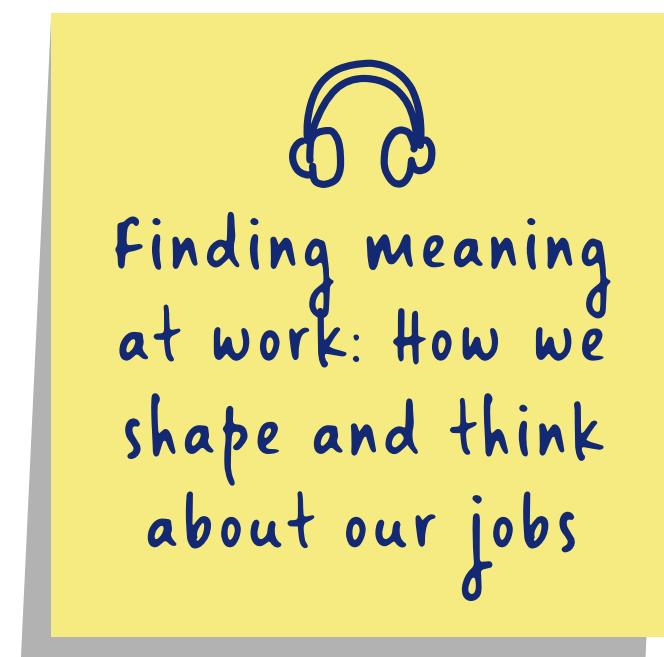
- **Reflect on your experience:**
Think about a specific situation - what you did, thought and felt at the time.
- **Reflect on what you learnt:**
How does your experience of this situation differ from what you expect of yourself, or the principles you want to uphold at work?
- **Apply your learnings:**
Apply what you've uncovered to the next similar

Reflective practice increases self-awareness, which is a key component of emotional intelligence, helping us develop a better understanding of others. Reflecting can also help you to develop creative thinking skills, and encourages active engagement in your tasks and projects, as opposed to passively taking part.

Reflecting can take the form of meeting with others and sharing what you've been through, or simply making notes yourself.

“The most important thing for me, when it comes to my wellbeing, is a network of other founders. I'm in a group of eight founders, and we meet up once a month. We share our deepest fears and I can be safe in sharing what I'm scared about. It helps to know you're not alone.”

Pip Jamieson | Founder of [The Dots](#)



Exercise and getting out

We've enlisted Keith McNiven, founder of personal training company, Right Path Fitness, to offer founders the right path to avoiding burnout by prioritising your physical health to optimise your mental wellbeing:



“Aim for a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise every day - even if it's just a walk.

“Try to get fresh air every few hours, as being in nature lowers stress levels.

“Set aside one day, or a few hours on the same day each week, to just do some form of exercise you enjoy.”

Keith McNiven | Founder of [Right Path Fitness](#)

Whether it's a gym session, pilates, hiking, swimming, tennis, running or even doga (that's yoga with your dog and, yes, it's a thing) it doesn't matter. Just focus on implementing physical exercise and getting outside into your routine, even when you don't feel like it. Because, often, it's when you don't feel like it that you'll need and benefit from it the most.

Journaling

Journaling can be a safe space to start opening up, and begin the transformative process to getting back to yourself again. Try and take the time to write at the start or end of every day, and if that seems like too much, try once a week on a Friday afternoon. You don't need a fancy app to do this - a pen and paper will do.

“For me, when I first began opening up about my mental health - when I was really suffering - the first place I went to was my journal and it was just me writing on the page. After that, I actually opened up to someone at work who I trusted.”

James Routledge | Founder of [Sanctus](#)



Meditation

Meditation brings with it many mental and physical benefits - and, as we know by now, both of these are connected and will, in tandem, promote better wellbeing.

Here's how it can help you as a founder:

It can improve mood

Lower levels of anxiety and depression are reported amongst those who meditate, as it's a chance to declutter your mental clutter.

It can improve sleep

Stress and fatigue can be reduced by participating in regular meditation, leading to less tossing and turning at night.

It can improve your work

Meditation has been proven to improve information retention, leading to greater productivity levels at work - so not only are you benefitting your wellbeing, but your startup's success, too.



Nutrition

You spend around 60% of your waking hours at work - whether at home, on the road or in the office. During the day, you'll consume about a third of all your daily intake of food and drink.

What we fuel our bodies with will have a direct impact on how we feel when working, and how well we're able to perform at work. In other words, your startup is what you eat.

Running a busy startup can be stressful and mentally draining, and your working schedule can become unpredictable and involve evenings and occasional weekends.

Tip:
You'll feel more focussed and attentive if you're able to eat food that doesn't make you crash after each meal.



Eccie and Gini, Co-founders of [Karma Cans](#)

07.

How to develop good habits

Good wellbeing is built on good habits. The smallest changes have the greatest impact.

Understanding what steps to take to help keep your physical and mental health in check can ease feelings of overwhelm when it comes to running a busy startup. We know the need to exercise regularly, but actually pulling on your trainers and leaving the house is another thing altogether.

To help maintain good wellbeing, developing habits will make the processes easier and more manageable - rather than unwelcome additions on your to-do list.

Good wellbeing isn't a zero-sum game, it's an ongoing process which you'll have good and bad days with. Just getting started in one area of work can help create positive reinforcement to focus on the next. For example, getting more sleep can help you feel more energetic the next day, which will make it easier to go for a run during your lunch break.

“When I stick to my routine, I’m in control of the day ahead, rather than the other way around. But just like going to the gym once doesn’t make you fit, I really see the benefits over a period of time.”

Gillian Roche-Saunders | Non-Executive Director at [Breathworks](#)

Here are 6 steps you can take to start to develop good habits to support your wellbeing as a founder.

01. Identify the habit

If we have habits that can harm our wellbeing, chances are they won't be obvious to us. To start finding out what habits could be making your wellbeing worse try to take a step back, or ask someone you trust, to see what's going on. Feeling exhausted when you wake up? Maybe you're staying up late checking emails. Find your productivity suffering and attention wavering? What you eat could be affecting concentration.

02. Start small

Once you know what change you want to introduce in your day-to-day, break the behaviour down into smaller pieces, and start to tackle just one part of it at first. If you're looking to develop a new habit of journaling every day, try literally writing down one sentence a day in a diary for a week, and then move up to two, three and a paragraph in the weeks that follow.

03. Make it easier for yourself

There are tools we can use to help introduce new behaviours. If you're struggling to focus on a project, why not move your phone out of sight to avoid distractions? On the flip side, set reminders to take a screen break every hour and have some water.

04. Replace a bad habit with a good one

If your go-to when stressed is social media, try and tackle that stress with something different, like a breathing exercise, or simply getting up from your desk and taking a walk. If you eat badly when you're feeling exhausted from work, try and create a new habit between finishing work and eating, like walking, running, or reading.

05. Reward yourself

Getting a reward for making a positive change will associate your new habit with something good - even if it's just a bit of self-compassion, or a small treat.

06. Be kind to yourself

Remember, we're all human and changing behaviours we've been wired to for our entire lives can be challenging, especially when grappling with running a startup, too. Be kind to yourself when you don't achieve what you set out to do - remember that it happens to everyone. You can always try again.

Founder wellbeing tips from our community:

“Learn to focus on the little things, instead of the bigger picture - as the bigger picture is intensely overwhelming when you’re just starting out. Try and tick the smaller boxes and, eventually, the big picture will come to life.”

James Talbot | Co-founder of [Pobi Bakery](#)



“Learn to see failure as a teacher. It doesn’t have to be the enemy. The most successful entrepreneurs have all experienced failure and setbacks - they just didn’t let it hold them back.”

Sandra de Monte | Founder of [MindBerry](#)

“Your biggest competitor will be yourself. Remember that your self-worth is not based on the success or failure of your business. Do not let it be all-consuming. And learn to get comfortable with the uncomfortable. Developing the right mindset will be one of your greatest assets.”

Ollie Collard | Virgin StartUp Business Advisor and founder of [Enterprise Orchard](#)



“Being passionate about what you do is the fire that drives you as an entrepreneur - you need to have it. Yet that passion is also the very thing that can prevent you from noticing when you need a break, from realising that you should prioritise personal life, or from putting in the boundaries that set you up for the long-term.”

Gillian Roche-Saunders | Non-Executive Director at [Breathworks](#)

08.

What support is out there?

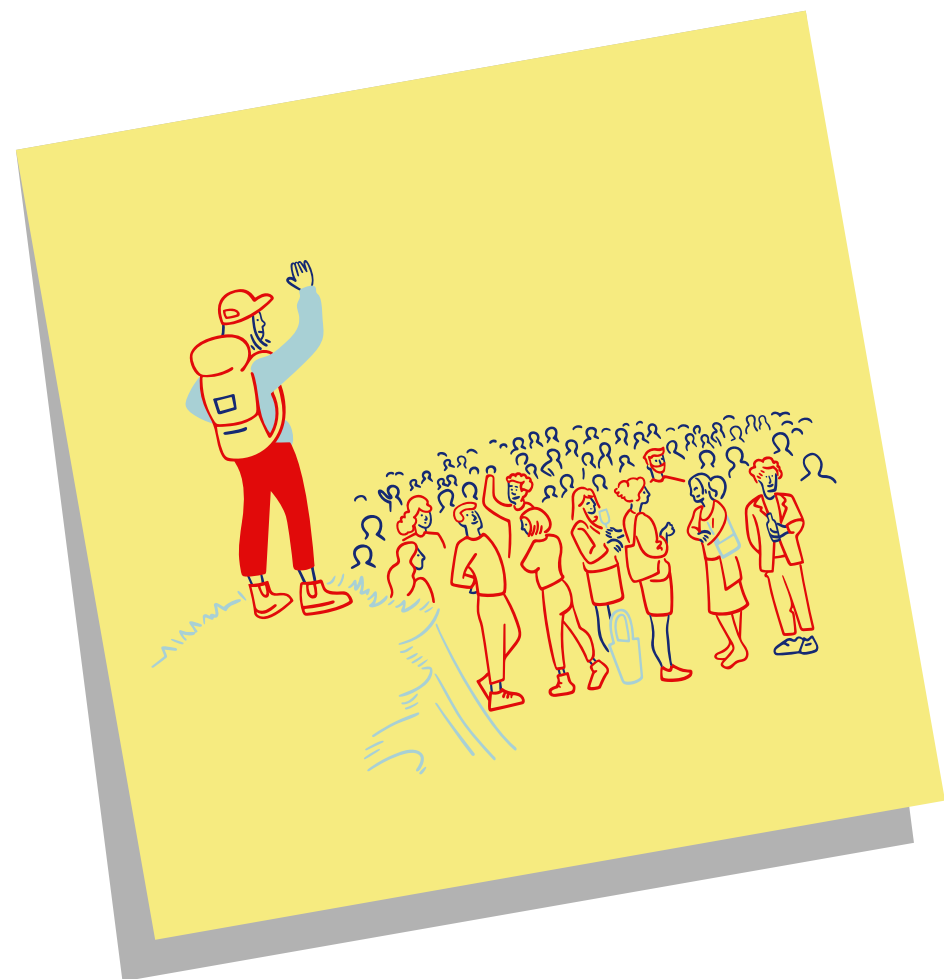
Sharing how you're feeling is an important place to start, and if you're in the position to have a co-founder, confiding in them can be helpful, especially if you're dealing with issues arising from work.

Outside of your team, consider your friends, family or partner and whether you can talk to them.

You should also seek advice from your GP, and consider speaking to organisations such as [Mind](#).

Waiting lists are unfortunately inevitable for free counselling support, so there are options you can look to. Whether that's checking out the [UK Council for Psychotherapy](#) website to find a private therapist if you can afford to, or calling [Samaritans](#) for free at [116 123](#) to speak to a mental health advisor, please don't suffer in silence.

You can also confide in a mentor if you have access to one. When you take out a [Start Up Loan](#) with Virgin StartUp, you become a part of our exclusive Funded Club, giving you instant access to a supportive community of founders going through the exact same journey you are online, as well as being matched with a mentor for 6 months.



08. WHAT SUPPORT IS OUT THERE?

Ollie Collard believes mentors are invaluable when it comes to founder wellbeing.

“Mentors have been there, done it and got the t-shirt. They can help you make better strategic decisions, reach your goals quicker and open doors for you. They have been through the same challenges you’re experiencing right now.”

Ollie Collard | Virgin StartUp Business Advisor and founder of [Enterprise Orchard](#)



09.

Supporting your team with their wellbeing

As leaders at work, we have a responsibility to look after and manage our teams.

This means making sure that they have access to the tools and support they need at work to help manage their stress levels and workloads.

Employee wellbeing leads to higher creativity and productivity levels. The World Health Organization found that optimal nourishment can raise national productivity levels by 20%. Healthy employees are happier, calmer, more engaged, sleep better and get sick less often.

With a rise in remote working, founders need to ensure team communications are strong. A team that feels in the loop will feel valued.

If your team feels valued, they'll feel supported, and they'll be bringing their best selves to work. And their best selves will be more productive, more invested in the business.

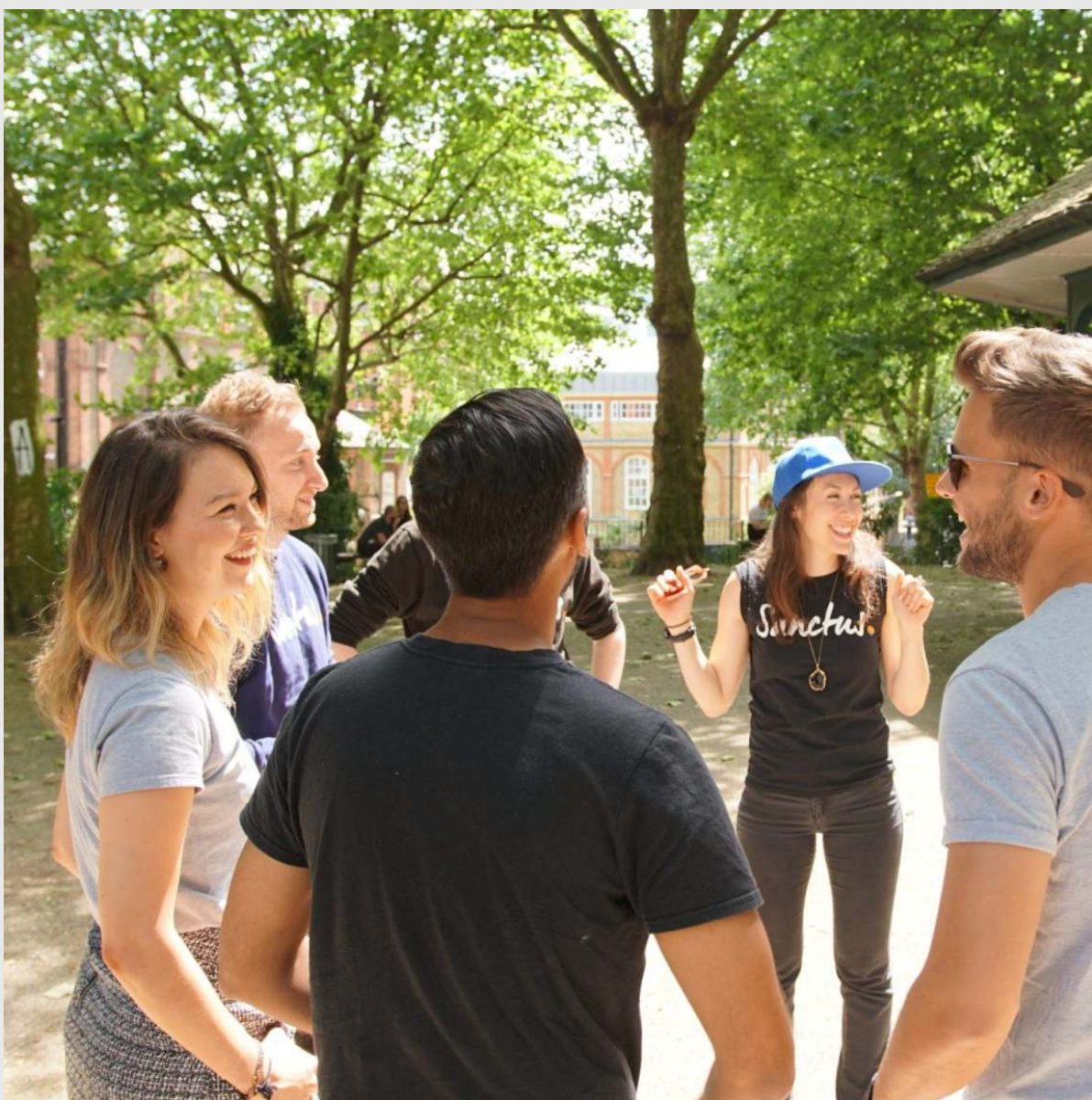
So how do you embed mental and physical wellbeing practices into your organisation so your company is one that thrives, not just in a profitable sense, but in terms of company culture?

We spoke to four founders to uncover how to embed mental and physical wellbeing into your startup:

Learn to become more approachable

“Practise sharing more of yourself. Share a photo of your dog; don’t just talk ‘work’ all the time; show that you are a human being.”

James Routledge | Founder of [Sanctus](#)



Structure your company with wellbeing in mind

“There are a million different ways you can design your business to be more people-centric. It starts in the DNA of the business, in the role-modelling of leadership and the culture of the company. You can see it in how people are able to show up. This is in our DNA at Sanctus, so it’s been easier for us to rationalise why it’s important to put people first.



“I’d recommend that the people in a business who are looking after well-being really start to look at their own mental health and lead by example. Leaders, managers and HR all have a responsibility to get comfortable with their own mental health first, so that they can develop empathy, confidence and literacy when talking about mental health at work.”

James Routledge | Founder of [Sanctus](#)

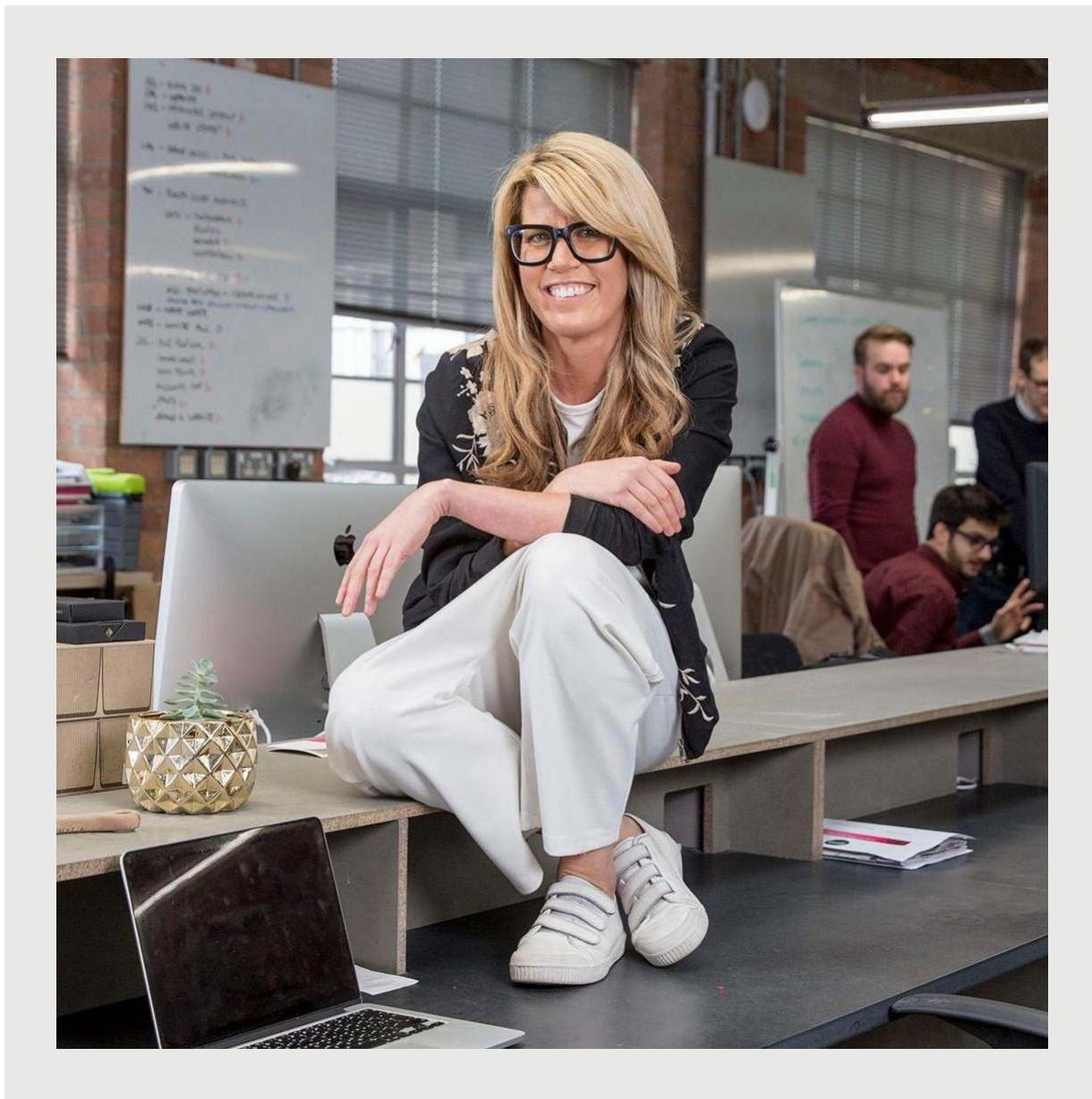
Promote vulnerability as a key company value

“Create a culture where vulnerability is accepted and it’s ok for people to say: ‘I’m not feeling so good, this didn’t go so well or I’m feeling a little bit stressed’. Mental health is not only about the darkness and depression - that’s like only talking about obesity and disease in physical health.”

Sandra de Monte | Founder of [MindBerry](#)



Build a positive team



“What I’ve found important is to put people around me that love doing the things I hate. It means I can maximise my team, maximise my strengths and energy, and ensure my team love coming to work.”

Pip Jamieson | Founder of [The Dots](#)

Wellbeing in the age of hybrid working

With the growth of hybrid working environments, there's never been a better opportunity to enhance the whole-person health of your employees. So long as you have the right tools in place and, more importantly, the right mindset, you're set for success. Joe Gaunt, Virgin StartUp Mentor and founder of [Hero Wellbeing](#), shares his thoughts on what the modern workplace means for our wellness.

The workplace shift and what this means for wellbeing

Since 2020, remote working has been normalised – meaning that 5-day-a-week office jobs could well become a thing of the past, confined to the history books for many. [Forbes](#) reported that European banks are cutting their office space in favour of remote working, with HSBC looking at a 40% reduction of its offices' capacity. Overwhelmingly, employees want to be able to balance working from home and the office.

Modern offices can be great for wellbeing. They promote and encourage social interaction, collaboration and innovation. If you couple this with a clear wellbeing strategy, with personalised and meaningful wellbeing services, offices will become destinations in their own right – a place employees look forward to going for additional support but with the back-up and reassurance that health services can be accessed at any time, and in any location.

This indicates a clear appetite for the 'hybrid' model to remain in place. So, let's explore what this means from a corporate wellbeing perspective and how employers can take advantage of this movement to create stronger work communities.

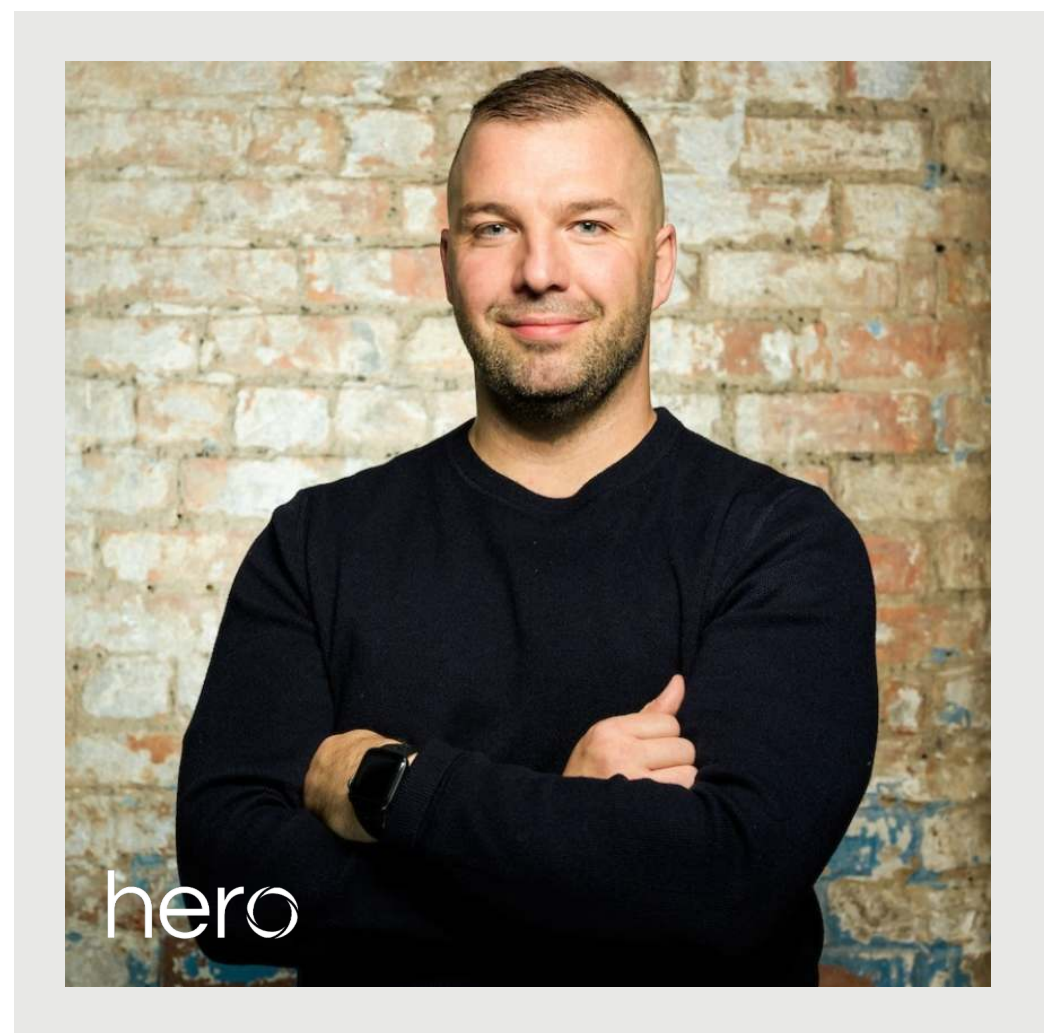
Blended times call for blended wellbeing strategies

As we enter the hybrid age – blending physical environments with digital ones – employers will need to implement blended strategies to support employees with the four pillars of wellbeing (mental, physical, social, and financial) at work and remotely. What's clear is that supporting your employees is important, regardless of where they are based. With this mixed landscape comes new challenges and opinions: some people can't wait to get back to the office, whereas some are dreading it and many want flexibility.

For many employees, working from home has fundamentally altered their attitudes towards health and wellbeing and given them a greater awareness of the variety of services that are available remotely and digitally. And while many health and wellbeing benefits included digital elements before 2020, these have been accelerated and / or advanced because of the new working landscape.

For some, accessing wellbeing services virtually has been a necessity, while for others, it's become a preference. A big reason for this is the convenience factor: digital / remote services remove travel and waiting time, reduce time away from work, and are much easier to use.

Because preferences, expectations, and delivery methods have shifted, employers are having to explore health and wellbeing options that include access to digital and remote services - not as a fall-back, but as a go-to.





About this Guide

This Guide was produced for Virgin StartUp by [Goldfish](#), with contributions from:
[MindBerry](#) ■ [My Friend Charlie](#) ■ [Time etc](#) ■ [Sanctus](#) ■ [Breathworks](#) ■ [Right Path Fitness](#)
[The Dots](#) ■ [Pobi Bakery](#) ■ [Enterprise Orchard](#) ■ [Hero Wellbeing](#)

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