

## Professional Support and Wellbeing Service

### Thames Valley

#### Bulletin May 2021

- Welcome
- Accessing PSWS and what to expect
- Coaching
- Dyslexia Assessment
- Survive and Thrive Wellbeing Programme
- Wellbeing Coaching
- Café coaching
- Foundation Careers Workshops

### CONTACT



WEBSITE:  
[thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk/resources-information/professional-support-wellbeing](https://thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk/resources-information/professional-support-wellbeing)

EMAIL: [psw.tv@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:psw.tv@hee.nhs.uk)

TRAINEE-CURATED WELLBEING RESOURCE HUB: [www.tvpsw.com](http://www.tvpsw.com)

### Welcome

Welcome to the first bulletin for the Professional Support and Wellbeing Service. Having recently rebranded with extended services, this is our opportunity to share the support that is available for all trainees across the Thames Valley region.

PSWS works with doctors, dentists and pharmacists in training in the deanery and we are gradually extending this support into even more multi-professional contexts as well. We are **a team of experienced, qualified coaches** from a **range of backgrounds**, some clinical and some non-clinical, offering a range of supportive services.

### Accessing PSWS and what to expect

Our **new referral system** is a simple online form found on our website under '[How to Refer](#)'. To make the process easy and to ensure we reach trainees in need of additional support and well-being services, we are **now accepting self-referrals in the majority of cases**. If you are an [educator](#) and you would like to be involved in the goal setting process for coaching, complete the educator referral form to guarantee an active part of the process.

Once you have completed the referral form, you will be **contacted by one of our Case Managers** who will arrange an **initial, virtual meeting** with you to fully explore your context and make sure we **get the right type of support at the right time for you**. An **action plan is agreed** and from there you will be passed on to the right place for further support.

For further information, our new website has a [short video](#) and [FAQ page](#).



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## Coaching

The PSWS is predominantly a coaching service, and many trainees are unsure of what coaching involves. Coaching is a **non-judgmental, coachee-led** process.

*Typically, a coach and trainee will work together, with the input of an educator where they have referred, to **identify specific goals for development**. Over the following **sessions (up to six)**, the coach will help **stretch and structure the trainee's thinking**. This is a **supportive, confidential** process. However, the coach will also **challenge the trainee to think differently, to make concrete plans to move forwards** and these will be reviewed as the sessions process.*

Typical challenges we offer coaching for include

- **Career dilemmas** – choosing or switching specialties or considering leaving medicine
- **Communication** – in exam and workplace contexts
- **Confidence and assertiveness**
- **Organisation and time management**
- **Exam preparation and anxiety**
- **Wellbeing and work-life balance**

## Dyslexia assessment

We are pleased to offer an extension to our [exam coaching](#) in the form of our **new dyslexia service**. If a trainee has struggled to pass an exam it is now standard practice for PSWS to screen exam referrals for dyslexia with follow up **assessment and reporting as appropriate**.

When a trainee is found to be dyslexic, PSWS offers **coaching to help identify strategies that will support them with dyslexia in their work, study and exam approaches**.

If you or your trainee have failed an exam and think dyslexia may be an additional challenge, you can refer on our website.

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## Survive and Thrive Wellbeing Programme

Last year we began running [Survive and Thrive courses](#), these were evaluated and refined to create the course that we now **offer face to face and virtually**. We were pleased to have the course **shortlisted for the Well-being Award** for the Association of Business Psychology.

*The morning of the course is an interactive opportunity to reflect on your individual stressors and stress responses in your context. In the afternoon we are joined by psychologists from The Oxford Cognitive Therapy Centre who provide practical strategies for managing mental well-being.*

In the last quarter we have run this course for trainees in Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Endocrinology and Rheumatology & Sport and Exercise Medicine. We are looking forward to seeing more trainees at the courses already booked in over the next few months. Get in touch if you would like more information.

## Well-being Coaching

The impact of Covid-19 on all healthcare professionals is profound and the full consequences are surely yet to surface. For some, this will require therapeutic support, where this is the case there are [resources](#) that can help, from **accessing their own GP to peer support networks** (some of which are signposted on the PSWS website). **Medic Support** works with Thames Valley deanery to offer CBT for trainees without the need to go through their GP.

There is not always a need for therapeutic support. **Trainees are understandably feeling overwhelmed, personally and professionally**. In addition to which, they now **face the long-term implications for their training** and additional challenges to be ready for independent practice.

Coaching can offer the **time and space to come to terms with their experiences and plan positively** for moving forwards.

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## Café coaching

[Café coaching](#) is a way to **introduce groups of trainees to coaching**. This half day session includes an introduction to coaching and a chance for trainees to **experience a confidential, coaching conversation** based on their chosen problems.

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*"Although initially I think many of us felt a little apprehensive about having a speed coaching session, this was a really useful experience. The coaches were very approachable and easy to talk to and really helped guide us individually to consider our concerns in a different light. I think speed coaching is a fun way for lots of trainees to experience coaching in a short time frame."*

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*Trainee from recent café coaching session*

Get in touch if you would like to offer this for your trainee cohort.

## Foundation Careers Workshops

Each year the PSWS runs workshops to help Foundation doctors navigate the application process for specialty training. The first round of these workshops for FY1s have now been advertised in our [events page](#). These will be **delivered virtually**, and trainees will need to sign up in advance in order to receive an invite. Both workshops will offer **support for making a career decision**. There are further resources available on the PSWS website.

### Workshop 1a will cover:

- Background and overview of specialty training process
- Key questions about the application process

### Workshop 1b will cover:

- The Multi-Specialty Recruitment Assessment
- Preparing for portfolio stations
- Things to think about for 'F3' year

These will be followed up later in the year with a **second workshop focusing on interview skills** needed for selection centres.