

Spring clean your mind



Diane Rochford, President of the British Society of Dental Hygienists and Therapists (BSDHT), says that a mental spring clean can be just as beneficial as a physical one.

Traditionally at this time of year, people usually have a spring clean. Whether that's going through your wardrobe and discarding any clothes you no longer wear, or giving your home a deep clean, it usually means performing a physical clear out – but what about your mental space?

More than half of dental hygienists and dental therapists have reported in the past that they are extremely stressed in their positions. With the pandemic and numerous other recent challenges, it would be little surprise if these figures are currently much higher.¹

As such, a mental spring clean can be just as beneficial as a physical one. But what can you do to clean out your mind?

Get some quiet time

One of the easiest ways to declutter your mental space is to cultivate some quiet time for yourself. Although we all have busy schedules, if you can carve out even half an hour of time to do a relaxing activity, this can have a great impact on your mental health.

For example, practising yoga, going for a long walk or even just doing some quiet meditation have all been found to have a beneficial impact on anxiety and stress levels.² These activities are thought to help modulate stress response systems in the mind, in turn decreasing physical symptoms of stress by helping to lower blood pressure and easing respiration.

Write down how you feel

You might also start a journal or a diary where you can write down your thoughts. Journaling not only gives you the chance to organise your ideas and feelings, but it is also a highly cathartic exercise when it comes to stress reduction. This is because the act of writing down your thoughts

and concerns means you can visualise them more clearly, helping your mind to solve any problems and put things into perspective.³

Of course, this activity can double up as a way to plan your career progression and to explore your feelings towards your current position. You can set goals, research CPD opportunities and jot down other helpful ideas – all the while exploring your thoughts and feelings so you can better map your current mental state.

Face your thoughts

It's likely that everyone is holding on to some emotional baggage. Perhaps someone has done something to upset you and you can't stop thinking about it, or maybe you've always wanted to tell someone how you feel but can't strike up the courage. Holding on to these feelings is likely to clog up your mind with emotions and, if you don't do anything to change this, you might lose considerable time without ever making any progress.

Bottling up feelings has been scientifically proven to be damaging to your mental health, and false positivity or evasive behaviour such as always telling people you're fine can make negative feelings worse in the long run.⁴ It's better to speak to people and be honest about the way you feel, especially if their behaviour is getting you down or a situation is constantly replaying on your mind.

Ask for help

Everyone needs mental support, and asking for help is an easy way to reduce stress, vent your feelings and get the back up you need. The British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) has long provided support for dental hygienists and dental therapists, and is always here should any member of the profession need help.

Members are able to access advice via email or phone call and also benefit from a slew of other helpful membership exclusives including a bespoke indemnity policy and access to tailored CPD.

Refresh yourself

Much like clearing out your wardrobe can give you a sense of satisfaction, a spring clean for your mind can work wonders too. By practising self care, letting go of stress and focusing on your future you can ready your mind for whatever comes next.

For more information about the BSDHT, visit www.bsdt.org.uk, call 01788 575050 or email enquiries@bsdt.org.uk.

References

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