DIGI**WELL**

THE BOOKLET:

Pocket Guide to Digital Wellbeing

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The Booklet: Pocket Guide to Digital Wellbeing

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This booklet is a product of a collaborative effort
between Transilvania University of Brasov (UNITBV); Diaconia
University of Applied Sciences (Diak); VID Specialized University;
and Technical University of Applied Sciences Wuerzburg-
Schweinfurt (THWS), as part of the DigiWell project.

Project website: **digi-well.unitbv.ro**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKLET

THIS BOOKLET IS MEANT TO SERVE YOU AS A TOOL for outlining what you might need to improve your digital wellbeing when at work. You may have received a copy of the booklet as part of a lesson, mentoring program or perhaps from another colleague or friend, regardless we encourage you to use the information and tools within to improve your own wellbeing as well as that of your colleagues in order to foster a supportive work environment.

The booklet was made as a part of the resources provided by the DigiWell project, which is a collaboration between Transilvania University of Brasov (UNITBV); Diaconia University of Applied Sciences (Diak); VID Specialized University; and Technical University of Applied Sciences Wuerzburg-Schweinfurt (THWS). The team aims to develop innovative approaches to supporting university educators in managing complexity at work, promoting digital well-being and efficient use of digital tools.

Using the booklet should be simple. Start by familiarizing yourself with what wellbeing and technostress mean in context of the booklet before moving on to the reflection model. This tool will help you gauge what areas of your digital wellbeing might need improving or where you may be ready to help others. Use the reflection prompts to determine where in the model you may lie (on pages 10 and 11). Then proceed to the corresponding pages (between page 12 and 14) for each level.

THE BOOKLET IS STRUCTURED INTO THREE PARTS; part one describes wellbeing and technostress which provides some context for part two; which consists of a model that you can use to reflect over your own work situation and how that relates to your wellbeing; and in part three provides exercises and advice on how to maintain your wellbeing in light of reflections in the earlier parts.

It is quite presumptuous of a booklet to decide what is best for you to have a sense of wellbeing when at work. Instead, it is meant to offer advice and be a helpful tool if you find yourself in doubt or are unable to quite express what it is that you require to experience wellbeing at work. With that being said, use its contents in a way that makes sense and works for you and your situation.
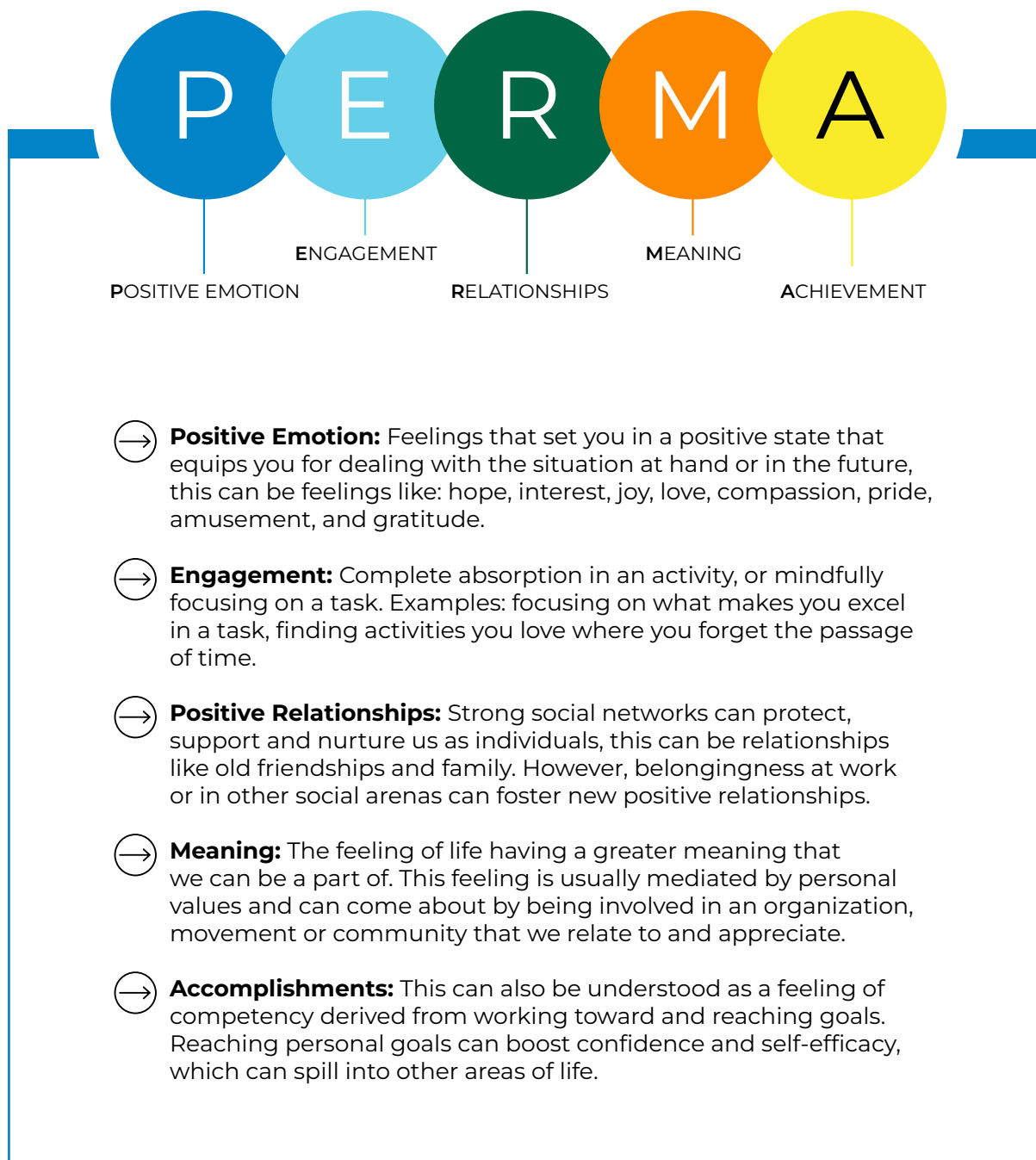
We hope this serves you well.

Happy reading!

WHAT IS DIGITAL WELLBEING?

Wellbeing can be understood as characteristics that facilitate one's ability to live a good life. **The PERMA model** [1] outlines five such characteristics that can make the fundament of one's wellbeing in work and other parts of life. **Digital Wellbeing** can be undertstood as characteristics that inhibit technostress and facilitate wellbeing. [2]

P E R M A

ENGAGEMENT

MEANING

POSITIVE EMOTION

RELATIONSHIPS

ACHIEVEMENT

→ **Positive Emotion:** Feelings that set you in a positive state that equips you for dealing with the situation at hand or in the future, this can be feelings like: hope, interest, joy, love, compassion, pride, amusement, and gratitude.

→ **Engagement:** Complete absorption in an activity, or mindfully focusing on a task. Examples: focusing on what makes you excel in a task, finding activities you love where you forget the passage of time.

→ **Positive Relationships:** Strong social networks can protect, support and nurture us as individuals, this can be relationships like old friendships and family. However, belongingness at work or in other social arenas can foster new positive relationships.

→ **Meaning:** The feeling of life having a greater meaning that we can be a part of. This feeling is usually mediated by personal values and can come about by being involved in an organization, movement or community that we relate to and appreciate.

→ **Accomplishments:** This can also be understood as a feeling of competency derived from working toward and reaching goals. Reaching personal goals can boost confidence and self-efficacy, which can spill into other areas of life.

TECHNOSTRESS

Technostress is an umbrella term for stressors that cause negative emotions at work which in turn effect your performance and ability to collaborate. There are different types of technostress which are described below. [2]

⊙ **Techno-overload:** the demand to work faster and longer, to manage excess information and features, and to comply with continuous flow of organizational requirements.

⊙ **Techno-invasion:** the intrusive effects of being able to reach, locate or surveil employees that are expected to respond instantly, even in their free time, which further disrupts their work-life balance.

⊙ **Techno-complexity:** feeling constantly insufficient or insecure in own abilities to master new technologies due to frequent hassles and complications when using technology at work.

⊙ **Techno-insecurity:** The fear of losing employment due to the advances in technology like machines replacing humans or being outcompeted by others who are more technically qualified.

⊙ **Techno-uncertainty:** Individuals fail to keep up with new developments in technology which further generates anxiety because they feel a need to constantly keep up.

⊙ **Examples of stressors:** Multitasking, pressure generated by constant messaging from emails and other notifications, being overloaded by tasks, having too many complicated and challenging tasks.
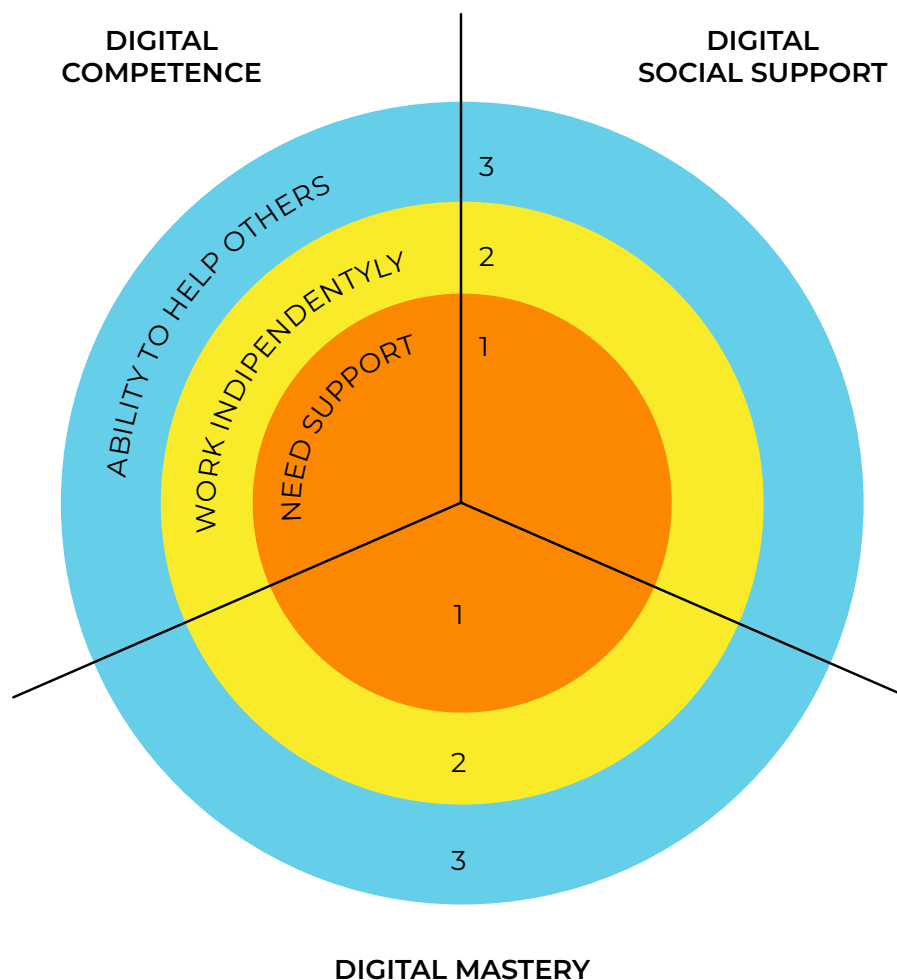
Aspects that may counter these stressors are tech-literacy, technical support, and supportive work environments. Organizations might offer training and technical support, inform their employees regarding digital transformation that are implemented, take into consideration their feedback and introduce change gradually, to limit technostress. [3]

THE REFLECTION MODEL

WHAT IS THE MODEL AND HOW TO USE IT

→ **The model is a reflection tool** designed to help you determine what areas of your digital wellbeing can be improved upon. It is made up of three areas, that all include three levels.

→ **The areas** represent an aspect of digital wellbeing, and **the levels** communicate if you need extra help with something, if you can manage but improve, or if you are capable and are ready to support others.

→ There is nothing wrong being at the lower levels, it simply shows what you may need to improve in order to elevate your overall digital wellbeing.

REFLECTION TOOL FOR ASSESSING OWN DIGITAL WELLBEING

DIGITAL COMPETENCE

DIGITAL SOCIAL SUPPORT

ABILITY TO HELP OTHERS

WORK INDIPENDENTYLY

NEED SUPPORT

3

2

1

1

2

3

DIGITAL MASTERY

WHAT DO THE AREAS MEAN?

→ **Digital Competence** can be understood as the confident, critical and responsible use of digital technologies for learning at work [4]. This means that if you have high digital competency, you can critically find, safely store and share data and technology to solve problems in your work.

→ **Digital Social Support** consists of the networks and peers a given individual has access to when in need of help and support in their work environment. Colleagues who have good social support share negative and positive experiences when working with technology, and overall contribute to making a supportive work environment [5;6].

→ **Digital Mastery** can be understood as the "perception of one's abilities to cope with the requirements of digital work [7]." This means that individuals who have high Digital Mastery will feel stronger self-efficacy [8], have stronger beliefs in their own abilities and will be less flustered by increased digitalization or the introduction of new technologies in the work environment. [9]

WHAT DO THE LEVELS MEAN?

→ **Level 1** individuals who find themselves at this level may experience that they struggle more than their peers when using technology at work. They only use the digital tools they must and need help understanding how to use the tools. In general, they struggle to use and are afraid of new technology.

→ **Level 2** individuals who find themselves at this level may experience that they can handle the technical challenges of the everyday and feel comfortable solving simple problems with and using technology. New technologies can be stressful to adapt to, but they learn new skills and technologies when they need. In general, they know which tools are appropriate and how to use them.

→ **Level 3** individuals who find themselves at this level may experience that they have an easier time using technological tools in the everyday and also have an easier time picking up new technologies and skills. These individuals may find themselves helping their colleagues, and do not struggle as much adapting to new technologies and practices at work.
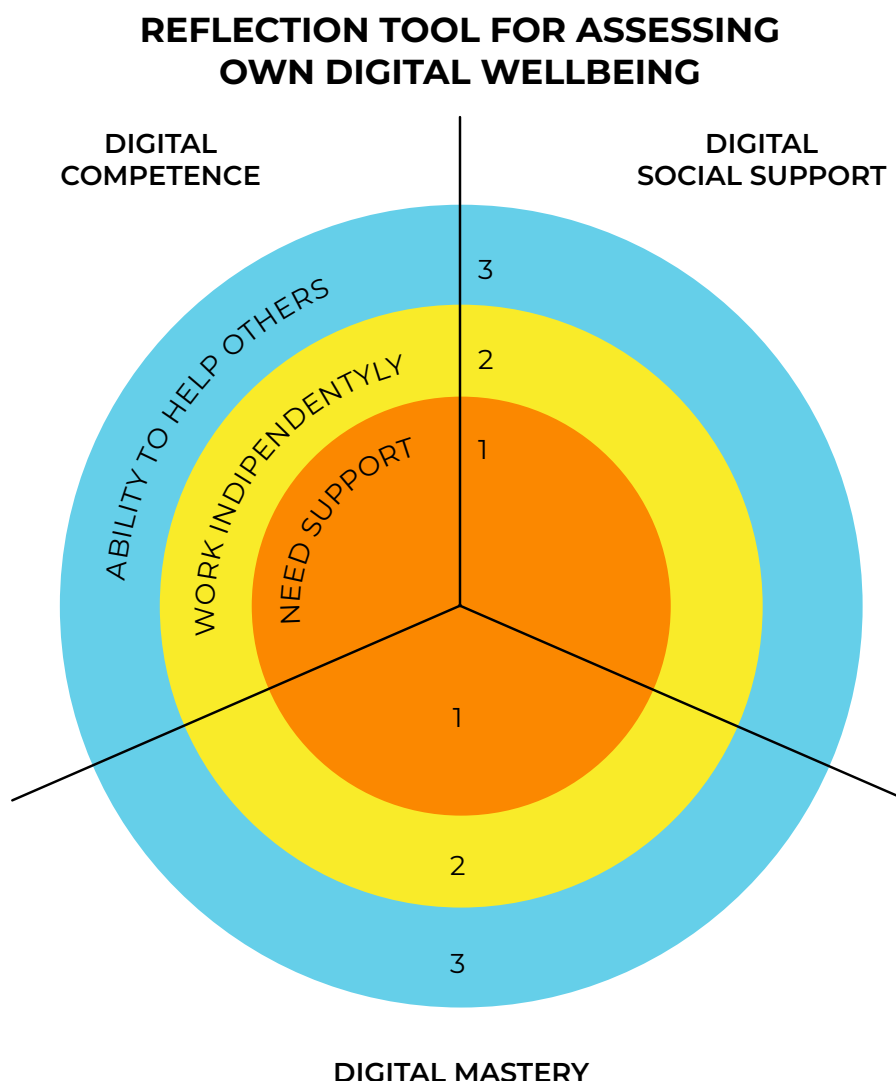
HOW TO USE THE TOOL

CONSIDER THE STATEMENTS BELOW. ARE THERE ANY STATEMENTS THAT RESONATE WITH YOU MORE THAN OTHERS?

Each set of statements are associated with a certain level. If the statements that you relate to the most are within a certain level, then the pages associated to that level are more likely to provide useful tips and information on how you can improve your situation.

Read through the statements on each level, find the one that resonates the most with you and go to the listed page.

For example if the statements in " level 2 – digital competence" resonate more with you, that means the information on **page 13** will be helpful to you.

**REFLECTION TOOL FOR ASSESSING
OWN DIGITAL WELLBEING**

DIGITAL
COMPETENCE

DIGITAL
SOCIAL SUPPORT

ABILITY TO HELP OTHERS

WORK INDIPENDENTYLY

NEED SUPPORT

3

2

1

1

2

3

DIGITAL MASTERY

→ DIGITAL COMPETENCE

Level 1 **(page 12)** – I stick to the tools I know because they allow me to do everything, I need to do in my every day, I have little interest using anything else. Communicating and working with others digitally is always a challenge. It is very difficult to diagnose and address issues with my equipment or digital tools, and I usually need help. My digital tools all have specific uses, using them for anything else would not work. I don't think about the security implications of how I share files, and information – that is someone else's job.

Level 2 **(page 13)** – The tools I use in my everyday work well enough, but I can pick up new digital tools if I must. communicating digitally with others can be inconvenient but isn't difficult. I find it challenging to diagnose and address issues with my equipment or digital tools, I usually try to solve it myself before asking for help. My digital tools have specific purposes, but I can see how they may be used for other functions as well. I consider how to safely share my files with others, but I am not always sure if I do it right.

Level 3 **(page 14)** – Using digital tools allow me to do my job and I rarely feel hindered by them. communicating digitally with others is not challenging and is something I want to engage with. Diagnosing and addressing issues with equipment or digital tools is to be expected, I often solve it myself before needing help. I understand that some of my digital tools can be used for different functions, and I know how to explore and discover these functions. I know how to safely share my work with others, and I can advise my colleagues when needed.

→ DIGITAL SOCIAL SUPPORT

Level 1 **(p. 12)** – I feel alone with my struggles, and I don't feel comfortable sharing it with my colleagues. I don't usually experience my colleagues sharing what they struggle with or want to improve either. I think that organizing and collaborating as colleagues is difficult and can feel impossible. I feel like there is no one to ask for help and going to management for help feels futile.

Level 2 **(p. 13)** – I usually feel comfortable sharing what I struggle with at work. I think my colleagues feel comfortable talking about what they struggle with, but I don't always know how to help them. We regularly collaborate, and it is relatively easy to organize gatherings, and asking management for help is possible if we can suggest a solution together.

Level 3 **(p. 14)** – I feel like my colleagues can talk to me about what they struggle with, and I feel comfortable sharing as well. I can often offer my help, or I know where to go to provide help. I understand that digital tools can create stress in others, and I know how to help. I can facilitate collaboration at my workplace, and I encourage others to do so as well. Going to management for help can be a solution, but I would need to organize my colleagues to come up with solutions.

→ DIGITAL MASTERY

Level 1 **(p. 12)** – I feel lost and confused when using new digital tools. I don't have the ability to understand how it works or how to use it. I don't think I am any good with technology, and I struggle to think that I will ever be any good. I rarely experience that others believe that I will or can improve. I hate feeling like I am failing in using digital tools, this can lead me to avoid using digital tools especially new ones. I feel like there is always some new technology or tool around the corner which can make me uncomfortable.

Level 2 **(p. 13)** – Learning how to use new tools is an accomplishment, and it gives me confidence in my belief that I can mastery future challenges using digital tools. With a little help I know I can develop my abilities to not only cope, but truly master the digital requirements of my work. I experience that others believe in my abilities to learn and adapt to new tools. I am (or I am becoming) unafraid of the idea of having to learn how to use new tools. I can get stressed when I feel like I am failing, but usually I know I can overcome the challenge in time.

Level 3 **(p. 14)** – I enjoy mastering technological problems even if it may be difficult, because ultimately, I expect to succeed. I manage to stay updated on the latest use of technology at my job, this is something I use to support others when at work. I experience that I can support others in a way that makes them feel comfortable taking on new challenges, and less afraid of failing. I experience that others look to me when wanting to learn something new.
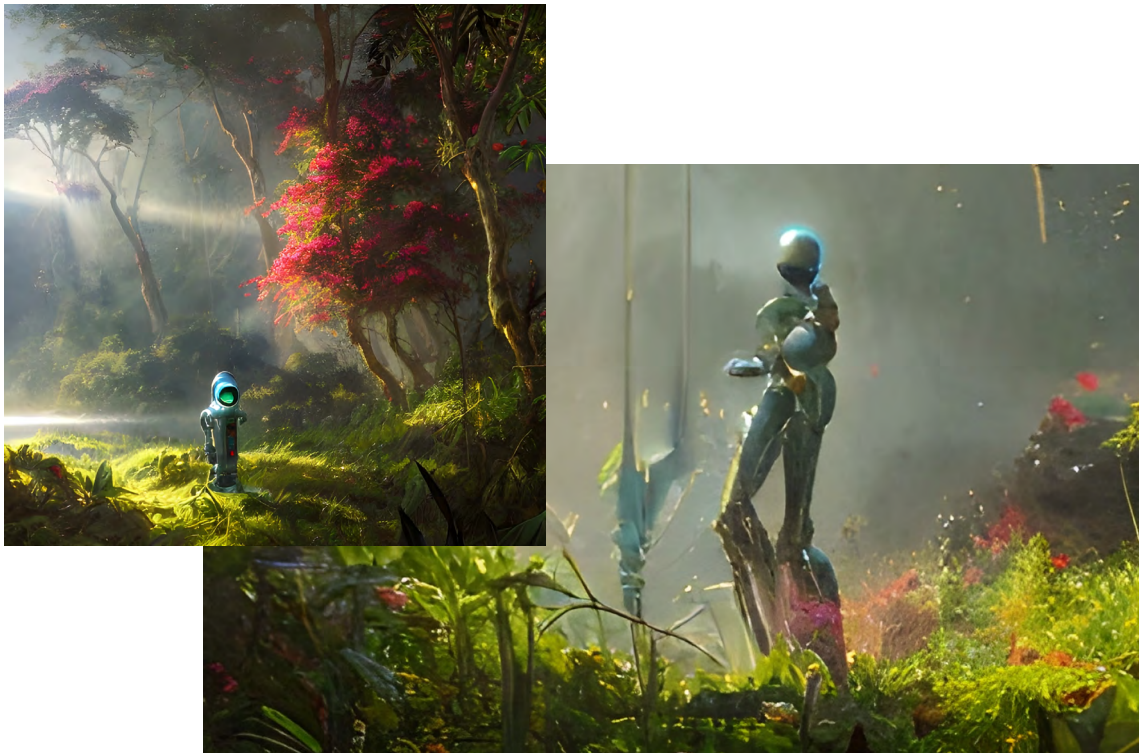
LEVEL 1 – I NEED SUPPORT

→ DIGITAL COMPETENCE

The key to improvement on this level is to practice using the technology you are struggling with, articulating what it is you are struggling with and asking for help. Try to stick to it even though it may feel hopeless at times.

Be open to new experiences and experiment with what you have. If you make a mistake, try and retrace your steps and make note of what went wrong. Technological tools usually work the way they are supposed to, though it can take some time learning how to tell them precisely what you want them to do.

Start with something easy and gradually go from there. Set aside some time to learn more about the tools you are using or are going to use, and ask someone more experienced to demonstrate how they can be used.

→ SOCIAL SUPPORT

The key to improvement on this level is to get used to viewing apparent failures as a natural part of a wider learning process, it is after all impossible to get better at something without failures. Getting better at sharing your learning experiences and formulating what you need to improve can also help.

It's a good idea to talk to your colleagues and see if they struggle with the same as you do. If it's an overall problem with the work culture it can be harder to change your own outlook on failures and asking for help. If this is the case, then informing management would be the next step – as an overarching training program or the like would be in order.

Find yourself someone who can support your efforts in learning and using technology. Look for someone you identify with, who is good at using technology and knows how to handle technostress, this could be a colleague or mentor but does not have to be.

Find out if your institution has any support system, if they have one then join it, it they don't ask for one to be created, or learn what needs to be done to create one with your peers.

→ DIGITAL MASTERY

The key to improvement on this level is to approach challenges that you think you can master and pay attention to what works. It also helps to pay attention to what colleagues do and make note of the solutions applied.

Focus on what you have mastered in the past. Start with small and easy tasks that you are able to manage to increase your self-efficacy. Have someone with more digital knowledge show you how to do it and tell you that you are able to succeed with the task at hand, and then try yourself.

If you get stressed (emotional or physically activated) take a break, go outside for a walk and focus on your breathing. Get your stress levels down before you continue. Know that it's not supposed to feel comfortable when learning something new, and that it's not a linear process.

LEVEL 2 – I MANAGE

→ DIGITAL COMPETENCE

The key to improvement on this level is to get comfortable exploring with tools beyond those you are used to. There are often tools out there that have been made for your specific need in mind. Take note of how you solve problems and get used to formulating them to others, this will help in the long-run when you want to support your colleagues.

To improve your digital competence, try exploring different functions and tools to see what works better for the task at hand, joining classes and practice using different tools can also help. Reflect around why you are using one tool over any other, is there a better way to use it?

Connecting with others can help manage the stress derived from using a particular tool. It is also a good opportunity to learn from your colleagues as well as sharing what you know with them.

→ DIGITAL SOCIAL SUPPORT

The key to improvement on this level is to contribute to an overall supportive work environment. This implies sharing learning experiences as well as encouraging others to do so. Being able to formulate problems and passing them on allows others to learn as well, therefore contributing to a more positive work environment. Also, sharing and supporting others maintain their boundaries between work and home can contribute to a work environment supportive of digital wellbeing.

Reflect over what can be done to improve the support system that is already in place; what can you do to improve the digital social support in your organization? Think about how the well-being of others be promoted.

→ DIGITAL MASTERY

At this point it is important to remember that it takes time to improve in whatever you are trying to improve in, and that it is not uncommon or unusual to feel a need to avoid failure.

You need more mastery experiences so build on what you already know. Start with small and easy tasks that you are able to manage to increase your self-efficacy. Have someone with more digital knowledge show you how to do it and tell you that you are able to succeed with the task at hand, and then try yourself. Try out new tools and reflect on what and why something works. When reflecting over what doesn't work, try to find potential solutions, and share them with your peers.

LEVEL 3 – I CAN SUPPORT OTHERS

→ DIGITAL MASTERY

At this level you can support others in improving their digital competencies.

The key to improvement on this level is to get better at formulating solutions to those who might need them. This will involve breaking down the problem in an understandable way, as well as encourage others to discern and remember solutions to technical problems and uses.

You can also try to facilitate that your peers actively take steps to improve their own knowledge and skills using technology. This can be done by informing them of courses, resources or holding courses yourself if possible.

→ SOCIAL SUPPORT

Overall you encourage your peers to share what they may be struggling with, facilitating collaboration.

The key to improvement on this level is to focus on what the work environment might need to become more supportive overall. This means understanding the needs of you and your colleagues and learning how to formulate it to management, as well as each other. Continuing to encourage your peers to help one another and share learning experiences, as well as respect and maintain each other's boundaries will help to maintain a supportive work environment.

Reflect on how to mobilize your colleagues to enact social change at your workplace.

→ DIGITAL COMPETENCE

You have more positive experiences than negative ones and you can help others have positive experiences when using technology.

The key to improvement on this level is to pay attention to what works, show your colleagues what they may need to know in order to achieve mastery in using a specific technology.

Paying attention to the skill levels of your colleagues can help you provide partners for your peers who are struggling the most. Providing a skilled partner to someone less skilled can allow them both to learn by sharing competences and experiences.

GENERAL REFLECTION EXERCISES
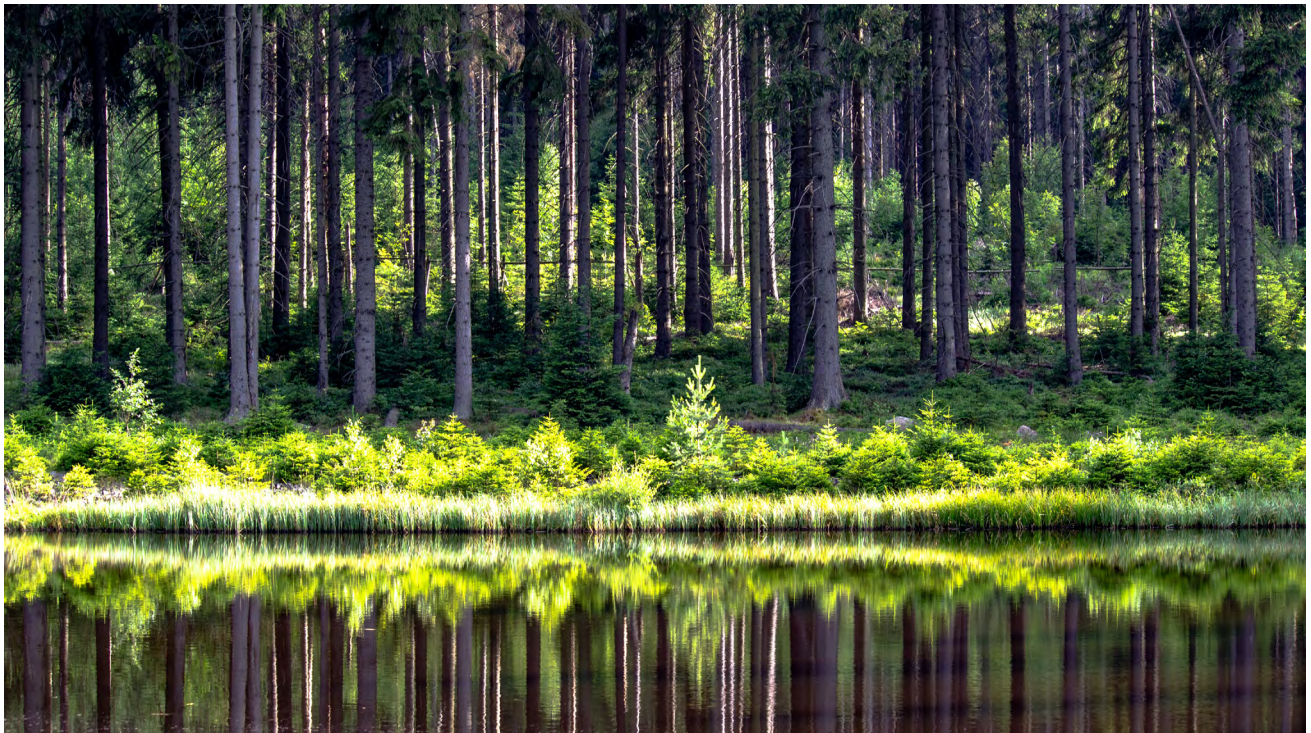
LEVEL 1

Pay attention to what you struggle with and how that manifests, practice identifying the problem. In response, write down exactly what you need. You can be general at first but start to gradually specify your needs.

When you have outlined what you struggle with, practice sharing it with those who may be able to help you and make note of the solutions that are applied. Practice using the solutions you made note of when you encounter similar problems and share what you learned with others.

LEVEL 2

Identify what you struggle with on a regular basis and consider why that may be. Write down your reflections and consider why your colleagues may or may not struggle with the same or something similar.

What would you need to address your struggles independently? What would your colleagues need to deal with their struggles?

Practice sharing your reflections with your colleagues, along with whatever solutions you may have to their problems.

LEVEL 3

Make an overview of what your colleagues need. Taking into consideration the resources and skills you have, sketch out how you can best support your colleagues deal with the technology they struggle with at work.

After making the overview, evaluate your solutions so far. Is there any support you would not be able to apply or that you would need help to apply? Are there others in your workplace who can help you realize your plan?

HOW TO MAINTAIN WELLBEING

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OPTIMAL BRAIN MATTER

According to neurobiologists David Rock and Daniel Siegel, there are factors that contribute to optimal brain functioning and factors that detract from it. Bellow we see what time the brain needs for optimal performance [10].

Therefore, the key to maintaining wellbeing at work and in life is striking a balance between what you need and what you are obliged to do, the challenge is finding the balance within the constraints of your own life situation.

→ **Focus Time** – When we deeply focus on goal-oriented tasks, we allow ourselves to be challenged that helps construct complex connections in the brain.

→ **Playtime** – By being spontaneous, creative and playfully enjoying new experiences, we can construct new connections in the brain.

→ **Connecting Time** – We can activate and reinforce the brain's relational circuitry by taking time to appreciate the natural world and connecting (ideally in person) with others.

→ **Physical Time** – When we move our bodies aerobically and if medically possible, we can strengthen and maintain the connections created in our brains.

→ **Time In** – When we quietly reflect, focus on sensations, images, feelings and/or thoughts, we can better integrate the neural pathways and connections we have made so far.

→ **Downtime** – We can recharge our brains by letting our minds wander without any specific goal, and simply relax.

→ **Sleep Time** – We recover from the experiences and impressions of the day by giving the brain the rest.
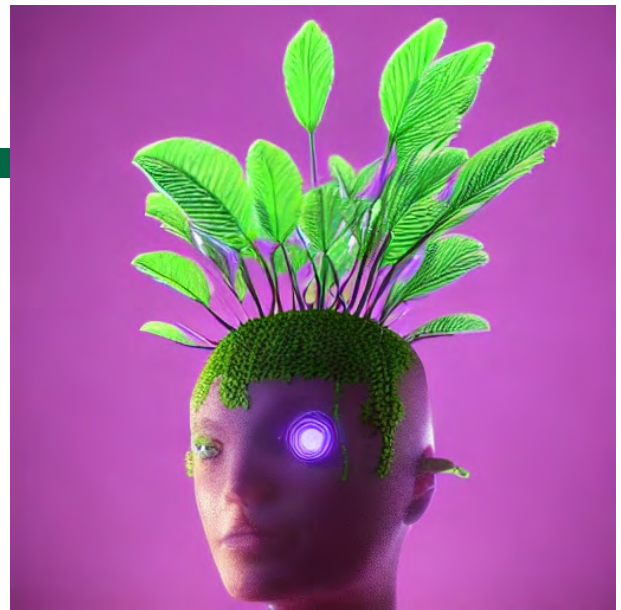
BALANCING YOUR DAYS

Often these needs will collide with work as well as other structural or medical barriers. Integrating habits that promote wellbeing and sharing them with others as well can be a small step on a longer road towards improving your own wellbeing as well as that of your colleagues. If you find yourself unable to perform some or even any of these exercises, then a good start is identifying what you need as concretely as you can, and make sure your close colleagues are informed and know how to best support you.

EXERCISES AND TIPS

→ PHYSICAL

Physical exercise is a tried and true way of improving your overall wellbeing, but finding time and motivation is often harder than the actual exercise. Walks and exposure to nature [11; 12] is a great alternative when carving out time to do something more regimented is out of the question. It is also a good alternative to having meetings or breaks inside, as well as supporting your colleagues wellbeing as well.

→ SOCIAL SUPPORT

Agreeing with colleagues about how you can best support and promote each other's wellbeing is a good way of constructing a more supportive work environment [6]. Take breaks together and encourage others to stimulate the social life at your workplace. Learn what your colleagues struggle with, and remember it for next time you talk.

→ BOUNDARY SETTING

Practice saying no when you have the chance to limit your workload. Start and leave work at a set time and enforce it by informing your colleagues and bosses when you stop working and answering messages for the day.

Singletasking: Practice setting up your schedule in such a way that you can spend an allocated amount of time on one task at a time, as opposed to having to switch between tasks regularly.

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The contents of the Booklet are based on the DigiWell Workbook, more references can be found there.

IMAGES IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

1. Annie Spratt on Unsplash
2. PERMA model retrieved from Strengthscope.com – What is the PERMA model of positive psychology? – Podcasts
3. Onder Ortel on Unsplash
4. Robot pictures were generated using deepai.org
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