

GROWING FOR WELLBEING WEEK (1-7 JUNE)

On 1 - 7 June, we acknowledge Growing for Wellbeing Week 2020 - the wellbeing movement that celebrates the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of gardening and growing your own produce.

Due to many of us spending a lot more time at home because of the COVID-19 outbreak, Growing for Wellbeing Week is the perfect opportunity to educate ourselves on how we can lead a more sustainable lifestyle by growing our own produce.

The emotional benefits of gardening have been well documented. Studies have found spending time gardening can help us through a period of difficulty in our lives, helping us restore balance and regain control.

Here are a few of the mental and physical wellbeing benefits of getting more involved with gardening:

Exercise - Research has found that a three to four hour session of gardening can burn as many calories as an hour at the gym. This in turn will help your body release endorphins resulting in an increased mood.

Reduces stress - Taking part in a physical activity such as gardening allows us to distract our minds from everyday stressors and focus on the task.

Self-esteem boost - By growing produce and keeping plants healthy, our self-esteem and confidence will receive a well deserved boost. Gardening also allows us to be creative and enjoy the outcome of our hard work.

Control - When our usual routine is interrupted, it can make us feel as though we have less control in our life than we would like. Organising a garden or vegetable patch can help us to regain control in one area of our life, resulting in a sense of achievement.

Getting involved with Growing for Wellbeing Week is easy - you just need to grow something! Whether it is in your garden, on your balcony or inside your home, there are endless ways in which you can feel the positive effects of growing your own produce.

You don't need to have a garden to reap the wellbeing rewards of growing your own produce. If you don't have an outdoor space to grow vegetables or plants, here are a few alternative ways on how you can get involved with Growing for Wellbeing Week:

Houseplants are affordable and easy to care for while allowing an opportunity to experiment with planting and growing different plants.

Chilli and herb plants - simply require a windowsill, sunlight and a little care.

Regrow from scraps - don't throw away scrap veg! There are many foods that you can regrow from scraps, such as potatoes, onions, garlic, kale and leeks. It's free and doesn't require a lot of space.

Starting a new hobby can be daunting, especially if you are unfamiliar with it. Try beginning with small, achievable tasks to help you take your mind off any worries or concerns you may have. Then, as your confidence builds, you can move onto larger projects.

Please remember that our Employee Assistance Programme which is provided by **Health Assured** remains available to all our employees. Health Assured can provide support on a wide range of wellbeing issues. Health Assured can be contacted 24/7 on **0800 030 5182** where professionally trained counsellors are available to take your call and provide confidential advice and support on any issue that may be concerning you. There is no cost to you for accessing the service.