



My Whole Self

My Whole Self aims to create a healthier working culture built on respect and collaboration. It's better for mental wellbeing and better for business. We are encouraging employers to create a culture where people can be themselves at work.

My Whole Self book club

Everyone has a story to tell. This activity is called **My Whole Self book club**. By running it you can empower employees to share a story about their whole self, encourage colleagues to discover new things about each other and find common ground.



Suitable for: groups



Time: 60 minutes



Materials: Share digital copies of 'book club guidelines', postcards, and our 'reading list' ahead of your My Whole Self book club

Activity

- Advertise the upcoming My Whole Self book club activity and invite employees to volunteer as **storytellers**. The storytellers are people who are comfortable choosing one aspect of their whole self to share with their colleagues at the book club.
- Ask your storytellers to fill in the **reading list** (page 3) with the topic they would like to talk about at the My Whole Self book club. This could be anything from "I am a singer" to "I have anxiety" to "I am a dad of four". Circulate the reading list and the **book club guidelines** (page 2) with attendees (your **listeners**) via email a few days ahead of the event. This is to ensure that everyone taking part knows how to keep themselves, and others, safe during the activity. Email digital copies of the book club rules to make sure these are easy to find by participants on the day.
- Use a web conferencing platform to host the My Whole Self Book Club. This could be Microsoft Teams, Skype, or whatever you usually use. Just make sure your attendees know how to set up a video call on the platform, and perhaps create a time sheet so listeners know when they can call storytellers and for how long. **We also recommend ensuring that a Mental Health First Aider, or a member of your HR team, is online or accessible via their phone, during the event.**
- On the day, make sure that listeners and storytellers know who they will be calling and at what time. Listeners can then begin a video call with a storyteller they would like to hear from, based on the topics on the reading list. They then have ten minutes together.

- While there is no set structure for the conversations, we recommend that the storyteller begins with a short summary of their chosen topic. Once they have finished, listeners can begin to ask questions.

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Book club guidelines

My Whole Self encourages conversations about any aspect of someone's 'whole self' – this may include conversations around challenging topics. It is important that guidelines are put in place to ensure everyone is safe and comfortable. Please share these guidelines with the whole group of listeners and storytellers ahead of time.

1. Before starting the event remind all participants that, unless stated by the storyteller, **all conversations at the My Whole Self book club are confidential.** The stories should not be discussed outside of the event without the storyteller's consent.
2. Ensure that there are no more than two listeners calling a storyteller at any one time.
3. If you have a member of your HR team or a Mental Health First Aider present, make sure their details have been sent to attendees. This could be their phone number, email address, or web conferencing details. If you don't have a dedicated HR person or Mental Health First Aider in your organisation, appoint someone to refer participants to appropriate sources of support if needed during the event.
4. All participants are encouraged to use the phrases below if they feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed at any time during the activity, when listening to or sharing a story.

Storytellers and listeners can stop at any time they wish. They can say that **"Story time is over for now"** and the session will come to a close with no questions asked.

If a storyteller does not wish to answer a question, they can decline to answer it by saying: **"That part of the story is just for me. But what I can tell you about is..."**



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Reading list

When we can be our whole self at work, it's better for our wellbeing. We understand each other and work better together.

Everyone has a story to tell. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England is encouraging workplaces across the country to empower their employees to share stories about themselves. This activity is called **My Whole Self book club**.

Come along to the book club to discover new things about your colleagues and have the chance to ask questions. See the list below to find out who you will hear from and what they will be talking about.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Storyteller	Topic



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