



My Whole Self

My Whole Self: Desert island favourites

We all deserve to feel valued and empowered to be our whole self at work. When people feel psychologically safe, teams can unlock innovation and excellence.

Brought to you by Mental Health First Aid England®, My Whole Self is the campaign for workplace culture change. We want organisations to empower employees to bring their whole self to work. That includes background, sexuality, religion, gender, health, and mental health.

By bringing together diversity and inclusion with health and wellbeing, we can drive positive transformation in workplace mental health and performance. At MHFA England®, we believe wellbeing and productivity fuel one another. We know teams that feel safe and connected work better together.

Inspired by BBC Radio 4's famous Desert Island Discs, this activity encourages team members to connect, discover more about one another, and find common interests. Through running this activity, you can empower employees to share a story about their whole self, perhaps linked to their favourite song, or a book they couldn't put down.



Suitable for: Groups – online or in person



Time: One hour, depending on the size of your team. (If you have a big team, consider breaking into smaller groups)



Materials: A document or slide deck prepared in advance of the session that captures each team member's Desert island favourites

Activity

Preparing for the session

1. Choose a time to hold your Desert island favourites session and share it in advance – this could be through your team, HR, on an office wide channel or via your MHFAider® network.
2. Invite each team member to confidentially send the organiser a list of their three Desert island favourites in advance of the session. As part of your invite to team members, you could include the following copy to set-up the premise of the session:
 - “Imagine you are going to be castaway to a desert island – possibly forever! You can only take one book, one song, and one luxury item to the island with you. Which author, music, and thing could you not live without? Share your list of three items confidentially beforehand and we will share them in the Desert island favourites session.”
3. Collect the list of three items from each team member.
4. Create a document or presentation to display each team member's choices.
5. Create a page or a slide for each team member within the document that includes pictures of their chosen song, book, and luxury item
 - Do not reveal or include the team member's name – the page should only show the pictures

6. Create a randomised running order for sharing each team member's choices. Keep the running order private. Don't forget to keep a confidential list of which items belong to who.

- Your slide could look like the following:



- **Optional extra:** To add to the session you could create a playlist of each person's favourite songs. You just need to order the songs in in the running order. You can create the playlist on Spotify, or your chosen music streaming service, and share it after the session with everyone as the team playlist.

Hosting the session

1. If running the session online, use your usual platform to host the Desert island favourites event. If hosting the event face to face, make sure you have a suitable space booked and ensure that the technology to play any music, or share slides, works.
2. Share your screen and your Desert island favourites presentation.
3. Kick off the session by reminding everyone of the three types of items they were asked to choose, should they be castaway to a desert island. For each page or slide in the document:
 - Talk your team through each team member's choices – but remember to just talk about the items and don't reveal who they belong to



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- **Optional extra:** If you created a playlist for the session then play a snippet of the song for each team member whilst showing the page with their chosen items
4. After you have told the group about the chosen book, song, and luxury item on the page then invite the team members to guess who is behind the choices.
 5. Whether the team guess correctly or not, invite the individual behind the choices to reveal themselves. Ask the team member behind the choices to explain the story of why they chose the items they could not live without and why they are their favourites. Do they represent specific memories, relationships, or key milestones in their life?
 6. Work your way through the running order until everyone's favourite song, book, and luxury item has been revealed.

After the session

- **Optional extra:** If you created a playlist then share the link with everyone after the session