

WELLBEING

National Simplicity Day

12th July 2020



“In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness s” - Henry David Thoreau

On the 12th July 2020, we acknowledge National Simplicity Day - the annual campaign that asks us all the take a step back from our hectic lives and live in the moment.

Meaning behind National Simplicity Day
National Simplicity Day was founded in honour of Henry David Thoreau - who shares the same birthday as the wellbeing event. Thoreau was an author, naturalist, philosopher and historian and was involved in the early transcendentalist movement in the United States.

At its core, transcendentalism is a philosophical belief that by nature, all humans are inherently good. While it's acknowledged that society and institutions have the ability to corrupt an individual, transcendentalists believe that people are at their best when truly self-reliant and independent.

How do I celebrate the day?

It may sound like a simple premise, but for some people, taking time out of their busy routine is not a simple task. In the

age of social media, smartphones and 24/7 news, there are multiple ways for us to be contacted or distracted at any given time.

Pausing your life for a brief moment and taking a breath can do wonders for your emotional wellbeing. Here, we have listed a few tips on how to observe National Simplicity Day in a way that is meaningful to you:

Educate yourself: New to the concept of simplifying your life? Spend a couple of hours researching Henry David Thoreau, transcendentalism and the history of the event.

The important things: What's important in your life? Make a note of all the things that are the most meaningful to you e.g. family, friends, pets. Then think about how much time do you dedicate to those things versus the time you spend on less rewarding activities such as browsing through social media.

Impulse buying: Do you tend to buy non-essential items on a whim? If so, write a list before a shopping trip. If it's not on the list, don't buy it.

Unplug yourself: How long do you go without checking your phone or personal device? Embrace the simple life by putting down your phone and explore the outdoors. Even an afternoon in the garden can help you detach yourself from the stressors of the normal routine.

The benefits of simplicity

Living a simpler existence has numerous benefits to your emotional, financial and

physical wellbeing. Here are just a few of them:

Improved finances: By buying less non-essential times, you will have more funds to spend on the things that are meaningful to you.

Health boost: The more simple you make your life, the less likely you will become stressed. Excessive stress levels can often lead to health ailments such as high blood pressure, fatigue and migraines.

More freedom: By spending less time worrying about the non-essential aspects of your life, you will be free from stress triggers and be able to enjoy life's simple joys, e.g. spending time with loved ones, long walks etc.

In summary, National Simplicity Day isn't about completely changing your life. It's an opportunity to reflect on what's important to you and to explore the lifestyle alterations you can make to get the most out of these parts of your life.

It's important to know that if you need to access our services to discuss any concerns you may have, our [confidential helpline](#) is available 24/7, 365.

Alternatively, you can visit our portal to view advice articles, webinars and 4-week programmes all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing:

www.healthassuredeap.com

TOPICAL

International Day of Friendship

30th July 2020



The 30th of July is the International Day of Friendship, a UN initiative that rejects poverty, violence and human rights abuses and promotes peace, security and social harmony.

International Day of Friendship is worldwide event that aims to develop strong and diverse relationships between people, groups, cultures and countries globally.

Benefits of friendship

There is a distinct connection between wellbeing and friendship - simply put, good friends are good for your health. They help you celebrate the successes in your life, such as a new job, as well as providing a listening ear and support network when you experience lows, such as a bereavement.

Maintaining the significant relationships in our lives brings numerous health benefits, such as increasing our self-esteem and confidence, reducing our stress levels and boosting our sense of purpose and belonging.

As well as the wellbeing benefits that friendships bring, our friends help us become more well-rounded individuals. For example, through our relationships with others we learn about different cultures, beliefs and languages.

The difficulties of making new friendships

As our lives progress, many of us find it difficult to develop new friendships. This is often because of new priorities that require our focus and attention, such as work, childcare or carer responsibilities.

In addition, your long-lasting friendships might become strained due to you relocating to a new community or simply because of changes in your lives and interests. The result of which can have negative effect on your mental health and wellbeing.

Taking part during COVID-19

The International Day of Friendship is the perfect opportunity to take stock of the friendships you have, and look forward to building upon those relationships for the future. While the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly introduced new challenges in our lives, there are still plenty of ways for us to celebrate the worldwide event:

Find out about other cultures: The world is getting smaller and smaller. The population is growing yet we can all communicate with each other instantaneously. This is a great thing for the curious—we have access to the sum total of human knowledge at our fingertips, and can chat with people from different cultures as easily as we can chat to the person in the next room. Use the day to read about people whose lives are almost unimaginably different—and maybe reach out to a few, and see where it takes you.

Spend time with friends and family: In our busy lives, we often forget to pause and reach out to those who are closest to us. Take the time on the International Day of Friendship to slow down a little, and catch up with the friends and family you maybe neglect a little with your busy schedule.

Get together - either virtually or at a safe distance - switch off your phones, and revel in each other's company. By making time to be social, you'll strengthen the bonds that hold your friendships together, and make a positive difference to the lives of people who care about you.

During a time where many of us may feel isolated from the rest of the world, it's vital that we maintain strong friendships with people we feel close to, because as part of a wider group, we can more easily bring positivity to the wider world.

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LEGAL

Disabilities in the workplace



Under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), there are nine protected characteristics protecting individuals from discrimination in society and the workplace.

Disability is a protected characteristic under the Act, the legislation outlines when an individual is deemed disabled and protected from discrimination. The Act defines a disability as 'a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The definition is broad and there are a wide variety of conditions and impairments that will be considered a disability under the Act. Some impairments automatically meet the definition of a disability under the Act, these include; HIV/Aids, multiple sclerosis, cancer, blindness/sever sight impairment and severe disfigurement

The Act excludes certain conditions from the definition of a disability. For example, a condition which causes an individual to commit a criminal offence such as Kleptomania, an uncontrollable urge to steal something. In addition, addictions to or dependency upon alcohol and nicotine are not regarded as disabilities under the Act.

Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace

According to the Commons Research Briefing published in January 2020, 19% of the UK working age population reported having a disability between July-September 2019, approximately 7.9 million people. This research also showed that 53.2% of people with a disability are currently in employment, which indicates that there is a large number of people with a protected characteristic in the workplace. The Act protects employees with disabilities in the workplace and requires employers to treat them with dignity and respect.

Employers may have to make reasonable adjustments to enable employees with disabilities to work and to ensure they are not disadvantaged in the workplace. This may require seeking consultation of an occupational health professional where necessary. This assessment allows employers to understand whether someone may have a protected characteristic and any adjustments that may be beneficial to implement. Although an occupational health professional cannot diagnose a disability, they are able to assess how an employee's work may be affected and if there is anything the employer can do to assist them in the workplace.

Employers should assess the reasonability of the requested adjustment by considering the needs of the employee, the cost to the business, the practicality of implementing the change and whether the adjustment could cause other individuals harm.

Some examples of adjustments that may be implemented are extra aids in the workplace such as a wheelchair ramp or specialist equipment, or changing the employees shift pattern. An individualised approach is needed as each person's may be different.

Discrimination

Unlawful discrimination is the unfair or less favourable treatment of an individual because they have a protected characteristic under the Act. Disability discrimination occurs when the unfair treatment is because the individual has a disability specifically. There are four types of discrimination that could affect an individual:

Direct discrimination: Individuals being treated less favourably due to their disability because they are thought to have a disability or because they associate with someone who has, or is believed to have a disability.

Indirect discrimination: Employers applying workplace policies across an entire organisation, but in doing so they disadvantage individuals with a disability.

Harassment: Unwanted conduct that creates a hostile environment and targets

an individual's physical or mental impairment.

Victimisation: Being victimised and treated unfairly because an individual has raised a complaint about being discriminated or witnessing discrimination.

Disabilities in the workplace and obligations during COVID-19

If a worker is considered disabled under the Act and deemed higher risk of developing severe illness during the pandemic due to a compromised immune system, employers may have a legal duty under that Act to make reasonable adjustments to the employee's working arrangements. Employers also have a duty under the Act to implement reasonable adjustments that disabled workers may require when working from home.

Northern Ireland

The Equality Act 2010 applies to England, Scotland and Wales. The main anti-discrimination law in Northern Ireland is the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In Northern Ireland, section 4A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 imposes a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people in the workplace.

Republic of Ireland

The Equality Act 2010 does not apply to the Republic of Ireland. The general position under the main anti-discrimination law in Ireland (The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015) is that employers are required to make certain 'reasonable' adjustments to the workplace to allow individuals with disability to carry out their role.

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