



# Wellbeing

## Considerate

## Listening to our bodies

Our bodies are amazing, aren't they? Yet, when life and work is busy and rushed, we can sometimes take our bodies for granted or just ignore those little aches and pains. Our bodies not only keep the score\* of what we've been through – they also act as early warning signs of how we are doing and our overall health. Taking time to stop and check in on how our bodies are can be helpful. It's about creating space, listening and being considerate to ourselves. Learning to listen to our bodies is a great practice to develop for our wellbeing. Here's a couple of ideas.

### **Cherishing our bodies**

We have a complex relationship with our body, sometimes we don't like our body shape – we think we are too thin or too fat, or we're not keen on certain aspects of ourselves. It's so easy to compare ourselves to others, generating negative feelings that can be destructive. One way to try and deal with these is to begin to think differently; to learn to cherish our body – whatever our shape, size or looks. This can be through gratitude and by being thankful. We can pause, slow down and listen - paying attention and being grateful for how our bodies work and how they see us through a day.

Today, try to think about something you appreciate about your body and say it out loud – it's hard but it can be so powerful.

### **Connecting body and mind**

Recognising that our body and mind are interconnected is key in learning to listen to our bodies. One way of doing this is by placing a hand over our heart and noting its beating rhythm - paying attention to our breathing and feeling the rise and fall of our chest. Now listen. Is your body tense, tired, in pain, relaxed or thirsty? Do you feel hungry, worried or anxious, jittery or achy? You may be surprised to learn what's going on inside of you.

Slowing down like this allows us to listen to our body, doing it regularly helps us know what is normal for us, keeping track of our health and acting on anything that is not right. We don't have to be driven by the expectations of others - either of who we are or what we look like. We can celebrate being us and be grateful for who we are and the body we have.

\* We wrote a previous piece about this, but further reading could be *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk