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## **Spice Up Your Life**

As we go through life we adopt habits and get into routines that can become automatic. Does life seem a little flat, same old thing day in day out? What would adding some spice to your life do for you? As the old saying goes:

*“Variety is the SPICE of life.”*

I first came across the SPICE model whilst working as a play leader for an inner London charity working with disabled children and their families.

This simple and effective model, which was originally used to plan activities for children around their Social, Physical, Intellectual, Creative and Emotional development, will support you to have more balance and control over how you manage your stress levels.

**Socialise** – setting time aside to see family and friends is one positive step you can take. Another thing you can do is to take up activities that you enjoy. Look around in your local community as there is probably a group that is running sessions in something you enjoy. This will also provide you with an opportunity to increase your circle of support by making new friends; this will also help to increase your confidence.

**Physical** – spending as little as 20 minutes a day doing some form of exercise will increase your physical wellbeing. Going for a brisk walk, practicing yoga or going for a swim are just a few ideas that spring to mind. Then there is your physical environment; living or working in a cramped, cluttered environment can have a negative impact on your wellbeing. Keeping your physical environment tidy and organised will reduce the negative impact.

**Intellectual** – stimulate the brain by finding fun and interesting ways of using it. Activities include reading, doing Sudoku, and taking part in quizzes are just a number of ways to keep the brain cells fresh. Learning new things gives us a feeling of accomplishment and will boost your self-confidence.

**Creative** – doing something creative is fun and as your work doesn't have to be seen or heard by anyone unless you choose to, this allows you to have a go and not worry about what other people think. You can draw, paint, or use clay to sculpt; there are plenty of fun and interesting ways to be creative.

**Emotional** – taking regular time out to calm your mind will have a positive impact on your day to day life. Spending as little as 20 minutes a day practicing meditation or performing deep breathing exercises will be beneficial. Another positive activity is to write down all the things that have made you feel happy throughout the day before going to bed – especially the little things.

***“Happiness is not something readymade.  
It comes from your own actions”  
Dalai Lama***