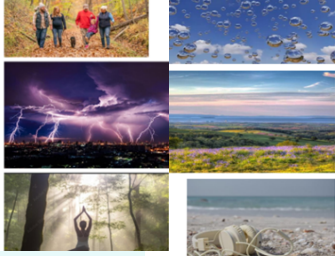


# Project on Staff Wellbeing and Self-Care Strategies in an EYs Setting

For this project we used creative methods to really engage staff. The process was split into stages, each designed to be practical, interactive, and meaningful.



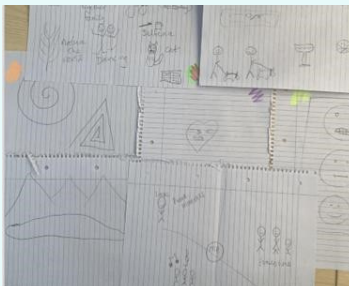
## What did we do?

### We started with...

Two fun, creative tasks, which generated some great reflections and discussions.

Photo Elicitation involved staff picking a photo from the internet that represented self-care and wellbeing to them.

Free Drawing involved everyone drawing something that symbolised self-care and wellbeing to them. Participants were encouraged to draw personalised images that reflected their own thoughts and feelings.



## Next

We brought in professionals to run some hands-on wellbeing demonstrations. This gave staff a chance to experience these practices firsthand and see what resonated with them. They included:

- Mindful walks to connect with nature;
- Breathing exercises;
- a sound bath;
- Narrative storytelling to encourage quiet reflection.

Staff also got signposted to a set of tried-and-tested self-care strategies they could explore at their own pace. These can be seen here - [Anna Freud Self-Care Resources](#)).

## Finally

We wrapped things up with a debrief. Participants filled out a questionnaire and joined a group discussion to reflect and share their experiences.

Go to page 2 to find out what difference it made....



## What did we learn? What difference did this make?

### The Drawings and Photos

It's clear from these drawings that self-care looks different for everyone, but the core idea remains the same: balance is everything. Whether it's a walk in nature, jamming to your favorite tunes, or planning time with friends, these little acts of care can make a big difference. The drawings were layered with meaning, often combining multiple elements into intricate compositions.

The photos were also really interesting to study, nature popped up as a recurring theme—think green spaces, calming views, and outdoor vibes. Participants highlighted the importance of connecting with others and striking a balance between activities like music, social events, and holidays. Many reflected on past times when they'd struggled with imbalance, noting how neglecting certain areas had impacted their wellbeing. It is clear, finding harmony between work, play, and connection is key to feeling good.

### Breathing

One of the standout sessions was all about belly breathing. This practical demo focused on emotional regulation and the difference between shallow and deep breathing. Participants learned techniques like lying down and placing their hands on their abdomen to mimic a “boat” rising and falling—a fun way to bring these exercises into playtime with kids. Many participants said they started using these techniques to manage stress, handle tough household moments, and even sleep better. It turns out something as simple as breathing deeply can make a big difference and it's free!

### Awareness

The project pushed participants to think differently about self-care. Some activities challenged their comfort zones—like walking barefoot outside in the cold and dark (a sensory adventure they probably won't repeat). But even these moments sparked reflection and helped them see self-care in new, accessible ways. By the end, there was a clear connection between this increased awareness and those higher wellbeing scores collected in the questionnaires. Sometimes, the smallest, simplest changes can have the biggest impact.

### Time

Throughout the project, participants kept circling back to how hard it is to find time for self-care. But this process gave them permission to pause, connect, and focus on wellbeing. By the end, many said they were making an effort to slow down and savor little moments, whether at work or in their personal lives. This shift toward mindfulness felt like a breath of fresh air in an often hectic sector.