

Ways to Wellbeing and Recovery

- Strengthening our Responses to Covid-19



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This time last year, when first confronted with Covid-19 many assumed that it was to be a short phenomenon at worst. I was one such person. Alas not so.



It goes without saying it has been quite a tough year overcoming loss and disappointment. The year has necessitated digging deep to find resilience and hope. It is now a journey of personal recovery with a new sense of hope for many of us. It is helpful to take a step back, and seek out the little things in life, as these can help distract and bring about positive change and generate hope for a return to a more sociable existence. Using the Five Ways to Wellbeing can help us on this journey of recovery. These are:

1. CONNECT

Connecting with people around us is important and perhaps something we took for granted before Covid impacted us. Presently it has taken on new importance. The regular means now are various online technical platforms. However, they are a good alternative to maintain facetime with family members and friends.

2. BE ACTIVE

Usually, when we think of being active more often than not, it is about exercise, walking or cycling. However, we can be active through our hobbies and interests, such as gardening. Enjoying the benefits of fresh air, taking a short stroll cannot be overstated. It is important to know that any level of exercise generates wellbeing.

3. TAKE NOTICE

Generally, this is associated with mindfulness; for some being mindful works, others maybe not so much. My preference is short breathing exercise or simply standing back and taking in nature's colours and sounds. It is free exercise! Slow down when you know you are beginning to feel anxious, stop and take a breather for 30 seconds, or breath in for three and let out for four.

4. KEEP LEARNING

No matter our status, it is helpful to have an open mind about learning, e.g. what "learning" will you take from reading this article?! Check www.aontas.ie

5. GIVE

Back to basics. It is about saying thank you, smiling and expressing gratitude or doing something helpful. By talking and listening, we can help each other, reflect on our concerns, and come to appreciate what really does matter at the end of the day. However, I am also adamant that each one of us must "give" to ourselves, be kind and give ourselves small treats!



Consider using the five ways as a daily habit. Additionally, it has been noted that people change best by feeling good, not by feeling bad. Here is the exercise.

- 1: Write this phrase on a small piece of paper: *I change best by feeling good, not by feeling bad.*
- 2: Tape the piece of paper to your wall or a mirror where you can see it frequently.
- 3: Read the phrase often.
- 4: Notice how this insight works in your life – and the people around you. (Tiny Habits – The Small Changes that Change Everything, BJ Fogg PhD Penguin 2019)



42%

don't know who to call if they need support/help in coping with life challenges.



76%

say Covid negatively affected their social life.

Finola lives with her family on their farm in Westmeath and is co-author of *Coping with the Pressures of Farming*, available free to download with many other helpful resources.

<https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/your-mental-health/farming-resilience/>

CASE STUDY: OVERCOMING DIFFICULTY



← Eric Lally

How a love of farming helped Eric Lally overcome personal and business challenges to build a successful business.

On the 9 July 1990, Eric Lally (17) had been farming with his father in Fohenagh before heading to Kenny Park in Athenry, the home of Galway hurling, where he was a member of the minor hurling squad. Setting out that day, little did Eric know the life-changing events that lay ahead. By evening, a serious road traffic accident had taken away the use of his legs and, along with a long list of other medical complications, meant that he would never hurl again.

For a while after the accident things looked bleak for Eric's future career because although his love of farming was not affected, his disability meant that attending Agricultural College was no longer feasible. However, after several tough years of mental and physical adjustment, Eric's interest in farming helped his career take off. Today, he not only runs the family farm but has expanded it, adding an agricultural contracting business that covers round baling, slurry spreading and tillage work.

Currently, Eric has a herd of 40 sucklers bringing their progeny to finish, 200 ewes and 60 acres of tillage.

Like many farmers, he is worried about the future of the beef industry both from his own perspective and from that of his contracting clients. Over the last few years he started growing beet which he harvests and stockpiles in October and December. He also sells rolled barley to a client base that is predominantly made up of beef farmers trying to minimise costs.

Eric has two full time employees, Shane and Colin, and carefully manages the business to ensure he has work all year around. He is acutely aware of how hard it can be to attract and retain good labour.

On life's challenges Eric says the biggest thing for him is the sense of independence he gets from being able to operate farm machinery which means he is not in his wheelchair 24/7. New technology also means that every few years innovations come along that enhance his working day— from his reversible plough, to his one pass system, McHale fusion baler and GPS for fertiliser spreading.

Eric's 'can do' attitude is a breath of fresh air and his farming operation and contracting work are truly inspiring. His only complaint is that running the business involves too much paperwork so he gets ifac bookkeeper Dymna Delaney to call to him every two months to keep him on the straight and narrow.