

Me and my sleep



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Introduction

This workbook does not replace professional advice. There can be many reasons why our sleep pattern is not what we find most helpful and it maybe you need to speak to a professional health care provider about your own unique circumstances.

This has been put together in response to the growing number of people sharing how disturbed they find their sleep to be at present. This workbook was created in March 2022, a time when we were still facing some restrictions as a result of the COVID_19 pandemic, while also trying to adapt to a new normal. For many, this new normal included additional concerns around rising fuels costs and general cost of living rises, as well as trying to find ways to work through the challenges the pandemic brought not only to health, the loss of a loved one, the impact on children and young people, but also in managing the change of this new world we find ourselves in, with increasing concerns for climate change, unrest in other parts of the world and so much more.

... and we wonder why we may have difficulty sleeping!

Many of the tools in this workbook are relevant to any point in time, however, they will make reference to the impact of the pandemic as at the time of writing this booklet, it is still with us. We hope you find something here which is of use. We have also included at the back of the workbook other sites which may be of interest. These were correct at the time of publication, but please check current arrangements as things do change.

Hoping you find something to help offer you a good night's sleep and pleasant dreams.



Tips for using the workbook

If you have never used a workbook before for self-management, here are some tips you may find helpful:

- Do it because it matters to you, and you think it will offer some value to your life.
- Decide where and when you can have time to work through the materials so you can give them your full attention.
- Decide if you need a self-management buddy, you can run ideas by. They can help to be a sounding board. This doesn't need to be a therapist, unless you struggle with broader mental ill-health issues. A trusted and supportive family member, friend or peer can also be a buddy.
- It is helpful to have a notebook for capturing reflections as you work through the booklet. Maybe think about using a pencil so you can rub out and edit where you need to. You could also record your thoughts, on your phone or laptop if this were possible, and something you found helpful, to listen to later and reflect on.
- Before you start each session using the workbook, make time to unwind in a way you feel is most helpful for you. There are some ideas on the COPE Scotland website www.cope-scotland.org
- Please don't force it. If you find some sections are a struggle, leave it, come back another day. There is a lot to this workbook and not every section will be relevant for everyone. Go at a pace works for you.
- The workbook offers some ideas to consider, some space to reflect, some tips to consider and invitations for you to decide what action you plan to take and when. This is your choice and its important to remember that. The workbook is there for you and not another thing you feel you must do. We hope it's something you find you enjoy doing.
- Do it at a time where you have the space to think and remember, if you need to speak to someone about anything that comes up for you, please do. Sometimes we can find things become very overwhelming and we need to speak to someone.



Communicating how you feel, or what you are thinking

We have included some tips here on communication. For all this workbook is aimed at self-management around our sleep routines, we recognise that sometimes in understanding one part of ourselves other questions may arise. Some people find it easier to seek support than others. The issue is, we may all need support at some time and knowing how to communicate our needs, can help us to connect with that support.

The following offer some general tips on opening up to someone about how you feel, which may or may not be useful for you right now, however, we want to try and make this workbook as helpful a resource as possible.



Tips on the art of communication

Decide what it is you want to share

How you plan to communicate that, if there are any communication barriers to be addressed, what can you do to help overcome them? If possible, pick a time and place where you can communicate without distractions e.g. reaching out to a friend whose attention maybe focused on their kids at that moment may not be a good idea, arranging a time where you can both connect undisturbed and privately may work better.

Let the person know what your intentions are

Sometimes when communicating how we feel the other person may worry they need to 'fix it'. Rather than focusing on what you are sharing, they are thinking about a solution. Opening up can start with 'I don't need you to fix anything or jump in with a solution, I just need someone to be there while I share what I am thinking and feeling, which can help me decide what next'. You are setting the scene and letting the person know you want to share and what you ask of them is to be there for you. Let the person know, just how much it meant to you, and you appreciate them offering this time and letting you know, they care.

Be kind if the person receiving the information asks a question

This means they are paying attention. It also may mean they need time to process the information and make sure they are understanding what is being shared. Effective communication happens when both parties respect each other, trust each other and feel safe to be open and honest about how they feel. Recognising sometimes there can be practical barriers to communication and working together to find a way these can be overcome.

People aren't mind readers

So you need to take responsibility for being understood. Don't worry if you feel what you are sharing is may be all over the place. Sometimes when we do open up for the first time, we have so much to share it comes in a rush. Just be patient with the person we are communicating with and say "I know this may not seem to make sense, bear with me". Sometimes we need that space of just letting it all pour out so we ourselves can start to make sense of what we are thinking and feeling. This is why its important people know we want them to simply receive what we want to share not solve anything. Sometimes we just need to know we are not alone and someone is paying attention, even when what we are sharing doesn't always make sense, even to ourselves. Find a method of communication that works for you, if there are barriers to communication explore how they can be overcome e.g. writing it down, or using sign language, or an interpreter. Sometimes communication itself can be a challenge, recognising barriers and seeking ways to overcome them, is also part of the art of communication.

Communicating with ourselves

This may seem a strange heading, however, we communicate with ourselves all the time. We all have an inner voice which chatters away to us pretty much constantly. Some of it we are aware of, some we may not even realise we are doing.

This inner voice can be an ally for us, it can also be a further challenge as it can get in the road of us falling or staying asleep. We may even find our inner voice sabotages our efforts to get a decent sleep by constantly saying how we don't sleep well, to a point perhaps where it doesn't even recognise when we do have a decent night's sleep.

We will cover the inner voice in a later chapter, for now, we simply want to flag up, it exists.

You may find it helpful just now to visit the video on the COPE Scotland site www.cope-scotland.org 'What are your saying to yourself, because you are listening'.



Tips for a kinder inner voice

We all have an inner voice, speak to yourself as you would to someone you love and don't want to hurt, someone you want to see succeed and you care about.

Drop I can't or I won't

Sometimes we set ourselves up to fail even before we start, if you want to feel better and it's in your interests to act use a motivating inner voice to say I can do this, even when it's hard; as that's when you need an inner motivating voice the most.

Start a new story in your heads

Instead of worrying about what may happen when you try something new, focus instead of how wonderful it will be trying something new and how great you will feel after you have done this, even if it's a scary thing, even more important you tell yourself an upbeat story.

Avoid people who pull you down

Sometimes the inner voices we hear reflect the unkindness of how others have treated us. Limit contact with people who pull you down, find new people who inspire you and you too can be an inspiration for encouraging others.

Remind yourself every day of things you are grateful for

Don't get caught up in all that is wrong or you fear, it changes the way you view the world, look for the good ... it is there.

How are you sleeping just now?

Please remember, this workbook does not replace professional advice. If you need to speak to someone about what has been happening to you, or how you are feeling that is impacting on your sleep, please speak to your GP, or other local health care provider. There are also phone helplines e.g., Breathing space in Scotland **Tel: 0800 83 85 87 Samaritans 116 123**

It maybe your sleep is disturbed as you do not feel safe, there may be some issues of trauma which you need support to work through, or you may still feel your safety is threatened by the actions of another. There are safety services who may be able to help including, but not exclusively, Women's Aid.

It maybe you work nightshift or have had changes in your working hours which is causing sleep disturbances. The more we understand what may be getting in the road of a decent sleep, the more we may find ways to overcome that.

We have also included some contacts at the back of the workbook. It maybe you are receiving care from someone and feel the questions may be triggers to cause you distress. Seek advice before using this workbook or use it with the support of your health care provider.

The following exercises are not a replacement for professional advice, they are for self-care and self -management or as a tool for reflection.



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, complete the following sentences in your sleep journal notebook. These are sentences you may find helpful to complete weekly to see if anything changes, so making a note of the date can be helpful.

Date:



A decent night's sleep for me means:

In the past week I would say my sleep has been:

I think my sleep has been this way because:

To help me get a better sleep I:

It is also worth reflecting has there been anything significant happened in this week e.g., have you been on holiday, has work been carried out in the house. Has there been anything out of the ordinary which may be worth capturing? Capture that also with your sentence completion notes. You may think it's the same question as "I think my sleep has been this way because".

It is similar, but it's not the exact same. It is an additional point for reflection to invite you to think has anything happened the past week which I may have overlooked.

The past week:

Visualising our sleep goal has been achieved

If we take time to reflect on what it is, we are seeking to achieve it can make planning our goals so much easier. Visualisation is a technique which can help us to imagine, our goal is achieved, and we have the sleep pattern which suits our wellbeing. The following tips offer some ideas on visualisation.



Tips for visualisation

What is creative visualisation?

We can think of creative visualisation as a way of using your imagination, to help create what you want to happen in your life. We do it all the time and probably aren't even aware of it. We may decide we want toasted cheese. We imagine the lovely warm toasted bread with the melting cheese. We may have none of these ingredients so need to go to the shops to get them. To do this we need money so need to look for our card or cash. In our mind we imagined toasted cheese, and before we know it, our feet are taking us along a line of decisions which result in us enjoying eating this lovely feast! It started with an idea, the more our imagination focused on a reality where this was something we were doing, the more motivated we were to make it happen and it did!

Why does it matter what we imagine?

It's amazing how much our thinking goes into creating what happens next. Using our imagination towards goals which matter to us will help us move towards having or achieving what we visualise. However, our faith in our ability to achieve that matters, when we visualise something, we also need to believe this is something we can do. There are many pieces on www.cope-scotland.org you may find helpful for increasing confidence. It is also really important we take time to think, what is it I want, what do I want to make manifest in my life.

How does this work?

Our thinking is pretty complex, in addition to the thinking we are aware of, our consciousness there is also our preconscious mind, it's kind of there if we need it but we don't think about it all the time. Then there is our unconscious mind. Like an iceberg, we only see what is above and just below the water, the bulk of the iceberg is hidden from view. This is also true of our unconscious. However, this is where our fears live, the self-doubts, attitudes and experiences which can hold us back from reaching our potential. Creative visualisation is a way to help us override any self-limiting beliefs we may have, by helping us develop new attitudes about ourselves and what we are capable of.

How do I start?

The aim of creative visualisation is to bring something into your life which wasn't there before or imagine a new life where something which isn't helpful for you is no longer an issue. The key things to remember are, it needs to be something which really matters to you and view it in the positive. If you are in a job you hate, don't visualise leaving that job, instead visualise yourself in a new job which makes you feel fulfilled. What does that new job look like? Be clear on what your goals are maybe include bullet points to achieve those goals. Knowing what your goals are and why they matter is really important for visualisation so please take time on this. Tune into your gut reaction, does this feel right? The clearer your vision the more it matters to you, the more motivated you will be to make it manifest. When you realise you maybe imagining something you don't yet know how to do don't worry about that as in setting your goals this is something you can work towards. The stronger the memory you are making of visualising yourself having already succeeded, the stronger will be your motivation to get there.

Give it time and be relaxed

Thinking about what we really want in our lives and why, is sometimes easier said than done. Give it time, don't rush it. When you are planning to think about this, spend some time first getting relaxed and do this at a time when you won't be disturbed, so try and switch off your mobile! You may want to have a relaxing bath first or listen to some music which inspires you.

What resources do I need?

Creative visualisation happens in your mind. The resources you need is your attention. Being mindful can help focus our attention. A pen and paper to journal, and perhaps to make a vision board. You can also use images and words from magazines to create your vision board, whatever works for you. The aim is to take what is in your mind and put it in front of you in words or pictures to help what you want to make manifest even clearer in your mind. Time can be sometimes hard to find. To begin with, even if you can make 20 minutes a day, every day, this can make a difference. It is better to perhaps use less time more frequently than a lot of time now and then.



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, complete the following sentences in your sleep journal notebook. These are sentences you may find helpful to complete weekly to see if anything changes, so making a note of the date can be helpful.



Date:

My vision of how I will feel after a good sleep is:

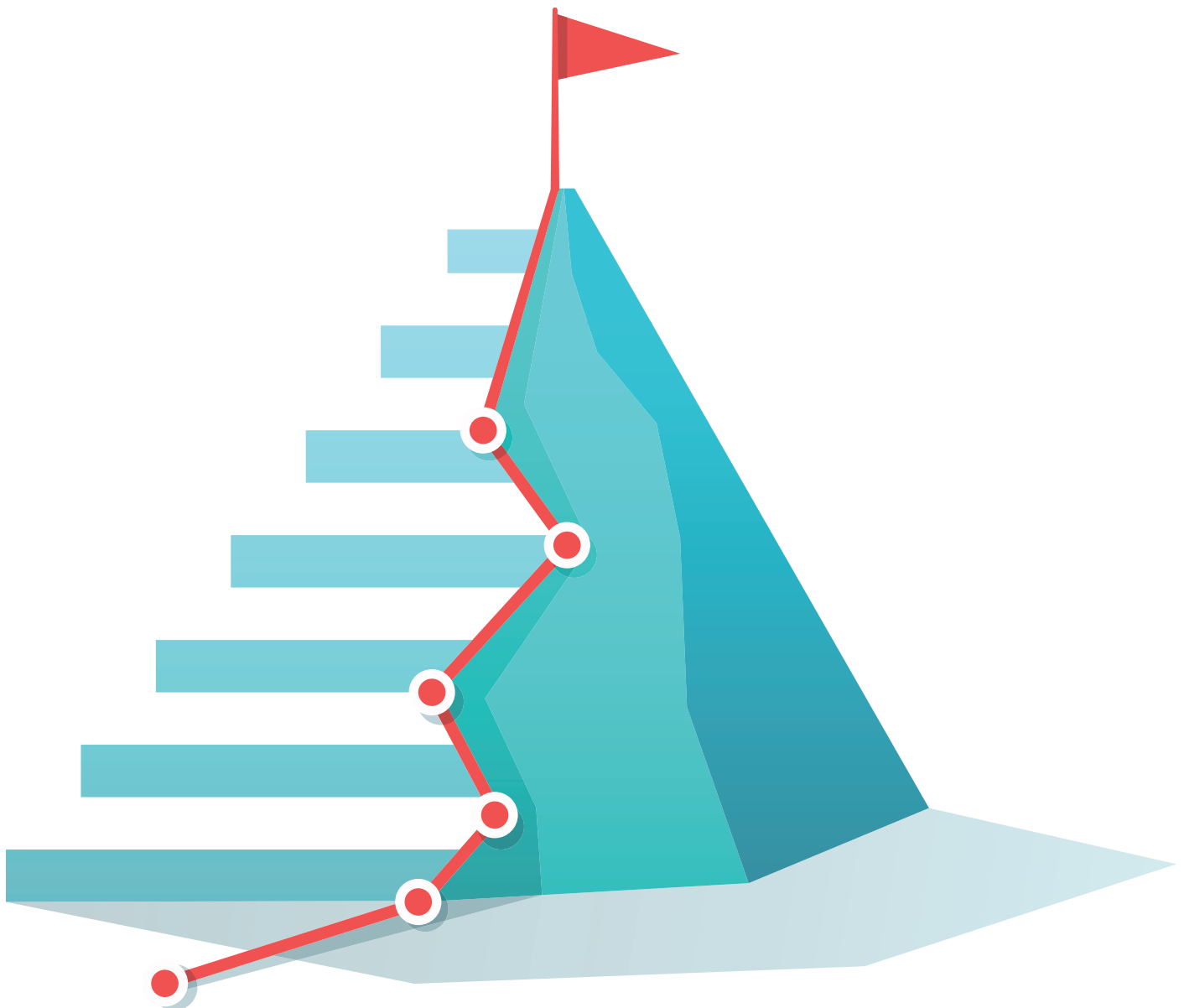
To have that good sleep I will:

The images and words which suggest healthy sleep to me are:

Your sleep goals

When we start out to make a change it's always helpful to have a goal worked out which we are working towards. Our goals can change as we make progress, or decide we have new priorities but starting with a goal helps us focus our energy. When we are not sleeping well, this can affect our energy levels, so having a clear goal in mind can help us plan the steps to achieve that goal and use our energy in a way that works best for us.

The following tool is a useful resource for helping to set our goals. It offers space to think what you are aiming for, the steps you need to take to achieve it, the rewards you will experience by taking these steps. It also recognises the obstacles we may encounter when seeking to make a change and space to plan, how will we overcome those obstacles, or work round them.





This tool is for wellbeing promotion, if you are struggling with any issues just now, please speak to someone, you matter.

Produced by COPE Scotland, inspired by Snakes and Ladders
 @COPEScotland | www.cope-scotland.org

Goal setting snakes and ladders for a better nights sleep

We may have a memory as children of playing that well known game Snakes and Ladders? This is a variation on that theme looking at the steps we need to take to achieve our goals, the possible obstacles we may encounter, how to overcome them and the reward for each step.

How to use

- In your journal capture what is your sleep goal? Be as specific as possible. If you want, feel free to print off the snakes and ladders poster and write directly onto that, or create your own in your journal.
- In your journal capture the steps you plan to take towards achieving this sleep goal. This may take a couple of sessions, that's fine, go at a pace which works for you. It maybe you need to break your main goal into smaller goals, that is fine too.
- We all know, sometimes life gets in the way of our best intentions. Consider the obstacles to each step you have planned; this offers an opportunity to find a way to work around those obstacles. It maybe you need to plan new steps you may find work better for you.
- It matters we feel motivated to make changes. Capture in your journal, the rewards you will experience for each of the steps you plan to take. A feeling of achievement for taking the step can also be a reward. Think about what will work for you.

This poster is a motivational tool to help you plan the steps you intend to take towards a goal which has meaning for you. These are some wee ideas to help promote better sleep:

Make your bedroom a place to unwind

Decluttering your bedroom, using relaxing colours, positioning your bed in a way that works best for you can all help get a better night sleep.

Leave social media out of the bedroom

If you want a good sleep don't have mobile phones, iPad, anything which pings to let you know you have mail or updates on social media this is a time to relax and unwind not socialise.

Get into a routine

A routine before bedtime sends a signal to your mind that you are getting ready to go to sleep, also, going to bed at a regular time helps programme your mind for sleep, work out a routine which is helpful for you and try and stick to it.

No stimulants

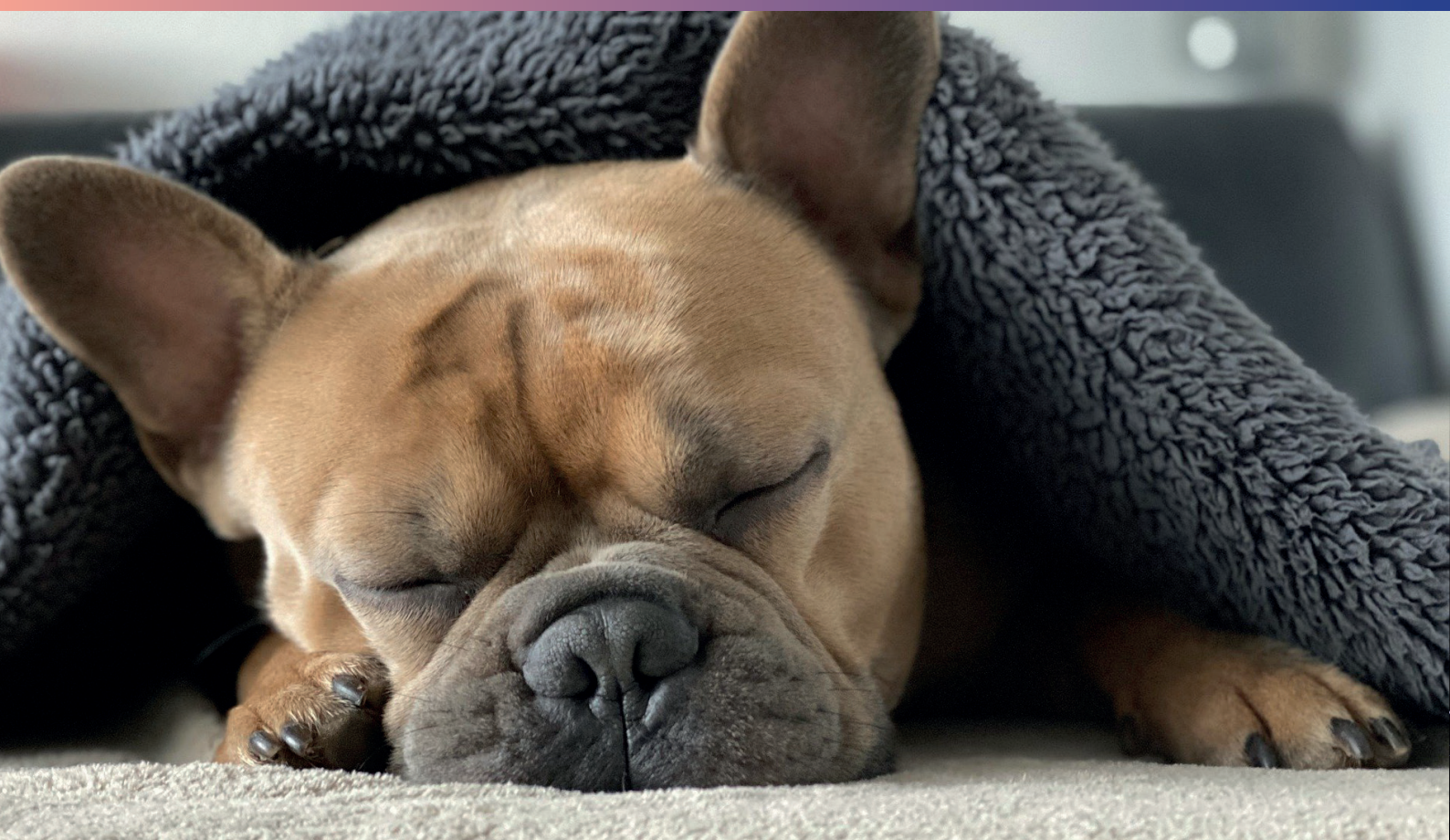
Trying to get to sleep means you want to unwind, coffee, cigarettes, fizzy drinks can all be stimulating and make it harder to sleep so avoid at least an hour before bed. Also, using alcohol is not a healthy way to get a good night's sleep and overuse can just lead to more problems. Also try and not eat anything heavy to digest before going to bed as this too can keep you awake.

Be active during the day

Exercising, going a walk, being active during the day all makes you more likely to feel tired so be more likely to go to sleep and have a good sleep once you are in bed.

If you can't sleep get up

If you find you're are lying thinking about not sleeping get up and do something boring, lying worrying about not sleeping will make it harder to sleep, get up and do something boring which will help make you feel tired and more likely to go back to bed and sleep, don't be tempted to have a cigarette or coffee this will only wake you up more.



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, begin to plan your goals, by reflecting on the following, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.



Date:

My goal for sleep is:

The steps I will take to achieve that goal are as follows:

The rewards I shall have from taking each step will be:

The obstacles for each step may include:

I will overcome those obstacles by:



Journaling for a better sleep

This workbook in itself, is a journal for improving your sleep routines. Journaling has many benefits. The following share what those are along with some tips for journaling.



Tips for Journaling

What is journaling?

There are many kinds of journals. The tips here are for journaling which can help setting goals to support well-being and capture your own thoughts in a way which helps you get to know yourself better. Journaling means writing down how you are feeling, or what you are thinking. When we put pen to paper and see something written before us, it can often make it easier to understand what we are thinking and may help us begin to work through what we need to do to help regain a sense of balance and well-being.

Journaling in therapy

Some people experiencing particular challenges e.g., around trauma may find journaling useful. However, please note, this is something best done with professional support. Using journaling in a therapeutic way can bring up many emotions and feelings and it's important you have appropriate support from someone who is qualified and experienced enough to help you work through this.

Journaling and goal setting

How often do we say, we want to be happier, more confident, feel better, life more balanced? But what does that actually mean? What would we be doing, saying, thinking, how would we be responding to others and situations in our life if we were happier, more confident, felt better, was more balanced? Journaling is a way to help us to look at where we are now, and where we want to be, it can also help us plan and keep a record of our progress towards achieving what matters to us in a way we can see, touch, feel, measure.

Making journaling a habit

The more we journal, the more we may find it useful in helping us to achieve our goals. These can be, around improving well-being, planning for a career change, moving to a new house, moving to a new country, dealing with a problem or challenge, understanding ourselves better. Whatever the goal is we have decided will be better for our lives. However, this takes time and a change in our routine to make time for this to become a regular part of our day.

From journaling to action

Most of us, if not all of us can usually offer many reasons why something didn't happen. Or feel defensive if perhaps someone says something which to them was neutral, but triggers something in us we react to and maybe even feel hostile about. In journaling we may find we write something which requires us to take a step back and think 'oh, okay, may be I do have more choices and have used excuses, or blame to stay stuck.' Remember, if you have something which you need to work through seek counselling. These tips are for self-management. To help 'own it' use 'I' as in 'I feel' 'I think' 'I want' also to help us move towards what we are wanting to achieve, use terms which suggest it's happening now e.g. 'Now I am visioning this great new job and how much more valued I feel, I am so excited.' Making your dreams come true needs action, so after each session capture even in a couple of sentences, how you feel after doing your journaling today and what action or next steps you plan to take towards the vision you want to achieve.

Journaling and motivation

Working towards change does take effort, and sometimes we may feel we can't be bothered, it's too hard, it's not happening, another challenge has cropped up. Our journals are a reminder of how far we have come, why we are doing this and can also capture what we learned to overcome when our motivation slipped. We don't have to do it all at once, and we don't have to have it all done by tomorrow. Small measured considered steps help us work towards what we want to achieve at our pace. Our visualisations when captured in our journal offer us something to reflect on why the effort just now matters and what the benefits shall be for the future.

Visualisation and journaling

To help clear your mind so you can focus on what you want to visualise you may want to try some relaxation techniques or some breathing exercises. Find one which works for you. Even 5 or 10 minutes a day can make a big difference over time. Do this before you journal or visualise in your mind the change you want to see. It may be you are enjoying packing up to move to a new home, picking colours for the décor. It may be you have moved on from a relationship which was not healthy for you. You see yourself free, confident, making the choices which matter for your well-being. The focus is one of positivity, imagine it like a film of how you want your life to be as if it was already happening. The using the senses to relax video is helpful in becoming aware of all of our senses so when we visualise the way we want our life to be we can add as much detail as possible. Which we then capture in our journal. Imagine you have succeeded, what that looks like. This is why setting goals for what we want to achieve matters so we set goals which are achievable and something we can see ourselves working towards. There is a video on www.cope-scotland.org on using all the senses to relax.

Tips for journaling time

Make time where you can do this without being distracted or concerned someone may see what you are writing. Your journal is private, it's yours. Even in therapy you may discuss if you want, what is in your journal, but you don't feel obliged to hand it over. This is your private space where you can write what you are thinking and how that makes you feel. Try and build in time each day not only to write in your journal, but also to have the space to read, and reflect on what you have written. There are many ways to journal, find a way that works for you. If you are using journaling therapeutically don't feel you need to write about the traumatic event, it's your journal, it's about what is right for you in this moment.

Tips for journaling purpose

Take some time to think what it is you want to write about, what is it you hope to achieve and take time to do this. If when you write it down it doesn't look right, no problem change it, the clearer we are on what we want to move towards the more energy we have to invest in taking those steps. This is why making space to feel calm and visualise the outcome you are seeking matters. Don't worry if at times your mind and your writing wanders, that's always something to be curious about later. This is why building in space to reflect matters and learning to be mindful so we can respond to what we see written in a way that is helpful for us.

Writing as a meditation

Some people may call it journaling, some may call it meditation. There are many kinds of meditation, there is meditation associated with Mindfulness. You may find this site useful www.freemindfulness.org/download However, there is also a form of meditation called visualisations meditation. Journaling can be used as a tool to help support this.

Why sleep matters

We have begun to explore why sleep matters to you and what your goals are, however, it's worth taking a pause to be reminded why sleep matters for all of us. There are specialist services in sleep management, this workbook does not replace that specialist support. It is for interest and self-reflection and self-management only. The following are general ideas on the importance of sleep.

Just as we need to eat a balanced diet, stay hydrated, be active, for good health, then sleep to is a necessary requirement for our well-being. When we sleep it not only gives our body a well-earned rest, but it also allows our body to take care of any necessary restorative work!

Which may be hard to attend to during the day when we are moving about and eating etc. Often when we are unwell, we may sleep more as our body seeks to heal itself.

There is a whole science around the world of sleep and this website may be of interest if you want to learn more visit the following site:

www.sleepfoundation.org For this workbook we just want to emphasise that having enough sleep and sleep of a decent quality matters for our well-being, and we know ourselves, when we have not had enough sleep how it can affect our concentration and energy levels. What may be helpful for you, is to take moment and reflect on the impact poor sleep is having on your life.



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, complete the following sentences in your sleep journal notebook. These are sentences you may find helpful to complete weekly to see if anything changes, so making a note of the date can be helpful.

Date:



The impact not having enough sleep has on me is:

Others notice I have not slept well because:

It matters to me; I have a decent sleep because:

Dreaming and levels of consciousness

An interesting element of sleep is dreaming. Some people remember their dreams others do not. Sometimes when we are facing challenges our minds try to sort this out when we are sleeping, resulting sometimes in some strange, even disturbing dreams. It's important to note, when experiencing traumatic event, it's not unusual to have dreams which almost seem like flashbacks to the event, as our brain is seeking to make sense of what has happened.

It is important, that we talk to someone if we have experienced trauma and are having flashbacks and some of the exercises in this booklet may not be helpful for you at this time. If in doubt, always speak to a health care provider about your own unique circumstances. This booklet is general information for self-management and not a replacement for therapy.



Levels of consciousness



Conscious level

What we are aware of just now e.g. I am tired

Preconscious level

Is like a store of knowledge we can call on easily if we need it e.g., we know where the bedroom is

Unconscious level

This is where our fears, anxieties, memories, often of things which cause us pain, or were unpleasant so we pushed them to the 'back of our mind' This can influence our dreams as things we perhaps have pushed to the back of our mind, but we need to work through surface in our dreams. It is not always dreams are unpleasant, sometimes they are fun. However, our dreams can often give us an insight into something which maybe bothering us and wants us to give it attention to deal with it. It may be there is no easy solution but naming what is bothering us can help us to adapt or overcome that challenge.

There were several studies carried out during the pandemic which indicated there had been a significant impact for many people on the numbers of dreams they were having, how much of the dream they recalled and the nature of the dreams. There are many of these studies posted online if you are interested in finding out more. Remember to reflect on the source of the research as being reputable.

What gets in the road of a decent sleep?

The following are some examples of what can get in the road of a decent night's sleep. Some may be more relevant for you than others. What we have sought to do is offer some comprehensive ideas to be of most benefit to as many people as possible. The following are some of the reasons why our sleep may be disturbed.

- **Internal and external stressors**
- **Worry**
- **What if's**
- **Problems**
- **Clearer thinking**
- **Inner dialogue**
- **Life challenges**
 - Chronic pain
 - Grief and loss
 - Moving home
 - Redundancy
 - The importance of releasing tears
 - Not feeling loved
 - Menopause
 - Bladder or other health conditions

This list is not exhaustive. you may find you have other ideas around what gets in the road of your sleep. The aim of this list is to demonstrate that many things can have an impact. There may be other challenges such as homelessness, or living in refuge. It would be advisable to speak to your local services around support you can access, where this workbook alone will not be enough. Sometimes we do need more than self-management.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, reflect on the following question, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress. Remember, if you need more than a self-management workbook can offer, please speak to someone, we have listed some useful sites and resources at the end of this workbook.

Date:



This is what I think is mainly getting in the road of a decent night's sleep:

While not the main issue, I think this may also be interfering with my sleep:

What can help improve my sleep pattern?

The following are some examples of what can get in the road of a decent night's sleep. Some may be more relevant for you than others. What we have sought to do is offer some comprehensive ideas to be of most benefit to as many people as possible. The following are some of the reasons why our sleep may be disturbed.

Understanding internal and external stressors

External stressors

An external stressor is something which we have little or no control over. If we live beside a noisy street with a lot of car noise, this is an external stressor which may have an impact on getting to sleep. We can perhaps use earplugs, or, if its possible sleep in a room furthest from the road, or if we can afford it install double glazing or additional glazing, or if we rent find out if this is something the person, we rent from can do. It maybe the noise is such we decide we want to move home. However, the stressor for example, the road traffic, is something we have little direct control over. We may form a campaign group with other residents who also find this an issue, but that may take time.



Other external stressors which can impact on sleep can include:

- Overcrowding and the house not being large enough for those who live in it to have their own space, bedroom, perhaps even their own bed, where appropriate.
- Other people's noise ranging from snoring, to flushing the toilet to coming home late, to dogs barking outside or, your own or a neighbour's pet and more.
- Wider events in the world which can cause an upset in our lives and routines, like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Not feeling safe at home which can be for many reasons, from problems with neighbours, disputes within the family, not having a secure place to sleep and sofa surfing, escaping domestic abuse, experiencing harm in the home or aware of violence happening locally. This lack of feeling safe can lead to a heightened sense of alertness that makes falling asleep and staying asleep a challenge.

- It maybe through other health challenges you require to take medication a side effect of which may impact on your sleep. This needs to be discussed with your medical team. While there are things you can do to help improve your sleep, you also need to understand where there maybe health challenges or interventions which may also have an impact and with your health professionals seek how that can be mitigated against.
- Money may be a challenge and you need a new bed, or bedding, or repairs done to the house as through issues of damp the air is not promoting a healthy sleep and sleeping with the window open is not an option. Perhaps even infestations of mice or other beasties which can again all lead to not feeling safe and secure which can impact on sleep.
- Money challenges may also impact on your diet, how well you can heat the home and going to bed hungry and cold will not support a good night's sleep, nor will the worry about how to make ends meet.

These are only some of the many external stressors which can impact on your sleep routine, you may find there are other experiences you have which can add to this further. The aim of this workbook is to invite us all to think about what is getting in the road of a decent sleep so we can take action to overcome that.





Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, reflect on the following question, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress. Remember, if you need more than a self-management workbook can offer, please speak to someone, we have listed some useful sites and resources at the end of this workbook.

Date:

The main external stressor impacting on my sleep right now is:

The other external stressors impacting on my sleep just now are:

To mitigate the impact of this external stressor I will:

Internal stressors

It is important before we begin, that the following section is not about blame or judgement. It is around raising awareness that sometimes we have more control and choices than we realise. Life can be challenging enough, how we respond to those challenges and in general, how well we look after ourselves, does have an impact on how we manage, or adapt to the challenges before us. Sometimes that is not easy. Sometimes small changes may mean we still are hurting, but we suffer less and that in itself is the beginning of hope things can change.

As we work through the ideas for helping improve sleep, refer back to your sleep goals and the steps you plan to take to achieve that. You may find the steps change and this is totally acceptable, it's your goal, your steps, pick ones which are going to work for you. The tips offered are ideas, however, it is your choice what you decide to do next. Remember, doing nothing is also a decision and if you do want your sleep pattern to improve, then there is a good chance this will require some effort on your part to try something new.



When we are tired trying anything new can feel like so much hassle. This is why having energy matters. These are some of the things we can begin to think about around addressing internal stressors, that is the choices we make, which perhaps are not in our best interests e.g.

- X *Using nicotine or other stimulants as a coping strategy.***
- X *Taking caffeine pills or energy drinks to feel more energetic.***
- X *Finding we hold onto something that is annoying us and not letting it go, or getting help to move forward.***
- X *Not eating a balanced diet then snacking on sugary foods for energy.***
- X *Drinking lots of tea and coffee and not enough water.***
- X *Remaining indoors and never getting out for some fresh air, even opening a window.***
- X *Keeping our phone or tablet beside us in bed and responding to messages or social media posts.***
- X *Knowing we have a problem and need to do something about it, but pushing it to the back of our mind and trying to ignore it.***
- X *Find it hard to maintain boundaries so always running around after others, and find it hard to make time for ourselves.***
- X *So busy with the business of getting through the day forgetting how to have fun, or a hobby or an interest which inspires us.***
- X *Using the bedroom as the office, ironing room, room to stick stuff in when don't know where else to put it!***

These are only some of the many internal stressors which can impact on your sleep routine, you may find there are other experiences you have which can add to this further. The aim of this workbook is to invite us all to think about what is getting in the road of a decent sleep so we can take action to overcome that. Recognising what is in our control can help us begin to make new choices.



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, reflect on the following question, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress. Remember, if you need more than a self-management workbook can offer, please speak to someone, we have listed some useful sites and resources at the end of this workbook.

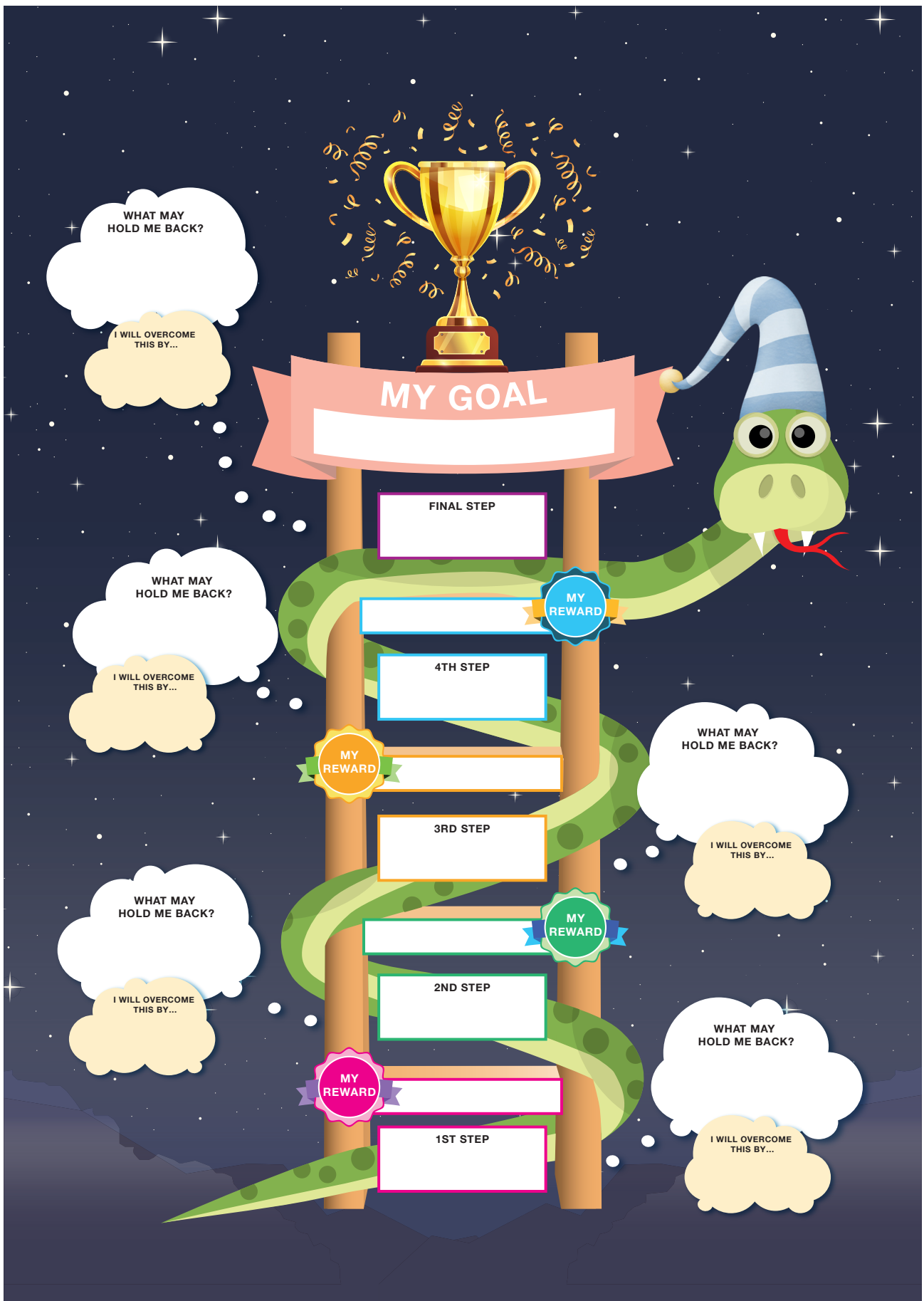
Date:



The main internal stressor impacting on my sleep right now is:

The other internal stressors impacting on my sleep just now are:

To manage the impact of this internal stressor I will:



Maybe you think you want to review your sleep goals; this is totally your choice.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, if you want to review your goals, then the following questions can help you do that, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.



Date:

My goal for sleep is:

The steps I will take to achieve that goal are as follows:

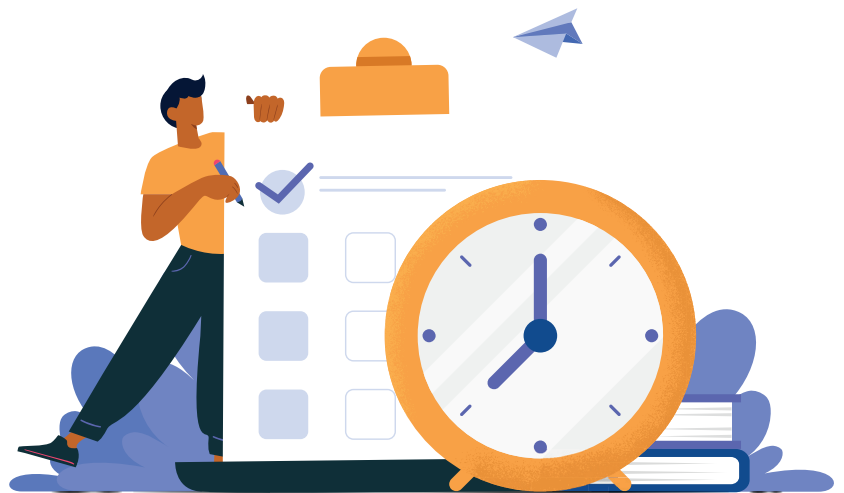
The rewards I shall have from taking each step will be:

The obstacles for each step may include:

I will overcome those obstacles by:

Routine

Part of establishing a healthier sleep pattern, may be around establishing a healthier routine. The following tips maybe of interest around understanding how our routines can become our habits. These tips can be used for many routines you may decide you want to change.



Tips to establish a healthy routine everyday

Eating

We all need to eat a balanced diet, if money makes this a challenge there are ideas on eating well on a budget www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/20-tips-to-eat-well-for-less. If things are challenging just now a food-bank maybe able to help www.trusseltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank. It's also important if we can afford extra food we don't overeat as we are bored or upset. If something is bothering you, please talk to someone about it.

Rest and relaxation

We all need a good sleep pattern and some healthy relaxation habits. Does your home promote calm, could wee changes be made so it's a place of relaxation, maybe start with the bedroom see if that helps promote better sleep too? There are also heaps of relaxation exercises online, maybe find one which works for you.

Housework and interior design

Often our external environment can reflect how we feel inside. Do you feel you have a lot of clutter, or things you would like to do in the house but just don't get round to? We all have those wee jobs about the house we put off. Getting into a housework routine can help keep clutter at bay, offer us some physical activity which saves cost of going to the gym! And improve how we feel inside and its amazing how a house can be made a home even when money is tight. This maybe offer some useful ideas www.idealhome.co.uk/diy-and-decorating/free-ideas-home-decorating-9179

Family

There is a saying we can pick our friends, but we can't pick our family and not everyone may want to stay in touch with family, however, if family is important, sometimes it's just getting into a healthier routine of staying in touch. Even a phone call or a letter if you don't see each other that often helps maintain those relationships. If you feel work needs done to rebuild family relationships, there is a lot of tips and advice online. If using online resources, check they are from reputable sources.

Connecting with others

We are social beings and for most people feeling and giving affection is important. Building time for companionship into our routine is important. If we don't have a lot of friends or family then it's looking at how we build connections. Part of a routine maybe looking for new places to connect with others e.g. online arts class, yoga, choirs, and singalongs, they are all out there and having a look we may find there is often more going on than we realise e.g. www.whatsonglasgow.co.uk

Knowledge and learning

Lifelong learning and acquiring new knowledge can be good for our well-being and we shouldn't worry about making mistakes as we learn, everyone makes mistakes until they learn something new. If you suffer a health challenge, learning more about your condition from reliable sources and ways to self-manage it can also be good for your well-being.

Be creative

This can be from baking a cake, starting a journal, joining a class, writing a song, making a hope jar, doing some creative artwork with the kids, writing poems, even writing a letter to a friend or family member.

Fun and leisure

Build some fun and leisure into your daily routine, even thinking about, or trying out new ideas can help fill the day in a meaningful way. Money maybe tight, however, our imaginations knows no limits, use it to find new ways to have fun.

You matter

Make time every day for what matters to you, we are all unique individuals with our own needs and sometimes when life is challenging these can be harder to meet, but look for even 15minutes in the day to call your own, to do what matters to you.

Know you are doing the right thing and are appreciated

We all respond to kindness and being kind to ourselves matters, sometimes we find that hard. There are some ideas on www.cope-scotland.org on how we can be kinder to ourselves, each other and the planet.

Spend time in nature

From a walk in the park, to time in your garden if you have one, or making your veranda if you have one to looking at pictures of nature or having plants in the house if you aren't allergic. Being in nature even watching a video can be good for our well-being.

Sense of freedom

Sometimes we get so caught up in what we can't do. We forget what is in our control. We may see lack of money, or someone to do things with as obstacles. Reflecting on what it is that really matters to us and why, we may find, we have more choices than we realise. We may also become aware of the many activities in our community which are free, as well as the many opportunities which are actually around to connect with others. For example volunteer at a community allotment or garden. Volunteer with a befriending service and link to others to have a wee blether with. Visit local art galleries, museums, parks, libraries. When we also look for opportunities, it can be amazing what is on our doorstep.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, reflect on the following question, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress. Remember, if you need more than a self-management workbook can offer, please speak to someone, we have listed some useful sites and resources at the end of this workbook.



Date:

Before I go to sleep my routine is:

I think my routine may impact on getting a decent sleep because:

The change I want to make in my routine is:

The obstacle to making that change is

I will overcome that obstacle by:

When I have had a decent sleep, I am able to:

Worry and existential angst

It can be very difficult to get a decent sleep when we are worried about something. We may find our mind keeps going over the thing or things we are worried about, making sleep hard to come by, or, when we do finally get to sleep, we have disturbed dreams which wake us up, and again we find it hard to get back to sleep again.

It does not take a pandemic or a cost-of-living crisis to create worry, even before this there were things which could keep us awake at night. However, the uncertainty the pandemic caused will have perhaps increased this low-level anxiety, waiting for the other foot to fall! It can also be a challenge thinking about how to make the transition back to a new kind of normal. The following tips may be of interest.



Tips to take wee steps in the transition to the new normal

What is the new normal?

For many people the world has changed since COVID-19. We have experienced restrictions on our movements, no one would ever have dreamed of, in an attempt to keep the virus under control. Even when restrictions ease, we need to remain mindful the virus is still with us. This can leave us feeling we are watching ourselves play a part of the person we used to be, while we work out, who we are now.

The changing world of work

For many the world of work has changed, perhaps on furlough for a long time, now not sure if there is a job to return to. Working from home and now having to adapt to returning to the office, or hybrid working between home and the office and perhaps feeling out of sync with whoever is in the office when you are at home, as if perhaps you are missing something, or feeling left out.

The impact on children and young people

The pandemic has caused so much disruption in the lives of children and young people at a time when they would have been developing skills, learning, relationships and be out and about in the world. Instead, they were home, being home schooled and wondering perhaps what their future held.

The impact on health

People had health conditions and concerns before the pandemic. As we went into lock-down and even now, as the health care-system is still dealing with COVID-19, people may find their access to the health care support they need isn't in place in the way they need to manage their condition, which is impacting on adjusting to the new normal as people remain wary of being around others.

Are we still all in it together?

People may have felt more sense of community spirit during lock-down. Many people were more vigilant by looking out for each other, especially those who through age or other issues were more vulnerable to going out, even for the limited reasons that were allowed. Perhaps during lock-down, people felt they had more connection with family and others, who were checking in more often to see if they were okay.

Change in high streets and places we visit

We may find many shops we used to visit have gone, or as we wander around with our mask on, the pleasure of a wee browse just isn't there anymore. It maybe some community facilities haven't opened yet, so people feel even more isolated as they hear of others getting back on with their lives, but the life they used to have feels altered forever.

Separation anxiety

For some, children, pets, and others being together so much and for such a long time, was perhaps comforting and reassuring. Now as we ease into what the new normal is for us, this may change. Children whose start at school was perhaps delayed may be needing more time to adjust to being away from parents and guardians for longer. Pets, used to so much company and perhaps walks, may also be feeling out of sorts as they too adjust! Perhaps unpaid carers had more support at home, and now people are going back out to work again, find their caring responsibilities and the expectation of the person being cared for, take some time to re-adjust.

Talk about how we feel and are thinking

These wee tips do not replace professional advice. If you are struggling to adapt to what has and continues to be a strange time, talk to someone about it. If speaking to friends or family is not enough then find out what mental health support services are in your area. If things ever feel so overwhelming you think of suicide, remember, **The Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel 116 123**

People are complex

For all the reasons mentioned and many more e.g., having experienced COVID-19 and now adjusting to long covid and the challenges it brings, we may find life feels very complicated just now, which may take a while to solve, and may require help and that's okay! On top of that, we as people are complex, we have so many layers to who we are, and we are all unique, so its finding something which works for us as individuals.

Normalise the anxiety

Feeling anxious is a perfectly normal reaction to everything that has happened. It's important we recognise this. Lock-down may have left many of us feeling a bit dazed and confused, feeling more tired than usual and finding our concentration wasn't as great as it should be. The same goes for putting on weight and perhaps not being as fit. May be we or, someone we care about, has adopted some unhelpful coping strategies such as gambling or increased use of alcohol, drugs spending too much time on the computer, gaming or watching box sets! Which again, may not be most helpful for well-being and in fact cause other challenges. These are general well-being tips, not a replacement for professional advice, if you have concerns about your health, or unhelpful habits speak to your GP or other healthcare provider.

Give it time

While we may be out of lock-down, we are not out of the time of COVID-19, and we don't know if this is now a virus we need to learn to live alongside in the future. This means we do need to create a new normal for ourselves. This can take time, as it maybe we need to let go of what our pre pandemic normal was, while we create a new normal that works for us. We all only have so much energy, so its investing that where it can make the most positive impact in our lives.

Be aware of your thoughts and actions

In lock-down we may have found ourselves running on autopilot, putting to one side what we felt and thought about what was happening as we were too busy trying to get through it. Making the transition to the new normal becomes easier when we are aware what we are thinking and the choices we make around our actions. Habits develop from routines. Our routines in lock-down perhaps were not the healthiest so time to review. Or you developed some great new routines for well-being during lock-down and now restrictions have eased, have let them slip.

Kindness and compassion matters

It seems just now there are more apps, websites, materials than ever promoting self-care and mental well-being. Explore these and find something that works for you. Being kind to yourself and practicing self-care will help you get from where you are to where you want to be.



As we have shared before, it maybe we need more than this booklet can offer, which is why the tips also include useful numbers. If you do not feel the next exercise is for you, that's okay, you can give it a skip, use this workbook in a way has the most use for you. It maybe if you are receiving support, you use the workbook with your therapist.



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on what is keeping you awake at night, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:

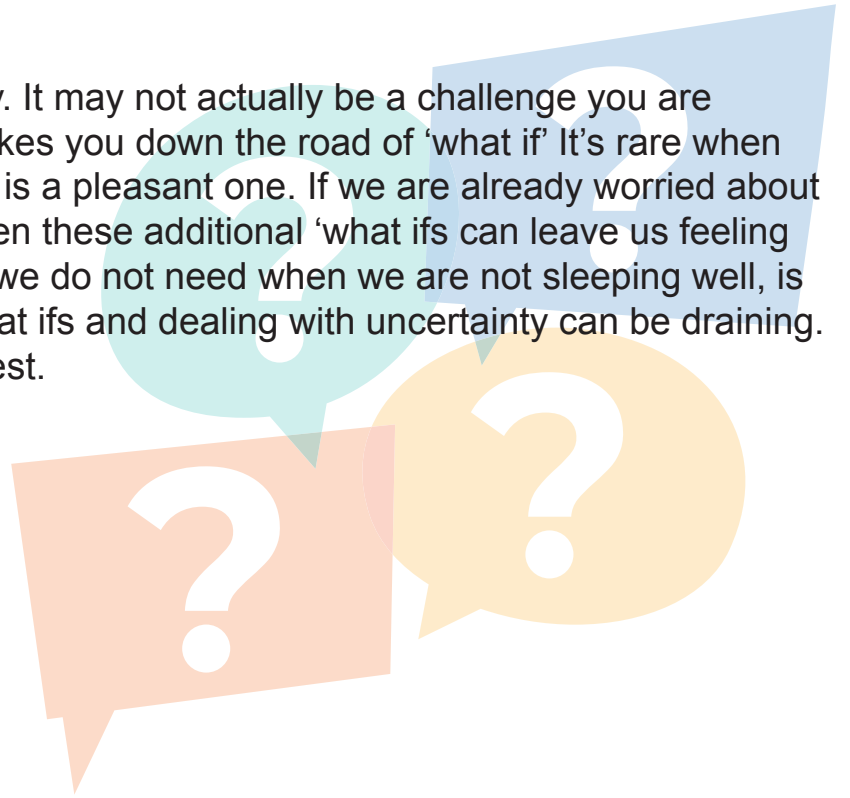
I find as I try to sleep, I think about:

To distract myself from anxious thoughts when I am trying to go to sleep I:

If I wake up during the night and start worrying again I:

What if's

What ifs are another form of worry. It may not actually be a challenge you are facing; it may just be your mind takes you down the road of 'what if'. It's rare when we go down that road the 'what if' is a pleasant one. If we are already worried about something we do need to face, then these additional 'what ifs' can leave us feeling even more exhausted. One thing we do not need when we are not sleeping well, is feeling even more exhausted. What ifs and dealing with uncertainty can be draining. The following tips may be of interest.



Tips for dealing with what ifs and uncertainty

Trying to control things

Life is full of uncertainty. Trying to control everything to have the outcomes that we want is an illusion and also can make us less resilient to the natural changes and adaptation that life will throw at us e.g. COVID19 and lock-down, now who could have predicted or controlled that to everyone's satisfaction?

Worrying

Most of us don't like uncertainty it can make us feel anxious and afraid. We don't know what may come next and we worry whatever it is, we won't be able to handle it. If we lock into that worry and all the things which may go wrong, which we don't think we can cope with, we can feel overwhelmed, maybe even feel hopeless, depressed, demotivated. Thinking where is the point?

Suicidal thoughts

Sometimes people find they have thoughts of suicide when it all becomes too much and the feelings of 'what if' become too exhausting. If you are having thoughts of suicide, please speak to someone about how you feel and what you are finding overwhelming. It can help to talk to someone.

Remember the **Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel 116 123**

Stuck inside your own head

Spending too much time inside our own head about how we feel can in itself increase our feelings of anxiety and depression. We find our minds stuck in this thinking loop where we keep going round and round thinking, or, talking about whatever it is we have focused on as a source of 'what if'.

Negative influences

The impact of other people can also affect the 'what ifs'. What we say and do has an effect on others as does what they think and do, have an effect on us. Being around others who repeatedly focus on negative outcomes; even when you are trying to be positive, can be exhausting. Also, watching news reports, following social media, other communication mediums which have a focus on 'It's Bad, it's going to get worse'. "Oh, and did you know about this new thing to worry about. .. ?" Again, doesn't fill us with hope for the future. That doesn't mean we don't need to be informed, it's all about balance.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty basically means we aren't sure what is going to happen next. We look to see what is happening now and then try and predict from that, what may happen next. Depending on our thinking styles, any predisposition we maybe have to anxiety or low mood may affect how we adjust and prepare to deal with this state of 'not knowing', 'not feeling in control' and the level of stress this uncertainty is likely to cause us.

Coping with change

Part of dealing with the 'what ifs' is being resilient to change. Even when it's a change we may not have chosen, the speed at which you decide to respond to the change in a way that is most helpful for us and those close to us, will impact on how we deal with that change. It maybe you need help to come to terms with the change, and that's okay, we all at times need someone to talk to.

Self-compassion

We are all different. Don't beat yourself up if you find others maybe respond better to change and uncertainty than you do, be kind, we all have things which can stress us out. Being kind and showing compassion for yourself is more likely to help you find a way through than being self-critical. That just drains energy.

Learning new skills

Depending on what happens next, we may need to learn something new. That maybe a new way of doing something, it may mean a new way of using your income to meet your outgoings, it may mean learning new skills to seek employment in areas which you have never thought about before.

Be flexible

Thinking of the analogy of the tree which bends in the wind, helps us realise the value of being flexible. If we can learn to go with the flow, taking control of what we can, not wasting energy on things beyond our control. This can help us conserve energy and reduce the impact on wellbeing. If we don't allow the 'what ifs' to overwhelm us. Recognising perhaps, that things need to change and that may take time to adjust to, but being open to change. In the long run acceptance can lead to more peace of mind to build a new future, than holding onto a memory of a reality which has gone. Remembering, if we need help to do this to ask.

Helpful habits

Practice tools which support your well-being. Get into the habit of going a walk, reading a book, doing some form of relaxation or Mindfulness practice. Be aware of what you eat and drink and how you cope with negative feelings. Avoid misuse of drugs, alcohol, or gambling harms. Any release of stress is short lived and in time will lead to more challenges. What matters if you find something works for you which you can fit into your day. There are often more options than we realise, have fun exploring what you enjoy, being mindful of simple pleasures we can build into every day.

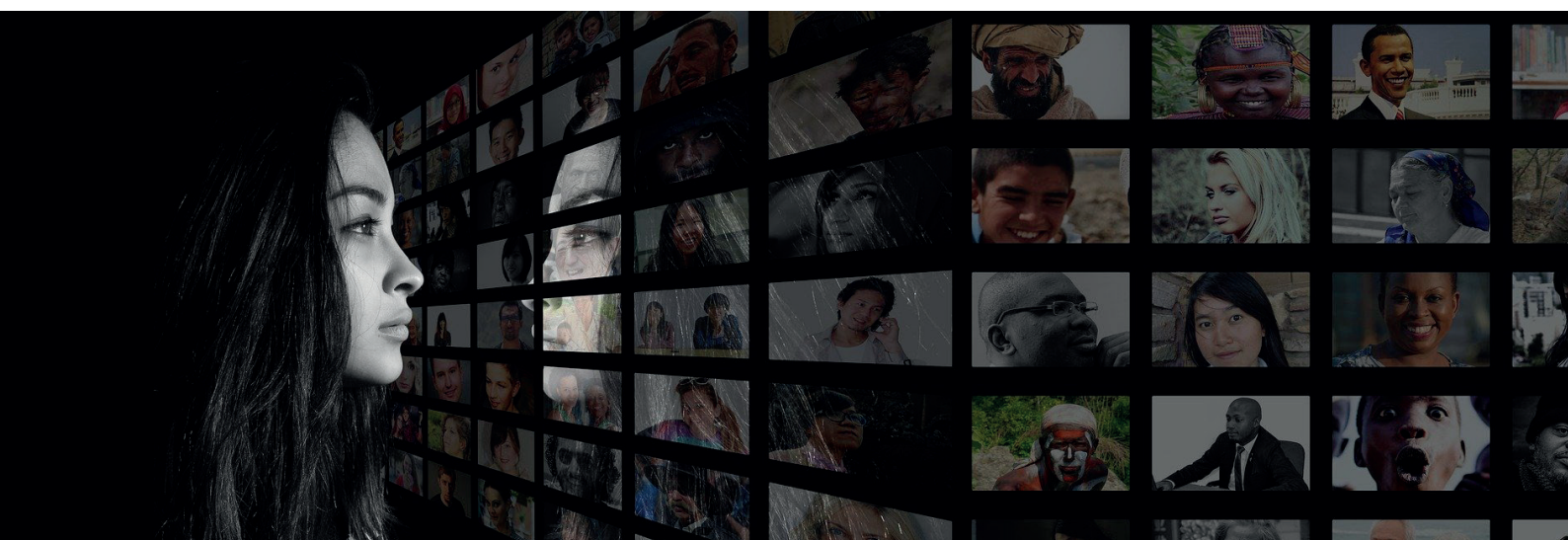
Inner voice

Taking control where you can is important. Sometimes we get so caught up in the 'what ifs' which we feel are in other hands, we forget what is within our own control. Become aware of our inner voice and the story we tell ourselves and be wary we don't tell ourselves we can't, when in fact we are really saying we choose not to.

We can all perceive the world differently

We are all different and we all respond to things in a different way. There are so many variables which can impact on how we think and what we feel. Whether we have a support network, what other challenges there are in our lives, what experiences we may have had in the past where we do see the world as a threatening place, how confident we feel and so much more. It can be hard trying to address this all at once, so it's breaking it down into smaller sections and dealing with each as we go along. No one can do it all at once.

We have a thing called the Reticular Activating System (RAS), a filter if you like there to keep us safe. A challenge can be, if all we scope for are threats, we will find them, and we may miss opportunities. If you find your mind often locks into all that could go wrong, you may find understanding your RAS helpful. There is a video on www.cope-scotland.org which offers more information on the RAS as well as a workbook which can be used as a reflective tool for understanding more around what you lock into and what you lock out.





Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:

What if's to me mean:

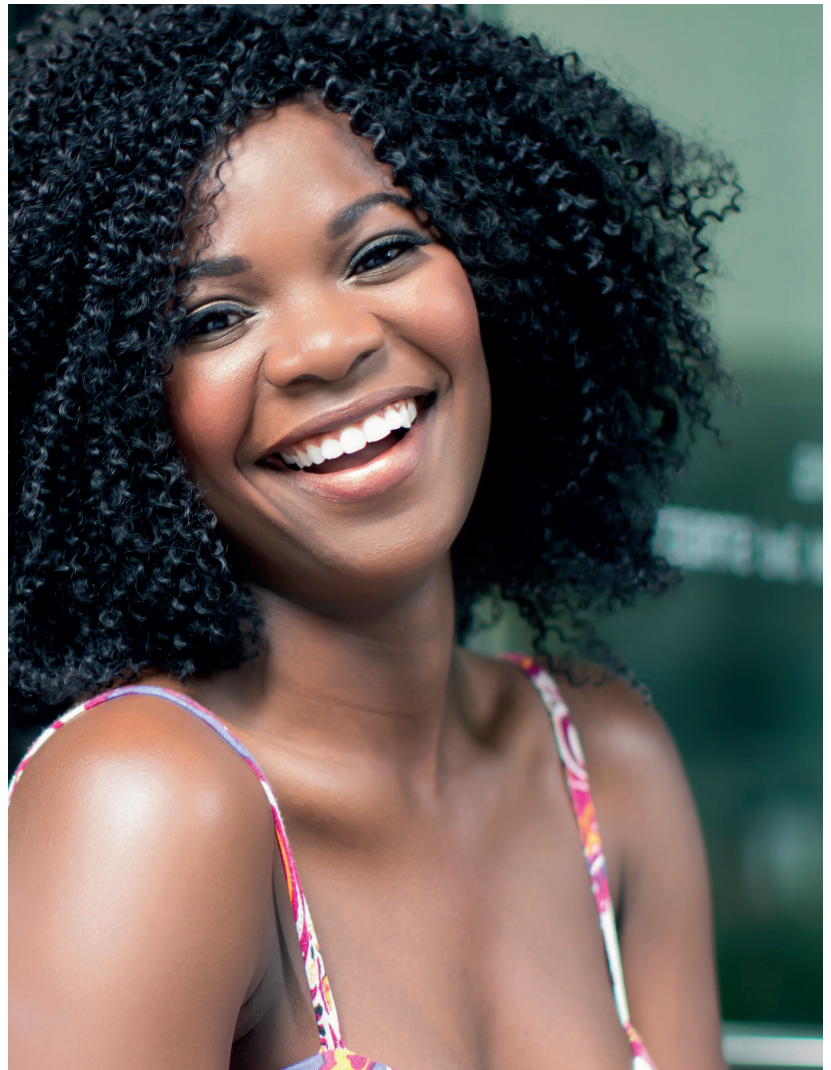
If I am bothered by negative what if's I :

Something I would like to learn about dealing with the what ifs would be:

How our mood affects sleep

Sometimes life has not been kind and it is totally natural that we find we often feel the need to scope for threats. It matters though we are aware of the impact this can have on our energy and our mood. Being cheerful, does not mean we don't face challenges, it can be a useful mindset though to help us recognise where a challenge may be and put our energy into either finding a solution, or adapting so it doesn't take so much out of us. Remember, when we need help to do this it is all right to ask, we all need help sometimes.

The following tips on being cheerful and developing an optimistic attitude may be of interest. We may think being cheerful in the face of adversity is too much of an ask, in fact, finding a way to find something positive to hold onto when life feels overwhelming is a survival strategy. This doesn't mean we pretend the situation isn't there, it just means we find way to use our energy in a way works best of our and our loved one's well-being.



Tips for feeling more cheerful

What does cheerful mean?

Being cheerful is like being optimistic, it doesn't mean you don't recognise there are challenges, it just means you may look at those challenges differently. Sometimes when we look at a challenge from a different perspective, we realise we maybe worrying about something that may not actually happen, or we realise there is something we can do to adapt to or reduce the challenge. Being cheerful offers us a break from worry, stress, and tension, it can help reduce the symptoms of stress, and even help us recharge our energy levels.

Why being cheerful matters?

Being cheerful, doesn't just benefit us, but those around us. We all know people who light up a room and inject energy and enthusiasm into a situation, not because they are faking it, or don't pay attention to the fact there are challenges, but because they are hopeful, positive, putting energy out to the world to find solutions and by doing so energise others, as well as themselves. Sometimes when life is challenging, we want to talk about that to others and this is good for our wellbeing, however, there are also times when we need to realise many people face challenges. Being interested in others is as important as others being interested in us, it can't always be about how we feel. Remember though, you may be experiencing challenges just now, which you need support to work through, please, do seek that support. These are general tips, not a replacement for professional advice. There are other reasons why someone's mood may be impacted e.g. they are suffering from depression. However, working on finding ways to be more cheerful is good for wellbeing when we are facing a life challenge. It doesn't mean we don't see the challenge, it just means we are careful how we use our energy.

Being cheerful takes work

As with many things becoming cheerful takes work, also it helps when others also approach a situation with a cheerful disposition. It can be very draining if you are the person constantly looking for a solution, or the bright side, while others focus on the doom and gloom and all that could go wrong. This in fact can drain energy from a room and leave you and others feeling exhausted before you start. If something has you feeling less than cheerful and does not respond to self-management speak to your GP or health care providers. Remember also the **Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel 116123**.

What is your passion?

To be cheerful we need to love our life, find something we are passionate about, it maybe how we offer a better future to our children, it maybe finding a cure for a disease, it maybe saving the planet, it maybe cooking, woodworking, your choice. However, it has to be something which you feel passionate about, something which you feel gives meaning to what you do. If you don't know what your passions are, take time to think of times you were really happy. What were you doing, where were you, who were you with, what else was happening, what about that situation made you feel happy? Once you have had a good think capture that on paper or perhaps in a journal. Then when you have remembered, or envisioned what your goal is to bring more cheer into your life, practice visualisation to help make it manifest.

Love being you

This may sound obvious, however, to be cheerful you are wise to love being you. Focusing on your strengths and forgiving yourself for not being perfect, no one is! Loving and caring about ourselves also means when we are struggling with something, we do something about it, speaking to someone if we need to. Being cheerful doesn't mean we don't have days we feel down or experience a range of emotions. It just means we are mindful of where we put our energy, and look for ways where our energy can be put to better use for our well-being.

Learn to work through things which are holding you back

There can be events in life, or situations we find ourselves in where being cheerful just does not feel like the default emotion we can manage e.g., when we are dealing with loss, or, perhaps we are suffering chronic pain, or some other health challenge which makes it harder to feel cheerful. It just means we are mindful of where we put our energy, and look for ways where our energy can be put to better use for our well-being.

Adopting cheerful behaviours

This may sound obvious, however, when we smile often, have a pep in our step as opposed to slouching, use upbeat language when we talk to ourselves and others. Also being relaxed within ourselves, kind to ourselves and others, this can make us feel more cheerful!

Being around others

Most people are social in nature, they enjoy being around others, some people are happy in their own company and that works for them too. However, if someone feels lonely, or doesn't feel close to other people this can make it hard to feel cheerful, and not feeling cheerful can make it hard building new relationships with others. Remember, you do matter. It's amazing how a shift in perspective can shift how we feel. Being cheerful and finding ways to bring more cheer into your life, can help improve your well-being. Doesn't mean we don't have a moan at times, we all sometimes need to vent our frustrations, just means we are mindful of this and seek to either do something about it, or find a way to adapt so it doesn't ruin our day.

**Remember, you do matter,
so does your happiness**

Tips to feel more optimistic about the future

An optimistic attitude finds ways round challenges

Being optimistic doesn't mean you don't recognise there can be threats, but your belief in a positive outcome is stronger and this belief makes you more likely to find out more about the threat and ways to manage it or overcome it.

An optimistic attitude can affect your lifestyle choices

People who are optimistic about the future often make healthier lifestyle choices too. They may avoid unhelpful coping strategies such as misuse of drugs, gambling, alcohol, cigarettes, sugary foods, as their joy for life and hope for the future draws them towards eating habits and life-style choices which support well-being.

An optimistic attitude can offer a greater sense of control

Being optimistic means if life is challenging, as it can be for everyone at times, you are more likely to engage in the problem. As opposed to being overwhelmed by the emotions the problem offers and pretend it doesn't exist. That doesn't mean if receiving bad news, you won't initially reel from this which is totally natural. Just you will be more likely to focus on what are the solutions, or thinking who else can help you get through this challenging time.

Optimists can have more social connections

Everyone has challenges at times and people who constantly focus on the negative, others can sometimes find exhausting. That doesn't mean at times we don't need to recognise there is an issue and do something about it. However, going in circles with how awful everything is, can wear yourself and other people out. Optimistic people are more upbeat and hopeful, so more people are drawn to them, which means they have more connections. And if life is proving challenging, more people to offer them support and help manage the stress of what they may be facing. Be the person that brings cheer to others as well as knowing at times when we need someone to help cheer us up.

Having a purpose helps you be optimistic

If we feel we have a purpose either in our home life or work life this can help us feel more optimistic. Living with purpose can help us feel more fulfilled and we start our day on a positive note as we have a focus, a belief in something we are doing, something that matters and is bigger than ourselves.

How to develop more optimistic attitudes

If we grow up surrounded by challenges and people who aren't optimistic, then it means we need to work harder as adults to see the world in this way. We also need to find ways to adjust to life adversities in a way which doesn't leave us thinking, "there is no point nothing ever works" as we all are challenged at times. So yes, some people may find it easier than others to be optimistic, however, this is an attitude with effort we can all adopt even in a small way. If you are facing a life challenges which requires professional support, please speak to someone.

Believing you can cope can increase optimism

Being optimistic and being happy aren't the same thing, that's not to say optimistic people aren't happy, pessimistic people can be happy at times. Optimism is more than happiness, it's a belief you can cope with whatever life throws at you and are able to seek support where you know that's going to help. If you feel being more confident would work for you check out www.cope-scotland.org which has a variety of tools and resources around increasing self confidence.

Retrain your brain to look on your bright side

There is a heap of research about right, left hand brain activity. We won't cover that here; you will know if you tend to see the glass as half empty or half full. Affirmations are one tool which can help us develop a more optimistic outlook.

Appreciate what is there, focus less on what is missing

Often, we put conditions on how we feel and if all the conditions we wanted weren't in place we feel it was all a waste of time. Focusing less on what we didn't like and more on what we can appreciate can help us become more optimistic. If life has been challenging this can be hard as our mind keeps drawing us towards the pain or disappointment we have experienced. Trying to view situations through a more optimistic lens can help us suffer less and be more open to what we can learn when things haven't went as planned. Maybe also doing a daily journal on what you appreciate and what is good in the world, can help?

Check out your inner voice

We all have an inner voice, chats away to us all the time. To develop a more optimistic attitude we need to learn to become aware of that inner voice and what it's saying to us. If we find it is not helpful for our well-being, then learning to change it to a kinder more encouraging inner voice can help us feel more optimistic.

Learn to manage the what if's

Helping manage the 'what if's' so that we don't feel overwhelmed by all the things we think could go wrong, is a useful way to help adopt a more optimistic attitude. As we recognise when we are thinking this way and either do something to mitigate the impact, or, if there isn't anything we can do, wait and see what happens and not become so overwhelmed that if a problem does arise, we are so tired we find it hard to overcome it, or manage it.

Be aware of your mind diet!

Be careful what you feed your mind with. While keeping up to date with the news is important, have a balance. Sadly, too often the news and papers report on things which are sad, or alarming. The thing is, this is just one view of the world and if that's the only view you have, it can be challenging. If you are interested in switching your focus, there is a workbook on the Reticular Activating System (RAS) on www.cope-scotland.org you may find interesting

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

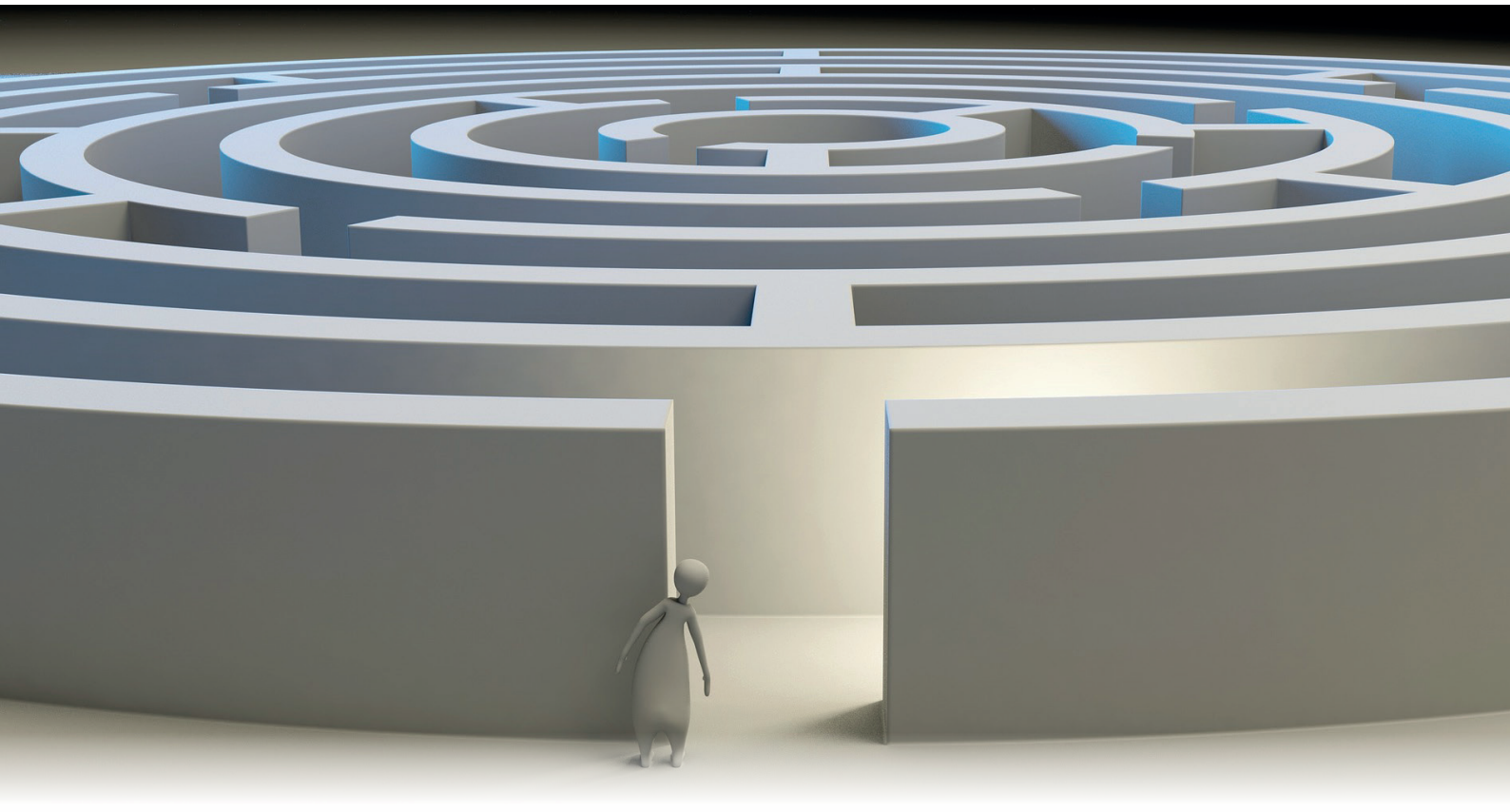
Date:

I feel cheerful when:

Optimism to me means:



Problems!



Sometimes we do have problems we need to face and worrying about them or catastrophising with 'what ifs' can leave us feeling so overwhelmed and exhausted that it makes it very difficult to find the energy to deal with the problems. We are talking about improving our sleep. If we have problems which need attention, then this can keep us awake at night as we either try and block them out or find a solution.

It's important when something does need our attention that we don't try and avoid it by using unhelpful coping strategies like drugs, alcohol, gambling. Sometimes when we feel overwhelmed, we find we may adopt a new behaviour which gives some short-term relief, however, in the longer term it can only lead to even more challenges.

If we find we have a problem, challenging as this may be, it's around how we deal with it, remembering we can ask for help. The following tips sheet may offer some useful ideas if you find you have a problem/s which needs to be addressed.

Sometimes people can feel so overwhelmed with their problems, they may think of suicide. If you ever have thoughts of suicide, please speak to someone. **The Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel 116 123**

Tips to manage problems

If you are thinking of suicide

Sometimes we may feel the problems are so large and insurmountable we consider suicide. If your problems have you thinking of suicide, please speak to someone as you do matter. The **Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel No 116 123**

Learn to live in the moment

Sometimes when faced with a problem it can be tempting to run away from it, pretend it's not there, or get so caught up in the emotion we associate with it, we find we begin to panic and can't think straight. Learning to be Mindful offers us ways to be in the moment and recognise when someone requires our attention, but not be overwhelmed by the emotions, where we may find our thinking becomes confused. This may be of **interest www.freemindfulness.org/download**

Recognise what is within and out with our control

Sometimes we are faced with a problem which is not something that is immediately within our control to do anything about e.g., the company we work for loses a big contract and with no more work coming in has to make people redundant. We can wait and see if we are kept on, or, we can start to look for other work, and keep looking till we find what we need. This is a choice within our control. Dealing with problems better means we try and avoid the ones we can and the ones we can't avoid we look for solutions, or ways the impact doesn't hurt so much.

Not all problems have solutions

It would be great if every problem had a solution. Some don't. Dwelling on a problem we can't solve drains our energy and ability to cope with the challenges the problem brings. If we recognise the problem is out with our control and we have explored options, sought advice to see if anyone else can help, but the problem remains the same, then we need to find new ways to mitigate the impact of the problem. Distracting ourselves can help. Just be sure we don't use distraction as an avoidance technique as if something can be done, it's better to take action to explore options, and if needs be ask for help. We all need support sometimes.

Are you clear what the problem is?

It's amazing how sometimes we get so caught up in thinking about the problem and how we feel about it, we don't actually take time to define in detail what the problem is, or if it's as much of a problem as we first thought! We see the symptoms of the problem e.g., we are worried, can't sleep, feeling angry, sad. However, we don't take enough time to actually 'diagnose' the situation, so it makes it harder to find a solution. Sometimes we need to have a few goes at this and work through the options till we find the one that makes the most sense for our needs.

Are you clear what the problem is?

Not all problems have a solution, sometimes all we can do is explore how the problem can cause less harm or suffering. It maybe we can stop whatever the problem is, great no more issues there, however, it maybe we can't stop it, so we need to look and see what we can do about the various elements of the problem which is causing the distress or harm.

What do we know?

Sometimes we get caught up in other's anxieties about the problem, we may even find we are reacting to suppositions or assumptions as opposed to facts. It is only human to get caught up in 'what if's'. Being in the moment helps us be aware of our emotions but not overwhelmed by them. When we are calmer it's easier to sort out the facts from the fiction and fears and also identify other information which may be needed, or other people who maybe need brought in to help.

What is it you are avoiding dealing with?

You may need help, its also a good idea to practice some kind of relaxation technique so you approach this feeling calmer. Get some pen and paper and begin to list, what is it you have been avoiding? Remember, if you need help, ask. There is more help than you may realise, check out the what's happening info mags www.cope-scotland.org for details of services and supports.

Prioritise

Take a minute to imagine you are solving the problem, what is it you are doing, is someone helping you, what is the impact now the problem is solved, how does it make you feel? What are the consequences and what happens next?

What does success look like?

Once you have explored options and decided on the best solution for you, it's time to plan. It may be the first step is seeking someone's advice, so finding out who can help and making that call. Check out the goal setting snakes and ladders on www.cope-scotland.org to plan your steps, the rewards for each step, any obstacles and how you plan to overcome them.

Explore options

Sometimes we need to consider various ways to solve a problem, and the advantages or even disadvantages this may have. E.g., we may find our job is becoming too much, resigning, maybe one solution. We may imagine telling our boss exactly what we think then walking off. However, what next? Do we have another job to go to? Who will give us references? We may decide leaving the job is the solution we seek, however, before doing that we need to plan for the outcome we seek and not more problems.

Act

No matter how small, act, do something every day that takes you closer to the solution you are seeking. Recognise it may take time. If it were easy it wouldn't be a problem! And remember if you need help ask. There is often more support than we realise.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.



Date:

Problems I am facing just now are:

What I plan to do about this is:

This is who could help:

Clearer thinking

There can be many reasons why our thinking feels foggy. This workbook does not replace professional advice, it is for self-management only. If you are concerned about your concentration, then please speak to your GP or other health care provider.

It was interesting research carried out around the impact of the pandemic also highlighted the impact on our concentration. This piece may be of interest www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jun/24/pandemic-brain-covid-coronavirus-fog-concentrate

If on top of whatever else is happening we are not sleeping well, our concentration may be even more affected and we may find this makes it hard to work out how to navigate the challenges we may be facing, and we get stuck in a circle of not sleeping as we try and work out what to do about what is happening for us, but not being able to work out what to do as we feel we just can't think clearly.

The tips on the following pages offer some ideas on thinking more clearly:



Tips for clearer thinking

Check out in case there is any underlying cause

Some health challenges can lead us to thinking less clearly as can some medications, or vitamin deficiency. If we are experiencing some mental health condition this too can have an impact e.g., depression, anxiety. The following tips do not replace professional advice, and if thinking less clearly is a concern for you, please speak to your GP.

We are all different!

This may sound obvious but worth stating. What thinking clearly means for one person, may have a totally different meaning for someone else. So, the first place to start is, what does thinking clearly mean for you? Have a good think about that, over a cuppa tea if needs be and write it down. If we want to think more clearly, BUT we aren't sure what thinking more clearly means to us, then we may go in circles.

One way to look at clear thinking

Expression. How we communicate with others, how we communicate with ourselves. If we have a lot of things to do, how we order them in terms of what we shall tackle first and use our energy wisely to find the best solutions.

Declutter our mind

If a cup is already full, we cannot pour anything else in, yet, when our minds are full, that's exactly what we often try to do, pour more in! Instead, learning to clear our mind, helps us take out what isn't useful to us, and putting in what is. Mindfulness is one technique which can help us declutter our minds. This website may be useful www.freemindfulness.org/download

Clearing our mind to have room to think!

Sometimes when faced with multiple situations or challenges we can find our mind becomes full of thoughts, half started ideas, plans, worries, and it's hard to think clearly. We may find as a result of this constant clutter in our heads we find it hard to sleep, switch off, concentrate on doing what needs done to address the issues causing us stress.

Give it a rest

Our minds need time to rest and recharge, and getting enough sleep is part of helping give ourselves a chance to think clearly.

Learn to let go

Depending on what you are holding onto, this may not be easy, it may even require you speak to a counsellor. However, holding on to thoughts and feelings which are not supportive of our wellbeing can take up the room in our mind, we actually need to consider the strategies to help us move on from this hurt or distress. The past is a different country and none of us live there anymore. Hold onto what is good, learn to let go of what is harmful.

Recharge your energy levels

It maybe you have a lot going on and your mind is going constantly and at the moment, that's the way it is as the challenges we face, need to be addressed. It's important then, to make time to recharge your energy levels.

Learn to journal

Keeping a daily journal can help clear the mind. Learning to journal can take time but is worth the effort. Journaling helps us set goals, track progress towards goals, offers space to clear the clutter from our minds which can help reduce stress and anxiety as once written down, the loop replaying in our mind may be reduced. It can also increase our confidence when we see how far we have come. When you are making a journal focus on being kind to you. Your journal also offers a tool to help us identify areas we may want to share with someone else. However, it's important your journal itself, remains private and you do not feel under pressure to share. There are many kinds of journals, from food, to mood, to goals, to appreciation. Find a style that works for you.

Multi-tasking is a myth

No one can do umpteen things at once. We can have a lot of things we are doing, but we do them one at a time. The same holds when we need to think clearly. We may have multiple issues we need to address, but if we try and think about them all at once! Prioritise what we need to address first, deal with that then move on to what is next. Remember, urgent isn't always the same as important. Urgent we may need to deal with now, important we may need to invest more time in thinking about as it has implications for the future.

Declutter

As well as decluttering our mind, its useful to declutter our living space, make it a place of calm and consider clearing out cupboards, drawers, storage boxes! Sometimes we hold onto things physically longer than we need to and this can also cause us to feel overwhelmed as we have no space for new things, we use a lot! Declutter also how much distraction you have with emails, the phone, social media. If you need to think clearly, then create space where you are not being constantly distracted. This can take practice!

Avoid procrastinating

Most of us can procrastinate. We know we have a decision to make, or action to take, BUT we find 101 reasons why we won't do it today. The issue then becomes we clutter our brain up even more as we have all these decisions/plans waiting to be made but not being cleared out, perhaps we put even more things in our brain to distract us from the decisions we know we need to make! Sometimes talking to someone, getting out a pen and paper and clearing what was in our mind so we can see it in front of us, helps us prioritise what we are going to give attention to. This again is where journaling can help us sort through what needs our attention, and what does not.

Use a kinder inner voice to boost your self-confidence

Sometimes we find it hard to think clearly as our own internal dialogue gets in the way! Becoming aware of how we talk to ourselves is really helpful if we want to think more clearly. Having a critical internal voice can affect our confidence and create all sorts of self-doubt, not useful for clear thinking. A kind supportive inner voice helps you direct energy to where its needed.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:

At the moment my concentration is:



To help me think clearly, I:

Our inner voice and affirmations for a decent night's sleep



The story we tell ourselves about our lives has a huge impact on how we respond and react to what is happening. Please take time to visit www.cope-scotland.org "what are you saying to yourself because you are listening" video

It matters we become aware of our inner voice and find ways to use a kinder inner voice which helps us achieve our goals, including our sleep goals



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:



This is what I say to myself when I go to bed to sleep:

This is what I could say to myself which would help me sleep better:

Affirmations for a decent night's sleep

We can use affirmations in many ways. The following is one example around making your own affirmation jar to support a decent night's sleep. There is also a video on www.cope-scotland.org on how to make an affirmation jar.

The key thing about affirmations is that they offer something which is positive for you, which inspire you. You can make an affirmation jar yourself, or with other family members, or friends. Here are some ideas to get you started.



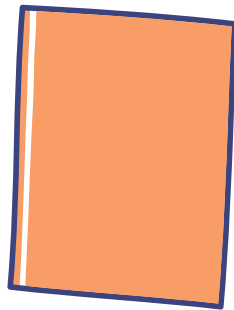
Items needed for affirmation jars

The **jar** size can vary depending on how many affirmations someone wants to put in it, also how easy to take the affirmation slips of paper back out. A jam or pickle jar is a pretty handy size. This also is a good way to recycle and reuse something may have been thrown away or sent to recycling. You just need to ensure they are clean and as they are made of glass use the same health and safety anyone would at home with a jam jar. If you don't have a jar, maybe use a colourful sock, or bag, something which itself makes you smile. If you have any material and enjoy doing a wee bit sewing maybe even make yourself a wee affirmation bag, using a piece of ribbon perhaps as a drawstring.

You need **paper** to write your affirmations on, which shall then be folded in half and put in the jar, the larger the paper, the fewer affirmations will fit in the jar. If they are too small though, it may be hard to read. As a guide think of perhaps the size of a small business card when unfolded. Using bright coloured paper can make the jar cheerier when finished, but paper will do just as well.

It's nice to decorate the jar and this can be done many ways. One way is to have some nice, coloured paper, cut out a circle about a half inch all round larger than the jar lid, fold this over the lid and hold in place with a piece of twine.

You can add a pretty label as a finishing touch to the twine which perhaps acts as a reminder what the jar is for e.g., 'Sleep well', 'I matter'. Whatever has meaning for you. Affirmation jars also make ideal gifts for a friend or loved one, or someone you know maybe needs a wee cheer up. It maybe you can't share the jar just now, but even letting someone know you made it for them and the hopes you put in it for them, may make them smile.



You need a **pen** to write the affirmations, for someone who may struggle with writing, instead of written affirmations you may do a drawing, or cut some images from a magazine which you find inspiring.

It's helpful to use **safety scissors** as this reduces the risk of someone being hurt accidentally while cutting the paper for the affirmations or decorating the lid of the jar/twine to hold the decoration in place. If you don't have safety scissors, just be careful as you would anytime you use scissors.

12 affirmations are a good number to have which means the jar isn't overfull and they are easy to remove. Remember, once the jar is made, new affirmations can be added when you feel you have used the initial ones often enough, that you find you are now doing these things, without needing to remind yourself e.g., making time every day to relax.

These instructions are for a better night's sleep affirmation jar; however, the same principles can be used for many things:

- **Wellbeing**
- **Joy**
- **Confidence**
- **The family**
- **Overcoming challenge**
- **Making a lifestyle change**
- **What you appreciate in life just now**

The main thing to remember is making a jar should be something you enjoy and the affirmations you put in the jar something which is positive and uplifting. Remember you can remove and add all the time, so if you see something which is inspiring, write it down and add it to the jar when next you come to replace your old affirmations. You matter and your well-being matters too.

Thinking about affirmations

Sometimes people may find it hard to think about positive affirmations, especially if life is proving challenging (and when life is challenging, this is when positive affirmations can really help), this is where sharing ideas with others can help. Discussing ideas for affirmations can be a fun way to help reduce stress and remind ourselves that for all at the moment things maybe challenging we can still have some fun and hope for a better tomorrow.

The activity of discussing affirmations and thinking about them is itself something which can help people feel more positive.

Some examples of affirmations to help get started, there are many more online. Remember it's about finding something works and inspires you.

- ***I matter and look forward to giving my body a rest***
- ***I am more than my stressors and worry, they do not control me***
- ***I enjoy getting into bed and practicing my relaxation***
- ***I am capable of so much more than I give myself credit for***
- ***I am letting go of that which does not support my well-being***

How to use the affirmation

Before you go to bed every night, take one of the affirmations from the jar, take a couple of relaxing breaths breathing in and out to a count of ten. It maybe you stand in front of a mirror; if you feel comfortable to do this and look yourself in the eye, so you are sure you are paying attention. Say the affirmation slowly and clearly maybe 3 times and focus on the meaning of each word. This is why any affirmation needs to be something which is good for you to hear, as words do have power.

There are many examples of affirmations on the COPE Scotland website www.cope-scotland.org including for confidence, life purpose, learning, young people's well-being.



Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:

An affirmation which would help me sleep is:



Life challenges and sleep

We have touched on some of the reasons why our sleep maybe affected. The following pages offer some more specific challenges we may face which impact on sleep. This list is not exhaustive. Remember, if you need more than a resource for self-management, please do speak to someone. Many of the tips which follow have contacts listed, also speak to your GP or other health care provider, or it maybe there are other advisors who may be helpful to speak to e.g., Money advisors.

The following are some examples of the life challenges we may face and some tips which may help us overcome or adapt so they do not hurt as much. This includes:

- **Chronic pain**
- **Grief and loss**
- **Moving home**
- **Redundancy**
- **The importance of releasing tears**
- **Not feeling loved**
- **Boundaries**
- **Decisions**
- **Guilt**
- **Menopause**



Tips for chronic pain

These tips do not replace the advice or treatment of a health care professional. If you suffer chronic pain, please do consult your GP and any specialists they may refer you to for treatment.

Suicide

Sometimes feelings of chronic pain can be so overwhelming you may think of suicide and with the medication you may be on for your condition, have the means to kill yourself readily available. It's important if you are having thoughts of suicide that you speak to someone. **You matter.** Remember, the Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel No 116 123

Mindfulness Practice

Consider learning a mindfulness practice which can help make living with chronic pain more bearable. Mindfulness isn't about taking the pain away all together, it is learning how to experience relief while you are in pain, which can be priceless. However, it does takes time to learn. This is why it is called Mindfulness practice. If exploring ideas to help manage pain is of interest, you may find it worth the time to invest in finding out more. This site may be of interest www.freemindfulness.org

Relaxation

Techniques used regularly can help manage the stress of chronic pain as well as perhaps help ease suffering when pain is acute. We are all different, so find a technique that works for you.

Be active within bounds of medical advice

You need to check with your medical team for an activity that works for you, but keeping active, mentally and physically helps along with good stress management techniques including eating a healthy balanced diet, to enable you to have improved physical and psychological wellbeing to help manage the pain and not let it take over your whole life. You are more than your pain.

Self-talk

Self-talk can be immensely powerful for helping draw our focus away from our pain. Reminding ourselves how sore we feel, is like shining a spotlight on our pain. Reframing our internal voice to accept living with pain due to our condition, isn't something we want to do, but in doing it, we can retrain our mind into remembering pain is not the only thing we have in our lives, and so we can learn to suffer less.

Appreciation

Locking into how awful our pain is, how we fear we may not be able to cope with it, can be overwhelming. We feel our life, as we knew it, has changed, lost, gone forever. Hard as this may be, try and remember what you can still do. This helps reframe our self-talk as we begin to look for things we can appreciate still in our lives. Somethings pain takes, somethings we give away, learn to appreciate what is still good and if you need help to do this, speak to a health care professional.

Pace yourself

It can be tempting on a day you are maybe feeling less pain or, pain free to catch up on all the things you weren't able to do. Please! Pace yourself, overdoing it can set you back. Take it easy and gradually. One or two steps each day leaving you feeling you could do more, will get you further than 20 steps if that means for a month you find it hard to do anything again as you are in pain.

Complimentary Therapies

Ensure anyone offering these is fully qualified and does take note of your medical condition and any medication you maybe taking. Speak to your medical team who maybe able to advise you on reputable therapists.

Prioritise

Each of us has a finite amount of energy. When we are living with a long-term condition which may also mean living with chronic pain, a lot of our emotional and physical energy can be tied up managing that. Use energy wisely so you have enough to invest in the things which matter to you. You may have family, children, friends, who can be a source of joy. Learn where to put your energy to most effect so you don't find times you may have had fun; you are so exhausted you have went to bed and missed it.

Have a dream

Sometimes when we are suffering chronic pain our focus is how we get through the next day, hour, minute. Any dreams become dependent on 'if I wasn't sore' However, we all need a dream, yes managing pain is important however, is that your only goal? There is life beyond your pain, consider what else matters to you and if needs be, seek help to set goals. It can be as simple as I will practice relaxation 3minutes every day. Start with a wee step, see where your imagination takes you.

Distraction Techniques

Techniques can help take the 'spotlight' off your pain. 6minutes reading, 1minute to drink a glass of water, 5minutes of some activity/exercise approved by your medical team, 3minutes relaxation, a crossword puzzle, play a video game, patience, mindful colouring in. We are all different, find something works for you which helps take your attention away from your pain.

Avoid unhelpful coping strategies

Sometimes to cope we resort to unhelpful coping strategies, misusing alcohol which is risky when on medication. Gambling as it's a distraction maybe even company? Smoking, overeating. There are many strategies which are not helpful and may make our pain worse. If this is an issue for you, please, speak to someone.

Managing stress

Living with chronic pain in itself can be stressful as can the other challenges associated with chronic pain. Maybe your home is no longer suitable, as you have too many stairs to climb, or relationships are suffering. Learn to manage stress, is another step towards suffering less.

Tips to help when experiencing loss

Coping with loss and grief?

Grief can hurt, we can experience many strong emotions including, sadness, despair, anger, hurt, shock, numbness, denial, guilt, fear and so many more, even sometimes relief. While these feelings can cause us extreme distress, they are the natural feelings which can emerge when we lose someone or something which mattered to us.

We can experience grief when a loved one dies, including the loss of a pet or miscarriage. We can also experience it at other times of loss, a health challenge, retirement, leaving school, separation all can produce feelings of loss and grief.

Remember, we are all unique individuals and we each cope with loss in our own way this includes the time we are grieving, which can vary too.

Remember it's okay to cry, putting a brave face on and not allowing the tears to flow when they need to, can mean we bottle feelings up which can make us feel worse. Crying at this time is natural. There are people who don't cry naturally so for them, not crying is natural too, we are all different, just because we don't cry, doesn't mean we don't care or aren't hurting.

Worrying about being alone or about money now the person has gone isn't selfish, it's natural, talk to others about how you feel.

Admitting to yourself and others that you are hurting can help you to begin to work through your grief and accept kindness from others to help at this time.

Sometimes sleeping and eating can be a challenge, but it's important at this time we find a way to rest and make sure we are looking after our physical body as well as our minds.

If you aren't sure if what you are experiencing is grief, or depression go and speak to your GP or other health care provider as it's important at this time we also look after our mental health.

Reach out if you are feeling alone with your grief and this is a challenge for you. There can also be support groups e.g. where someone has lost someone to suicide. Sometimes having someone just to listen can be very powerful, this is a time also we may find our faith or life philosophy is a comfort.

Tips for moving home

Coping with loss and grief?

We have started with this question as sometimes, due to distress, we make impulsive decisions, e.g., moving home following the death of a loved one, thinking this will offer a new start. In the future, moving may be the right decision; however, if we have not worked through our grief, then moving too soon may only mean we move that pain and upset with us. There may be other reasons, e.g., conflict with neighbours, which prompts us to consider moving. It may be this is the right decision for us, however, take time to talk over your feelings with someone, to ensure what you decide works best for you and your family long term. If you need a break from your current home, maybe see if you can stay with friends or relatives for a short while, or if you can afford it take a little holiday to create some space to reflect on what next.

Financial considerations

Moving home has costs involved. Thinking through the potential costs can help reduce later stress. It may be you need to move as you can no longer afford your home. Speak to your landlord or mortgage provider about what support there may be available to help. It's always helpful for budget planning to know the running costs of the new home, e.g., council tax, heat and light, as again, knowing in advance the expenses you may have to meet gives you time to plan budgets.

Moving home can be stressful

Even when it's a move we want to make, moving home can be stressful. However, sometimes other things are happening in our life which can make moving even more distressing. We may find we are closing the home of a loved one who has died. We may discover through a divorce or separation we are moving home. It may be a life transition, leaving the family home, or moving home as the family have grown smaller. Moving home can be stressful, acknowledging that gives us permission to share when we need help and recognise when we need to look after our wellbeing. These little tips don't replace professional advice. Instead, they offer some ideas where you can reduce the stress of moving.

Get orientated

As soon as possible after you know, you are moving and have started the process of planning. Visit where you are moving to and find your way around. Where do you plan to do your main shopping, activities, sports centres, clubs? Where will you walk the dog? Is it safe for your outdoor cat? Where is your new place of worship if that is going to change? If you plan to return to areas you already use and don't have a car, become aware of the public transport options and travel costs. Maybe you want to join in some local community activities by volunteering or getting involved in the Community Council. Moving home can feel strange. Learning about your new neighbourhood can help make it feel more familiar when the day to move arrives.

Timing

There are so many things that need to be timed, from decorating the new home or having work done before moving in to fitting carpets and curtains. The more time we give ourselves, the more we plan, the less stressful this can be. Building in flexibility where we can if, for some reason, things don't run to schedule.

Deal with the practical

There are practical things we can do to help make moving less stressful. First, have a good clear out and only take what you know you want and need. Second, decide how you will pack what you are taking and how you will pack it. If you are closing the home of someone who has died, this can be difficult in knowing what to keep, dispose of, or give away, especially if the person hasn't left a Will. If needs be, seek some advice on how to proceed. Think about how you will move belongings, and if hiring a van, or using a removal firm, book it in plenty of time. Be aware if you are moving, you may need help to move heavy or awkward items. Finally, make time to clean where you are moving to and where you are moving from, as again, this can help make you feel calmer.

Deal with logistics

There are logistics to consider when we move, so giving ourselves as much time as possible and enlisting help matters. Things like final meter readings, keeping the same phone number (if you plan to do this), letting the housing provider know if you are renting. Make a list of who needs to know your new address and let them know in order that essential bills and other documents don't get lost in the post. If you can afford it, use a mail forwarding service for a while. Remember also if you drive to let DVLA know. Sort out your new house insurance seeking advice from an insurance broker if this is helpful. If you have broadband or some TV provider that requires installation again, this needs to be arranged and cancelled at your old address.

To whom do you need to register?

Moving home may mean moving to a new area, indicating changes in GP, dentist, school, nursery. However, when we move house, rarely is it just a change of 'building'. It is a change of 'home' and all that goes with meeting the needs of those who live in that home. So again, taking time to plan can save a lot of stress.

Conflict associated with moving home

Sometimes moving home can be complicated. It may be due to separation or divorce, and there are issues with who retains/moves out of the marital home. If you have children, this is an additional stressor for them, on top of the distress of parents separating. Good financial advice is essential in situations like this, as is accurate information to share with children. While there will be upset, the more clarity and reassurance you can offer, the smoother the transition may be for them. There may also be challenges if the house, which may have been the family home, is part of someone's estate and is being sold, and there was no clear Will made around specific items. It may be worth speaking to a solicitor or Citizens Advice who may be able to share supports available in your area to address these challenges if they arise.

Normalise feeling anxious

Moving home can make us feel anxious as we are giving up the familiar for something new. Visualisation and journaling can be a helpful way to look forward to the move and work out the natural anxieties you may have. Talk to someone about how you feel, it's incredible how often the worries we have can be eased or addressed when we discuss them with someone else and make a plan or accept there will be upheaval for a while, but in the end, it will settle.

Children, pets and other dependents

Moving is stressful for pretty much everyone. However, it can be more so for young children, pets, or other family members who, through ill health or other reasons, are even more vulnerable to the stress of moving. This stress is why seeking support during a move matters, as others may be able to help short term so that the new home is more settled for others more likely to be upset by the move. It may also be worth seeking advice from your VET or the RSPCA around helping settle your pets into their new home, e.g. if you have a cat who is outdoors, how to help them relax in their new surroundings and when it may be time to let them out to explore.

Emotional preparation for moving

Settling in a new home can be an emotional experience. Finding ways to have courageous conversations with others where a family is moving can help manage those emotions. This conversation is where visioning and using a visualisation board can help. Creating that space to hear people's fears about the move and through creative visualisation working together to explore how those fears can be allayed and replaced with anticipation and excitement at something new.

Kindness to you and the family

Do not neglect to look after yourself when moving. Making time, no matter how short this may be, to relax matters. When you are packing, remember to have a box with your kettle and ingredients for a cuppa and something to eat. If you have children or pets, think about what may help them feel comforted during the move, a favourite toy or a blanket. Build in some time to relax, have fun, unwind and recharge your energy levels.

Moving is stressful, however, a bit of planning, asking for support and looking after yourself and those affected by the move can help manage that distress, so in time you begin to enjoy your new home and the new memories which you shall create. Remember, if you do need more formal support, find out about professional support near you, as sometimes we do all need to talk and be heard.

A home is more than a house

Our homes contain memories. These can vary according to our experience and aren't always positive. If moving home is creating some feelings of distress, as perhaps old memories surface speak to someone. This can often be the case when moving home due to loss, either a relationship breakup, children all leaving home or sadly someone has died. It may be a trusted friend or family member who is enough to share your feelings with. On the other hand, it may be there are underlying feelings that require more formal support. Speak to your GP or health care provider.



Tips to deal with redundancy

Take a minute

On hearing bad news, we naturally can have a flood of emotions which can cause us further distress. If just for a moment we do nothing, like a wave, let it wash over us, we may find, that initial flood of negative feelings dissipates, and we are in a calmer place. www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/theright-mindset/202004/the-90-second-rule-builds-self-control

Risk of suicide

Sometimes the shock of redundancy can lead people to think of suicide, if you are having thoughts of suicide, please speak to someone. [Samaritans Free Phone Tel: 116 123](https://www.samaritans.org/).

Know your rights

You do have rights and it's worth knowing what they are. This link take you to a place where you can find out more: www.mygov.scot/help-redundancy (PACE) is the Scottish Government's initiative for supporting people dealing with redundancy. PACE can provide free, confidential advice to help you with your next steps. You can phone them on **0800 917 8000**. For financial advice and signposting to services have a look at moneyadvicescotland.org.uk particularly, 'get help' drop down.

It's the post that has been made redundant

It can be hard for it not to be personal if we are made redundant after all, it's us who have lost our job. Remember this isn't you that's at fault, it's that the post doesn't exist anymore as your employer has lost funding, or a contract or business isn't doing well. It's important at this time we don't lose our confidence. Also take time to update your CV, it's amazing the skills and experience that we have, we take for granted.

Discrimination and redundancy

If you believe you have been unfairly treated or experienced discrimination in the redundancy process, these sites may be helpful: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/leaving-a-job/redundancy/check-if-your-redundancy-is-fair/discrimination-during-redundancy and www.acas.org.uk/your-rights-during-redundancy

Look after you

Seems common sense, amazing how as soon as we are challenged we find self-care goes out the window, yet we need to be in a calmer place with more energy to work out how to get out of this situation which is causing distress.

Manage the what ifs

It is natural on becoming redundant to begin to worry about the 'what ifs' as we may have very practical things to consider, mortgages, rent, debt, financial commitments already made, fear we may not work again.

Talk about how you feel

Life happens and sometimes it can take the feet away from under us. If we try to deal with this alone it can be even more challenging. It's important we have a support network round us at this time, that can be informal, with friends and family maybe colleagues who also find themselves redundant. It may also be speaking to a professional advisor about how you feel and what you are thinking.

Face the challenges

It is understandable when faced with redundancy we may want to avoid listing the challenges we now face as we are already feeling pretty distressed. Redundancy can cause real issues though and recognising what they are and taking steps to deal with them can go a long way to reducing the distress that procrastinating can cause. Sometimes we do need space to reflect what next, sometimes we avoid what next as we don't know if we can cope with it, which is why seeking support is essential, you don't need to go through this alone. Delaying dealing with the fall out of redundancy only puts your wellbeing more at risk. www.psychcentral.com/lib/10-good-and-10-bad-things-about-procrastination

Don't fear to fail

It maybe you need to retrain for a new job or career path, and this can feel daunting, but we all have to learn and that means sometimes in the road to learning we don't get it right first time.

Find a hobby

You may think you don't have time or money for a hobby, but it's important to remember this is a point in your life and not let it overwhelm every aspect of your life. Volunteering may also become a hobby and could even offer experience which may help return to paid work.

Plan what next

This job was made redundant, there are other jobs out there. We can focus on why we may not get one as there are more people looking for work, than work available, or we can focus on securing that new job, even if it takes time, or means retraining.

Get help to find a new job, these resources maybe helpful:

- www.indeed.co.uk
- www.reed.co.uk
- www.s1jobs.com
- www.swifthires.com
- www.mygov.scot/find-job
- www.myjobscotland.gov.uk
- Turn2us.org.uk
- www.scotland.org/work/career-opportunities
- www.gov.scot/policies/employment-support/fair-start-scotland-employment-support-service
- Fair Start | Tel: 0800 804 8108
- Business Support Scotland | Tel: 0300 303 0660
- www.myworldofwork.co.uk | Tel: 0800 917 8000
- Employersdirect.org.uk/redundancy-advice | Tel: 0800 464 0966

The importance of releasing tears

We are all different, so, never judge your own feelings. If something is a big deal for you, even if its not for others, that doesn't matter, it's a big deal for you. Sometimes we really do need a genuinely good cry, these are wee tips to help you cry better, when you need to release your sadness.

When to cry

Cry whenever you need to. It doesn't need to be a traumatic event like the loss of a loved one, if something has you feeling you could cry... cry.

Cry for your own pain as well as others

Sometimes its easier to cry over what is happening to someone in a film, or in a book, or listening to music, sometimes if we need to get started crying this can help release emotions which have maybe built up. BUT you may be avoiding what is hurting you. It's okay to cry for yourself too, you matter.

How long to cry for?

You can't set a time limit on tears. Avoiding having a good cry may result in you feeling sadder for longer. Trust your body, it will know when you have cried enough. If you do make the connection with where your pain is coming from and allow yourself to cry, you will find, your tears will come to a natural stop. There is no time limit on sorrow, it can be a sore time, but be patient as you will come through the other side. Its like the weather, sometimes it rains for days, weeks, but the sun eventually does come back.

Find a time and a place

Sometimes we need to stop crying and keep it together in front of someone else e.g. if you are a doctor and you are seeing a patient, that may not be the best time for you to cry about your pain, or even the empathy you have for the others distress. However, later when you are alone, or with people who you can share your tears with then let them flow. No one is immune to pain who has feelings and we all sometimes need to cry no matter what our role is. Remember, don't force tears. It may be you needed a good cry and that was enough. Don't feel you need to keep crying longer than is helpful for you, or shorter than is helpful. We all work through pain differently. If the need to cry has gone, let it go, don't get stressed out if you can't recapture your pain, it may have gone of its own accord.

Use a kinder inner voice

Sometimes our inner voice is unkind and stops us crying. Telling us: We are overreacting, men don't cry, get a grip, it's no big deal. Or, we feel we are a burden crying so apologise and want to stop. Use a kinder inner voice, be compassionate to yourself as you would for someone you love and say; I matter, and I need to cry. Don't try and stop yourself, by allowing yourself to cry you will stop naturally.

Crying around other people

Sometimes we don't want to cry in front of others in case we upset them. The most helpful thing someone can do when you are crying is sit quietly with you, offering hankies if you need them, but not trying to make you stop crying, or offering advice. This may come later, but when we need a good cry, we need a good cry, its natural.

Other reasons tears may be close to the surface

There can be health conditions or other reasons where we find we cry more often. This is something may be experienced e.g. by someone going through menopause. If you experience any health conditions or challenges, and find you are crying more often than usual and this is becoming an issue for you, please speak to your GP or other health care provider.

Tears of Joy and Laughing at something sad

Sometimes, we can be happy, receive great news, and, we burst into tears. These however, are tears of joy. There's a suggestion, that tears of joy may well be the body's way of restoring "emotional equilibrium". It's also suggested we can laugh at something sad, to restore equilibrium, or to build resilience in the face of potential trauma.

If you are working through some issues which you need support with, or struggling with thoughts of suicide, then seek help from someone, don't cry alone. There are services as well as friends and family and local community groups who care, speak to your local health care providers about support near you.

It is suggested crying is good for you. Tears contain toxins and feel-good chemicals are released in the body whenever we cry tears of sadness. Think, maybe of our tears as a waterfall we need to pass through to get to a better place, so if they need to flow.... let them, remember they will eventually stop and the sun can shine again.



Tips to bring more love into your life

What is love?

Often when we think of love, we may think of romantic love, or the love of a parent/grandparent for their child. However, there are many other ways we can experience love. Love may be associated with feelings of security, not being judged, being nurtured and that someone cares and has our back, they are there for us and we are there for them, there is a sense of loyalty, someone who is with you in good times and bad.

Why does feeling loved matter?

When we consider steps to improve wellbeing we may consider, changes to our diet, making time to exercise, have hobbies a sense of purpose, be around others etc. However, its also worth considering how love impacts on our wellbeing. Consider the first point, what is love? Now ask yourself, how many of the qualities we identify with love, do we apply to ourselves? Do we love ourselves? We can also associate love with feelings of closeness. Evidence suggests, feeling and showing love supports our wellbeing, in fact in our early years as babies and children it is crucial for our emotional development. Love matters.

What gets in the road of loving?

Sometimes we have an image of how another should be before they deserve love, this can make being loving a challenge as it maybe the qualities you seek in others are not there. No one is perfect including ourselves. Loving ourselves and others may mean also loving those parts which are not perfect. There can be reasons why we may struggle to love ourselves or others. These tips are for wellbeing only and do not replace professional advice. Ask your GP or other health care providers about support near you, if you feel you need more than self-management tips. If we didn't experience love when we were younger, this may impact on us in later years. This may require counselling, or other therapeutic interventions to explore what is getting in the road of love. It may be our boundaries have become barricades.

Start loving you, you deserve it

Sometimes for many reasons there is a battle goes on inside our heads which on the one hand wants to show self-love by e.g., making time to relax, versus self-loathing or sabotage, which puts us off making time for ourselves. We find we are arguing with ourselves, that it won't make any difference what we do, so why bother. We may be carrying guilt, which makes it hard for us to love ourselves. Remember, these pieces are for self-care and do not replace professional advice. Learning to support the part of us which loves ourselves helps us make different choices. These choices can help form new routines and habits. Check out the tips on COPE Scotland's website www.cope-scotland.org around feeling good being you.

Feeling lonely

Some people are happy with their own company and don't mind spending time alone. Some people may spend a lot of time with others, yet still have an empty feeling inside. Some people may believe if they just meet that special someone, they won't feel alone anymore. We are all different, and we have different needs.

Self-care matters

While wanting more love in our life may be a goal we have, looking after ourselves also matters. When we make time for self-care this can improve our wellbeing, how relaxed we feel, how much more focused we are in our thinking and decision making, all of which can help support more meaningful relationships with others.

Showing love

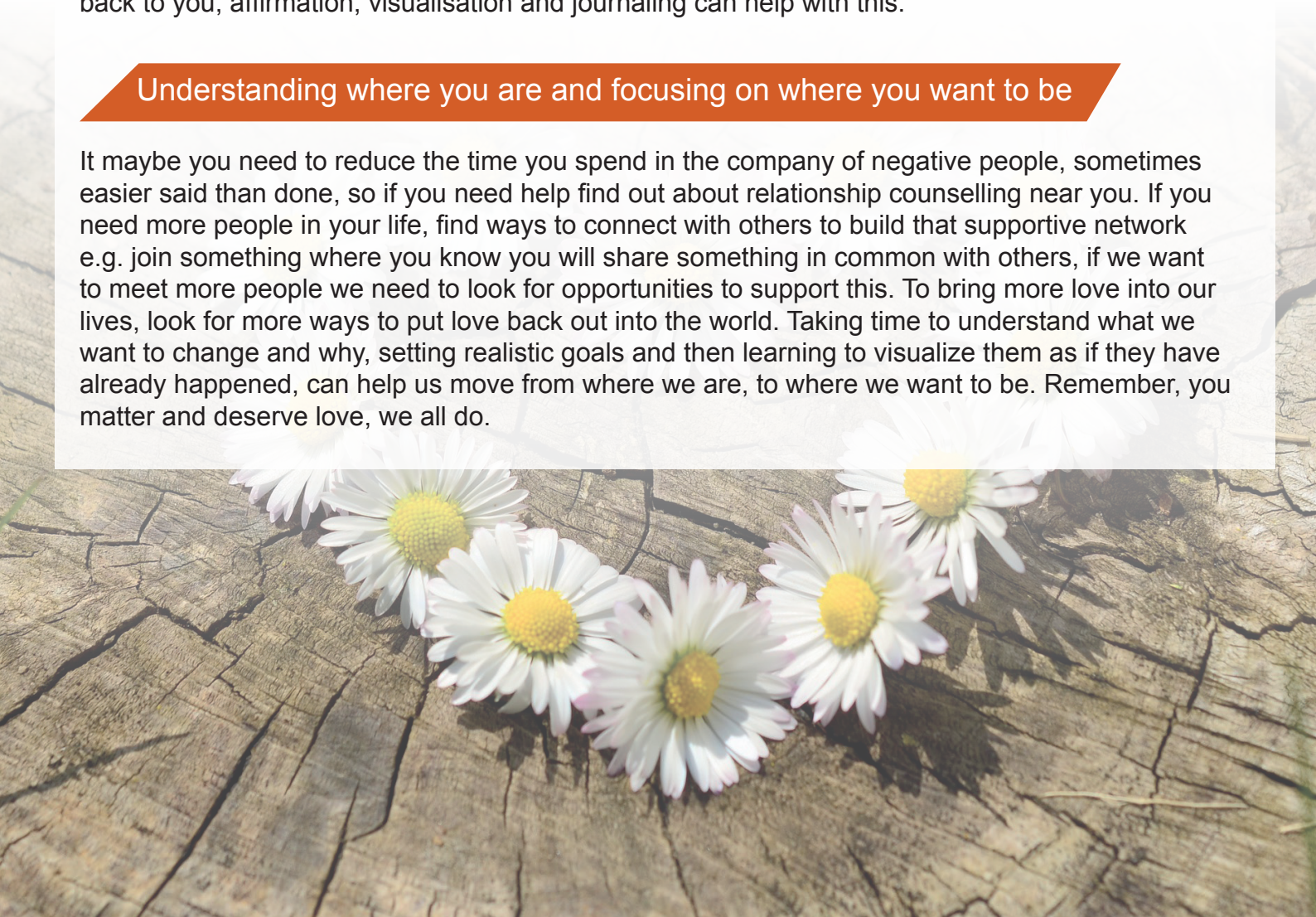
While we cannot influence how much love another person may show, we do have control over how much love we can show; again, this is for self-care and does not replace professional advice. We may show our love to another person, or it maybe the attention we give our home or garden, it may be the love we show for our pets, or a cause we feel passionate about. Love isn't only about romantic relationships. There is also love for friends, which can include the love in longer term relationships when its less about getting all dressed up going out together and just being together anywhere and enjoying the moment. Then there is the love for the rest of the world. This love is given freely with no thought of return, it is selfless and forgives easily as it is not about me, but we.

Bringing more love into your life

If we are not content with how things are and we want something different to happen, this is probably going to require change, so as with anything, its helpful to reflect on your goals and motivation for this change. Learning to send out positive messages, may help bring more positivity back to you, affirmation, visualisation and journaling can help with this.

Understanding where you are and focusing on where you want to be

It maybe you need to reduce the time you spend in the company of negative people, sometimes easier said than done, so if you need help find out about relationship counselling near you. If you need more people in your life, find ways to connect with others to build that supportive network e.g. join something where you know you will share something in common with others, if we want to meet more people we need to look for opportunities to support this. To bring more love into our lives, look for more ways to put love back out into the world. Taking time to understand what we want to change and why, setting realistic goals and then learning to visualize them as if they have already happened, can help us move from where we are, to where we want to be. Remember, you matter and deserve love, we all do.



Tips for setting boundaries for wellbeing

What are boundaries?

Boundaries can be physical, how comfortable you are e.g., with being hugged, or touched. They can be emotional, which can include how much you allow another person's feelings to impact on your own needs and how many sacrifices you make to keep them happy, when you actually feel pretty miserable. Boundaries can also be around your privacy and what you are willing to share with others.

Why boundaries matter

Boundaries set the parameters for what you decide is or isn't acceptable. If we don't set boundaries, then people may push them. It's easier to set boundaries at the beginning than try and put them in place when problems have started to arise.

How do you know your own boundaries?

We are all different, we have different priorities, natures, attitudes, and values. We need to know what matters to us, to help set our own boundaries. When we are caring and compassionate, we may find it hard to say no to others, however, always saying yes can leave us exhausted. You need to decide how much you have for others, and how much you need for yourself.

Why may we find it hard to set boundaries?

Most people like to be liked, to be accepted, not to be alone. Often fear of being rejected, abandoned, hurting someone else's feelings, being judged, and found to be wanting, or not a "nice person", can often push us into accepting situations, or behaviours of others we personally don't like, but fear the consequences if we don't 'put up with it'. There may, however, be issues in our past which make setting boundaries more of a challenge and it maybe that counselling is advised.

Is it too late to set boundaries?

It is never too late to set boundaries. However, there can be consequences. If we have always put someone else first, they may be confused if we stop doing that. Think of relationships like a job description. If the other thinks you always put them first, they matter more than anything, you don't have any needs, then if you start to assert these don't be surprised if they wonder what your problem is. To avoid this, it's important to plan what you want to say and sit down calmly and communicate how you feel. It maybe you need to speak to a relationship counsellor.

Your boundaries, your responsibility

Caring people can be particularly good at offering reasons why they constantly put others needs before their own. However, if putting others first constantly is impacting on our capacity to look after our own wellbeing, this will not change until we decide to make the change. No one can or will make that decision for us. We need to balance what we do for others, with what we need to do for ourselves.

People aren't mind readers

Sometimes we hope, people may see we need some space and create that for us, we may drop hints, we may even be passively aggressive? Passive aggression is where we indirectly resist what others are asking of us, but don't actually come out and say how we feel as we want to avoid what we may think is direct confrontation or offending them. This can actually result in others becoming confused and the very confrontation we wanted to avoid happens.

Our boundaries can define us

We are all individuals; we need to respect other people's boundaries as we would want them to respect ours. Setting boundaries helps define who we are to other people, it expresses our individuality it also lets people know what we hold ourselves responsible for. This is why it matters we respect and set our own boundaries. If we hold ourselves responsible for everything, so will everyone else and you may find it hard to find time to call your own!

Healthy boundaries and self-care

Setting healthy boundaries means you consider not only others needs but your own. Crucial for wellbeing is having healthy boundaries in place. How we set boundaries can vary in different settings e.g., the boundaries we set with our own family, may be different from the boundaries we set with our work colleagues. Boundaries we set on a private Facebook page, may be different from what we put on our professional page.

It is okay to say no

We can say no, we don't always need to explain why we are saying no. Sometimes we feel guilty saying no. However, if saying yes crosses our boundaries, this means we are again sacrificing our own needs. This can even leave us feeling resentful. Only we can consider what matters to us, and what needs to change so that we recognise our needs matter too. Sadly, it does not follow, that by caring and making time to be there for others, they too will make time for us, only we can make that time for ourselves. If there are wider issues in a relationship that need to be explored, then it is making time to calmly and quietly share why you need this boundary, to help the other person understand. If they don't understand and don't care about your needs then perhaps you need to consider how healthy this relationship is. It may be you need more professional help to explore why you struggle with boundaries.

Change can be challenging

If you have never really set down boundaries and you start doing it now, you may find initially this is quite challenging. People's reaction may not be the support you had hoped for. It may be more challenging with family members, or others, who you can't stop seeing if you find the relationship unhealthy, as there are other conditions which mean you can't easily walk away. There may be physical space issues where you can't simply get room to practice self-care. There are many people living in the same space, or you have no spare resources, money is tight for everything and the whole family's boundaries are being pushed! This is why it's important to find ways to communicate calmly, find a common ground you all share and work on compromise. Seeking support where this is needed.

You matter and looking after you requires time

If setting boundaries is of interest to you, start slowly and with people you are confident to share your thoughts with, if you don't know anyone like that, maybe seek professional help. The more we practice setting boundaries, the easier it can become.

Boundaries aren't barricades!

If you have issues of trust, you may need to seek support to work through this. However, in general, remember, boundaries are there to protect what matters to you, not to close people out, or push them away. Everyone has rights and needs. In setting your boundaries be realistic about what you hope they will achieve and don't put consequences on a breach of boundaries you don't plan to follow through on. Recognise the possible impact establishing boundaries may have, but if they matter to you and your wellbeing and this is the impact you seek, then do what is right for you, recognising, this won't always be right for everyone else.



Tips to be more decisive

Decisive and effective decisions

Perhaps you find you jump into committing yourself to something not having thought it all through, and later regret this. It maybe you procrastinate about the pros and cons for so long that the opportunity is lost. Being decisive and making good decisions is a balance of thinking through your options and concluding on the best way forward, then acting on the decision made. Recognise we can only make decisions on things which we have some control over. Sometimes decisions are made for us and if we don't like them, then its how we adapt. E.G Lockdown during the COVID19 pandemic to protect lives and the NHS and following the restrictions.

What gets in the road of being decisive?

Low confidence and self-esteem can make us worry what others may think of our decisions. We may have a set of beliefs which don't think we can make good decisions. It maybe we are a perfectionist and unless we think its going to be totally perfect, we are reluctant to decide in case we aren't happy with how it works out. Every decision feels like a test. Or we find it hard to say no, so find people are constantly making decisions for us by asking us to do things which we jump to do, but don't always stop to think, why, or do I need to do this? Feeling good about ourselves is one way to help ourselves make decisions that work for us.

Sometimes we need support to understand ourselves better

Different mental health conditions can affect our decision making such as depression and anxiety. It maybe you find your mind so overcrowded with decisions to make, that making any becomes exceedingly difficult. The following tips are for self-management and don't replace professional advice. There can be underlying reasons, life experiences, how others have treated us which can impact on our ability to make the decisions we need for our wellbeing. If you need to speak to someone about your challenges of decision making, ask your GP or other health care providers about services near you. **You do matter.**

Clearing space to consider decisions

Sometimes we have so much going on we feel we don't have time to think, so we either rush to a decision, or put it off. Clearing our mind and being relaxed can help us make space to reflect on the various options before us, and which path looks most favourable to achieve our goals. It maybe our mind is preoccupied with problems.

Ah, but what if?

Sometimes our imagination can run away with us around the 'what if's when we are making a decision. We try and consider every angle and outcome and how we will feel, what we will do, this may make us anxious and so we find it even harder to think about what next. Learning to be mindful is helpful when making decisions. Good decisions don't mean we don't have any doubts. We do need to consider pros and cons. It means we are not put off by our doubts, but seek a solution, asking for help if we need it.

Group decisions

Many of us may find we are involved in group decisions where perhaps a consensus is needed before action can be taken. Sometimes tensions can arise between those who want to get on and get it done and those who want to think about it a bit more. This can be as much in family life as in work. Finding consensus in a group can be a challenge, but it is not impossible. We perhaps just need to explore together in a more meaningful way how we will come to a decision and the timeframe we offer ourselves for this to happen, ensuring everyone has a say in the matter and recognising the solution may not be perfect, or suit everyone, but will be good enough. Sometimes good enough is as good as it gets! There is much online about consensus decision making.

What do you want to make the decision about and why?

This may sound obvious, but its amazing how we can fall into routines where we don't really think about the decisions we make, its almost like we are on autopilot. If we want to make changes in our life, this will require new decisions, so being aware and mindful of the choices and decisions we make is vital. Journaling is another useful way to think about what decisions we want to make, have made and what happened, what we can learn and what happens next.

Information and alternatives

Once we know the decisions we plan to make, it's important we recognise if perhaps we need information and start to gather that, and if needs be who can help. It is also useful to come up with alternatives so if the original decision we made, doesn't work out we have other options. For example, we may decide to get fitter, but we need to find a fitness regime that works for us. This may involve seeking advice. What we decide needs to be something we feel motivated to follow and fits with our goals. If this involves a lot of activity outdoors, we may need alternatives if the weather prevents us from getting out for a while.

Acting on our decisions

Doing nothing is a decision, it's the decision to do nothing. However, if we are not happy with something in our life, this may not be the best decision for us. This is why it matters we think through what it is we want to do, what else do we need to know to help us decide what next, are there alternatives, which option seems most likely to get us to where we want to be. There comes a point though when we need to act or decide to stop beating ourselves up over deciding to change when in fact, we don't want it bad enough to do what needs to be done, so just go in circles of, 'I should, but don't' If it matters to you, you will find a way, if not then let it go. If you need help, ask.

It may not work out first time; this is why its important to review what happened and journaling can help with this. We may decide to go for a new job, research all the possibilities, apply and get an interview only to find we didn't get it. We can decide to leave it, or we can decide to learn from what happened and try again. We learn by doing. If something matters to you, which requires a change, think what decisions you may need to make which will take you from where you are, to where you want to be. You do matter. Have faith in yourself, you are more awesome than you know.

Tips to help with guilt

If thinking of suicide talk to someone now

Guilt and shame can lead us to thoughts of suicide, if you are thinking of suicide, please talk to someone. Remember, **the Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel: 116 123**

Unhealthy guilt

This is more complicated and it's when we feel way more responsible for a negative situation than we should. We may not even have had any control over what happened, but somewhere inside we feel we could have done something to prevent it, even when in reality there was nothing anyone could have done.

Guilt linked to other health conditions

There are some conditions e.g. OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) can produce many challenges for people in relation to their tolerance of feeling guilty and their sense of what they are and aren't responsible for. If this is an issue for you please do speak to someone. The OCD action helpline maybe a good place to start **0845 390 6232 W: www.ocdaction.org.uk**

Healthy guilt

Yep, sometimes it is healthy guilt, it's that wee feeling we get when we know what we have done or said wasn't appropriate. We all at times act in a way we later regret. Guilt is a way of helping us learn to do better next time. Accepting we need to make amends, saying we are sorry without trying to make up an excuse for our behaviour can help us learn and move on and maybe if we do better next time others will accept our apology. The main thing is learn an apology means nothing if we keep doing the same thing.

Survivors guilt

Sometimes when we are doing okay but someone else isn't we feel survivors guilt. This can be from being the sole survivor of a car crash, to perhaps even feeling bad you have plenty of food when others are using foodbanks. So, you feel the need to keep giving things away, but no matter how much you give, another advert on tv of people or animals suffering, or another news story of injustice and those feelings come back, a constant reminder of the pain in the world. You are not responsible for this. Be kind to yourself, others and the planet, and if you can't do good, try and not do harm. This is all any of us can do.

Let it go

Sometimes we make a mistake, we try and make amends and others say they forgive us but then keep casting it up. When we accept someone's apology that's it, the apology is accepted. If you find someone won't let it go, no matter how much you have tried to make amends, then maybe you need to see what you need to let go of. We cannot change others behaviour only our own.

Guilt and grief

It is natural to experience guilt on the death of a loved one, or someone we knew. This can be very complex from regret we hadn't said or done something differently, or regret we had said or done something, we would now love to take back and can't. Sometimes even self-blame, thinking we could maybe have done something to prevent it.

Behaviour

If you find you keep apologising for the same thing, maybe you need to understand the behaviour which leads to an apology in the first place e.g. hurting someone's feelings. Learning more about ourselves and how we relate to other people maybe a good place to start. Sometimes CBT or learning more about our emotions can help. These links maybe useful www.moodcafe.co.uk/free-online-behavioural-therapy.aspx. alison.com/course/develop-your-emotional-intelligence.

What's in our control versus what we would love to control

A huge part of managing guilt is recognising what's within our control and what is beyond it. Its also important to remember while yes, we are responsible for children or vulnerable people in our care, we are not responsible for everyone's happiness. Kind people often don't want to offend so don't put their needs first. Don't allow others to manipulate you with guilt, learning assertion can help with this www.openlearningworld.com/innerpages/Assertiveness%20Training.htm

Make a forgiveness affirmation jar

How we talk to ourselves plays a huge part in how we deal with guilt. We are all different and have different reactions to situations, some people are very good at putting the blame onto others, or saying 'not my problem' some people feel the pain of the world intensely and feel they are to blame for it all, which they are not! An affirmation jar can help change the internal script to one which is kinder and more forgiving. Learn to forgive yourself.

Challenge your own rule book

We all have standards we try and live our lives by, check your standards are realistic. Sometimes guilt comes from not meeting our own standards. However, if those standards were a challenge for anyone to live up to all the time? Eventually you may find you don't meet them either, you are only human. Challenge the rule book of your life. Being kind to others is important, make sure and make time in there for you too. Please remember, you will make mistakes we all do; you will have regrets, we all do. Don't let mistakes and regrets from the past hold you back from a better tomorrow, learn to say sorry, learn to forgive yourself, learn to make amends and move on. If you need help to do this, speak to someone.

Tips to help with menopause

Menopause awareness

The menopause is when a person stops having periods, it is a natural part of ageing and while it usually starts around 45 to 55 it can begin earlier. Perimenopause is the lead up to menopause when oestrogen levels begin to decline and this can start for some people as early as their 30's. Menopause can also occur as a result of surgery (hysterectomy) or as a result of some cancer treatments. If in doubt please speak to your GP or other health care provider.

Symptoms can vary and not everyone's experience is the same, but symptoms can include:

- **Hot flushes** • **Reduced libido** • **Changes in mood** • **Breast tenderness**
 - **Irregular periods aches and pains possibly urinary problems**
 - **Weight gain** • **Thinning hair**

If not sleeping well due to hot flushes this can cause fatigue which can affect mood and concentration.

There can be other reasons why people may have these symptoms so it's worth going to your GP, they can discuss your symptoms and advise whether they think this is the menopause and if any other tests need to be done. They can also offer advice around treatment, including lifestyle options and medical management, including HRT. Many women find discussing options, with their GP, for managing the menopause, including doing nothing, helpful.

Small things which can help. Wear light clothing and layer so if you become hot you can remove layers. Use cool showers, compresses and cold drinks to help with flushes, maybe carry a fan.

Other changes can happen at this time, children have grown and are leaving home, career, caring for older relatives, perhaps other health challenges for you or a loved one. Learning to be aware of the signs of stress and how to manage this is really important.

Making time to have fun, be active, work out something you enjoy relaxing can all help at this time, also become aware of any triggers which make symptoms worse and maybe avoid them e.g. you notice a flush after you drink coffee.

It's important at this time you don't feel alone, so share with others how you are feeling. There are also opportunities to connect with others and share experiences of menopause e.g. www.menopausecafe.net find a menopause café near you, or organise one of your own.

While the menopause is a natural part of the ageing process, it can be a challenge, be aware of the signs and symptoms of menopause and seek advice to help you work through this in a way most helpful for you.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:



Reflecting on what I have read so far, one change I want to make is:

The help or information I need to make this change is:

I can look for this help or information:

Getting more energy

When we are not sleeping well this can affect our energy levels. It matters we try and find ways to keep our energy charged especially if we find we are facing challenges. The following tips offer some ideas.



Tips to get more energy

There can be many reasons why we may have no energy, including some health conditions, if you are concerned about your health, please speak to your GP, these tips are for self-management and don't replace professional advice.

Sleep is important

If we feel we don't have enough energy, then we need to look at our sleep habits and see if we can get into routines which work better for us. Sleep, for some, no problem, head on pillow few minutes later and, they're off! For others, sleep does not come easy and the more you think about the fact you can't get to sleep, the harder it is to sleep. However, sleeping and sleeping well are essential for our physical and mental health.

What can keep us awake at night?

There can be many reasons why we find it hard to get a good night's kip: We may work shifts, or have a young baby who needs cared for, or we may be worried about something. We may have chronic pain and it keeps us awake. We may be bored as each day feels like the day before and not much happened, so we cat nap throughout the day, then can't sleep at night. Too much sleep is also not good for us. We may be caring for someone and their poor sleep affects our sleep. We may have had an upsetting experience and are scared to go to sleep in case we have bad dreams. Where we stay may be noisy, there may be light pollution from streetlights, cars, buses. We may not feel safe to sleep. We may have had too much coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, or smoked cigarettes, or a combination of all these things. We are all unique so what keeps us awake can be unique too.

Wakening easily

Studies by Orfeu Buxton, an associate professor of biobehavioural health at Penn State University, suggest, we all have a flight or fight response, abrupt noises can wake us up and put us on full alert, if you find it hard to sleep, you will find being wakened like this can make it harder to get back to sleep. Noises like the sea are non-threatening sounds, which vary in volume so are less abrupt and more likely to lull you back to sleep. For more information on this study follow this link. www.livescience.com/53403-why-sound-ofwater-helps-you-sleep.html You will also find on You tube many videos of the sea, why not check them out see if you can find one which works for you?

Eat a balanced diet

We wouldn't expect a car to run on no fuel, so our bodies need fuel and the right fuel to meet our body's needs, fatigue can be one of the signs of a diet which isn't balanced. This site offers further advice on the benefits of and what constitutes a healthy diet www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition It's also important not to become dehydrated, so make sure and drink enough water.

Being with others

Some people find being around others who are important to us can give us energy. It may be for whatever reason you haven't been able to spend as much time with people who recharge your energy, become aware of this, and explore how you can make more time for the people and activities which matter to you.

Specific challenges to a healthier sleep

If you have some specific challenges in your life which are affecting your sleep explore what services or opportunities are around locally which may help you address them. For example, if chronic pain is an issue, find out are there any Mindfulness courses near you, or perhaps centres which offer meditation classes. If you are caring for someone and aren't already linked into a carers' centre, find one near you and see what support there is that you can tap into. If something is worrying you, find someone to talk to and see if the problem can be solved and if not, explore things which may help you worry less. If you have experienced trauma and are having flashbacks speak to your GP about services which can help you. We often think there is no support or opportunities out there, but it's amazing how when we start to look what we can find. Check out www.cope-scotland.org 'What's Happening' resource mags for more info around what may be helpful for you.

Having purpose

Having a reason to get out of bed, start our day in whatever fashion that has meaning for us, to be involved in something which helps us live our values and can offer us a sense of purpose is good for our wellbeing. If you visit www.cope-scotland.org and browse the document sections, you may find various resources there which could be of interest. These include, life purpose affirmation cards, motivation workbooks, videos and more.

Self-care including self-talk!

Just like a car needs fuel it also needs an MOT and regular service. If you aren't looking after yourself, you may find there is a lot of energy going out, but not a lot of time being spent topping that energy back up. Making time to relax matters and can make a big difference. The story we may tell ourselves about how we are feeling can also impact on our energy levels.

Relax and recharge routines

We become what we do repeatedly! If we never make time to relax and recharge, then deciding to make time means a change in routine and that can sometimes be a challenge. If we find we don't have a lot of energy, then to regain energy, something needs to change. Remember, if something really matters to us, we shall try and find a way, if it doesn't, we will find an excuse! So small steps lead to bigger changes and be kind to yourself on the journey. Negative self-talk and worry drains energy, instead try, and find ways to walk on the sunny side of the street.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:

Currently I recharge my batteries by:



Other things I can do to recharge my batteries are:

Opportunities to do this includes:

Relaxation

Learning to relax is a good technique to help us fall asleep or get back over to sleep if we wake up. The following tips may be of interest.



Tips to feel more relaxed

Why relaxation matters

Relaxation is good for us as it helps us manage the natural stressors of life as well as when we are faced with life challenges. It is also good for us physically, which can help our immune system to be as healthy as possible. There are many reasons why we may feel tense or anxious, so making time to relax while it may not solve all our problems, may help give us space to recharge our batteries, giving us more energy and confidence to manage the problems we face.

Keep stimulants to a minimum

Watch the volume of coffee and even tea you drink as they both have caffeine, also energy drinks, can produce the opposite feeling to relaxation. Smoking, fizzy drinks, alcohol, drugs, too much sugar can all cause us issues as stimulants can make it hard to relax.

Stay hydrated

Our bodies are pretty much made up of water and we need water for them to function well. When the weather is warm, drinking water helps regulate our body temperature, also we need water to keep our joints lubricated, help prevent infection, get nutrients around our body, help our organs function. Being hydrated can even improve sleep quality. However, be mindful of drinking water just before bed as the need to get up for the toilet may interfere with your sleep cycle.

Eat a balanced diet

If we don't eat a balanced diet, we can be more likely to become unwell, suffer infections, feel tired even fatigued and everything can become an effort. When money is tight fresh fruit and veg maybe a challenge, but we can use tinned and frozen. This site offers further advice on the benefits of what constitutes a healthy diet www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition

Making time to relax

There are different ways to relax and it's finding one that works for you. Some people may have more time for self-care than others who may have, a demanding work schedule, excess hours, no breaks, cancelled holidays. They may be caring for someone else, they may be trying to juggle a family, work, caring for a relative the list goes on. Finding time can be hard, but finding time is even more important when you are busy, even if only a few minutes every day, can make a difference.

Relaxation in minutes

If you find it hard to find time to practice relaxation these tools may be helpful. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpQ-R8CgQ5A> There is also a video on the COPE Scotland website, "using the senses to relax". Co-designed with colleagues who have experience of sense challenges <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfxulw98FYE>

Relaxation ideas if you have a wee bit more time

Learning to be calm when things are challenging, helps us to feel less tense. Have a look online for reputable Mindfulness sites and explore if learning Mindfulness may be of interest to you. Sometimes we have been tense for so long we feel quite anxious, maybe even have panic attacks. These pieces may also be helpful for learning more about and how to self-manage panic attacks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2q03WCXmp34> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9-plRGwSAQ>

Be active

Being active and relaxation may sound like a contradiction, however, sometimes we have pent up energy which makes it harder to relax. Releasing this in a constructive way can help. This can be going for a walk, taking up a new hobby e.g. Yoga. Even really putting some effort into a spring clean any season of the year! Or polishing brass if you have some, or making bread, are all ways to put our energy into something which leaves us feeling fulfilled and relaxed.

Dealing with issues

If there is something, we need to deal with, but we keep putting it off then this can cause us tension and make it harder to relax. While Mindfulness is around being in the moment, learning to practice mindfulness can help us when we begin to feel overwhelmed by helping us focus on our breathing and bringing us back to the moment. There are many examples of Mindfulness practice on www.freemindfulness.org/download. Feeling calmer and more relaxed enables us to face challenges and be more optimistic of finding a solution or at least suffering less.

Find your happy

Laughter can be good for helping us relax. There are also our funny go to programmes, which again can make us laugh. Maybe there is a reason there were so many seasons of 'Only Fools and Horses'!

Learn to let go

Sometimes we get overwhelmed by what we see as injustice. The actions of others, which cause us stress, which we replay over, and over, which only leads to a spiral of tension. Learning to let go is not easy! But worth the effort. Instead become aware of our inner voice and find ways to reprogramme it to find things we appreciate and that is good in the world, as there is also good if we look for it.

Cuddles to help relax

A cuddle can also help ease tension. This wee video about the butterfly hug may be of interest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGGJrqscvtU> There are also items called weighted blankets which can give the feeling of being cuddled. However, do some research before investing in one.

Reading for relaxation or listening to music

Reading is another way to help us relax and unwind or listening to music or a talking book. Some research suggests even 6 minutes a day reading can be good for our wellbeing.

Make new habits lead to new routines

Building some relaxation into everyday routines can lead to healthier habits around making time to relax.

Time to reflect

Please, when it feels right for you, take some time to reflect on the following questions, again adding the date can be helpful to track progress.

Date:

Currently I relax by:



Other things I can do to relax are:

Opportunities to relax includes:

Tips for a better night's sleep

In this workbook we have sought to explore some of the things which can get in the road of a decent night's sleep, we hope you have found at least one thing of interest. The following are some general tips for a better sleep. What matters is what works for you and your well-being as you do matter.



Tips for a better night's sleep

Make your bedroom a place to unwind

Decluttering your bedroom, using relaxing colours, positioning your bed in a way works best for you can all help get a better night sleep.

Leave social media out of the bedroom

If you want a good sleep don't have mobile phones, iPad, anything which pings to let you know you have mail or updates on social media this is a time to relax and unwind not socialise.

Get into a routine

A routine before bedtime sends a signal to your mind you are getting ready to go to sleep, also, going to bed at a regular time helps programme your mind for sleep, work out a routine which is helpful for you and try and stick to it.

No stimulants

Trying to get to sleep means you want to unwind, coffee, cigarettes, fizzy drinks can all be stimulating and make it harder to sleep. So please try and avoid using stimulants in the evening or before getting ready for bed. Also, using alcohol is not a healthy way to get a good night's sleep and overuse can just lead to more problems. Try and not eat anything heavy to digest before going to bed as this too can keep you awake. Find something else which produces more feelings of calm e.g. herbal tea.

Be active during the day

Exercising, going a walk, being active during the day all makes you more likely to feel tired so be more likely to go to sleep and have a good sleep once you are in bed.

If you can't sleep get up

If you find you're lying thinking about not sleeping get up and do something boring, lying worrying about not sleeping will make it harder to sleep, get up and do something boring which will help make you feel tired and more likely to go back to bed and sleep, don't be tempted to have a cigarette or coffee this will only wake you up more.

Talk to someone

If there is something on your mind keeping you awake then maybe speak to someone about that, your GP should be able to signpost you to support.

Is your bed, mattress and pillows comfy?

It can be an expense we don't need, but, a good night's sleep is priceless, if your bed isn't comfy then getting a good night's sleep will be a challenge, if a new mattress is too dear maybe start with new pillows or a mattress topper.

Wind down

To help get in the mood for sleep, get into the routine of some wind down activities before bed, this may even include listening to a relaxation CD. There are a few to choose from on COPE Scotland's website, as well as many others online. Perhaps learn how to give yourself a hand massage and use some hand cream or essential oils. Having a pre sleep ritual can help your mind and body to prepare for sleep, so you feel more rested and get a better nights' sleep.



Useful links and contacts

Action for happiness

www.actionforhappiness.org

Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/getting-a-good-nights-sleep/

Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Alzheimers Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/

Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Asthma UK

www.asthma.org.uk

Scottish Autism Advice Line

Tel 01259 222 022

Bladder Health

www.bladderhealthuk.org

British Dyslexia Association

www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/adults/living-with-a-dyslexic-partner

British Menopause Society

www.thebms.org.uk

British Veterinary Association

www.bva.co.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-advice-for-animal-owners/

Carers Scotland

www.carersuk.org/scotland

Chest, heart and Stroke Scotland

www.chss.org.uk

Child bereavement UK

www.childbereavementuk.org

Citizens Advice Bureau Helpline Scotland

Tel 0800 028 1456

CRUSE Bereavement Care

www.cruse.org.uk

Diabetes UK

www.diabetes.org.uk 0345 123 2399

Domestic abuse and forced marriage helpline Scotland

Tel 0800 027 1234

Drink helpline Scotland

Tel 0800 7 314 314, do not accept calls from withheld numbers

Epilepsy Connections

www.epilepsyconnections.org.uk

Foodbank near you

www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-food-bank/

For advice on neighbour disputes

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/housing/problems-where-you-live-s/neighbour-disputes/

Free Mindfulness

www.freemindfulness.org/download

Gambling harms

National Gambling Helpline (0808 8020 133)

Hearing link

www.hearinglink.org/living/lipreading-communicating/how-to-lipread/

Heating

www.homeenergyscotland.org

Homelessness

scotland.shelter.org.uk

If you are deaf and experiencing a crisis text

DEAF to 85258 for free and immediate support

Inclusive communication

<https://inclusivecommunication.scot/>

Long COVID Scotland

www.longcovid.scot

The Living Life service offers guided self-help and cognitive behavioural therapy
Tel 0800 328 9655

National Autism Society
www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication

NHS 24
Tel 111

NHS 24 NHS Language Line
www.nhs24.scot/get-in-touch/language-line/

NHS Inform
www.nhsinform.scot

Overeaters anonymous
www.oagb.org.uk/scotland

The Pain association Scotland
www.painassociation.co.uk

Redundancy support service
www.employabilityinscotland.com/employability-services/pace/

Relationship Counselling
www.thepark.org.uk

RNIB
www.rnib.org.uk

RNID
www.rnid.org.uk

Samaritans
Tel 116 123

Sarcoidosis UK
www.sarcoidosisuk.org

Scottish Hazards
Confidential advice network for people having difficulties with their employers around the new laws and guidance
www.scottishhazards.org
www.facebook.com/scottishhazards
<https://twitter.com/ScottishHazards>
Tel 0800 0015 022

Scottish National Residential Pain Management Programme
www.snrpmp.scot.nhs.uk

Scotland's National British Sign Language User relay service
contactscotland-bsi.org

Sign up for free newsletter on chronic pain management **www.webmd.com/pain-management/guide/11-tips-for-living-with-chronic-pain#1**

Sleep Foundation
www.sleepfoundation.org

Support in Mind Scotland
www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk

Survivors of bereavement by suicide
www.uksobs.org

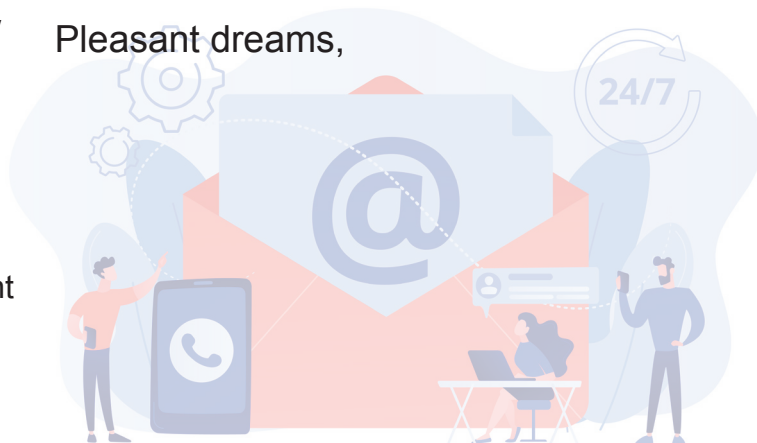
Tips on stress management, self-talk relaxation and wellbeing
www.cope-scotland.org

Zero Suicide Alliance Online Suicide Awareness Training
www.zerosuicidealliance.com

These are only some of the many services and supports available. Check out what is in your area. You may also find the 'What's happening' archives in the document section of **www.cope-scotland.org** of interest. These magazines list a significant amount of services. Directories can change so please check directly with services listed.

We hope this booklet has offered something to help you have an improved sleep experience.

Pleasant dreams,



Sweet dreams!

This workbook is part of **COPE Scotland's** understanding ourselves better suite of resources.

For more information visit www.cope-scotland.org or follow us on twitter [@COPEScotland](https://twitter.com/COPEScotland)

Produced by COPE Scotland
www.cope-scotland.org
🐦 @COPEScotland



More Choices for More People. Funding for this piece of work has been supported by the Self-Management Fund for Scotland administered on behalf of the Scottish Government by the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (The Alliance) with support from the William Grant Foundation and is also part of enabling connections to Build Healthier, Safer, Kinder Communities Together to Tackle Inequality