



Mental Health Awareness Week

In these challenging and uncertain times, looking after your own and others' mental health has never been so crucial. [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) will take place from 18th May through to 24th May, hosted by the Mental Health Foundation.

The theme this year is kindness, chosen because of its singular ability to unlock our shared humanity. Kindness strengthens relationships, develops community and deepens solidarity.

There are many suggestions on how you can get involved on the Mental Health Foundation website, as well as tips on how to manage your own well-being and support others.



Mental Health

It is always important to look after our mental health. The current situation can put additional pressures on our mental well-being.

At times you may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried, anxious or concerned about your health or the health of those close to you.

It is alright to feel all of those things and to recognise that everyone will respond differently.

There are many organisations and charities there to support you if you need it. The online help and also phone helplines can be found in the links below.

[NHS: Every Mind Matters](#)

[NHS: Staying at home tips](#)

What is good mental health?

The Mental Health Foundation characterises good mental health by a person's ability to fulfil a number of key functions and activities such as:

- The ability to learn
- The ability to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- The ability to form and maintain good relationships with others
- The ability to cope with and manage change and uncertainty

How to manage this?

It is important to take care of yourself and to get the most from life. Below are 10 practical ways recommended to look after your mental health.

1. Talk about your feelings
2. Keep active
3. Eat well
4. Drink sensibly
5. Keep in touch
6. Ask for help
7. Take a break
8. Do something you are good at
9. Accept who you are
10. Care for others



Give

Do something nice for a friend, family member or neighbour. Say thank you. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Seeing yourself connect with your community and those around you can be incredibly rewarding. Research suggests that:

- Acts of giving have the potential to enhance the social development in children and young
- People: in older people, volunteering can lead to a greater sense of meaning in our lives, while offering support to others can also reduce mortality rates.

Keep Learning

Try something new. Take on new responsibility at work. Learn how to cook, play an instrument or a new language. Learning new things makes us feel more confident as well as being enjoyable. Research suggests that:

- Learning new things has a positive impact on our mental well-being in older people
- Opportunities to learn or work can lift people out of depression
- Setting goals for ourselves I associated with higher levels of well-being

Be Active

Step outside, go for a walk or run. Dance. Garden. Cycle. Exercise makes us feel good. Find a physical activity that you enjoy and one that is suitable for your fitness level and mobility. Any type of physical activity to make us feel good. Slower-paced activities, like walking can enhance our mood by allowing us to enjoy our natural surroundings.

Research suggests that physical activity reduces stress and helps us sleep better, helps us to manage our weight, helps keep our heart strong and reduces our blood pressure.

Take Notice

Live in the moment. Take notice of the changing seasons. Embrace the here and now, whether you are eating, with friends or walking to work. Be aware of what you are feeling. Be aware that our experiences helps us appreciate what matters to us.

Research suggests that:

- Savouring our experiences can help us recognise and restore our life priorities, being aware of what's going on in the moment can enhance our sense of well-being, self-awareness allows us to make choices based in our values and motivations.

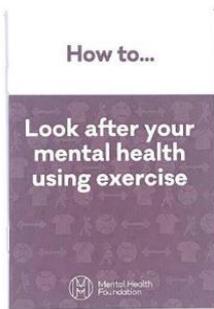
Connect

Connect with people around you; with your family, friends, neighbours and colleagues. Think of these connections and relationships as the cornerstones of your life. Invest time in developing them. Nurturing these will support and enrich you every day.

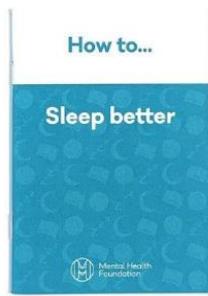
Research suggests that:

- Social networks increase our sense of belonging and well-being
- Life goals that are intertwined with a connect to family and friends promotes life satisfaction; the happier you are, the stronger your social relationships will be.

Further Reading from mental health.org



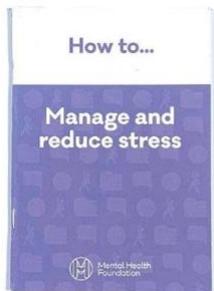
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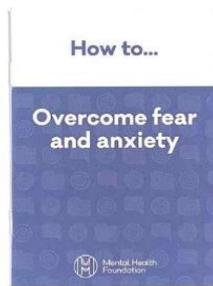
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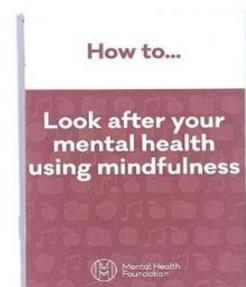
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ACTION CALENDAR: MEANINGFUL MAY 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>"Start Where You Are. Use What You Have. Do What You Can" ~ Arthur Ashe</p>				<p>1 Take a minute to remember what really matters to you and why</p>	<p>2 Do something meaningful for someone you really care about</p>	<p>3 Reconnect with nature today, even if you're stuck indoors</p>
<p>4 Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do</p>	<p>5 Send friends a photo of a time you all enjoyed together</p>	<p>6 Take a step towards one of your life goals, however small</p>	<p>7 Let someone you love know how much they mean to you</p>	<p>8 Set yourself a kindness mission. Give your time to help others</p>	<p>9 Look out for positive news and reasons to be cheerful today</p>	<p>10 Tell someone about why your favourite music means a lot to you</p>
<p>11 What are your most important values? Use them today</p>	<p>12 Be grateful for the little things, even in difficult times</p>	<p>13 Today do something to care for the natural world</p>	<p>14 Show your gratitude to people who are helping to make things better</p>	<p>15 Find out about the values and traditions of another culture</p>	<p>16 Look around you and notice five things you find meaningful</p>	<p>17 Take a positive action to help in your local community</p>
<p>18 Hand-write a note to someone you love and send them a photo of it</p>	<p>19 Find a way to craft what you are doing to give it more meaning</p>	<p>20 Reflect on what makes you feel really valued and appreciated</p>	<p>21 Share photos of 3 things you find meaningful or memorable</p>	<p>22 Ask a loved one or colleague what matters most to them and why</p>	<p>23 Share an inspiring quote with others to give them a boost</p>	<p>24 Do something special today and revisit it in your memory tonight</p>
<p>25 Give your time to help a project or charity you care about</p>	<p>26 Recall three things you've done that you are really proud of</p>	<p>27 Today link your decisions and choices to your purpose in life</p>	<p>28 Tell someone about an event in your life that was really meaningful</p>	<p>29 Think about how your actions make a difference for others</p>	<p>30 Find three good reasons to be hopeful about the future</p>	<p>31 Look up at the sky. Remember we are all part of something bigger</p>

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind

13 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together