

Wellbeing in Winter 2025

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**Tips for
Wellbeing in
Winter, for you
and yours**



Introduction

Well, here we are, winter 2025 and things are still a bit unsettled in many ways. Lock down and the pandemic may have been a few years ago now, but for many between the ongoing cost of living, unrest in the world, changes to our high streets and advances in artificial intelligence, we may still find we are a bit unsettled. Not to mention any personal challenges we, or others we care about may be going through. We may be holding on; however, it would be nice if things became a bit calmer and more settled. Until they do, we need to find ways to overcome the challenges we can overcome and find ways to mitigate the impact of those which have no immediate solution. Find ways to appreciate what we have and not focus on what is causing us to feel unsettled. When we think about lockdown, a cup of tea visiting a friend was a real treat, perhaps focusing on the small things which can bring us joy can help us find life satisfaction against the odds.



Life Satisfaction Gift Bag

This Life Satisfaction Gift Bag is a thoughtful collection of reminders designed to uplift your spirits and emphasise the importance of perseverance, hope, and self-awareness in challenging times. Each item in the bag holds a special meaning, encouraging you to focus on love, transformation, and gratitude even when life is challenging.

		
There is still love and hope in the world and to remind you that you matter.	This stone invites you to stay grounded. Take a moment to breathe deeply and centre yourself in the present. In times of uncertainty, let hope anchor you.	To remind you transformation is possible and change for the better can happen, no matter how small, it all counts towards our wellbeing.
		
To remind you of the simple pleasures in life, like a cup of tea. To take time to pause, and find a moment of peace within the chaos.	To remind you to keep a note of what you appreciate and are grateful for, even when life is hard.	To remind you we have more power to write our own story than we often realise.



www.copescotland.com

Links That May Help

This booklet is not replacement for professional advice. It offers some ideas which may support self-care and wellbeing in winter. Self-care is important; however, it is not a replacement for professional advice. If you need more than this booklet can offer, please speak to someone. It can be hard at times finding services, but they are still there. Here are some links which may be helpful.

Glasgow Helps

Citizens and support providers can contact Glasgow Helps on:
0141 276 1185 | Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Or complete the Online form to request a call back at: www.glasgow.gov.uk/glasgowhelps
They can provide translation services as well as BSL.

For more information check out <https://www.glasgowhelps.org/>
where you can find out more about services and support in Glasgow.

Aliss A Local Information System Scotland

Find services, groups and activities for health and wellbeing across Scotland

<https://www.aliss.org/>

Home Energy Scotland

At Home Energy Scotland we're here to offer free advice and support to help you make your home warmer, reduce your energy bills, and contribute to a greener, more sustainable future.

<https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/about-us>

0808 808 2282

Every season offers opportunities. Winter can be a time for reflection and planning for the New Year. It can also be a great time of year to enjoy the 'Coorie'. This video offers some ideas on bringing the Coorie into your life, even when money is tight:

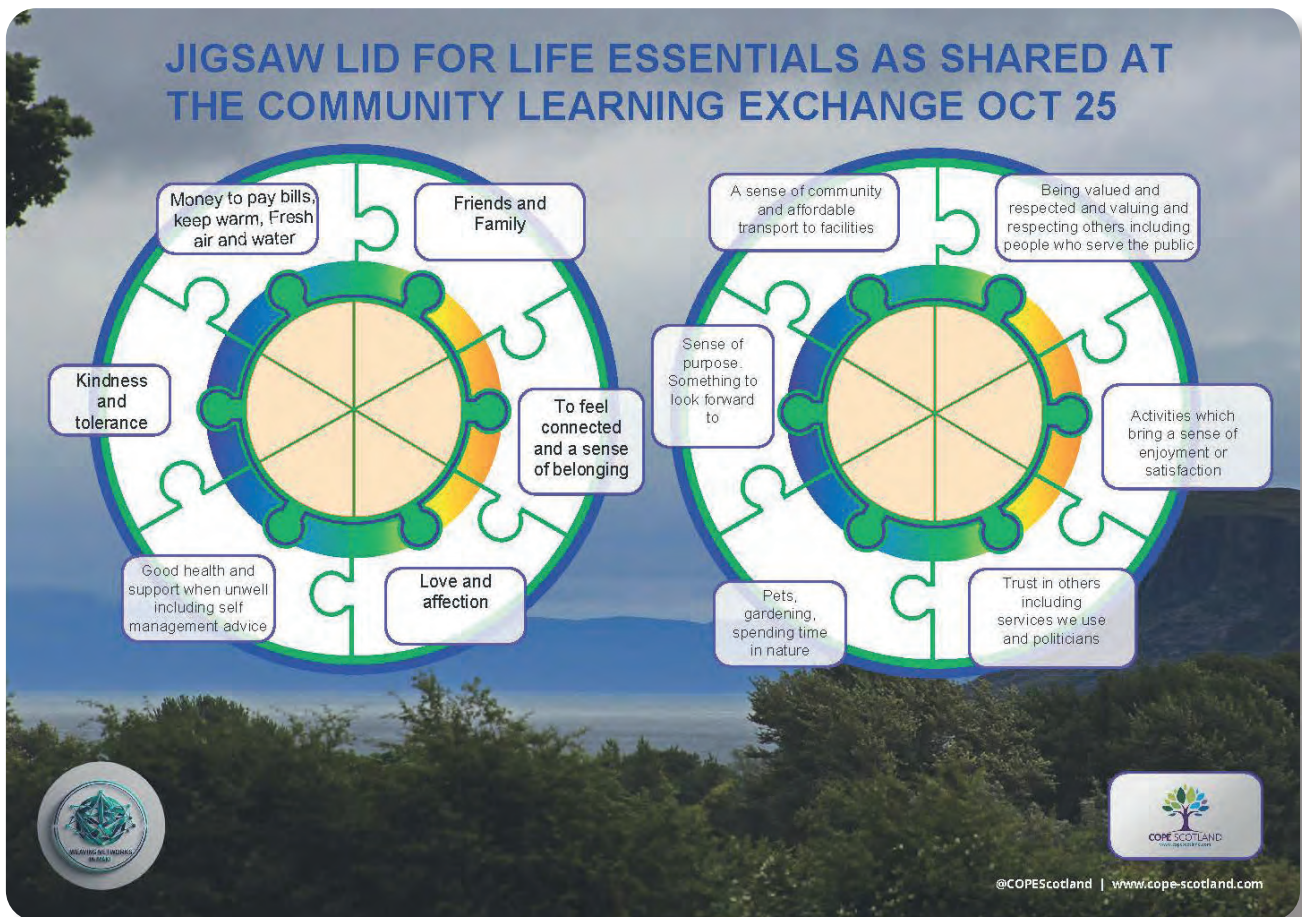
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jl6-JIDiojQh>

Apologies in advance for any errors or omissions in the booklet, details can change so please check directly with any services listed any changes they may have made.

How to Use This Booklet

We don't intend people to read this booklet cover to cover. It's a resource to dip into as it meets your needs and those you know. The areas in the booklet have been informed by what people have shared would be helpful to address some of the challenges we can find at this time of year as well as planning something to look forward to in 2026.

The items in the booklet also reflect what people shared with us were the essentials for life. Yes, money was of course important to pay bills, buy food, however, many of the other things people shared were not material but more around the connections we have to each other, our community and a sense of purpose.



This Jigsaw lid was created at two community learning exchanges during challenge poverty week exploring what people felt were life essentials.

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1. Staying Warm in Winter

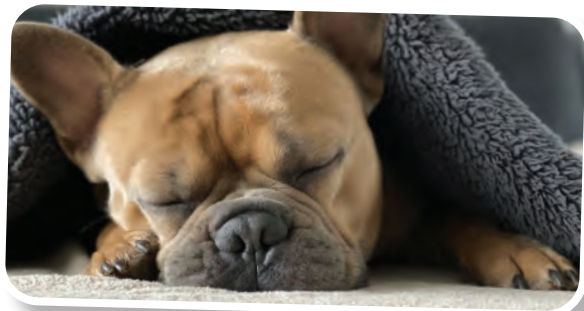
Tips to...

stay warm when the weather is colder



Clothes

May seem obvious but layering clothes and wearing a hat and socks can help keep you warm, including wearing a hat indoors if very cold and slippers.



Block draughts

Check if you have any draughts in your home and block them up with draught excluders. You can make your own by recycling old materials. The legs from old trousers, sleeves from woolly jumpers, just sew or staple up one end, stuff with anything which is suitable, sew or staple up the other end and if you fancy being creative give it a snakes tongue or caterpillar legs go for it. Just take care if you have children or pets there are no choking hazards and ensure there are no fire risks. If you look online, you will find plenty of inspiration. Use curtains ideally with a thermal layer, open them during the day to let sunlight in and close them in the evening. Think about installing a door curtain if your front door is very draughty or put a flap over the letter box inside the house.

Diet

It's important during a cold spell that you eat well. If money is tight this can also be a challenge. Look for deals in supermarkets like 2 for 1 on porridge, this is a healthy meal to help keep you warm and can be eaten any time of day. Soups are a great way to stay warm and nourished, such as Cup A Soups or Mug Shots. You can also easily make your own with chicken stock cubes, vegetables and noodles, cheap and cheerful chicken noodle soup. For more ideas on cooking on a budget, take a look online or TV. BBC Good Food has lots of straightforward every day and comfort food recipes.



Being warm in bed

If your home is cold wear a hat to bed to help keep the heat in, try if possible to have a warmer tog quilt, this can also be brought into the living room to snuggle in if the weather is cold. Throws and fleece blankets add another layer of warmth to your bed as well as being something else to use to stay warm if wrapped around you in the living room.

Staying warm across the generations

We feel the cold differently depending on age and physical health, it's important to make sure any younger or older family member's needs are also met as well as anyone with a health condition. Make sure you receive the benefits you are entitled to, speak to Citizen's Advice. If someone has poor circulation in their hands and feet, heated insoles and gloves could be a good choice.

Gizmos which can help

You can get meters which tell you how much energy you are using. Become aware of items which are high cost e.g. kettles, only boil what you need or if you boil more keep it in a flask till the next time you need it. If you have radiators, explore with advice centres or housing providers using foil or radiator reflectors to stop wasting heat from the back of the radiator, if your radiator is under the window maybe explore putting a shelf above it to stop heat being wasted. But don't put anything on the shelf.

Mobility in winter

If you have mobility issues or use a wheelchair you may find it challenging to stay warmer in winter, a wheelchair cosy can help this as well as make sure if you are out you wear something waterproof. Speak to your health care advisors about specific tips to meet your needs.

In winter it's tempting to not move and just snuggle on the couch, the wintry weather is more reason to keep doing some form of exercise e.g. yoga practice to develop an internal heat that keeps us healthy and warm. Check out FREE opportunities to be active in your area.



Use heating wisely

If you have central heating, turning the heating down a wee bit may help you keep the heating on longer, use a thermostat to see how warm your house is, in general most homes in UK are between 18 and 20 degrees Centigrade. Use layers of clothes and fleece throws to help keep warm. However, as already stated if you have specific health conditions or other vulnerabilities to the cold seek advice around how your needs can be met. If you don't have central heating, heat the rooms you use most and keep the doors closed on those you don't so cold air doesn't travel. Energy suppliers can vary in costs, shop around and make sure you are getting the best deals.



These are only some tips, for more advice contact:

Home Energy Scotland: visit homeenergyscotland.org or call free on 0808 808 2282. Our lines are open Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm and Saturday 9am - 5pm.

Citizens Advice Bureau: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/>

Macmillan Cancer Care: many local libraries have outreach services or visit www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/benefits-and-financial-support

Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/preparing-for-winter/

Maybe check out other local services and groups in your area including local money advice centres. Maybe see if you can register as a priority services customer, for more info www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register-people-need Sometimes worrying about money can affect our mental health, if this is an issue for you, see what services you can connect with locally. These helplines may also be useful. You don't need to be alone with this, there are people who care, sometimes it takes time to find them, but they are there

The Samaritans: free phone number is 116 123

Crisis Text Line: www.crisistextline.uk or Text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer

Breathing space: 0800 83 85 87

Tips to... bring more Coorie into your life

Take pleasure in the simple things

Visit the library online, borrow a book, written or audio if you fancy having a wee story read to you and snuggle up in a comfy warm blanket with a cup of tea for even 15 minutes, just embrace the moment. Here is one example of an online library www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/online-library

Take a walk on the wild side

We know the weather in Scotland can be wild, so embrace it. Wrap up warm on a cold day and go out a walk, even for a short while, if you have a dog enjoy sharing it with them, maybe even visit a park or beach somewhere you both can experience nature in the raw. When you get home, snuggle up with a warm blanket and bowl of homemade soup.



Have a cosy home

Keeping the house warm when money is tight can be a challenge, so have warm snuggles, use colours which suggest warmth, maybe invest in a salt lamp which can glow a lovely orange colour, or download an app to your TV, if it's a smart one, showing a log fire crackling, or invest even in a wee electric heater with coal, or log effect, again to create that feeling of warmth. When it's really cold maybe focus on one room in the house being the cosy room so heat can be concentrated in that area.

Share a cuddle

Many of us like a cuddle, it maybe with another person, or even sharing affection with our pets, its suggested stroking a cat or dog has real health benefits for us as well as being good for our pets, there are some suggestions even watching videos of cats can be good for us as its boost's energy and positivity! Or make a nest of cushions and blankets with the kids, get out a board game and a bowl of popcorn and for a wee while just enjoy the fun of being together. There are also weighted blankets which can help give that feeling of being cuddled and for some promote better sleep.

Appreciate the landscape

Nowhere in Scotland are we far from the great outdoors, from Loch Lomond, to the Campsie Hills, the West Highland way, the Cairngorms, Glencoe and so much more. Check out any special deals on buses and trains to explore the outdoors around you or borrow or hire a bike, join a cycle club, health walk or a rambler's group. Take a warm flask of soup and some sandwiches and appreciate how much of nature we still have around us.



Getting away from it all and getting perspective

Enjoying the variations in the natural world in Scotland can help take us away from our troubles even for a wee while, the openness and space can help give us perspective, just to be, not to be trying or doing, just to be. Walking up a mountain or hill or whatever you can manage depending on your fitness and health listening to the silence and seeing the world spread out around us can help recharge our batteries and heal perhaps the emotional aches we have as we realise, we are connected to something so much more than ourselves. If walking is a challenge, we have many lochs in Scotland, just sit and watch the sun reflect off the water, listen to the wind in the trees and realise we all have a wee bit of paradise on our doorsteps.

Making the most of what we have

Money can be tight and sometimes even trying to make sure the children are fed is a challenge. Coorie is also about how do we protect ourselves and our family to feel safe, and cosy even when life is challenging? Keeping an area of the house cosy, making wholesome warm meals which don't cost a lot, using free local facilities like libraries and local community resources can help build a community cuddle where we can all feel cosier and safer and have a sense of balance and wellbeing. Coorie is also about caring for ourselves, each other and the environment, together we can all help build a cosier world for all.

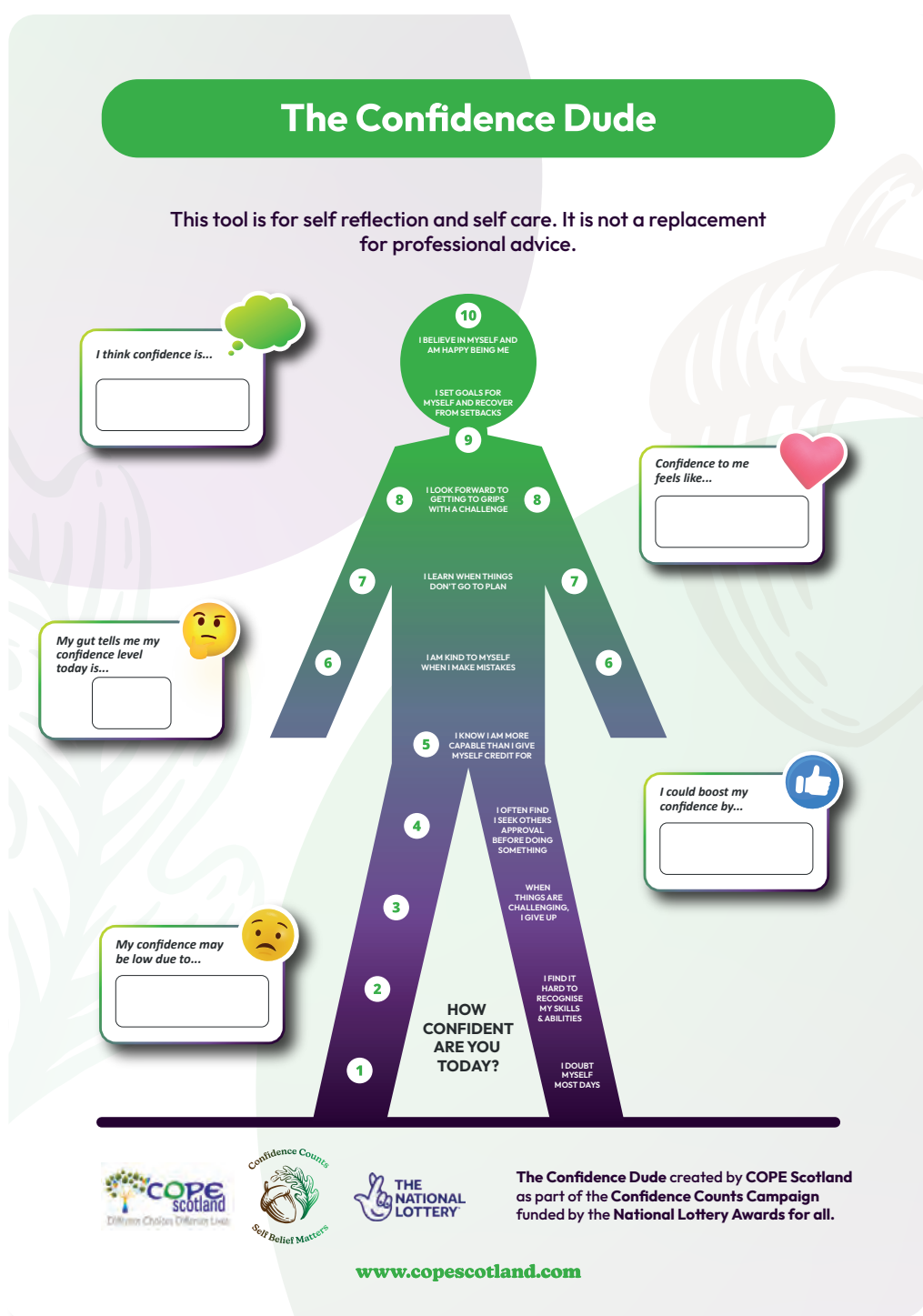


2. Recharging Your Energy Levels And Boosting Your Confidence

Tips to...

increasing your confidence and self-belief in 2026

These tips offer ideas for developing your confidence and self-belief in 2025. Visit www.copescotland.com for other ideas including 'The Confidence Dude'



Be Your Own Self Confidence Architect

Designing a more confident you.

A Reflective Workbook

Choose to be Your Own Confidence Architect

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Wee changes can make a **big difference**

Tips to have 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.

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.

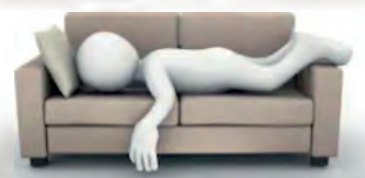


Being with others

Some people find being around others who are important to us can give us energy. It maybe 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.

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-of-water-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?



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.

Having purpose

Having a reason to get out of bed in the morning, or to do things can give us energy. If you feel you have lost your purpose, check out the motivation and goal setting pages on www.copescotland.com also the life purpose affirmation cards



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.



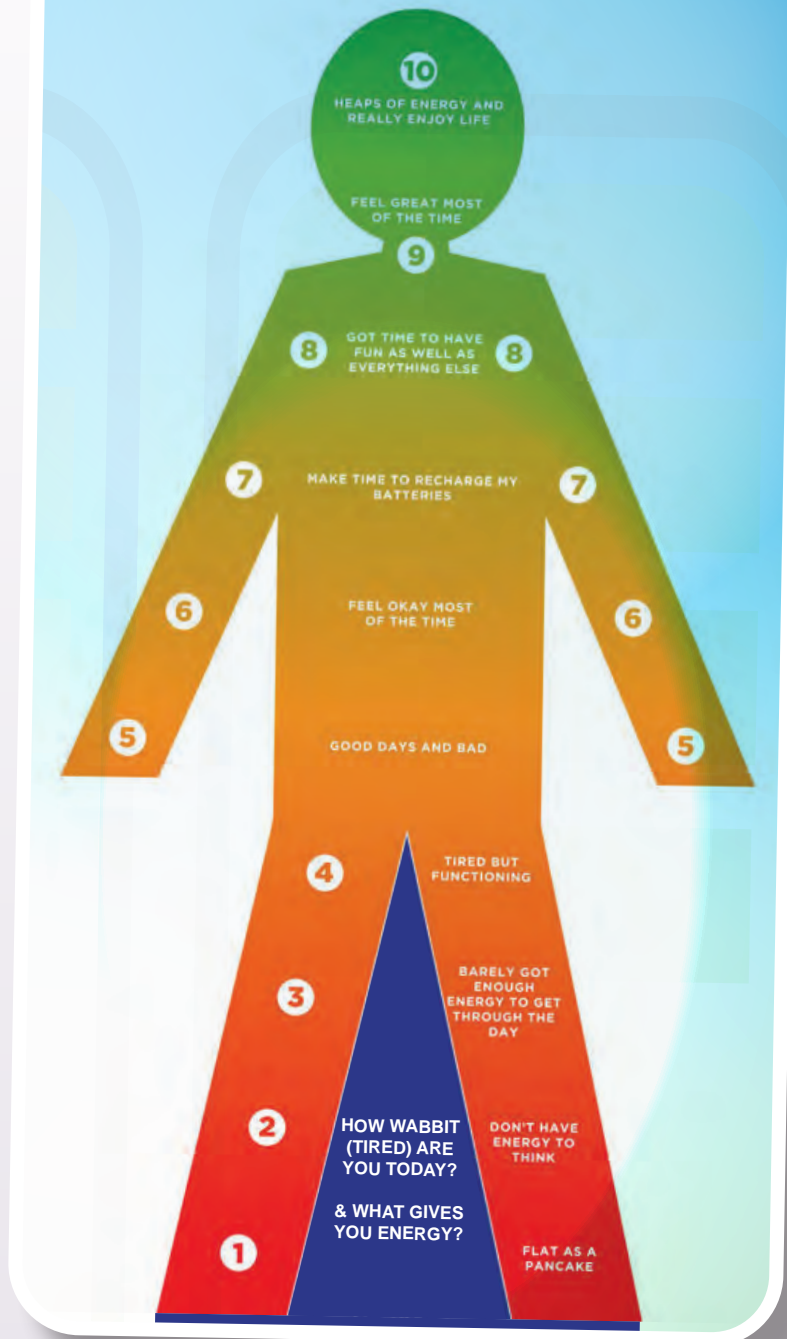
The story we tell ourselves about how we are feeling can also impact on our energy levels. Check out the "what are you saying to yourself because you are listening" video on www.copescotland.com

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.

The Battery Dude



The battery dude offers a simple way to check in with your energy every day. If you notice your energy levels dropping, then your personal battery poster can help you identify things which may help reduce the drain on your energy or top it back up again.

Being mindful of how we use our energy



We only have so many hours in the day and days in the week. We often play many different roles all of which require energy. Depending on how our energy levels are will impact on the energy we have to invest in whatever else is happening in our life, including any challenges we may be facing.

The battery image on the front of this poster invites you to create your own battery and offers one idea of how to do that. This exercise is helpful for reflecting on where you spend your energy, where perhaps you can save some energy and what ideas you plan to take to replenish your energy.

This exercise in itself can be exhausting if we approach it when already feeling overwhelmed as we may feel this is adding to our feelings of pressure being reminded of all we need to do. Take a few moments to do some mindful breathing or something else which helps bring you into the moment. Approach the exercise with a sense of curiosity and do it at a pace that works for you and remember you do not need to do it all at once.

Draw a battery, ideally take a large piece of paper, some old wallpaper may do, or maybe even do this online. From one side of the battery have leads coming off, each lead represents something you spend energy on. Now some leads may have subheadings. This is why we need a BIG piece of paper e.g., you may have a lead which says 'Work' but then how many of us only have one thing we do at work, so for each area which takes energy in relation to work have a subheading and name it. You can be as creative as you like with this, you can colour code each lead, vary the length or thickness of each lead to represent a sense of how much energy you spend in this area. Take your time with this put on some soothing music, make it an exercise of joy not another chore. If you need some inspiration then check out the image overleaf.

Now on the other side of the battery repeat this, but instead have leads going in which represents something you do to replenish your energy. Again, some leads may have subheadings e.g., one lead may say exercise, but there may be different subheadings under this e.g., Cycle, walk the dog, yoga. Don't worry too much if you find you have similar activities in different leads as you may also e.g., include Yoga in relax. The aim of this is to invite you to think about what you do to replenish your energy levels and also how perhaps one activity can have multiple benefits.

It is interesting, often people find the section where they are thinking about where they spend their energy could go on, and on and on. The section on how they replenish their energy on the other hand, takes a lot more thought. If you find you are putting more energy out than topping back up, then you do put yourself at risk of burnout. Sometimes, life pressures and challenges come at us faster than we would like. It is at these times it matters we check in with our energy levels and top them up.



Tips for feeling more energetic



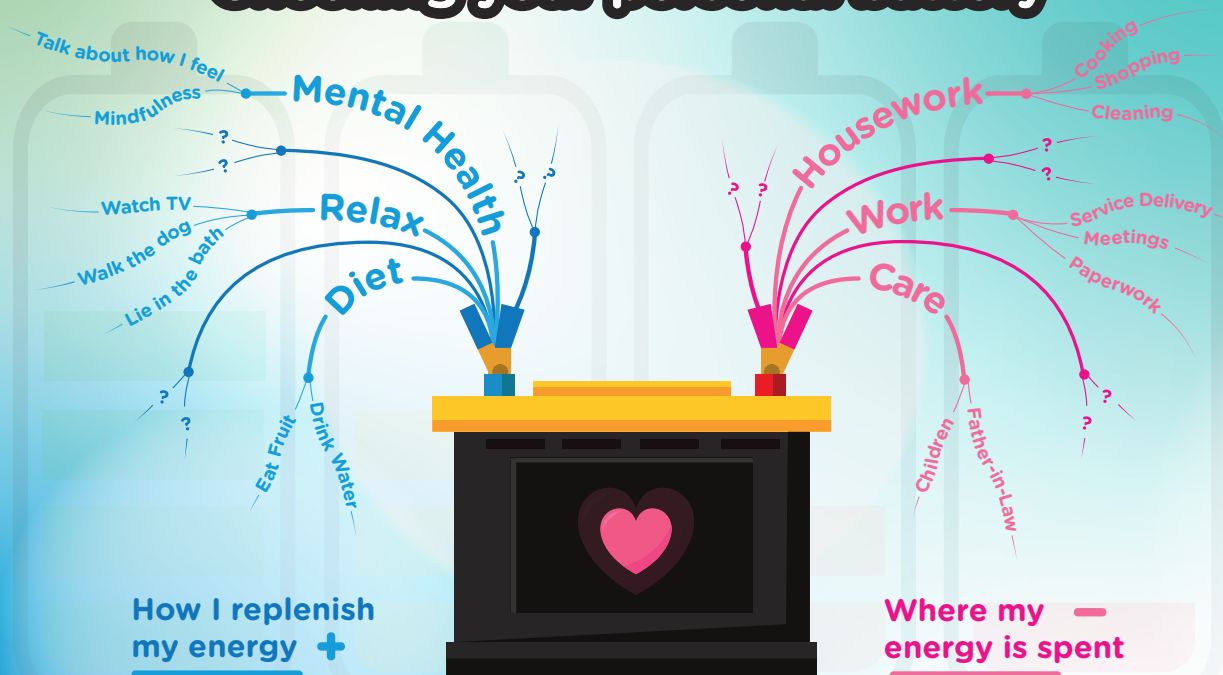
- Find ways to be more active
- Connect with people & try something new
- Get creative
- Learn to relax & chill
- Make time to enjoy a good book
- Get into a healthy sleep routine
- Make time for self-care
- Live life with purpose
- Learn to use my energy wisely
- Eat a balanced diet
- Drink enough water

Produced by COPE Scotland

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Checking your personal battery

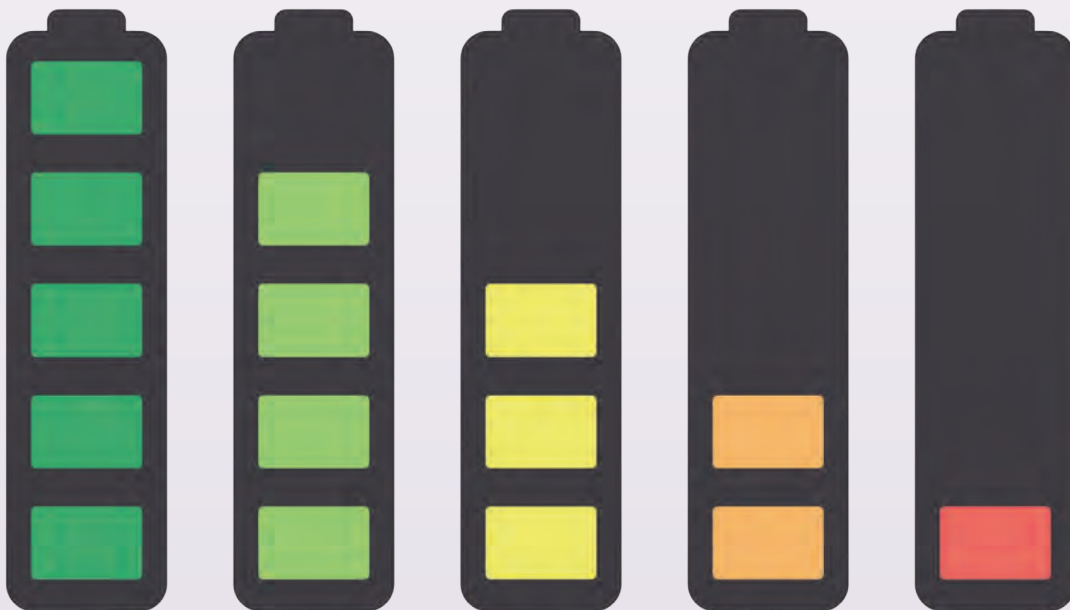


The aim of the personal battery exercise is to become aware of where we spend our energy and how we top it back up again. Do this exercise at time which suits you and remember you don't need to do it all at once. Before starting take a moment to pause and breath to help bring your attention to the activity. There are many ideas on www.copescotland.com to help bring us into the moment.

Instructions

Draw a battery, ideally take a large piece of paper, some old wallpaper may do, or maybe even do this online. From one side of the battery have leads coming out, each lead represents something you spend energy on. Now some leads may have subheadings. This is why we need a BIG piece of paper e.g., you may have a lead which says 'Work' but then how many of us only have one thing we do at work, so for each area which takes energy in relation to work have a subheading and name it. You can be as creative as you like with this, you can colour code each lead, vary the length or thickness of each lead to represent a sense of how much energy you spend in this area. Take your time with this put on some soothing music, make it an exercise of joy not another chore. If you need some inspiration

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Tips to... acquire new skills

Volunteering is a great way to acquire new skills and experience as well as meeting people. These tips may be of interest, they were created to share ideas on recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Simple tips and ideas to... **recruit and retain volunteers**

Because volunteering can help increase people's feelings of life satisfaction.

Recruit



Challenge stereotypes.

While recognising different roles may require different abilities, when seeking to recruit challenge perceptions of who can do this role to avoid stereotyping who may choose to volunteer.

Have a proper induction.

Make sure people are provided with an induction and, if possible, a buddy who can support them until they become familiar with the routine and make sure the volunteer post, volunteering role description reflects the tasks and responsibilities you are asking people to take on.



Promote benefits.



In what ways could a volunteer benefit from this volunteering role? Volunteering can support feelings of wellbeing in many ways including showing kindness to others. It can help build references for a CV for people seeking a new job. It can offer a sense of purpose, including a way to regain confidence as well as build new connections with others and the local community. It can have many therapeutic benefits which should be explored with the individual and, where appropriate, the agency seeking to support them to volunteer.

What matters to the person seeking to volunteer?

It's important for the organisation and the volunteer that the role fits people's needs. People seeking to volunteer need a role that interests and motivates them, so in recruitment be clear what the organisation can offer.



Communicate clearly.

Promote the opportunities you offer in a way that makes sense to the audience you are promoting the opportunities to, as well as the different roles which may be available. Have an in-house communication plan which helps keep people informed and engaged.



Person centred.

Create profiles for each volunteer: what brought them to you, what they are interested in, what obstacles or challenges they may face, how much time they have and other factors which may have an impact e.g., their own health needs, childcare, family, or friends attitudes to them volunteering.



Volunteers' Rights

Create a charter for Volunteers' Rights around breaks, expenses, to share opinions, raise concerns they may have e.g. recognising the health issues some people may have and the need to make reasonable adjustments. People may also want to know about any possible impact on benefits. Address concerns the person may have if they have a criminal record. Recognise the right to walk away if it is not for them.



Be clear on what volunteering actually means.

Sometimes there can be confusion between volunteering, unpaid work, placements, and internships: make the distinction so people know what they are and what is expected of them in that role and also expected of you as the organisation.

Retain



Be realistic.

People have lives outside of volunteering: be clear on time commitment recognising people can change what they can offer.

Volunteering as part of a person's journey to recovery

People come to volunteering for different reasons and if it's part of a recovery journey then this needs to be explored in a way works for the person and the organisation.



Be kind.

It is important to show appreciation for what someone does in a meaningful way. Being kind also includes providing an environment which considers the wellbeing needs of volunteers as well as staff. These are different roles so may require different approaches to wellbeing support. For example, you may consider setting up a peer support group specifically for the people volunteering with your organisation.



Training and support.

People may come to volunteering to gain experience or learn new skills, so it is important to ensure that there is appropriate induction and training provided to enable someone to take on their volunteering role, as well as regular support and supervision. People need to see development opportunities if this matters to them.

Team building.

It can be strange joining an organisation where everyone already knows each other and people may feel they don't fit in: take time to help connect with the others in the team, recognising people may have had negative experiences in the past so may initially be quiet, reserved, even suspicious. Raise this in supervision to help the person feel a part of the team.



Learn and share together.

In developing your service or exploring ideas for improvement include your volunteers as well as staff and service users in the co-production and design of these developments. Value the wisdom, experience and perspective volunteers can bring to your service and how they can help shape it to meet the needs of those it serves.

Stay connected and keep informed.

Join a network or link to your local volunteer centre, here is the web address for Volunteer Glasgow <https://www.volunteerglasgow.org/> Other centres can be found online. This offers opportunities to connect to other groups who also have volunteers on their team as well as learning about new developments, policies, ideas for your organisations volunteer handbook. It can also offer opportunities to hear about learning opportunities which may be of interest to people volunteering with your organisation or raise ideas for joint learning. Being connected also helps spread the other volunteering opportunities which exist which you can share with those volunteering in your team if this fits with their goals for volunteering e.g. a partner organisation may be able to offer more opportunities, knowing about this helps them and the person you know build connections as people are not 'our volunteers' they are individuals with goals and plans of their own and while we value the time they offer us, we remember, we have no right to expect them not to move on. Paid staff move on, volunteers may choose to do so also.



Produced thanks to support from Glasgow Wellbeing Fund.

Co-designed with members of the Referral Agency Partners Networking Group.

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Self-care ideas to help... avoid compassion fatigue and survive burnout

These do not replace professional advice. Self-care is also recognising when we need to ask for help or seek professional support ourselves.



Connect with your sense of wellbeing.

These links are worth exploring <https://proqol.org/proqol-health-1> and <https://proqol.org/>. There are other tools which can help identify issues which suggest compassion fatigue and burnout. Choose one which works for you.



Remember why you are doing this.

It's helpful to reflect back on why we entered the caring professions and what we have achieved so far in our career, and the obstacles we have already overcome to get to where we are. Living our values also supports our wellbeing. This piece may be of interest thamesvalley.hee.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2020/12/Values-activity-PSWS.pdf



Be mindful of your thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.

Sometimes we go into autopilot. We do not listen to what our body and mind is trying to tell us. Learning to be in the moment offers us an opportunity to recognise these thoughts and feelings and to take steps to redress the balance when we are feeling overwhelmed. These sites may be of interest capacitar.org/ and www.freemindfulness.org/download and moodgym.com.au/ There are others. Find a practice which works for you and you can bring into your everyday.



Give yourself permission to look after you.

It's not selfish to care for our own wellbeing also. Pushing ourselves to go on when we ourselves are unwell and need time off is not healthy for our wellbeing or those in our care. We can often think it's impossible to make time for ourselves, but there is a price to pay in continually neglecting our own wellbeing. Allowing ourselves to stop, look after ourselves enables us to continue doing what drove us to become a health and care professional in the first place.

Recognise boundaries.

We cannot do it all, and we cannot make everything better for everyone no matter how hard we try. We do the best we can and look after ourselves so we can do our best, but there are things beyond our control and it is important to recognise this to avoid unnecessary guilt when things don't work out the way we would have wanted for other people. It is also all right on occasions to say no. This doesn't mean we do not care, its simply being realistic about what is in our control and our gift to give. This podcast may be of interest the-qnis-podcast.captivate.fm/episode/setting-boundaries



What are the pieces you need for your wellbeing?

Its amazing how we know what tips to offer others for their wellbeing, but do not always practice these ourselves. We are aware of the impact of diet, hydration, exercise, relaxation, sleep, connections outside of work, hobbies and interest, but do we invest the time in bringing them into our everyday?

Our working environment

We spend a lot of time at work and in the caring professions this can be a stressful working environment where we are exposed frequently to the suffering of others. It is important then to have a culture in work which is supportive of the wellbeing of those who care for others. This includes supportive supervision and that support is there from seniors on a regular basis, including time to debrief when needed, as well as time for informal downtime together, maybe creating a team affirmation jar, something which brings joy into work and is celebrated at the end of a shift. It's also important new members of the team have time to get orientated and feel part of the team. There are many ideas to promote a supportive working environment e.g. www.ihl.org/education/training/creating-workforce-joy-and-well-being and 15s30m.co.uk/ You may also consider setting up a peer wellbeing support group.

Knowing we are not alone.

We are all unique and our experiences are ours alone. However, knowing others may also be having similar thoughts and feelings can help us understand this isn't something that is 'wrong with us'. Rather, this is a reaction we are having to something going on outside of us. The job is stressful and if we do not look after ourselves, can lead to compassion fatigue and burnout. Being part of a network can also be a source of support: this can be an informal social network where you share a common interest or hobby; it can also be a network of individuals who share common goals e.g. the Q community — a connected community working together to improve health and care quality across the UK and Ireland — q.health.org.uk/



"Please remember, you matter too. In a world full of problems and challenges you are part of the solution, it is allowed that you also care about your own wellbeing."

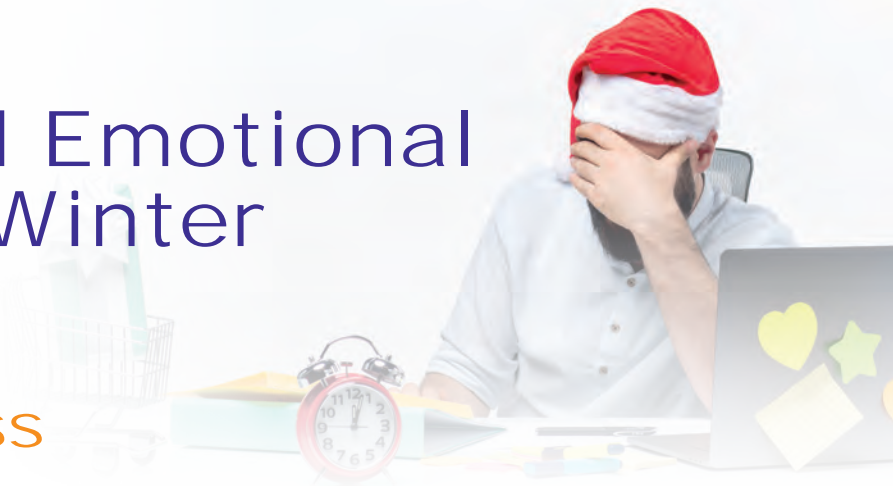
Hilda Campbell MBE

www.copescotland.com X @COPEScotland



3. Mental and Emotional Wellbeing in Winter

Tips to... beat festive stress



Manage expectations

There can be many reasons we do not feel festive. It matters that we do not feel under pressure to 'be' any particular way. It maybe through loss we find this time of year challenging. Be kind to yourself and do what works for you, not what the adverts and films all sell as the perfect Christmas. On the COPE Scotland website www.copescotland.com there is a piece on coping with loss, it won't have all the answers, but may offer something to help you suffer less if you have been touched by bereavement and loss.

Manage the stress

We can each experience stress in different ways, and it matters that whatever we do to help manage our stress is something which works for us and does not cause us further distress e.g., self-medicating with alcohol is not a helpful way to manage stress. There are many tips on the COPE Scotland website on managing stress. This website may also be of interest [Mental Health Foundation](http://www.mentalhealthfoundation.org) Check out the your personal jigsaw lid for wellbeing and have a think what would work for you and is in your control?

Watch the pennies

Sometimes when things seem overwhelming, we can feel 'ach stuff it' and decide lets' just blow the money and have a great Christmas. However, the most priceless gifts are often the ones which cost the least money and in a time of uncertainty, spending money, we can't afford, is only setting up a problem we need to deal with in the future. It maybe already you are worrying where you will even get food to eat on Christmas day. Check out Trussell Trust for a foodbank near you
<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-afoodbank>

Make plans as far ahead as suits you

This can often be a time of year which is stressful, as we can find ourselves under pressure to meet other people's expectations of what we should do on Christmas day and who we should spend it with. There are often no easy answers. Make time to maintain your energy levels and build in things you want to do as well as what you may feel needs to be done to keep everyone else happy. If you are alone at Christmas and find that stressful, there are many charities looking for volunteers on Christmas day, or perhaps ask a neighbour who is also alone to share lunch with you. if we remember the things and people, we have in our life to appreciate at this time of year, that can help. There is an interesting section on reprogramming the reticular activating system on www.copescotland.com which you may find useful around changing the filters we look at the world through.

Be aware of unhelpful coping strategies

When we feel overwhelmed, anxious, fed up, we can turn to strategies which aren't helpful for us, gambling, overeating, drugs, alcohol. This can lead to even more challenges and in the long term doesn't help us at all. Sometimes we need someone to talk to, or, help to find ways to cope with how we feel. Many services are closed over the festive break, but there are still helplines if you don't have friends or family to talk to. Use them, they can save lives, sometimes our own. We have listed some contacts at the end of this wee sheet.

What connections do you need?

We are often sold this image of 'The perfect Christmas' and when we don't recognise that as our experience, either feel left out, or try to recreate it. But life isn't like the telly and in real life people are unpredictable, whereas in the films and adverts they work from a script and keep repeating it till they get it right! If you enjoy your own company and don't want to spend Christmas with others don't feel under pressure to 'do what others think you should do'. If you are alone at Christmas and don't want to be, then see what can be done to create some company, even if that's a phone call, a virtual zoom call, or walking the dog with someone you know. Maybe explore volunteering opportunities or see if there are any local community events to get involved with. It maybe you have a neighbour who is also alone on Christmas day, perhaps spend it together?



Your wellbeing in emergencies

We have a fire drill; in the event of fire, we know what to do. We should maybe also have a wellbeing drill. So, we know what to do if we feel overwhelmed. If we maybe have panic attacks, what we can do to help control them. On the COPE Scotland site www.copescotland.com there is a video on surviving panic attacks. This does not replace professional advice; the aim is to offer some self-management tips until you speak to someone. There is also a video and several pieces on the site if you feel your mood has dipped, again this does not replace professional advice. We are all different, think about your own circumstances and if you are in receipt of any health care support, work out with your providers, things you can do to look after you and emergency numbers to call when self-management is not enough.

Tap into assets around you

It is important when planning to have enough supplies in, so you have enough medication, food, and other items you may need over the festive period. However, do not bulk or panic buy to a point where it creates a storage problem, or things go out of date or cause you financial challenges as you have blown your budget. One thing the pandemic has taught us, is sometimes the small things make the biggest difference. So do not worry if you cannot get the ingredients for that 'special Christmas meal' beans and toast when shared with loved ones can mean more than a table groaning with food.

Tap into assets around you

We are often capable of a lot more than we give ourselves credit for, but often we lack the confidence to see that. If you visit www.copescotland.com there are several pieces on lifting confidence, including in the video section, "how to use a kinder inner voice". We can also be more creative than we realise. It is amazing, there are often far more local assets than we realise, local groups, befrienders, places of worship. Find out what is happening near you and if it meets your needs maybe think about how to tap into those assets.



12 Days of a Self-Care Christmas

As the holiday season unfolds, it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle, often forgetting to take care of ourselves. This year, why not make self-care a priority with a festive twist? Inspired by the classic carol, here's a creative and rejuvenating approach to the 12 days of Christmas—self-care style!

Day 1: A Cup of Tea

Start with something simple: brew your favourite tea, find a cozy spot, and just be. Let this quiet moment be your gift to yourself.

Day 2: Mindful Breathing

Add two minutes of mindful breathing. Focus on your breath and let go of any tension as you sip your tea.

Day 3: Relaxation

Take three minutes to relax—stretch, meditate, or simply close your eyes and enjoy the peace.

Day 4: Walking/Wheeling

Spend four minutes walking/wheeling. Whether indoors or outdoors, let your thoughts wander and enjoy the movement.

Day 5: Laughter

Gift yourself five minutes of laughter. Watch a funny video or recall a joyful memory to lift your spirits.

Day 6: Reading

Dive into a book for six minutes. Let stories transport you to another world, even if just for a short while.

Embrace this festive self-care journey and let the spirit of Christmas bring tranquillity and joy to your holiday season. Each day, layer on a new act of self-kindness, and by the end, you'll have a toolkit of wellness practices to carry into the new year. Merry Self-Care Christmas!

Love COPE Scotland

xxx

Day 7: Self-Care Ideas

Come up with seven new self-care ideas to try. From journaling to crafting, the possibilities are endless.

Day 8: Fruits and Veggies

Incorporate eight servings of fruits and vegetables into your meals. Nourish your body with these colourful delights.

Day 9: Dancing

Dance for nine minutes. Let loose to your favourite tunes and feel the rhythm energize you.

Day 10: Positive Affirmations

Recite ten positive affirmations. Remind yourself of your strengths and embrace positivity.

Day 11: Music Playlist

Create an eleven-track playlist of your favourite songs. Let the music uplift and inspire you throughout the day.

Day 12: Me Time

Finally, give yourself twelve minutes to call your own. Whether it's a bath, crafting, or simply resting, savour this time dedicated just to you.

COPESCOTLAND.COM

12 Days of a Self-Care Christmas offers a simple, festive guide to nurturing your wellbeing during the busy holiday season. Each day introduces a small, mindful act of self-care, helping you slow down, recharge, and carry a sense of calm and positivity into the new year.

Wee changes that can help lift your mood when the clocks change in Winter

Diet

A healthy balanced diet is important at all times, especially if your mood is low. For more information on a healthy diet visit www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition

Exercise helps produce feel good hormones and neurotransmitters which can help lift mood, even starting a short walk, every day is a step in the right direction, sometimes when our mood is low we can't be bothered, but finding a way to be active 30minutes each day could make a real difference.



Seasonal Affective Disorder

When the clocks change in autumn going into winter and there is less daylight this can be a challenging time for people who experience seasonal affective disorder (SAD). The symptoms of SAD are very much like depression and can include:

- Low mood, even feelings of despair
- Not enjoying the things, you usually do
- Feeling irritable
- Low energy and wanting to sleep during the day.
- Finding it hard to get up in the morning.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Craving carbohydrates and maybe gaining weight

Remember, these tips are for selfcare and do not replace professional advice. If you think you may have SAD speak to your GP or other health care professional. If you ever feel so despairing, you think of suicide please speak to someone.

The Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel No 116 123

When we may need to speak to someone about how we feel

Sometimes low mood is a reaction to something which has happened in our lives and it maybe we need to go and speak to someone about this to help us work through the feelings arising from this. Speak to your GP about services they can refer you to for more support.

How you talk to yourself

Self-talk, and body language is so important in lifting mood, if we slouch, tell ourselves how awful we feel, how pointless it all is this will make us feel even worse, become aware of your self-talk maybe read COPE's wee changes on improving self-talk www.cope-scotland.org

If you are having thoughts of suicide, tell someone

If your mood is so low you are having thoughts of suicide, speak to someone straight away, the Samaritans have a free phone number 116 123, there is also Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87, also speak to your GP about services which can offer support, also are there friends or family members who you could talk to about how you are feeling? You are not alone, there are people who care, and yes sometimes it takes time to find them, but it is worth the effort, your life matters.

Do something which distracts you

Get involved in something, distract yourself, clean out those drawers that keep sticking as full of paper, or rearrange the furniture, or listen to upbeat music. Sitting thinking about how low you feel will not help. Our physical environment can reflect how we feel inside, sometimes when we are feeling low we neglect the house so why not give it a spring clean now, don't wait until winter has passed. It will feel better for it and so may you.



Be kind to yourself

Pamper yourself, do something which makes you feel special. You are very special. Sometimes when our mood is low, we neglect ourselves, then when we look in the mirror, we say unkind things to ourselves. Be kind to your body and your mind. Practice mindfulness and try to find something each day, no matter how small, to be grateful for and appreciate.



Smile even when we don't feel like it, as this is when we need a smile most

You matter, be kind to yourself, from the beginning of time till the end of time, there will only ever be one you, you are a unique and special human being. Smiling, laughing, watching comedy programmes can all help lift our mood too, so please give some of these tips a go, they may just help make you feel a wee bit better. Maybe try some laughter yoga? Never heard of laughter Yoga? Check out the video section on www.copescotland.com for more information.

Give it time

Remember this too will pass, it's like rain, telling the rain to stop, won't make the rain stop, but it won't rain for ever, sunny days will come back, sometimes its recognising that things take time and giving it and yourself time.

Tips to...

help manage the distress of grief and 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.



If you find the feelings so overwhelming, you are thinking of suicide please speak to someone. The Samaritans or Crisis text line or your GP or other local health provider.



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 its 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, its 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 its 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 its 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.



Grieving can be a challenging time and it's okay to ask for help.
Sometimes it's hard to find but it is there.

For example:

CRUSE [cruse.org.uk](https://www.cruse.org.uk)



Picking up the pieces when the person you were caring for dies.



Acknowledge how you feel.

Losing someone you were caring for is a deeply challenging experience that can leave you feeling adrift and overwhelmed. Remember, it's okay to grieve and to take the time you need to heal. Start by acknowledging your feelings—whether it's sadness, anger, relief, or confusion, give yourself permission to feel all of the emotions that come with it—and understand that all these emotions are natural at this time. Allow yourself to feel without judgment, as this is a crucial step towards healing.

Guilt.

Coping with the guilt that often accompanies the loss of a person you were caring for is a profound and complex journey. It's important to acknowledge that these feelings are a natural part of grieving. Many carers can find themselves grappling with “what ifs” and “if only,” questioning their actions and decisions during their loved one's final days. Remember, you provided care out of love and compassion, even when this was challenging for you, you did the best you could, please be kind to yourself.

Recognise you may even feel abandoned.

Losing a loved one is an incredibly difficult experience, and for those who have been in a caregiving role, the aftermath can be particularly challenging. The sense of loss is often compounded by feelings of abandonment from the services and support systems that were once so integral to daily life. It's important to recognize that these feelings are valid and that finding ways to navigate through them is essential for your wellbeing, seeking support to do so if you need to, we all need support at times.



Self-compassion when managing difficult emotions.

Please practice self-compassion. Guilt can stem from the belief that you should have done more or that you made mistakes, but it's essential to recognise that you did the best you could with the knowledge and resources available at the time and this includes your own personal resources, you are human. Reflecting on the positive impact you had on the person's life and remembering the moments of comfort and connection you shared can help in easing these feelings. We all have regrets, things we look back on and would have done differently, we are only human, we don't always get it right every time. Forgive yourself if you have regrets : seek support to do so if you need help to do that.

Managing challenging relationships with other family members.

Dealing with difficult relatives in the wake of losing someone you were caring for is an emotional and often turbulent experience at a time when you are already emotionally exhausted. Everyone grieves differently, and their emotions might manifest as anger, frustration, or even indifference which can be hard for you. Seeking to create a calm space to discuss things can help reduce tension, and if there are some things you are not yet ready to discuss let them know this. Look first for common ground where you can work together on something which you all agree is important and all have a right to contribute to e.g. a memory book. Sometimes tensions arise because people feel left out, or don't know what is happening. Where things are so challenging you find you cannot work together seek support. This information from CRUSE may be helpful <https://www.cruse.org.uk/understanding-grief/managing-grief/family-conflict-after-someone-dies>.

Time to care for and nurture yourself.

Picking up the pieces of your life in the aftermath of such a profound loss takes time. During this time, it's essential to prioritize your own wellbeing and practice self-compassion. Self-care is so important for your own wellbeing and to help you through this difficult time. Simple acts such as maintaining a balanced diet, staying hydrated, and getting adequate rest can significantly impact your overall wellbeing. Small, consistent steps towards self-care can make a significant difference in your overall well-being. Acts of self-kindness can help ground you and offer some respite from the waves of grief. This video from Capacitar on fingerholds to help manage grief may be of interest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zC7PSJSoCwI>

Give yourself time and space to grieve.

Allow yourself the space to grieve and time to process the complex emotions that arise. This might include engaging in activities that promote mental and emotional health, such as journaling, meditation, or spending time in nature. Remember that it's okay to seek professional help if you need it; counsellors and support groups can provide a compassionate ear and valuable guidance during this time. Be kind to yourself, you will need time to process how you are feeling and find ways to pick up the pieces of your life again, and that's okay, don't rush it, go at a pace that works for you.



Rebuild your sense of self confidence.

Many people who have been in an unpaid caring role find as more time is needed to care for a loved one, they have less time for their own hobbies, interests, friendships, they may even have had to give up work. Caring has become the focus of their life and the person they cared for the focus of their world. It's understandable to feel cast adrift as if the anchors which held you have been lost and you wonder what next and can you cope. This will take time, and, in many ways, you will be rebuilding your life. Speak to yourself with a kind voice, focus on the many skills you have, and learn to believe in yourself again, seeking support where this is needed.

Find new ways to fill the hole that its natural to feel has been created.

When the person you cared for dies, you may find you have more time than you know what to do with. This can exacerbate your feelings of loss. We are all different, it's important to find a new sense of purpose and activities which help you at this time. It could be a new hobby, spending time in nature, learning to relax, escaping into a good book. What matters is that it is supportive of your wellbeing and something, which even if only for moments, brings you joy. On the death of a loved one we can feel guilty if we laugh or smile, however, remember they loved you too and do not want to see you so sad all the time, it's okay to forget your grief, even for a moment, it does not mean you have forgotten your loved one.



It is all right for you to seek support from others too.

Reach out to friends, family, or support groups who understand what you're going through and can offer empathy and companionship. Sharing your feelings with others can alleviate the sense of isolation that often accompanies loss. Remember, it's okay to ask for help, whether through counselling or peer support. By weaving these networks of care and compassion, we not only support our own healing journey but also create a community that fosters resilience and collective wellbeing.



Connect with others who may have similar experiences.

It may be for some time you have not been able to meet up with others. Look for groups or networks that focus on grief support or caregiving transitions. These spaces offer not only a sense of solidarity but also practical advice from others who have walked a similar path. Collaboration and sharing your experiences can lead to innovative approaches to healing and growth, reminding you that you are not alone. Together, we can foster a culture of kindness and support, ensuring that no one feels abandoned in their time of need.

Financial and other practical concerns.

It may be in addition to coping with your grief you have financial concerns, or there are issues if the person you were caring for left a will and executing that has become complicated, or there is a house to close up and belongings to deal with, each holding special memories. Seek advice. The first place to start may be your local citizen advice bureau for the practical advice on the things which need to be done now the person has gone. This may also include aids and adaptations or equipment you have in the house which may need to be returned. Perhaps put that away in another room until it is collected, now is a time to heal and not be reminded of your pain and loss. Seek emotional support for yourself, from friends, family, speak to your local Carers Centre or mental health services. Do not feel you need to go through this alone, you do matter too.





Honour the memory of your loved one.

You may find it helpful in rebuilding your life after loss to finding a way to honour the memory of your loved one. This could be through creating a tribute, participating in activities they enjoyed, planting a tree, creating a memory book to share with other members of the family so children and grandchildren can also remember them in the years to come or continuing their legacy in some meaningful way.

Remember, your wellbeing really does matter, and taking steps to care for yourself is an essential part of honouring both your journey and the memory of the person you cared for. Through kindness to yourself, you can navigate this challenging time with the compassion and resilience that you so freely gave to others. Take care, hold on, this intense feeling of loss in time will pass and you will be able to remember the happier times you had together.

Some useful numbers and websites

(Apologies in advance if any of these links have changed, there will be others though, so check with your local Carers centre.)

Carers Trust

<https://carers.org/when-caring-ends/coping-with-grief>

Carers UK

<https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/practical-support/when-caring-ends-or-changes/>

Citizens advice bureau

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/death-and-wills/what-to-do-after-a-death/>

Marie Curie

<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/bereavement>

Bereavement support line 0800 090 2309



Inspired by a heartfelt conversation at Knightswood Family Fun Day 2024, where someone shared the challenges of losing a loved one they've cared for. We dedicate these new tips to them and all those who have faced similar loss. Our aim is to offer some ideas to help you navigate this difficult journey.

Produced thanks to support from
Glasgow Wellbeing Fund.

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Glasgow
Council
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Sector

Understanding... **Doom Scrolling**

and its impact on self-confidence and belief.



In today's digital age, the term "doom scrolling" has become increasingly prevalent. It refers to the act of continuously scrolling through negative news, often on social media platforms. While staying informed is important, excessive exposure to distressing content can have detrimental effects on our mental health. This can compromise self-confidence, self-belief, and trust in others.

The Impact of Doom Scrolling



When we are bombarded with negative stories, it can feel overwhelming. That may lead to feelings of helplessness, despair and negative self-talk. Constant exposure to distressing news can skew our perspective by making it seem like the world is a more threatening place than it truly is. This can result in anxiety, stress, and a diminished sense of hope.

Increased fear of failure

Repeatedly hearing of stories of failure, disaster, unkindness, suffering and betrayal can undermine our belief in what we can do. It can also erode our relationships by increasing mistrust. Unjustified worrying about what could go wrong can leave us feeling frozen and inactive. Allowing fear to keep us hunkered down in our comfort zones keeps us from taking new actions that could go well.

Loss of Faith

Faith can mean many things to many people. Losing faith in something greater than ourselves can harm our wellbeing by stripping away a sense of purpose, belonging, and hope. Without this guiding belief and source of motivation, we may struggle to find meaning in life's challenges. This can adversely affect our emotional resilience. Doom scrolling not only robs us of faith in ourselves but also in each other and in the world we share.



Personal achievement



Doom scrolling can take us away from thinking about, and valuing, the positive parts of our own lives. It can shift our focus to bad and upsetting things going on elsewhere. These are usually things over which we have little or no control. We may even feel guilty that something nice is happening in our lives. Of course, we should care about the wellbeing and fate of others beyond our realm of influence. Yet, doom scrolling can leave us feeling powerless and demotivated. If we devalue our achievements, then the result can be feeling less capable to keep making a positive difference.

Losing trust and confidence in others



With an abundance of negative news, particularly about societal conflicts and human failings, we may develop a more cynical view of humanity. This can lead to expecting the worst in people and turning our backs of potentially wonderful chances to bring about much-needed changes for the better.

Isolating ourselves from others and the world around us

Doom scrolling can contribute to social isolation, as we may withdraw from social interactions due to feelings of anxiety and depression. This isolation can further erode trust in others, as we lose opportunities to build and maintain meaningful relationships. We may find we spend more time in a virtual world and become isolated from our real world. It is healthier to experience the joys of life fully. Isolation can make us less confident when we meet people and situations in real time. By contrast, positive engagement with the people and places around us promote confidence.

Striking a Balance

It's crucial to find a balance between staying informed about distressing world events and becoming overwhelmed by them. Here are some ideas to help reduce the anxiety caused by doom scrolling, they focus on still appreciating the beauty and joy in the world. Don't hesitate to seek help, if you're struggling with social media's impact on your self-esteem. This may include talking to someone you trust or seeking professional support.

- Limit screen time.
- Avoid late night scrolling, as this can have a negative impact on the quality of your sleep.
- Become Mindful of to what you are giving attention and priority.
- Follow positive accounts of what's also happening around you and unfollow those sources which are not helpful to your own wellbeing.
- Remember there is a life beyond social media. Start to reengage with the good things that exist in real life by connecting (or reconnecting) with kind and good people in real time. Find a healthy balance between the online and offline worlds. This matters for your mental wellbeing
- Find a way to relax, which is healthy and works well for you. For example, go outside, get some fresh air and be active. There is a life and a world beyond the screen that can enhance your enjoyment of life and restore your sense of the positive aspects of the world around you.
- Use grounding techniques to help stay in the moment and not feel overwhelmed.
- Look for joy in everyday activities, like a walk in the park or a friendly conversation or dance to or listen to a tune which uplifts you.
- Spend time on hobbies or activities that bring you happiness and fulfilment.
- Share your thoughts and feelings with friends or family. Sometimes discussing your concerns can help alleviate anxiety. Join a peer support group or a club where you can meet people with common interests.



- Engage with communities that focus on positive change. These are opportunities to get support, have fun together and feel hopeful about the future.
- Practice self-compassion and selfcare. Use a kinder inner voice . . . because you DO matter and are an asset. Remind yourself of your successes and strengths — because you DO have them.
- Focus on your goals and what matters to you. While the support of others is helpful, remember that you do not need external validation to be yourself or to become your truest and best self.
- Restoring faith often begins with introspection and seeking inspiration from personal experiences, nature, or others' stories. Engaging in spiritual practices if this has meaning for you, connecting with supportive communities, and embracing forgiveness and gratitude can also rekindle hope. Patience and openness to new perspectives can guide us towards renewed belief and inner peace. Remember, if you need professional support, please seek that out, these are general ideas for selfcare.
- Recognise and celebrate what makes you YOU! Your individuality is a unique asset that can contribute to the world in a meaningful way.

Despite all the global challenges, there is still beauty, kindness and goodness in the world. It is essential to seek them out and be influenced by them daily, too. By focusing on the positive aspects of life, we all can cultivate resilience and maintain hope for the future. Remember, while it's important not to ignore or be blind to the world's troubles, it's equally important to pay attention to the world's joys and successes in order to nurture your self-confidence and self-belief. These supports the well-being of us all and enhances our chances of finding and treasuring all those wonderful moments that make life beautiful.

FINDING JOY EVERYDAY

WHAT IS JOY VERSUS HAPPINESS?

Joy can mean different things to each of us. If helpful, think about it as that inner feeling, that glow when we see a baby smile, a firework go off, a kitten chasing its tail, smell a bowl of homemade soup on a cold day, pompoms, ice cream with sprinkles! Joy is something which we can have in our lives everyday despite any hardships or challenges we may be facing. Joy comes in moments, and we can have many moments.

Happiness is a strong emotion and one we may all pursue. However, when life is challenging, we may find it hard to capture and hold onto happiness. Joy, on the other hand can be found every day if we only start looking for it.



WHY JOY IS GOOD FOR OUR WELLBEING?

Joy creates a reaction which is good for our wellbeing. There is a whole science behind this around hormones and neurotransmitters, but the short answer is, it is good for us. There can be many ways we can experience Joy. Take a moment to think, what brings you Joy?



INTERESTING TED TALK

[Where joy hides and how to find it Ingrid Fetell Lee](#)

Well worth the watch for ideas on finding Joy.



IDEAS TO BRING MORE JOY INTO EVERY DAY

Use bright colours to decorate your home, even when money is tight it's amazing what can be done on a budget. A simple multicoloured blanket thrown over the couch can transform a room.

Getting together with others to crochet squares can promote connections to others, making a blanket for someone else, can bring Joy knowing you are helping another person. Be part of a community, get involved – litter picking or taking action to help reduce littering can help create an environment which brings joy to everyone.

Put on some tunes you like. This wee video is well worth a watch [Chinese village couple's 'rural-style shuffle dance' goes viral online](#)

Enjoy the smell in the air after rain. Create your own scented garden or visit a local park, community garden. For a moment just relax into the moment and experience the Joy of the moment, don't think about it ending, think about what is happening now. Spending time in the natural world can bring Joy.

Find your purpose. Learn to live in the moment: the past is a different country; we do not live there anymore, and the future is as yet unwritten. Being in the moment can help us appreciate those moments of Joy. If we need help to let go of the past, then yes seek it. However, it's also important to consider what we can do ourselves around letting go and moving on, learning to appreciate what we have and not feel overwhelmed by what is missing. That doesn't mean we do not have aspirations. We can use the energy and enthusiasm we get from joy. However, if finding happiness is dependent on things out with our control, it may be a long time coming. If we learn to stop for a moment and appreciate a tree, flower, a warm cup of tea or a refreshing glass of water we may find Joy can come from the simplest pleasures which cost us nothing but are priceless.

These wee tips do not replace professional advice, and things happen where we may find it harder to experience Joy. The aim of the tips is to offer some ideas for you to reflect on which you may find have value for you. If you ever feel so despairing, you think of suicide please speak to someone. The Samaritans are there 24/7 365 **Tel 116 123**

Thanks to Glasgow Community Health and Wellbeing Fund for support in making this tips sheet.

www.copescotland.com

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Glasgow Council
for the
Voluntary
Sector

4. Connecting to others over the Winter period

Tips to...

develop your connections with others

Wee changes can make a **big difference**

Tips to be interested in other people



Recognise compassion fatigue

"The ProQOL is the most commonly used measure of the negative and positive effects of helping others who experience suffering and trauma. The ProQOL has sub-scales for compassion satisfaction, burnout and compassion fatigue." proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html If you wish to complete this look at the self-score version, it may help you recognise if you are feeling less interested in people, why this may be the case. A trap kind and caring people can find themselves in is the expectation others have of them, always to put others first. Maybe even being critical of them if they do not.

This is also a useful read if you want to know more about compassion fatigue and how to overcome it www.goodtherapy.org/for-professionals/business-management/human-resources/article/cost-of-caring-10-ways-to-prevent-compassion-fatigue

What we can learn from Geese

This is an interesting piece to read www.bkconnection.com/bkblog/jeevan-sivasubramaniam/five-teamwork-lessons-from-geese It shares how geese work together and support each other. Offering encouragement and each taking responsibility to lead. It may help you reflect on who is encouraging you if you are leading a team; and this includes family. Also, who is taking responsibility to give you a rest?



We alone cannot solve all the problems in the world

While it's important to think about what we can do to help be part of the solution, we alone cannot make it better. It maybe you are less interested in people as you are worn out caring. People or communities we care about may be in challenging times, we are concerned about other people and want to help e.g., concerns of someone thinking of suicide. If we alone feel we are responsible we can quickly become exhausted as the weight of responsibility can feel very heavy. Working as a team sharing the weight, helping together to keep that person safe we can do more for others and at less personal cost to ourselves, so we remain in a place where we feel confident to help others. Balance is important, it cannot be all give.



Being helpful can help be interested in others

The wee tips to "help feel more useful" on www.copescotland.com offer lots of ideas to find ways to be interested in other people. If the issue is for some time you have been focused on your own needs, or your own life, and now you want to make new connections with others. Then recognise for others to be interested in you, it's only fair you are interested in them. It cannot be all take either.



Being interested in others can take practice

For many reasons we can see the world from our point of view and not really be that interested in anyone who has a different point of view, or, who wants to talk about something we don't really care about. Becoming interested in other people means we start to pay attention to who they are, what they do, what matters to them, even if it doesn't matter to us. If we want to talk about something we care about, we expect someone to listen and not yawn or look at their watch, or interrupt or walk away. So, thinking about becoming more interested in others, we think what we value which shows someone is interested in us.

Barriers to being interested in other people

There are sometimes reasons why we are not interested in others which lies beyond our control e.g., someone with Asperger's may find it difficult to be interested in another person. This link maybe helpful www.autism.org.uk/about/communication/social-isolation.aspx These tips are for general wellbeing and do not replace professional advice, where that may be indicated e.g., depression can affect interest in others.

Be curious

Being curious about other people naturally leads us to being interested as we want to find out more about them, or why they are doing something, or what they think about something. Now there will always be people who don't really want to talk about anything apart from themselves, so if you show an interest in them, doesn't necessarily hold they will reciprocate. However, other people you may find now you have been interested in them; they are now interested in you.

Don't be too hard on yourself

It could be you have an extensive social life, a lot going on and just don't have time to cultivate new friendships or relationships, it may be being interested in other people isn't a priority for you. We are all different and connect with life and others in different ways. These tips are for people who want to be interested in others or widen their connections. Not everyone is drawn to everyone so don't feel you need to be the kind of person who everyone likes and who knows everything about everyone.



The art of conversation

Sometimes we find we are not interested in others as we don't know how to start the conversation, we don't want to just talk about the weather, or, how their weekend was as that feels kind of superficial pleasantries, nothing more. Conversation is called an Art as it can take practice. This link takes you to some tips around the Art of Communication: <https://www.copescotland.com/resources/art-of-communication> You may find it easier chatting to people you have things in common with so perhaps if you want to be more interested in people, start to seek out activities which interest you, then you have something in common, so conversation becomes easier.

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Communities Fund

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 as a sense of purpose, be around others etc. However, it's 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 love?

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 that 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. 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. Learning to support the part of us which loves ourselves helps us make different choices. These choices can help form new routines and habits.

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 homes 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 journalling 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 visualise 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.



Wee steps can make a **big difference**

Tips to regaining your interest in things

Why do we lose interest?

This wee tips sheet does not replace, professional advice. There can be reasons such as depression where we lose interest in things we normally enjoyed. Speak to your GP or other health care provider about support near you. If you have lost interest in life so much that you are thinking of suicide, speak to someone. The Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel 116 123, you do matter. Sometimes we lose interest due to stress, boredom doing the same things over and over, feeling stuck in a rut, relationship issues, too much energy going into work or other demands, no energy left for fun!

Why is losing interest an issue?

We can find ourselves in a catch 22 situation if we are not careful. We aren't interested in the same things we used to be, so stop doing them, this may mean we are not seeing people the same way we did before. This isolation and lack of stimulation can make us feel less interested. Our mood can become even more 'can't be bothered' and so we go round in circles. Sometimes our choices are limited e.g.. due to ill health we are limited in what we can do, or due to money constraints, not being able to afford to do the things we enjoy, eventually we forget what they are and don't care anymore. Not having things to be interested in, or look forward to, can impact on our wellbeing, as the buffers which can help protect us from stress are perhaps being removed.

What to do when we can't be bothered!

The challenge is, when we can't be bothered, or are just not interested, the steps we need to take to get our mojo back require us to do something, but, we can't be bothered! So, finding motivation matters. Becoming aware of our inner voice can help. If we keep telling ourselves we are "not interested", "what is the point", "it will be boring" etc this will not motivate us at all. Changing our inner voice can help us begin to look at how we use that to find the motivation to make small changes. There are resources on www.copescotland.com which may be of interest around motivation and our inner voice.



Unhelpful routines leading to unhelpful habits

If you find you have lost interest in things, have a look at your routines, are they helpful to your wellbeing? Do you build in even moderate exercise every day? Stay hydrated and drink water regularly? Eat a balanced diet and have regular meals? Avoid overdoing the sugar, alcohol, or other habits which may leave you feeling drained? Make time even for a few minutes to do some kind of relaxation? Looking after our physical health can support our mental and emotional health too

How well are you sleeping?



Sometimes when we have too much going on, or not enough, we find it hard to get to sleep, or once asleep, be able to stay asleep, or if we do fall asleep have strange dreams, which means when we wake in the morning, we don't feel rested. This again drains our energy and are we surprised if we find we have lost interest in activities, maybe even groups which we used to enjoy being part of? There are resources on www.copescotland.com around sleep and ideas which may be helpful to get a better night's sleep. These are for self care and not a replacement for professional advice.

Set realistic goals

If we want to get our interest in things back and at the moment, we pretty much are running on autopilot then it's better to take wee steps more often as opposed to big steps now and then. Visualisation and journaling are good ways to begin to think about what matters to you and to plan the changes you want to make at a pace which you can work with. There are ideas on www.copescotland.com around visualization, goal setting and journaling,



Recharge our batteries

Having too much to do can drain our energy and leave us losing interest in things we previously enjoyed, also not having enough to do can also leave our batteries feeling flat! Think of a car left out too long without going a run, we are the same, we need balance between work, rest, and play.

Become aware of where you spend your energy and how you top it back up again. There are ideas on www.copescotland.com which may be of interest.



What impact is your environment having?

Being in nature and getting some fresh air can help revitalize us. However, if we live in the city, far from a park and are limited in the distance we can travel either due to health challenges, financial issues, or transport issues we may not be able to spend as much time in nature as we want. Finding ways to make our homes an oasis of calm, despite what is happening around us, can help us to recharge.

Taking an interest in our home is a strong message to ourselves that we matter and what is happening around us matters. If we can't see any trees, explore how we can bring trees into the house in pictures, or other images which support nature. Perhaps also explore using essential oils instead of room fresheners, natural fragrances which inspire us. There is a booklet on www.copescotland.com around how to make a scented space indoors and out. Free to download.



If something is bothering you...

It maybe there are some challenges you are facing just now which are draining your energy e.g., chronic pain. It is important if something is bothering you to do something about it. Seeking help where we need it. There is often more support available than we realize. This search engine is helpful for finding supports near you www.aliss.org, so please, if you are finding life is overwhelming just now do speak to someone. Your GP or other health care providers may also be able to tell you about support near you. It maybe you have financial worries, which can make everything seem a challenge. Seek advice from money advice services, there are people who can help. Sometimes we have problems, and we need to find ways to deal with them sometimes we are inconvenienced and may need to find ways to adapt to this, but we can ask for support, we do not always need to do it alone.. We only have so much energy, so what we invest it in matters for our wellbeing. Be aware of what is within your control to do something about and put your energy there. Challenges can be a part of life, there is a resource booklet on www.copescotland.com which offers self care ideas to help navigate the challenges on the sea of life

Find ways to have fun



When we can't be bothered, we can't even be bothered sometimes with fun, so we need to relearn how to enjoy ourselves. This can start small and build e.g., find some tunes which make you smile, if you are starting to do something in small steps e.g., give the house a spring clean, put on a favourite song, only clean for as long as the song is on, see how much you get done, if you want to stop, stop. If you want to do more, listen to another song. Finding ways to bring more laughter into your day, can help recharge your batteries and help you regain an interest in who and what is around you. Check out the video on laughter yoga on www.copescotland.com. There are also tips on being cheerier and more optimistic. This does not mean we do not see challenges, just that we are more mindful of where we put our energy.

Be kind to yourself

Its important if we have lost our zest and spark to be kind to ourselves. There are many reasons we can end up feeling flat and can't be bothered. Making small changes on a regular basis can be more helpful than overwhelming ourselves by trying to do too much at once. Remember, please you do matter.



Tips to...

regain that sense of purpose that helps give what we do meaning

Sometimes when life feels routine and options feel limited, it can all feel a bit mundane. This can make us feel bored, restless, unsettled as if the whole world is at a party, we didn't get an invitation to. We have heard of living mindfully, even living kindly, so here are some tips for living meaningfully, as we all need a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

Do something which has a positive impact on someone else

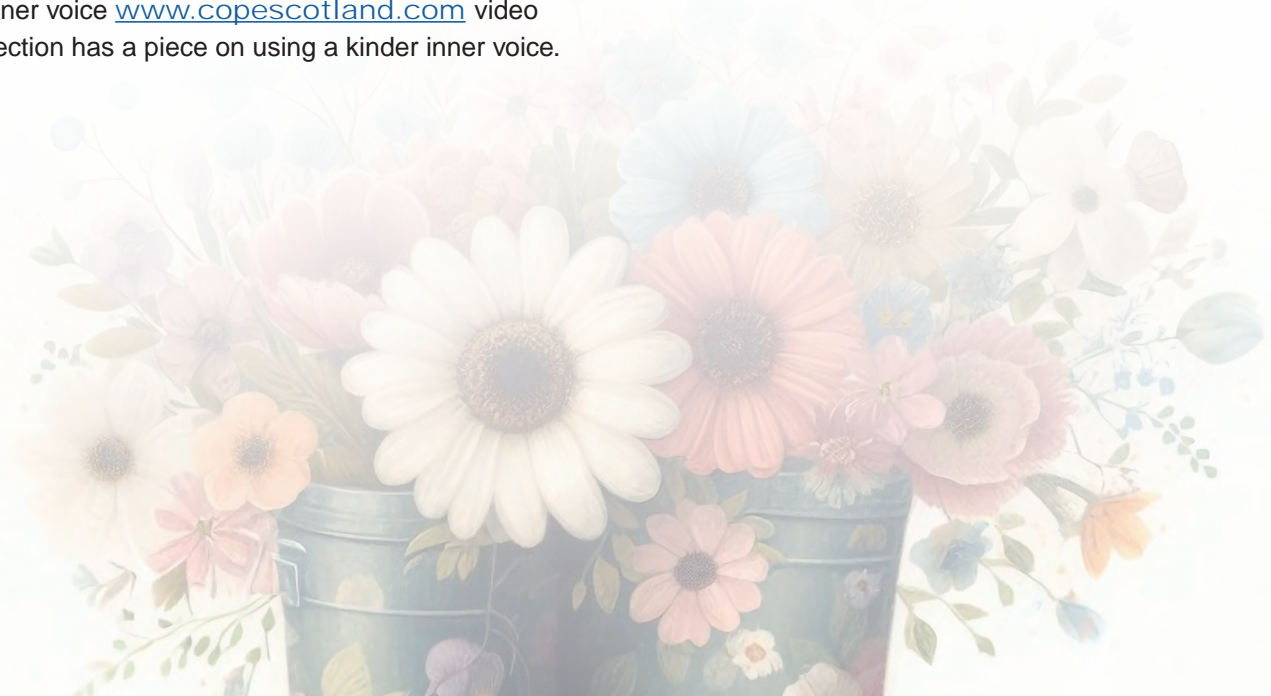
This can be from making banana bread which one of the family will enjoy, phoning an elderly relative or friend you haven't spoken to for a while, even giving a wee gift of an affirmation jar which may help someone smile? Visit www.copescotland.com for ideas on making your own affirmation jar.

Recognise your strengths and use them

When we feel bored, unsettled, out of sorts, we can be unkind to ourselves, even get angry as we know we should be doing X,Y,Z but just can't be bothered. It's hard to tell yourself, your life has meaning, when you are using an unkind inner voice. Often, we are too quick to condemn ourselves and think we can't do things, as opposed to actually reflect we can do a lot more than we give ourselves credit for. Learning to use a kinder inner voice, helps us to recognise our strengths and use them to make a difference in our lives as well as having a positive impact on others. This piece and video is helpful for using a kinder inner voice www.copescotland.com video section has a piece on using a kinder inner voice.

Think about the difference doing the task will make

If we feel overwhelmed getting the house back in order as maybe it's got a wee bit out of hand. Visualise what it will be like when it's finished, putting on some music gets you feeling energetic and you may find you are more motivated to do it and finish it. Same can hold if you have a garden and things need weeded or cut back. It maybe you want to create a safe space for nature over winter, the little green space has some amazing ideas www.littlegreenspace.org.uk of how we can support nature.



Learn what matters to you and why

Sometimes we think its fancy holidays, or nights out, or a new kitchen, or.....but other times when we stop to think about it we realise it's the moments we spend with people who matter to us, the laugh we shared, the calm of watching the wind in the trees, escaping into a great book, the first time we made scones and they rose! Not being in pain.

www.copescotland.com has a variety of affirmation cards in their download section. There is a workbook and set of cards specifically looking at motivation and life purpose which you may find helpful.

What are the routines that have become our habits

It's amazing how easily we slip into routines which become habits, maybe not even ones which are good for us, but it's been going on so long we don't even think about it, or why we do what we do. www.copescotland.com has a tips sheet in the download section for changing unhelpful habits which you may find of interest.

Find something you want to belong to and people you want to be with

We recognise loneliness can be an issue, sometimes to fill that need for company we get involved in 1001 things to be around others, and still that feeling remains. Sometimes having one or two meaningful relationships is more satisfying than 1001 contacts where we maybe in a crowd, but we still feel alone. Working on the relationships which have meaning for us, can help bring more meaningfulness into our lives. www.copescotland.com in the download section has a workbook on 'Getting back your oomph' which may be of interest as it also touches on relationships (page 29).

If you need to talk to someone please do

Sometimes things can happen which rocks our World, we lose someone close to us, our health is affected, we lose our job, we find we are taking early retirement and hadn't planned for it and wonder what next. Sometimes we need to talk to someone about how we are feeling. That maybe a friend or family member, but it maybe someone who is trained to offer support. There is a wellbeing piece on www.copescotland.com on the art of communication on how to open up if you need to share as well as being there for someone who needs to share with us.

Have confidence that what you do matters

How often do you hear someone describe themselves as I am 'just a' or, maybe have done that yourself? As if somehow there are some people more valuable than others. We are all valuable, every single one of us and we all have something to give. Maybe some people earn more money, that's not because they are more valuable, that's because whatever they do carries more responsibility, or requires more time commitment, or whatever. We all contribute something to this world, and we all have meaning, it's just sometimes we forget it, or don't realise the value a smile has to someone who really needs it. Being confident, is not the same as being arrogant. Having confidence can help us find meaning. www.copescotland.com has a workbook and affirmation pack which can be used as a self-help tool to increase self confidence which may be of interest. These are available in the download section.

Live the life has meaning for you

We can be sold an image of how our lives should be and social media in many ways has contributed to this, where it seems all these people are having all these amazing times and here we are again, Friday night and doing nothing exciting! Oh the pressure when someone asks what you did at the weekend and you have nothing amazing to share....so what! Being happy and being content are not necessarily the same thing. Some people may need to climb Everest to find meaning in their life, other people it maybe that hour a week when they go a walk in the hills, or start a new book, or make a banana loaf and share it with the family, is what gives them that feeling of internal satisfaction. Sometimes finding pleasure in the little things, we find, we can have more pleasure and find more meaning every day.



Some simple tips to ease the stress, as life can be complicated enough...

MAKING EMAILS WORK FOR YOU

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Set up an auto response letting people know the standard you have for responding to emails, to avoid reminder emails if people are not sure if their email was received, or they expected a response sooner. Let people know your working hours, People working 2 days a week may take longer to reply perhaps than someone who works 5 days. If a prompter response is needed, it may be better asking people to phone you or suggest someone else to contact if the communication is time crucial.



SHARE HOW YOU RECEIVE EMAILS

Emails received on a smart phone may struggle to open attachments. You may work out of the office for days and only use a phone; let people know this as it may take longer for you to reply as you need to wait until you can access a laptop or PC.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

People can use emails for different reasons. Some people use them to collaborate as they find it reduces the time spent in meetings and taking notes. It's helpful to check if this is a mutual understanding, as others may prefer more meetings or phone calls to discuss issues.



BE REALISTIC WITH TIME TO SEND AND REPLY

Dealing with work related emails during time off and annual leave impacts on the time we have to recharge. Set boundaries so that time off, is time off. Deal with what can be dealt with before you go off and leave another contact for emergencies. If you feel you have no other contacts ask yourself, what will happen if you were ill and unable to respond, who will deal with this then?

AVOID COPYING IN PEOPLE WHEN IT IS NOT NEEDED

Sometimes a mail all is helpful for a joint piece of work. Take time to confirm people are okay with this. Consider when replying though. do you need to copy everyone in? e.g., does anyone need several emails of people offering their apologies?



MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTIONS

We may find we were once involved in something which added us to a mailing list. We are no longer active in this but continue to receive emails, newsletters and other things which are no longer relevant to our work. Think also about things you add to a 'to read pile' you never get round to. Consider whether it would be helpful for you to politely let the sender know you no longer want to be on the mailing list.

BE CLEAR WHAT THE EMAIL IS ABOUT

Having a clear subject line lets the recipient know what the email is about. If there is a deadline on a response, add this to the subject line. If the recipient cannot respond within that time, they can let you know. We can all often work to different deadlines and not always have the same time to reply. It may be better if this requires discussion to schedule a quick phone call.



HAVE A SIGNATURE BLOCK

Once someone knows you, the signature block is not always used. However, it is helpful when first connecting via email to offer some information on who you are, so the person receiving the email has a sense of who the sender is.

SET THE RIGHT TONE FOR THE SUBJECT

There are times when emails may have an informal tone; however, this may not always be recommended. Consider the purpose of the email and use a tone which is supportive of that purpose.





CHECK AND DOUBLE CHECK

Write the email before adding the recipient address and double check it is being sent to the intended recipient, especially if you have people with the same first name in your mailing list. Proofread the content before sending, especially if you use predictive text, as it may not have inserted what you intended.

REPLY TO EMAILS BUT DON'T REACT

Sometimes an email can create an emotional response and we may have started to construct an email which with a calmer head we may not send. Take time to respond and if there is a matter to be discussed with the sender create space to do this face to face or by phone. Sometimes emails can be misunderstood, sometimes real time conversations are required to address an issue. Emails can be wonderful tools; however, they are not the best communication platform for all situations.

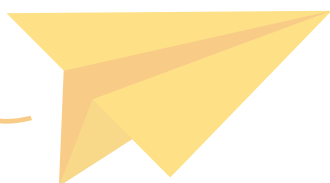


REDUCE DISRUPTIONS

If we are working then the ping of an email alert, or what's app message can be distracting. Switch off notifications to avoid disruptions, unless of course it is an essential message for which you are waiting.

MANAGE TIME

Most of us have more to do than time to do it, so managing the time spent on emails also is important. Have clear times of the day when you check mail and let others know this. Do not accept work related emails on your personal phone. Use the opportunity in emails to create folders which may help organising emails and responses under specific people, group, work plans.



FIND WAYS TO DECLUTTER

Declutter your inbox. If we think about a physical desk which is tidy or cluttered this can help us reflect on which one creates the most feeling of calm and sense of being on top of things. If the email requires to be long, break it into headings as it is a challenge for someone already busy to be hit with a wall of words. This can mean your email gets red flagged as more time is needed to read and respond and due to other commitments ends up being forgotten.



TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED

None of us like to feel ignored and not responding to an email where a response is requested can cause others unnecessary stress. Even a quick reply saying 'acknowledged' lets the person know they have been heard. We are all busy, so we may feel that we need to apologise for not responding sooner, explaining we didn't have time as we were busy. However, the person at the other end may feel you don't recognise or value their time as they too are busy yet made time to communicate to you. A simple apology, 'sorry, I didn't get back sooner' if required is sufficient. Organise your emails and reduce the times you ask for something to be resent as this causes additional work for the sender. If your workload means you need more time to respond to an email, factor this in when anticipating a reply. It is not realistic if you perhaps need 2 weeks to reply to expect others to reply to you in 2 days. If the work, you are doing together is time critical, make sure to be easily contactable or find another way to communicate with each other as delays of weeks in between communication may impact on project outcomes. Always try to respect each others time.



INSPIRE OTHERS

Adding an inspiring quote, or tip for wellbeing to your email signature can remind you of what matters and also sends the recipient a quote to inspire them also. We are all trying our best; we are not perfect; no one is. Finding ways to reduce the stress of emails when we send and receive them, may just help reduce our overall stress.

LOOK AFTER YOU

Give your eyes a rest, and don't stare at the screen for hours on end. If you need to go to the toilet, hydrate, etc move! Make time to do this. Be mindful of your breathing as sometimes we can hold our breath when constructing an email and forget to breath! Emails are a great tool, but they do not replace human contact. Make time to connect with colleagues in real time too, even if only occasionally, those contacts matter.



www.copescotland.com

5. General Wellbeing in Winter

Look after antibiotics so when we need them, **they can look after us**

What is antibiotic resistance?

The overuse of antibiotics in recent years means they are becoming less effective. This has led to bacteria that have become resistant to many types of antibiotics resulting in people getting infections that can no longer be treated by antibiotics. This is called antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria that cause infections no longer respond to antibiotics designed to kill them. It is mostly caused by overuse of antibiotics in humans and animals. This means when bacteria cause an infection and the antibiotics no longer work, the person continues to be infected. It becomes more of an issue when the 'antibiotic resistance' bacteria multiply and spread, causing infections that are difficult to treat. The 'antibiotic resistance' bacteria can also pass their resistance on to other bacteria which means, they too, won't respond to antibiotics.



What we can do to help

By safeguarding the use of antibiotics, we provide better outcomes for those requiring treatment, reduce the spread of infections and ensure that antibiotics keep working for many years to come.

Why does antibiotic resistance matter?

Antibiotic resistance means that common infections such as pneumonia, kidney infections and cellulitis may become untreatable. Routine surgical operations such as caesareans, hip replacements and appendix removal and cancer chemotherapy will also no longer be safe without effective antibiotics. This is a situation that we don't want to be in. When used correctly, antibiotics can save lives.



We all have a part to play

Jacqueline Sneddon is a pharmacist and Project Lead for the Scottish Antimicrobial Prescribing Group, which is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland. She says everyone has a part to play in ensuring antibiotics keep working for future generations.

"Bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics is still one of the biggest threats to healthcare facing us today. While Scotland has made progress when it comes to reducing unnecessary prescriptions for antibiotics, work still needs to be done to help reduce the risk of antibiotic resistance.

Healthcare professionals need to change their practices to preserve antibiotics, but we the public also have an important role to play. If we ask for antibiotics to treat common self-limiting infections this may put pressure on healthcare professionals to prescribe them unnecessarily.

Antibiotics aren't always the answer

That's ok, isn't it? The short answer is no. Antibiotics do not work for most coughs, sore throats, earaches or the common cold. These are usually self-limiting infections, so the body can fight them itself. Simple self-care measures such as taking some rest, drinking plenty of fluids and regular paracetamol or ibuprofen for a few days will help you feel better. Your local community pharmacist will be able to advise you on symptom relief, when you should see a doctor, as well as signs of more serious illness to look out for.



Why we need to protect antibiotics and when we use them

Antibiotics can save lives when they are used in the right way. In some cases, when you visit your GP antibiotics will be required so if you are prescribed an antibiotic, always take them as directed – the right amount, at the right time, for the right length of time. You should never save antibiotics for future use or share them with others and return any unused antibiotics to your local community pharmacy for disposal.



Why we may think we need antibiotics

Feeling under the weather and a little run-down if we become unwell often takes its toll on our bodies but as many of us continue to work from home, we also feel the added pressure of calling in sick for fear of our colleagues perhaps thinking we could easily work from the sofa or our bed.

Taking all of that into account, you might decide the easiest solution is to consult your doctor to get antibiotics to speed up your recovery so that you do not need to take any time off work.

So remember...

1. Help to prevent infections by doing simple things like washing your hands and discarding tissues in the bin.
2. If you have symptoms (fever, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell) that may suggest COVID-19 follow current Scottish Government advice or NHS Inform guidance
3. In most cases, symptoms of a cold, cough or sore throat will resolve themselves with rest, fluids and paracetamol or ibuprofen. But if your symptoms are severe or do not clear up within a week or you are concerned, contact your GP practice or visit your community pharmacy for advice, as in some cases antibiotics may be required.
4. Ensure antibiotics, if prescribed, are taken as directed as it helps them to work better and also helps prevent resistance.

Healthier routines for wellbeing

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 foodbank maybe able to help www.trusselltrust.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.

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, there is a lot of tips and advice online. If using online resources, check they are from reputable sources.

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.



Companionship

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.

Knowledge and learning

Lifelong learning and acquiring new knowledge can be good for our wellbeing 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 wellbeing e.g. There is a piece on www.copescotland.com which offers some selfcare ideas for managing pain.

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.



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.

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.

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 to what we want to do. Sometimes it's about working out what matters to us, what is within our control and what maybe we need to find the confidence to go for. There are some selfcare resources on www.copescotland.com you may find helpful. Few people if any get everything, they want, but having the confidence to set realistic goals may mean we find what we need.

Know you are doing the right thing and are appreciated

We all respond to kindness and being kind to ourselves, each other and the planet matters. If you find being kind to yourself a challenge, check out the 'What are you saying to yourself, because you are listening' video on www.copescotland.com. There are many pieces on the site to support kindness to ourselves, each other and the planet, why not have a visit and see if anything there is helpful for you.

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 wellbeing. Check out the piece on www.copescotland.com around creating your own sensory space indoors and outdoors.

Little Self-Care Tips

as ever if in doubt check with your GP

Enjoy escaping into a good book

Find a book you enjoy and read for at least 6 minutes each day, or listen to a talking book. Pop into your local library which has a great selection of books and materials which are free. You can also register for an online library in many places.

Find a way to relax that works for you and is good for you

Make time every day to relax, even if only for a few minutes. There are many relaxation exercises online, you can also visit www.copescotland.com for some examples including the 3minute relaxer. If a relaxation exercise doesn't work for you, explore other options, mindful colouring in, playing a game of patience, sitting quietly and for a few moments you are not doing something, or rushing somewhere, just being in the moment. Its also suggested watching videos of cute kittens can help us unwind so maybe visit you tube and see if you can find something works for you.



Connect with nature

Spending time in nature is good for our wellbeing as is doing something which is good for nature. Even if it's only looking at pictures of the natural world, or, finding ways to bring more of the natural world into our homes. Maybe take a new interest in gardening if you have one or find out if there is a local allotment, or community growing initiative looking for volunteers. There is a handbook on gardening on the COPE Scotland website you may find of interest www.copescotland.com co designed with a local community growing initiative Growchapel.



Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet

Our bodies need water and a balanced diet to perform at their best. That doesn't mean we can't have a treat now and again, however, being aware of the impact diet has on our mood and energy levels can help us make healthier choices. There are many resources in your local library or online which offer ideas for a healthy diet.



Find healthy strategies to cope with stress

Sometimes when life feels overwhelming or stressful, we can turn to unhelpful coping strategies, like consuming more alcohol than is recommended, or turning to drugs, gambling, overeating, and other strategies which we think may offer short term relief, but in fact can lead to more problems in the long run. If we are feeling distressed by something which is happening, talking to someone about how we feel and finding healthier ways to destress, is what is best for us in the longer term.

Find ways to move more

Being active is good for our self-care. For some people this is maybe going to the gym, or cycling, or jogging, but that may not work for everyone. What matters is you find something which works for you, which you incorporate into your life on a regular basis. Walking the dog, playing with the children or grandchildren, put on your favourite song and have a wee dance, get stuck into housework with a bit of vigour, all this too can help us move more.



Appreciate

When life is challenging sometimes it's hard-to-find things to appreciate, however, they are there. Looking for the positive in the world, may take effort when all we see are things we are concerned about, however, seeking them out can reinvigorate us and offer us hope. Make your own joy or appreciation jar to offer inspiration. Instructions for how to do this are also on www.copescotland.com

These are only some wee examples of self-care, there are many more. What matters is you find something which works for you and your wellbeing.

HOLD ON

In a world often full of noise
It can be hard to find a balance,
retain our poise
Feeling overwhelmed
by all there is to do
Then someone suggests.
Hey remember selfcare too!
It can feel a bother,
when it's all too much
When we are so busy,
there is not even time for lunch
Yet weaving in a moment here and there
Reminding ourselves that selfcare,
doesn't need to be complicated
another thing to do
Just simply looking after ourselves
and reminding others to do so too

Hilda Campell MBE

IDEAS FOR A WEEK OF SELF CARE

DAY 1

**A SIT DOWN WITH
A CUP OF TEA**

DAY 2

**2 MINUTES
OF MINDFUL
BREATHING**

DAY 3

**3 MINUTES TO
RELAX**

DAY 4

**4 MINUTES
WALKING**

DAY 5

**5 MINUTES OF
HAVING A GOOD
LAUGH**

DAY 6

**6 MINUTES OF
READING**

DAY 7

**7 MORE
SELF CARE
IDEAS**



Glasgow
Council
for the
Voluntary
Sector



wee changes can make a **big difference...**

Unpaid Carers wellbeing counts too



You know the challenges

If you are reading this and are an unpaid Carer you know the challenges, you face. These tips will not have the answers for every situation; however, we hope they offer help and reassure you that you are not alone. We've also provided links to support.

We want to help, even if only in a small way. There are more resources on www.cope-scotland.org to support wellbeing.

Support to deal with the challenges

If you are not already receiving any support in your caring role, then explore what is available near you. This is one place to start looking Care Information Scotland – which also has a helpline for carers on **0800 011 3200** (local rate) (Mon - Fri 8am - 10pm; Sat and Sun 9am – 5pm).

Carers - Glasgow City Council

Other helplines can provide a good starting point when you first become a carer or are struggling with issues in your current situation e.g. <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/carers>

Carers Scotland:

www.carersuk.org T: 0808 808 7777

Alzheimer's Scotland

www.alzscot.org/ 24-hour freephone
Dementia helpline T: 0808 808 3000

Your Support Your Way Glasgow:

<https://www.yoursupportglasgow.org/carers>

Find your local service

<https://www.careinfoscotland.scot/topics/support-for-carers/carers-centres/>

GAMH North East Carers Support Service: (0141) 404 3769

Glasgow North West Carers: (0141) 954 1010

Glasgow South Carers: (0141) 423 0728

Health and Social Care Connect: (0141) 287-0555.

Other charities linked to specific health issues also often offer family support e.g., MND Scotland, Parkinson's Scotland, Down Syndrome Scotland and others. Check out their websites. PAMIS offer support to parents who support people with profound and multiple disabilities and their families. Visit their website here:

PAMIS | Promoting a more inclusive society | <https://pamis.org.uk>





You are not a machine

No matter who we are, we have a finite amount of energy and eventually if we keep going and don't recharge, we will feel an impact on our wellbeing. Sometimes we need to switch off, even for 5 minutes. What helps you switch off? Build more of that into your day. If you need to speak to someone this resource may be of interest -Free, safe and anonymous mental wellbeing support for adults across the UK. www.qwell.io

Self-care matters

Self-care includes making sure you stay hydrated, eat regular meals and a balanced diet, have time to rest and a decent night's sleep. Sometimes we don't have the time or space to do this well, so it's important to find small spaces or moments to remind ourselves that we matter too. There are many resources for improving self-care e.g., thesleepcharity.org.uk www.selfcareforum.org/



Avoid unhelpful coping strategies

Sometimes when life is challenging, or we find ourselves feeling isolated, we can lock into some unhelpful habits. If you find this is a concern for you, please talk to someone, there is often more support than we realise. This search engine may be of interest www.aliss.org/

Find ways to be Mindful when our minds feel too full

Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed and that is natural. It is also exhausting.

Finding ways to ground ourselves can help. Mindfulness is one practice which can be helpful, there are also some useful techniques on this site capacitar.org This may also be of interest Free Mindfulness www.freemindfulness.org/download.

Carers centres and other organisations may offer Mindfulness and Wellbeing training and sessions check out what is available near you.





Stay connected

Where you can stay connected to other friends and family please do. If this doesn't seem possible, try to build new connections. Perhaps even with other people who are in an unpaid caring role who together want things to change for unpaid Carers e.g. We Care Campaign wecarecampaign.org.uk

Peer support is priceless as you don't need to explain why you feel the way you do as others understand through the lens of their own experience. Being in a space where you are not judged but listened to is priceless.

Retain your own identity hopes and dreams

It matters when we are caring for someone that we do not lose sight of who we are. Retaining our own identity and hopes and dreams matters. If we need help to rediscover who we are, there are services there who care about you too. Find out what your local Carers Centres can offer/link you too. Remember also breathingspace.scot T: 0800 83 85 87



A life in balance

A life in balance can mean different things to each of us. You decide what a balanced life looks like for you. Maybe even create a vision board, there are tips on www.copescotland.com on visualisation as well as goal setting tips to help bring your vision to life.

Maybe there is not a lot of time for you, so its finding ways to maximise what is there that also offers you space to breath.



Get help for money worries

Practical issues including paying the bills all add pressure to already pressured lives.

If money is a concern for you speak to someone and see what other support may be available. www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/family/help-for-adults-in-the-community-s/carers-help-and-support/ . Your local Citizens Advice Bureaux can offer advice and practical support on benefits, debt and other financial issues.



Boundaries and guilt

It can sometimes feel hard to set boundaries when it feels there is no one else to help. That is why it matters that we do connect to others and don't feel alone.

It also matters we learn to control our guilt and don't feel responsible for everything, we are only one person, and no one person can do it all. If you need support to work through these feelings check out what is in your area using some of the local directories e.g., www.glasgowhelps.org/



Keep yourself safe from thoughts of suicide

The pressure of caring, maybe worrying about money, feeling alone can all put someone at a higher risk of considering suicide. It matters if you have thoughts of suicide you talk to someone. Remember, the Samaritans are there 24/7 365 Tel No 116 123

You do matter and people do care.



wee changes can make a **wee difference** to living with 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.

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.



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, this takes time to learn, hence it is called Mindfulness practice. Worth investing time into and making it a goal.

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.

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.

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. Re framing 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.

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.



Complementary Therapies

Ensure anyone offering these is fully qualified and does take note of your medical condition and any medication you may be 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 3 minutes every day. Start with a wee step, see where your imagination takes you.



Avoid unhelpful coping strategies

Sometimes to cope we resort to unhelpful coping strategies, misusing alcohol which is risky when on medication, gambling which can lead to more challenges, 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.



Distraction Techniques

Techniques can help take the 'spotlight' off your pain. 6 minutes reading, 1 minute to drink a glass of water, 5 minutes of some activity/exercise approved by your medical team, 3 minutes 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.

Useful information and contacts

If you are thinking of suicide due to chronic pain phone the Samaritans **T: 116 123**

Or text **SHOUT** to **85258** to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer

Alcoholics Anonymous
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Free Mindfulness
www.freemindfulness.org/download

Gambling harms **www.gamcare.org.uk**

Overeaters anonymous
www.oagb.org.uk/scotland

The Pain association Scotland
www.painassociation.co.uk

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

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

Tips on self care
<https://www.selfcareforum.org/>



6. Motivation and Goal Setting

wee tips to dealing with 'what if's' 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 lockdown, 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.

Negative thoughts

Uncertainty breeds uncertainty! When we begin to imagine all the various 'what if' scenarios (which are usually negative, we can end up imaging even more 'what if' scenarios)! We have great imaginations, but rarely do we lie awake in the wee hours of the morning, unable to sleep thinking about all the super wonderful things which are going to happen to us! This focus on what can go wrong can make us feel negative, which in turn, can programme us into looking for more things to be negative about and feeling like that.....we find them. This does not leave us feeling jolly!

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 if's'. 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 'Its 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.

Part of dealing with the 'what if's 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.



Be flexible

If we think of the analogy of the tree which bends in the wind, it helps us realise if we are flexible to the 'what happens next' and learn to go with the flow, don't allow the 'what if's' to overwhelm recognise maybe that things need to change and while that maybe hard to accept, in time acceptance will lead to more peace of mind than holding onto a memory of a reality which has gone.

Good habits

Practice tools which support your wellbeing. 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.



Inner voice

Taking control where you can is important. Sometimes we get so caught up in the 'what if's 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.

It's okay to ask for support, here are some ideas:

- If you are thinking of suicide due to worrying about the 'what if's' phone the Samaritans **T: 116 123**
- Or **text SHOUT to 85258** to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer
- Speak to your GP about mental health services you can link to
- This link takes you to information on a variety of support for anxiety:
www.supportline.org.uk/problems/anxiety
- Campaign to look after your mental health **www.clearyourhead.scot**

You matter, how you feel matters. It's ok not to be ok and to ask for support

Find other tips for wellbeing at:
www.copescotland.com and
maybe follow us on

 **@COPEScotland** for updates





Wee steps can make a **big difference**

Tips for moving home

Is moving home the right decision just now?

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.

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 where 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.

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.



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 your budget.

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.

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 if you need help, removal firms can often offer a packing service, if packing may be a challenge for you. 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, vet if you have pets, 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



Wee steps can make a **big difference**

The Satisfaction of Tackling 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**

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.



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.

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 which we may find confusing our thinking. This may be of interest www.freemindfulness.org/download

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.

Solving the problem doesn't always mean it's gone away

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 have a problem you need help to resolve; however, you can also practice selfcare by finding a healthy way to relax and stay calm, this enables you to look for solutions in a way that responds instead of reacting. It's 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.

Prioritise



If our problems are to do with money, debt, relationships, housing, work, our health, others health, the list goes on, we may find we have a big list, and this can be a wee bit overwhelming! Understatement! So, we need to decide what will we tackle first as we cannot do it all at once. Start with the least difficult as that will help build your confidence and stamina to begin to address the bigger problems.

What does success look like?

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?



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.

Plan towards the best solution?

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. It's amazing how things can get in the way of our plans. There is a goal setting snakes and ladders tool on www.copescotland.com you may find helpful.

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.

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 and 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.copescotland.com 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 visualise you may be 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.



What could creative visualisation offer me?

These tips are for self-management. If there has been something in your life which has had an impact on you and what you believe yourself capable of, this may require professional intervention. Ask your GP or other health care provider about support near you. If you perhaps want to achieve something, new house, relationship, job, improved sense of wellbeing, pass a test and more, then creative visualisation is a tool that may help you achieve that desired goal.

Untangling notes with boxing gloves on!

Sometimes we have so much going on in our lives, it's like being given a ball of very knotted wool, putting on a set of boxing gloves and a blind fold and told to untie the knots! Hmmm how many seconds and the ball of wool goes flying. The same holds when our lives feel very overwhelming and stressful, we don't know where to start. Relaxation doesn't take away the knotted ball of wool, but it takes off the blindfold and boxing gloves and makes it easier for us to be calmer and focus on the knots which we need to put our energy into unknitting. Make a note in your journal about the knots that are holding you back from your dreams.



Stay kind and positive

Creative visualisation is around bringing something kind or positive into your life and the lives of others and is a tool for bringing more positive energy into the world. If at this time you find it hard to be positive do speak to someone as our mental health matters and sometimes self-help alone is not enough. What is also helpful, if you think this is hard, is it to think of someone you admire who succeeded, sometimes against the odds, that you would see as a role model. Yes, goals need to be realistic, however, we are often capable of more than we give ourselves credit for, so if you are going to dream, dream big and see where those aspirations take you and remember, if you need help ask, we all need help sometimes.

Using all your senses



You may find watching this wee video helpful for realising just how many senses we have <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfxulw98FYE>. This is using your senses to relax; however, you can use them to visualise. Imagine your goal has already happened, you have succeeded, what do you see, hear, smell, taste? What can you touch, is there wind on your skin? Are you moving, how does that movement feel e.g., you may want to learn to drive a car, can you feel the car moving? The clearer the vision is in your mind, the more often you visualise this, the more likely you will feel motivated to achieve that goal as already you can imagine you have achieved it. You may want to add people, times of year. The more your imagination works in a positive way the more focused you are on achieving this goal. This is where a journal and or a vision board can help as you can capture all of this to reflect on and remind you what you are working towards on days when maybe this is harder than others.

Perspective

There are a couple of ways you can visualise; one is that you are in the vision and experiencing all the positive things you are aiming to achieve. The other is seeing it through someone else's eyes, e.g., you may imagine watching yourself on a screen. Perhaps a film you have written the script for and directed? Try it both ways, see what works for you. A reminder, if you are working through any issues, or have any feelings of depersonalisation or dissociation, speak to a health professional before trying these exercises, they are for self help and do not replace professional advice.

GOAL SETTING SNAKES AND LADDERS

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.

This tool is part of a variety of tools aimed at helping us solve what can sometimes be the complex puzzles which are our own lives. This one has a focus on steps to achieve goals and works well when used with the Jigsaw lid and getting back your oomph workbook all available for FREE on the COPE Scotland website www.cope-scotland.org

HOW TO USE

- If using a hard copy please write your goal in the section of the poster relating to your goal, ideally in pencil so you can rub out and use the poster again, so being kind to the environment
- There is also an editable version on www.cope-scotland.org and instructions below on how to edit if doing an e version
- Take time to think about what are the steps you need to take to achieve your goal and write these in the space in the poster
- Then for each step think what obstacles you may encounter and add that in the section on what may hold you back
- Having identified what may hold you back, then think, what can I do to overcome that obstacle? and add that in the space provided
- We all need some motivation, so think about the rewards you can have when you take each step and add that in the rewards section

The 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 useful tips for goal setting:

IS IT YOUR GOAL?

Might sound obvious BUT achieving goals takes motivation and if it's not really a goal you would choose for yourself then it's hard to get motivated so make sure any goal you set is your goal and something you really want to achieve.

IS IT REALISTIC?

Now there is always a balance between confidence and having a go and not setting yourself up to fail, we can all set goals which are set so high they are unobtainable and then we feel disheartened, so once you decide on your goal maybe ask advice from others who can help you achieve it or a step towards it as sometimes its wee steps which get you there, dream big and go for it while balancing that with not putting yourself under undue pressure.

TIMELINE

Moving from dreaming to having dreams come true requires more than talk it requires action, having a timeline helps achieve goals as it focuses you on what you need to do within a specific time. Now it may be a big goal, no problem, just break it into smaller goals each with their own timeline.

HAVE A GOAL BUDDY

Having someone to share your goals with can help motivation, also it means there is someone who you can keep up to date with progress this helps in making sure you keep to your timeline. This is a buddy someone to offer support and encouragement.

DON'T FEAR TO FAIL

We all fail all the time, we learn from what didn't work to try again, so don't worry if it all doesn't go to plan first time, review the plans for next time.

GET ADVICE

There are so many agencies, groups, and maybe people you know who can help you set and take steps to achieve your goals so find out what and who is in your area that can help you achieve the goals which are important for you.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Imagine how good you will feel even taking steps towards your goals, believe they can be achieved and see it in your mind's eye how good that will be, remember, success isn't measured by the position we achieve but the obstacles we overcome seeking to achieve.

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





Keeping a journal, diary or record can help us plan and record the steps we are taking to achieve our goals



What is journaling?

There are many kinds of journals. The tips here are for journaling which can help setting goals to support wellbeing 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 wellbeing.

Journaling and goal setting

How often do we say, we want to be happier, more confident, feel better? 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? 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.



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 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 journals for some lifestyle changes or choices, or for improving is something which we can do ourselves. 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.

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 wellbeing, 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.



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. These are two examples <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jI6-JIDiojQ> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpQ-R8CgQ5A>

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 wellbeing. 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.



Writing as medication

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.




Remember, this is your journal

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 time

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.



*“remember It’s a lang road
that’s no goat a turnin...*

the spring will return”

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