

# FIVE WAYS FOR FIVE DAYS FOR WELLBEING

Issue 2 April 27th 2020



**A 30 minute walk each day reduces anxiety**

Welcome to week two of our wellbeing flyer. A number of our community have reported an increase in generalized anxiety. To help you, to help yourself keep well, we have featured some information in this week's addition

## What is anxiety and how can we help to manage the symptoms?

It is perfectly normal and perfectly human to feel anxious at various points in life; at times this might even be on a daily basis. Everyone feels a degree of anxiety at certain points in their lives: it is a crucial part of being human. We often feel anxious about things that are important to us – things that we care about. This might be a first experience such as a new job, exams, an interview or meeting new people who are significant. A feeling of mild anxiety can be exhilarating: when we put ourselves through something challenging and get through to the other side, this can evoke a sense of great achievement.

Anxiety is a general feeling of uneasiness or persistent worry. It is nature's way of helping us to respond to threat which prompts the 'fight' (tackle it), 'flight' (run from it) or 'freeze' (do nothing) response which helps to keep us safe. It would be very difficult to avoid some degree of concern in the current climate. We all have loved ones who might be threatened and there are, understandably, constant news articles highlighting the potential threat of Covid -19. While we cannot banish anxiety completely from our lives, at some points it can become a problem; we can become overwhelmed. To find some ideas to help you, or your loved ones, manage anxiety, please read on...

## 1. Stay Connected

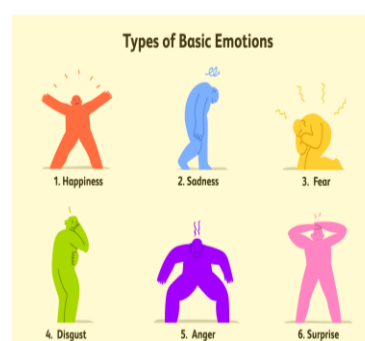
Have you ever observed someone fidgeting as they talk to you, fiddling with an object, picking at their fingers or tapping on a table? This is often unconscious behavior and is an outward expression of 'nervous tension'. Being in this state suggests that the person is not fully aware of what is happening in that moment in their lives – not giving their full attention to a situation. When our minds are busy, or niggling thoughts distracts us, we do not fully benefit

from the potential enjoyment that we could have in our lives, such as family, work, children, friends or new experiences. Learning to connect with ourselves, to become more self-aware, can enhance our sense of wellness. Instead of living our lives 'in our head', locked in our thoughts, it is possible to make a small effort to divide our attention between our thoughts and what is happening around us in the outside world. A kind of 50-50 awareness.

### TRY THIS...

*To connect with yourself you need to take time to notice how you feel, physically and emotionally.*

1. Each day, stop what you are doing and do a quick 'stress check' (this is also great to do with children). Start at your feet and mentally work your way up your body to notice any tightness and tension (frowning, relax shoulders etc.). Just notice it.
2. Now take a minute to notice how you feel. Give your feelings a name and just accept that is how you are in this moment.



### Write it out?

*A great way to connect with your feelings is to spend 5 minutes a day writing a journal to explore them. Why not give it a try, you might be surprised how helpful it is.*



**my anxiety gives me anxiety**

Click on this link to learn more about helping to manage anxiety

[https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc\\_id=Anxiety&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIsY6YpJ736AIVROd3Ch1eVw8vEAAYASAAEgLNvD\\_BwE](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/anxiety/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Anxiety&gclid=EAlaIQobChMIsY6YpJ736AIVROd3Ch1eVw8vEAAYASAAEgLNvD_BwE)

## FIVE WAYS FOR FIVE DAYS FOR WELLBEING



Fear provokes a typical 'fight or flight' response releasing surges of adrenaline to help us to respond quickly to a threat – it's an alarm response. Anxiety indicates a lingering sense of apprehension or chronic worry, dread or tension in anticipation of something bad that might happen which can result in on-going psychological and physiological feelings that can be acute.

## 2. Take Notice

*Did you know that taking time to notice can reduce worry anxiety and depression?*

Calming, noticing and controlling breathing is a good starting point to help our bodies to relax. We often subconsciously take a deep breath when we are feeling nervous or facing a challenge. We can benefit from taking longer, slower and deeper breaths to allow us to take in more oxygen. This helps to naturally calm and sooth us.

### TRY THIS:

1. Sit comfortably in an upright position.
2. Breath in through your nose for 3 seconds – hold for 3 seconds; breath our though your mouth for 5 seconds.
3. Repeat for as long as is comfortable for you.



### TRY THIS....

**Take a moment to notice how you are feeling. Do you notice any of the following?**

- Tension in your body?
- Rapid heart rate?
- A feeling of dread, danger?
- Digestive discomfort?
- Difficulty focusing trembling or muscle twitching?
- Shortness of breath?
- Stomach pain?

If you notice these signs, you may be feeling anxious, particularly if they are persistent.

**Did you solve last week's riddles? Here are the answers:**

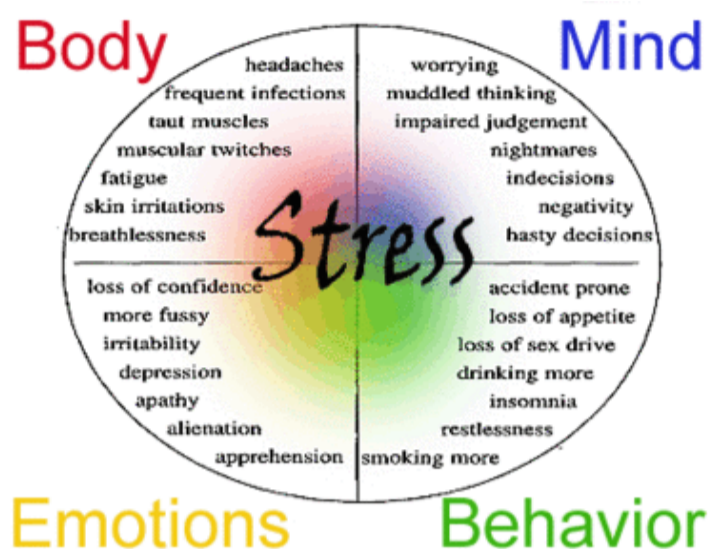
Q1. A crane

Q2. There was a father, his son and the grandson together so one son was also a father.

**Can you solve these riddles:**

1. Louise has four daughters and each daughter has a brother. How many children does Louise have?
2. What has 88 keys but can't open a single door?
3. The more you take the more you leave behind. What are they?

**TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING AT HOME, FOLLOW THIS LINK:**  
<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-to-share-with-parents/>



Look at the chart above. Take time to notice any recent changes to your usual way of being. Extreme, or long term stress can result in anxiety.

### TRY THIS: FOR COOL KIDS

**To help you to be super cool and relaxed try this exercises:**

1. Sit up- right like a king or queen on a throne.



2. Close your eyes (put the book down for now)
3. Put one hand on your stomach.
4. Imagine that your stomach is a balloon (you choose the colour).
5. Breath in gently to inflate (blow up) the balloon.
6. Breathe out slowly to deflate (let the air out) of the balloon.
7. Do this for 3 in and 3 out breaths.

**Why don't you try this every day for 5 days?**

### TRY THIS:

**Some fun breathing activities:**

**Even numbers counts:** count 2 in count 2 out; count 4 in; count 4 out; count 6 in count 6 out; count 8 in count 8 out.

**7-11**

Breathe in for a count of 7, breathe out for a count or 11 (repeat).

Now try this again but hiss the air through your teeth as you breathe out.

**Focus** on the coolness of on your nose as you breathe in and the warmth as you breathe out.

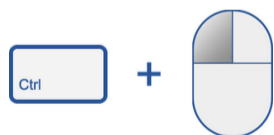
## 3. Keep Learning

We know that learning has many positive effects on our wellbeing.

Here are some links to help you to learn more about how to manage stress and anxiety.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

<https://www.recovery.angousminds.co.uk/>



What can you do with your mind?

### TRY THIS:

- Remember your last birthday.
- Describe what you wore yesterday.
- Recall the last time that you ate in a restaurant.
- Picture the face of your favourite pet.
- Think of five things that are really important to you.
- Describe a journey from home to a particular place.

**Here is a web-link that will enable you to take some free courses offered collaboratively across universities. Why not give it a go?**

<https://www.futurelearn.com/>





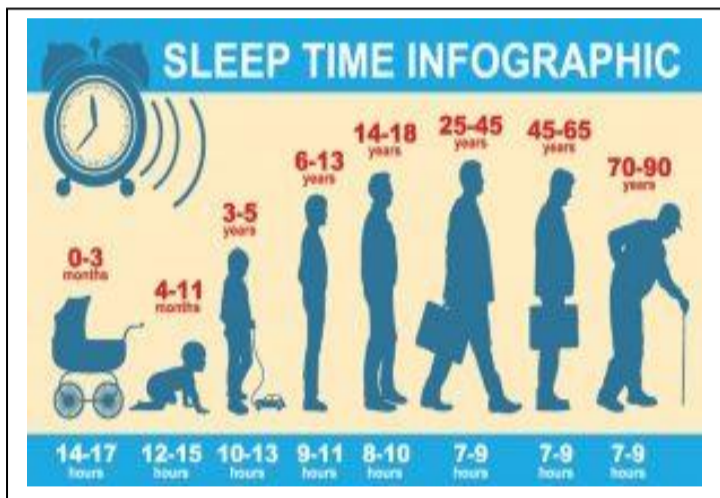
# 4. Be Active and keep well

## *Eating exercise and Sleep*

What we eat is really important but did you know that when we eat is also important?

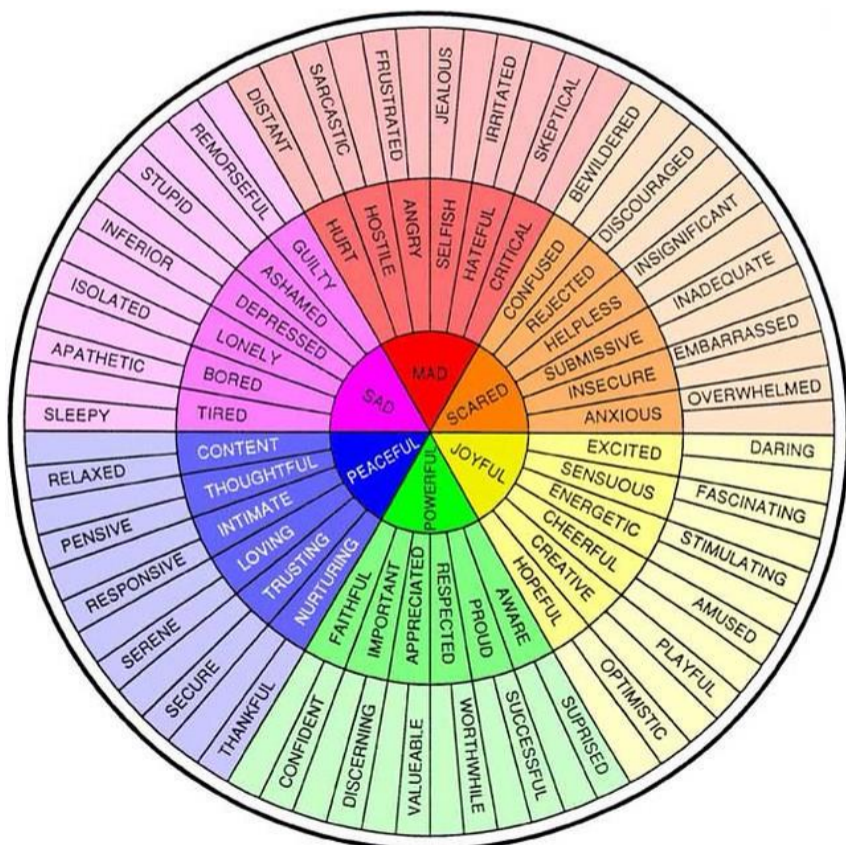
Because our mind and body are linked, relaxing physically is beneficial for calming thoughts.

**Did you know that there are foods that can help to reduce anxiety? Some foods that might help include: brazil nuts; fatty fish; pumpkin seeds; dark chocolate (in moderation like everything else ☺); turmeric; chamomile; green tea and eggs.**



Sleep is vital to maintain our general health and wellbeing. Anxiety can cause sleep problems but sleep deprivation can also lead to anxiety.

**SLEEP FACTS** -Everyone is spending a lot more time on a screen; that is understandable. However, it is really important to be aware that excessive screen time can lead to insomnia. The blue light emitted by electronic devices can suppress the release of the hormone melatonin which regulates our circadian rhythm (our body clock). Try to avoid working on a screen too late at night. The issue with a lack of sleep it that is has many adverse effects and can make us prone to obesity; heart disease and diabetes. It also effects our ability to learn, as it impairs memory. Slowing reaction times can also pose a risk when driving. As sleep reduction also raise blood pressure and reduces our body's amount of time to repair, it is so important to get enough sleep so that our immunity to infection is strong.



### **ANOTHER PLANK CHALLENGE...**

*Are you still practising the plank? Can you add another 10 seconds this week?*

### **TRY THIS:**

#### **Something to ease young minds**

Here is a poem to learn to recite if family members are feeling worried about something

#### **The Worry Monster Poem**

I'm your little worry monster  
I am always here  
When worries pop into your head  
Don't let them turn to fear

Take a piece of paper

Make sure you write your name

Explain your worry

Write it clear and plain

Put the worry into my mouth

And let me eat the fear

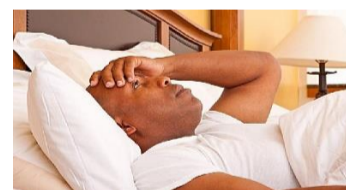
Put a smile upon your face

Then give a great big cheer

Debbie Palphreyman (2016)

#### **Tips to help with a good night's sleep:**

- ✓ Keep regular sleep hours
- ✓ Wind down to prepare for sleep (warm bath; relaxation exercise such as stretching; listen to a calming CD etc.)



- ✓ Ensure that your bedroom is sleep friendly by avoiding associations with wakefulness such as light, noise, TV etc.
- ✓ Keep a sleep diary if you are having trouble sleeping and seek medical advice if it goes on for a long period of time.



To find out more click here about sleeping with anxiety, click here.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/sleeping-with-anxiety/>

**How are you feeling today?**



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**LIGHT EXERCISE CAN BE BENEFICIAL FOR REDUCING FEELINGS OF TENSION.**

**TRY THIS:**

*Listen to your body and only do what feels comfortable...*

**Side bend:**

Stand up straight with your feet apart. Raise your arms sideways to shoulder height with palms facing downwards. Bend at the waist bringing the right hand over head and the left hand down the left leg. Relax your neck. Straighten up. Now do the opposite side. Repeat 5 times.



**Neck Roll:**

Keep your shoulders relaxed. Slowly bend your head forward until your chin touches your chest. Without hunching your shoulders, roll and twist your head to the right, then roll and twist the head backwards and then to the left and then back to the front. Repeat in the opposite direction.



**Eye Exercise:**

Look ahead. Without moving your head, roll your eyes up. Hold for a second. Roll your eyes in a circle, right, down, left and up again, holding for a second at each point. Repeat in the opposite direction.

**Shoulder Roll:**

Standing up straight, slowly roll your shoulders in a forward direction and then in a backward direction. Try one shoulder at a time. Repeat 3 times.



## SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

*Peace I leave with you.*

*My peace I give you.*

*I do not give you as the world gives.*

*Do not let your hearts be troubled.*

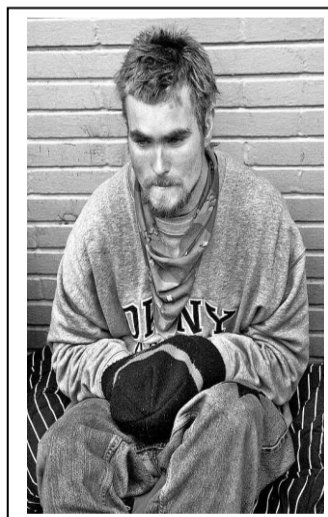
*And do not be afraid.*

*John 14:27 NIV*



We know that giving improves self-esteem, lowers the risk of anxiety and depression, can lead to better physical health and can promote a sense of purpose in life.

### 5. GIVE...



Living with such confined conditions can put a huge strain on family relationships. If you are a young person living in a situation that is close to breaking point, try to get help now. Click on the link below to find out more.

<https://www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/services/youth-services>

**IF YOU ARE WORKING IN EDUCATION AND FEEL ANXIOUS PHONE:**

08000 562 561 or visit <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/> for access to free advice and counselling.

**Give someone a treat by making these 'anxiety reducing' (it's the dark chocolate) brownies**

**Ingredients**

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/3 cup dark cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder

**Instructions**

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 11x7-inch baking tray.
2. In a bowl, stir together the cocoa powder, flour, 1/4 teaspoon sea salt and baking powder.
3. Melt the butter and add to a large mixing bowl. Add the dark chocolate chips and stir with a whisk until they begin to melt. Add the sugar and whisk until combined. Add the vanilla and whisk in the eggs, one at a time. Stir in the dry ingredients.
4. Pour the batter into your prepared pan. Top with the additional 1/4 teaspoon sea salt and bake for 20-25 minutes. Remove them from the oven when the centre is still slightly underdone and allow them to cool completely on a cooling rack.
5. Top with coarse sea salt when ready to serve.

*“Hope is being able to see there is light despite all the darkness.”*

Visit: <https://northamptonhopecentre.org.uk/> if you want to give to a charity to help the homeless.