

The Little Book of Mental Health

A practical guide for
everyday emotional well-being



Promoting...

Health and Well-being



worcestershire
county council

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Everyday well-being is about how we feel, think and behave. Nobody feels blissfully happy, thinks positive thoughts and behaves sensibly all the time. However, if you are in a pretty good state of mind, it is generally much easier to enjoy life and cope with its challenges.

Looking after your state of mind is just as important as taking care of your body, yet most of us manage our physical health far better than our mental health. As soon as we feel a physical ache or pain we generally try to do something about it, but when we find ourselves feeling very low or stressed we tend to think it is just part and parcel of life and don't do anything to improve the situation.

If you do feel down, anxious or distressed, you are not alone. One in four of us experience a mental health problem in any one year.

If you feel you are a risk to yourself or anyone else then you should contact your GP or other Healthcare Provider to discuss this immediately

The phrase “mental health problems” covers many different conditions, ranging from mild or temporary distress to problems which severely limit a person's ability to cope with everyday life. The move from a mild state of anxiety or depression to a severe one can be very gradual, but it is important to recognise the signs so that action can be taken before the condition becomes serious or prolonged.

Helpful Tips

If you do feel down, anxious or distressed, you are not alone. One in four of us experience a mental health problem in any one year.



10 basic skills for gaining and maintaining emotional well-being

Set yourself achievable goals

Set yourself some goals. Make sure that your goals are specific and achievable. If they are too vague you will never know if you achieved them. If you set them too high you will end up frustrated. Too low and there will be nothing to aim for. Write down short-term, middle and long-term goals. An example of a short-term goal will concern things to do that day. A middle-term goal could be to make a change to your lifestyle... like deciding to start jogging. A long-term goal might be to learn a new skill, change your job etc.

Be good to yourself

Take notice of your achievements, however small and reward yourself. Think about what gives you pleasure and enjoy the reward. Tell others about your achievements. Giving time to activities we find rewarding increases our sense of well-being, whereas a routine made up almost entirely of things that we have to do can have the

Helpful Tips

Just as achieving physical fitness takes time, practice and commitment, so too does achieving mental fitness.

opposite effect. Doing things to put you in a good mood is sensible, not self-indulgent; so don't feel guilty about it.

Believe in yourself

Self-confidence is concerned with how we feel about our abilities. Self-esteem is slightly different as it reflects the degree to which we value ourselves. You can build up your self-confidence and self-esteem even if it has been low since childhood.

Manage your time

Good time management means setting goals and planning to tackle the most important things first. Do not waste time on low priority jobs or spend valuable time on things outside of your control. Take 5-10 minutes each morning to plan the day.

Helpful Tips

To build self-confidence and self-esteem:

- *Behave as if you're more confident than you feel*
- *Learn from your mistakes*
- *Speak encouragingly to yourself*
- *Do the best you can, but don't try to be perfect*
- *Spend time with people who make you feel good.*

Prioritise jobs in this way:

- A** = Absolutely essential
- B** = Better done today
- C** = Could wait
- D** = Delegate/ask someone else to do it

Face and solve your problems

We all have a tendency to avoid facing our problems. Avoidance is not helpful in the long run because it can make the problem worse, it can create new problems and thirdly it stops you getting on with your life and leads to more stress and tension.

Keeping things in perspective

There is always more than one way of seeing things. This means that although you may not be able to choose the facts, you may be able to choose how you react to them. You can help yourself feel better and be more effective by looking at your situation with an open mind and being realistic about what you can manage.

Learning to relax

Practicing relaxation will give you more energy, decrease anxiety and irritability and reduce pains due to tense muscles. Relaxation time should be seen as an important part of your daily routine.

Expressing your feelings

Expressing our feelings promotes a sense of well-being and freedom from tension. It helps us to recover from hurtful experiences, and also helps other people to understand what is going on inside us. Of course there are times when displays of emotion are not helpful, but hiding or holding back our feelings can cause tensions that affect our physical and mental health.

Managing your diet

The foods you eat can play an important part in the way you feel, physically and mentally. Too much sugar, coffee or salt can cause tension and irritability, and alcohol is a depressant. For general well-being the secret is a balanced diet.

Exercise

Regular exercise is good for us in many ways. It can increase our confidence and self-esteem, stimulate “feel good” chemicals in our bodies, provide an outlet for tension and frustration, relieve anxiety, help us sleep better and prevents some physical illnesses. Choose a sport or exercise you enjoy. If you have concerns about your health or fitness speak to your GP.

Learn to say NO

Learning to say ‘No’ in an assertive and tactful way is a difficult but important skill to learn. Remind yourself now and then that you have this right.



Problem solving – one step at a time

Choose a problem that is causing you concern, then:

- Write down the problem. Be specific
- Write down a list of possible solutions
- Write down the advantages and disadvantages of each solution
- Choose a solution and break it down into steps
- Tackle each step, one at a time.

If you have more than one problem, write them all down and put them in order of difficulty. Tackle the least difficult problem first.

Check your alcohol intake

People who are anxious and/or depressed may try to cope with their symptoms by drinking more alcohol. This makes things worse.

For men

Regularly drinking 4 or more units a day is a risk to your health.

For women

Regularly drinking 3 or more units a day is a risk to your health.

Helpful Tips

Speak to your GP if you think you have lost control of your alcohol intake.

As a rough guide, there's ONE unit of alcohol in:

- half a pint of ordinary strength beer, lager or cider
- one small glass of wine
- a single pub measure of spirits.

Most of us have felt low from time to time, but usually the low mood passes after a few days. Sometimes, a person sinks into depression to a point where they may need professional help to get back to normal.

Depression does not mean that you are weak or lazy. It is a common illness like high blood pressure, diabetes or arthritis. It can occur at any age. The good news is that there are things you can do to help yourself and treatments that work well.

Signs of depression

When we become depressed, we may experience:

- Loss of identify and self-esteem
- Sadness, when there is maybe nothing to feel sad about
- Extreme guilt over minor matters
- A sense of failure, when this is not realistic

Helpful Tips

Most people recover completely from depression. You should never give up. Try to live one day at a time and keep reminding yourself that you will not always feel like this.

- Loneliness, even among other people
- Tearfulness, when there is nothing to cry about
- Constant exhaustion
- Feelings of hopelessness, misery or despair
- Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

When to seek help

You may be experiencing clinical depression and should seek help if your low mood or loss of interest in life:

- *interferes with your home, family or work life*
- *lasts for two weeks or more*
- *brings you to the point of thinking about suicide.*

Talk to your GP or contact one of the mental health associations or voluntary organisation if you are concerned.

Coping with depression

- Avoid sitting or lying about doing nothing
- Identify things you used to do regularly and things which you used to enjoy
- Plan to gradually increase the routine of pleasant activities
- If a task seems too difficult, try breaking it into a series of small steps
- Above all reward yourself for your efforts
- Avoid discussions of bad feelings. Solving problems is more helpful
- If your appetite is poor, eat small quantities regularly and drink lots of fluids
- Keep to a normal sleep routine. Avoid daytime naps. At night get up if awake for 30 mins or more, and try to relax
- If you go off sex, keep some physical closeness with partner and reassure them it is not personal but a temporary symptom.

Helpful Tips

It is important to be active even when you do not feel like it. Getting going again can help you feel better.

Depressive thinking

When you are depressed there are changes in the way you think, as well as in how you feel. You tend to look on the black side of everything, see the worst in yourself, in your life and your future. Once you are feeling down, you are more likely to remember the bad things that have happened and ignore the good ones. Negative thinking can also trigger depression and it slows down recovery.

Identifying negative thinking

Negative thoughts can be difficult to spot because they become a habit, they can flash quickly into your mind and most of us are not used to noticing our thoughts. Learning to spot and catch these negative thoughts is a skill you can master with time.

Some examples of negative thinking are:

- **Thinking the worst**, e.g. your boy/girl-friend doesn't phone. You assume they don't like you anymore.
- **Ignoring the positive and only seeing the negative**, e.g. 'The shelves I put up are no good because one screw fell out.'

- **Taking things personally and blaming yourself for what others do**, e.g. 'My son failed that exam. I should have helped him more. I am a bad parent'.

You may also have beliefs that are unrealistic:

- I should be happy all the time
- If someone is hurt by something I say or do, I am a bad person
- If I show emotion, I am weak
- If I don't succeed, I am worthless.

Changing negative thinking

You can learn to think more positively with the **3 Step Approach** and this will make a huge difference in your life.

- **First**, write down your negative thoughts as soon as possible. If it's difficult to notice any thoughts, try noticing when you feel down and ask 'What went through my mind just before I started feeling sad'.

- **Second**, ask yourself ‘Is what I believe TRUE?’
 Ask yourself if everyone would have the same belief
 Think of other possible explanations for the event
 Try a real-life experiment. For example, if your friend doesn’t phone, call him or her to ask why.
- **Third**, balance each unreasonable thought with a more realistic one.
 These should be different to the unreasonable belief
 Try to make them realistic statements
 Try to make as many alternatives as possible.

If you are worried about feelings getting out of control keep track of your feelings, thoughts and behaviour on a “mood chart”. This will help you notice anxious or negative thought patterns as soon as they begin, so you can start using your self-help strategies.

Make a list of specific feelings, thoughts and behaviour that sometimes apply to you. Only you will know what to put in these lists, but here are some examples:

Feelings I am aware of:

- Sad
- Lonely

Thoughts that bother me:

- Nobody likes me
- I can’t cope

Negative behaviour:

- I’m trying to do too much at once
- I’m avoiding people

Positive checklist:

- I am coping with life
- I am in control of my thoughts and feelings

Give each of your feelings, thoughts and behaviour a “rating” from 0 to 5.

0 = have not noticed any problems;

5 = things could hardly be any worse.

For an example of a mood chart see next page.

Mood chart

| | M | T | W | T | F | S | S |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Feelings I am aware of: | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Thoughts that bother me: | | | | | | | |
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| Negative behaviour: | | | | | | | |
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| Positive checklist: | | | | | | | |
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It is normal to feel anxious if you are facing something dangerous or difficult, but it is not usual to feel anxious all the time or to feel that anxiety is ruling your life. Severe anxiety is like a “false alarm” – the body over-reacting to something that is not really dangerous. The most noticeable physical signs are nausea, light headedness, sweating, a racing heart, palpitations and rapid breathing.

People often react to severe anxiety by *avoiding* the situation that makes them feel bad. However this is not helpful in the long run, because the more you avoid something, the more difficult it will seem to you. It also limits what you can do and does not give you the chance to discover that the situation was not really dangerous after all. Try making a plan to help you face your feared situation, with the least frightening event to be tackled first.

When people are under stress, there is also a tendency to worry more than usual. Worry and unrealistic or negative thinking can be triggers for anxiety. People who get anxious sometimes think in ways that bring on the anxiety or make it worse. You may also have beliefs about yourself and about other people that are unrealistic. Anxious people often imagine that other people are judging them harshly.

Coping with anxiety

- Learn to relax and do relaxing things
- Reduce caffeine and avoid using alcohol
- Regular physical exercise will help
- Make a plan to solve problems and take action
- Change the way you think.

Remember you can learn to think more realistically and this will make a huge difference in your life. Use the 3 Step Approach (see Managing Depression).

Worry and negative thinking is a habit and it takes time to change.

Helpful Tips

Taking action may make you feel more anxious at first. Just keep going at your own pace, and remember how much better you feel when you are able to take control and lead a fuller life.

When to seek help

If your anxiety is severe it is important to seek help. Talking therapies can help you feel more positive and in control. Prescribed drug treatment can provide short-term help.

Ask your GP for advice or contact one of the organisations listed at the back of the book.

Relaxation exercise

- Choose a quiet place where you will not be interrupted
- Before you start, do a few gentle stretching exercises to relieve muscular tension
- Make yourself comfortable, whether sitting or lying down
- Start to breath slowly and deeply, in a calm, effortless way
- Gently tense, then relax, each part of your body, starting with your feet and working your way up to your face and head
- As you focus on each area, think of warmth, heaviness and relaxation

- Push any distracting thoughts to the back of your mind; imagine them floating away
- Don't try to relax; simply let go of the tension in your muscles and allow them to become relaxed
- Let your mind go empty. Some people find it helpful to visualise a calm, beautiful place like a garden or meadow.

Stay like this for about 20 minutes. Then take some deep breaths and open your eyes, but stay sitting or lying for a few moments before you get up.

Slow breathing to reduce anxiety

Anxiety can make you feel breathless. The natural response to this is to breathe in more or to “over breathe”. However, this makes the problem worse. The best solution is to slow down your breathing which will stop the unpleasant feelings of anxiety.

Remember to breathe in using your abdomen (not your chest). This is sometimes called stomach breathing, because the abdomen should gently rise and fall rather than your upper chest.

- Breathe in slowly through your nose to the count of 3 seconds
- Then slowly breathe out to the count of 3 seconds
- Pause for 3 seconds before breathing in again
- Continue this exercise for 5 minutes or so.
- Practice twice a day for 10 minutes (5 minutes is better than nothing)
- Try to check and slow down your breathing during the day
- Use the slow breathing technique whenever you get anxious.

Helpful Tips

Remember the technique of slow breathing sounds very simple, will take practice to master but is very effective.



Panic attacks

Panic attacks are very frightening because they seem to come out of the blue. Most people describe a sudden, overwhelming sense of anxiety, including:

- Feelings of absolute terror
- Very rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Dizziness or faintness
- Sweating and hot or cold flushes
- Feelings of unreality.

Coping with a panic attack

- Slow your breathing
- Stay where you are
- Remind yourself that you are safe and that the feeling will pass
- Try to distract yourself by looking hard at something nearby
- Face the situation again later.

Helpful Tips

The important thing to remember is that feelings of panic will never cause you any harm. Your body is simply gearing itself up for a non-existent danger.

Anger

Anger needs to be expressed, because if it gets bottled up inside it can cause harm or boil over into rage. You are 6 times more likely to suffer from heart disease if you are persistently angry. Anger has to be expressed calmly not aggressively. Remember that losing your temper is never a good solution. It may provide temporary relief, but later on you will feel bad, which can lead to more anger.

First aid for anger

- Breathe slowly and deeply
- Slow down. Don't rush into words or actions you may regret
- Count to 10
- Walk away if possible
- Do something physical like a vigorous walk or housework
- Take some exercise such as running, walking, cycling or swimming – but not a competitive sport as this can increase feelings of aggression.

Helpful Tips

If you want to deal with your anger STOP blaming others and START to change yourself.

How to tackle deeper, long-term feelings of anger

- Talk to someone about the way you feel
- Ask your GP for help in tackling your feelings
- If it is yourself you are angry with, think whether you are blaming yourself unfairly
- Try to think about the bigger picture
- Express your feelings in writing or painting
- Practice techniques to make yourself more relaxed and stress-free
- Don't take things personally
- Recognise your own early warning signs.

If you are experiencing mental distress there are many treatments available to help.

Medical treatment

Sometimes when a person's distress is acute, their GP may prescribe medication. Some people dislike the idea of taking medication, believing they should be able to manage without, but there are times when it is the best solution. Taking medication on its own is beneficial but it can also help you help yourself through other treatments. Some medication may have side effects – usually minor but it is very important to not stop taking medication without consulting your doctor.

Talking treatment

You may choose to see a therapist, counsellor, nurse or other mental health worker to discuss your problems. Usually this is available through the NHS via a referral from your GP if the problems are severe. Therapy is also available privately and some non-statutory agencies provide free or low cost counselling.

There may also be NHS services available in your area which you can access through self-referral such as psycho-educational groups.

If you are working and your employer has an occupational health department they may provide counselling, especially if your problems are centred around work.

Steps you make want to take in managing your problems are as follows:

Self Help

There is a lot you can do to help yourself. Take a look at the suggested reading list at the back of this book. You can also be helped by support from family, friends, teachers, or work colleagues. However, there may come a time when you feel you might benefit from additional help. Help can be found via your local authority, and private voluntary organisations. The agencies listed in this book are there to help you.

Helpful Tips

For more self-help options see the recommended reading list and the list of useful organisations at the back of this book.



GP surgery

There are many sources of help to be found via your surgery. A GP is many people's first point of contact when seeking help. A sizeable proportion of most GPs' work is related to emotional problems. GPs can:

- talk through your problems with you
- prescribe short-term medication such as anti-depressants and tablets to reduce anxiety
- refer you to a mental health worker at your surgery
- refer you to specialist mental health services
- talk with you about other sources of help in your community.

Your Practice Nurse, Health Visitor or District Nurse may also be able to help you manage your mental health difficulties and discuss options available in your surgery and community.

Further help in your surgery

Mental Health Worker

These are mental health staff who are part of the Primary Care Mental Health Service and are based in GP surgeries rather than hospitals. They are qualified mental health practitioners.



They are very experienced at assessing emotional distress and giving advice on ways of managing your problems. They can also talk with you about other life stresses e.g. related to your job, occupation, housing or benefits. They will be able to direct you to appropriate services.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Counselling & Psychology

The mental health worker may also recommend group or one to one psycho-education or psychological therapy which are also provided by the Primary Care Mental Health Service. These include cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT),

counselling or therapy with a primary care psychologist. CBT looks at the ways our thoughts shape the way we feel and behave. It has a proven record of success in helping people manage a range of mental health problems. It helps you examine your beliefs about yourself and to view your situation differently. Building up your coping skills can improve your mood and enable you to face feared situations.

Counselling

Counselling can provide a supportive and non judgemental atmosphere for you to talk over your problems and explore a more satisfactory way of living. It is often helpful in dealing with depression.

Primary Care Psychology

Sessions with a psychologist can help you explore your difficulties and make some choices. The psychologist may help you examine in detail the issues which are troublesome and to find an area where it would be possible to start making some positive changes.

Try the different exercises in this booklet.

Specialist mental health services

Sometimes when problems become severe or people are at risk your GP will talk to you about referral to your specialist mental health service. This is a team of mental health staff including a Psychiatrist, Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPN), Clinical Psychologist, Social Worker, and other support staff. They are skilled and experienced in managing complex problems in a professional, confidential and sensitive manner.

There are some mental health problems that require early access to specialist services, these include psychosis, dementia, and some eating disorders. If you are at all concerned that this may apply to you make an appointment to discuss with your GP.

If someone close to you is experiencing emotional problems, encourage them to talk about their feelings and, if necessary, get advice from their GP.

You can help by listening. Be reassuring and encouraging, but try not to tell them how they should feel or what they should do. Show appreciation, small successes should be recognised and celebrated. Anything that may help the person feel more light-hearted and forget their problems for a while is beneficial. Practical help may be needed short term with everyday tasks. You may need to stand up for the person's rights about anything that concerns them.

It can be very upsetting when a friend or relative is distressed, and you may well find yourself in a caring role that you did not choose. If so, you will need support in coping with your own feelings. Ask friends and relatives for help. Outside support may also be helpful. Remember your emotional well-being is important too!

Overcoming Depression by Paul Gilbert Robinson, 2000.

A self help guide.

Understanding Stress by Professor Greg Wilkinson.

Family Doctor Series in association with BMA, available from Lloyds Chemists, Boots and some Tesco stores.

Managing Anxiety and Depression: A Self Help Guide by N Holdsworth and R Paxton. Mental Health Foundation 1999.**Overcoming Anger and Irritability** by William Davies.

Basic Books, 2000. A self help guide.

Overcoming Anxiety by Helen Kennerly. Robinson, 1997.**Postnatal Depression: Facing the Paradox of Loss, Happiness and Motherhood** by Dr Paula Nicolson. Wiley, 2001.**The Feeling Good Handbook: Using The New Mood Therapy in Everyday Life** by David Burns. Plume Book, 1990.**Age UK**

www.ageuk.org.uk

01452 422 660

Alcoholics Anonymous

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

0845 769 7555

Alzheimer's Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk

0300 222 1122

Anxiety UK

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

08444 775 774

Beating Eating Disorders

www.b-eat.co.uk

0845 634 1414

Bipolar UK

www.bipolaruk.org.uk

020 7931 6480

British Association for Behavioural & Cognitive Psychotherapies

www.babcp.com

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

www.bacp.co.uk

01455 883300

British Psychological Society

www.bps.org.uk

0116 2549 568

CALM

www.thecalmzone.net

Child Death Help Line

www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

0808 800 6019

Useful Organisations

Childline

www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk 0844 4111 303

Cruse Bereavement Services

www.cruse.org.uk 0844 477 9400

Depression Alliance

www.depressionalliance.org 0845 123 2320

Domestic Violence Advice Line

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk 0808 2000 247

Drug & Alcohol Services

www.worcestershire.gov.uk Search drug and alcohol services

Family Lives

www.familylives.org.uk 0808 800 2222

Gamblers Anonymous

www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Healthy Lifestyles Hub

01905 363 909

Miscarriage Association

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk 01924 200 799

Mental Health Foundation

www.mentalhealth.org.uk 08457 90 90 90

Useful Organisations

Money Advice Service

www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk 0300 500 5000

MIND

www.mind.org.uk 0300 123 3393

Narcotics Anonymous

www.ukna.org 0300 999 1212

National Drugs Advice Frank

www.talktofrank.com 0800 77 66 00

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

No Panic

www.nopanic.org.uk 0800 138 8889

OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) UK

www.ocduk.org 0845 120 3778

OCD Action

www.ocdaction.org.uk 0845 390 6232

Pre and Postnatal Depression Advice and Support PANDAS

www.pandasfoundation.org.uk 0843 28 98 401

Prevention of young suicide PAPYRUS

www.papyrus-uk.org 0800 068 4141

Relate

www.relate-worcestershire.org 01905 280 51

Rethink Mental Illness

www.rethink.org 0300 5000 927

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org.uk 08457 90 90 90

Sane

www.sane.org.uk 0845 767 8000

UK Council for Psychotherapy

www.psychotherapy.org.uk

Worcestershire Association of Carers

www.carersworcs.org.uk 01905 751 340

Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic and Social Abuse

www.worcestershiredomesticandsexualabuse.co.uk
0800 980 3331

Worcestershire Young Carers

www.yss.org.uk/young-carers 01299 252 320

Worcestershire Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre

www.wrsasc.org.uk 01905 724 514

YMCA Worcester

www.ymca.org.uk 01905 423 197

Young Minds

www.youngminds.org.uk Parent helpline 0808 802 5544

There are a variety of mental health organisations in Worcestershire. To find out more about groups and services near you and more about positive mental health, go to your local online directory.

Redditch & Bromsgrove

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Search **well-being** for local services.

South Worcestershire

www.southworcsccg.nhs.uk

Search **mental health directory** for local services.

Wyre Forest

www.wyreforestccg.nhs.uk

Search **mental health directory** for local services.

Worcestershire County Council

Download this book and more information about mental health at www.worcestershire.gov.uk and search **health and well-being**.

For a list of recommended books about mental health go to www.worcestershire.gov.uk and search **books on prescription**.

Disclaimer:

In producing this booklet Worcestershire County Council has made every effort to provide advice based on up to date evidence for what is effective. It is, however, not intended as a substitute for thorough medical assessment and clinical intervention. If you are concerned about your mental health consult your GP.

Acknowledgements

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Five ways to well-being

1

Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Be active Step outside. Go for a walk or run. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

2

3

Take notice Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



Keep learning Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.

4

5

Give Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.



The Little Book of Mental Health

Whether you sometimes experience difficulties yourself or are supporting someone else who struggles with anxiety or depression, this booklet is for you. It gives you useful tips on managing these problems and advice about when and where to seek help. Importantly, it looks at things we can all do avoid mental distress and improve our everyday emotional well-being.



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