

A healthy mind

The World Health Organisation has declared stress as the 21st century health epidemic. The problem of always being “switched on” in relation to mobile phone and internet use is a major problem. This can affect stress and sleep levels as well as impacting on relationships. Despite the population in the UK and USA becoming wealthier as nations (most people now have a TV and mobile phone) we have become less happy and more stressed. This impacts on health and our overall wellbeing.

In 2012, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared 20th March as International Day of Happiness recognising the relevance of happiness and wellbeing as universal goals and aspiration in the lives of human beings around the world and the importance of their recognition in public health policy.

Sometimes people can feel embarrassed about having low mood, anxiety or other mental health problems, but these are just as important as physical illness.

There are many different approaches to improving your mental health.

If you have thoughts of hurting yourself or your mental health is getting worse, please book in to see the GP.

1 Audioguides

<https://www.activenorthtyneside.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

There are audioguides available for anxiety, low mood, unhelpful thinking, low confidence and assertiveness.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/>

2 Leaflets

There are some excellent information booklets which help to explain why you may be feeling the way that you do.

<https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>

www.getselfhelp.co.uk

3 Talking therapy and computer based work

Some people prefer to talk to someone on the phone or face to face (**Talking Therapies**). Patients can now self refer for this by phoning 0191 295 2775.

This service also offers free access, through an activation code, to the computerised self-help treatment programmes "Beating the Blues" to manage low mood and "Fear Fighter" for anxiety symptoms with the addition of planned, regular telephone support from a CBT coach.

Living life to the full is a computerised user-friendly training package based on the cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) model that aims to alter unhelpful thinking and actions that commonly occur during times of stress. You can sign up FREE here : <https://littf.com/>

Anxious minds – this is a local organisation who can also offer counselling and other therapy for people with various mental health problems, particularly anxiety and depression.

www.anxiousminds.co.uk

There are a number of organisations who can help with a variety of mental health needs which are listed on the Healthwatch North Tyneside leaflet.

<https://healthwatchnorthtyneside.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MH-leaflet-Aug-2018-web.pdf>

4 Meditation and mindfulness

It can be easy to rush through life without stopping to notice much.

Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can improve your mental wellbeing.

This awareness can be called “mindfulness” and can help us to enjoy life more, and can help relieve stress, anxiety and depression. It is explained more in the link below:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>

As well as trying to be more “aware” during your day to day activities, it can be useful to put aside some time regularly to sit silently and pay attention to thoughts, sounds and sensations of breathing or in parts of the body, bringing the attention back whenever the mind starts to wander (mindfulness meditation). Even a few minutes each day have been shown to improve mental health and overall wellbeing.

There are a number of meditations that are available:

Oxford Mindfulness Meditation – derived from the book “Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World” which is available to borrow from several of the North Tyneside libraries including Killingworth, and is highly recommended. Work through these in order, trying to do each one several times (over several days, ideally one per day) then move to the next phase.

Oxford Mindfulness Meditation: Breathing anchor (8 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUeEnkiKyDs>

Oxford Mindfulness Meditation: Body scan (14 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyKhfUdOEgs>

Oxford Mindfulness Meditation: Sounds and thoughts (8 minutes)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFeTTgl_wAI

Oxford Mindfulness Medication : Exploring Difficulty (10 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIEFKxGNPHk>

Oxford Mindfulness Medication: Befriending (9 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLt-E4YNVHU>

Oxford Mindfulness Meditation: 3 minute breathing space (3 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOne1P0TKL8>

Mindfulness for health – this gives some free meditations and is based on a book called Mindfulness for Health by Dr Danny Penman.

<https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/mindfulness-for-health>

Headspace

This is a free website/app which explains meditation and there are some free meditations to try.

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

Visualisation

Some people find looking and listening to nature can be helpful. This is best done outside but if that is not possible, a recording can be used such as the one below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZYbU82GVz4>

5 Loneliness, social contact and activity

Sometimes trying a new activity on your own or in a group can really help improve mental health. There is a wide range of activities available in our area through “social prescribing.” This is available for people of any age with a mental health need or those over 50. You can contact them on 0191 280 8484 and they will talk to you about the options available.

6 Technology

Phones and other technology equipment (computers/tablets) can be useful but can also affect mood. We tend to compare ourselves with people on social media, and can sometimes scroll through things on our phones and lose big chunks of time. It can be useful to check how much time you are spending on your phone so that you can check that this is not affecting your wellbeing.

Moment is a free app which you can download onto your phone from the app store, and tells you how much time you have spent on the phone.

7 Young people

The Foundation for Positive Mental Health A self-help programme for stress, depression, and anxiety which works on building confidence, coping and wellbeing. **It** includes 2 free tracks designed to help you enter a deep state of relaxation

<http://www.foundationforpositivementalhealth.com/>

<http://www.foundationforpositivementalhealth.com/listen-now/audio-tracks/>

Young minds: for children and young people and parents-information and resources about mental health and emotional wellbeing www.youngminds.org.uk

Parent helpline: 0808 802 5544

Kooth provides great online and phone counselling for young people <https://kooth.com>

Papyrus-Uk are an organisation dedicated to **preventing suicide of young people.**

Call: 0800 068 4141 Text: 07786 209697

www.papyrus-uk.org

Streetwise (Newcastle): advice & support service for young people aged 13-25 years including anxiety & depression, bullying, feeling bad about yourself, stress, relationship difficulties, loss of someone close to you, sexuality issues, parental divorce or separation, any traumatic experience or

anything else that is worrying you. They provide counselling either face to face, via instant messaging, email or Skype.

<http://www.streetwisenorth.org.uk> Tel 01912305533

Family Lives: for parents – information, advice and support on different issues you might face when parenting children including drugs/alcohol, relationships, behaviour and bullying

<http://www.familylives.org.uk>

Helpline 0808 800 2222

ChildLine: a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19, including people who are being bullied.

<http://www.childline.org.uk>

Call free on 08001111

School nurse

If you are aged 11-19 you can text your school nurse for confidential advice and support on 07507 332532. They can help you with a wide range of issues including relationships, bullying, mental health, alcohol, drugs, sex, healthy eating, smoking and self harm.

Students may find this site helpful - it explores topics such as anxiety, depression and suicidal thinking.

<http://studentsagainstdepression.org>

