

Wellbeing and mental health:

A guide to
looking after
yourself
and others



Contents

- 4** Looking after your wellbeing
- 6** Lessons from the pandemic
- 7** Sleeping well
- 8** Working from home
- 9** Struggling to cope
- 10** Depression and low mood
- 11** Anxiety and panic
- 12** Manage your Stress Bucket
- 13** Self-harm
- 14** Dealing with uncertainty
- 15** What to do in a crisis
- 16** Thoughts of suicide
- 17** Pull-out wellbeing Plan
- 20** Lifting your mood
- 21** Money and employment worries
- 22** Alcohol and drugs
- 23** Bereavement
- 24** Look out for others
- 26** Spot the signs
- 27** Listening tips
- 28** Thoughts of suicide
- 29** Getting help
- 30** Supporting children and young people
- 32** Resources for children and young people
- 34** Useful apps
- 35** Places 2 Talk



Throughout the book you'll see QR codes which will take you to more in depth information. Open the camera on your phone, point it at the QR code and tap on the website link that appears.

SCAN HERE



We all have mental health

But think about the last twenty four hours – it's easy to list things that we have done for our physical health – exercised, slept, eaten, cleaned our teeth, been to our GP – but what have you done in the last 24 hours to look after your emotional wellbeing or mental health?

This booklet explores what we all can do to promote positive mental health and draws on many of the lessons we have learnt during the Coronavirus pandemic. There are simple things we can all incorporate into our lives that underpin our emotional wellbeing and make us more resilient to the challenges that life throws at us. This booklet also explores what to do when we start to struggle with our mental health, when it starts to impact on our day-to-day living. There is a lot of advice, support and services out there.

Finally, there is guidance on how to help others. You don't need to be a trained professional to support someone who is struggling with their mental health. Checking in on those around us, being helpfully nosy and showing compassion can go a very long way in helping people move through difficult feelings.



111

111

HOW ARE YOU?



We'd love to hear if this booklet has been useful for you. Follow the link below to leave us feedback or to order more copies of the booklet. Thank you.

qrco.de/purplebooklet



5 Ways of wellbeing

The 5 ways of wellbeing are the blueprint for looking after our mental health and include a range of activities to help you stay emotionally healthy.

1 Stay connected

People Matter when it comes to our mental health. Having good relationships, with friends, family and our community, help us feel valued, make us feel happier and create a sense of belonging. Having strong bonds with others provides an opportunity to share our feelings and know that we are understood.

Ways to stay connected:

- Speak to a friend, chat about anything, just talk
- Make time for family, play a board game together
- Have lunch with a colleague at work



2 Get active

What we do with our bodies can have a powerful effect on our mental wellbeing, so it's important we view our mind and body as one. Getting active doesn't need to mean high intensity, simply going for a daily walk, or even 10mins of yoga, can help us feel good. Remember your activity should bring you enjoyment and not feel like a chore.



For more tips on finding the right physical activity for you, visit [nhs.uk/live-well](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well)



3

Take notice

Life can sometimes whizz past us, so stopping to take notice can help us to reframe our thoughts and gives us breathing space to appreciate where we are, both mentally and physically. Taking notice of what we have achieved, the challenges we've faced and even just stopping to appreciate the world around us, all helps us enjoy life and understand ourselves better.

4

Give to others

Giving isn't about material objects, it's about the time we can offer to help support other people, helping others makes us feel happy and more satisfied with life. Small acts of kindness towards others, volunteering our time to a local charity or even checking in with a friend who is having a tough time, can all boost our self worth whilst supporting people around us.



Keep learning

Learning can take place anywhere and continuing to learn throughout our life can build our resilience.

5

- Learn to cook a favourite meal for you or your family/friends
- Revisit an old hobby or interest that challenges you
- Take on new responsibilities at work
- Watch tutorial videos online and learn a new skill
- Visit a museum or research about a favourite celebrity
- Sign up to an online course or seminar

Lessons from the pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has taught us a lot about how to remain resilient in the face of life's challenges, and how to look after our wellbeing and mental health. We have compiled some of the key themes that emerged during 2020/21, themes you will see recurring across this booklet.

Get outside

Research has shown us that walking and time in nature were the two things that most helped the nation cope with the stresses of the pandemic in 2020. So wrap up warm and get outside!

Know where to get help

Whether its anxiety or stress, money problems or employment issues. Knowing where you can get help when you need it, and reaching out early can really help us get through.

Be kind to others

Find ways to help others. Simply checking on a friend can make a huge difference to their day. It will boost their mood, and yours too.

Be nice to yourselves

Lots of us struggle to treat ourselves kindly. In fact, we're often nicer to others than we are to ourselves. Show yourself compassion when things aren't going well, treat yourself, do the things you enjoy.

Get moving

Moving more is good for your mind and body. Find an activity that you enjoy, and make it part of your daily routine.

Get a good night's sleep

4 in 10 of us has experienced worse sleep during the pandemic due to stress and anxiety. Learning simple ways to improve quality of sleep can really improve your mood.

Look out for burnout

Many of us are working harder than ever, many of us still from home, and it can be hard to switch off. Keep an eye on how your job is starting to impact on your mental health and makes changes where you need.

Learn new things

Whatever you choose, learning new things can give your mental health a boost with a sense of achievement.

Help is still out there

It may look different but the NHS and our network of charity and community groups are still open for business, taking referrals, providing support – and there for you.



Sleeping well

Finding it hard to get to sleep or waking up in the night are common issues and many people found this happening more during the coronavirus pandemic. Here are some tips that may help.

Try to keep to a daily routine

Having regular sleep patterns, going to bed and getting up at around the same time, can really help.

Careful what you consume

Avoid too much caffeine or alcohol during the daytime. Avoid big meals 3 hours before going to bed, and try to avoid watching the news and using screens half an hour before going to bed.

Keep it dark

We are physically wired to sleep in certain conditions. Keep your room dark and cool and free from ambient light such as alarm clocks. Try to keep your mobile out of your room or at least have it turned to silent or night mode.

Manage your worries

Try to talk about your worries to someone you trust during the day, if they are on your mind as you go to bed - write a 'to do list' or have your own version of worry dolls. Try to unwind and relax before bed with gentle stretches, reading a book or mindfulness.

Get Outdoors

Fresh air, regular exercise and being physically tired helps promote good sleep. Strenuous exercise within 2 hours before bedtime however can make it harder to fall asleep.

Don't lie there stewing

If you're lying awake unable to sleep, do not try to force it. Sleep may come naturally but if it hasn't after 30 minutes or so, get up and do something relaxing for a bit, like reading a book or listening to quiet music, and go back to bed when you feel sleepier. And repeat if necessary.



**NHS Live well -
How to get to sleep**
tinyurl.com/1ah75gee



**Mind - How to
improve your sleep**
tinyurl.com/13s9goc0



**Pzizz App - Fall asleep
fast and stay asleep**
pzizz.com

Work well from home

For many of us home working is now the standard. Here's a few simple ways that you can focus on improving your wellbeing whilst still remaining productive;



Get Work Ready

Shift your mindset. Set a designated space in your house to work from. Ditch the hoodie, think about dressing as if you are leaving for work!

Set Schedules and Goals

Set yourself some simple goals for the day and break your work down into bite sized portions. Schedule regular breaks and leave your workspace.

Be flexible

It can be hard to focus at home, so ask your employer for some flexibility around your hours. Adapt your working day to the way your home runs. Spend time with the kids and work in the evening.

Get Fresh Air

Make sure you get time to leave the house, even if it's your garden, or leaning out a window. Go for a walk, run or ride if you can.

Connect with Colleagues

Workmates are a big part of our life. Connect through virtual meetings, Skype or a phone call. Keep the conversations and banter going.

Circle of Support

If you are struggling to cope, reach out to you colleagues, or too any support schemes your workplace or union offers. Check in with your workmates and look out for each other.

Give yourself some slack. Adapting to home based working takes time. Be patient, and be kind to yourself.



NHS Every Mind Matters – Working from Home

qrco.de/bcaF2j



Mind – Coronavirus and Work

mind.org.uk/workplace/coronavirus-and-work/



Struggling to cope?

It's important to recognise that sometimes we may need to seek extra support. We might be feeling overwhelmed, burnt out through prolonged stress, or struggling to manage our mood or the impact of life events.

Help can come in many forms and you might want to consider;

- **Share your feelings** with a good friend, a relative or a work mate.
- If it feels hard to find the words, **speak to someone who is trained to listen**, like the Samaritans on 116 123, or other helplines listed at the end of this booklet. You can talk to them about whatever's getting to you, in your own way.
- **Contact your GP**. Be open about how you are feeling, plan what you want to say and if it helps get someone to accompany you. Your GP can refer you to a range of support.
- You can refer yourself to the **NHS First Step service**, which is for anyone experiencing depression or low mood, anxiety and panic, OCD, health anxiety, PTSD, postnatal depression, anger issues and more. See below.
- Check out our **Support directory** to find out about a range of local and national support, services and information.

If you feel you can't keep yourself safe any longer, or if you have done something to harm yourself - call 999 now. The number is free.



It's OK to ask for more support to get you through a difficult time. There is help available and there is hope



Find out more about coping with thoughts of suicide



First Step - North and West Cumbria
cntw.nhs.uk/services/first-step/



First Step - South Cumbria
lscft.nhs.uk/first-step



Every Life Matters - Support Directory
every-life-matters.org.uk/get-help/

Depression and low mood

We all have times when our mood is low and we are feeling sad, down or miserable about life. These feelings usually pass. However, if your low mood is interfering with your life and the feelings don't go away after a couple of weeks, or if they come keep coming back, it could be a sign that you're experiencing depression.

Depression is low mood that lasts for a long time, and affects your day to day life. At one end of the spectrum, depression can mean just being in low spirits. It doesn't stop you leading your normal life but makes everything harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe, depression can be life-threatening because it can make you feel suicidal.

When it becomes difficult to manage a period of low mood and we notice that it's impacting on our daily life it is important that we seek help and support.



NHS Self-help guides for depression, low mood, anxiety and panic



web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/

Mind guides. Find out more about depression, low mood, anxiety and panic



Depression
qrco.de/bcatJh



Anxiety and Panic
Attacks qrco.de/bcatX4

Anxiety and panic

We all feel anxious at times, in fact a little anxiety is good for us and helps us to keep motivated. The negative effects of anxiety will often pass quite quickly when a situation has ended.

Anxiety can cause us to feel heightened levels of worry or fear and those feelings might be very mild, however they can also become more severe. We might start to avoid things in life which are relatively harmless because we feel it might increase our anxiety and so it can become a problem. It might become more severe or intense, causing issues in our everyday lives and relationships.

We might start to avoid things in life which are relatively harmless because we feel it might increase our anxiety and so it can become a problem. It might become more severe or intense, causing issues in our everyday lives and relationships.



The NHS First Step service, which is for anyone experiencing depression, low mood, anxiety and panic.



First Step – North and West Cumbria
cntw.nhs.uk/services/first-step/



First Step – South Cumbria
lscft.nhs.uk/first-step

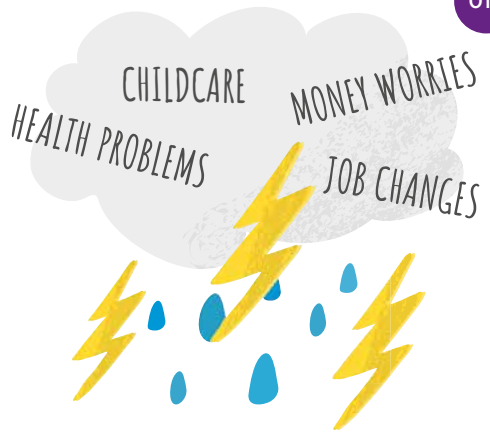
Manage your Stress Bucket

Stress is a part of everyday life. It can help us take action and work productively. But if our Stress Bucket becomes full it can also overwhelm us and impact negatively on our mental health.

Everyday stressors including work, money and family flow into that Stress Bucket like rain. But we also have ways of coping that allow this stress to flow out, like holes in the bucket.



Challenge - draw your own stress bucket.
What are some of the 'rain clouds' but also what are 'our holes'?



- Too much stress - especially when we start to feel out of control - can really affect our mood, health and relationships. It can make us feel anxious, irritable, and affect our self-esteem.
- Experiencing too much stress over a long period of time can also lead to burnout - a feeling of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.

Scan the QR codes below to learn more about stress and what you can do to manage it.



**NHS Self-help
Guide to Stress**
web.nth.nhs.uk/selfhelp/



**Feeling Stressed? -
NHS Every Mind Matters**
tinyurl.com/1nh7qf22

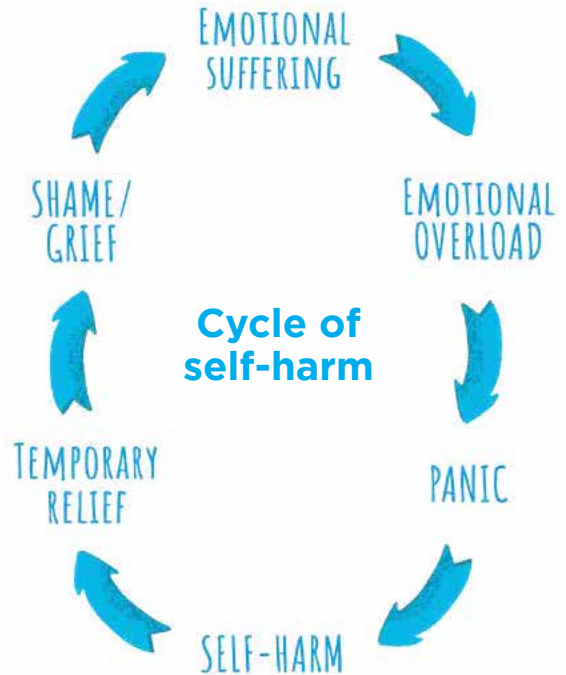
Self-harm

Self-harm is when you hurt yourself on purpose. Examples include cutting, burning, poisoning and bruising, but other forms might be more indirect such as self-neglect, excessive risk taking, alcohol and substance misuse or eating distress.

There are many reasons why someone may self-harm and it can affect anyone of any age. It is often used as a way of coping with other problems or the stresses of life in general, but it can relate to underlying issues with your mental health.

Self-harm is not a positive way to deal with things but it can be difficult to stop, especially when someone feels distressed or upset. It may be a temporary relief from emotional overload. If they don't feel they can stop right now, that's OK, but try to ensure they keep themselves safe

Many people stop hurting themselves when the time is right, but we can look to break the cycle of self-harm now. Alongside seeking professional support we can also use common self-help techniques such as distractions – combatting the urge to self-harm, which is strongest for 15 minutes. Finding a way to distract yourself during this time can make all the difference.



Every Life Matters – Self-harm info and support

every-life-matters.org.uk/self-harm



LifeSIGNS – Self-injury guidance and support

lifesigns.org.uk



Dealing with uncertainty

We've all faced change and uncertainty during the coronavirus outbreak, and that looks set to continue for a while longer. It's not a state we usually have to deal with in such large measures but there are some practical steps to help us.

Focus on the short term

The further we look into the future, the easier it is to get overwhelmed by uncertainty. Instead, focus on the day-to-day, and think about what's in your power to do right now. Break down your days, and weeks, into manageable and achievable tasks. This can help us feel more in control.

Acknowledge what's working

Even when everything feels turned upside down there will be some things, however small, that are still working for us. Take notice of the constants that remain in your life like a relationship, a skill or a work task.

Recognise your achievements

Take some time to list some of your accomplishments or successes over the last 2 years - no matter how big or small. We have all had to adapt, learn new skills and ways of coping.

Reframe your thoughts

In difficult times like this, it can be easy to get caught up in negative thoughts, feelings and actions. This is an understandable response. Maybe you're disappointed about what was "supposed" to happen this year or scared of what the future may hold. It can be helpful to step back, examine the evidence for your thoughts and explore other ways of looking at the situation.

Get practical advice

Talk to people you trust and get support if you need it. There is lots of help out there. Knowing where you can get help when you need it, and reaching out early can really help us get through. If you are worried about money, debt, housing or employment issues there are lots of organisations that can help you understand your rights and find solutions.



**NHS Every Life Matters -
Dealing with change
and uncertainty**
qrco.de/bcaFW1



What to do in a crisis

A mental health crisis is when we feel out of control, overwhelmed by our thoughts and feelings – even to the point of thinking about suicide. If we do reach crisis point, or feel like we are having a break down then it's important to reach out for professional help. There is hope and you are not alone.

If you, or someone you know, is having a mental health crisis then you can;

- Call the local **NHS Universal Mental Health Crisis Lines** listed below. These are open 24 hrs a day/7 days a week and are for all ages.
- Make an emergency appointment with your **GP Practice** or call **NHS 111**
- Contact **MindLine Cumbria** on 0300 561 0000 text Mind to 81066. Information, guidance and support. Midday-11pm Mon-Fri. 5-11pm Weekends or contact one of the other helplines listed at the end of this booklet.



North Cumbria NHS Universal Mental Health Crisis Line **0800 652 2865**
 South Cumbria NHS Urgent Mental Health Support Line **0800 953 0110**



Mind - Getting help in a crisis
qrco.de/bcaJo9



Thoughts of suicide

Thoughts of suicide are a common response to challenging life events – a lot of people will have them – around one in five of us during our lifetime. Having these thoughts doesn't make it inevitable that you are going to take your own life and they will pass.

If you are having thoughts of suicide focus on what you need to do to keep yourself safe for now. As well as seeking professional help visit our website and learn more about what practical steps you can take to keep yourself safe and get help. This can include:

- Finding ways to distract yourself that allow the feelings to pass
- Calling a helpline or someone you can trust
- Avoiding using alcohol and drugs
- Removing things from your house that you could use to harm yourself
- If you can, going somewhere you feel safe
- Knowing who you can contact if you need professional support – this might be your key worker, your GP, NHS 111 or others
- Making a Hopebox – a list, or photos, or objects that remind you of why you want to live.

If you feel you can no longer keep yourself safe, that the thoughts of suicide are becoming overwhelming, or if you have already done something to harm yourself – call 999 right now.

Thoughts of suicide do pass and there are things that you and other people can do to make your situation better. There is hope.



Find out more about coping with thoughts of suicide



Every Life Matters – Thoughts of suicide?
every-life-matters.org.uk/thinking-about-suicide/



Samaritans – How we can help
samaritans.org/how-we-can-help

Jar of gratitude

Think about all the things you are grateful for in life, and everyday add them to your jar of gratitude.

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.



You can also fill your jar with things to look forward to and reminders of future plans that make you feel hopeful.

Wellbeing plan

Keep this as a private journal or pull out and pop it somewhere to remind you daily.

My daily check in:

How am I feeling today?

What am I grateful for right now?

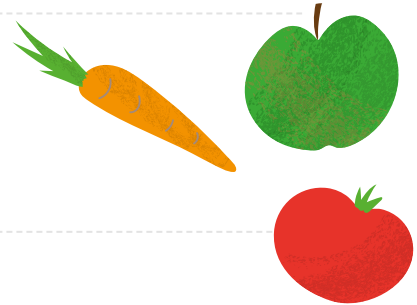
Who do I want to keep in contact with?

(Friends, colleagues, family, neighbours)



How will I stay healthy and active?

(Exercise, diet and sleep)



How will I know when to use my wellbeing plan?

(Feeling snappy, sleep issues, feeling low, eating more/less, drinking more)

What new things would I like learn and how will I keep my mind active?

(Hobbies, video tutorials, subjects that interest me, new challenges, online learning etc)

How am I going to take notice today?

(Mindfulness, nature walk, breathing exercise, yoga)

What can I do to help others?

(Volunteer in the community, help a friend, random act of kindness)

How can I distract myself if I feel anxious or stressed?

(Treat myself, do something fun)

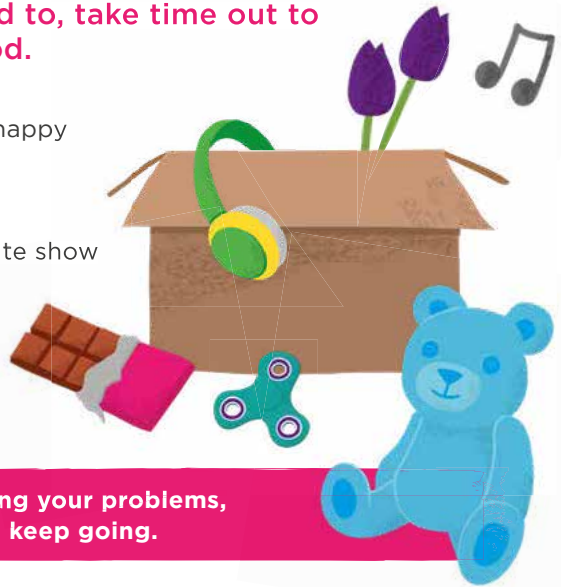
Who can I talk to if things get too much?

(People, helplines, online)

Lifting your mood

Smaller stresses and daily worries sometimes leave us feeling flat and drained emotionally. Be in tune with how you're feeling, if you need to, take time out to do something to lift your mood.

- Play a song that makes you feel happy
- Eat some sweets or chocolate for a quick sugar buzz
- Watch an episode of your favourite show
- Message a mate and rant about whats bothering you
- Start planning a night out with friends or family



Lifting your mood isnt about solving your problems, it's a quick pick me up to help you keep going.

Distractions

Sometimes lifting our mood is not enough, feelings of anxiousness, stress and panic have the potential to be overwhelming. Distraction techniques can help us get by - minute by minute - to allow these feelings to pass.

For a quick distraction technique focus on:

- 5 things you can see right now
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 good thing about you



Mind - Distraction techniques

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/tackling-negative-thoughts-with-distraction/>



Carry your distractions with you, write them down on your phone, keep them where you need them.

Money & employment worries

The continued effects of Covid-19 may still be causing uncertainty in our lives; you might be worried about money, have lost your job, be worried about losing your job or getting in more debt - these issues can have a big impact on your mental health and wellbeing. Likewise, poor mental health can also make managing your finances more difficult. It is therefore important to take steps to manage your money and employment worries.

Create a budget

Working out a budget can be a good first step in managing money worries as it helps you to track your spending, work out what you can afford and see where to save money.

Don't ignore the problem

We might want to put our head in the sand but this is not going to help in the long run. It can be tempting to avoid tackling debt head on - but the sooner you tackle the issue and get help, the sooner you can start getting back on top of things. There is support out there.

Get help and advice

If you are struggling with money or debt it can feel like there is no way out, but there are lots of organisations who can provide you with clear advice and help you come up with a plan to feel more in control.

Know your rights

If you are facing possible job loss, it can help to know where you stand and think about your options. ACAS, Citizens Advice and the Money Advice service all offer a wealth of information and advice for people who are struggling with employment issues.

Talk about how you are feeling

It's good to talk to someone you trust about your situation, whether that's a family member, friend or someone at work. They can support you, or help come up with a plan for what to do.



Cumbria County Council
Directory of local and national advice services
cumbria.gov.uk/welfare



Citizens Advice
Info and advice about benefits, employment, debt, housing and other Covid related issues.
citizensadvice.org.uk



StepChange
Get free debt advice online and support you for as long as you need us.
stepchange.org

Alcohol and drugs

In times of stress we can easily find ourselves drinking or taking drugs more frequently or more heavily and with so many of our routines changing it hard to keep on top of just how much we're actually consuming. Keeping a happy, healthy relationship with alcohol or drugs is important for our mental health. Here are some ideas.

Work out other ways to relax and treat yourself

Alcohol or drugs can be our go-to treat both when we want to relax and when things are getting tougher than normal. During coronavirus you may have found yourself reaching for alcohol or drugs more often than normal. Try finding some alcohol and drug free treats. Chocolate, a hot bath, playing video games, watching a favourite box set or film. Whatever it is that helps you unwind.

Keep track of things

With normal routines out of the window and anxiety levels going up, its easy to find yourself drinking or taking drugs more than usual without noticing. If you think your use is getting out of hand start to make a record. There are a number of apps and other tools to help you do this. Remember the calories and/or money you'll save by cutting back!

Look after your wellbeing

Many people are prone to drinking or taking drugs more as their mental health declines. Do what you can to look after your wellbeing. Connect with others, keep active, learn new things and get good sleep. It can all help.

Reach out for support if you need it

If you are in recovery, or are sober and receiving support, services are still available. It may look different, but it's still there. Reach out if you need it. Or maybe you're just realising that you need to cut down and would like some support, but aren't sure where to turn. Again, good news - there are lots options for self-help and receiving support online or over the phone. Check the links below.



Frank - Confidential advice about drinking or drugs

Call the 24hr helpline on 0300 123 6600
talktofrank.com



CADAS - Supporting people in Cumbria who feel their alcohol or drug use is problematic

cadas.co.uk

Bereavement

Losing a loved one under any circumstance is a difficult time in anyone's life. Throughout the pandemic losing a loved one may have been further complicated due to the circumstances of the death and the restrictions put in place to reduce the spread of the virus.

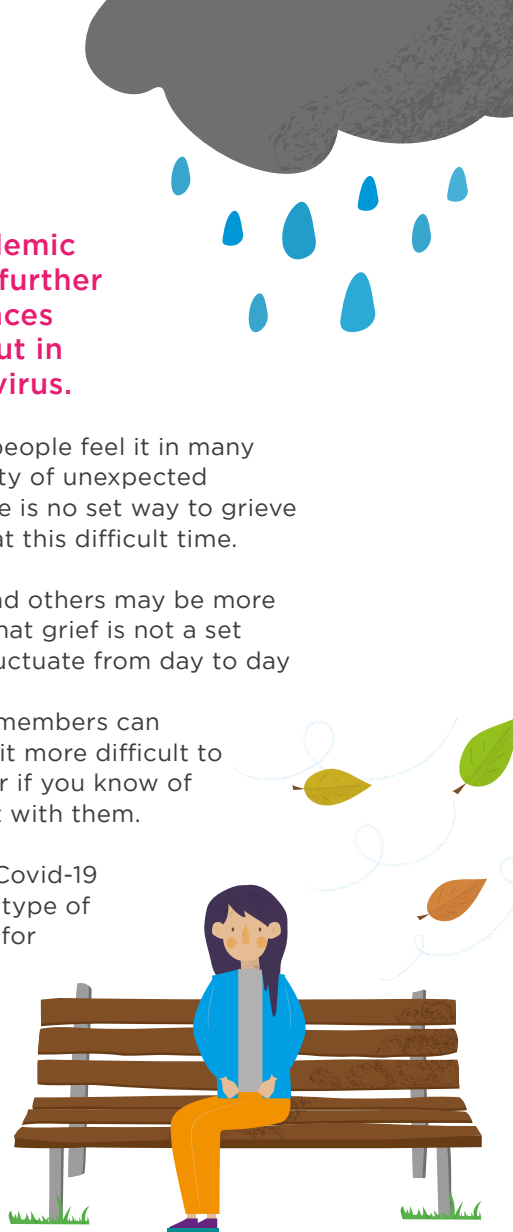
Grief is as unique as your fingerprint, and people feel it in many different ways. You may experience a variety of unexpected emotions or even physical symptoms. There is no set way to grieve and there is no shame in the way you feel at this difficult time.

You may experience really difficult days, and others may be more manageable, its important to understand that grief is not a set process and your mood and feelings will fluctuate from day to day

Being isolated and withdrawn from family members can compound your feelings of loss, and make it more difficult to process your grief. Ensure you reach out, or if you know of someone recently bereaved stay in contact with them.

For many the death of a loved one due to Covid-19 can be sudden and unexpected. Often this type of loss is the most difficult and tragic to bear for those left behind and has perhaps come at time when they may be dealing with other challenges associated with the pandemic.

It is important to remember that across Cumbria and the North East there are many services that can provide support if things become too difficult to bear.



Cumbria Bereavement Support Directory
northcumbriaccg.nhs.uk/contact-us/bereavement-support-cumbria



Cruse Bereavement Support
cruse.org.uk

Look out for others

We can all play a role in helping people whose mental health is at risk. The smallest displays of kindness, like picking up the phone to check-in on someone and the conversation that follows, could make the difference. You don't need to solve their problems and knowing someone cares could be enough to get them through, and perhaps even save a life.

About 1 in 4 people experience mental health problems each year, so most of us will know someone who has struggled with their mental health. We can all feel anxious, stressed or low at times, but it can be a problem if these feelings get worse, go on for a long time or affect our daily lives.

Many people struggle to reach out for support and sometimes we might need to ask, and ask again, “How are you?” “How are you really?” If you are worried aboutw someone don't be content with an “I'm alright mate”. Be helpfully nosey and be patient. Let them know why you are concerned and that you are there for them.

In addition to offering practical and emotional support we can help others by making them aware of the range of services and support available to:

- Support their mental health
- Address the broader range of problems that arise out of the crisis such as housing, money, domestic violence and employment issues.



NHS Every Mind Matters – Helping others with mental health problems

nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/helping-others

Five steps to helping others

1

Be Aware

Watch for the warning signs that someone might be struggling. This is more challenging during the Covid-19 crisis, and we may need to be more pro-active about checking in with others by phone and online.

2

Ask

Trust your instincts and ask the person directly how they are doing. If necessary, ask twice. "Are you really OK?". If you feel they may be struggling let them know that you are worried about them and that you care.

3

Listen

Give them time and space to talk and be helpfully nosy. Have a look at our listening tips on the following pages. During the Covid-19 crisis you may need to do more of this by telephone and online.

4

Build Support

Explore what help they might need. Build a circle of support through family and friends. Have a look together at the resources at the end of this booklet, or on our website. Set goals about what they can do next.

5

Check-in

Keep checking in and letting the person know you are there for them. Knowing someone cares can make all the difference.



Every Life Matters – Helping others

every-life-matters.org.uk/helping-others/

Spot the signs

The Covid-19 crisis has been really challenging for our mental health and it's more important than ever that we look out for each other.



Be vigilant. Look out for signs that someone might be struggling to cope.

How someone might behave

- Changes in appetite or sleeping patterns
- Withdrawing from, or avoiding friends and family
- Stopping telephone or social media contact
- Losing interest in things, including their appearance
- Risky behaviour or increased use of alcohol and drugs
- Carelessness or lack of interest in work
- Starting or increasing self-harming behaviour
- Increasing coping behaviour such as hand-washing
- Struggling to make decisions and concentrate.

How they may be thinking or feeling

- Sadness or anxiety that does not go away
- Losing enjoyment and interest in people and activities
- Lack of energy, lethargy and tiredness
- Extreme mood swings, ongoing irritability or anger
- Developing unrealistic or excessive fears and worries
- Increased anxiety about their health
- Chest pains, shortness of breath

Be helpfully nosy

Show you care through asking questions about how they are thinking and feeling. And don't be afraid to ask twice if you are worried. Check in, and continue to check in.

ARE YOU OK?



Mind – Helping someone else

[mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else)

Listening tips

The smallest displays of kindness, like picking up the phone to check-in on someone, and the conversation that follows, could make the difference...

Avoid offering solutions

Listening to someone's problems is not always easy – and most of us want to make things better, but this is not usually helpful. Avoid fixes such as 'Have you thought of doing this?' or 'You should try that'.

Ask open questions

These are questions that invite someone to say more than 'yes' or 'no', such as 'How have you been feeling?' or 'What happened next?'

Offer prompts

Encourage someone to talk more through phrases such as 'Tell me more' or 'Can you say more about that?', or through repeating back important words they say.

Give them time

Make sure you have time to listen. It can take a while sometimes to describe how we feel.

Take their feelings seriously

Take whatever they say seriously and without judgment. Don't dismiss what they say or minimise how they feel.

Avoid judgements

You might feel shocked or upset by what someone says, but it's important not to blame the person for how they are feeling. It may have been a big step to talk to you, and to place their trust in you.

You don't have all the answers

It's okay to not know what to say! You're a human being too and what you're hearing might be upsetting or confusing. If you don't know what to say – be honest and tell that person.

Give re-assurance

Let the person know there is help available and that you care about them.



Every Life Matters – Helping others
every-life-matters.org.uk/helping-others



Thoughts of suicide

028

Being there to listen and to provide emotional support can be a lifesaver.

If you're worried that someone you care for may be feeling suicidal it can be really hard to know what to say to them, or how to help. But thinking about suicide does not make it inevitable that someone is going to take their own life, and all of us have the ability to support someone who is experiencing thoughts of suicide, and to save lives.



Trust your gut instincts. If you are at all concerned that someone is having thoughts of suicide - ASK them directly - LISTEN compassionately - GET HELP if needed.

In addition to the general signs of mental health problems listed earlier someone having thoughts of suicide might;

- Talk, or post social media messages, about wanting to die, feeling hopeless, trapped or having no reason to live, or that they are a burden to others.
- Show unexpected mood changes such as suddenly being calm after a long period of depression, giving away possessions or making a will, increased risky behaviour or self-harming, or researching suicide online.
- Have had by a major loss or change in their life, an accumulation or build-up of problems before Covid-19, or be facing financial, relationship or housing hardship.

Talking about suicide with someone can feel nerve-racking but the best thing to do is ask directly. "Are you thinking about suicide?" This will not put ideas in their head and will show them they don't have to struggle alone with these overwhelming thoughts.

If the person has already attempted suicide, taken an overdose or seriously harmed themselves seek immediate help. Call 999 now.

Find out more about how to support someone with thoughts of suicide



Every Life Matters - Supporting someone with thoughts of suicide
every-life-matters.org.uk/worried-about-someone/



Every Life Matters - Online Suicide Prevention Training

Getting help



There may be times when we need some extra support to get through - Its ok to ask for help, and there's lots of support out there.



Every Life Matters - Support Directory
every-life-matters.org.uk/get-help

Telephone/Text Helplines

Samaritans 116 123

Whatever problems you are facing Samaritans are there to listen 24/7

SHOUT Text Shout to 85258

Crisis text service for support with any mental health concern 24/7

MindLine Cumbria 0300 561 0000

Information, guidance and support. Midday-11pm Mon-Fri. 5-11pm Weekends.

CALM Campaign Against Living Miserably 0800 58 58 58

Helpline for men of all ages 5pm - Midnight.

Silverline 0800 470 80 90

Information, friendship and advice for older people 24/7

Young Minds Parent Line 0808 802 5544

Advice for parents and carers worried about a young person 9.30-4pm Mon-Fri.

Young Minds Crisis Messenger Text YM to 85258

Crisis text support for under 25s 24/7

Papyrus Hopeline 0800 068 4141

Support and advice for young people 9am to midnight seven days a week.

The Mix 0808 808 4994

Advice and support for under 25s 4-11pm

Childline 0800 11 11

Support currently available 9am-Midnight and online 1-2-1 chat www.childline.org.uk

NHS 24hr Universal Mental Health Crisis Lines

North Cumbria **0800 652 2865**
 South Cumbria **0800 953 0110**



First Step - North and West Cumbria
cntw.nhs.uk/services/first-step/



First Step - South Cumbria
lscft.nhs.uk/first-step

Supporting children and young people at home

It can be hard for anyone to open up about their mental health – especially for a young person who may not know how to articulate what they are feeling – or is uncertain of the reaction they are going to receive.

What can you do at home?

Find time to talk

'Check in' - talk about their day, your day, ask their thoughts on things, what they are watching, playing, reading. Encourage them to ask you! Talk about how you are feeling.

Spend time together

Read together, cook together, eat together, play together - play helps children to be curious, learn new things, solve problems and express feelings without words, spend time outdoors together - nature and exercise are so beneficial to wellbeing.

Be a role-model

Show how you cope with difficult feelings and look after yourself. Children do learn from those around them- looking after your own wellbeing will be a good example to them. Model good habits - including screen use!

Try not to react

As a parent or carer it is hard, we want our children to be happy and healthy. Remember most of the time you don't need to fix things, you just need to be there.

Remind them you are there to talk

Even if they are not ready to yet. But if they are struggling the most important thing is that they talk to someone: it may be the case that your child may find it too difficult to talk to you.



Make conversations about mental health a normal part of everyday life.



Help them look after their own wellbeing

Help them understand how what we eat, how we exercise and how we spend our time (fresh air v screen time) can affect our wellbeing.

Help your child get the sleep they need

Not getting enough sleep can make children and young people less able to deal with difficult situations, as well as having a significant impact on their ability to concentrate, retain information and take part in physical activity. As a general guide children aged three to six need 10-12 hours' sleep a night; seven-twelve years olds – 10-11 hours; and teenagers – around eight to nine hours.

For children and young people one of the biggest factors is SLEEP – this is the “the magic pill” for our children

Teaching self-help

Low level anxiety and low mood can be improved using various self-help tools. Engaging with self-help can help them regulate their own emotions, learn valuable coping strategies and come to their own emotional rescue in the future. A range of self-help Apps and other tools are listed on the next pages.



If your child (or you!) find it hard to relax and drop off, try a bit of BEDITATION! Check out more ideas in the Cumbria School Nurses top sleep tips or try some of the recognised sleep Apps such as Pzizz, Moshi, Relax Melodies, Surfing on a cloud and many others.

Resources for children and young people



Barnardos My Time

A Cumbrian service for children and young people needing emotional health and wellbeing support. My Time work with mild to moderate emotional health presentations such as anger, anxiety, low mood, self-harm and depression. Referrals to My Time can be made by GP's, Schools staff, Health Professionals, Social Workers and so on.



Kooth

Free and confidential online counselling service for young people aged 11-19 in Cumbria. It is a safe place to explore a variety of emotional health issues. kooth.com



Cumbria Public Health 5-19 Service

Health and wellbeing information and Advice and e-school nurse appointments. cumbria.gov.uk/ph5to19



The Mix

Web based support for under 25s on mental health, life style and relationships and helpline 0808 808 4994 themix.org.uk



CAMHS Resources

Wide range of helpful resources about young people's mental health camhs-resources.co.uk



Every Life Matters

Directory of local and national information, support and services every-life-matters.org.uk/get-help

Helplines

Papyrus Hopeline 0800 068 4141 Support and advice for Young People. 9am-Midnight 7 days a week.

The Mix 0808 808 4994 Advice and support for under 25s 4-11pm

Childline 0800 11 11 Support currently available 9am-Midnight and online 1-2-1 chat www.childline.org.uk

Young Minds Parent Line 0808 802 5544 Advice for parents and carers worried about a young person 9.30-4pm Mon-Fri.

Young Minds Crisis Messenger Text YM to **85258** Crisis text support for under 25s 24/7

Information for parents



Young Minds National mental health charity for children, young people and their parents includes a 24/7 crisis messenger service (text 85258) and a dedicated parent line 0808 802 5544 youngminds.org.uk



Anna Freud Centre National mental health charity providing resources and support for professionals and parents. annafreud.org

Online training



MindEd Free online courses for parents and carers on mental health issues. minded.org.uk



Ourplace Fascinating online courses for everyone who wants to be an even better mum, dad, grandparent or carer. Plus courses for teenagers. Use the access code: WORDSWORTH inourplace.co.uk

Useful apps



Chill Panda A family friendly relaxation, breathing exercise and activity app that allows young people to understand how their bodies respond to different feelings. chillpanda.co.uk



Cove Like a mood journal, except instead of using words to express how you feel, you use music. cove-app.com



Equoo This app uses adventure games designed by psychologists to help you increase your emotional fitness and teach you new psychological skills. equoogame.com



MeeToo The MeeTwo app provides a safe and secure forum for teenagers wanting to discuss any issue affecting their lives. meetoo.help



Three Good Things A journaling app that encourages to write three good things down every day, this is a great way to record what they're grateful for. the3goodthings.org

Useful apps



Catch It

Learn to look at problems differently, turn negative thoughts into positive ones and improve your mental wellbeing.

liverpool.ac.uk/csd/app-directory/catch-it/



My possible self

Pick from 10 modules to learn how to manage fear, anxiety and stress, and take control of your thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

www.mypossibleself.com



Feeling good

Improve your thoughts, feelings, self-esteem and self-confidence using the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy.

feelinggood.app



Stress and Anxiety Companion

Guided breathing exercises, relaxing music and games made to help calm the mind, and handle stress and anxiety on the go.

companionapproach.com



Calm Harm

An app designed to help people resist or manage the urge to self-harm.

calmharm.co.uk



DistrACT

Get quick, easy and discreet access to information and advice about self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

expertselfcare.com/health-apps/distract/



SAM

An app to help you understand and manage anxiety.

sam-app.org.uk



STOPP

An app help you to change vicious, negative cycles of behaviour and positively enable you to make changes to your thoughts, feelings and behaviours to live a more skilful, less impulsive life

www.thedecider.org.uk/resources-downloads/stopp-app



Places 2 Talk

Places 2 Talk is a new project for people across Cumbria. A chance to come together with others in your local community and have a “Place 2 Talk” about your experiences of living through the pandemic and to share your hopes for the future.

Who’s it for?

If you’re part of a club or a group in Cumbria and are interested in holding a Places 2 Talk event then this project is for you. You might be a member of youth club, sports group, or a social club like a “knit and natter” project. Or you might be a café that has a weekly pensioners lunch, or a business that would like to bring your employees together to talk.

How can we support your group?

We will send you a resource pack that can help you to think about how to hold the session, and that points you to other sources of support if people need it.

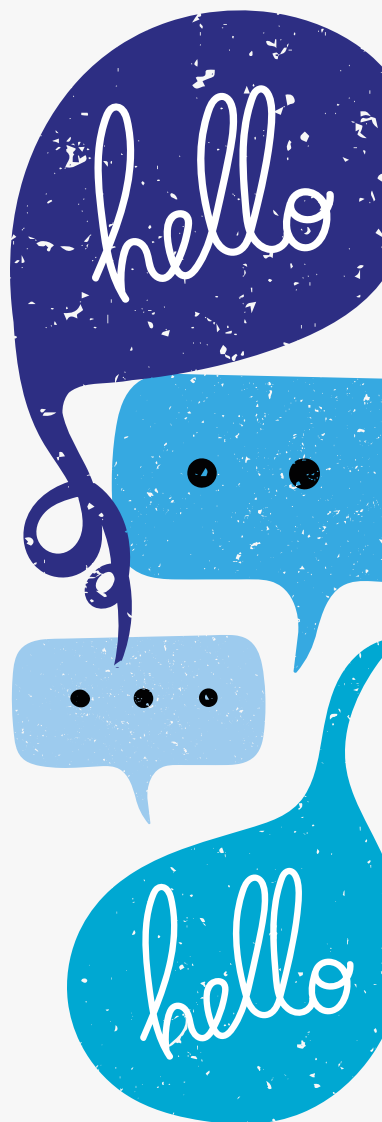
We can offer a bit of financial help to hold your session to do things like to cover room hire for your group, or for tea and cake.

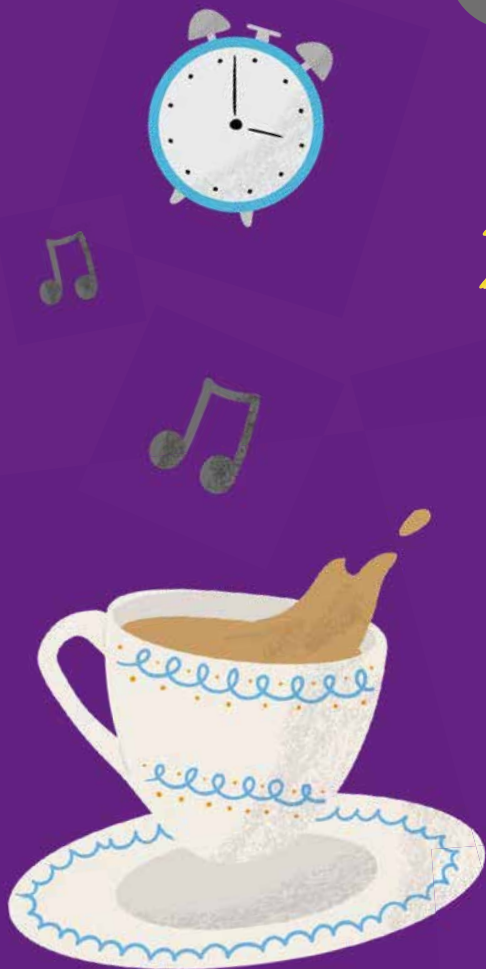
When will the project run?

You’d be able to hold your “Place 2 Talk” session during 2022.

How do I find out more?

You can find out more about the project and register on our website:
cumbria.gov.uk/placestotalk/





Written and
produced by

Every life matters ...

With the support of



www.every-life-matters.org.uk

Suicide safer Communities, Training and
Suicide Bereavement Support in Cumbria
Charity No. 1180815

