

# Self-care for mental and emotional wellbeing

- **Grounding and Calming Yourself**

**Breathe:** Make yourself comfortable, either sitting or lying down and become aware of your breathing. Imagine your breath coming through the floor and the furniture into your body. Notice the breath travelling right through your body and imagine yourself rooted to the furniture, the ground and the planet as you continue to inhale and exhale. Another way of trying to calm yourself is to slow down your breathing through counting. Sit or lie comfortably and close your eyes. Become aware of your own breathing – in and out. If you can, breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Begin to match your breathing to a count of three in and three out. After a while, increase this to four and then, again after a while, to five.

**Senses** Sit in a comfortable place and position and choose a small object to hold. First **look** at the object, take time to really observe its shape, colour, structure and texture. **Feel** the details of the object as you hold it. Experience the sensations on your fingertips or the palms of your hands as you hold and touch it. Now close your eyes and **listen** to everything around you. Notice sounds – whether nearby or more distant. Notice the silence in and around the sound. Finally, with your eyes still closed become aware of your own body and **feel** the different sensations you are experiencing. Notice any tension, tightness or tingling. Be aware of your breathing.

**Focusing** Develop the activity above by taking the object to a table along with paper and pencil or pens. Try and draw it, really looking at each detail and being as accurate as possible.

**Using your senses** Write down as many things as you can about where you are sitting at the moment, particularly focusing on your five senses – things you can see, hear, feel, taste, smell.

- **Relaxing Activities**

**Colouring** Invest in a book or find downloadable colouring pages online. Alternatively, create lettering, drawings or patterns yourself and colour them in.

**Collage** Use words, phrases, images and/or photos to create your own collages with things cut from magazines or newspapers or printed from the computer.

**Learn a new skill** There are loads of online tutorials you can use to teach yourself a new skill such as knitting, origami, crochet, calligraphy...

**Start a journal** Writing in or creating a journal is recognised to be a really positive way of processing thoughts and feelings. Don't worry if you haven't got a brand new book, you can use any paper and start where you are. You could try and create a list journal, a bullet journal or a journal of your thoughts and feelings (google ideas for these). Listing things you are grateful for is proven to make you feel better so a gratitude journal might be helpful in lifting your spirits.

- **Active Relaxation**

**Get up and dance; make or bake; lend a hand, grow something; go for a walk/do some exercise**

These are general strategies. If you need more structured support, the NHS has a list of apps you can download, which you can browse here: <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/>

**If you would like to talk to someone:**

**Childline:** Freephone 0800 1111 (24 hours) or go to [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) for online chat/message boards

**Young Minds** have a new messaging service: you can text YM to 85258

**A list of other external agencies can be found on the QR code page of this planner**