



Rationale

Our working lives have changed significantly over the past few weeks and we are all concerned about the health and wellbeing of those around us, at home and at work, as we all adapt to far-reaching changes. The overall uncertainty of the national and global situation is presenting risks to our health and wellbeing, often adversely affecting our physical, mental, financial and social state of being. We are now more likely to be isolated and working differently for the foreseeable future.

In these unsettling times, it is important that we work together to support each other in and out of our early years settings. This *Wellbeing Matters* tool will hopefully provide you with useful information to help you to cope with the new challenges you may face. We recommend a 'pick and mix' approach to using this resource, take what you need and share with your team.

Pick and Mix!

Take what you need.



Please note that any resources referenced in this wellbeing tool are for information and are not being personally recommended or promoted by LCC.

Coronavirus and your wellbeing

You will probably be worried about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it could affect your life. This may include having to stay at home and avoid other people or coming into work and supporting vulnerable children and those with critical worker parents.

This might feel difficult or stressful. But there are lots of things you can try that could help your wellbeing.

HOW TO RESPOND

Here are 3 positive steps we can all take when facing difficult times:



KEEP CALM

There are lots of things outside our control. Let's remember to breathe and focus on what really matters so we can respond constructively.



STAY WISE

Making wise choices helps everyone. Let's choose positive actions that support our wellbeing and help others to do the same.



BE KIND

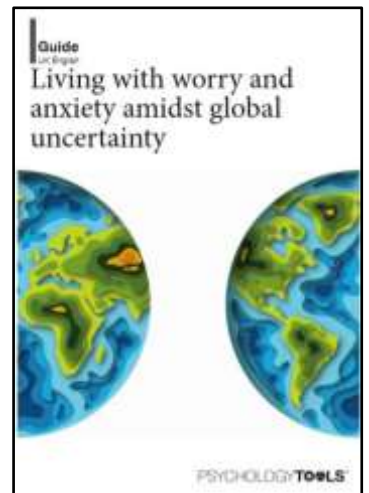
We're all in this together, even when we're forced apart. Let's stay connected and reach out to help others who may be in need.

<https://www.dayofhappiness.net/#new>

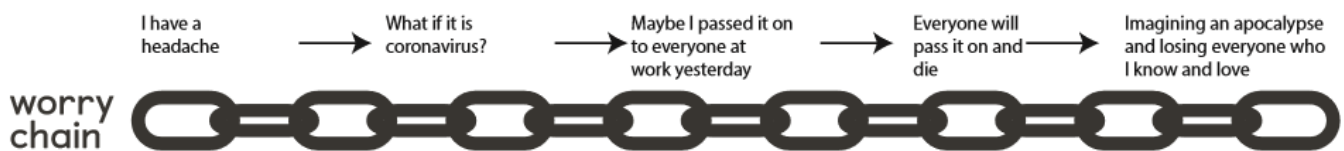
Dealing with worry (© 2020 Psychology Tools Limited)

What is worry?

Human beings have the amazing ability to think about future events. 'Thinking ahead' means that we can anticipate obstacles or problems, and this gives us the opportunity to plan solutions. When it helps us to achieve our goals, 'thinking ahead' can be helpful. For example, hand washing and social distancing are helpful things that we can decide to do in order to prevent the spread of the virus. However, worrying is a way of 'thinking ahead' that often leaves us feeling anxious or apprehensive. When we worry excessively, we often think about worst case scenarios and feel that we won't be able to cope.



What does worry feel like?



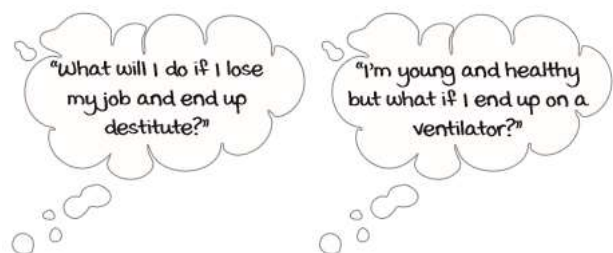
Worry can be helpful or unhelpful, and psychologists often distinguish between worries concerning 'real problems' versus 'hypothetical problems'.

- Real problem worries are about actual problems that need solutions right now. For example, given the very real concern about the virus at the moment, there are helpful solutions which include regular handwashing, social distancing, and physical isolation if you have symptoms.
- Hypothetical worries about the current health crisis might include thinking about worst-case scenarios (what we might call catastrophising). For example, imagining worst case scenarios such as most people dying.

Real problem worries
are about *actual* problems
that are affecting you *right now*.



Hypothetical worries
are about things that do not currently exist,
but which *might* happen in the future.



Ways to deal with worry

Maintain balance in your life.

- Practise identifying whether your worry is a 'real problem' worry, or 'hypothetical worry'.
- Worry is insistent. Practise postponing your worry to have a different relationship with it. In practice, this means deliberately setting aside time each day to let yourself worry (e.g. 30 minutes at the end of each day).
- Speak to yourself with compassion. Write down your worries and find a different way of responding to them. Using the 'Challenging Your Thoughts with Compassion' worksheet (available from the link below) you can practise responding to your anxious or worrying thoughts with kindness and compassion. (There is a worked example to get you started).
- Practice mindfulness. Learning and practicing mindfulness can help us to let go of worries and bring ourselves back to the present moment. For example, focusing on the gentle movement of your breath or the sounds you hear around you, can serve as helpful 'anchors' to come back to the present moment and let go of worries. (See mindfulness links to get you started in 'Be active' below.)

[https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide to living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty en-us.pdf](https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide%20to%20living%20with%20worry%20and%20anxiety%20amidst%20global%20uncertainty%20en-us.pdf)

There are five ways to boost our wellbeing.

Research shows there are five simple things you can do as part of your daily life, at work and at home – to build resilience, boost your wellbeing and lower your risk of developing mental health problems. These simple actions are known internationally as the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*.



Life has changed significantly over the past few weeks and we are all concerned about the health and wellbeing of those around us - at home and at work - as we all adapt to far-reaching changes. This wellbeing booklet provides tips and ideas for managing these changes using the Five Ways to Wellbeing.

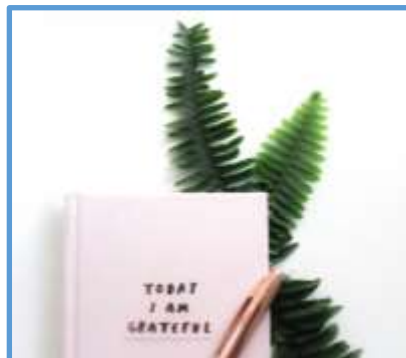
<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/take-5-steps-wellbeing-looking-after-your-mental-health-while-you-stay-home>



Take notice

Stop, pause and take a moment to be still and look around you. Reduce your time watching the news and browsing social media. Let go of what none of us can control right now and focus on what you can control. Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings and be kind to yourself. It is normal not to feel 'normal' during this time. Listen to gentle music or try relaxation apps and videos. Know that this is temporary and things will get better. Take notice of your habits. Avoid smoking or drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol. It can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Breathe and think of 5 things you are grateful for...



Hand washing and hand massage

With all the extra hygiene precautions are your hands taking the toll?

Relax and wind down mindfully - hand massage:

Turning the little things we do, without thinking, into mindfulness exercises is a great way to fit some brain training and relaxation into your everyday life. Learning to focus on what we are doing in that moment is at the heart of mindfulness. No matter who you are and how busy you are, spending a minute applying some hand cream mindfully will help you relax and come into the moment.



<http://www.revitalisedays.co.uk/take-your-time-with-mindfulness-and-get-to-sleep-much-more-easily/>



Be active

Exercising makes us feel good mentally and physically. We have to be a little creative in our new situation. Gardening or housework count as physical activity. Maybe try an online exercise video. The NHS website <http://pha.site/workout> has a range of options, or there are a number of fun videos available free on YouTube for all ages and different levels of ability.

Keep fit

Check out online yoga for all ages, abilities and reasons with Yoga with Adriene

<https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>

Joe Wicks, Body Coach

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYlRfn6rYQ>

Mindfulness/ guided meditation to help you stress less, move more and sleep soundly

<https://www.calm.com>

Free subscription during the current global crisis

<https://www.headspace.com/covid-19>



Eat Well

Instead of bulk buying loo rolls, stock up on some healthy staple foods which can be easily stored, cooked and frozen, such as lentils, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, whole grain rice, tins of sardines, mackerel and tuna to name but a few. Further information about healthy eating can be found on the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/eat-better/>

Sleep

Making sure we consistently get a good night's sleep is one of the best ways we can improve our immunity and defend against viruses and disease. Sleep is a natural immune booster. In the UK, we're recommended to get about eight hours sleep, but most people get on average about seven. Getting enough sleep helps the body to repair in the day and maintains our energy and concentration levels.

Here are some simple strategies to support your sleep, your well-being and boost your immunity during these challenging times.

- As part of your daily routine make sure you engage in some form of physical activity throughout the day, as exercise can also support healthy sleep and is critical for mental and physical well-being. Going for a walk or a run outside, provided that you can keep your distance from others, is a great way to get Vitamin D exposure (also an immune system booster) and to reduce stress and anxiety. If going outside is not an option for you, there are plenty of free apps online for everything from yoga to interval training to keep you physically active. Don't forget to make sure that caffeine and alcohol intake is kept in moderation to avoid negative consequences for sleep later in the day.
- Consider reducing or setting limits on the amount of time you spend consuming news or social media as this can further increase anxiety and disrupt sleep. Try to focus on the present and coping in this moment or in this day. Looking into an unknown future and trying to predict when a crisis will pass can be overwhelming.
- Reduce the use of technology before bed as keeping a smartphone in your bedroom or using a screen late at night can disrupt your sleep cycle. This is because you are exposing yourself to blue light, which affects melatonin production, the hormone that controls your sleep cycle. Consider imposing a digital detox about an hour before bed to make it easier for you to fall asleep.
- Try to establish consistent bedtimes and wake-up times and develop consistency in your routines throughout the day. Unpredictable or erratic routines can disrupt sleep-wake rhythms and increase anxiety. By setting routines for yourself and your family, you send a signal that even during seemingly uncontrollable times, you have some control over how you lead your life.
- Review your sleeping environment. Is your room too warm or too cold? A bedroom that is aesthetically-pleasing, i.e. without clutter, will help create a more soothing environment and help you fall asleep faster.

Top tips to beat insomnia

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/10-tips-to-beat-insomnia/>

Tools to aid sleep

<https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/advice-support/sleep-tools/>





Keep learning

We are all learning how to do things differently for now; learning new ways of doing things and how to enjoy ourselves. Use this time for some discovery. Learning new things gives us a sense of achievement, increased confidence and enjoyment. Use this as an opportunity to teach your children new skills or maybe sign up to an online course.

Stay ahead of the game—subscribe for key educational updates

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/>

And, have some fun! There's plenty of ideas out there about what's good to [watch on television](#) during the lockdown, and what to read with [online book clubs](#) springing up everywhere. A former Lancashire pub owner has even set up a weekly [online pub quiz](#), which hundreds of thousands of people are taking part in.





Give

Do something nice for someone. Thank someone. Make a gift or a card. Volunteer your time for a local group if it is safe to do so. Show you care to people who might be struggling. Be patient. Some people find giving easy, but don't find it easy to receive – whether gifts or compliments. If you know it feels good to give, then when you accept something you know it's good for the person who is giving to you too. Ask for help so others can give to you.

Get involved with random acts of kindness

- Call a friend that you haven't spoken to for a while
- Tell a family member how much you love and appreciate them
- Make a cup of tea for someone you live with
- Arrange to have a cup of tea and virtual catch up with someone you know
- Arrange to watch a film at the same time as a friend and video call
- Tell someone you know that you are proud of them
- Tell someone you know why you are thankful for them
- Send a motivational text to a friend who is struggling
- Send someone you know a joke to cheer them up
- Send someone you know a picture of a cute animal
- Send an inspirational quote to a friend
- Send an interesting article to a friend
- Contact someone you haven't seen in a while and arrange a phone catch up
- Reach out to call a friend, family member or neighbour who is experiencing loneliness or self-isolation
- Donate to a charity
- Lend your ear – call a colleague and ask how they're finding the change in routine
- Give praise to your colleague for something they've done well
- Arrange to have a video lunch with a colleague
- Send an inspirational story of kindness people around the world are doing for others to someone you know
- Donate to foodbanks



- Offer to skill share with a friend via video call - you could teach guitar, dance etc.
- Offer support to vulnerable neighbours
- Offer to send someone a takeaway or a meal

<https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/random-acts-kindness>





Connect

Connect with the people around you. We are all in this together. Social distancing is about physical distance, not emotional. Keep in touch with family, friends, colleagues or neighbours through calls, text or video links like FaceTime, WhatsApp, Messenger, Zoom or Skype. Arrange a daily telephone call, especially with those who may be at home alone. Maybe you can watch the same film/show at the same time and message about it or get a gaming app like scrabble and play together.

Setting up video calling using online platforms

Technology can provide us with some valuable connectivity while working in isolation and help us to keep in touch with family and friends. Most devices should have cameras to enable you to set up an internet meeting place for example Zoom.

Select Zoom from your app store
Install on your device
Create an account by signing up and activating your account
Allow zoom to access your camera and microphone
Video calling should now be enabled.



You can schedule a 'virtual' meet up and could be a regular part of your weekly calendar or whenever you want to connect with others.

There are many other platforms that enable video calling from your phone, tablet or computer, such as:



FaceTime



WhatsApp



Facebook Messenger

Staying connected through listening to podcasts

You can listen to podcasts via digital music services such as Spotify or for free via online platforms such as BBC Sounds or Podbean that can be downloaded via the app store on your phone or tablet.

<https://www.podbean.com/?sourceid=navbar> logo

Staying at home

Decide on a routine



- Plan how you'll spend your time. It might help to write this down on paper and put it on the wall.
- Try to follow your ordinary routine as much as possible. Get up at the same time as normal, follow your usual morning routines, and go to bed at your usual time. Set alarms to remind you of your new schedule if that helps.
- If you aren't happy with your usual routine, this might be a chance to do things differently. For example, you could go to bed earlier, spend more time cooking or do other things you don't usually have time for.
- Think about how you'll spend time by yourself at home. For example, plan activities to do on different days or habits you want to start or keep up.

If you live with other people, it may help to do the following:

- Agree on a household routine. Try to give everyone you live with a say in this agreement.
- Try to respect each other's privacy and give each other space. For example, some people might want to discuss everything they're doing while others won't.

Coming in to work

If you are an essential worker coming to work during this pandemic, thank you for everything you are doing in our communities.



It will feel unusual, and may add to the anxiety you feel, or that loved ones feel for you.

- If you can reduce your travel, consider doing so, or changing the method of transport you use or the times you travel to reduce peak travel and increase the distance between you and others so that you can observe social distancing guidelines.
- Maintain the scrupulous hygiene measures advised by authorities. Hand washing, catching sneezes and coughs, and not touching your face are still a key strand in preventing the virus spreading.
- The virus is likely to be a hot topic of conversation at work. Try to minimise gossip and hearsay about both the news and personal stories of things you've heard and people you know. It can help dial back people's anxiety.

Action for Happiness

The Action for Happiness response to COVID-19

Having researched thoroughly and had much discussion, our recommended response in brief is:

1. Listen to the experts

Leading health authorities tell us that our actions now can reduce the burden on the healthcare systems and help save lives. We all need to respond.

2. Keep calm (but don't carry on)

In light of the latest expert advice, our recommendation is to avoid non-essential face-to-face gatherings for the time being to help slow the spread of the virus.

3. Make wise and kind choices

We can all help to reduce the impact of this virus by looking after our own health, washing our hands, self-isolating if needed and being kind and considerate to others



COPING CALENDAR: KEEP CALM. STAY WISE. BE KIND

30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Please use & share 🙌

1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact	2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!	3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why	4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system	5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch	6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them	7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help
8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly	9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them	10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up	11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you	12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast	13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with	14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger
15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you	16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits	17 Learn something new or do something creative	18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity	19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small	20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself	21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with
22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others	23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news	24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go	25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths	26 Take a small step towards an important goal	27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why	28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year
29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing	30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time	<p style="color: #4a86e8; font-weight: bold;">“ Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances ” ~ Viktor Frankl</p>				

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

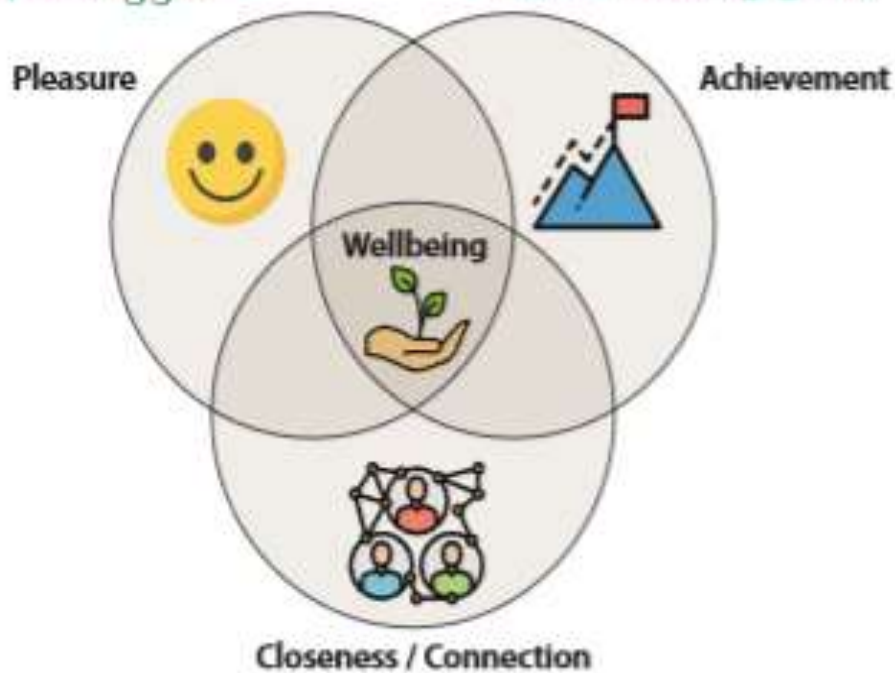
www.actionforhappiness.org

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living, including books, guides, posters and more here: www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys

Look After Your Wellbeing by Finding Balance

When we are struggling with anxiety and worry, we can lose touch with things that used to give us pleasure. Plan to do some activities each day that are pleasurable and make you feel joyful. For example, reading a good book, watching a comedy, dancing or singing to your favourite songs, taking a relaxing bath, or eating your favourite food.

We feel good when we have achieved or accomplished something, so it's helpful to include activities each day that give you a sense of achievement. For example, doing some housework, decorating, gardening, a work task, cooking a new recipe, completing an exercise routine, or completing 'life admin' such as paying a bill.



We are social animals, so we need and naturally crave closeness and connection with other people. With the current health crisis many of us may be physically isolated or distant from others, so it's important that we consider creative ways to connect in order that we don't become socially isolated and lonely. How can you continue to connect with family and friends and have social time in a virtual way? Perhaps using social media, phone and video calls you could set up shared online activities e.g. a virtual book or film club. You could also explore local online neighbourhood groups, and see if there are ways to be involved in helping your local community.

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World Health
Organization

Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.

Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.

If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.



Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions.

If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.



Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.

Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.



What are others doing?

The following are tips from other settings about how they are supporting their team's wellbeing, both in the setting and when working/staying at home.

Keep connected as a team- consider setting aside a specific time to get together as a team, physically, if you are in a setting or virtually, if you have colleagues at home. Many settings have a team message group so they can maintain contact with each other. You could even try organising a virtual coffee break or a 'Friendly Friday' event to reconnect with colleagues at home. One setting who has closed is even organising a staff dance workout session enabling the team to be active and connect at the same time!



Stay connected with families and team members who are at home – consider sharing information with families and staff about experiences still going on at the setting e.g. clips of the setting's pet eating their lunch, clips of the children involved in the Children in Need rainbow challenge or staff and children engaging in PE with Joe Wicks.

Stay connected with weekly updates – consider a weekly briefing with news from the nursery, who is doing what or how children have been playing.

Give lots of praise and recognition – for the work they are doing and the impact on families.

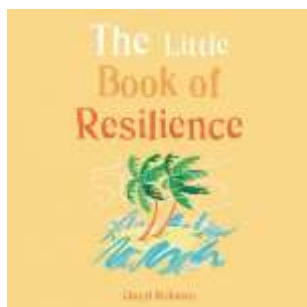
(Thank you for these contributions from the Maden Centre, Springfield Montessori and Sparklers.)

Please help by sharing other ways in which you are supporting wellbeing and we can include these in future communications.

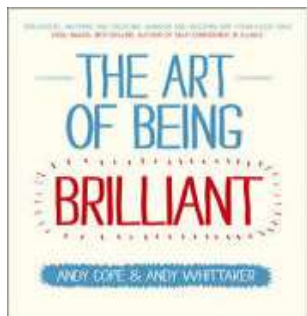
Recommended reading/useful apps



Booklist:




The Little Book of Resilience by Cheryl Rickman: Embracing life's challenges in simple steps



The Art of Being Brilliant by Andy Cope and Andy Whittaker: This book can fill you to the brim with happiness, positivity, wellbeing and, success. It outlines six common sense principles that can help ensure you can be the best version of you!



The authors of this book also have a regular blog and this month it specifically links to the coronavirus: <https://www.artofbrilliance.co.uk/blog/2020/03/the-coronavirus-survival-plan/>


Downloadable Apps to support wellbeing:



CATCH IT


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

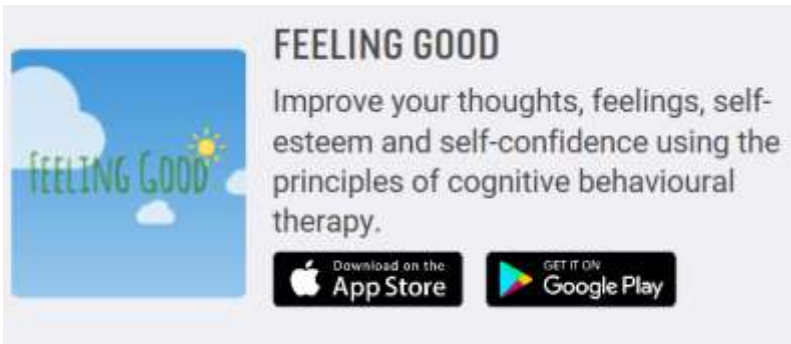
 



COVE

Create music to help express complex feelings. Cove is a personal musical journal to help you with your mental health.





Podcasts:

There are a wealth of health and wellbeing podcasts available, here are a few of our favourites:



A special edition with Mo Gawdat on how to cope with anxiety in the time of the coronavirus. The podcast can be accessed [here](#).



Happy Place with Fearne Cotton

<https://www.officialfearnecotton.com/news/2018/2/26/happy-place-podcast>

Look how much you've
already managed to
adapt to. Look how
resilient you've already
been. There's no "right"
way to respond to this
because it's never, ever
happened before. Give
yourself some credit. ☆
There's no one in the
whole world who has
this figured out yet.
So it's absolutely okay
if you don't either ♥
mellow doodles



A huge thank you for all you have done and are still doing to help.
You are amazing!