

welcome to your CAMHS care pack



This has been made by us for you. It is packed full of ideas to help you keep your mind and body calm, grounded and resilient



Hey there,

With all the nonstop news and talk, we are pretty sure that you have heard all about the new Coronavirus. It is big news on TV and social media and you may be talking about it with your family and friends.

There are lots of factual statements, 'fake news' and new stories circulating that you may not know what to believe or how to deal with what you hear. You maybe experiencing many intense emotions that can feel overwhelming. A lot of people feel scared or worried, frustrated and confused or even angry. You may be anxious about becoming sick or someone you love catching the virus. These are all normal feelings.

Coronavirus is having a major impact across the whole world and the effect on your own life can feel very surreal. Being stuck at home, not going to school, being separated from family and friends and not being able to see your CAMHS therapist is a big change and one that is likely to stir up lots of different and perhaps new emotions! Although you may be feeling frustrated, scared or angry, these changes are needed to keep us all safe and well so we can return to normal as soon as possible.

Although you may be feeling powerless to do many everyday things right now, it is really important that we try and take extra good care of our mental health and really look after ourselves. This pack has been personally developed with care to give you some tools to support you at this time of uncertainty because how you are and how you are feeling matters to us.

It is absolutely your choice when and how you complete the activities and which of the ideas you want to give a go. We suggest you start with the one that interests you most and you feel could be most helpful to you. Remember this is not meant to be homework so if you don't want to do something, you don't have too!

We want you to know that whilst things are different, we are still here for you and even though we will not see you for while, you will stay in our minds and we will keep connected through the things that we send.

It is important to know that if things get tricky, you can call us on

01372 203 096

Your also welcome to email us and tell us what your thoughts on your care pack, we would love to hear your feedback!

Until next time
From CAMHS Children in Care

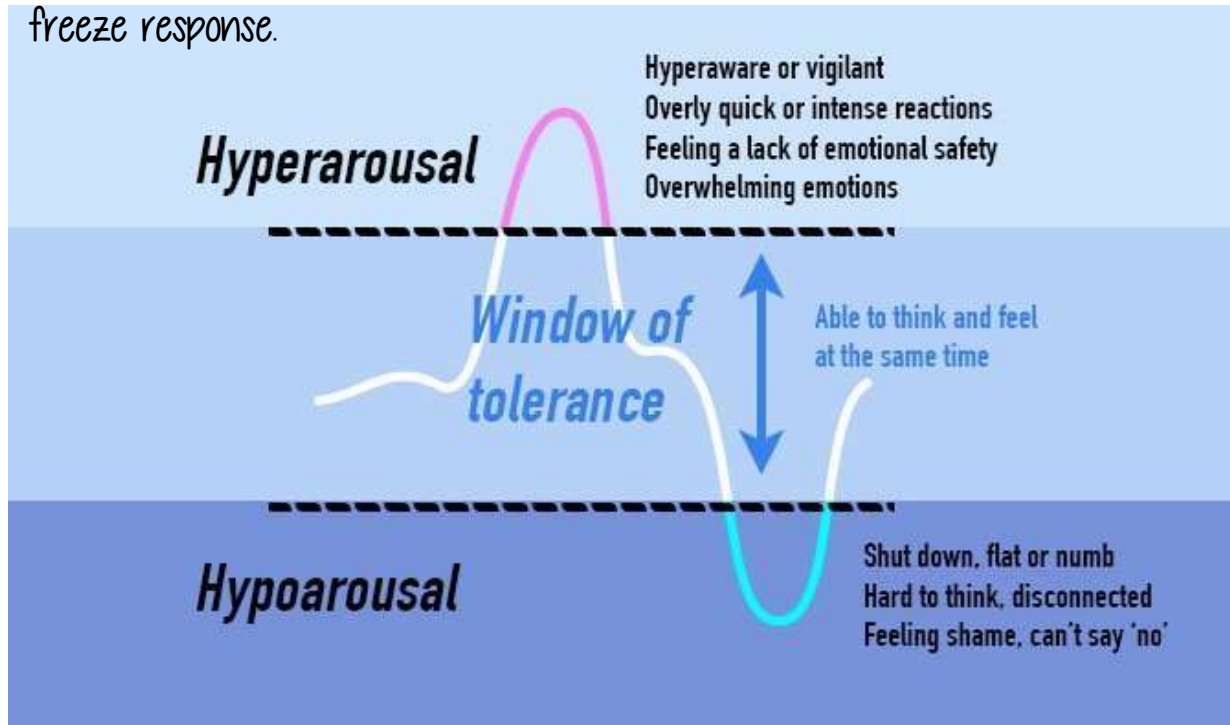


Understanding stress

Although everyone is having to deal with the corona virus crisis, we understand that you may be feeling emotions more intensely than some of the other people around you.

One way to explain this is through understanding your window of well being or tolerance . This is the term used to describe the zone in which your nervous system functions best and is 'just right' (you know like the goldilocks story). Trauma has the tendency to shrink your window so you may find yourself outside your zone quicker or more easily than others.

During times of extreme stress, people often experience either hyper-arousal otherwise known as the fight/flight response or hypo-arousal known as the freeze response.



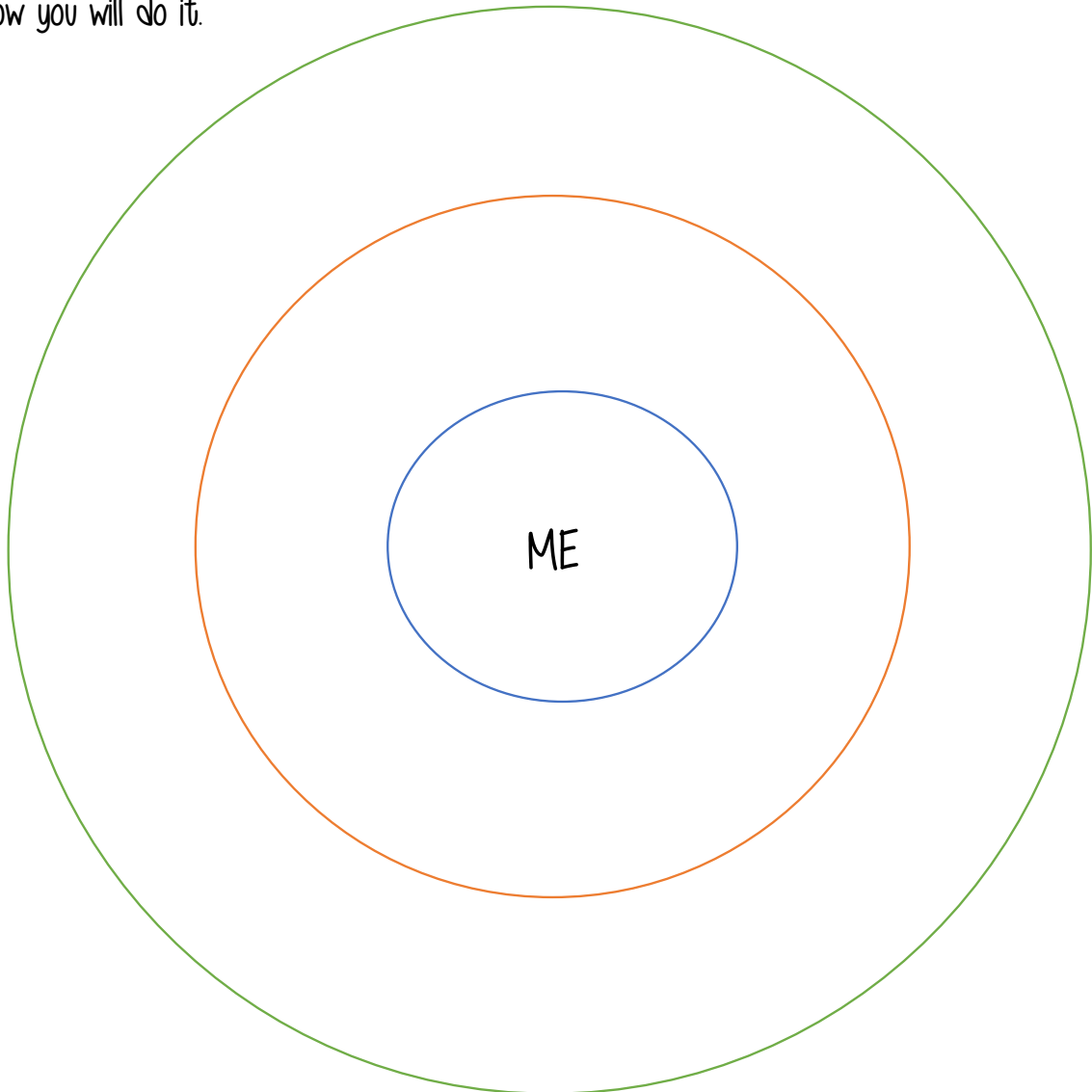
The good news is there are techniques you can use to soothe, ground and regulate (comfort) yourself.

KEEP CONNECTED

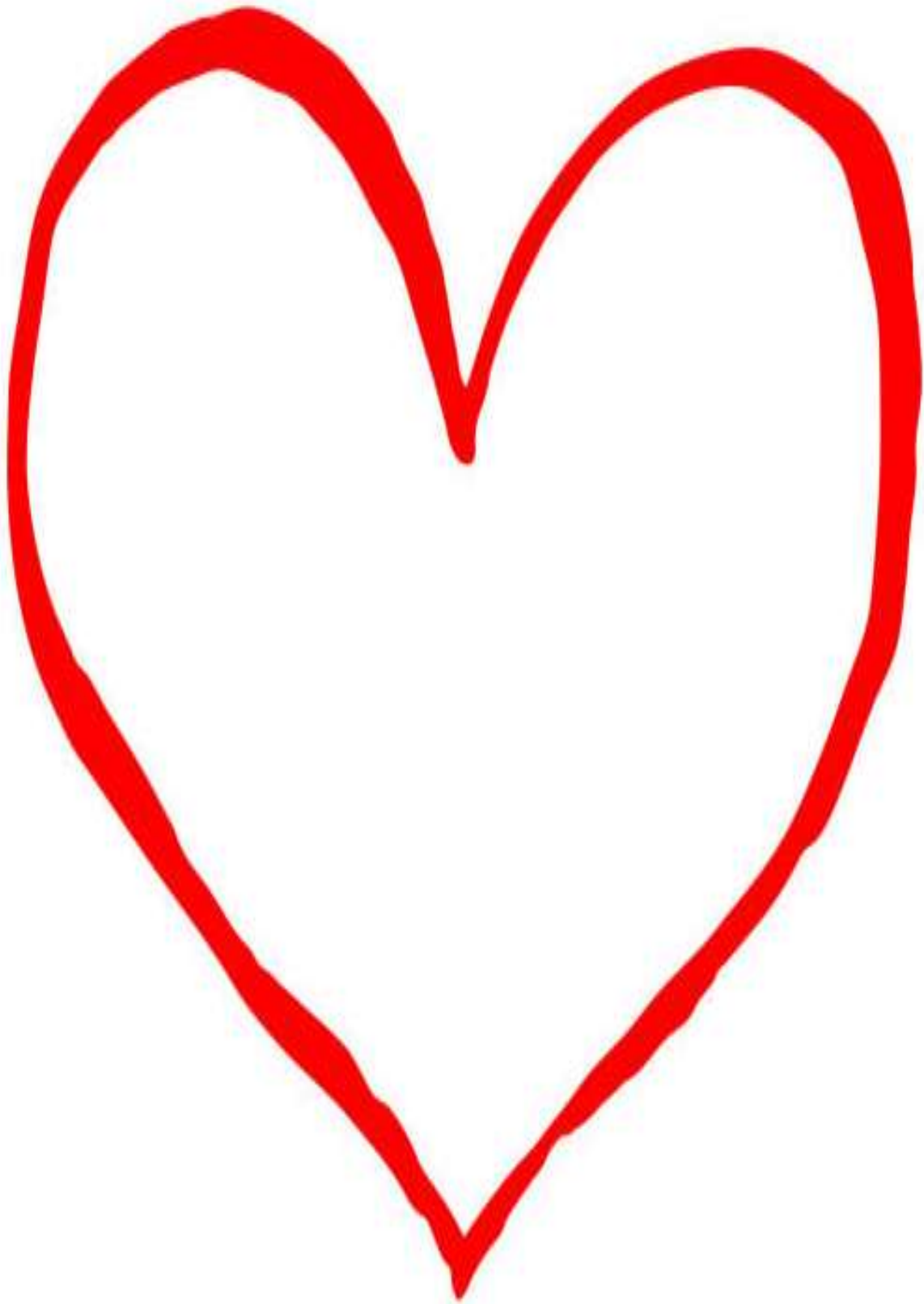
Being in contact with people most important to you is absolutely crucial right now. At this time lots of people are feeling extremely isolated so it is even more important to think about people who support you, help you and make you smile and how you can keep in touch with them.

There are many ways in which we can stay connected including messenger, video call and over the phone.

Have a go at filling out this social circle, naming people you can reach out too and how you will do it.



My heart map



BREATHING

- breathing deeply is one way to help manage your reaction to stress.
- normally, when in a stressful situation, our diaphragm flattens and we begin to breathe shallowly, which in turn, increases our stress level.
- consciously controlling your breathing can immediately calm you down and allow you to think through the situation.
- you will get the most benefit if you practice breathing regularly, as part of your daily routine.
- when you're next in a stressful situation, it will be much easier to use this technique as your body will be used to breathing in this way.



Hold your hand out...use a finger to trace up the edge of your finger and breathe in...hold... then breathe out as your trace down your finger....



Take a deep breathe in...hold...slowly breathe out and gently blow up one side of the feather and down the other.... Repeat 3 times

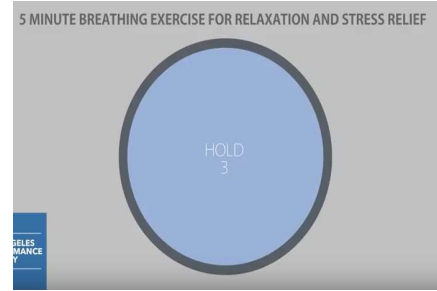


Choose a colour that feels calming to you. Take a deep breath in and as you do Visualise yourself breathing in calm. As you breathe out visualise yourself breathing out fear (or distress, or anxiety)

Breathe in through your nose then breathe out hot air onto your palm (wide mouth)...
Breathe in then breathe out cold air onto your palm (small mouth)
— repeat 3 times



Lie on your front and use the straw to blow the cotton wool ball into a "goal"... or make an obstacle course and blow cotton wool ball around it



Watch a YouTube video that guides your breathing.



Close your left nostril with your finger and breathe in only through your right nostril...place thumb against right nostril to cover and breathe out through left nostril... Try reversing (right nostril first)



Imagine bubbles are worries and watch them float away... Or pop them using your finger or different parts of your body... blow them away until you feel ready to go on with the day

Other Calming activities

- Gargling/humming/singing (breathing techniques)
 - Increases heart rate variability (each in different ways)
 - Singing at the top of your lungs works muscles at the back of your throat (activates vagus nerve which is connected to vocal cords)
 - Humming creates a predictable rhythm of soothing bodily vibrations



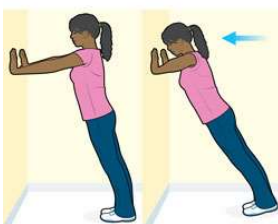
- Grounding through the mouth (chewing/sucking)
 - heavy work for the jaw and/or invites deep breath/calms heart rate
 - chewing gum/dried fruit/warm toast and butter/chewy sweets
 - sucking: drinking thick milkshakes through a straw; sports water bottle; Maltasers and straw game; sweets



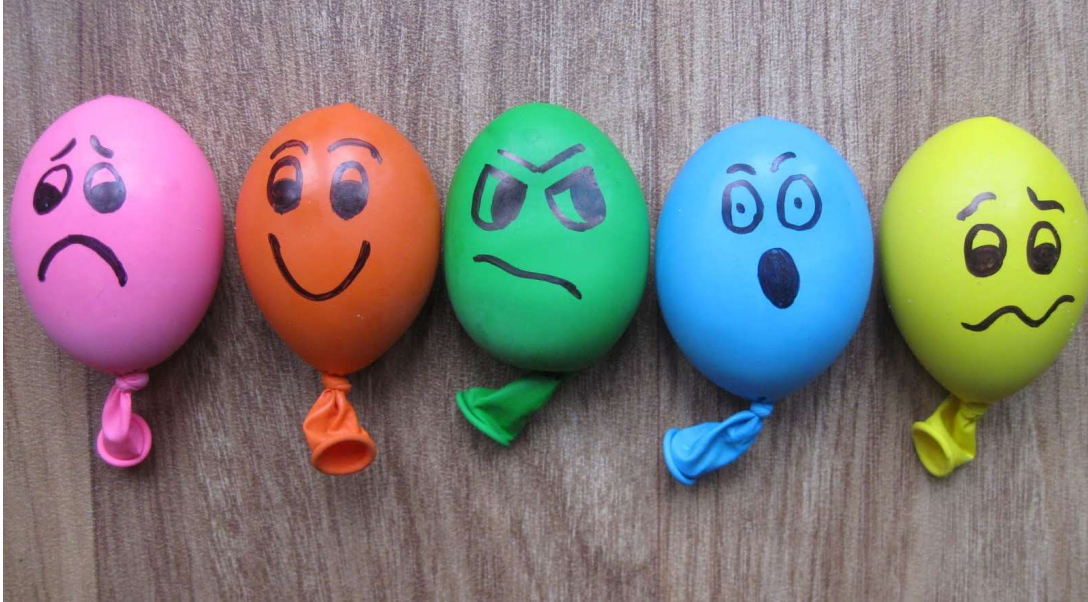
- Cross crawl
 - stand with feet flat on the floor, then bend forward and bring one elbow and its opposite knee together slowly...repeat with other elbow and opposite knee
 - this movement makes one side of your brain talk to the other side which helps you to focus when you need to



- Wall push
 - stand facing a solid, blank wall feet flat on the floor, and place flat palms against wall and gently push against wall
 - hold this position for 5-10 seconds



Make your own stress ball by using
playdough and two balloons



create your own comfort box of things
that you find soothing to help you find
your calm!



Self-soothe with 6 senses

When you become stressed out, anxious or distressed all of your senses are affected, which has an impact on how we feel, think, behave and even how our body works!

But... you can also sooth yourself through your senses!

On the images below identify what things you could use to soothe each of your senses, it could include chewing gum, a soft blanket, taking a bath or smelling your favourite fragrance....



muscle relaxation

- Guided muscle relaxation can be performed by reading a script, through an app or even a video on you tube. They can be long or short and can be performed alone or with others.
- The aim of the exercise is to reduce stress and anxiety in your body by getting you to slowly tense and then relax each muscle. This exercise can provide an immediate feeling of relaxation, but its best to practice frequently. With experience, You will become more aware of when you are experiencing tension and you will have the skills to help you relax.



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THINGS I CAN CONTROL

When it feels like so many things are happening and changing beyond our control (like not being able to go out or see friends) it is important for us to hold onto what we can change and control...

Idea 1: WEAR ODD SOCKS FOR A DAY

- #find the courage to do something different...this is your power
- Choose your 2 favourite pairs of socks...these are your good mood socks because they make you smile or feel soft n cosy and keep your feet happy. Wear them for a day and give your courage a boost (remember only brave people have the courage to wear odd socks)
- Take a photo of your good mood feet



Idea 2: MY SPACE

- Choose a drawer/shelf/ box in your room. Choose everything that you want to be in your chosen space and decide how you want to organise it. You get to choose how you arrange your things. You have complete control over this important space. No matter how uncertain or chaotic the world feels (or maybe how messy the rest of your room is) you can come back to this space whenever you need and remind yourself that you have complete control over this tiny but very important part of your world

Idea 3: SORT N ORGANISE

- Choose something that you want to sort and organise. It might be your pencil case or a book shelf or maybe even the clothes in your wardrobe. You get to decide how you want to organise your chosen objects. For example you may choose to rearrange all the books on your shelf in height order or alphabetical order. You might want to sort your clothes into like colours or categories. When you are done stand back and admire your handy work – YOU DID IT!



5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique

When you need a break from bothersome brain chatter (you know those tricky thoughts that get stuck in your mind such as worries or negative self talk) help yourself find your calm again by using your senses

Take a deep belly breath in then look around you, find and name:

5 things you can see



4 things you can touch



3 things you can hear



2 things you can smell



1 thing you can taste



Safe Place Imagery



STAND FIRM AND STRONG JUST LIKE A TREE

A great way to find your courage (when things feel different and uncomfortable) is to mentally ground yourself. Stand and press both feet to the ground and in your mind imagine roots growing from the soles of your feet deep into the ground. Take some deep breaths in through your nose and say to yourself 'Breathe in strength' then breathe out slowly through your mouth and say to yourself 'Breathe away stress'. Stand firm and strong just like a tree and even though chaos and uncertainty may blow through your branches, they will disappear into the breeze. Remember your roots are your anchor...you can stand firm and strong whatever the weather

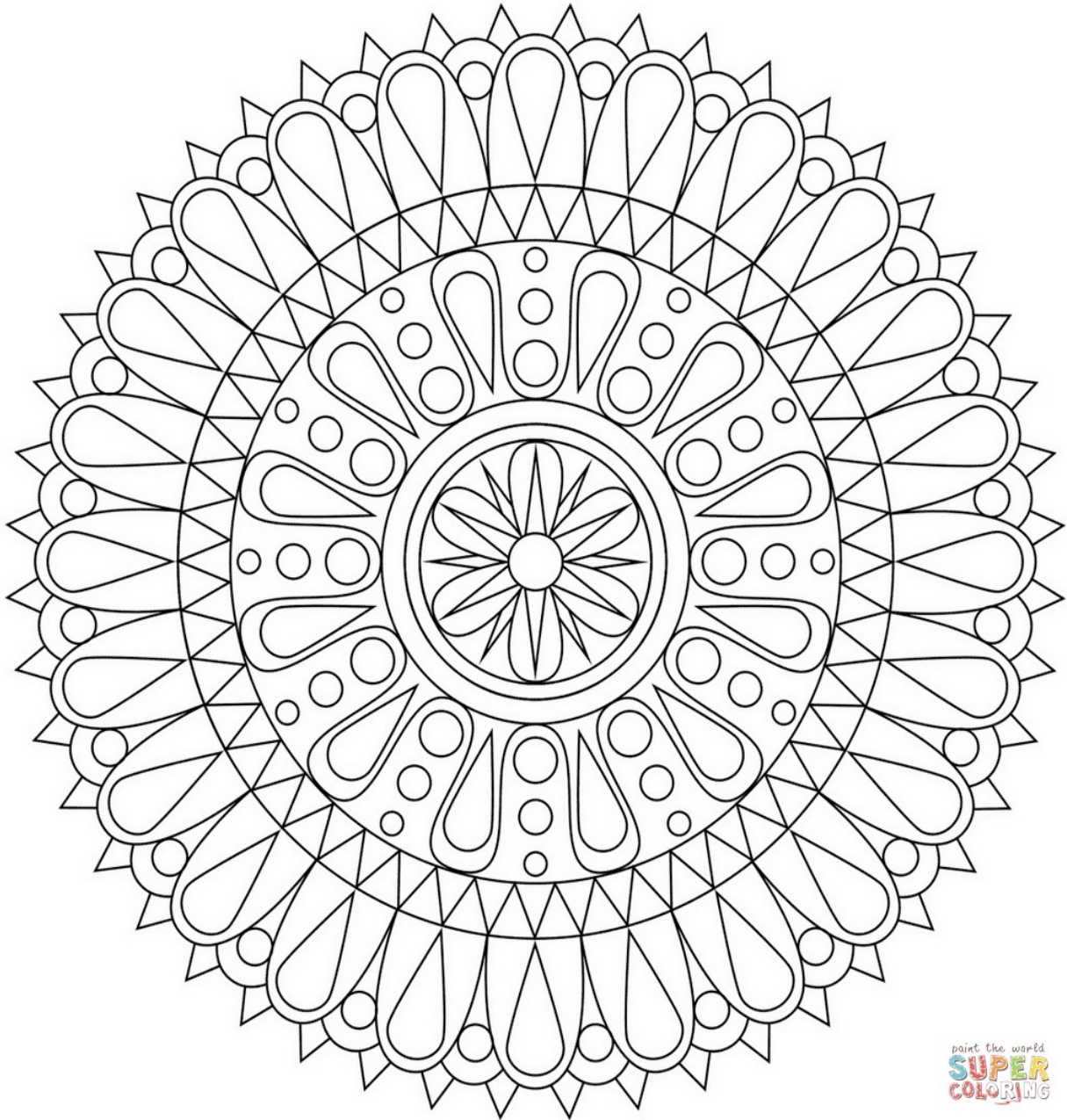


TAKE A MENTAL HOLIDAY

- Close your eyes (if you feel comfortable) and choose where you would like to go on holiday in your mind
- Think about how you will get there (imagine the aeroplane or the train or perhaps you will travel in the car)
- Where are you going? (USA, the beach, the mountains?)
- Where will you stay? (hotel, tent, cottage)
- Think about the sounds and smells of this place (the sounds of the waves crashing, the scent of the salt in the air)
- Think about the weather (will it be snowing or warm and sunny)
- Who are you going with? What will you enjoy doing? Will you relax on the beach and snooze under the warm sun or will you be adventurous and climb a mountain or snowboard or go horse trekking. It's up to you. This is your holiday and you decide



Unwind by colouring a mindful mandala. Focus on colouring the patterns, relax and allow your mind to grow quiet...



BE YOUR OWN CHEERLEADER

Speaking to and about yourself more kindly has the power to change the way you feel about yourself. ♥ Talk to yourself like you would talk to a friend...What would you say? Circle as many as you like....

- ♥ You are courageous
- ♥ You are strong
- ♥ You are enough
- ♥ You are adventurous
- ♥ You are a warrior not a worrier
- ♥ You are the expert of you
- ♥ You are smart
- ♥ You are loyal
- ♥ You are determined
- ♥ You are kind
- ♥ You have patience when its needed
- ♥ You can try again
- ♥ You are lovable
- ♥ You are a survivor
- ♥ You are curious
- ♥ You are healthy
- ♥ You can find a solution
- ♥ You have your own spirit
- ♥ You will get there
- ♥ You control your own happiness
- ♥ You are in charge of your life
- ♥ You can learn from mistakes
- ♥ You are brave
- ♥ Your ideas matter
- ♥ You are important
- ♥ You are capable
- ♥ You matter
- ♥ You deserve good things
- ♥ You are wise
- ♥ You are creative
- ♥ You are calm
- ♥ You are energetic
- ♥ You are generous
- ♥ You are safe
- ♥ You have talents that the world needs
- ♥ You can make a difference
- ♥ You are fun to be around
- ♥ You are unique
- ♥ You are free to make your own choices
- ♥ You are imaginative
- ♥ You hold your own power within
- ♥ You have a light within you
- ♥ You can be anything you want to be
- ♥ You can ask for help
- ♥ You can stand up for what you believe in
- ♥ Everything will be OK
- ♥ You can follow your heart, it will lead you where you need to be
- ♥ You can dream BIG

recognize what you can change

At this time unfortunately, you may find there are lots of things you are worried about that you just can't change. What can be useful is to recognize what is currently within your control and what isn't so you can choose what to do next!



dealing with things that worry you – Worry Box

Find a box, something small like a shoe box or a chocolate box.

Write down what's worrying you on a piece of paper and place it in the box.

Tell yourself that you don't need to think about the worry at the moment and you can let it go and leave it in the box for now.

You can do this as many times as you like.

Remember to keep the box somewhere private.

You can get these things out later, revisit them with you therapist or you may even find that they diminish alone.



Let it Out

- Being human is tricky sometimes. Our brains can think difficult thoughts and we can feel difficult emotions like anger, loneliness, sadness and anxiety (worry). Let your feelings and thoughts out by expressing them in whatever way works for you. This sense of release stops the thoughts and feelings churning round and round inside you. Then you can find your emotional balance once more.

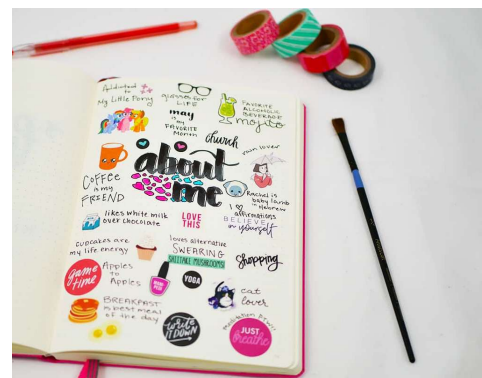
Some ideas:

- Say it out loud... talk to someone
- Message someone you trust will listen and understand
- Play it (through your choice of music to reflect your mood)
- Blog it
- Use an app (see our handy list)
- Take photos (that capture something of how you feel) or find an image/picture online that speaks about your feeling
- Draw, paint or build something
- Write it in your journal

Journaling

Journaling can be a great activity for our mental health in general and there are load of ways to do it!

Positivity and self care



Diary



Quotes and inspirations



Schedule



Tolerating distress



At any time of life, but particularly right now, it might feel like you can't actually change much or make something better. What we can do though is accept that we feel however we feel and tolerate this anyway, even though this is really hard!

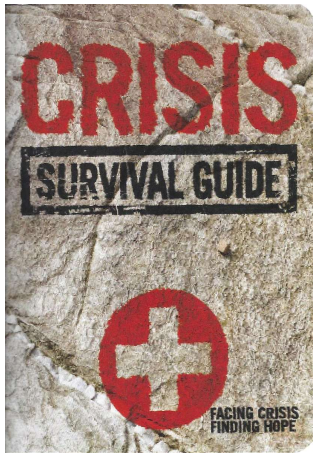
Imagine being on a ship... suddenly you skid and fall overboard, by the time you have reached the surface the ship has sailed away.

What do you do?

You have two options –

1. You could act on your panic, screaming and flailing around falling deeper into emotional mind and likely making the situation worse.
2. You could use enormous amounts of distress tolerance and mindfulness skills to float.

It is important to realise that taking option two is not easy, and you will certainly still feel distressed but it allows you take time to use 'wise mind' instead of acting impulsively and falling into intense desperate and often destructive emotional reactions.



These skills are useful in times of extreme distress.

Clever stuff: They work by boosting your parasympathetic nervous system to reduce your heart rate, blood pressure and lower how intensely you feel your emotions for roughly 5-20 mins giving you time to pause and think about what else you can do!



Temperature – cover your face with cold water - this activates the dive reflex whereby humans heart rate slows as oxygen becomes limited calming you down.

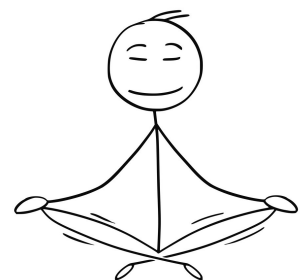
Intense aerobic exercise – 10-20 minutes of getting your heart rate right up can re-regulate the body out of the state of attack and bring down the PNS for the next 20 mins.



Paced breathing – 5-6 breath cycles per minute.

Follow your hand breathing in as you go up a finger and out as you go down.

Progressive muscle relaxation – there loads of apps that you can play and just listen along!



Re-engaging the thinking brain

When in a heightened emotional state it can be difficult to think clearly! This is because the thinking part of your brain had 'gone offline'.

There are some simple games we can use to re-engage this part of our brain giving you the power to make rational decisions....

Some examples of games are

- Chose a category and go through the alphabet naming something for each letter e.g. foods, celebrities, countries....
- My grandmothers shop – if in a group take it in turns to add to the list, items that you bought from the shop, see how many you can remember!



Distract

Mindfully engage in something distracting... when you mind starts to drift back to the distressing situation noting this and then bring it back to the current activity.

If one doesn't work... try another!



Do something nice for someone else



Make a self soothing box



Create a distraction list



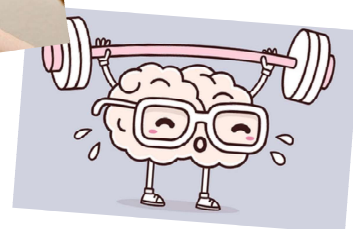
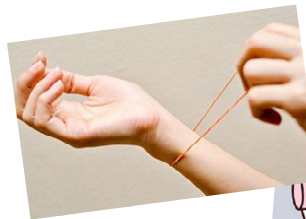
Engage in a behaviour that evokes opposite emotions



Glitter jar



Intensify other sensation



imPOrtant things scavenger hunt

- ♥ Take a moment to come back to the things that make you smile....
- ♥ Can you find, make a list, draw or picture in your head (a mind scavenger hunt):
- ♥ Something that makes you laugh (or feel happy)
- ♥ Something you like the feel of
- ♥ One thing you love to smell
- ♥ Something you like to look at
- ♥ Something you like to hug (maybe that is a teddy or a fluffy jumper or a cushion or maybe yourself!)
- ♥ One song that makes you feel good (your happy song)
- ♥ Something to give someone else to make them smile
- ♥ Something that is your favourite colour
- ♥ Something that makes you smile in nature
- ♥ One thing that is very useful to you (if you were stranded on a desert island you would definitely want to have this with you)