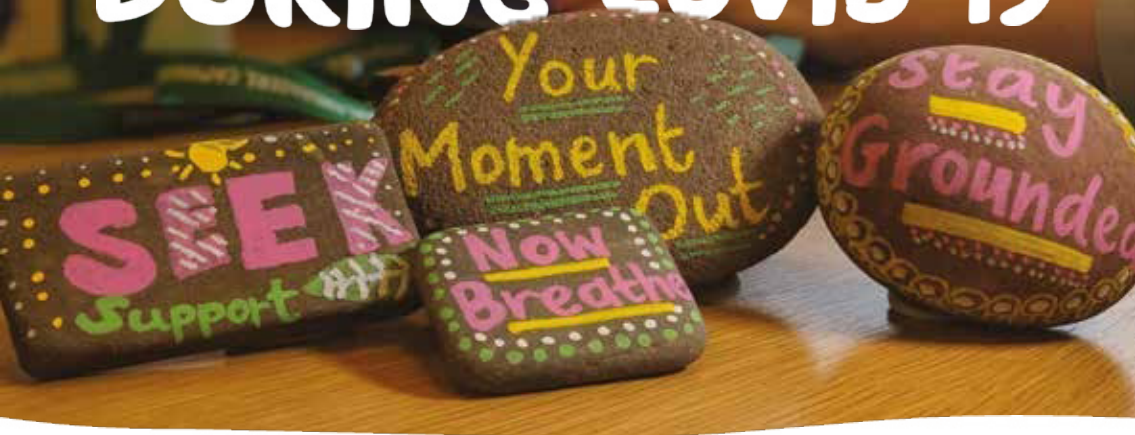


# YOUR MOMENT OUT DURING COVID-19



Take a moment out of your busy working day to focus on you

**MACMILLAN**  
CANCER SUPPORT

# ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

We recognise that we can all have days when we feel like this:

Out of Control  
Stuck  
Worried  
Anxious  
Scared  
Tense  
Dizzy  
Alone  
Frustrated  
Stressed  
Disconnected  
Untethered  
Overwhelmed

During a crisis such as Covid-19 these may be more extreme or frequent.

We put this booklet together to remind us all how important it is to look after our mental health and wellbeing especially at this time. Our minds and bodies are connected, but we can forget to look after ourselves mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. This is just as important as physical exercise if we are to prevent mental ill-health.

We wanted you to know that if you are feeling like this, there are things you can do that may help, there are people you can talk to, and there are places where you can get information and support.

We want to support you to feel more like this:

Grounded  
Connected  
Safe  
Present  
Understood  
Held  
Supported  
Composed  
Empowered  
Calm  
Heard

Take a moment out for yourself and it can become part of your daily routine.

Most importantly, please remember that you don't need to struggle on your own, if you don't want to.

That's what this booklet is for.



## Content

This booklet has three parts.

### Now breathe

Part 1 is about taking time out from your busy day to look after yourself. We share some tools and techniques for helping you feel calm and relaxed during times of difficulty.

### Stay grounded

Part 2 is about helping you feel more grounded. We share some tools and techniques that you can build into your daily routines to help you build your resilience, and stay grounded. This supports your mental health and wellbeing in the longer term, rather than just in the moment.

### Seek support

Part 3 contains a list of places to get the support you need during times of stress or mental distress, both within and outside Macmillan.



**This part of the booklet is about taking time out from your busy day to look after yourself, especially when you are experiencing anxiety or any form of mental distress.**

Here are some tools and techniques to reduce stress and anxiety, and for helping you feel calm and relaxed.

Do some **deep breathing exercises**

- To begin, make yourself comfortable and sit still
- Close your eyes and begin breathing through your nose. Then, inhale for a count of two
- Hold the breath in for a count of one, then exhale gently, counting out for four
- Finish by holding the breath out for a count of one. Keep your breathing even and smooth
- If the 2-4 count feels too short try increasing the breath lengths to 4 in and 6 out, or 6 in and 8 out

The NHS Moodzone website has some tips on breathing through stress. Or search the 'Calm' website for breathing exercises

**Mindfulness** is a technique which can help you manage your mental health and wellbeing. Mindfulness involves making a special effort to give your full attention to what is happening in the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – in a non-judgemental way. Mindfulness has many benefits; it can help increase your awareness of your thoughts and feelings, and help you feel calmer and better able to manage stress.

There is a wealth of information about mindfulness on the internet.

Be.Mindful is an online Mindfulness course that you can access through Learn Zone – [Be.mindful](#)

We also like the podcasts on the **Academi Wales** website (visit the website, and search for 'mindfulness').

**Download an app** to help you. There are a wide variety of apps available, some of which are free. You could try the 'Calm' app for meditation, sleep, and relaxation, or the 'Headspace' app for meditation and mindfulness, or the 'pause' app, which helps you slow down racing thoughts and focus for a few minutes.

It is important to take regular breaks from your work to recharge your batteries. We recognise that our professionals are based in different locations and have a range of working conditions. Whether working in an

acute setting, in the community or from home find something that works for you and your place of work.

If you spend long periods of time sitting at a desk, try having a **change of environment**. Go for a short walk if you can, ideally outdoors, in line with current Government guidance.

Do **stronger physical exercise** if it helps. Some people like to go for a run, others find Yoga, Pilates or the Alexander technique helpful.





**This part of the booklet is about helping you feel more grounded.**

When you're grounded you feel stable and balanced, and the things that happen around you don't influence you, or throw you off balance, as much.

We share some tools and techniques that you can build into your daily routines to help you build your resilience, and stay grounded. This supports your mental health and wellbeing in the longer term, rather than just in the moment.

Build some of the suggestions from 'Now Breathe' into your **daily routine**. For example, make time for daily **deep breathing, mindfulness**, or using a calming app. Spending just a few minutes every day on techniques like these can have a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing.

**Try to form a new habit.** Building one of these techniques into your daily practice for 21 days may help you to achieve this.

**Make a to-do list:** break up your tasks into small, manageable chunks. Writing a list can help you organise your day. You could use a method designed by Stephen Covey called 'start with the big rocks', to help you prioritise the most important tasks. Google it to find out more!

**Set yourself some small, achievable goals,** with rewards for achieving them. You might challenge yourself to achieve small steps towards bigger goals that may seem insurmountable, using an app called 'Countdown'.

**Physical activity** can help your mental wellbeing. Build a walk or run into your daily routine, or try a new physical activity. Yoga, Pilates, Tai chi and Qigong are all fantastic forms of exercise to calm a busy mind. Take regular breaks to do some yoga stretches! Or you may prefer more vigorous exercise, like Zumba online. It's all about finding something that works for you.

**Healthy eating** can support your mental as well as physical health. There is a wealth of information available on the internet about healthy eating. Have a look at MIND's website, which explores the relationship between 'food and mood'. Keep well nourished by eating regular meals and choosing healthy snacks if eating 'on the go'. Try swapping sugary snacks for fruit, nuts or plain popcorn. Keep well hydrated by drinking 6-8 glasses of fluid every day, including water, tea/coffee, low fat milk, or low calorie, sugar free squashes. For more tips on eating healthily try the **NHS Eat Well** page.

**Learn about positive psychology**, which focuses on techniques to help you build resilience and become happier, often by changing how you think about things, e.g. by having a more optimistic outlook. There are many books and websites available about this. Watch Martin Seligman's YouTube videos or read his books.

**Meditation** is the practice of focusing your mind on an object, thought or activity. Meditation can help you achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm state, or a higher level of awareness. Try the 'Mindfulness meditation' app for simple guided meditations.

Try a **relaxation technique** called **Guided Imagery** or **visualisation**. This is about using our imagination to experience pictures, sounds, or other sensations we associate with being relaxed or happy. Search YouTube for something that suits you.

**Creative practices** can help some people cope with stress, anxiety, or other aspects of mental health. You could try creative writing, painting, or crafts. Or you could try **cerebral activities** and puzzles such as crosswords, sudoku, or solitaire.

**Listening to speakers** share their own experiences of mental ill health, or their views about how to support good mental health, can help you

reflect on your own experiences, or find ways to support yourself or other people. Some good examples include Kristin Neff's YouTube channel for talks about self-compassion, and Brene Brown's TED Talk on Vulnerability and Shame. Search for these and other similar speakers on YouTube and TED Talks. Or search TED for talks about self-care, including one by Andy Puddicombe (cofounder of the app called 'Headspace').

**Stay connected to your colleagues and other networks.** This is particularly important if you are

working from home, working on your own for long periods of time, or delivering frontline services, whether over the phone or face to face. If you need to talk to someone, take time out to catch up with a trusted colleague or friend.

**Try to get as much sleep as you can.** Many of us underestimate the importance of sleep, and how much sleep we need to be mentally and physically healthy. Try to keep a good sleep routine, going to bed for regular hours, to see if this helps. We suggest reading 'Why We Sleep', written by neuroscientist Matthew Walker.





**This final section includes a list of places to get support for your mental health and wellbeing.**

Consider **talking to friends and family** that you trust.

If phone seems too difficult you could **write a text / message / email or letter.**

If you don't feel like talking to someone then online forums can be helpful too. Here are a few you might consider:

- **Sane** charity (support forum)
- **I'm in Crisis** online emotional support charity
- **Daily Strength** (online support groups)

You could **speak to your GP.**

**The Samaritans** offer a **free listening service**, available at any time. You can talk about anything at all that troubles you.

If you are feeling anxious, you could download the **anxiety self-help guide by Moodjuice** from the internet.

**Your Organisation's Wellbeing support.** Consider exploring what support your organisation provides by checking your intranet site. You may have access to helplines, counselling via Occupational Health or resources that you may find useful.

The NHS has launched a package of wellbeing support. You can call **0300 131 7000** (7am - 11pm seven days a week) for support with mental health, financial help, bereavement care and coaching. For 24/7 text support Text **'frontline'** to **85258**. Through this service there is free access to mental health and wellbeing apps Unmind, Headspace, Sleepio and Daylight for all NHS staff.

Here at **Macmillan**, we want you to know that you are supported and valued, so we have extended the support of Macmillan's Employee Assistance Programme to all Macmillan professionals. This programme, provided by Health Assured, offers a wide range of confidential services 24 / 7 with support ranging from legal advice and counselling, to financial advice and health and wellbeing podcasts. To access support call **0800 030 5182** or download the Health Assured app / visit <https://www.healthassured.org>

Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland.

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