

## **Introduction**

It's no secret that a lot of us are feeling pretty stressed and anxious right now. Between skyrocketing unemployment rates, a broken education system, and the non-stop distraction of our phones where TikTok and Instagram have both us and the older generation completely hooked it's easy to feel totally disconnected from the real world.

To help handle the chaos, Youth Active has put together a quick, straightforward resource pack. It's packed with practical advice and low-effort activities you can try out at home plus a list of solid resources and support networks you can reach out to if you ever need a bit of extra help.

### ***How do I use this Resource Pack?***

You can work through the pack at your own pace either on your own or with someone else who you think could help you. There are a number of different topics discussed in the pack. It's best to work through each of them in order, giving yourself time to complete each one before moving on to the next. At the end of the pack there is a list of useful websites and contact numbers which you might want to contact if you feel they would be helpful.

### ***What topics are in the Resource Pack***

- The stress bucket.
- Coping with Emotions.
- 5 ways to wellbeing
- Healthy habits.
- Useful websites and resources

# THE STRESS BUCKET

Increasing your awareness of emotions and how they affect you each day is the first step to improving your mental health.

Everyday there are lots of different stressors which come up. Like a bucket full of water, we can get laid down by them all. Like a full bucket, our emotions can also spill over when things get 'too much'.



People who are able to open the tap and let the stress out are described as being

## KEY POINTS

- **EVERYONE** has a stress bucket that gets full of things that are difficult or stressful.
- Our bucket **CAN OVERFLOW** if we have too many stressors in it.
- Mental health problems happen when our bucket overflows.
- To stop our bucket from overflowing we need a tap at the bottom of the bucket to **LET OUR STRESS OUT**.
- The tap is opened when you use **HELPFUL COPING TOOLS**.
- If we use **UNHELPFUL COPING TOOLS** (like avoiding an activity or hurting ourselves) the tap doesn't work properly and bucket continues to fill up.

## ACTION: What things are filling your STRESS BUCKET right now?

Think about the things which filling your bucket and how can you open the tap?

Stressful things/situations	What tools do you already use to cope?	
<p><i>Example:- Worrying about knife crime</i></p>	<th data-bbox="841 992 1471 1028">Helpful coping tools</th>	Helpful coping tools
	<p><i>Example: going to less crime area and keeping away from crowded places.</i></p>	
	<th data-bbox="841 1469 1471 1505">Unhelpful coping tools</th>	Unhelpful coping tools
<p><i>Example: going to crowded places where youths gather and cause anti-social behaviour.</i></p>		

## **ACTION: How will you know if your bucket is getting too full?**

Think about the way you think, feel and behave when you are getting over loaded and you notice your mental wellbeing is not doing so well?

<p><b>I will be THINKING.....</b></p>	<p><i>Example: It is not safe place for me to be so I might be a victim</i></p>
<p><b>I will be FEELING.....</b></p>	<p><i>Example: Worried and feeling anxious, paranoid</i></p>
<p><b>My Body Clues will be .....</b></p>	<p><i>Example: slow heartbeat, stiffness</i></p>
<p><b>My behaviours will be .....</b></p>	<p><i>Example: avoid gathering locations, noisy places, shopping busy times.</i></p>

## COPING WITH EMOTIONS

**Mix it up:** Just like a proper toolbox, you need different strategies for different moods to stop big emotions from taking over.

**Break the habit:** When you are overwhelmed, your brain struggles to think clearly. It is easy to default to unhelpful habits just because they feel automatic.

**Plan ahead:** If you gather a list of safe ways to calm down or distract yourself before you get stressed, you do not have to think about what to do in the heat of the moment.

**Act early:** The minute you feel those heavy feelings coming on, go straight to your list and pick an option.



SOMETIME YOU WILL NEED TO USE MORE THAN ONE COPING  
TOOL TO FEEL BETTER.

SOME TOOLS WILL WORK BETTER FOR CERTAIN THINGS  
RATHER THAN OTHERS

Just Keep trying

# THE COPING TOOLBOX

A collection of your favourite and healthy items that you can use when you are feeling anxious, panicky or stressed.



Many therapists recommend creating a coping toolbox for those times when you need something to help you get through an anxiety attack, panic attack or any kind of distressed situation.

The items below are ideas to get you started. It's up to you what you add – just keep in mind that you want things that will give you a positive distraction and that will help bring you through the difficult times.



## IDEAS TO INCLUDE



### COMFORT ITEMS

A soft blanket, stuffed animal or something that soothes you.



### WRITE IT OUT

Notebook or journal to express your thoughts.



### MUSIC

MP3 player or playlist with songs that help you relax.



### SCENTS

Scented candles, essential oils or anything with calming smells.



### MEMORIES

Photos or notes from people who make you feel happy.



### PLAY

Playing cards, puzzles or small games to keep your mind busy.



### REFUEL

Healthy snacks or a protein bar to give you energy.



### HYDRATE

A bottle of water to keep you refreshed.



### POSITIVITY

Affirmations or kind notes to lift your mood.



### GROUNDING TOOLS

Stress ball, fidget toy or rubber band to snap on your wrist.



Remember, it's okay to ask for help. You are not alone.



**ACTION: What will you put in your COPING TOOLBOX?**

Fill in the boxes with ideas.

***Physical tools    Relaxation tools***

*(Things that involve moving around)    (Things that help your body and mind calm down)*

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***Social tools***

*(Things to do with people who help you)*

**Thinking tools**

(Things to stop you thinking about something or think more positively)

**Other helpful skills to try- If they help add them to your toolbox!!**



## Grounding techniques

Anxiety often makes us feel very detached, dissociated, or unreal. Grounding techniques help to bring us back to the here and now. The aim is to turn your focus of attention away from the past or current distress which can help you feel calm and safe



## WAYS TO WELLBEING

Studies have shown that there are 5 areas which impact on our wellbeing. Just small changes in the things you do each day in these areas will help you feel and cope better.

**ACTION:**                      **What can you change to feel better?**

Below is a list of the 5 ways to wellbeing along with some examples of things you could try. Think about each of the 5 ways and come up with some other ideas of your own which might help you open the stress bucket tap.

	What are you going to do each day/week- Plan when & how?
<p><b>Connect with others</b> Strengthening relationships and feeling valued and close to others is good for wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch films or a box set (or two) with someone.</li> <li>• Share some funny YouTube clips with someone.</li> <li>• Play a game with someone in your home.</li> <li>• Talk to someone in your home.</li> <li>• Plan activities to do in the home with people.</li> <li>• Message a friend to ask about what they are doing.</li> <li>• Talk to someone on the phone, through SKYPE, FaceTime or similar.</li> <li>• Do things together with people at home.</li> </ul> <p><b>What else could you try?</b></p>

**Stay active**

Being physically active improves mental wellbeing whilst decreasing anxiety and depression as does eating healthily and getting enough sleep.

**Ideas:**

- Create a routine to do every day
- Go for a walk if you can
- Plan a household schedule and agree how the household will run with everyone at home every day.
- Do some physical activity in your home
- Dance to your favourite songs
- Run up and down the stairs
- Do some star jumps
- Clean a room in the house
- Have a Wii-fit competition
- Stretch your arms and legs
- Do a YouTube exercise class
- Start an indoor exercise challenge app □ Do some weights with some tins of beans.
- Create a rota or plan for household jobs and things that need to be done.
- Get up at the same time each day and go to bed at the same time. Avoid laying in all day.

**What else could you try?**

**Take Notice**

Paying more attention to the present moment boosts wellbeing.

**Ideas:**

- Be close to nature.
- Have pictures of nature around the house.
- Use your 5 senses (sight, touch, smell, sound and taste) to notice the things around you.
- Open the window and watch and listen to the animals and birds outside.
- Grow some herbs or plants on a window sill.
- Try a new food and notice how it tastes, feels, smells.
- Close your eyes and notice what you can here.
- Notice the nice things other people in the house do for you and tell them.
- Download a mindfulness app and practice every day.
- Listen to your favourite music.
- Create a coping toolbox. Pick items which use the 5 senses. It might include colouring pens and pictures, stress ball, bubbles etc.

**What else could you try?**

**Learn**

Learning and seeking out new things stimulates the brain and helps contribute to wellbeing.

**Ideas:**

- Do something which gives a sense of mastery.
- Get creative.
- Try something you've never done before.
- Research something interesting to you.
- Learn a new word every day.
- Play a quiz with friends or family on line or face to face.
- Learn a new hobby.
- Read a book.
- Paint, draw or colour.
- Make and decorate a cake.
- Decorate a room.
- Tidy or rearrange the furniture in a room.
- Try a new recipe.

**What else can you try?**

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<p><b>Give</b></p> <p>Acts of kindness, no matter how large or small, can increase happiness, life satisfaction and a general sense of wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Ideas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sort through your things and get things you don't want ready to go to charity.</li> <li>• Offer to help someone do a task</li> <li>• Bake a cake or cook a meal for someone</li> <li>• Give your pet a hug</li> <li>• Drop a note through a neighbour's door asking if you can walk their dog or get something for them.</li> </ul> <p><b>What else can you try?</b></p>
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## HEALTHY HABITS

To give you the best chance of feeling better it's important to make sure you look after your physical health too.

**ACTION:**                      **How can you look after your health?**

Use the space below to decide if you need to make any changes

	What healthy changes can I make?
What is your <b>sleep</b> like? 	
What is your <b>eating</b> pattern like? 	
Do you take any <b>medication</b> ? 	
Do you do any <b>exercise</b> ? 	

Other things you can try, might include;

- Limit the amount of time spent listening and reading the news.
- Pick two sources of information to get updates and make sure these are reputable such as the WHO website, BBC news or Mind website.
- Avoid sources which might act as triggers for worry or low mood. For example social media etc.
- Focus on any positives, such as the community coming together to manage this, kind things people are doing to help each other etc.
- Focus on the evidence that this is a type of flu and most people recover from side effects within a few weeks.

# MANAGING ANXIETY & WELLBEING (IN A DIGITAL AGE)



**FOR SELF-CARE**

- Schedule daily movement to stay active
- Practice specific self-care routines
- Dedicate time to relaxation techniques (breathing, meditation)
- Create a solid routine and structure
- Cultivate positive energy; avoid negative sources

BlessingManifesting



**FOR PHONE & SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Practice 'conscious scrolling' on social media
- Minimize aimless phone usage
- Focus on connecting, not just consuming
- Explore online relaxation resources



**FOR STAYING ENGAGED & HEALTHY**

- Plan meals for healthy eating: 'you are what you eat'
- Keep busy by reading books
- Watch movies (stream online, create home cinema)
- Explore new creative relaxation techniques (art, music)
- Reconnect with virtual social circles

## USEFUL WEBSITES, HELPLINES AND RESOURCES

Currently people are being asked not go to their GP or to A&E. If medical attention is required. Then phone your GP surgery, or the North Wales Out of Hours GP Service on 0300 123 55 66.

Follow government advice regarding how to manage symptoms and when to seek medical advice.

### **Samaritans**

Offers free 24 hours, 365 days per year support to all.

**Tel: 0845 790 9090 / 116 123**

**Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)**



### **Papyrus**

Papyrus HOPElineUK provides confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person:

**Tel: 0800 068 41 41**

**Website: [www.papyrus.org.uk](http://www.papyrus.org.uk)**



### **Rethink Mental Illness**

This website offers advice and information –They have useful factsheets that can be downloaded. They offer general advice with regards to mental health. **Tel: 0300 5000 927**

**Website: [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)**



### **Mind**

Mind has many available resources, help and advice detailed on the website for young people, parents and professionals. They have a helpline, text services and online chat with advisors.

**Helpline: 0845 766 0163**

**Text: 86463**

**Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)**



### **NSPCC**

The national society for the prevention of cruelty to children. The website provides information on the services that they run and which are currently run in your local area. They also have a helpline

**Tel: 0808 800 5000**

**Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)**



### **The Mix**

Support service for young people and any difficulties or worries they may be experiencing.

**Helpline: 0808 808 4994**

**Crisis Messenger: 85258**

**Website: [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)**



### **Young minds**

24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support, you can text YM to start the text. **Text: [85258](text:85258)**



### **C.A.L.L. Community Advice and Listening Line**

Offers emotional support and information/literature on Mental Health and related matters to people of Wales.

Anyone concerned about their own mental health or that of a relative or friend can access the service. C.A.L.L. Helpline offers a confidential listening and support service Tel: **0800 132 737** / Text: **60062**



### **SAM**

This is a mobile app that offers young people wide range of self-help who are willing to manage their anxiety.

