

# Self-care Booklet

*The things that you can do yourself  
to look after your own mental  
health*

Haringey Trailblazer Team



## Introduction

We know that times are tough and lots of young people are adapting to a new way of living, and learning. Therefore it is more important than ever that look after ourselves, both physically and mentally.

We have drawn up a list of strategies and ideas for young people to use and hope that they help to manage your wellbeing. These are exercises and helpful tips that you can try on your own, or you can try with family.

It is completely up to you what helps. If you find something that works, keep doing it. If something is not helping then stop, and try something new.

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The content of the booklet is taken from the manuals that we use in sessions with young people.

## Building routines

Having a routine and structure to the day is known to support positive mental wellbeing.

Below are some tips to help build a daily routine;



Try to wake up and go to sleep at the same time each day. It can be tempting to stay up late or sleep in for long than usual however it is best to try and keep the same timings as you would at school to help transition between being at home and returning to school.



Structure your day like a school day. Try and create a workspace with all the equipment you need for the day. Take breaks and lunch like you would at school and only do home learning during school hours.



Create a timetable for your day and plan which topics you will cover and in what order you will do them. Create a list of goals you would like to achieve. Try to make your goals realistic and achievable and don't be too hard on yourself if you don't achieve everything you planned to do.



Make sure to set aside time for activities you enjoy and find relaxing! This will help you find a balance and separate your school work and down time.



Schedule some time to connect with Friends. You could organise an online study session or call a friend during a break.

Don't forget to include some form of exercise in your routine! There are lots of online workout videos that can be completed in your living room!

## Sleep hygiene

Sleep Hygiene describes good habits for effective sleep. These are small, simple steps that you can take to improve your sleep. Remember to focus your hard work on improving your S.L.E.E.P

### Snacks & Stuff – *Eat well in the day and eat little at night*



- **Reducing energy high substances** such as caffeine, nicotine or alcohol for 3-4 hours before bed will help
- **Avoiding a heavy meal** 2-3 hours before bed should also help to avoid any bursts of energy at bed time, a light snack before bed may be helpful however
- **Eating healthily over the day** will fill your body with the correct nutrients, supporting wellbeing and sleep



### Lighting – *Dark at night but daytime, bright*

- **Avoiding bright lights around bed time**, try dimming lights and assuring your bed space is largely dark to get your brain in the right place for night time.
- **Going out in the daytime** and finding daylight will help your mind re-establish the cycle of day and night, increasing wakefulness in the day and sleep pressure in the night.
- **Removing screens** 20 minutes before you intend to sleep, screen-light may keep us awake but more evidence suggests the activity of using technology itself stops your mind from becoming relaxed



### Exercise – *Exercise earlier*

- **Exercise** in the day to increase fatigue in your body to aid sleep, but limit yourself to light exercise in the evenings to prevent your body becoming overly-aroused

### Environment – *set up a cool, comfortable, consistent and quiet bed space*



- **Reserve the bed for sleep only**, spending time in your bed area when doing activities or not asleep will breakdown the connection of bed and sleep in your brain. So reserve bed for sleep to reinforce that bed means time for sleep
- **Keep a tidy and comfortable room**, this will give you a space in which you're physically able to sleep and help to settle your mind whilst removing any distractions
- **Keep a cool room temperature**, as human beings we're all evolved to seek out cool, dark and dry places for sleep. Imagine you're a caveman and make sure your bed space is as dark, cool and cave-like as possible!
- **Control noises** that may prevent you from sleeping, if you can make sure your bed is away from household noise. Consider how household noise may affect your sleep routine and remove noises in your room such as phones, loud music, etc.

### Preparing and Relaxing – *Gentle activities and relaxation strategies before sleep*

- **Use soothing or relaxing activities**, appeal to your senses with a relaxing activity like a warm bath or scented pillow to help you sleep. You might find slower activities like reading or listening to relaxing music help too to sleep.
- **Use distraction** to take your mind off of sleep, think about something bland that is not connected to sleep to avoid over worrying and lead you into a dazed sleep

# Sleep Routines

## Sleep Routines

Routines are a set flow of activities that regularly and predictably occur each day at the same time. Building routines around sleep will help to prepare your mind and body for rest, forming cues and clues that get you more sleepy as your brain learns the pattern of motions. A sleep routine will also prime your **sleep pressure** and **body clock** to get you sleepy at the same point, this being gradually reinforced over time. *A routine may include: bathing, dressing, brushing teeth/hair, reading, lights out, etc.*

## Bed Area Routines

As well routines around activities and time, it is worth re-emphasizing the importance of a regular environment. When we're looking for clues around when to be sleepy, the biggest clue is often big and bed shaped, so having somewhere your brain knows is the main place just for sleep will form a huge cue.

## Napping Routines

Try not to! Much easier said than done, but napping in the day will lower the amount of sleep time you can get at night time. In our sleep models **sleep pressure will be much lower** in the evening as you're already well-rested, meaning there's less in your body pushing you towards sleep. We might imagine sleep as pizza dough, if gathered in one place (night) it's perfect but if stretched (over the day) holes appear.

## Top 3 Tips for Time around Sleep

**Golden 20min Rule:** If you are lying awake for 20mins+ get up! Avoid overthinking, do something for half an hour or until you feel tired and then try again.

**Silver 15min Rule:** If you are struggling to sleep on time over a number of nights rethink the bed time. Aim to sleep 15mins before you actually fall asleep now, then add 15mins on each night.

**Bronze Rule:** If it's near an acceptable bed time and you're tired go to sleep. Don't fight sleep!



## Distraction techniques

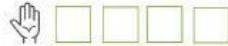
Having distraction techniques can help you to focus on something else when you're in a panicked, anxious or upset. At first it may seem like a difficult thing to do, but it can be a useful and healthy way of coping with challenging situations. There are many distraction techniques that you can try. Here are a few ideas that you could try out:

### 54321

Name 5 things you can see



Name 4 things you can touch



Name 3 things you can hear



Name 2 things you can smell



Name 1 thing you can taste



### Colours

Find 3 things in the room that are red/yellow/green etc..



### Counting

Count backwards from 100 in multiples of 6 or backwards from 100 in multiples of 3



### ABCD

Think of animals/ names/ books/ countries beginning with A, B, C etc. till you get to Z



### Try doodling or colouring

You can find great designs online to colour in and we have included a few at the end of the booklet.

## Breathing exercises

Breathing plays an essential role in worry. Practising techniques to control your breathing will reduce your general anxiety. It is helpful to practice doing this at a quiet time when you will not be disturbed. It can be done sitting up or lying down. With enough practice, it can also help to reduce your anxiety when you are in stressful situations. It can be helpful to imagine letting go of your anxieties with each breath. Imagine the worries dissolving or floating away.

### Controlled breathing



1. Put one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach
2. Take a deep breath in slowly through your nose for 7 seconds; both your hands should rise gently as you breathe
3. Hold the breath for 2 seconds
4. Release your breath slowly for 11 seconds
5. Practice!

### Balloon breathing

*Begin to notice your breath. Are you taking big breaths or little breaths? If you are taking little breaths, start to make them bigger ones. Follow your breath as the air goes into your nose, down your throat, and all the way into your belly. Let that breath fill up your belly like a big balloon! When you are ready to let that breath out, pull your belly button in towards your back to squeeze all the air out. See if you can make your breath go out exactly the same way it went in. Starting in your balloon belly this time and pushing it all the way back up your throat and out of your nose.*

*Now, as you fill up your balloon belly, open your arms really wide so that you are making your whole body fill up like a balloon. Imagine you are filling up with so much air that you could almost fly like a balloon. As your belly fills, move your heart up as you let your head tilt back, looking up to the sky. You can imagine yourself floating up into the clouds. When you are ready to exhale, bring your arms back to your body and give yourself a nice big hug, rounding your back as you curl into a little ball.*

*Keep breathing like this: making yourself as big as you can on the inhale, and as small as you can on the exhale.*



## Hand Trace



1. Stretch your hand out like a star
2. Get the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your fingers up and down.
3. Slide up each finger slowly ~ slide down the other side.
4. Breathe in through your nose ~ out through your mouth.
5. Put it together and breathe in as you slide up and breathe out as you slide down.

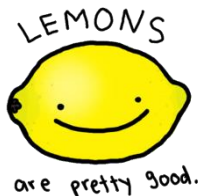
Keep going until you have finished tracing your hand.

## Grounding exercise

Grounding techniques are a set of tools used to assist you to stay in the present moment during episodes of overwhelming emotions. Staying in the present moment allows people to feel safe and in-control by focusing on the physical world and how they experience it.

Grounding techniques are useful when we feel distressed, overwhelmed emotionally, triggered or mentally removed from the present moment.

## Lemon squeeze



Pretend you are squeezing a whole lemon in your left hand.

Squeeze it hard.

Try to squeeze all the juice out.



Feeling the tightness in your hand and arms as your squeeze

Now drop the lemon and relax. See how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed.

Repeat with other hand



## Muscle relaxation

It may be helpful to find a warm comfortable place where you will not be disturbed to practise these techniques. This exercise will teach you to relax different muscles in your body by tensing them for 5 seconds and then relaxing. Whilst tensing each muscle, study the tension and notice how different it feels when they become relaxed.



### Progressive muscle relaxation

- **Hands** – clench your left fist, and then relax. Do the same with your right.
- **Arms** – bend your elbows and tense your arm and bicep, then relax.
- **Neck** – Press your head back and roll it from side to side slowly. Feel the tension moving then bring your head forward into a comfortable position.
- **Face** – focus on your jaw and forehead. Lower your eyebrows into a frown and then raise them. After 5 seconds relax them and clench your jaw for 5 seconds. Notice the difference between tensing and relaxing.
- **Chest** – take a deep breath and notice your chest rising. Hold it for a few seconds then relax.
- **Stomach** – tense your stomach muscles as tight as you can and then relax.
- **Legs** – straighten your legs and stretch out as far as possible. Bend your feet up towards your face. After 5 seconds on stretching, wiggle your toes and relax.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness can help us enjoy life more and pay better attention to the world around us, especially how we interact with it through our bodies. Mindfulness techniques and meditations are designed to awaken us to the sensations of the present moment, such as the sound of the birds or the feel of an object. The goal is that we are not caught up in the constant workings of our thoughts and have more time to see the present moment clearly.

When first trying mindfulness it can be useful to listen to a guided video – these can be found on website such as YouTube or on apps like Spotify.

## Positive thinking

Positive thinking sounds a bit like it might be 'easier said than done', especially when we're going through a tricky situation. However, it can actually just mean treating yourself with the same level of compassion and kindness that you extend to other people.

Positive statements encourage us and help us cope through distressing times. We can say these encouraging words to ourselves, and be our own personal coach. We have all survived some very distressing times, and we can use those experiences to encourage us through current difficulties. Examples of coping thoughts might be:



- ★ Stop, and take a breath, I can do this
- ★ I can use my coping skills and get through this
- ★ Relax those muscles
- ★ I have done this before, and I can do it again
- ★ These are just feelings, they will go away
- ★ I'm not going to take this personally
- ★ I don't need to rush, I can take things slowly

## Worry Tree

The worry tree helps us effectively deal with worrying thoughts.

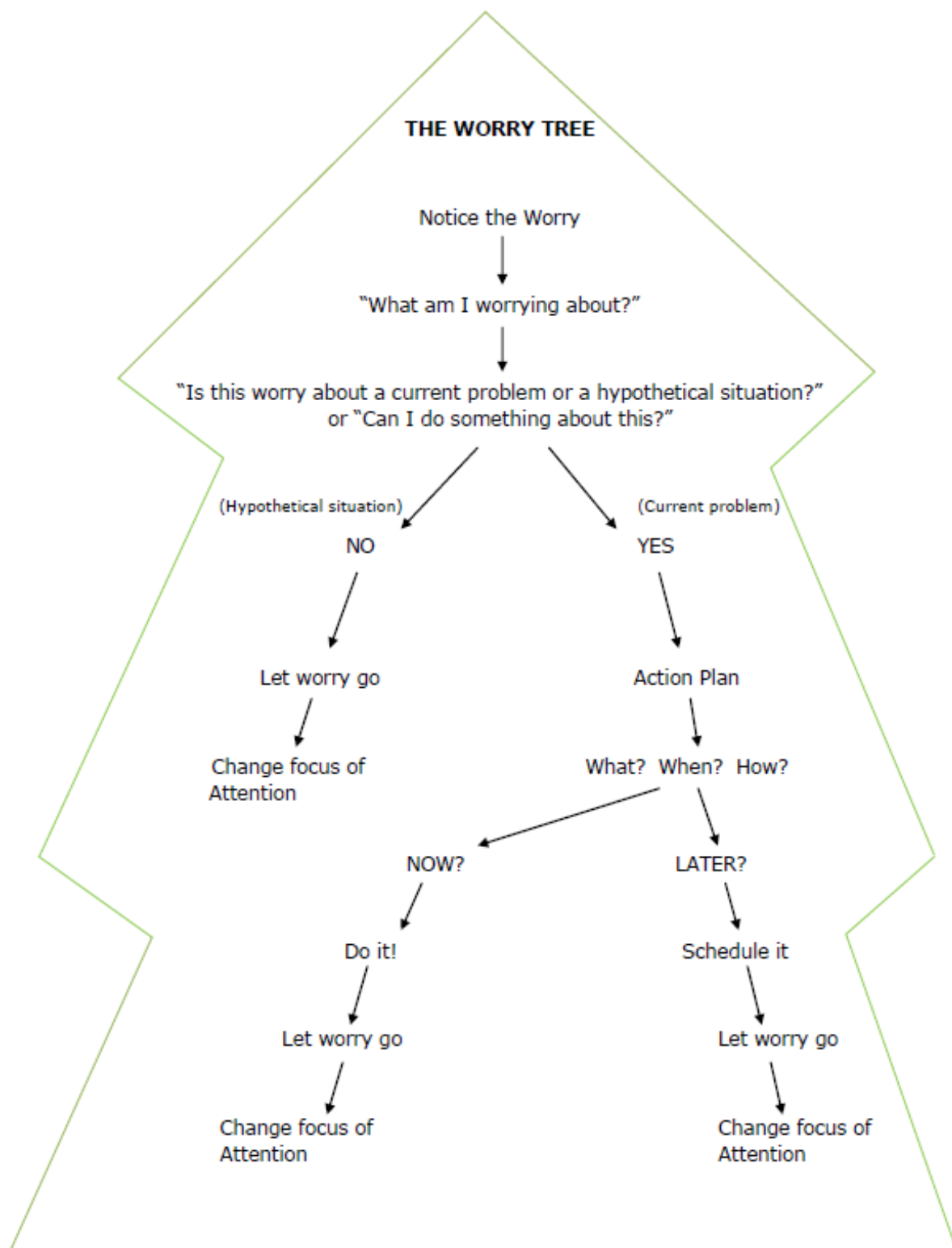
The worry tree helps us deal with Type 1 worries which are the worrying thoughts that seem to happen all the time.

Type 1 worries can be separated into two further categories:

Hypothetical situations: "what if...?" thoughts about some terrible event that might happen" The ozone layer has holes - what if the end of the world happens soon?"

These thoughts are usually followed by imagining what would happen in those worst-case scenarios.

Current problems: are those worries that relate to a real situation, that we CAN do something about. In which case, we can decide what to do, when and how - which will be much more helpful than just continually worrying about it.





## Helpful Apps



These Apps are digital tools that have been assessed by the NHS. This means they meet the NHS quality standards for clinical effectiveness, safety, usability and accessibility and has a supportive evidence base.

### Apps suitable for all ages

App	Cost	Target area	Suitability for YP
Beat Panic	£0.99	Designed to guide people through a panic attack or raised anxiety. The app uses a series of soothing coloured flashcards with messages designed to help you overcome a panic attack in a calm, gentle manner.	Suitable for anyone who experiences panic attacks
Calm Harm	Free	Designed to help people resist or manage the urge to self-harm. Uses the principles of dialectical behaviour therapy. Encourages users to distract themselves from urges to self-harm and help manage their emotions in a more positive way.	Suitable for all ages
Catch It	Free	How to manage feelings like anxiety and depression. Uses CBT to help change the way people think and feel about things Use the app to record your mood in three simple steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•‘<b>Catch It</b>’ records and rates your mood.</li> <li>•‘<b>Check It</b>’ asks you to take a moment to reflect on what you’re thinking.</li> <li>•‘<b>Change It</b>’ asks you to think about a better way of dealing with a problem.</li> </ul>	Suitable for all ages
Chill Panda	Free	Chill Panda uses the camera on a smartphone or other mobile device to capture your heart rate. Chill Panda asks you to rate your mood to work out your current emotional state. You are then encouraged to take part in a variety of playful tasks and activities,	Chill Panda is for children and adults

		including breathing and light exercise.	
Cove	Free	<p>Cove is like a mood journal, except instead of using words to express how you feel, you use music.</p> <p>To create music, choose from six different moods – calm, struggling, longing, playful, clouded and gentle.</p>	Suitable for anyone
Stress & Anxiety Companion	Free with in-app purchases	<p>Uses CBT</p> <p>Managing stress and anxiety at home or on the go with breathing exercises, relaxing music and games.</p> <p>Helps to identify your anxiety and stress triggers</p>	People with mild – moderate anxiety or stress
Thrive: Feel Stress Free	To unlock all functions requires a subscription £5.99 / month	<p>Uses game to track your mood and teach you methods to take control of stress and anxiety.</p> <p>Learn relaxation techniques like meditation and deep-breathing</p> <p>Lets you track your mood, emotions and situation you were in at the time.</p> <p>Reminds you of how you reacted on a previous occasion to make you feel better.</p>	Suitable for any age
Ieso	Free in some areas	<p>Online course using instant messaging for people with MHP. CBT</p> <p>You will be matched with a therapist</p> <p>Appointments are either 30 or 60 minutes long and can be scheduled for any time of the day, including evenings and weekends.</p> <p>The length of your treatment depends on your needs. You can expect to have between four and 12 therapy sessions.</p>	Suitable for all ages
MyCognition Home	Free with in-app purchases	<p>You start off by doing a 15-minute test called MyCQ, which assesses: planning, decision-making, memory, concentration, and speed and accuracy.</p> <p>Your MyCQ score is used to create a personalised training programme to help improve your performance in some of these areas.</p> <p>You're encouraged to spend 90 minutes a</p>	Suitable for children and adults

		<p>week – that's 15 minutes a day – using the app's brain training games.</p> <p>Aims to help people think faster, focus better and improve decision making and memory.</p>	
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### Apps suitable for adolescents

App	Cost	Target area	Suitability for YP
Be Mindful	£30.00 for 10 sessions	Online course for reducing stress, depression and anxiety. It guides through elements of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy	Be Mindful is for anyone aged 16 years or older
Big White Wall	Free	Online community for people who are stressed, anxious or feeling low. Support is given from trained professionals. You can talk anonymously to other members and take part in group or one-to-one therapy with therapists.	For anyone aged 16 or over who wants to improve their mental health
BlueIce	Free	<p>Evidence based app to help young people manage their emotions and reduce urges to self-harm.</p> <p>Has a mood diary/wheel to track your mood – allows young people to see patterns/ identify triggers.</p> <p>Offers personalised set of activities designed to reduce distress.</p>	BlueIce is suitable for young people attending mental health services who are self-harming
distrACT	Free	<p>Access to information and advice about self-harm and suicidal thoughts.</p> <p>There's advice and support information, including emergency contact numbers, how best to work with healthcare professionals, and safer alternatives to self-harming.</p> <p>In the app's Chill Zone, you can find resources that may help you feel better.</p>	Anyone over the age of 17

MeeTwo	Free	Safe and secure forum for teenagers wanting to discuss any issue affecting their lives. Anonymously discuss with experts or other teenagers going through similar experiences. Aims to build confidence, increase wellbeing and improve emotional resilience Post and replies are moderated and therefore only positive feedback is published	Teenagers
SilverCloud	Free	Online 8 week course to help manage stress, anxiety and depression. CBT approach Work on a series of topics chosen by your therapist Therapist will check in with you every 2 weeks	Over age of 16

### Apps suitable for adults

App	Cost	Target area	Suitability for YP
FearFighter	Free – In App purchases	9 week course (50mins/ session) for people who struggle with phobias, panic or anxiety. Uses CBT and gradual exposure Weekly questionnaire to see progress	Suitable for Adults
Feeling Good:positive mindset	Free – In App purchases	Uses relaxation, CBT and resilience building techniques to improve positive feelings, self esteem and self- confidence 12- track Positive Mental Training	Over 18s
My Possible Self: The Mental Health App	Free with in-app purchases	Use the simple learning modules to manage fear, anxiety and stress and tackle unhelpful thinking. Content from world-leading mental health experts Information has been proven to reduce stress, anxious feelings and low mood in 8 weeks.	Over the age of 18

## Colouring for relaxation



*Just Color*



