

The Mental Health Support Team

Covid-19 Newsletter
April 2020

Welcome to our second newsletter! During the lockdown and disruption to schools we wanted to share some resources that parents and carers can do at home when looking after their young people to support their wellbeing.

We are still open for referrals for 1:1 support via phone/video call. Please make a referral via our website. Referrals can come from teachers, other professionals, parents/carers or young people themselves.

<https://secureforms.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/mhst/>



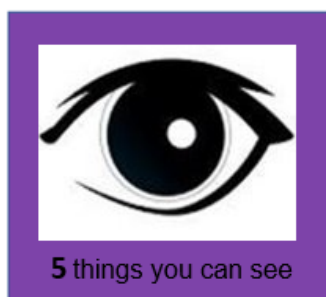
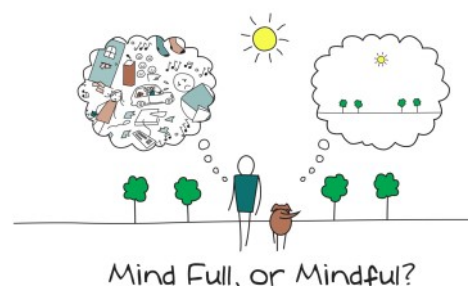
A lot of the activities and ideas we suggest are based around the **5 Ways to Wellbeing**: <https://bit.ly/wayswellbeing>

A link to our first **podcast** around how we can use the 5 Ways can be found here: <https://bit.ly/5WaysPod>

Mindfulness!

Being present & engaging fully in each moment.

A Simple Grounding Technique for Anxiety & Overwhelming Feelings:



You can find a [mindful colouring sheet](#) at the end of the newsletter.



Grounding techniques often use the five senses—sound, touch, smell, taste, and sight—to immediately connect you with the here and now. They help to produce sensations that are difficult to ignore or that distract you from what's going on in your mind.



Videos

- ⇒ 5 Minute [Meditation](#) You Can Do Anywhere
- ⇒ Guided Breathing [video](#): 'Do Nothing For 10 Minutes'

Breathing, Yoga & Games for [relaxation](#)!

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Creative!

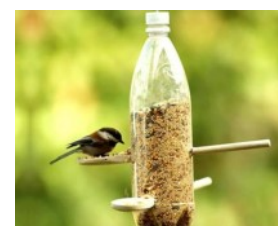
Glitter Jars

[These](#) are great for promoting calm feelings, coping with worries, and are beautiful to look at! Getting lost in watching the glitter fall to the bottom can give you time to calm down and relax when you are feeling anxious or overwhelmed. They're also fun to make too!



Make Your Own Recycled Bird Feeder

This [article](#) gives you instructions to make a bird feeder using recycled plastic bottles and a few other simple materials. Once it's finished you can spend some time outside in the sunshine peacefully watching birds come and go. It's an easy way to interact with nature without having to go very far!



#DrawWithRob - Rob Biddulph is making [videos](#) every Tuesday & Thursday for children to learn how to draw things— from dinosaurs, self-portraits, to sonic the hedgehog! Although it's aimed at a younger audience anyone can have a fun time following along—you also gain a great sense of achievement by creating and doing something new!



Active!

Exercise is amazing for mental health as it releases chemical endorphins in the brain which are known to improve our mood. Keeping active is therefore especially important in stressful and uncertain times.

Star Jump Challenge!

How many star jumps can you do in 1 minute?

These are a fun full body activity. See if you can jump in-between each one for an extra challenge!



No equipment HIIT workout

Do each exercise for 40 secs and have 20 secs rest. Keep going until you've done all 5, then see if you can repeat the circuit 3 times:

- Mountain Climbers
- Squat Jumps
- Plank
- High Knees on-the-spot
- Press-ups

If you need to stop and have a break then that's ok. Just do your best!

Learn or make a Dance Routine to your favourite song! This is a fun way to keep active & there are lots of routines to learn on YouTube!



Yoga Pose



Cobra Pose

Great for stretching the back, shoulders & arms, elevating your mood!

Lie on your tummy with your legs straight out behind you. Activate your legs by pressing your thighs and the tops of your feet against the ground. Place your palms flat next to your shoulders and draw your shoulder blades together down your back.

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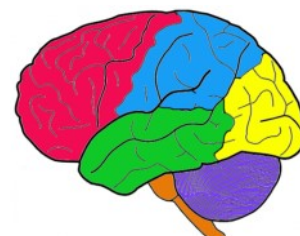
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Science!

All about The Brain!

- ⇒ This fantastic [video](#) from SciShow is one of many in a psychology series. 'Getting to Know Your Brain' discusses the different structures in the brain, their functions, and how the brain can influence our behaviour. SciShow is well worth subscribing to!
- ⇒ An [interactive resource](#) from scientists at the University of Manchester includes facts and games to learn more about the brain, its areas, and its functions!
- ⇒ This [TED Talk](#) 'How Your Brain Tells You Where You Are' is the first in a series of videos relating to the brain. It discusses groundbreaking experiments in the field of neuroscience that help us to understand how we orientate ourselves in the world!
- ⇒ A [podcast](#) from BBC Radio 4 'A History of the Brain' is a series of episodes discussing the brain and what we now know about it. The first episode called 'Einstein's brain' discusses what happened with his brain after his passing as scientists were fascinated by what they might find.



Find [Brain Facts](#) at the end of the newsletter!

Fun & Games!

M and M's Tell Us:

This is a fun game to play if you want some new things to talk about after you've run out of conversation with the people you're staying with! All you need are some M&M's. One person picks one at a time and then has to respond to whichever colour they choose:

- RED:** Say something about yesterday
- ORANGE:** Something you do well.
- YELLOW:** Something that you can remember from your childhood.
- BLUE:** Something you learned last week.
- BROWN:** Something you can't live without.
- GREEN:** Something you watch/listen to.



Recommended Ted Talks

Here are some incredible Ted Talks to give you inspiration while you're in lockdown!

[All It Takes is 10 Mindful Minutes](#)

[How Boredom Can Lead to Your Most Brilliant Ideas](#)

[How to Create Meaningful Connections While Apart](#)



Outside Links

Parent Survey from Oxford University: Are you a parent of a child or young person in year 0 (reception/foundation) to year 11?

If so please take part in <http://cospaceoxford.com/survey>

Emerging Minds: <https://bit.ly/EMAnxiety>

Action for Happiness: www.actionforhappiness.org

Childline: under 19s can call **0800 1111** for free, confidential support

Self Care Ideas for Children: <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>

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10 Top Tips from the NHS to Battle Coronavirus Worry!

Life is changing for us all for a while. It may cause you to feel anxious, stressed, worried, sad, bored, lonely or frustrated. It is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. What's important to remember is that this situation is temporary, and these difficult feelings will pass. Here are some simple things you can do to take care of your mental health and wellbeing during times of uncertainty:

Stay connected with people. Maintaining healthy relationships with people we trust is vital for mental wellbeing. You can try phone calls, video calls or social media instead of meeting in person – even if you haven't done much that day, you can talk about anything!

Talk about your worries. It's normal to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember that it's OK to share your concerns with others you trust – and doing so may help them too! If you're not sure who you can talk to then you can try a [helpline](#) instead.

Support and help others. Helping someone else can help you as well as them. Try to think of things you can do to [help those around you](#). Is there a friend or family member nearby you could message? Are there any community groups you could join to support others locally?

Feel prepared. Think through how your normal week will be affected and what you need to do to solve any problems. Working through these issues that staying at home brings will help you to feel more prepared and less concerned. If you need help, then you could ask people you know or find local and community help groups. Remember that this is all temporary.

Look after your body. Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse. Try to eat healthily, drink enough water and [exercise](#) regularly. Check out our active section for some ideas to get you moving!

Stick to the facts. Find a credible source you can trust like [Gov.uk](#) or the [NHS website](#) – and fact-check information you get from newsfeeds, social media or other people. False information can lead to fear and anxiety – so make sure you check whatever you're sharing too. You might also want to consider limiting the time you spend reading news coverage. It's good to keep informed but focusing on the outbreak too much can become unhealthy.

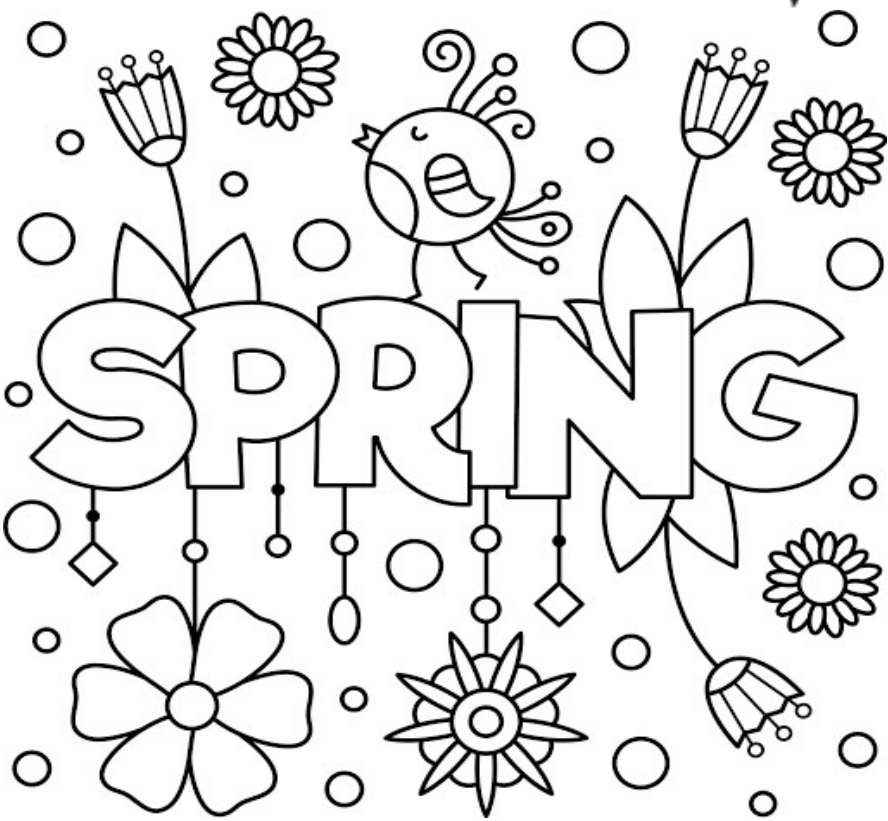
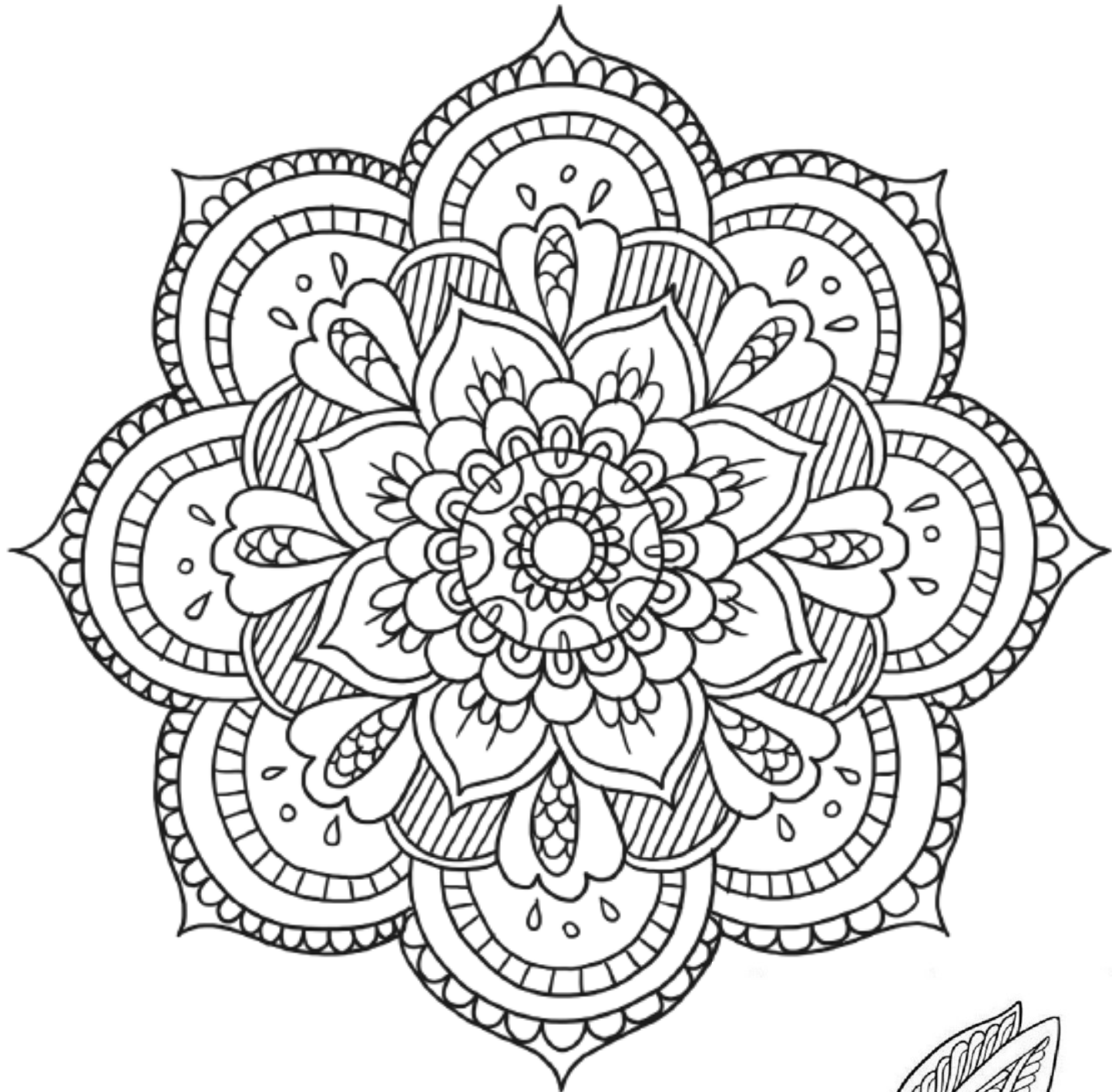
Stay on top of difficult feelings. Concern about the coronavirus outbreak is perfectly normal. However some people may experience intense [anxiety](#) that can affect their daily life. Try to focus on things you can control, such as your behaviour, who you speak to, and where and how often you get information. Here are some ideas to help manage anxiety, or check out our mindfulness section!

Do things you enjoy. When we're feeling worried, anxious or low, we might stop doing things we enjoy. Focusing on your favourite hobby, relaxing indoors or connecting with others can help with anxious thoughts and feelings. You could even try learning a new skill or trying a new hobby. Or check out our fun and games section for some ideas!

Focus on the present. Focusing on the [present](#), rather than worrying about the future, can help with difficult emotions and improve our wellbeing. Relaxation techniques can also help to deal with worry, or you could try the activities from our mindfulness section!

Look after your sleep. Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel mentally and physically. Try to maintain regular sleeping patterns and keep up good sleep hygiene practices – like avoiding screens before bed, cutting back on caffeine and creating a restful environment. Here are some [tips](#) to help improve your sleep!

Adapted from this [article](#)

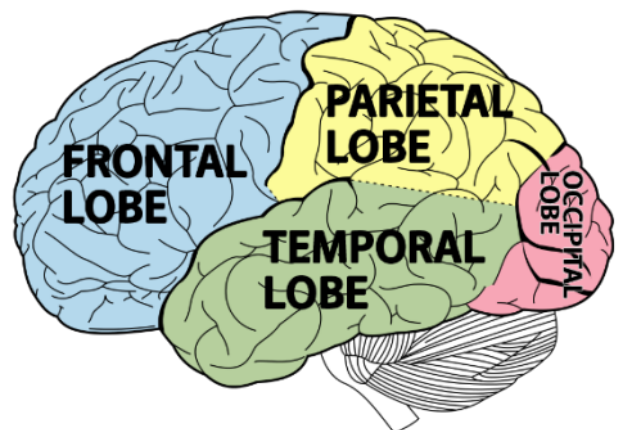


Brain Facts!

**DID YOU
KNOW?**



- ⇒ Do you know that your brain has around 100 billion nerve cells?
- ⇒ Brain nerve cells use neurotransmitters as signal to communicate with each other.
- ⇒ Your brain is more powerful, more complex and more clever than any computer ever built.
- ⇒ The brain is the control centre for your body and it sits in your skull at the top of your spinal cord. It is part of the Central Nervous System.
- ⇒ Your brain is wrapped in 3 layers of tissue and floats in a special shock-proof fluid
- ⇒ It is estimate that we each have between 50,000 and 70,000 thoughts a day!
- ⇒ It is constantly dealing with hundreds of messages from the world around you, and from your body, and telling your body what to do. It gets information from
- ⇒ Your brain collects all the information, sorts it out, thinks, remembers, creates, compares, solves problems and coordinates actions all at the same time.
- ⇒ The brain stores lots of things in its memory: facts and figures and all the smells, tastes and things you have seen, heard or touched.
It remembers links between things, which is why a smell or sound might remind you of something!
- ⇒ The Brain has 4 'Lobes' and these form the 'cerebrum'. There is a part called the Cerebellum and also the Brain Stem.
- ⇒ The outer layer of the brain is called the cerebral cortex.



For more information & facts!

https://www.braininjuryhub.co.uk/media/images/AnIntroductiontotheBrainFactsheet_897.pdf