

# Becoming your healthy self

*Your monthly self-help toolkit*

COLOUR ME IN! 

**Volume 4:  
Stress**

advocacy  
focus

[www.advocacyfocus.org.uk/healthyself](http://www.advocacyfocus.org.uk/healthyself)

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# INTRODUCTION

## Stress

We can all experience stress at different times in our lives. Sometimes, stress is a good thing, but a lot of the time stress can create feelings such as anxiety and being out-of-control.

We are living in a society which continues to become faster and more complicated, meaning that stress levels are rising.

Our brains are designed to cope with some stressors and initiates a "fight-or-flight" response, however in today's stressful world, our brains may feel overworked and unsure of when this response is needed.

**Check out the facts, myths, tips and coping techniques in this booklet for ways to be able to cope more with stress and identify coping mechanisms so that you can feel positive and in control.**

## COVID-19 and its impact on stress

We understand that this year has been a difficult one for most people and understandably has had a large impact on people's stress levels.

With normal everyday practices either changed completely or put on hold, there are many things which may have created different stress levels over the past year.

The pandemic means that people have lost loved ones, their jobs, had to home-school their children, as well as just get used to a different way of life. A loss of routine, financial strain and loss of support are identifying factors on stress levels.

We hope that this booklet can provide some support during this challenging time.

"It is extremely important ... that we acknowledge that this uncertainty is stressful. And in fact, this anxiety is appropriate under the circumstances."

— Roxane Cohen Silver, Ph.D.,  
Professor of Psychological  
Science, Medicine, and Public  
Health at University of California,  
Irvine

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## What is stress?

Stress is a reaction to being placed under pressure. There is no specific medical definition of stress, but many medical professionals describe it as a feeling of emotional tension stemming from an event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous.

## What are the types of stress?

Stress can be broken down into several categories, but the two most common forms of stress include acute stress and chronic stress. Acute stress is defined as short-term stress that goes away quickly. It may present itself in threatening situations or momentary scenarios such as during an argument or when you need to slam on the brakes in your car. Acute stress is often described as intense and unpleasant and usually lasts no longer than one month.

Chronic stress however lasts for a longer period of time. People with money worries or in problematic relationships are most likely to suffer from chronic stress as their trigger is ongoing. If stress continues for several weeks or months, it is usually described as chronic stress.

## What causes stress?

Stress can be triggered by different things for different people. However, causes of stress are often linked to experiences in your life that may include:

- Being under too much pressure
- Lacking control over a certain situation
- Being overwhelmed by responsibilities
- Worrying about things
- Undergoing a period of uncertainty (i.e. a global pandemic)

It is also important to know that you can sometimes experience stress when there are no obvious causes.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## What are the symptoms of stress?

It may be difficult to recognise that you are feeling stressed. Some people manage stress better than others and may not display any signs that they are suffering from stress. Stress however, can cause many different symptoms both physically and mentally. These can include headaches, muscle pain, stomach issues, chest pains and sexual problems. If you are stressed you may also find it difficult to concentrate on a task, become forgetful and struggle to make decisions. Some people may recognise changes in their behaviours when they are stressed. They may smoke, drink, or eat more than usual and may find that they are sleeping too much or too little.

## Can stress be positive?

Stress is a normal feeling and your body's natural reaction to a demand or threat. At one time or another everyone will suffer from some form of stress and many people require stress to complete tasks and meet demands. 'Eustress' is a term used for positive stress that enables people to perform better, increase motivation, focus energy, and meet deadlines at work, for example.

## What is post-traumatic stress?

Stress experienced following a specific stressful, frightening, or distressing event can sometimes lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A person with Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) often has flashbacks or nightmares where they will relive an event that was incredibly stressful. PTS is estimated to affect 1 in 3 people who had a traumatic experience and can develop immediately after the event or weeks, months or even years later. PTS is an anxiety disorder and may require psychological therapies if symptoms persist.

# STRESS - THE FACTS

49%

**of 18-24-year olds** who have experienced high levels of stress, felt that **comparing themselves to others** was a factor, which was higher than in any of the older age groups.

51%

**of adults** who felt stressed, reported feeling depressed, and **61% reported feeling anxious.**

37%

**of adults** who reported feeling stressed, reported feeling lonely as a result.

74%

**of adults** have felt so stressed at some point over the last year, they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope.

16%

**of adults** said they had self-harmed as a result of stress.

32%

**of adults** said they had experienced suicidal feelings as a result of stress

# THE MYTHS WE NEED TO STOP BELIEVING

## MYTH - Only major symptoms need attention

### FACT

Stress can escalate quickly when it is not managed. Chronic stress has been negatively linked to many physical problems, and stress hormones can have a real impact on how well a person functions in everyday life.

Research has shown that an excess of stress hormones can alter several things. These hormones are capable of producing a whole-body response, even if an individual shows minor symptoms. Typical treatments for stress include learning stress management techniques, prescription medication, and behavioural therapy.

## MYTH - Stress causes grey hair

### FACT

It has long been a myth that grey hair is caused by high-stress levels. However, this is not supported by research. Hair does not turn grey due to stress. The pigment responsible for hair colour is produced less as people age. Age is a large factor in the development of grey hair, as well as a person's genes and some other illnesses. Therefore, evidence suggests that stress is not a large factor in developing grey hair, if at all.



# THE MYTHS WE NEED TO STOP BELIEVING

## MYTH - Stress is the same for everyone.

### FACT

This just isn't true, although we may have similar symptoms, we don't always experience stress in the same way. Something that makes one person feel stressed might help another person to thrive, for example, in a high-pressure job. The impact of stress is also very subjective. People may deal with certain types of stress better than others, or they may bounce back more quickly, depending on the type of stress, and if the source of stress is no longer there.

## MYTH - Stress is everywhere, and we can't avoid it.

### FACT

Learning how to avoid stress is difficult, and sometimes people cannot avoid it entirely, but you can develop coping strategies so that you're not overwhelmed by it.

There are many effective strategies to manage stress that people use every day.

Some of these strategies include, but are not limited to:

- Understanding what stress looks and feels like to them
- Having a support system, including friends, family or co-workers
- Accessing professional support if necessary
- Exercising each day (30 minutes of walking, for example)
- Setting clear, realistic, and measurable goals
- Setting aside time each day for mental wellness and relaxation

## MYTH - No symptoms means no stress

### FACT

Just because you don't have symptoms doesn't mean you're not experiencing stress. For may be for example, masking your symptoms with medication, which may cause you to miss the signals that help you to reduce the strain on your physiological and psychological systems. Even though stress is a psychological effect, chances are you will experience it in a physical way. Common signs include feeling anxious, tired, run down or short of breath, feeling overwhelmed, disorganised and having difficulty concentrating.



# REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE

## The stresses of everyday life

**My depression and anxiety has peaked and troughed at various points throughout my life since I was a teenager, my Dad passed away when I was 12 and I couldn't grieve properly at the time because of a difficult family situation.**

**Nowadays, it's often the stresses of everyday life which have the biggest impact on my mental health.**

Two years ago, my mental health got really bad. I had just started a new job with the ambulance service but became physically ill only a few weeks after starting my new role. I was passed between nurses, doctors, and other GP services, trying to find out what was wrong. My GP told me I was fine, so I carried on working but it turned out it was my appendix. I was upset, frustrated and in a lot of pain.

This, on top of a new, high pressure job was quite overwhelming. Eventually my appendix was removed, but my own wellbeing had been impacted quite significantly due to the stress of the whole thing. I had around three months off work but was stuck on my own without any visitors – my wife was working too, so we didn't see each other much.

**I wanted to be working, but knew I needed to take some time for myself.**

Although I eventually went back to work, I had to take a few more periods off work due to stress. There was a support service for people working in the ambulance service and I really appreciate my colleague's support, but unfortunately there is not enough help for everyone.

While working in the control room I would sometimes receive verbal abuse from worried callers. Often, it is just people venting their concern, which I understand, but words can be just as painful as violence, especially when you're already stressed or feeling particularly low. Unfortunately, because of the stress, in June 2017 I stopped working for the emergency services and began working as a peer mentor instead.

**Sometimes it feels like as soon as you sort one stressful situation, another one pops up.**

Although I love my new job, I had a 30 mile commute to work each way. At first I accepted it, but soon having no time to switch off and relax really began to take its toll. I have been off work since December, but hope to go back soon.

In January, my wife and I moved into a house closer to work. The process of buying a house is stressful for anyone, it was particularly difficult to get a mortgage – when my anxiety is heightened, I have a habit of impulse spending.

I also found trying to access mental health support in my new area really stressful and complicated. Of course,

being off work has added to the stress of it all, as my wife needs to work harder than she already does to cover the bills.

When I'm feeling really stressed, whether that's work, studying, housing issues or my relationships, I go off in my own world with my two Chihuahuas, I don't know where I would be without them. They both recognise when my mental health is bad and respond by being super affectionate.

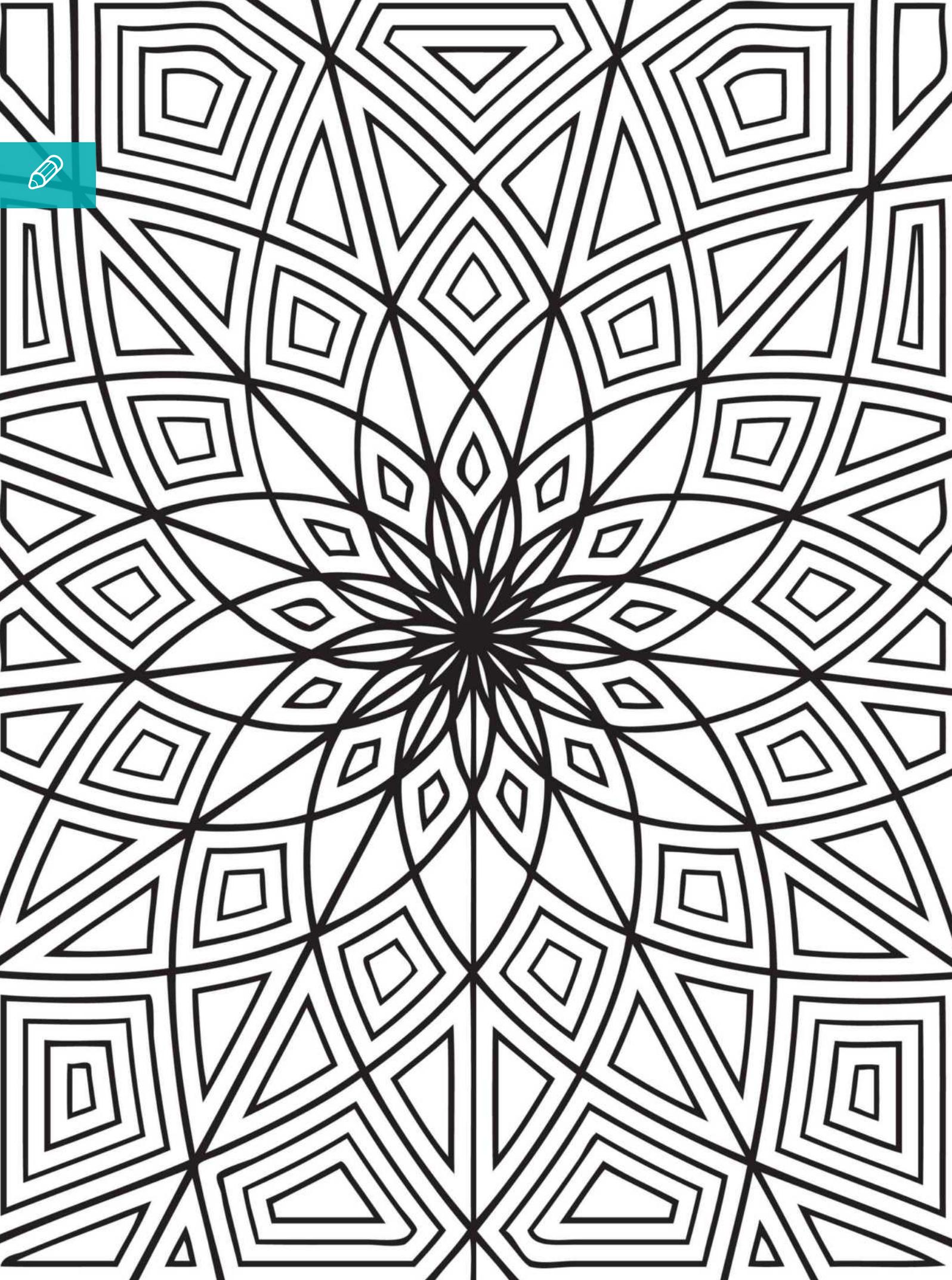
**"There have been times when I've felt like I was better off not here, but I couldn't leave my wife or my dogs. They have literally saved my life."**

Getting outdoors helps me better manage my mental health and I know running is good for me, but having the motivation to go out and run can be incredibly hard. I sometimes find just getting up and washing difficult, let alone running.

However, I've set myself a challenge and will be running Simplyhealth's Manchester 10k on 20 May.

It will be the first time I've done anything like this, but what better way to get through Mental Health Awareness Week than by committing to a challenge and sharing my story to help others to open up about their mental health problems. I have goals in life, a list of things I want to do and a plan of how I am going to get there. Achieving these will have a positive impact on my wellbeing.

*Stacie-Mai X*



# MENTAL HEALTH TRACKER

Throughout the day, use the symbols below to track how you are feeling, what you are doing, and anything else that you think may be significant to your mental health and wellbeing. If your moods, thoughts or behaviour are getting in the way of your everyday life, consider sharing your tracker with someone you trust and feel able to talk to. A friend, family member or even your GP.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

I felt...		How much (many) _____ did I...				Other			
	Happy		Hyper	zzz	Sleep	D	Drugs		
	Sad		Anxious	F	Food	Al	Alcohol		
	Tired		Irritable	E	Exercise	SH	Self Harm		
	Angry		Calm	C	Cigarettes	S	Thoughts of suicide		



# WELLBEING ASSESSMENT

## In the last week I have:

- Felt upset or cried for no reason
- Avoided a situation because I was worried how I would cope
- Been awake all-night thinking about things
- Found it very difficult to get out of bed in the morning
- Felt unable to talk about my feelings to someone close to me
- Felt unable to focus or concentrate
- Constantly felt tired and lethargic
- Felt as though nothing is going right
- Worried that friends/ family/ colleagues don't like me
- Had feelings that I don't deserve what I have got
- Felt as though I don't want to engage in hobbies/ leisure activities
- Felt anxious or uncertain about the future
- Used drugs or alcohol excessively to try and make myself feel better
- Been bothered by a lack, or increase, in appetite
- Felt angry or irritated by minor things
- Felt as though I can't control my emotions
- Been unable to relax
- Experienced persistent, negative thoughts

If you have ticked six or more symptoms, you may be experiencing difficulties with your mental health. Take some steps to improve your own wellbeing with our wellbeing tips or, speak to your GP about further support. If you need immediate support, refer to our signposting section on page 21.

# MY MENTAL HEALTH TEMPERATURE

Our mental health is fluid; sometimes we have good days and sometimes bad days. It's useful to regularly assess where we are so that we know if we need extra support.

Mild	1	I feel amazing, everything is absolutely fine, and nothing is going wrong. I feel very happy with my life.
	2	At times I feel a little frustrated or down, but it doesn't take much to distract me from this and I'm soon cheered up.
	3	There are some things which are bothering me, but I'm coping ok. It might be I'm a bit overtired, not eating healthily or feel a little emotional. It usually helps if I offload to someone I trust.
Moderate	4	I'm having a bad time at the moment. I know I will be able to get myself through it. I need to take part in some self-care activities, i.e. going for a walk or reading a book.
	5	My mental health is starting to impact on parts of my everyday life, I'm having more bad days than normal. I'm finding it hard to find motivation for things that I used to find easy. It might be time for me to speak to my doctor.
	6	My mental health is stopping me from doing some things the way that I usually would. I'm experiencing negative and intrusive thoughts which are hard to cope with.
Severe	7	I'm avoiding being in any situations which might make me feel worse, but I'm also avoiding things that would normally make me feel better. I do not feel my usual self. This is getting serious; I should definitely seek help.
	8	I can no longer keep hidden how much I'm struggling. The way that I'm feeling is seriously affecting my sleep, appetite, productivity at work and ability to have fun. I'm socialising less and becoming more withdrawn. My mental health is affecting nearly all aspects of my life.
	9	I feel like I'm at breaking point. I feel like I hate myself, my life and the world. I am deeply unhappy, and I can't see how things will get better. I'm having thoughts of hurting myself or others. I need to seek urgent help.
	10	My mental health is at rock bottom, there is no worse feeling than how I feel now. I've completely stopped looking after myself. Things can't get any worse than they are now, and I feel like I can't cope with life anymore. I need to seek immediate help.

# WELLBEING TIPS

Whilst it may sometimes feel as though nothing can be done about our stress, whether it is a home, school, or at work, there are steps that you can take to try and relieve some of the pressures causing stress and regain control. You have a lot more control than you think...

## Connect

Spending quality time with someone who makes you feel comfortable and safe is a natural stress reliever. The people you talk with don't have to be able to fix your stress, they just have to be good listeners. Building a network of close friends can help to build resilience against stress factors.

## Have fun

Ensure you have some 'me' time and plan some fun and relaxing activities. This is a necessity for making sure that you are in the best place to be able to fight life's stressful moments. Do something you enjoy every day and make sure that you keep your sense of humour along the way, as this is one of your biggest assets.

## Identify

Stress management can only begin once you have identified the source. To identify your true sources of stress, it is important to look closely at habits and attitudes as well as your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

## Move

Physical activity is a huge stress reliever as exercise releases endorphins which make you feel good. Just 30 minutes of regular exercise is needed to feel the benefit, and this can be in one 30 min block or small chunks of exercise throughout the day.

## Manage your time

Not managing your time properly can lead to a very stressful and unhealthy lifestyle and can impact on you both physically and emotionally. It is important to:

- **Prioritise tasks** - make a to do list and work through it in order of importance.
- **Delegate responsibility** - if other people can help you do tasks then let them. You don't have to do everything yourself.
- **Split tasks into small chunks** - break the task down step-by-step - it's less overwhelming.
- **Don't over commit** - it is okay to say no to tasks so that you are not stretching yourself too much and instead allowing yourself more time to spend on what is important.
- **Finding balance is key** - with many of us working from home, it is crucial that we think about keeping our personal and professional lives as separate as possible. Think about creating a workspace away from your relaxation areas and make sure you don't start earlier or finish later.

## The four A-s of stress management

Some stressors can arise at obvious times and you may be surprised at the number of stressors that you can remove from your life by using the 4 A-s and putting these into practice.

1. **Avoid** - avoid unnecessary stress. Learn to say 'no' and take control of your environment. Look at your responsibilities and tasks and if you feel there is too much, get rid of the less important and unnecessary things.
2. **Alter** - alter the situation. If you cannot avoid a stressful situation then do what you can to alter it. This can be done by changing the way you usually behave. For example changing your thinking patterns can help to prevent a situation becoming stressful.
3. **Adapt** - adapt to the stressors. If you cannot change the situation then try and change your expectations and attitude. Re-gain your control of the situation.
4. **Accept** - accept the things you cannot change. Some sources of stress are unavoidable and the best way to deal with this is to accept them. This can be difficult but over time is easier than fighting against something that you cannot change. Try repeating "this is out of my control, I cannot change this" and see whether that helps.

# PRACTISING GRATEFULNESS

On this page, and the next, is a box for each day of the month. Try and write down one good thing that has happened this month. It can be a daily thing, it can be weekly, or it can be for the whole month, just put something down that is positive and brings back a good memory for yourself.

Instructions:

1. Write the date
2. Write down what made you happy, try to focus on something that YOU have done;
3. Write down how it made you feel happy;
4. Keep this list to look back at over the month, or pop it into a memory jar for future reflection. Try opening it at the start of the New Year to look back on all the happy memories for the old year!

Day 1 Date:

Day 2 Date:

Day 3 Date:

Day 4 Date:

Day 5 Date:

Day 6 Date:

Day 7 Date:

Day 8 Date:

Day 9 Date:

Day 10 Date:

Day 11 Date:

Day 12 Date:

Day 13 Date:

Day 14 Date:

Day 15 Date:

Day 16 Date:

Day 17 Date:

Day 18 Date:

Day 19 Date:

Day 20 Date:

Day 21 Date:

Day 22 Date:

Day 23 Date:

Day 24 Date:

Day 25 Date:

Day 26 Date:

Day 27 Date:

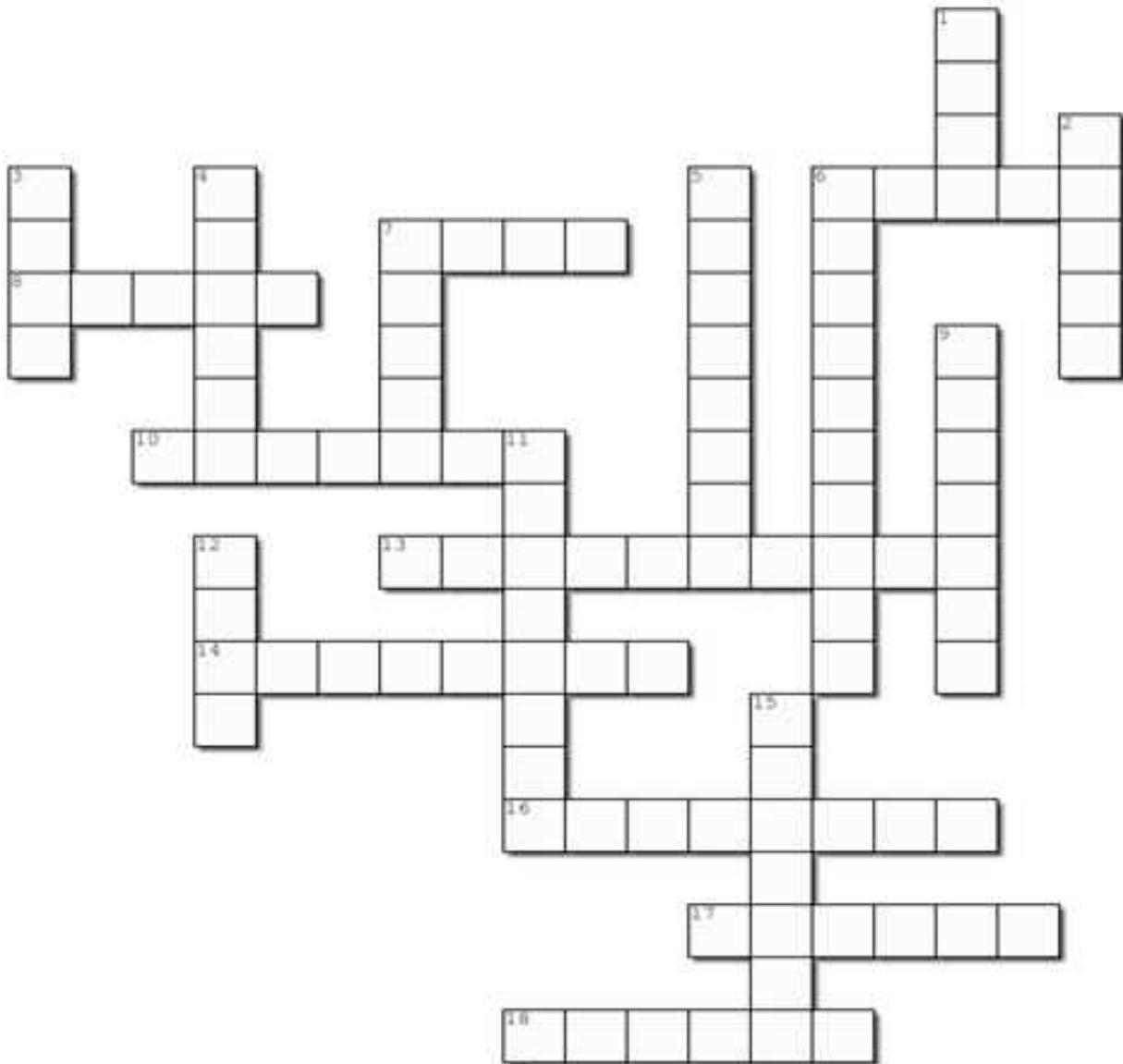
Day 28 Date:

Day 29 Date:

Day 30 Date:

Day 31 Date:

NOTES



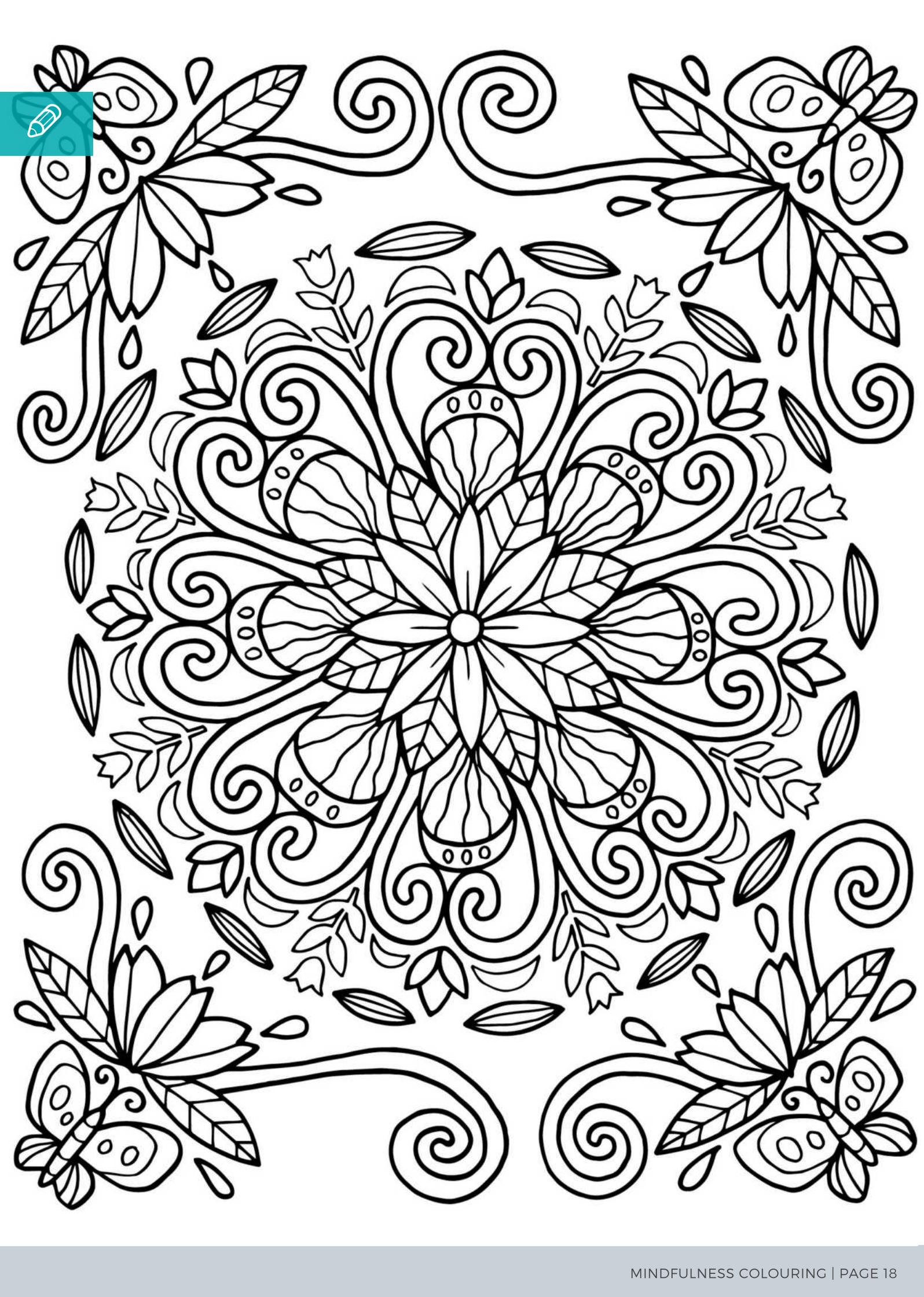
### Down

1. Having these around can help reduce stress
2. A type of stress
3. Often confused with other disorders
4. Utilising .... techniques can help reduce stress
5. A byproduct of stress which can cause more stress
6. Another way of dealing with stress
7. More likely to experience physical signs of stress
9. A state of body cause by stress and adrenaline
11. A hormone released when stressed
12. Having a good one of these helps with stress
15. A type of headache associated with stress

### Across

6. Another useful tool for reducing stress
7. In America, 80% of people blamed their stress on...
8. Natural way our bodies reduce stress and its associated hormones
10. A type of stress
13. A hormone released when stressed
14. Can help reduce stress
16. Popular herb used to reduce stress
17. A ..... amount of stress can be helpful
18. Stress can affect .....

Answers on page 26





**"If you feel like  
you are losing  
everything,  
remember  
trees lose their  
leaves every  
year, and they  
stand tall and  
wait for better  
days to come"  
- Unknown**

# STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

STRESSOR	REACTIONS TO STRESSOR (emotional/physical/behavioural)	COPING STRATEGIES
<i>Sunday night thinking about the week ahead</i>	<i>Sleep disruption, restless, anxious thoughts, and feelings</i>	<i>Make a list, plan meals and activities in advance</i>

# CHANGE YOUR THINKING



## PLAY TIME

Sit back, relax and be spontaneous. Being creative and allowing time to just 'play' helps the brain make new connections.



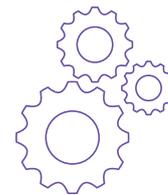
## DOWN TIME

Let your mind wander. Don't think about any particular goal. It helps the brain recharge.



## TIME IN

Shhhh. Quiet thoughts help your brain and body connect. Focus on sensations, thoughts and feelings.



## CONNECTING TIME

Connecting with others - in person where possible and not via a screen! - as well as stopping to connect with the natural world (literally stopping to smell the roses).



## PHYSICAL TIME

Get up and get moving. It strengthens the body, including the brain.



## SLEEP TIME

Get your zzzzzs! While the brain snoozes, learning is consolidated. Sleep also allows the brain to recover from the days experiences.



## FOCUS TIME

Closely focus on a task or goal. This challenge makes deep connections in the brain.

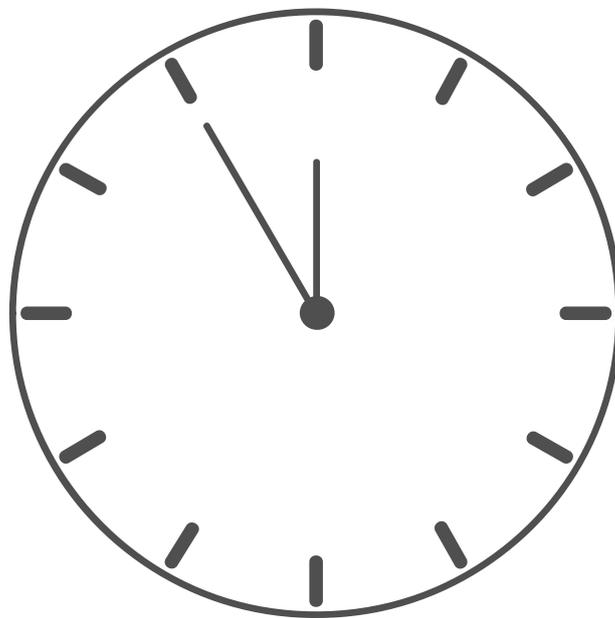
# 5 MINUTE SELF CARE



Write down three  
nice things about  
yourself

Do a short  
mindfulness  
breathing exercise

Drink  
some  
water



Listen to a  
song that  
makes you  
smile

Step outside for  
some fresh air and  
listen to the noises  
around you

Book that  
appointment  
you've been  
putting off



## HELP & INFORMATION

### ANXIETY UK

Provide support and help if you've been diagnosed with, or suspect you may have, an anxiety condition.

**Text service: 07537 416905**

**Infoline: 03444 775774**

**Web: [www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)**

### EVERY MIND MATTERS

Answer five quick questions to get your free plan. With tips to help you deal with stress and anxiety, improve your sleep, boost your mood and feel more in control.

**Web: [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)**

### MIND

Provide information on mental health problems and where to get help.

**Infoline: 0300 123 3393**

**Text: 86463 Mon – Fri 9 am – 6 pm**

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

"It's overwhelming. Sometimes you can't see beyond the thick fog of stress."

### SAMARITANS

Provide confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

**Helpline: 116 123 (Everyday, 24 hours)**

**email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)**

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

### STRESS MANAGEMENT SOCIETY

Information about stress and tips on how to cope.

**Web: [www.stress.org.uk](http://www.stress.org.uk)**

### SUPPORTLINE

SupportLine provides a confidential telephone helpline offering emotional support to any individual on any issue.

**Helpline: 01708 765200**

**Web: [www.supportline.org.uk](http://www.supportline.org.uk)**

# SELF-HELP APPS AND PODCASTS



## MY POSSIBLE SELF

The mental health app clinically proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and low mood. Track your mood every day, understand what signs and symptoms to look for, and discover practical steps to look after your own mental health.



## CALM

Calm is the leading app for medication and sleep. Join the millions experiencing lower stress, less anxiety, and more restful sleep with the guided meditations, Sleep Stories, breaking programmes, masterclasses, and relaxing music.



## SHINE

Make caring for your mental and emotional health a habit. Learn a new self-care strategy every day, get support from a diverse community, and access an audio library of 800+ original meditations, bedtime stories, and calming sounds to help you shift your mindset.

These apps have free trial periods with a payment plan to enjoy the full content for the rest of the year.

## DAILY MEDITATION PODCAST

A library of meditations at your fingertips. Be happy, healthy, more at peace, and sleep better as you're greeted every morning with a daily guided meditation technique.

## ANXIETY SLAYER WITH SHANN AND ANANGA PODCAST

An award-winning podcast for anyone suffering from anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress, panic attacks, and stress. Listen in for a rich collection of supportive conversations, meditations, relaxations, expert interviews, and breathing techniques to help you feel calm, centered, and relaxed.





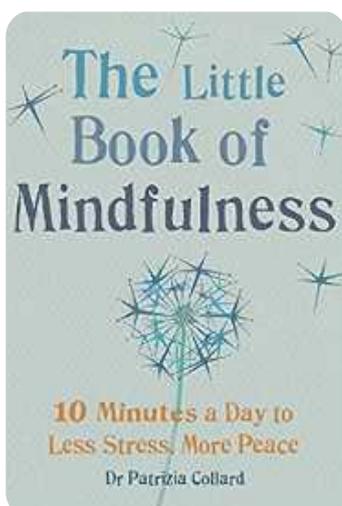
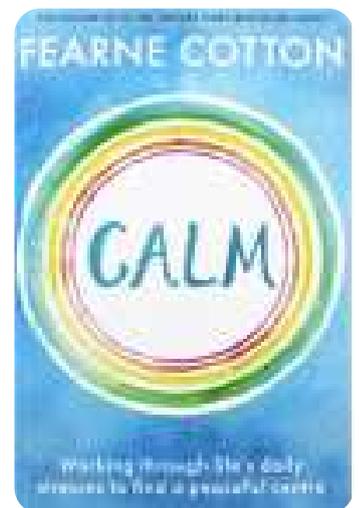
# SELF-HELP BOOKS

## CALM – FEARNE COTTON

**'Calm for me is less about thought and much more about feeling...'**

"Join Fearne Cotton in this search for inner tranquility within the modern-day mayhem of all of our lives. Fearne has not written this book because she strolls around with a huge grin on her face feeling care-free, Fearne has written this because the modern day can often make you feeling like you want to escape.

In search of the solution, discover all expert advice, easy to try ideas, activities to complete and little things that make a difference. We have a mission to find the simple things that can guide us away from all of the stress!"



## THE LITTLE BOOK OF MINDFULNESS: 10 MINUTES A DAY TO LESS STRESS, MORE PEACE

"Mindfulness is the easy way to gently let go of stress and be in the moment. It has fast become the slow way to manage the modern world - without chanting mantras or setting aside hours of time for meditation.

Dr Patrizia Collard will show you how to bring simple 5- and 10-minute practices into your day in order to free yourself from stress and, ultimately, find more peace in your life."

# SELF-HELP BOOKS

## THE STRESS SOLUTION: THE 4 STEPS TO CALMER, HAPPIER, HEALTHIER YOU: THE 4 STEPS TO A CALMER, HAPPIER, HEALTHIER YOU - DR RANGAN CHATTERJEE

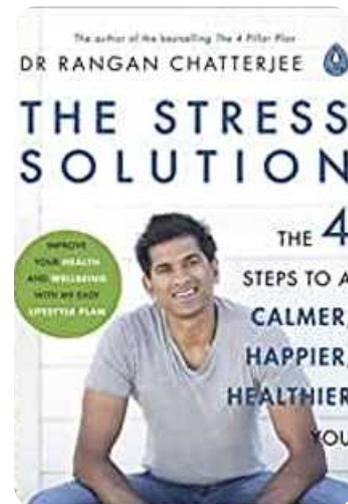
**Become a calmer, happier and healthier you** with Dr Rangan Chatterjee's The Stress Solution.

"In this book, BBC One's Dr Rangan Chatterjee, draws on two decades of practice to show you how to make easy-to-follow and sustainable health and lifestyle improvements to your everyday life.

Top tips include:

- How to breathe to feel happier
- How to schedule in "me time"
- How to become less addicted to your phone
- How to find and ignite your passion

At no extra cost, learn how to slow down and feel calmer and more in control of your life by investing in your long-term health."



## BRAINTEASER ANSWERS

Page 17

### ACROSS

6. Music
7. Work
8. Sleep
10. Chronic

13. Adrenaline

14. Exercise
16. Lavender
17. Little
18. Anyone

### DOWN

1. Pets
2. Acute
3. PTSD
4. Breath
5. Insomnia

6. Meditating

7. Women
9. Jittery
11. Cortisol
12. Diet
15. Tension

"[It feels like] the world is closing in on me, I can't breathe and I'm running out of time."

# WHO ARE WE?

**We are a registered charity providing free health and social care advocacy support across the North West.**

Advocacy means supporting a person to become more involved in important decisions about their care and support needs.

Our Advocates help people who have difficulty communicating their thoughts, needs and wishes or making decisions about things, such as how or where they are cared for.

We help people access the support they need and become more involved in decisions about their care and treatment.

**We help people live to the lives they want to live.**

## Did you know we offer a wide range of training courses?

You can check out our Mental Health training courses [here](#), and our Menopause courses [here](#). We can also provide tailored advocacy training, you can enquire about this by emailing [training@advocacyfocus.org.uk](mailto:training@advocacyfocus.org.uk).

All training revenue received is put back into supporting our services and communities.

<https://www.advocacyfocus.org.uk/Pages/Category/mental-health-first-aid-training>

<https://www.advocacyfocus.org.uk/menopause-training>

Coming up in the next issue: **Suicide**  
Stay up to date by signing up to our newsletter at:  
[www.advocacyfocus.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/newsletter](http://www.advocacyfocus.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/newsletter)

