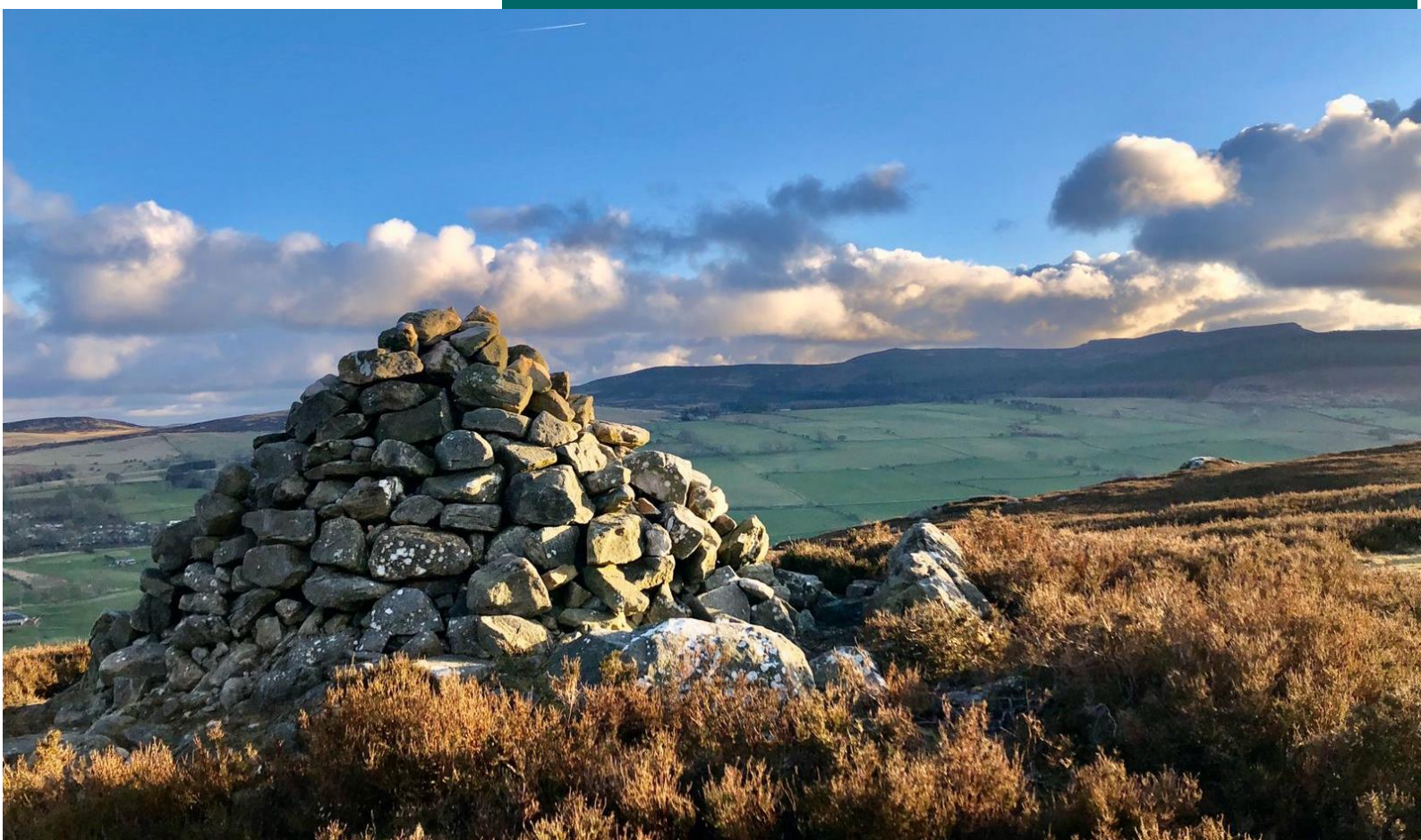


Resources to help us  
stay well during  
this period of  
uncertainty, self-  
isolation and social  
distancing



The whole world is experiencing an uncertain and difficult time right now, with many of us left feeling worried, removed from our usual routines or social activities, and facing new challenges as we are asked to stay indoors and distance from others. This can be lonely and create feelings of anxiety or low mood, especially if we do not have family nearby or we live alone.

Feeling anxious as we enter this period of unknowns is completely understandable, however, there are things we can do to try and minimise the impact of this worry and to look after ourselves. Many of our usual coping strategies may not be available to us right now; so keeping ourselves distracted and engaged whilst staying indoors may feel like a difficult task. We know that getting regular exercise, fresh air and social contact can help to manage some of those worrying thoughts or feelings of low mood, but what else can we do from our own homes?

In the past couple of weeks I have had lots of useful conversations with people about looking after our mental and physical health during the pandemic, and they have come up with some lovely examples of things that they are trying to do to help them through this difficult time. I wanted to share these with you, in the hope that it might give you some ideas of ways to look after our mental health whilst we are facing these new challenges;

- Create a plan for the day every morning; to help bring structure and routine to our week. Use to do lists, goal setting or timetables to help do this.
- Try to keep to your usual schedule (for example; every Wednesday I will go for a walk instead of my dance class which I can't attend right now, and every Friday morning I will ring my friend instead of our usual meeting for a coffee in town).
- Avoid watching too much news or searching for information online/in newspapers on coronavirus, as it can make us feel more anxious. Also, not all of the information out there is helpful or factual.
- Spend some time watching television or listening to the radio each day to 'switch off' from the outside world – try something that you're already interested in or try something new which you might learn from.
- Keep a journal to document your thoughts and feelings; we know that writing down our worries can distance ourselves from them and take away their power. You can even try ripping them up or throwing the page in the bin too!

- Ring a family member or friend each day for a chat (use video calling if that option is available, so you can see their face). This might help us feel connected.
- Accepting that our feelings are normal at a time like this can be helpful; acknowledging them and labelling them might help to make sense of them.
- Try to keep a usual sleep, bedtime and waking routine.
- Do some exercises in the house, either seated or standing, which help to stretch our body and keep our muscles active.
- Try to do a daily creative activity, such as painting, knitting or sewing. This can keep our minds distracted and help us relax. We could use our creative time to make something for our home, for friends and family, or for charity.
- Keep your mind active with puzzles or games, such as jigsaws or crosswords.
- Get some fresh air each day if you are able to and it's safe to do so; either by spending time in your garden, standing at the front door or having a small walk (following social distancing guidelines).
- Look through old photo albums and spend time thinking about happy memories or good experiences that you have had.
- Listen to your favourite music. Music has the ability to change our mood, calm us down and bring memories to mind.
- Read a book or magazine.
- Find a comfortable and quiet spot and do a relaxation exercise. These can be breathing exercises or imagery exercises.
- If you have seeds or bulbs, and a love of gardening, plant something and watch it grow and flower during the lockdown period.
- Check in on friends and family, neighbours or colleagues during this time. You could write to them, send them a message or phone them.
- Sing (even if you don't think you can) along to some music or with friends/family.

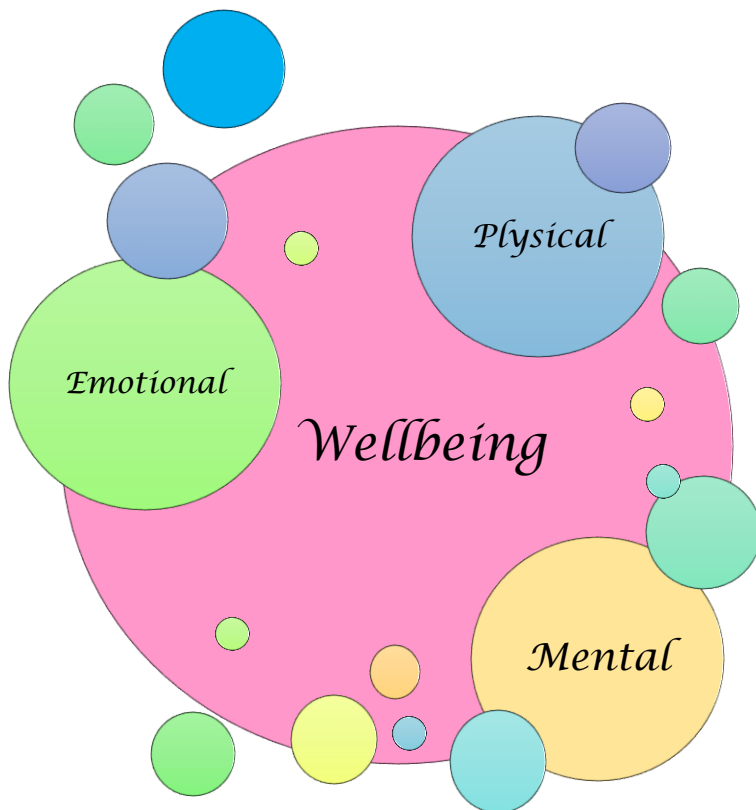
These ideas for activities will help us to take control of our time and fill it with things that promote looking after ourselves. The coming months will be hard for a lot of people, but I hope that you find an element of purpose, strength, comfort or fun in these ideas and the resources included in this wellbeing pack.

I wish you all good health in this difficult time.

Warm wishes,

Rowan

## Creating a personalised wellbeing plan



Think about the following aspects of your wellbeing, and how you can help to look after those over the coming weeks. This will look different for everyone and may help to think about what support you may need during this time.

**Emotional wellbeing** may include social interaction or connection with others, spiritual influences, ways to help you relax, or creative activities.

**Mental wellbeing** may include ways to keep your mind active such as puzzles or mindfulness techniques, or strategies to reframe negative thoughts or worries.

**Physical wellbeing** may include looking after our diet, sleep and exercise or Interacting with nature. It may also include looking after any physical health problems.

Try creating your own wellbeing plan here;

Physical	Emotional	Mental

## Good Things

### Activity: recognising the good!

Things, people or places that you love;

write or draw one thing that brings you joy;

write down your favourite childhood memory;

List 3 things to look forward to;

1.

2.

3.



## Breathing exercise

**This calming breathing technique for stress, anxiety and panic takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere.**

You will get the most benefit if you do it regularly, as part of your daily routine.

You can do it standing up, sitting in a chair that supports your back, or lying on a bed or yoga mat on the floor.

Make yourself as comfortable as you can. If you can, loosen any clothes that restrict your breathing.

If you're lying down, place your arms a little bit away from your sides, with the palms up. Let your legs be straight, or bend your knees so your feet are flat on the floor.

If you're sitting, place your arms on the chair arms.

If you're sitting or standing, place both feet flat on the ground. Whatever position you're in, place your feet roughly hip-width apart.

- Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.
- Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5. You may not be able to reach 5 at first.
- Then, without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently, counting from 1 to 5 again, if you find this helpful.
- Keep doing this for 3 to 5 minutes.

**MINDFUL COLOURING:**

Use pens, pencils or paints and spend some time making me colourful.



## Relaxing 'Safe Place' Imagery

(Adapted from [www.getselfhelp.com](http://www.getselfhelp.com))

All visualisations can be strengthened by ensuring you engage all your senses in building the picture in your mind's eye - it's more than just "seeing". Try to engage your sense of smell and touch, try to imagine the sounds and tastes just as much as you develop the image.

*If you notice any negative links or images entering your mind whilst develop your positive image and safe place, then discard the image of that place, take some deep breaths and think of something else. Before returning to the exercise to develop a new image.*

*Avoid using your home (or bed) as a 'safe place', because if they signal safety for us, we have those resources already.*



Start by getting comfortable in a quiet place - where you won't be disturbed.

Take a couple of minutes to focus on your breathing: close your eyes, become aware of any tension in your body, and let that tension go as you take each out-breath.

Bring to mind an image of a place where you can feel calm, peaceful and safe.

*It may be a place you've been to before, somewhere you've dreamed about going to, somewhere you've seen a picture of, or just a peaceful place you can create in your mind's eye.*

Spend a few moments looking around you in that place, notice the colours and shapes.

What can you see in front of you, and now to the right, and to the left.

What else do you notice?



Now notice the sounds that are around you, or perhaps the silence.

2 of 2

Sounds far away and those nearer to you.

Those that are more noticeable, and those that are more subtle.

Think about any smells you notice there. Does the landscape have a distinct smell, or can you smell something in the distance being carried towards you on the breeze?

Now focus on any sensations you can feel on your skin.

How does the earth beneath your feet feel? Is it hot or cold, soft or hard? What does the temperature feel like on your skin?

Is there any movement of air, or anything else you can touch?

Take a moment to notice the pleasant physical sensations in your body whilst you enjoy this safe place.

Notice the tension fall from your muscles as your body relaxes. You may wish to verbalise this release of tension, or continue to notice it with every out-breath.

Now whilst you're in your peaceful and safe place, you might choose to give it a name, whether one word or a phrase that you can use to bring that image back, anytime you need to.

Say this word in your head as you take in the beauty and safety around you.

You can choose to linger there a while, just enjoying the peacefulness and serenity.

You can leave this place whenever you want to, just by slowly opening your eyes and being aware of where you are right now...

Bring yourself back to alertness in the 'here and now' by focussing on your breath and what you can see, touch, smell and hear around you.

You may wish to count backwards from 10 to do this, as you leave your safe place, safe in the knowledge that you can return there whenever you need to feel relaxed.

**Try to plan your days and weeks – timetables can be a useful tool when making sure we fill our days with a combination of activities to make us feel purpose, pleasure and skill.**

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

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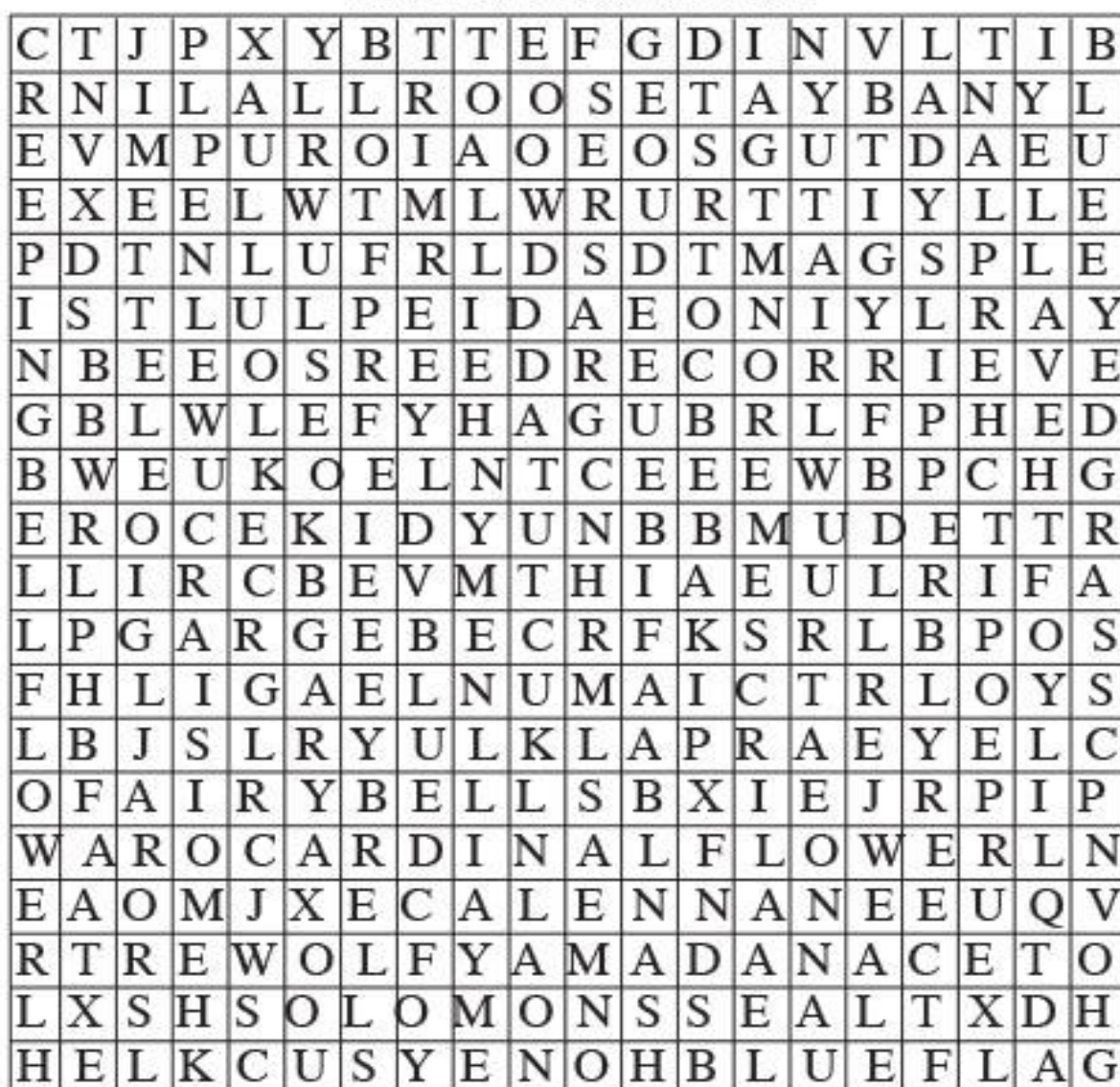
## Keep your mind busy with a quiz

Try and solve the cryptic clues... the answers are all sweets or chocolate!

1. Wobbly infants...
2. Pleased to be in Istanbul?
3. Alcoholic dentures...
4. Edible clothes fastenings
5. Wise guys...
6. A mariner's pal...
7. Where aliens go for a drink...
8. Scrooge's famous words...
9. Stars far away...
10. It's a good place for a house...
11. Fruit that falls...
12. For a job well done...
13. A pirates loot...
14. Royal herb...
15. Tartan stone...
16. 100% metal...

*If you get stuck...I have the answers!*

## Find the Wildflowers



- |                  |                      |                 |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| ASTER            | CARDINAL FLOWER      | PICKERELWEED    |
| BELLWORT         | CREEPING BELL FLOWER | PITCHER PLANT   |
| BLACK EYED SUSAN | FAIRYBELLS           | PRIMROSE        |
| BLOOD ROOT       | FIREWEED             | QUEEN ANNE LACE |
| BLUE BEAD LILY   | FOAM FLOWER          | SOLOMONS SEAL   |
| BLUE BELL        | HONEYSUCKLE          | VENUS FLY TRAP  |
| BLUE EYED GRASS  | INDIAN CUCUMBER ROOT | YARROW          |
| BLUE FLAG        | JACK IN THE PULPIT   |                 |
| BLUETS           | LADY SLIPPER         |                 |
| BLUE VIOLET      | LILY OF THE VALLEY   |                 |
| BUNCHBERRY       | MULLEIN              |                 |
| BUTTER AND EGGS  | PARTRIDGE BERRY      |                 |
| CANADA MAYFLOWER |                      |                 |






**To access support for your mental health during this period, aside from your usual mental health professionals (if you have access), you can contact;**

- **Samaritans** - Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline) or Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)
- **Your GP** - if you would like help and support
- **Emergency services** – 999 - in crisis situation if you feel that you require urgent help and support to stay safe
- **SANE** - Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.  
Phone: 0300 304 7000 (daily, 4.30pm to 10.30pm) or use their textcare service which provides comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most: [www.sane.org.uk/textcare](http://www.sane.org.uk/textcare)  
Peer support forum: [www.sane.org.uk/supportforum](http://www.sane.org.uk/supportforum)

**General advice around COVID-19 (corona virus) and what to do if you feel unwell or have symptoms;**

<p><b>COVID-19</b></p> <p>Protect yourself and others</p>	<p><b>Wash your hands</b> as often as possible with soap and water or hand sanitiser, especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• after coughing or sneezing</li><li>• when caring for the sick</li><li>• before during and after preparing food</li><li>• before eating</li><li>• after using the toilet</li><li>• when hands are visibly dirty</li><li>• after handling animals or animal waste</li></ul> 	<p>Stay at home (self-isolate) for 7 days if you have either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a high temperature of 37.8C or above or a</li><li>• new persistent cough</li></ul> <p>If another person in your household develops symptoms you should self-isolate for 14 days from the onset of their symptoms.</p> <p><b>Do not</b> go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Please go to NHS 111 online, or call 111 if you cannot go online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• you feel that you cannot cope with your symptoms at home</li><li>• your condition gets worse</li><li>• your symptoms do not get better after 7 days</li></ul> <p>In a medical emergency call 999</p>
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- Please call 111 for any advice or support if you are experiencing symptoms of corona virus
- Please call your GP for advice or support for any other aspects of your physical health during the pandemic as telephone appointments are available and face-face appointments where necessary