

S2R
**CREATE
SPACE**

Promoting Positive Mental Health

Support to Recovery

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

S2R
**THE GREAT
OUTDOORS
PROJECT**

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WELLBEING

PACK 11



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inspiring local giving...

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**Community
Learning
Works**
Find your future

**✓ MINDEFUL
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**Kirklees
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Support to Recovery

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH



Hello from S2R

These packs are designed to help you stay well and feel good while you navigate the 'new normal'. Facing a new set of challenges can be difficult so we wanted to send you a little something to help you build a resilience toolkit keeping you feeling well, engaged, creative and confident.

These Wellbeing packs are designed around the national Ways to Wellbeing initiative recognised to keep you fit and healthy in different ways, each pack will have different tips and creative activities for you to try.

Packs 7 - 12 look at ways we can regain healthy daily structures, routines and habits after lockdown. As well as looking after our physical health, it's extremely important to take care of our emotional and mental wellbeing too.

This pack looks at 'Stress', what is it; how can it affect us; and how we can reduce and better manage feelings of stress.

Remember it's really important to follow current Government Guidelines to keep yourself and others safe.

If you would like to chat with someone about your wellbeing or would like to know more about S2R please give us a call on 07933 358 800 (between 10am - 4pm).

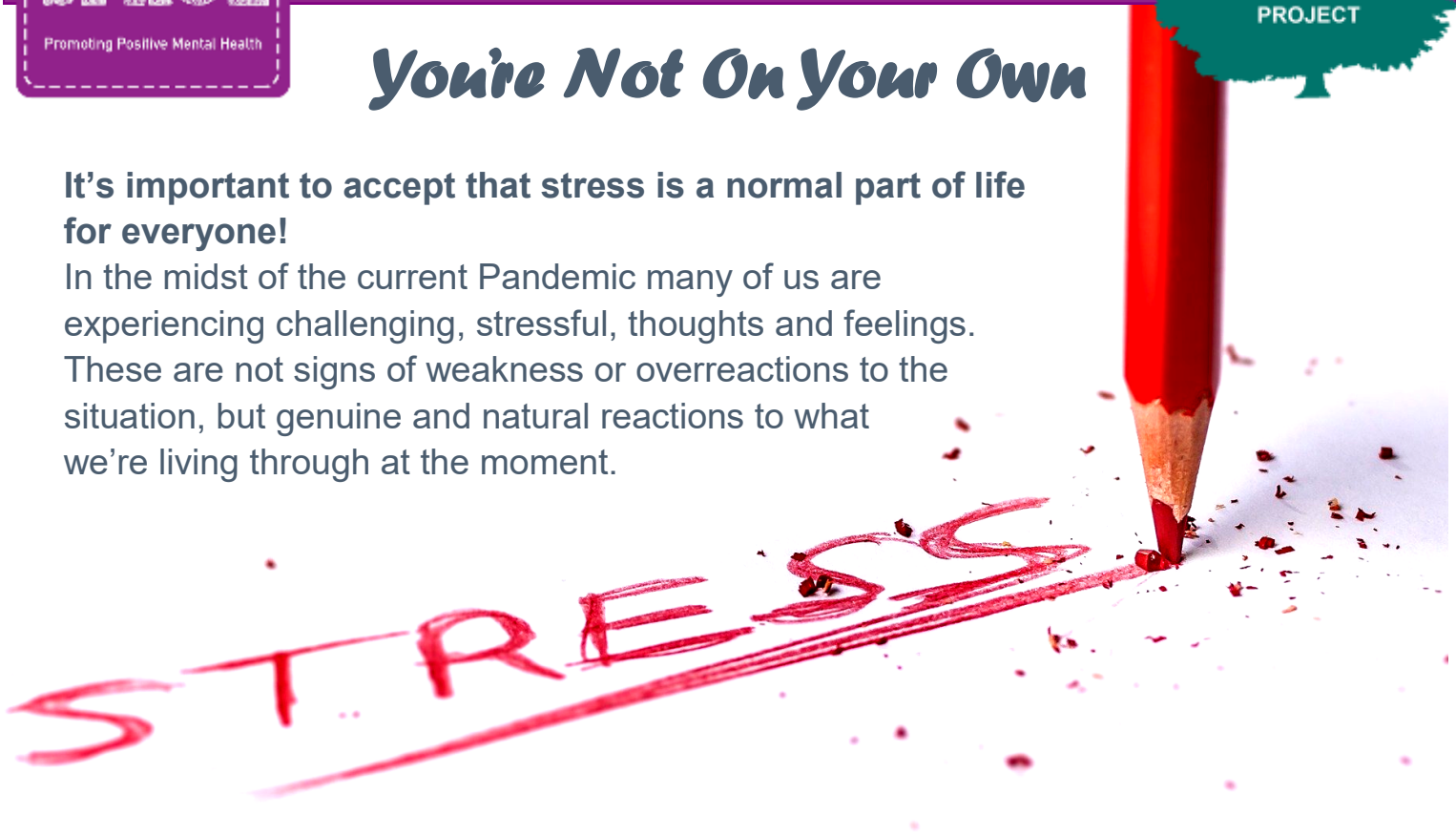
Stay well and keep in touch

Support to Recovery

You're Not On Your Own

It's important to accept that stress is a normal part of life for everyone!

In the midst of the current Pandemic many of us are experiencing challenging, stressful, thoughts and feelings. These are not signs of weakness or overreactions to the situation, but genuine and natural reactions to what we're living through at the moment.



We all had to adapt to lockdown restrictions, some found it easier than others and now we are adapting to the realities of life post-lockdown, which for some is equally difficult and can feel like having to let go of our protective bubble.

In this pack there are hints and tips to help you recognise how you are feeling and how to help yourself manage these feelings. Remember... don't be too hard on yourself! Being conscious of and actively looking after your wellbeing, particularly in times like these, helps you to reduce stress, keep things in perspective, take calm and effective personal actions towards positive outcomes and to recognise the things you are thankful for.

Stress

What is it?

Stress is the body's natural reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Some of our responses to stress can be very mild such as butterflies in the tummy or a slight increase in our heart rate, but they can also be more significant such as a headache, worrying thoughts and not being able to sleep.



Sources of Stress

We can experience stress from a range of different sources while trying to resume pre-lockdown activities. For example:

- **Our environment** - the increased traffic and noise, using public transport again, going back into more crowded shops, supermarkets,- these can all create stress.
- **Our body** – we may think we have put on or lost too much weight, suddenly feel self-conscious about the way we look or just generally feel unhappy with our appearance.
- **Our thoughts** – we might worry too much about things we can't control, have negative thoughts 'the glass is half empty not half full' or try to be perfect all the time.

And it isn't just negative events in life that can lead to stress - positive situations can too! Such as meeting up with family and friends again, going back to work or resuming activities we did before lockdown, like going to the gym, learning to drive or attending a class with others.

How Stress Can Affect Us

Our bodies are designed to experience stress and react appropriately to it. We do all need a little bit of stress though, because it keeps us alert, motivated and ready to avoid danger!

Stress becomes a problem when... we try to deal with continuous challenges without a break or having the chance to fully relax between the things that cause us to feel stressed.

We are probably all familiar with the result when someone becomes overworked: stress-related tension builds and they might even describe themselves as *stressed-out*.



What is our flight or flight response?

Our body's autonomic nervous system has a built-in stress response that causes physical changes allowing our bodies to deal with stressful situations. This stress response, also known as the 'fight or flight response', is switched-on in case of an emergency. However, this response can become overly activated during sustained bouts of stress.

Prolonged activation of our stress response can damage our bodies, both physically and emotionally.

Distress

Stress that continues without relief can lead to a condition called *distress*, which can disturb the body's internal balance and lead to physical symptoms such as: headaches, an upset stomach, high blood pressure and problems sleeping. Emotional problems can also result from distress such as: depression, panic attacks or other forms of anxiety and worry. Research suggests that stress can also bring on or worsen certain symptoms or disease, so learning how to manage stress is very important for everyone's general health and wellbeing.

Dealing with Stress

During lockdown many of us have experienced more stress than usual as we've struggled to adapt to lots of sudden changes. There are many different ways we can respond to stress, some of the things we decide to do are more helpful than others.

We can choose to deal with stress positively by:

Talking to others.

Share your problems and worries with a partner, friend, family member or someone from your community or faith.

Taking good care of ourselves.

- o Eat healthy, well-balanced meals with plenty of fruit and vegetables
- o Keep active – take exercise, go for walks, find something you enjoy
- o Get plenty of good quality sleep
- o Take some time every day to relax

Recognising when you need more help.

If your stress is starting to make you unwell talk to your GP or get in touch with a local mental health charity or wellbeing group.

Take up a new hobby or interest.

Doing something creative can be a great stress buster! It can deflect negative thoughts and relaxes our bodies and minds. Give it a go!!

Avoiding drugs and alcohol.

These may seem to help in the short term but they usually create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.

Trying mindfulness.

Paying more attention to the present moment – to your own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around you – can help you de-stress and gain perspective. For information visit:

www.mindfulnesscds.com/
www.mindful.org/

Taking a break.

Give your thoughts a rest by switching off the news and social media, take some time to notice the natural world around you.

One Step at a Time

Walking is simple, free and one of the best ways to relieve stress, get more active, lose weight and become healthier.

Sometimes overlooked as a form of exercise, walking briskly can help you build stamina, burn excess calories and make your heart healthier.


You don't have to walk for hours. A brisk 10-minute daily walk has lots of health benefits and can be a major stress buster!

A brisk walk is about 3 miles an hour, which is faster than a stroll.

You can tell you're walking briskly if you can still talk but can't sing the words to a song.

The easiest way to walk more is to make walking a habit. Think of ways to include walking in your daily routine. You could try:

- walking part of your journey to work
- walking to the shops
- using the stairs instead of the lift
- leaving the car behind for short journeys
- walking the kids to school
- doing a regular walk with a friend
- going for a stroll with family after dinner



Exercise can help
relieve muscle
tension and
reduce hormones
that serve as
messengers of
stress.

Walking while listening to music or a podcast can take your mind off the effort. It can also get you into a rhythm and help you walk faster. You'll be surprised at how fast the time goes when you're walking to your favourite tunes.

Walking regularly should help you clear your mind of stressful thoughts, take more notice of your environment and feel more relaxed.

How to make a Stress Ball

Fun for all the family - hopefully you'll find this craft quick and stress-free too!

You will need:

- ⇒ A strong 'heavy duty' balloon
- ⇒ Cornflour / Rice / Sand
- ⇒ Funnel / rolled up piece of paper
- ⇒ Plastic bottle with cap - clean, dry & empty
- ⇒ As an added extra you can also use Aromatherapy oils but it's not a requirement



1. Using your funnel (or rolled up piece of paper) as a guide, pour 1 cup of cornflour / rice / sand into the plastic bottle. *Half a cup will make a smaller stress ball, better for little hands*

2. If you want to use aromatherapy essential oils - you can now add a few drops of your preferred scent into the plastic bottle. Then put the cap on the plastic bottle and shake well to mix.



3. Blow up a 'heavy duty' balloon to about double the size you want your finished stress ball to be.

4. Remove the cap from the plastic bottle. Carefully, without losing too much air, attach the open end of the balloon over the top of the plastic bottle.

... continued ...



5. Turn the balloon and bottle upside-down and squeeze the bottle until all the flour / rice / sand has emptied into the balloon.

6. Pinching the end of the balloon, slowly remove it from the plastic bottle.

7. If there is still a lot of excess air in the balloon you can now adjust this by loosening your hold on the neck of the balloon to let a

little air out. Do this very carefully, if you loosen your hold too much all the flour will fly out everywhere!! If you want a hard, firm stress ball, then let out almost all the air. If you want a super soft stress ball that's easy to squeeze, then leave most of the air in.

8. Tie a knot in the end of the balloon and that's it!

* You can draw on your stress-ball with a marker pen... maybe give it a face!*



Done!

Simply, squeeze the stress ball whenever you're feeling a little stressed. It helps to relieve anxiety, calm you and quiet a racing mind.



Stress Habits

When we're stressed it's all too easy to reach for unhealthy *quick-fix* stress relievers like alcohol or cigarettes. It's important to remember that these give us a short mood boost but the negative effects are greater and long lasting.



So let's look at some simple ways you can reduce your alcohol intake:

1. **Keep track of your drinking habits.** Instead of relying on memory, jot down your drinks in a diary to see exactly how much and how often you drink.
2. **Change your drinking habits.** Control the amount of alcohol you drink by setting some goals, for example not drinking alone or when stressed. Schedule at least two alcohol-free days each week.
3. **Don't drink on an empty stomach.** A full stomach slows the absorption of alcohol so copy the Europeans and only drink alcohol with food.
4. **Quench your thirst with water or soft drinks.** Otherwise, you risk gulping down alcoholic drinks and this actually leads to being dehydrated.
5. **Sip your drink slowly.** Put down the glass after each mouthful and drink mindfully, savour the taste and smell.
6. **Take a break.** Make every second drink non-alcoholic and remember that alcohol is a high sugar, high calorie drink.
7. **Buy low-alcohol alternatives.** Options include light beer and reduced alcohol wine. Or learn to make some tasty alcohol-free mocktails.
8. **Do something other than drink.** Find a healthier alternative that you'll enjoy and that will stop you feeling bored or stressed. Try a craft, reading, walking or meeting up with a friend.



For support cutting down or quitting smoking: in Kirklees you can contact the smoking cessation service at: <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/health-and-well-being/alcohol-drugs-and-smoking.aspx>

Perspective & Resilience

In a situation that's uncertain, like the current pandemic, it's only natural to have many 'what if?' questions floating around our minds. When we're lacking information, our anxious mind will often fill in the blanks with all the worst case scenarios, this can leave us feeling overwhelmed, helpless and vulnerable.



To shift your thinking from worst case scenarios to a more helpful mindset, try asking yourself these questions:

What are the things within my control?

How likely is it that the worst-case scenario will actually happen? Am I overestimating it?

What actions have helped me cope with challenging situations in the past that I can try now to refocus my mind?

What is a small helpful or positive thing I can do right now?

Seek accurate information.

Finding credible sources of information, that you can trust, is really important to avoid the fear and panic that can be caused by misinformation.

Not everything we see online, on social media or hear from others is accurate.

Misinformation is not always intentional, most of us have shared information we believed to be true, only to later find out we'd been misinformed ourselves or misremembered the information. So when you hear something that worries you, try not to react before you've checked the original source for clarity and perspective on the issue at hand.

Perspective & Resilience

Set limits around news and social media.

It's understandable and important to keep informed and prepared. At the same time, constantly reading, watching, or listening to upsetting media coverage can unnecessarily intensify worry and agitation. When you get the urge to check updates, see if you can pause, notice the urge, delay acting on the urge, and let it pass without judgement. Schedule a specific time to check in with the news instead.

Remember it's also okay to take breaks from conversations with others about COVID-19 and suggest talking about other topics.



Resilience is our ability to cope in the face of adversity, trauma and stress. Here are some tips to help us build reliance and help us to deal with difficult situations:

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Bad feelings do not last forever, they prompt us to do things differently. | • Problems can be solved , look at them from a different perspective. |
| • Take action to fix problems , make decisions to overcome problems rather than avoid them. | • Be Optimistic. Maintain a positive outlook and think about what you can do. |
| • Self awareness is key, recognise your feelings, know your strengths and self-worth. | • Make connections good relationships and social bonds help, accept support and assist others. |
| • Goal Setting set realistic goals with realistic expectations. | • Take care of yourself exercise, sleep, good balanced diet. |
| • Laughing is a great way to release the tension and helps us to think positive. | • Keep working on your skills learning new things builds our resilience. |
| • Believe in yourself and your own abilities. | |

Wild Food

Foraging means gathering wild food for free.
It's a great stress-busting outdoor activity so why not give it a try this Autumn.

*These are easy to
identify & find in
Autumn*



Blackberries



**Sweet
Chestnuts**



Elderberries

Where can I forage?

It's fine and legal to forage in public spaces and footpaths but it isn't okay to do so on private land without the permission from the owner, so make sure you ask first.

What to avoid:

You need to be 100% sure that what you're eating is definitely what you think it is. Even if you're completely sure that you've picked the right thing, make sure you try a small amount first, rather than diving straight into a bowlful of what you've just found, just in case! Use a reference books to identify what you've found. Fungi can be notoriously difficult to identify, so if you're unsure it's best to leave alone.

Try to avoid foraging too close to busy roads, not just for your safety but also to avoid the food you pick tasting of exhaust fumes!

Foraging Sustainably:

- Only take from plentiful populations, where there are lots of the food you're collecting.
- For fungi, only take mushrooms that have opened their caps (so are likely to have dropped their spores). Do not collect small 'button' mushrooms.
- Always leave plenty behind. Wild food is vital for the survival of the UK's wildlife. Forage carefully to ensure there is enough left for birds and species to consume now and to ensure plants and fungi can regenerate and reproduce.
- Don't take more than you plan to eat.
- Take care not to trample down or damage areas you are collecting from.
- Some species are protected by law, so know what not to collect. Ancient woods, in particular, can contain many rare species so take special care. If you're not sure, it's best to leave it alone.

www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/foraging

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/things-to-do/foraging/



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Quick & Easy Elderberry Jam Recipe

Ingredients

- 500g ripe elderberries
- 250g caster sugar
- 1/2 cinnamon stick
- 1/2 strip lemon peel

This recipe will make enough jam to fill 2 jars!

Method

1. Wash and remove the elderberry stems. Place berries in a saucepan with a very small amount of water, add in cinnamon stick and lemon peel. Boil until berries burst, this should be about 10 minutes.
2. Strain the mixture with a sieve to get rid of seeds and return the liquid to the saucepan. Add the sugar and bring to the boil, stirring regularly. Boil until the jam thickens.
3. Pour into sterilised jars and place the lids on tightly. And you're done! Why not keep a jar for yourself and gift the other to someone else?

Roast Sweet Chestnut Recipe

Foraging Tip:

Not to be confused with horse chestnuts (conkers), which are mildly poisonous and definitely not edible for humans, sweet chestnuts are completely different. You can identify edible sweet chestnuts by their extremely prickly cases (they look like hairy little monsters or sea urchins!) and the distinctive tear-drop shape of the nut. There are usually 2 or 3 chestnuts to a case.

This one couldn't be simpler, so forage yourself some chestnuts and give it a go!

Method

1. Heat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
2. Using a small, sharp knife, cut a cross into the skin of each nut. Put in a roasting tin and bake until the skins open and the insides are tender, about 30 minutes.
3. Serve in paper bags, if you like. To eat, peel away the tough outer skin and the pithy white inner skin to get to the sweet kernel.



So many yummy things you can do with fresh blackberries! Why not:

- Eat fresh with a sprinkle of sugar / a scoop of ice-cream...
- Make a blackberry and apple pie or crumble...
- Use them in jams, smoothies and milkshakes...
- Bake blackberry muffins, biscuits or cheesecake...

Make a wild blackberry crumble

You will need:

- 450g handpicked ripe blackberries



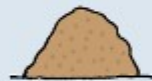
- 2 tablespoons caster sugar



- 225g plain flour



- 150g soft brown sugar



- 75g butter (soft)



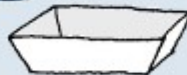
- 1 level teaspoon baking powder



- Mixing bowl



- Ovenproof dish



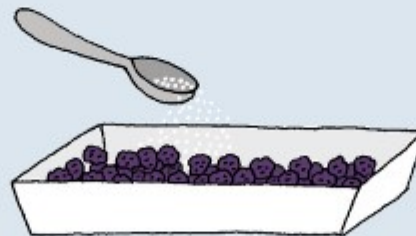
- Oven gloves



- 1 Between August and October, go out on an adventure picking blackberries.

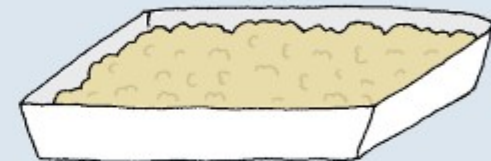


- 2 Wash the blackberries, and arrange in a shallow ovenproof dish. Sprinkle with the caster sugar.



Remember to get help from an adult when doing this activity.

- 3 Mix the remaining ingredients together between your fingers until it goes all crumbly. Sprinkle the crumble mixture on top of the fruit.



- 4 Bake in the oven at 180C / 350F / Gas 4 for 30-40 minutes



- 5 Leave the crumble somewhere safe to stand and cool down. Ask an adult to check before tucking in. Enjoy!





Support to Recovery

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH



Your Wellbeing Journal

10 minutes to reflect on your day

Date:

What did I do today?

How did I feel today?

What do I want to do tomorrow?

1. Essential task - getting up, dressed, cleaning teeth..
2. Activity - work, hobby, exercise...
3. Relaxation - reading, bath, calling a friend...

Date:

What did I do today?

How did I feel today?

What do I want to do tomorrow?

1. Essential task
2. Activity
3. Relaxation

Date:

What did I do today?

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3. Relaxation

Date:

What did I do today?

How did I feel today?

What do I want to do tomorrow?

1. Essential task
2. Activity
3. Relaxation

Any other thoughts, feelings or notes you'd like to record about your week?



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Support

Mental Health Help Line

0800 183 0558

Offering confidential help and support 24 hours a day. The helpline will provide a listening ear, emotional support and guidance to adults with new or existing mental health conditions. It will also provide information, advice and support to carers.

Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership (Emergency Advice)

07562252940 (8am - 8pm)

Kirklees Gateway to Care – social services

01484 414933 (24 hours a day)

Pennine Domestic Abuse Partnership

0800 0527 222 (24 hour helpline)

Well-bean (Crisis) Cafe

Huddersfield 07741 900395

Dewsbury 07867 028 755

Community Response Helpline

01484 226 919 / 0800 4561114 (8am - 6pm weekdays, 10am - 4pm weekends & bank holidays) *Updated*

Support to Recovery (S2R)

07933 358 800 (10am - 4pm weekdays)

SPA mental health - Single Point of Access

01924 316 830

Folly Hall - Mental Health Service

01484 343 100

IAPT for people with low mood or anxiety

01484 343700

Grief and Loss Support Service

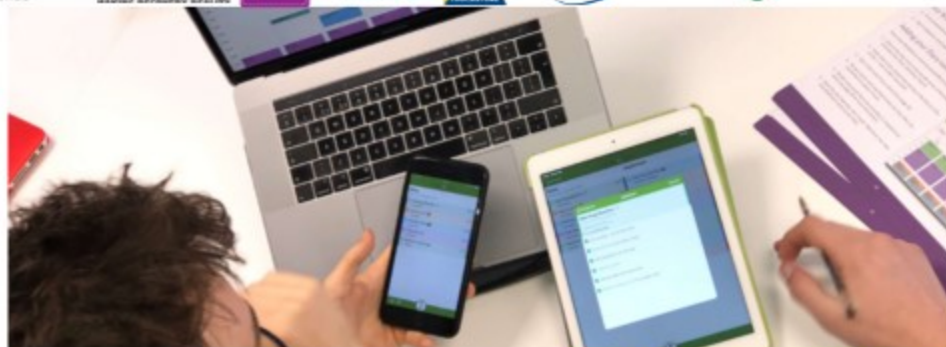
0808 196 3833 (8am - 8pm)

Take care and stay safe

braininhand

personal technology for independent living

Working throughout Kirklees in partnership with:



What is Brain in Hand?

Hannalease Newton - Brain in Hand Coordinator

BiH is professional digital support system which aims to support people with making decisions, managing anxiety, and dealing with unexpected situations.

Brain in Hand can help a service user to:

- Solve problems more independently;
- Cope with change and new settings;
- Manage anxiety and develop confidence;
- Remember things and organise your time;
- Take part in more activities and opportunities.

Who is Brain in Hand for?

BiH is for anyone whose day can be knocked off track by anxiety, unexpected events, who find it hard to remember things, and need support to make decisions under pressure. It is not condition specific but concentrates on what each individual finds difficult, their strengths and goals they wish to achieve.

WHAT USERS IN KIRKLEES SAY:

"It felt like a lifeline to my own self recovery and of great benefit in helping me to manage my mental health and the obstacles that I find challenging every day."

"I use the traffic light system a lot. It helps me to just take a second in my day to really think about how I am feeling and to click the light that reflects my feelings."

"I am now using my time more wisely during lockdown and have joined a online Arts and Crafts group. This is something I have never done before, but I have built the confidence to do so."

What goals can BiH support you with?



Emotions and feelings: managing anxiety; coping with change

Travel: using public transport

Communication: being able to communicate needs

Social: talking to new people in new situations

Study or work skills: breaking down and planning assignments or work tasks

Organisation: knowing where to be and when; remembering what is needed for the day

Independent living: managing housework or bills; spending time at home alone

Relationships: how to best respond to what friends or family might say or do

A service users story..

Jennifer was first introduced to BiH from her support worker at Touchstone. After an introductory session with Hannalease the Brain in Hand specialist, Jennifer was excited to see how Brain in Hand would be able to support her day to day.

"The initial reason I was interested in BiH was because I was struggling with my mental health. I read up on Brain in Hand and was really interested and excited. It felt like a lifeline to my own self recovery and of great benefit in helping me to manage my mental health and the obstacles that I find challenging every day. From what I read it was documented that it was extremely helpful for people with the condition of PD, at the time I felt that I was willing to try anything that would help."

Jennifer has been using the support from BiH for a couple of months over the lockdown period and has been finding it helpful to remember things throughout the day and using the preloaded strategies to support in difficult situations.

"I use the self-help strategies for when I'm in crisis when my brain can't think of things to do to help the situation, the strategies are there on my app to help. I also get notifications to check in how I am by using the traffic light system which helps. I have felt extremely supported throughout my BiH journey. My support worker Hannalease Newton has gone above and beyond to help me in any way I have needed, I know that without this support I would not have been able to setup or use my BiH app to its full potential. I feel that I have a very trusting and understanding relationship with Hannalease even though it's a remote one."

Jennifer uses a template account which has pre-loaded problems and solutions / self help strategies to support during the pandemic. She regularly uses the template strategies and can easily blend these seamlessly with her own life events.

"Having the templates have been invaluable to me. I have struggled with knowing what to include at times, which can cause me extreme anxiety & low self-esteem."

START YOUR JOURNEY

To start your Brain in Hand journey please contact Hannalease Newton on Hannalease.newton@commlinks.co.uk

For more information about BiH please visit:

www.braininhand.co.uk

[Brain in hand YouTube channel](#)

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We hope you find this pack useful and enjoyable.
If you are comfortable using the internet - check out our website and social media pages for more wellbeing tips, nature-based and creative activities:

Website: www.s2r.org.uk
Facebook: [@S2R Create Space](https://www.facebook.com/S2RCreateSpace)
Twitter: [@CreateSpaceS2R](https://twitter.com/CreateSpaceS2R)
Instagram: [@S2RCreateSpace](https://www.instagram.com/S2RCreateSpace)

Please tell us what you think of this Wellbeing Pack: all feedback is appreciated, and if there is anything you would like us to include in future packs - do let us know - all ideas will be considered. Remember to send in photos of activities you have been doing too, it could be pictures of nature or a craft activity, we would love to see them and share with others.

S2R is a Mental Health & Wellbeing Charity delivering Wellbeing, Nature-based and Creative activities across Kirklees communities.

If you would like to support S2R by making a donation, you can do so online by visiting the 'Support Us' page of our website here:

www.s2r.org.uk/supportus

Or by post, addressing cheques to:

Support to Recovery, 5 - 7 Brook Street, Huddersfield HD1 1EB

Thank you