

**Herefordshire and Worcestershire  
Pocket Guide for your**

# *Mental Health*



Digital version

# *Feeling low?*

Feeling low is never easy, it is not a weakness and you're never alone in it.

- Notice your emotions without judgement. Positive and negative emotions are all valid.
- Express how you feel in healthy ways, even crying can help.
- Talking can help- meet a friend for a walk or a coffee.
- Try a small act of kindness and see how it feels.
- Celebrate small wins, like getting dressed or cooking- those take real effort.
- Remember to be kind to yourself. If sadness or anxiety lasts, speak to your GP. You deserve support.

For urgent help any time of the day or night:

- Dial NHS **111** (option 2)
- Text '**SHOUT**' to **85258**
- Call Samaritans on **116 123**
- Call Papyrus HOPELINE247 on **0800 068 4141** (under 35yrs)

Accessible contact options including British Sign Language support is available for these services through their main webpages.

If you can't keep yourself safe or are worried that someone's life is in danger, always call 999.

You can also get information and support from the following webpages:

- Coventry, Warwickshire & Worcestershire Mind  
**[swwmind.org.uk](http://swwmind.org.uk) / 01905 600400**
- Herefordshire Mind  
**[herefordshire-mind.org.uk](http://herefordshire-mind.org.uk) / 01432 372 407**
- NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Talking Therapies **[talkingtherapies.hwhct.nhs.uk/talking-therapies](http://talkingtherapies.hwhct.nhs.uk/talking-therapies)**
- Herefordshire Talk Community  
**[www.talkcommunity.co.uk/keeping-well-staying-healthy/mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing](http://www.talkcommunity.co.uk/keeping-well-staying-healthy/mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing)**
- Worcestershire County Council  
**[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing)**
- Melo **[www.onside-advocacy.org.uk/melo](http://www.onside-advocacy.org.uk/melo)**  
Support for your mental health (0 to 25 years)
- Hub of Hope **[hubofhope.co.uk](http://hubofhope.co.uk)**

We can't control all the factors that affect how we feel, but there are usually lots of positive steps we can take to help ourselves. Building one or more of these five areas into our daily lives is proven to keep us feeling good.

## **CONNECT**

with the people around you



## **BE ACTIVE**

do regular physical activity



## **TAKE NOTICE**

be aware of the world around you



## **KEEP LEARNING**

try something new or rediscover  
an old interest



## **GIVE**

do something good for the community



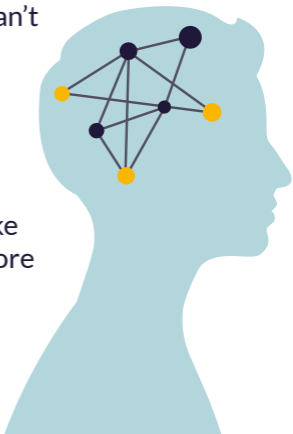
Don't worry if this feels like a lot – choose one area to focus on first. You'll still feel the benefits!

# Top tips to keep yourself well

## Sleep

Regular poor sleep increases our risk of poor mental health, but all of us can benefit from improving the quality of our sleep.

- Try to go to bed and get up around the same time every day
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and screens directly before bed as these can make it harder to fall asleep.
- Try to get out and be active in the day. Even a short walk makes a difference.
- Don't stay in bed if you can't sleep. Get up and do something to relax your mind like reading a magazine or doing a puzzle.
- If you're often lying awake worrying, make time before you go to bed to write down your thoughts. This can help your mind to rest.





## Eating well

Eating well can make us feel less tired and help to regulate our thoughts and feelings. We know it can be difficult, but here are some easy wins.



- Eat regularly and eat foods that release energy slowly, like wholegrain bread & brown pasta.
- Milk, cheese, nuts and eggs all contain proteins essential for our brain function
- Fruits and vegetables contain nutrients that keep us mentally and physically well. Frozen, tinned and juiced fruit and vegetables all count too.
- Test out your skills in the kitchen by learning to cook something new from scratch.
- Drinking water helps you to think more clearly. Aim for at least 3 pint-sized glasses per day (but any more than usual is a positive step).
- The less alcohol you drink regularly, the lower the risk of harm to your health. NHS guidance suggests drinking no more than 6 medium glasses of wine or 6 pints of beer per week.



**[www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/alcohol-support)**

## Managing stress and anxiety

It's normal to feel stressed and anxious from time to time, but long-term stress and anxiety can make us unwell. If you're feeling overwhelmed, some questions and tips to think about are:

- Am I trying to do too much at once?
- Could I say no? Saying no to people can help you to take control, gain focus and reduce feelings of overwhelm.
- Track when feelings of stress or anxiety appear. This can help you find where these feelings are coming from.
- Once you've got an idea of what is causing your stress or anxiety, try listing these into things you can and can't control.
- Now focus on the things you can control. Find the most manageable item and think about how you might tackle it.



# *Circles of Control*

This can help you focus on what you can control in your life, and let go of the things you can't. Have a go at creating your own circles of control using the example below:



**Look back at the top tips.**

**What can you do differently this week?**

Consider what you might be able to change,  
no matter how small...

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# *My Safety Plan*

## **How to Use this Plan**

This plan is designed to help you cope if you're struggling with your mental wellbeing. You can also look at it if you feel overwhelmed or in crisis.

It's good to fill in this plan when you're feeling well (if you can). That way it's already there if you need it.

If you're worried about someone, you can show them this plan and help them to complete it. It's important that you don't come up with the answers though – they must come from the person you're supporting.

**If you need to see your doctor quickly, ask for an urgent appointment or ask to see the GP today.**

**If you can't keep yourself safe, please call 999.**

1

## Getting through right now:

If I feel overwhelmed, what activities could help me to get through that moment?

**Examples:** phoning someone I like and trust, telling myself I matter, focusing on my breathing.

**Notes:**

2

## Making my situation safer:

If I'm thinking of hurting myself, what could improve my safety?

**Examples:** not storing medication at home that I don't need, identifying a place I could get to easily where I feel safer.

**Notes:**

**3**

### **Things to lift or calm my mood:**

When I notice I'm struggling, what helps to lift my mood or calm me down?

**Examples:** listening to my favourite music, looking back at photos, messaging a friend, planning my day.

**Notes:**

4

## Things to distract me:

What things can I list to 'take my mind away' from distressing feelings? What specific things can keep me busy.

**Examples:** drawing or writing, going for a walk to the local park, playing a video game.

**Notes:**

**5**

## **People I can talk to if I'm struggling to cope, thinking of harming myself or thinking about suicide:**

Add a few options including friends, family, your GP, your mental health team (if you have one) and a 24-hour service.

**Name:**

**Phone Number:**

**Name:**

**Phone Number:**

**Name:**

**Phone Number:**

**Name:**

**Phone Number:**

**Name:**

**Phone Number:**

With thanks to partners and residents across  
Herefordshire & Worcestershire  
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A printer friendly version of this  
pocket guide can be downloaded from:  
[www.talkingtherapies.hwhct.nhs.uk/  
downloadable-resources](http://www.talkingtherapies.hwhct.nhs.uk/downloadable-resources)

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