



NHS FORTH VALLEY DOCTORS IN TRAINING WELLBEING QUICK GUIDE



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Hello everyone!

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We have put this together in the hope that it would make it easier for you guys to find the resources that you need during difficult and stressful times.

It is important to remember though that everyone's experiences and circumstances are different; therefore, please bear in mind that some tips may or may not work for you. If you do find that these tips insufficient and you need more help, please do reach out. There are plenty of resources available. We have listed them at the very end.

Lastly, do take care and remember, we will get through this together.

Much love and warm wishes,

FV DiT Peer Support Team

Looking after yourself during COVID-19: advice for healthcare workers¹

It is normal to feel under pressure in the current situation. It doesn't mean you can't do your job or that you are weak.

You may feel stressed for many reasons such as

- the amount of work
- being uncertain about the future
- having to make difficult decisions about patients' care
- worrying about taking the virus home with you and infecting others
- less contact with family and friends

Stress can lead to

- feeling overwhelmed
- finding it difficult to think clearly
- feeling exhausted
- tension in working relationships

This is a marathon and not a sprint. To make it to the finish line you need to look after both your physical and mental health. You can't look after your patients unless you look after yourself. So..

Take care of yourself

- Take regular breaks and find time to unwind between shifts
- Get enough sleep
- Eat enough healthy food
- Exercise regularly

Be kind to yourself

- Make room for your feelings - feeling upset or worried is not a sign of weakness
- Think about how you usually cope at times of stress and use these strategies
- Recognise and give yourself credit for all that you are doing

¹[https://www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/media/content/files/Advice%20for%20healthcare%20staffTAKINGCAREOFYOURSELFDURINGCOVID%20v0_2\(1\).pdf](https://www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/media/content/files/Advice%20for%20healthcare%20staffTAKINGCAREOFYOURSELFDURINGCOVID%20v0_2(1).pdf)

Stay connected

- Keep in touch with family and friends – by phone or social media if necessary
- Check how your colleagues are doing and support each other
- Recognise that different people will cope in different ways

Manage information

- Too much information can be overwhelming. Keep work-related COVID updates to key times. Take breaks from watching, reading or listening to news
- Obtain information from trusted sources and focus on facts not speculation

***ITS OKAY NOT TO
BE OKAY***

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SELF care

SPARK

A self-care tool
for professionals



Self-reflection
Prevention
Assessment
Resilience
Kindness

The **SPARK** tool is a **self-reflective** evaluation tool for practitioners working in community and social services, supporting them to develop a tailored self-care plan. It aims to **prevent** excessive stress and burnout by encouraging practitioners to reflect on distinct areas in their personal and professional lives. Using evidence-informed prompts, practitioners can **assess**, what, if any, changes are necessary to improve their welfare. This tool aims to build personal **resilience** in practitioners as an ongoing process. It provides a reminder that **kindness and compassion** towards ourselves and others are essential components in our personal and professional satisfaction.

Being exposed to stressful workplaces and trauma cases can have a cumulative negative impact on practitioners' well-being. Developing and implementing a plan can help to express and process feelings, recover, re-energise, promote physical and mental health, develop a worker's resilience and ultimately improve practitioners' work. In essence, self-care helps to keep the **SPARK** alive, or rekindles it when energies run low.

<https://ideachildrights.ucc.ie/resources/spark-tool1.1b.pdf>

MY SELF-CARE TODAY

I Feel...

I Need to...

Overwhelmed

Take a break

Stressed

Focus on relaxation

Anxious

Practice my coping skills

Sad

Be loving toward myself

Angry

Find a positive outlet

Drained

Rest (mind, body soul)

Broken

Practice (self)compassion

Upset

Find love & support

BlessingManifesting

8 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH TODAY

It is imperative that we all look after our own mental health- most of us know that! What we struggle with is making time for it! Here are 8 simple ways you can do just that!

Thriftyvintagefashion.blogspot.co.uk



1 LOG OUT OF FACEBOOK

Although this point could apply to any form of social media, for me Facebook is the biggest culprit of bringing negativity to people's lives. Simply log out, do something else and you will be surprised how much you haven't missed it.

2 GO OUTDOORS

Whether this is a run, jog, walk or a full-blown yoga session. Experiment until you find something that is right for you. Exercise releases endorphins which help boost your mood. Who can say no to that?



3 MINDFULNESS

Meditation doesn't have to be you sat in a field going 'hum' over and over again. Mindfulness is all about taking a few minutes out of your day to relax, de-stress and forget about the world around you.

4 GO TO BED EARLIER

Your body needs sleep! So give it sleep! Sleep has so many benefits upon your body's physical wellbeing but also your mental wellbeing. Leave your phone in the other room, turn your internet off and go to bed half an hour earlier than what you usually would.



5 DISCONNECT

You don't have to be connected to the online world all day. Find a hobby, enrich and enhance your knowledge, listen to music, read a book, play with a pet, draw, create, write- Twitter will always be there when you come back!



6 ACCEPT WHAT YOU CAN'T CONTROL

Most of our worries are built upon things that we can't control. Once you realise that you can't control the weather, other people's actions or bad events happening, you will be more inclined to enjoy life and experience new things!



7 TALK TO OTHERS

Whether this is your GP, family, friends, a pet or friends online. Talking about your troubles is one of the best things you can do to help you get them off your chest. If you haven't got the courage to talk yet- write it all down.

8 PRACTICE GRATITUDE

We are all egocentric in some ways. We only can see the world from one perspective- our own! We think our worries and troubles are huge. Once you learn to understand the scale of your issues you will be able to practice gratitude.

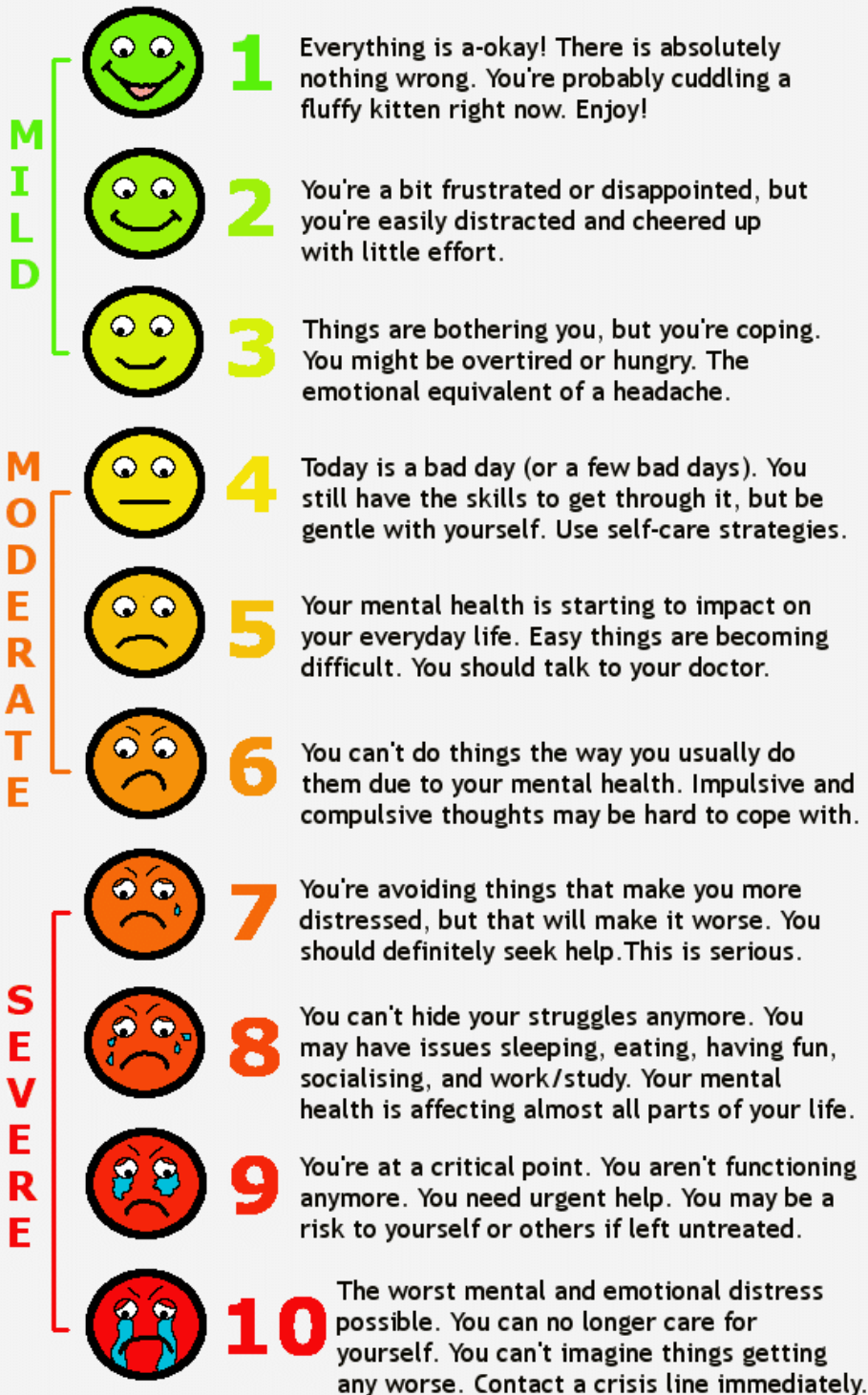


Ideas based on '8 Ways to improve your mental health today' by Nicole Marie
Thriftyvintagefashion.blogspot.co.uk

RECOGNISING DIFFICULT THOUGHTs, EMOTIONS AND STRESS

A Simple Mental Health Pain Scale


thegracefulpatient.wordpress.com



WEEKLY WELLBEING CHECK-UP

Try using this list each week to check in with your mental health

**#ADDRESS
YOUR STRESS**




Where's my mental health today?

How do I feel today?

Mentally?

Physically?




Looking after my wellbeing

Am I drinking enough water and eating a balanced diet?

How did I sleep last night?

Did I feel rested when I woke up?

Is there anything I can improve?



How's my thinking today?

How are my thoughts making me feel?

Am I having unhelpful thoughts?

For free resources on spotting and challenging unhelpful thoughts, visit getselfhelp.co.uk or create Your Mind Plan with **Every Mind Matters**



My Stress Container

How full is my container?

Am I using helpful coping strategies?

Are they working?

Learn about your stress container here: mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources



MHFA England


There are simple steps you can take to **#AddressYourStress**. Check out our resources at mhfaengland.org


dealing with
difficult
thoughts,
emotions and
stress


5 ★ 4 ★ 3 ★ 2 ★ 1

SLOW DOWN & CALM DOWN

FIRST OFF - TAKE 3 SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS!

5 List 5 things you can SEE 

4 List 4 things you can FEEL 

3 List 3 things you can HEAR 

2 List 2 things you can SMELL 

1 List something positive about yourself 😊

MAKE
today
COUNT

FINISHED? NOW - TAKE 3 MORE SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS ☺

6 STEPS TO MINDFULLY DEAL WITH DIFFICULT EMOTIONS



1

Turn toward your emotions with **acceptance**

Become aware of the emotion and identify where you sense it in your body.

Identify and label the emotion

To stay mindful, say to yourself, "This is anger" or "This is anxiety."

2



3

Accept your emotions

Don't deny the emotion. Acknowledge and accept that it is there.

Realize the **impermanence** of your emotions

Even if the emotion feels overwhelming, remember that it will pass.

4



5

Inquire and investigate

Ask yourself, "What triggered me? Why do I feel this way?"

Let go of the need to control your emotions

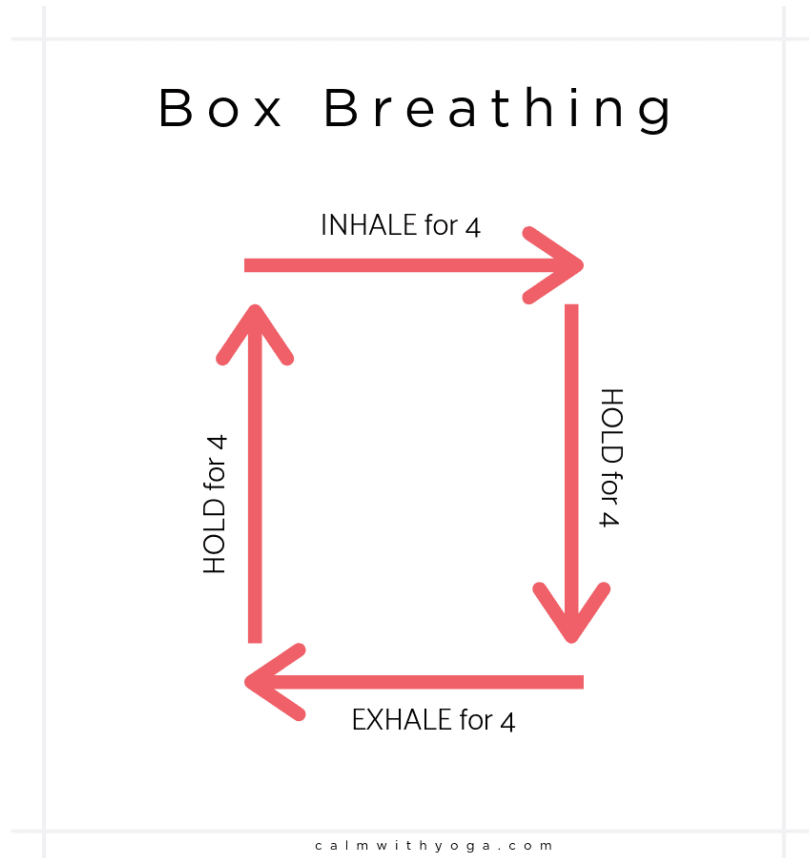
Be open to the outcome of your emotions and what unfolds.

6



The Gottman Institute

Box breathing, or four-square breathing, is a powerful yet simple relaxation technique used when taking slow, deep breaths. It can heighten performance and concentration while also being a powerful stress reliever.



3-4-5 Breathing is a simple and effective exercise for dealing with anxiety and stress.

Breathe in for 3 seconds...hold your breath for 4 seconds...and finally breathe out for 5 seconds.

Video: <https://www.nhsinmind.co.uk>

A Mindful S.N.A.C.K.

The next time you're feeling stressed out, overwhelmed, or unsure, reach for a moment of calm awareness: a mindfulness SNACK. Here's how to do it:

S

Stop

Just stop whatever you're doing. (Stopping, by definition, requires us to begin again. We can always begin again.)

N

Notice

What is happening within and around you?

A

Accept

This is a tricky one. Whatever it is you're struggling with (time, kids, sleepiness, frustration) acknowledge it for what it is, without judgment.

C

Curious

Ground yourself with questions about your experience and environment: What am I feeling? What do I need right now?

K

Kindness

Respond to yourself and others (mistakes and all) with kindness and observe how that helps things get back on track.

By Carla Naumburg, PhD (carlanaumburg.com)

*I am always
important, no
matter what.*

*I've dealt with
harder situations
and I know it will
get better.*

*This hurts, so I need
to be extra kind
towards myself.*

*This is tough,
but so am I.*

Coping thoughts

AVERSTU.COM

*Not everything will
go my way, but I
will try to be
flexible.*

*It's not that great
right now, but it's
not the worst thing
either.*

*Everything
will get better,
sooner or later.*

*If I stay strong I
know I will get
through it.*

TYPES OF COPING SKILLS

Self-Soothing

(Comforting yourself through your five senses)

1. Something to touch
(ex: stuffed animal, stress ball)
2. Something to hear
(ex: music, meditation guides)
3. Something to see
(ex: snowglobe, happy pictures)
4. Something to taste
(ex: mints, tea, sour candy)
5. Something to smell
(ex: lotion, candles, perfume)

Distraction

(Taking your mind off the problem for a while)

Examples:

Puzzles, books, artwork, crafts, knitting, crocheting, sewing, crossword puzzles, sudoku, positive websites, music, movies, etc.

Opposite Action

(Doing something the opposite of your impulse that's consistent with a more positive emotion)

1. Affirmations and Inspiration
(ex: looking at or drawing motivational statements or images)
2. Something funny or cheering
(ex: funny movies / TV / books)

Emotional Awareness

(Tools for identifying and expressing your feelings)

Examples:

A list or chart of emotions, a journal, writing supplies, drawing / art supplies

Mindfulness

(Tools for centering and grounding yourself in the present moment)

Examples:

Meditation or relaxation recordings, grounding objects (like a rock or paperweight), yoga mat, breathing exercises.

Crisis Plan

(Contact info of supports and resources, for when coping skills aren't enough.)

Family / Friends
Therapist
Psychiatrist
Hotline
Crisis Team / ER
911

Other resources

Talking

FV DiT Peer Support Group

FV Psychological Support Team

FV Spiritual Care

BMA Wellbeing Service

The Doctor's Support Network (DSN)

Breathing Space

Samaritans – 24/7 Listening Service

Social media

Tea & empathy Facebook group

Joyful doctor podcast

Mindfulness

Calm app

Headspace app

Unmind app

**All the links for the above and many, many more on the FV
COVID Staff Wellbeing website!**

<https://nhsforthvalley.com/covid/staff-information/staff-support-and-wellbeing/wellbeing-resources/>