



# Building Your Mental Health



## Toolkit

- Use this toolkit and the backing sheets to think of a few simple things per category you can do to build your mental health
- Remember to take it just one step at a time. No step is too small – gradual changes can make a big difference

### Connecting with others:

### Relaxation and stress reduction:

### Getting quality sleep:

Physical health:

Getting creative:

Anything else:

# Connecting with others



## Talk to someone you trust

- Speak to or meet with a friend or family member you can trust
- Sometimes all we need is empathy - someone who listens and wants to understand how we feel

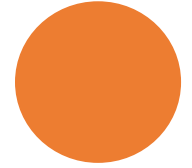
## Groups and peer support

- Hope College is a great example! Another is Sport In Mind
- The Slough Community Directory is a great resource for this ([www.sloughhealth.org](http://www.sloughhealth.org))

## Volunteering

- Helping and supporting others can support ourselves and help us heal

# Relaxation and stress reduction



## Try a gratitude journal

- At the end of each day, simply write down one thing that you're grateful for – it can be anything, big or small

## Balance relaxing and entertaining

- Relaxing and entertaining aren't always the same, but you can balance both
- E.g., watching an action movie may be entertaining and engaging, but it might not relax you

## Explore mindfulness or meditation

- Mindfulness and meditation have proven benefits for mental health
- It may be tricky at first but it's like anything else – practice makes perfect

## Use music

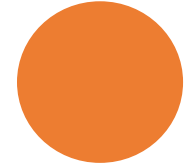
- Music doesn't have to just be popular artists or bands
- There is a lot of music made specifically to help us with relaxation and destressing

## Spend time outdoors and with nature

- Nature isn't only outdoors – growing a house plant and pets counts too!



# Getting quality sleep



## Make a routine

- A routine can help build a rhythm that your body gets used to and help improve your sleep
- You could go to sleep at the same time each day, wake up at the same time, have a routine before sleep such as listening to calming music

## Use a sleep diary

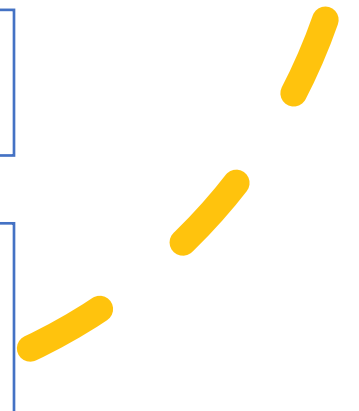
- Write down how you feel [well rested, sleepy, groggy, tired] and compare it to what time you slept and woke up, what you did in the day, what you did before bed etc.
- This can help you understand what affects your sleep quality

## Make yourself comfortable

- For example: an eye mask, earplugs, guided meditation, sleep hypnosis

## Screens

- Screens can interfere with our natural sleep process
- Try to limit screen time in before sleep as much as possible



# Physical health

## Keep hydrated

- This is one of the simplest things we can do which can give huge benefits
- Keeping a water bottle nearby can make this much easier (I have a giant one which I love!)

## Keep active

- You don't have to run a marathon - one small thing at a time is enough
- Try to find things you enjoy doing, like walking in a particular park or time of day

## Be mindful of drugs and alcohol

- If this is tricky, there are great resources which can help

## Set small goals

- Small goals can make a big difference to feeling better, like going for a walk a few times a week. You can then build this into going more often, or other physical activities
- Don't worry if you don't get everything done in one day – one step is better than none

## Balance is better than perfect

- We can't be 100% healthy all the time – focus on small and gradual changes which are sustainable

# Getting creative

## You are creative!

- We are all creative - the key is to find out how to express your personal creativity
- Try different things until you find what you enjoy
- This could be learning an instrument, drawing, painting, writing a story, cooking etc.

## Focus on the experience, not the result

- Don't worry about the end result or how good you are at whatever you're doing – if you enjoyed doing it, it was worth doing
- We can all be artists – whatever we create doesn't have to be perfect to have value to us

## Try a new skill – anything you're interested in

- [www.OpennLearn.co.uk](http://www.OpennLearn.co.uk) is a great FREE resource to learn new skills from the comfort of your home
- Future Learn is another online website for learning
- You might have skills you never knew about! Try anything you find interesting