



# The self-kindness toolkit

Expert tips to tackle challenging times

# 6 Rs of resilience

The 6 Rs of resilience can prepare you and your family so that you are better able to bounce back when faced with a difficult situation.



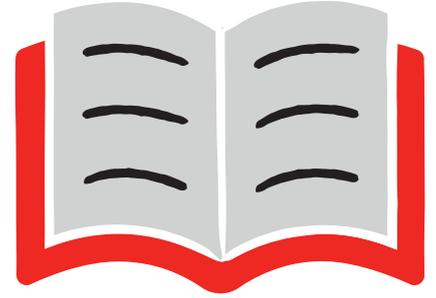
## Responsibility

Taking responsibility for your own mental health, wellbeing and resilience.



## Reflection

Reflecting on how you are, what is happening and how you are feeling about things.



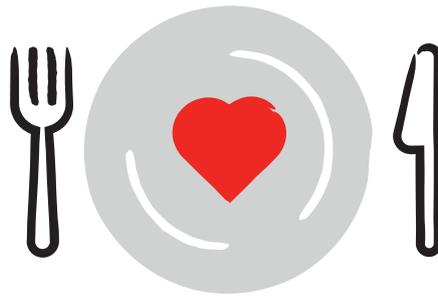
## Relaxation

Relaxing in a way that suits you, such as gardening, reading a book and mindfulness practice.



## Relationships

Noticing the things we can take responsibility for can help to build confidence in ourselves and help us to feel more in control.



## Refuelling

Eating a healthy diet, being conscious of alcohol intake.



## Recreation

Taking regular exercise, and having fun.



# Circles of control

# Responsibility

Being worried or anxious can mean feeling like you have little control over a situation or how to change it. Feeling uncertain can stop you doing many things that might help you feel less concerned.

Circles of control is used by many people and is a tried and tested way to feel more in control of a situation. This means you can focus on what you can do and not what you can't.

Everything can seem a little uncertain right now. A way to help is to focus on things we can control.



1. Write down all the things that you worry about, or might worry about in the future, in a list.



2. Draw two circles on a piece of paper.

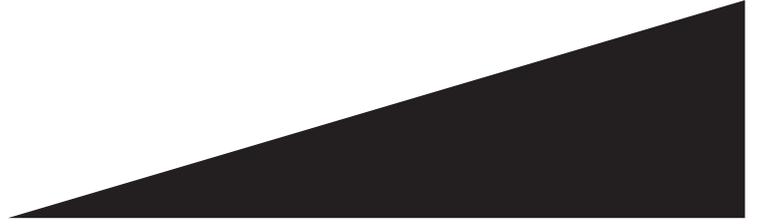


3. Using your list, organise the worries you have control over in the centre circle. Then place the ones you can't control in the outer circle.



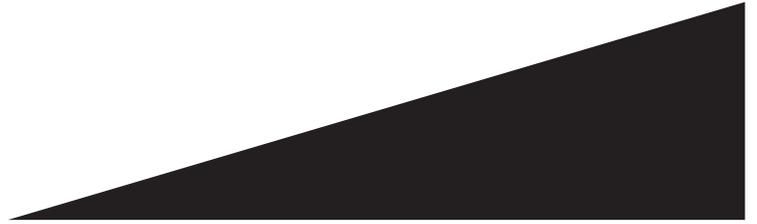
4. Think of one thing you can do to ease one of these central worries.

1 Sometimes problems can seem so large that it is hard to know where to start.

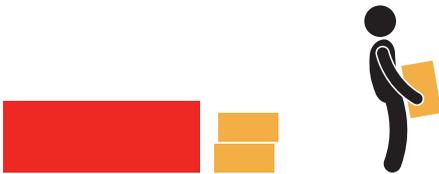


2 Break the problem up into smaller parts.

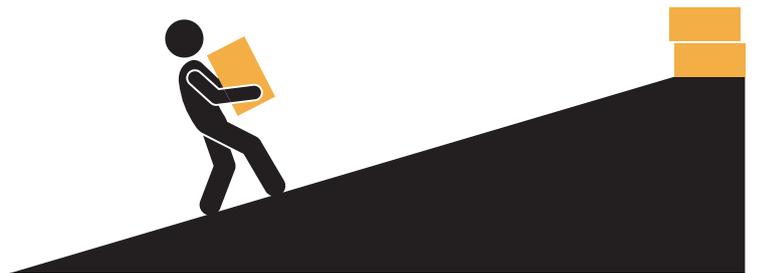
For example, going shopping can be broken into: making a list, organising transport, getting enough bags ready



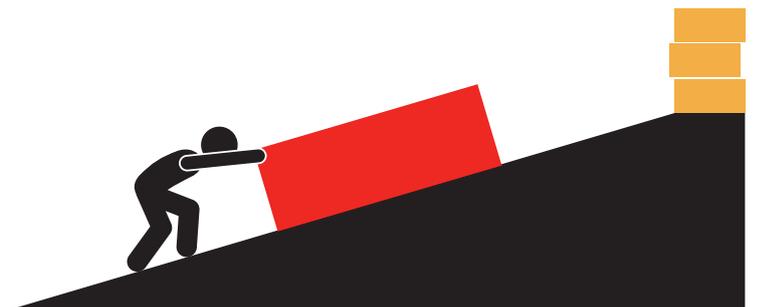
3 You can solve smaller tasks more quickly and easily.



4 You can then solve the whole problem more easily.



5 Think of a problem where doing this might help. How can you break it up?



The pathway below shows how you can be confident when making decisions.



## 6. Think about your decision

What was easy or difficult about making this decision? What will you do differently next time?

## 5. Set a time limit

Give yourself time to make a good decision – but also set a time limit for making it.

## 4. Recognise your fears

It is normal to be worried about making changes. Say that you will make a decision.

## 3. What is good and bad about this decision?

Write down all the reasons for and against what you are thinking of doing. Use this to decide what to do.

## 2. What is stopping me deciding?

Remember do what is best for you, not others. What is that?

## 1. How do I feel?

Write down how you feel about making this decision.

Write down how you can use the steps above in the future.

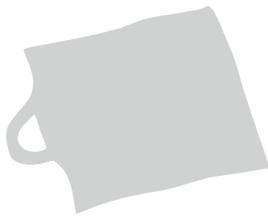
# Everyday items you can use for first aid at home

Learning and knowing first aid allows us to look out for one another in our communities. There are many alternative ways you can provide first aid treatment using everyday items.

### Burns

#### Cool the burn with running water...

...or any cold liquid, such as juice, beer, or milk. The aim is to cool the area as quickly as possible, using whatever cold liquid is available. Remember: It should be cooled for at least 20 minutes for the treatment to be effective.



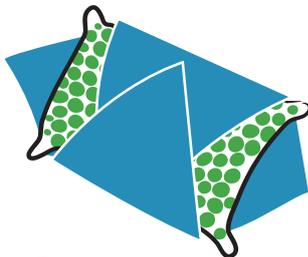
#### Use a clean plastic carrier bag, cling film, sandwich / freezer bag...

...or similar to cover the burn once cooled. These types of items will not stick to the burn and will create a barrier to stop infection. Plastic bags are particularly useful for covering a burned hand or foot.

### Bleeding heavily

#### If you don't have dressing pads to put pressure on the wound...

...use a t-shirt, tea towels or even the person's own hand. All these items can be used to put pressure on the wound and stop or slow down the flow of blood.



### Head injury

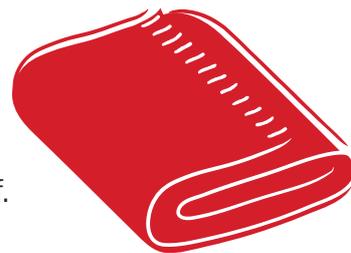
#### If you don't have an ice pack...

...use a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel to cool the affected area.

### Broken bone

#### If you don't know what sort of padding to use to support a broken bone...

...use items of clothing, blankets or simply hold the injured part yourself.



### Hypothermia

#### Give the person hot food like soup or...

...use towels and sheets if you don't have blankets.

### First aid at your fingertips

Support your first aid learning and keep your skills refreshed with the British Red Cross first aid app.

#### Download the app:



1. Consider a recent change in your life.



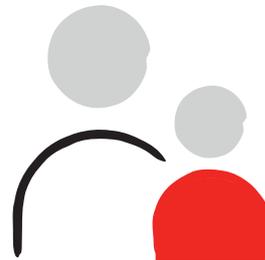
2. Write down all of the positive and challenging emotions you had about it.



3. Consider why you felt like that.

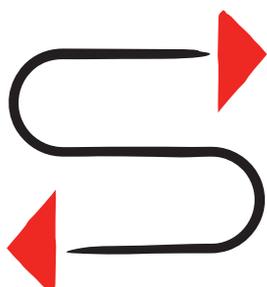


4. Think of all the people and resources you have that can help you cope with changes.

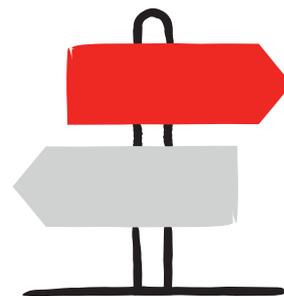


This could include friends, family, and people or services in your community.

5. How will they help you to cope well with more changes?

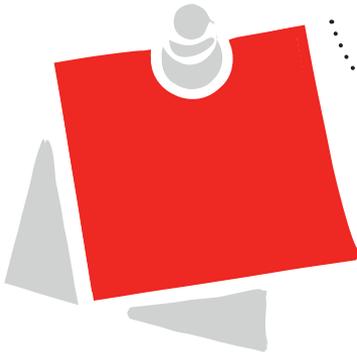


6. What might you do differently in future?

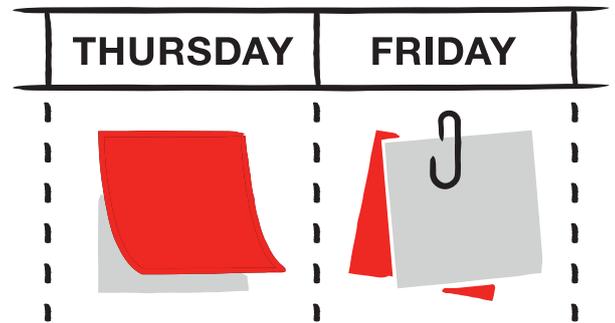


Reflecting on our successes helps us to cope better. Here is a method to help you to do that.

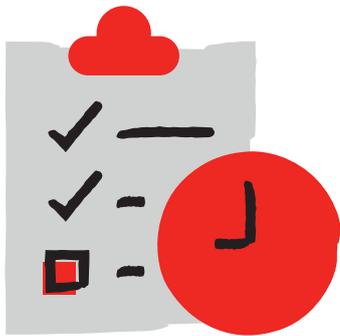
1. Write down what you have achieved today.



2. Now write down what you want to achieve tomorrow and next week.



3. Check your notes in the morning to remind you what you want to achieve for the day.



4. Reflect again at the end of the week. How have your plans changed?

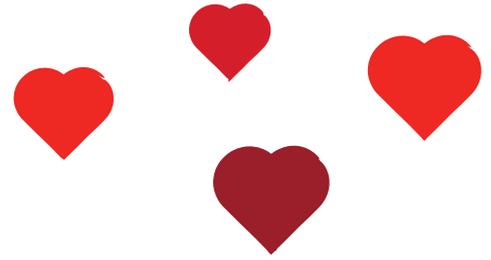


How could this method help you to achieve your aims?

You could use these reflections to help you focus on the skills you would like to learn or develop. It could also help you to identify groups you might like to join.

## Easy mindfulness activities for you to enjoy

Mindfulness activities involve no more than being fully present and engaged in the moment, and being aware of our thoughts and feelings without judging them or getting too caught up in them.



### Cooking

**Notice the smell and texture** of each ingredient.

**Focus on the precision of** repetitive tasks, such as chopping and stirring.

Recognise the **taste and smells** of different foods as they cook.

Involve the **family** and reconnect.

### Dancing

**Move your body** and dance if you can.

**Put on music that you enjoy** and notice how you feel when your body responds.

Notice how different **songs, lyrics and rhythms** make you feel.

**Create a wellbeing playlist** of songs that affected your mood positively.



### Appreciate or tend to nature

**Feel** the texture of the soil, the roughness of weeds or the softness of flowers.

Take in the **smells** of freshly cut grass and nectar.

**Look** at the changing colours, textures and patterns of plants and flowers.

**Listen** to the sounds of birds, lawnmowers and watering of plants.

Sleep is important for our physical and mental wellbeing. However, it is often most difficult to sleep during times when we need it most. Try and use the techniques below to help you wind down and set yourself up for sleep.

## 1. Journal before bed

Using a notebook or a piece of paper, you can write about anything; how you are feeling, tasks you completed, movements you made, or even worries and concerns that you have. If you have written down your worries, how about trying to do our 'circles of control' task with your list? Below is a template you can copy to help you get started.

**My Journal**

**Today I am grateful for...**

**Things I'm worried about...**

**Movements I made...**

**Things I'm excited about...**

## 2. Breathing exercises can help calm anxiety

Here are a few you can start with.



### Breathing in colour

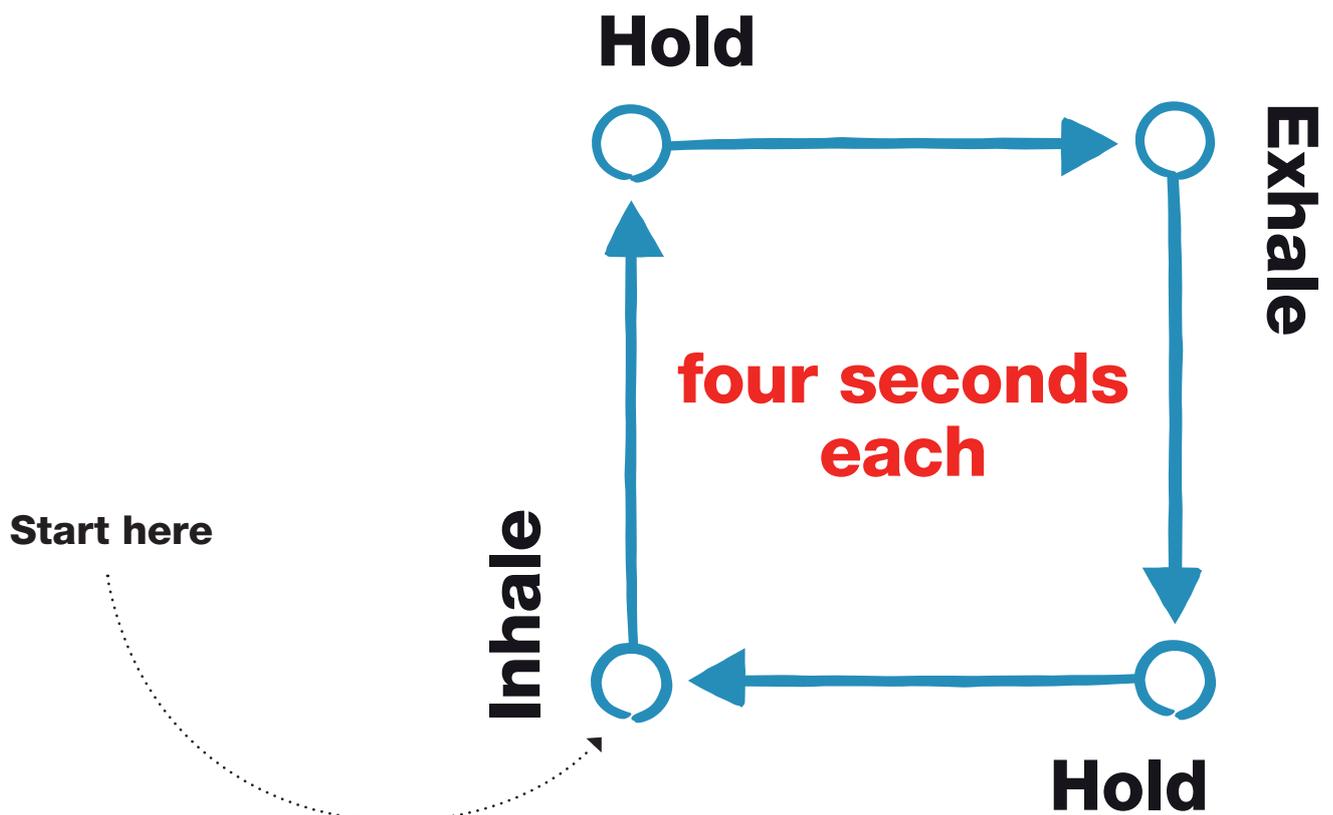
- Picture a colour you associate with happy, positive thoughts.
- Now picture another colour; for thoughts that are not positive.
- Take a slow breath in. Now picture breathing in that wonderful, positive colour. Imagine the breath is reaching your fingers and toes.
- Take a slow breath out and imagine you're breathing out the negative colour.
- Blow it far away from you.
- Repeat this exercise a few times.

Does it help? How do you feel now?

### Box breathing

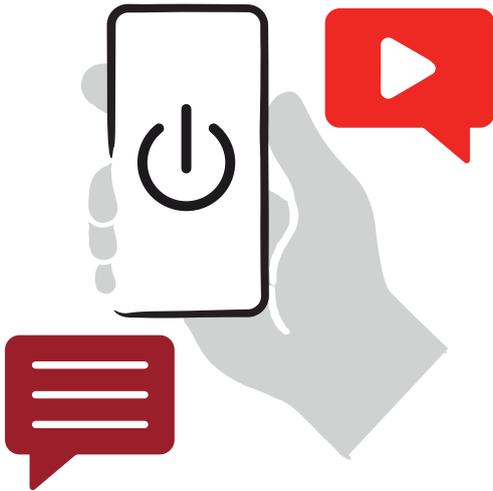
- Take a deep in breath. As you breath in, count to four slowly. Notice the air entering your lungs.
- Now hold your breath and count to four. Avoid inhaling or exhaling.
- Release your breath slowly, again for four seconds.
- At the end of your breath, hold it for another four seconds.
- Repeat this process as many times as you need.

Did it help? How do you feel now?



### 3. Set a routine

Try to set a time to get into bed to create a routine, helping your body get used to regular sleeping times.

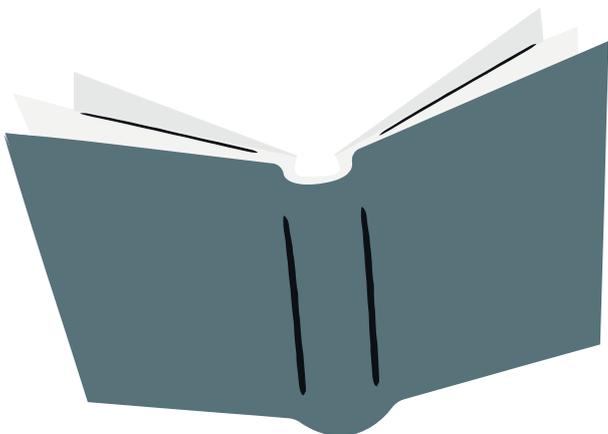


### 4. Limit screen time just before sleep

If you can, also attempt to remove 'blue light objects', such as phones and laptops, from your sleeping space.

### 5. Do something for you

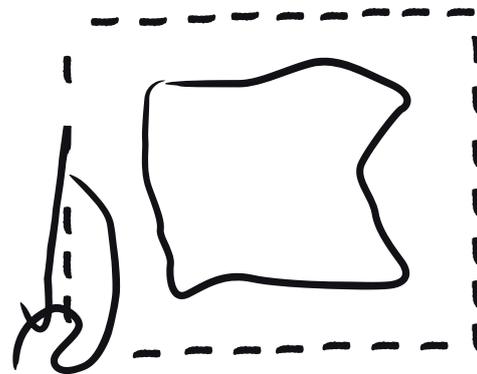
Finding something relaxing that you enjoy doing before bed can help towards a better night sleep. Maybe read something that interests you, dim the lights, have a cup of calming decaffeinated tea or listen to music.



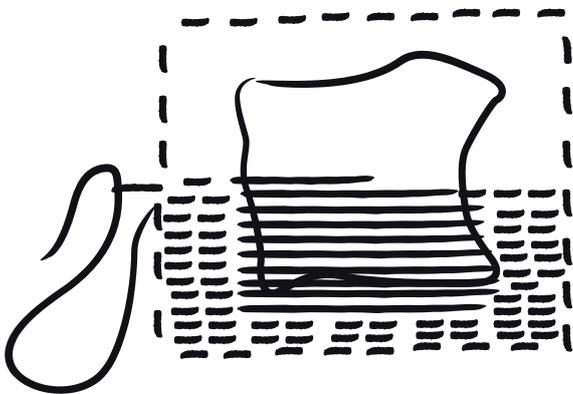
At times when we are feeling anxious or overwhelmed, it can help to keep our hands busy. Look through your things – are there any items that you no longer need and could give to charity? Recycling items is a kind act which can give you satisfaction. Or you could upcycle your items – this is where you take something old and make it into something new. You can learn new skills and even share items with friends and family.

Why not try our mending guide below to keep your hands busy while also bringing an piece of clothing back to life? If you can't think of a way to use the example below, explore ways to upcycle or repair your items through articles and videos online, local repair groups, or go to your local library to find inspiration.

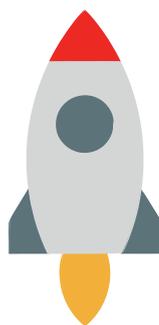
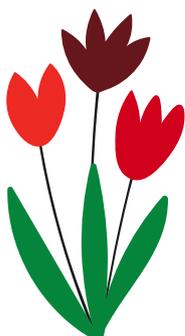
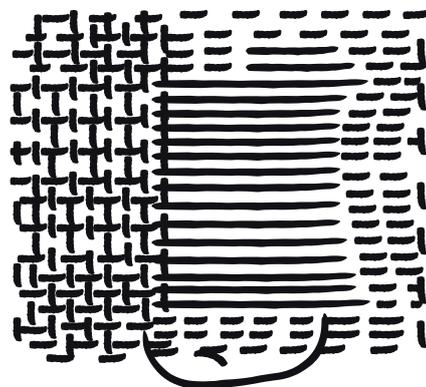
Put something hard underneath the hole: a cup or jar will do. Push the needle and thread through the front side of the fabric to the back. Now bring the needle through the back to the front. Repeat this process, weaving the needle through the fabric to create a line (running stitch) around the edge of the hole.



Now create lines across the hole using the same running stitch. When you get to the hole, pass over it to the other side and stitch again until you reach the border. Change direction and repeat until your hole is covered with lines.



Repeat the same process horizontally: weaving the thread under and over the lines that you created in the last step. When you're done, pass the thread through to the back, tie a small knot, and snip the thread short.



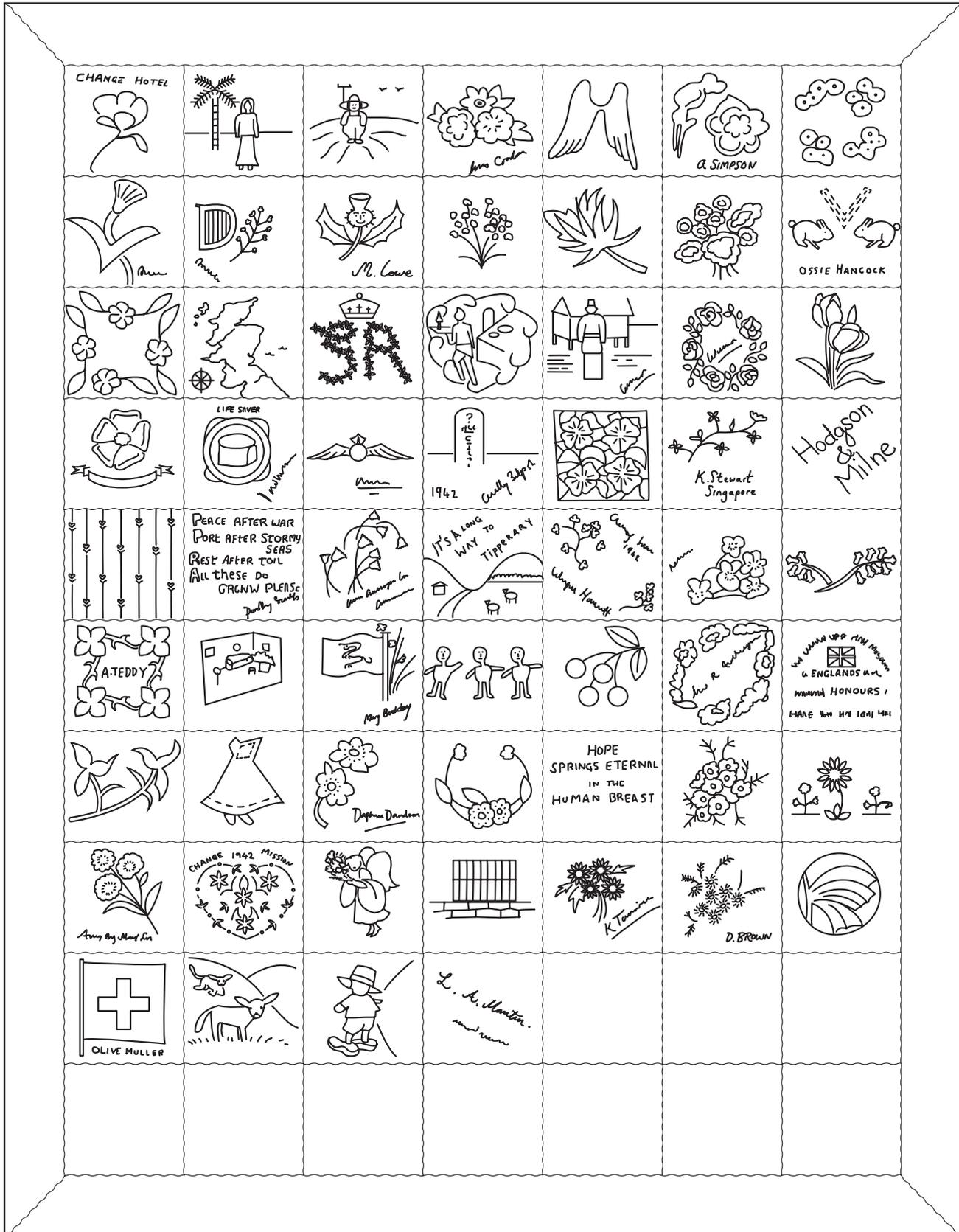
**Tip:** how about trying to create an image over your hole, like a flower or rocket?

# Creative activity – Changi quilt

# Relaxation

This is the Changi quilt, made by women held captive during the Second World War. Every woman stitched a square with their name, something about themselves, and messages for their loved ones.

Colour in the quilt below – some panels have been left blank for you to add your own message about what matters to you.



All the words below relate to items in this pack.  
See if you can find them in the wordsearch.

- Birds**
- Changi**
- Connect**
- First aid**
- Resilience**
- Support**
- Breathing**
- Nature**

F	B	R	E	A	T	H	I	N	G	R
B	C	B	I	R	D	S	T	R	O	E
C	Z	S	J	U	X	Q	P	R	V	S
O	N	G	S	J	F	I	E	R	X	I
N	A	D	R	V	P	H	M	P	Z	L
N	T	S	C	H	A	N	G	I	T	I
E	U	V	B	U	P	R	T	R	T	E
C	R	F	I	R	S	T	A	I	D	N
T	E	S	R	T	P	Q	F	R	P	C
V	Y	S	U	P	P	O	R	T	K	E
Z	W	K	S	U	I	Q	M	R	V	G

When you have finished the wordsearch, write down three words from the list that appeal to you the most and then write down three ways you can learn more about them or try to do them. Then look back at the end of the week to see what you have achieved.

## British Red Cross: The self-kindness toolkit feedback

We hope you are enjoying the activities in this pack. To give us feedback and help us improve our resources in the future, please fill out this short survey. [forms.office.com/e/SxGhGBv4NF](https://forms.office.com/e/SxGhGBv4NF)



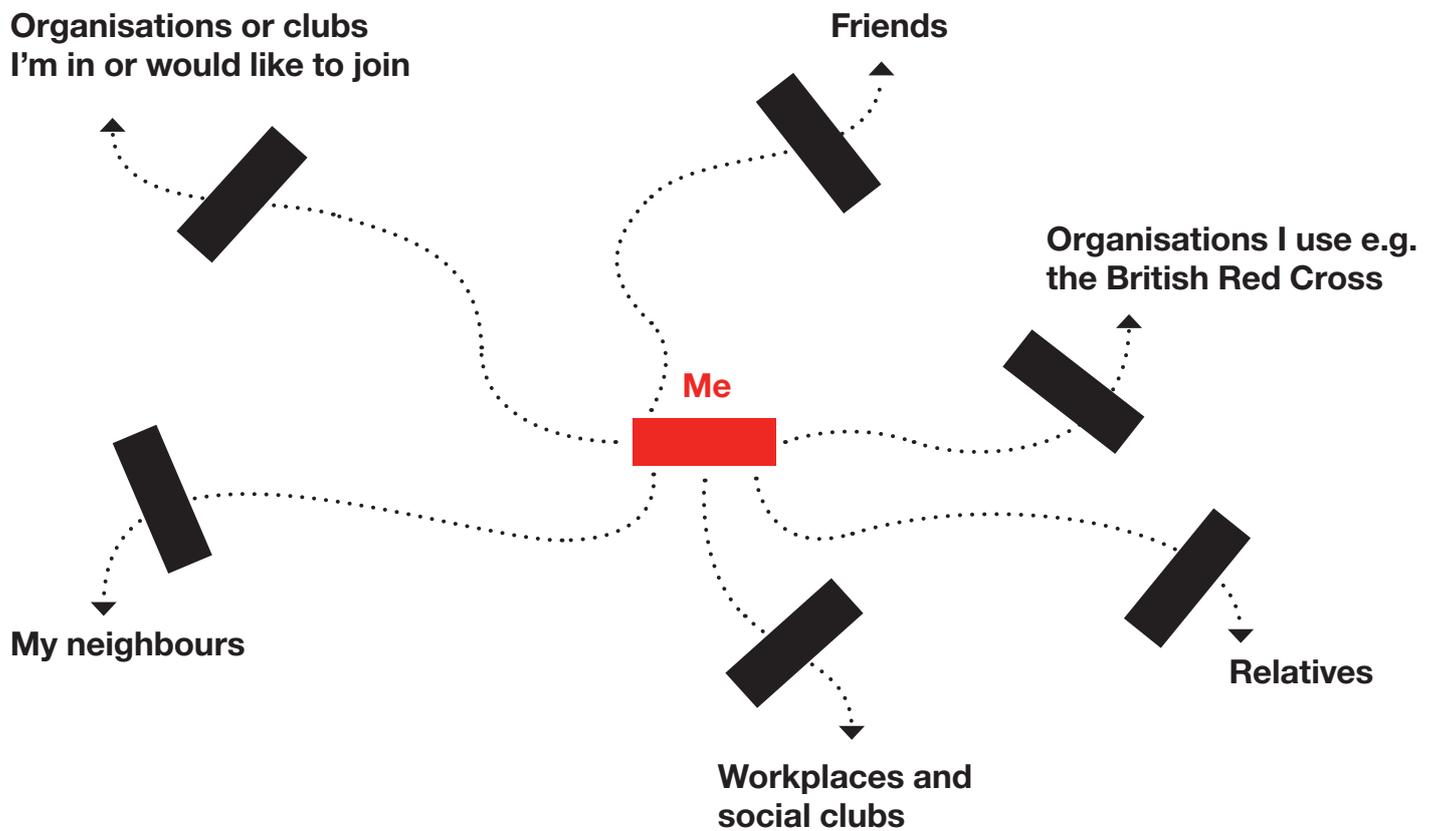
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QR code

We know many people who can help us, or who we can help when they are struggling. It can help for us to remind ourselves who they are.

Write down the names of the people you are connected to.

What do they do?

How can you continue to connect with them?



Think about **how these people help you.**  
Then write down **how you help them.**

Who else would you like to meet?  
How can your connections help you?  
What can you do to help build and nurture these connections?

# Other ways you can connect with your community

There are many ways you can get involved and show what you can do. You may wish to cook and share what you've made with your neighbours, or make something like a pillow or a wooden toy to give to someone you know or a local charity.

You can also visit your local library or community centre to find new things you can get involved with in your area. It could be a sport or hobby group. Many community groups allow you to attend as a beginner or give you the chance to pass on your knowledge and skills to others. How will it feel to make something and then share it?



**Use the boxes below to write down ways you could connect to others**

Use this box to write down some more options or groups in your local area.

Use this box to list ways that you could support others locally.

Use this box to list some places you could volunteer your time (e.g. in person, by phone or by making something).

Use this box to write down some ideas around how you could support people that live further away.

Exercise can help relieve tension and stress, while also making you feel better through the release of 'feel good' hormones, called endorphins. From a brisk walk to yoga, movement is a great way of looking after your wellbeing. If you are able to, the yoga poses below are a good way to practice movement and listening to your body.

As you move into the positions, notice what feels good and what doesn't. Keep bringing your attention back to your breathing as you move through the poses.

Acknowledge how different moves make you feel. Are you frustrated, proud, determined, or relaxed?



Go to a space outside that you love, such as a garden, park or leafy street. Try our mindful walking in nature routine.

- **Walk** at a natural, slow pace.
- **Focus on your breathing**, take a few deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Then settle into a natural rhythm.
- **Now take a look around you**; how does it feel to be outside?
- **Notice your senses**. What can you hear? What can you see? What can you smell? What can you touch?
- Are you able to **pick up a leaf, or touch the bark of a tree?** What do you notice about how they look and feel?
- When you are done, **shift your attention back to your walking**. How could walking in nature help others around you to feel more connected and how can you pass this on to help someone else?

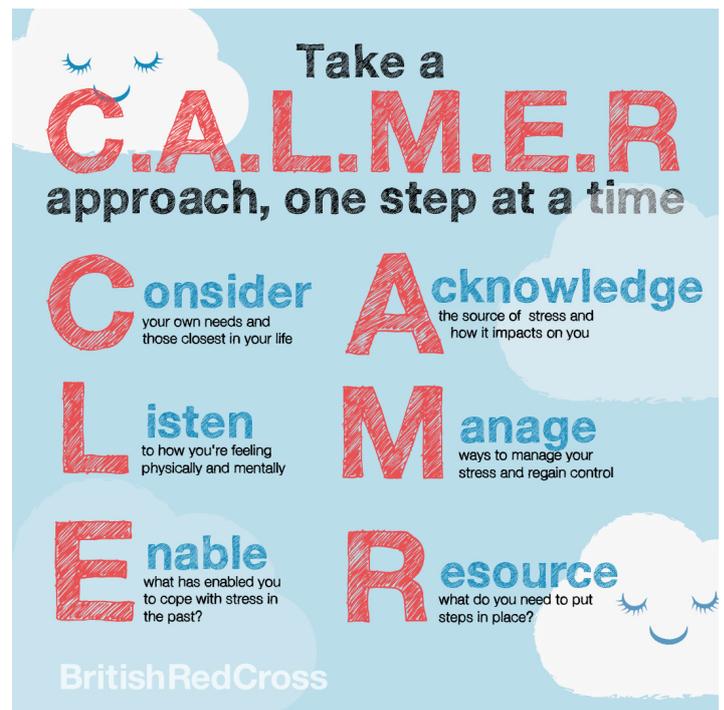
If you are unable to go outside, **look out of a window**. Take a note of what you can see. You could draw plants or animals you have seen and try to find out their correct names, for example.



# How to take the C.A.L.M.E.R approach to stress and anxiety

The C.A.L.M.E.R. approach is a useful acronym developed by the British Red Cross' psychosocial and mental health team. Using it will enable you to easily remember a few healthy steps you can take when you or someone you know feels anxious or helpless about the current situation.

Think of something you are going to do soon. How could using the C.A.L.M.E.R. framework help to make you more confident about it going well? Write this down and look at it again to keep reminding yourself of how this will help you to manage the situation well.



## Who to call

**Call our free support line for advice on British Red Cross support, including in your local area - 0808 196 3651**

Or just call to chat. Our friendly team are here to listen.

Call free and confidentially during these times:

Monday: 10am - 5pm

Tuesday: 10am - 5pm

Wednesday: 10am - 8pm

Thursday: 10am - 5pm

Friday: 10am - 5pm

**Here are some of the areas we can help you with:**

- **Loneliness**
- **Support at home**
- **Money problems**
- **Hiring a wheelchair**

**For more activities and information to help build confidence, coping skills and improve your wellbeing, visit: [redcross.org.uk/wellbeing-support](https://www.redcross.org.uk/wellbeing-support)**

For free online, telephone and face-to-face wellbeing workshops offering you the chance to connect with others and learn new skills, get in touch by email [redcrosseducation@redcross.org.uk](mailto:redcrosseducation@redcross.org.uk) or call our team to find out more:

**0344 412 2734**