What's Inside this guide?

We have put this second booklet together to help anyone who is struggling with an eating disorder as a coping resource that you can use during the current situation we are all in.

This is a time of uncertainty for everyone and it's okay to feel anxious, scared and worried. You are not alone if you feel this way, remember that the whole world is experiencing this together and together we will get through it.

We hope that this second guide can bring you a little bit of comfort.

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DEALING WITH ANXIETY

BREATHE

Try taking some big deep breaths. Focus your attention on the air going in and out.

Why? Deep breathing increases supply of oxygen to the brain, which stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting a calm feeling.

The next few pages will give you a few techniques that might be useful to help deal with feelings of anxiety and being worried. There's no pressure to give everything a go, just try what you think might be helpful.

Most importantly, whatever you are feeling now is valid and there is no need to feel ashamed, whatever these feelings are.

Soothing box

Can you create a soothing box or draw filled with things that might help you to feel calm?

Your box or draw will be unique to you, but here’s some examples of what you could put in:

- Nice smelling moisturiser
- Soft toy to stroke or cuddle
- Pictures of happy memories
- Stress ball or something soft to squeeze
- Distractions like colouring books, crosswords, puzzles

Warm and cold breath

Try taking a deep breath in and out through your nose. Then try it again to see if you can notice that the air going out is slightly warmer than the air going in.

Focus on this to help bring yourself some calmness.
Stop and notice the moment you are in

What colours you can see now?
What can you hear now?
Is there anything you can smell now?
Is there anything you can touch now?
Stay in this moment for as long as you need.

Stop scrolling
Stay connected
You may find yourself endlessly scrolling through social media. Ask yourself: is this making me feel better or worse? If it is making you feel worse could you limit the time you spend on social media each day? Can you use social media in a positive way to stay connected with friends?
It may be useful to have some down time from screens before bed as the blue light emitted from screens can interrupt sleep.

Take a break
When feeling anxious you may find yourself trying to do lots to keep yourself busy and block that anxious feeling. It's good to use distraction's and this may help for a while. But you may find that it can make the anxiety worse or you may feel like you can't stop. Could you try taking a break? Try sitting down for a while and accepting how you feel in the moment, remember it's okay to be anxious and the feeling will pass.
Progressive muscle relaxation

If you have been worrying or feeling anxious, you might feel some tension in your body, this exercise can help to relieve this a little. Try going from top to bottom or bottom to top a few times.

1. Scrunch your forehead. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
2. Shrug your shoulders up. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
3. Hold your arms out as straight as you can. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
4. Sit up as straight as you can. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
5. Clench your hands in a fist. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
6. Make your legs as straight as you can. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
7. Curl your toes up tight. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
8. Scrunch your eyes shut. Hold for ten seconds and relax.
It's really normal to have arguments with your family from time to time. Remember that everyone is in a stressful situation at the moment which makes arguments more likely and you are not to blame. If your family gets upset, that's because they care about you. You are not upsetting anyone on purpose so try not to be too hard on yourself.

After an argument is there a way that you can show your family member that you want to put it behind you and go back to getting along the best you can? Maybe you could write them a note or if it helps ask for a hug and do something together like watch a film.

You could try sitting down with one of your family members when you are both calm and talk about what comments related to your eating disorder you find helpful and ones that you don’t. Sometimes a family member may make a comment that they think is helpful without realising that it’s not. You could also make an agreement with each other about when to discuss things related to the eating disorder and when not to, and plan in some time where you don’t mention it at all.

Don’t be hard on yourself for slipping back a little, if you have recognised that you are struggling more that’s a really good sign and you can do something about it to prevent things getting any worse.

Think about what has helped you in the past when you have struggled, can you use any of these techniques to help now?

Who can you speak to about this worry and are there any ways they can help you to prevent the eating disorder behaviours worsening?

Recovery isn’t a straight line and we all go through bumps along the way, don’t give up hope and don’t stop trying.
Something I have found so helpful recently is the ability to accept however I'm feeling, knowing there is no right or wrong way to feel at the moment.

Ours is a situation like no other, nobody has experienced it before so we are all finding our feet, establishing new routines and ways to deal with our circumstances.

We may be feeling anxious, low in mood, tearful, frustrated, worried or angry at what is going on around us and how it is impacting our lives. We're all having to adapt to something new and different, and change can be very challenging to cope with.

We must keep trying to remember that feeling negative emotions at the moment is perfectly reasonable and to be expected. We mustn't beat ourselves up for however we're dealing with this disruption to our lives, homes, work and recovery paths.

By the same token you may find you have days where you feel more positive and this is perfectly fine too. I can find myself feeling guilty for having sudden waves of motivation to get things done or moments of calm and optimism. Anything is acceptable - both the good and bad days.

It's uncharted territory for everyone and therefore nobody is doing this wrongly or correctly. Be kind to yourself, accept that you are feeling a certain way today and then look at how you can make peace with your frame of mind and move on. We're all in this together, and we're all doing a great job!
Get yourself a piece of paper and split it in half or use the space below. Give yourself a limited time to write down all your worries. Then give yourself some time to write down on the other half of the page things that are happy; any happy memories, things that have made you laugh or things that you are proud of yourself for. If you find it difficult to think of the positive things try doing it with someone else in your house or on the phone with a friend.

This means that you get your worries out but you’re also giving yourself some brighter moments to focus on.

You might prefer to do this as a conversation rather than writing it down. Have a conversation with someone you feel confident talking to, set a time limit on speaking about worries and then talk about other things that are more positive.
STAYING MOTIVATED FOR RECOVERY

It may seem difficult to be motivated for recovery at the moment with everything that is going on. But recovery from your eating disorder is just as important now as it ever is. This page has a few ideas on what you could try to help a little with staying motivated.

List all your reasons for recovery

- What will you be able to do more of when you're recovered?
- Is there something you want to be able to do at the moment but can't because of the eating disorder?
- What about the eating disorder will you be glad to leave behind?

Tip:
Smiling at yourself in the mirror is a quick way to give your mood a little boost and have a giggle at yourself!

Letter from your future self

Could you write a letter from your future self? Imagine that it is 10 years time and you are recovered from your eating disorder (and we are no longer in lockdown!) what motivational letter would you write back to yourself to read now?
Expectations

Expectations that we or others place on ourselves can sometimes be overwhelming. If we place too many expectations we can start to feel under a lot of pressure and it can result in feeling like a failure if we don't meet those aims. Remind yourself that failure means you were trying something and for that you should be proud of yourself.

Expectations and having aims are not all bad, they allow us to keep moving forward, how about trying to create some more laid-back, positive expectations? Can you set yourself three positive expectations for this week? See our examples below.

1. I expect myself to be a little kinder to myself this week

2. I expect myself to stop and take big deep breaths when I start to feel anxious

3. I expect myself to allow enough time to rest this
Things you could do during lock-down

Having some routine and structure in place may be useful for you. See booklet 1 for a weekly planner you could use to plan out your week.

- Gardening
- Watch a film
- Knitting
- Jigsaws
- Watch a motivational TED talk
- Learn a language
- Meditation
- FSED weekly online mental health training 3pm Thursdays (link on our facebook page)
- Listen to a podcast
- Story writing
- Play a board game or design your own
- Playing an instrument
- Read a book
- Card games
- Colouring
- Blogging
- Doing or creating a quiz
- Online courses (if you search online there are some free ones)
- Video call with friends and family
See if you can complete this crossword to help pass a little time (the answers are on the second to last page, but no cheating!)


SPREAD SOME COLOUR!

We would love you to get creative decorating our logo. You can use the template below or draw it yourself! Then share your creations this far and wide, let's spread a little colour around! Tag us @firststepsed on twitter, facebook or instagram with your creations, we look forward to seeing them!
A MESSAGE FROM STAFF

Maria our training and events coordinator says:

'These unprecedented times full of unknown and uncertainty bring up a variety of difficult emotions we learn how to deal with every day. Despite the worries, the outbreak of COVID-19 may also become an opportunity for us all. By staying at home, we may give ourselves some mental space and focus more on self-reflection. Ask yourself what this really means to you, explore it, write about it and see where it takes you. Stay curious. I wish you all to use this chance to get to know yourself better and finally connect with your own true “self”. NOW is a perfect moment to start this journey.'

Clair our specialist support worker says:

"It's a strange and worrying time for all of us right now all over the world. There have been lots of changes in our daily routines that have been taken out of our control. It's natural to have days where you feel emotional, so release it cry, scream or shout and let it go... This current climate gives us the opportunity to learn to adapt and change our attitudes and behaviours to cope in situations that push us to the limit. Practice self care and self love even if its only for 5 minutes each day. Remember you are strong and together we will all get through this! #alwayslookforthepositiveineverynegativesitation"

Antonia our Eating Disorders In Student Services Ambassador says:

‘Although this is a really tough time and a new way of life (hopefully for the short term), utilise the new-found time you have to invest into your wellbeing and recovery. Take your time with food, find positive and proactive things to do but also allow yourself to do nothing sometimes :-) most importantly - STAY CONNECTED with the people who uplift you’

Rob our Eating Disorders In Student Services Coordinator says:

"Mental strength is not having the ability to stay out of the darkness; it is the ability to sit present in it, knowing that the light will shine again"
WE HOPE YOU HAVE FOUND THIS BOOKLET USEFUL. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE THIS WITH ANYONE YOU THINK MAY BENEFIT.