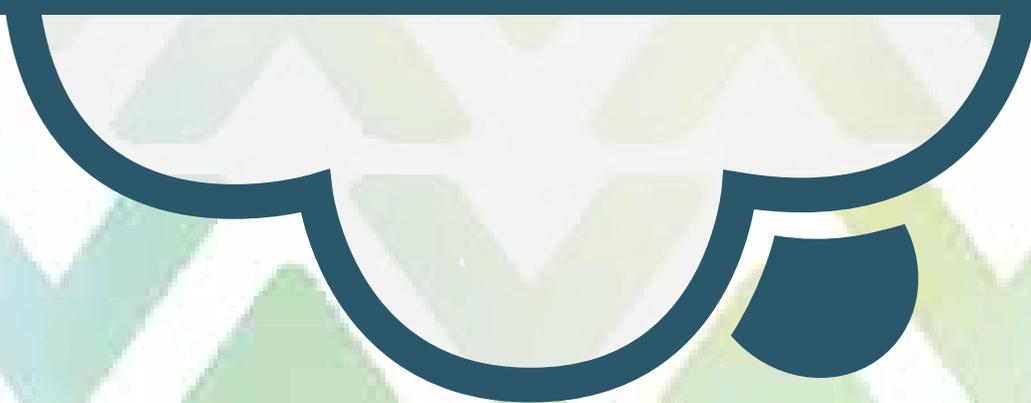




# SUNNY SPELLS & SCATTERED SHOWERS



## Welcome

Welcome to your first edition of Sunny spells and scattered showers. This publication is for you and we want to bring ideas, tips and essential information to support your mental wellbeing.

Donna (Radlett Nursery Manager) recently went on a two day Mental Health First Aid training course and came back with lots of information to help us to support you.



## Our trained Mental Health First Aider, Donna Shadbolt

Donna, Radlett Nursery Manager is our trained MHFA. In general, the role of a Mental Health First Aider in the workplace is to be a point of contact for an employee who is experiencing a mental

health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting the person to get appropriate help. Mental Health First Aiders are valuable in providing early intervention help for someone who may be developing a mental health issue. Mental Health First Aiders are not trained to be therapists or psychiatrists but they can offer initial support through non-judgemental listening and guidance.

Mental Health First Aiders are trained to:

- Spot the early signs and symptoms of mental ill health
- Start a supportive conversation with a colleague who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress
- Listen to the person non-judgementally
- Assess the risk of suicide or self-harm
- Encourage the person to access appropriate professional support or self-help strategies
- Escalate to the appropriate emergency services, if necessary
- Maintain confidentiality as appropriate
- Protect themselves while performing their role.

### See our new Mental Health and Well Being Policy.

**Early support is essential and starting a conversation about mental health doesn't have to be difficult and will be kept confidential and so don't hesitate to talk to your Manager.**

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## Are mental health problems increasing?

The overall number of people with mental health problems has not changed significantly in recent years, but worries about things like money, jobs and benefits can make it harder for people to cope.

It appears that how people cope with mental health problems is getting worse as the number of people who self-harm or have suicidal thoughts is increasing.

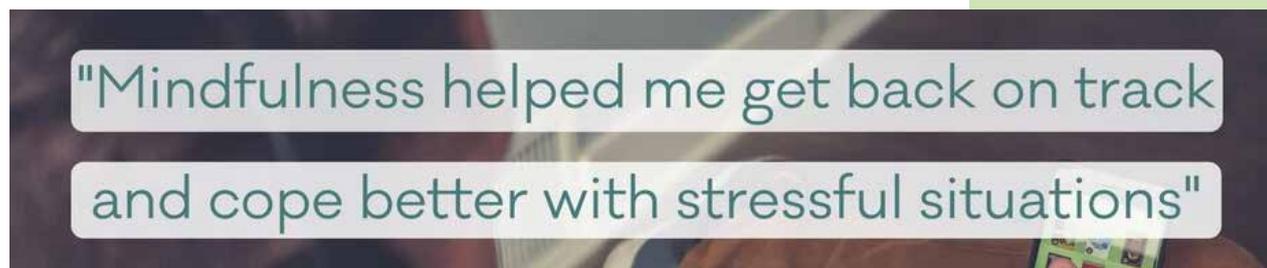


**MHFA England**

**Approximately 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year.**



**We may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but we care about you and want to help.**



# Important stuff!

## So what is mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing describes your mental state - how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life.

Our mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month or year to year.

If you have good mental wellbeing you are able to:

- feel relatively confident in yourself and have positive self-esteem
- feel and express a range of emotions
- build and maintain good relationships with others
- feel engaged with the world around you
- live and work productively
- cope with the stresses of daily life
- adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

## How are wellbeing and mental health problems connected?

If you experience low mental wellbeing over a long period of time, you are more likely to develop a mental health problem.

If you already have a mental health problem, you're more likely to experience periods of low mental wellbeing than someone who hasn't. But that doesn't mean you won't have periods of good wellbeing.

Think about what is affecting your wellbeing

We're all different. What affects someone's mental wellbeing won't necessarily affect others in the same way.

But we all have times when we have low mental wellbeing, where we feel stressed, upset or find it difficult to cope.

Common life events that can affect your mental wellbeing include:

- loss or bereavement
- loneliness
- relationship problems
- issues at work
- worry about money

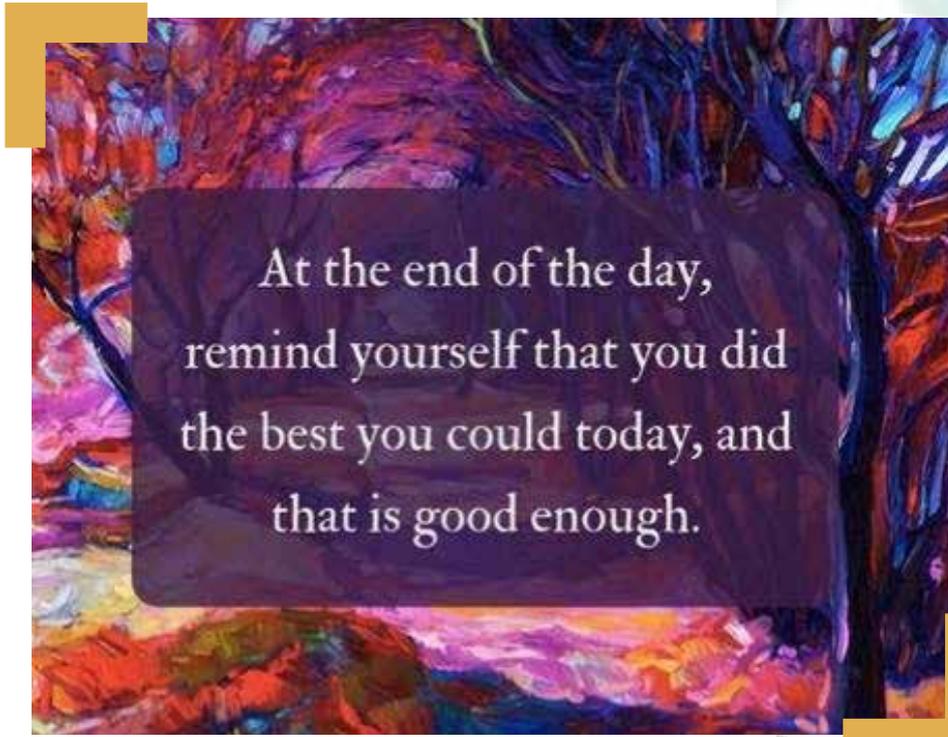
Stress, loneliness, inactivity, lack of sleep are all negative for my mental wellbeing. Other times there is no clear reason for why we feel the way we do - which can be frustrating.

There are some factors that may make you more vulnerable to experiencing a period of poor mental wellbeing. These may have happened in the past or might still be happening now:

- childhood abuse, trauma, violence or neglect
- social isolation or discrimination
- homelessness or poor housing
- a long-term physical health condition
- social disadvantage, poverty or debt
- unemployment
- caring for a family member or friend
- significant trauma as an adult, such as military combat, being involved in a serious accident or violent crime

No matter the reason, it can be helpful to remember that you deserve to feel good and there are steps you can take to improve and maintain your mental wellbeing.





At the end of the day,  
remind yourself that you did  
the best you could today, and  
that is good enough.

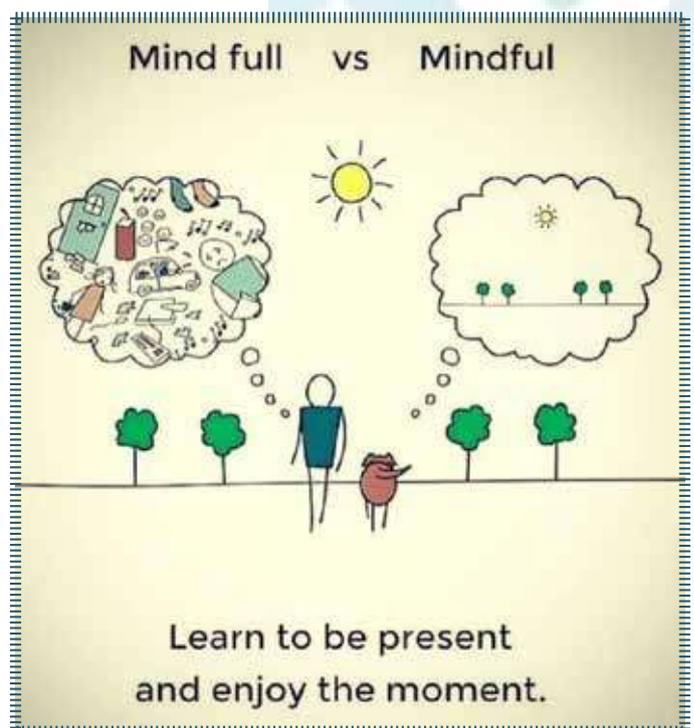
## So what is mental mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

Mindfulness meditation gives us a time in our lives when we can suspend judgment and unleash our natural curiosity about the workings of the mind, approaching our experience with warmth and kindness—to ourselves and others.

### Things to Know About Mindfulness:

- Mindfulness is not obscure or exotic. It's familiar to us because it's what we already do, how we already are. It takes many shapes and goes by many names.
- Mindfulness is not a special added thing we do. We already have the capacity to be present.
- You don't need to change who you are or become something you're not.
- Everyone can benefit and it's easy to learn.
- It's a way of living. Mindfulness is more than just a practice. It brings awareness and caring into everything we do—and it cuts down needless stress. Even a little makes our lives better.
- It sparks innovation. As we deal with our world's increasing complexity and uncertainty, mindfulness can lead us to effective, resilient, low-cost responses to our problems.



# Belly Breathing

Meditation begins and ends in the body. It involves taking the time to pay attention to where we are and what's going on, and that starts with being aware of our body.

**What are breathing exercises?**

Belly breathing exercises can coax your body into calming down.

**When should you do them?**

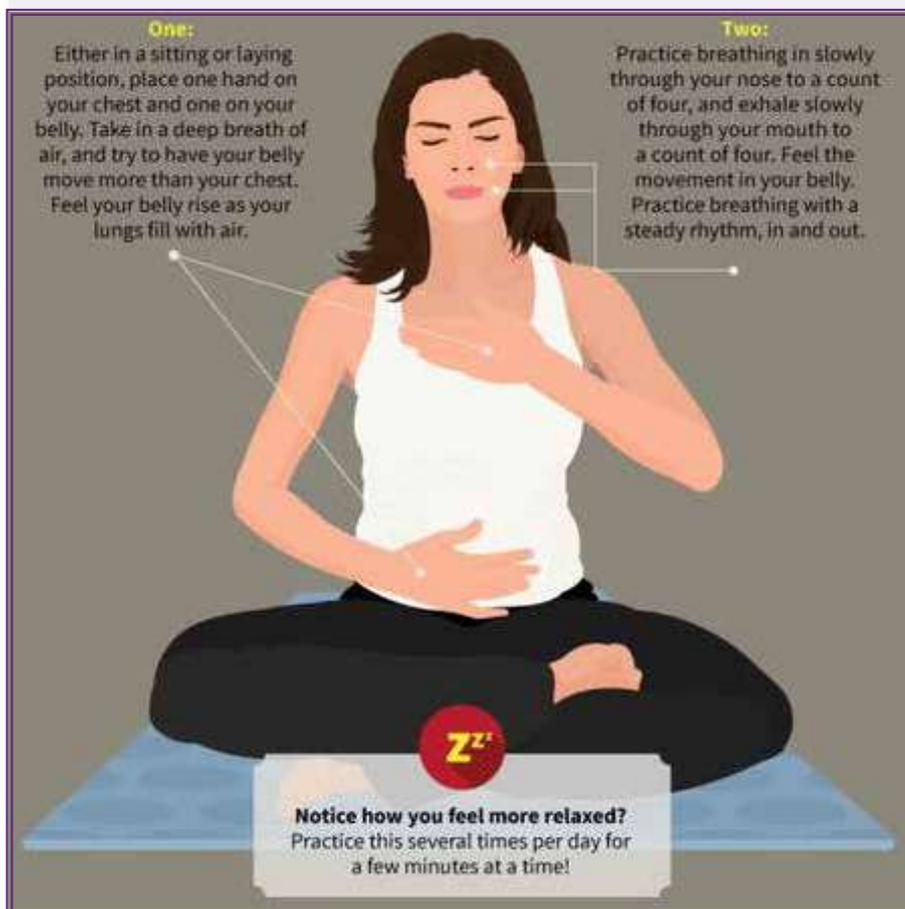
Any time you feel stressed, anxious or when you feel physically out of control.

**Where should you do them?**

Sit or lay, they are versatile exercises that can be done virtually anywhere.

**Why should you do them?**

When you are anxious, you tend to breathe in a shallow and rapid manner - rapid heartbeat, trembling, clammy hands, dizziness. These sensations can be unnerving.



<b>THINK BREATHING</b> 	Breathe in, hold for three counts and exhale. Count seven breaths.	<b>DEEP LISTENING</b> 	Listen completely and contemplate your response.
 <b>NOTICE YOUR SENSES</b>	What are two things you can taste, touch, smell, hear, right now?	<b>DO ONE THING AT A TIME</b> 	When eating, just eat, when checking emails, just check emails.

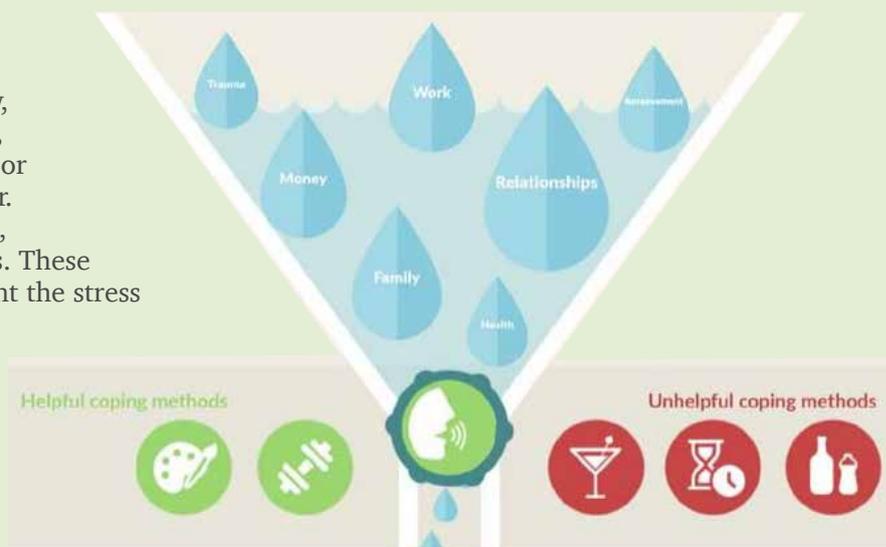
# Stress Container

To understand what causes us stress and by taking action to manage our stress levels is a key part to looking after our well-being. The stress container can help us to understand how we experience stress and how to address our stress levels.

What's in your container?, Work load, bereavement, money concerns, relationship problems, health concerns?? Even positive events may cause us stress such as a new job/ role or having a baby. Stress is the body's natural response when danger is sensed, we all experience it, at different times and in different ways but if we leave it too long, it interferes with our lives and makes us ill.

The more stress we are under, the quicker our stress container will fill, it will overflow and issues quickly develop. You may feel tearful, irritable, have difficulty concentrating or more physical signs such as headaches or upset stomach.

We can release some of our stress by using some helpful techniques such as being active, exercise, try something new, make time for yourself and your hobbies, talk to a friend/relative/ work colleague or your workplace Mental Health First Aider. Unhelpful strategies may include alcohol, overworking, or bottling up your feelings. These block the tap to our container and prevent the stress from flowing out.



Have a look at the following which helps to explain clearly - <https://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/campaigns/mhaw2018/#stresscontainerclip>

## 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](http://getselfhelp.co.uk) or the NHS Apps Library



### 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](http://mhfaengland.org/mhfa-centre/resources)



MHFA England

There are simple steps you can take to **#AddressYourStress**. Check out our resources at [mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org)

# Relating

The people around you offer a valuable pool of support so it's important to put time into strengthening those connections.

## Give it a go:

- Meet up with someone you haven't seen in a while
- Turn off distractions to chat with friends or family about your day

# Exercising

Regular activity will provide an endorphin boost and increase confidence.

## Give it a go:

- Find an activity that suits you and your schedule
- Swap the car on short journeys and cycle or walk to work



# Awareness

Taking time to switch off autopilot and 'be in the moment' is a great tool to combat stress.

## Give it a go:

- Pay attention to your senses — what can you see, hear or feel around you?
- Choose a regular point in the day to reflect

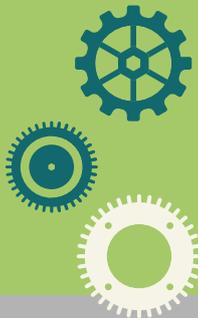


# Giving

Holding out a helping hand makes other people happy and will make you feel happier too.

## Give it a go:

- Share your skills or offer support
- Ask friends, family or colleagues how they are and listen without judgement



# 10 KEYS TO HAPPIER LIVING

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Find out more about the 10 Keys to Happier Living at [actionforhappiness.org](http://actionforhappiness.org)



MHFA England

Visit [mhfaengland.org](http://mhfaengland.org) to learn about Mental Health First Aid and how you can support a friend, family member, colleague or student with their mental health

# Trying out

Learning new things is stimulating and can help to lift your mood.

## Give it a go:

- Take on a new role at work or school
- Try out a new hobby, club or activity that interests you



# Direction

Working towards positive, realistic goals can provide motivation and structure.

## Give it a go:

- Choose a goal that is meaningful to you, not what someone else expects of you
- Remember to celebrate progress along the way



# Meaning

People who have meaning in their lives experience less stress, anxiety and depression.

## Give it a go:

- Prioritise the activities, people and beliefs that bring you the strongest sense of purpose
- Volunteer for a cause, be part of a team, notice how your actions make a difference for others

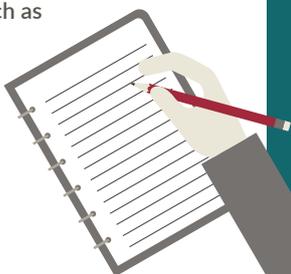


# Resilience

Although we can't always choose what happens to us, we can often choose our own response to what happens.

## Give it a go:

- Find an outlet such as talking to friends or writing it down
- Take action to improve your resilience skills



# Emotions

Positive emotions can build up a buffer against stress and even lead to lasting changes in the brain to help maintain wellbeing.

## Give it a go:

- Take time to notice what you're grateful for and focus on the good aspects of any situation
- Set aside time to have fun

# Acceptance

No one is perfect. Longing to be someone different gets in the way of making the most of our own happiness.

## Give it a go:

- Be kind to yourself when things go wrong
- Shift the focus away from what you don't have and can't do, to what you have and can do

# Do you need support now?



If you are feeling distressed or have concerns for your wellbeing and need to talk to someone, contact your GP or call any of these numbers:

**NHS Single Point of Access (SPA): 0300 777 0707:** For people to access NHS mental health support and services. Lines are open 8am to 7pm.

**NHS Herts Mental Health Out-of-Hours Helpline: 01438 843322:** Available from 5pm to 9am on weekdays and around the clock at weekends and bank holidays.

**NHS Wellbeing Team:** To make a self referral or find out more about the service, visit [www.talkwellbeing.co.uk](http://www.talkwellbeing.co.uk). To request a self referral form be sent to you via post, please call **0300 777 0707**.

**Hertfordshire NightLight: 01923 256391:** Telephone line open 7pm to 1am; face to face crisis support 7pm to 2 am. Friday to Monday.

**Samaritans: 116 123:** Lines open 24 hours a day. Calls are free.

**Saneline: 0300 304 7000:** Open every day 4.30pm to 10.30pm.

**Mindline Trans+ National Helpline: 0300 330 5458** National helpline for people who identify as Trans, non-binary & their friends and families. Open every Monday and Friday 8pm-Midnight

**NHS 111 Service:** For non-emergency medical help, open 24 hours every day. Calls are free. In emergencies only, call 999.

If you are currently under a Mental Health Team and need support, contact the Duty Worker during normal working hours, 9am—5pm Monday to Friday:

Borehamwood & Potters Bar Mental Health Team	0208 731 3000
Bishops Stortford Mental Health Team	01279 464 800
Cheshunt Mental Health Team	01992 818 600
Dacorum Mental Health Team	01442 913 569
Letchworth Mental Health Team	01462 438 139
Watford & Three Rivers Mental Health Team	01923 837 000
Ware Mental Health Team	01920 443 900

For further information or to book an appointment, call **02037 273500** or email [info@hertsmindnetwork.org](mailto:info@hertsmindnetwork.org)

