



Healthy London
Partnership

Coping Well During Covid: *Working from Home and Staying Well*

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- Toolkit of **evidence-based resources, ideas and tools**
- The content of these webinars is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- CBT focusses on making changes to our thoughts and behaviour to improve our mood.

Objective of this webinar

- This Webinar will consider the challenges created by home working, helping you to find a better home working life balance, enabling you to find it easier to separate working from home life.
- To go away with some strategies to help you switch off from work and enjoy your time outside of work more.



**What do you hope to get out of
the Webinar?**

You said.....

“Help with keeping my home life balance in check”

“I want to find out how to balance working from home and personal life”

“How to cope with continuing to work from home during the corona situation”

“How to retain a work life balance when work and home life are blurred by working from home”

“To help me leave work behind at the end of the day”

“Learn some tips to help cope with the new norm caused by COVID.”

“Anxiety and the feeling of isolation now I’m working at home and not in the office “

“How to support someone who is becoming overwhelmed by work and is working from home, so not being able to shut off, working very long hours “

“Am struggling not seeing any of my colleagues, I am working harder and longer, I am tired and I can’t switch off from work.”

“Work life balance and coping with family pressures “

Question



What are you finding the most difficult about working from home?

You said.....

“Low motivation and energy levels “

“Balancing working from home with working from work “

“Staying physically active“

“Isolation, virtual working with clients”

“Over-working”

“Not being able to switch off”

“Mentally really stressful - no alone time - as well as missing f2f human interaction”

“The loss of routine... feeling pressure to do my work but also doing household chores that are staring me in my face.”

“Switching off at the end of the day with no real change between work and home, resisting the urge to work at weekends”

“Trying to manage childcare whilst working from home. being present but not being present.”

“Small space & interfering with partner in bedroom.”

“I'm having difficulty: Setting a routine. Stop snacking. Working out. Feeling stressed.”

“How to cope with my toxic work environment now invading my personal safe space”



It's OK to not feel OK

If you need urgent support right now...

Don't struggle by yourself. The Samaritans are here to listen at any time of day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. Call free on **116 123**.

Challenges of working from home

Managing your own time

Difficult to switch off from work

Working too much

Interruptions

Loneliness and lack of human interaction

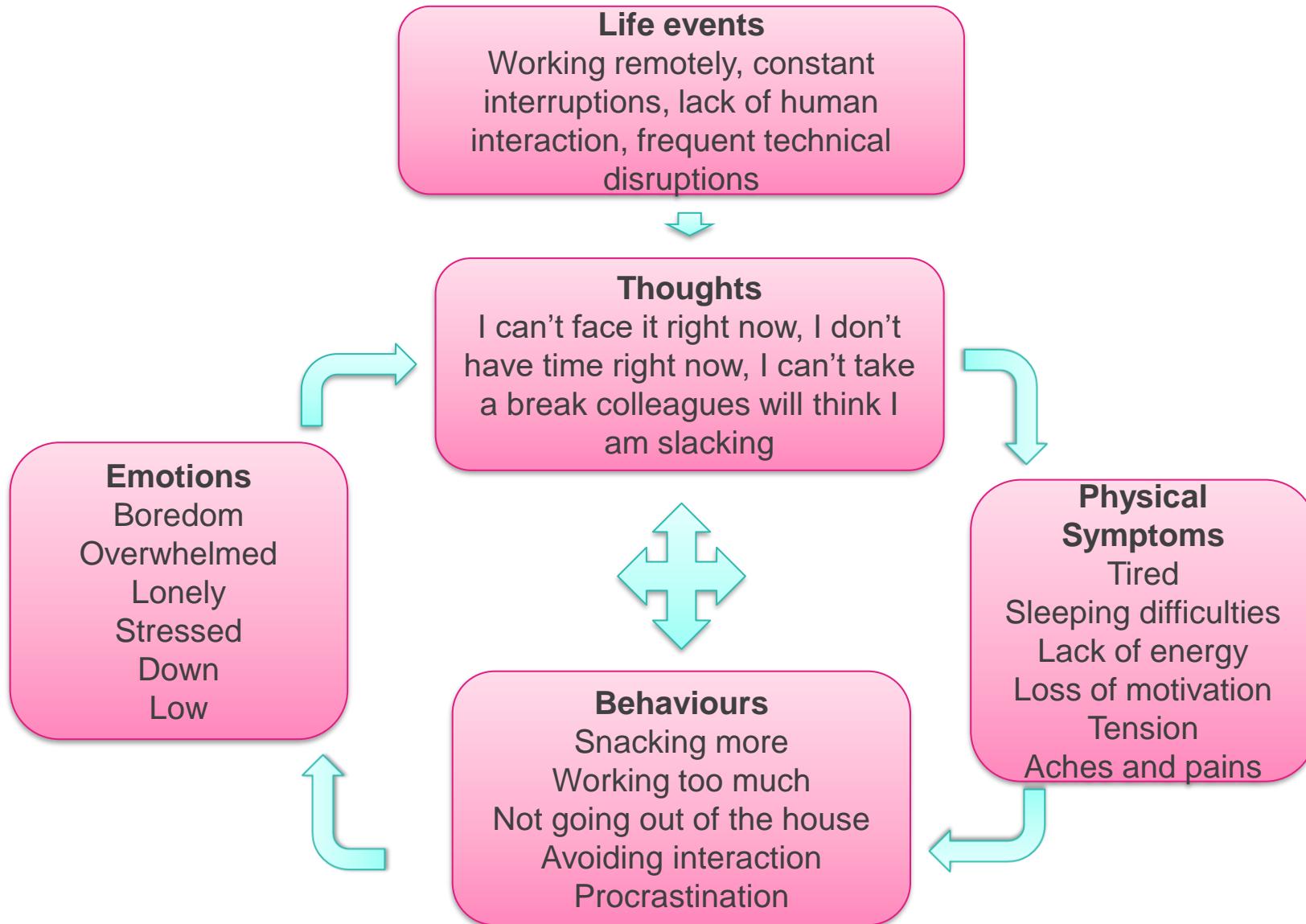
Collaborating

Socially interacting

Technical Difficulties

Bad Health Habits

The Five Areas Model





What are the benefits of working from home?

You said....

“Can wake up later - More sleep”

“Being able to exercise without a 5am start”

“No commute which takes up a lot of time”

“Seeing my partner more”

“Escaping the long commute- no more tube!”

“Saving cost on travel”

“You can get stuff delivered easily!”

“Really good to have time to exercise by just walking or anything else”

“Better, healthy lunches”

“Not having to get dressed and put make up on”

“I have found that I wear whatever I feel like, including my favourite sequin jumpsuit, and a tutu skirt I rarely have a place to wear it!”

“Availability for work people to come and do jobs”

“Making lunch in a clean kitchen!”

“Eating meals with kids”

“No restrictive bra!”

Impact of Home Working

Survey findings captured during the first two weeks of the lockdown have been analysed to produce a preliminary picture of how homeworking is affecting both the physical and mental wellbeing of a new army of UK homeworkers

Within the **first two weeks** of the mandated lockdown there was a significant increase in musculoskeletal complaints.

- More than half of the survey respondents reported **new aches and pains**, especially in the neck (58 per cent), shoulder (56 per cent) and back (55 per cent), compared to their normal physical condition.
- **Diet and exercise were on the wane** with one fifth (20 per cent) of respondents admitting to an **increase in alcohol consumption**, while a third (33 per cent) reported eating a less healthy diet, and over half (60 per cent) acknowledging that they were **exercising less**.

Make sure the home 'office' set-up is safe and ergonomic and that you are mobile and take exercise.

The Health and Safety Executive have some really useful guidance on workstation setup, there is a useful video

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>

Main tips from Health and Safety Executive

- Break up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
- Avoid awkward, static postures by regularly changing position
- Get up and moving or doing stretching exercises
- Avoid eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time



Try to have your work space in a different area than your bedroom.

If you are house sharing, we would suggest not to work from your bed, but to sit away from your bed, and set up a small area for work only.

Sticking to a Routine

- Stick to a routine as much as possible.
- Make sure you are meeting your basic needs:
- Eat regular, healthy meals
- Don't rely on caffeine and sugar to get you through.
- Plan time away from your desk
- Stick to your working hours

We can look at this a bit like we might look at sharpening a saw. By taking time out to sharpen in the saw it prevents the edge of the saw from becoming blunt.



Do something to replace your commute to signify the start and end of your working day





Put the day to rest

- Once you have finished working, pack up your work materials and have a clean finish to the day. turn off email notifications.
- It may be useful to set an alarm to signal the end of your working day.
- Plan an activity to do straight after you finish work to take your attention away from work and to help you switch off from work.

Build a scaffold



- Our lives are made up of different areas that support us.
- The more areas we have in our lives the more supported we feel.
- Having a framework in place helps us to cope better when things become difficult.
- When you are feeling overwhelmed with the demands of work make sure this support is in place.

Person A

Work

Relationship

Person B

Work	Relationship	Family	Social Network
Pets	Education and Learning	Hobbies and Interests	Exercise

Time Management Strategies

- 1) Know your goals in life:** Identifying goals is an important place to start. These goals are the map by which you give direction to your life and schedule your time. These large overall goals can be broken down into smaller manageable tasks to accomplish.
- 2) Rank Priorities:** Activities can be ranked in terms of what is important and what is less important. It can also be helpful to rank them in terms of difficulty; we want to be kind to ourselves so starting with the hardest goal may be setting ourselves up to fail. (please see Eisenhower Urgent and Important Matrix)
- 3) Plan and write down:** There is a misconception that planning adds time to a task. Minutes spent in planning will be saved many times over. Using a diary such as that we looked at last week can help us realistically plan for our week.
- 4) Identify prime time:** If we are scheduling ahead we can identify when we work best and plan that time for our most demanding tasks. Similarly, we can then allocate undemanding tasks to times when our energy levels may be low.
- 5) Keep a balance:** Remember our scaffolding. We find having a balance across activities and varying our activities can help us cope if one area in our life takes a knock. A good place to start is planning in breaks during the day, take some time to relax and plan for future pleasurable activities.

- 6) Leave slack in your timetable:** Where possible often leaving small spaces in our diaries can be helpful to allow for slack. Then if something unexpected appears or a task takes slightly longer than anticipated we know we have a back-up plan to
- 7) Work out a system:** Muddle makes unnecessary work, wastes time and creates frustration. Initially it may be helpful to schedule time to organise your environment, this may be spending time filing our documents, de-cluttering our work station or re-organising our cupboards. This should then be invested time in helping reduce the time spent searching or short term tidying. help us avoid this situation causing more stress.
- 8) Practice saying ‘no’:** Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed as a result of saying yes to too many things. It is not possible to say no to everything, however we can reduce its flow by learning to say no sometimes. This may feel difficult to start with if we have been used to always saying yes, and others have come to expect that. Maybe start by practicing saying no to a small task, to build up our confidence.
- 9) 5 minute rule:** Sometimes just getting started with an activity can feel hard. We may know it will help with our stress and we have it scheduled in, but committing to starting can still feel daunting. We recommend trying using a 5 minute rule to get around this; this means setting yourself the goal of doing the activity for just 5 minutes. If after 5 minutes you feel worse, you have permission to stop. However if you feel no different or even more positive about doing it, then continue for a further 10 minutes. Then review again and so on. Often just the act of getting started without the pressure of having to finish will enable you to make positive changes.
- 10) Identify perfectionism:** Perfectionism involves putting pressure on ourselves to meet high standards which then powerfully influences the way we think about ourselves. Researchers have shown that parts of perfectionism are helpful, and parts are unhelpful. To start with it can be helpful to identify any perfectionist traits you feel you may have and start to consider when these are helpful or unhelpful.

Eisenhower Urgent and Important Matrix

An Urgent Important Analysis helps you to rapidly identify the activities that you should focus on, along with the ones you should ignore. It challenges the role of habitual activities and allows you to regain control of your environment and external demands, rather than allow them to control you. By filtering out “busy” activities that provide minimal value to long term goals, you free up time for things that matter.

Important but Not Urgent (Plans)

These are the activities that help you achieve your long and mid-term goals and objectives. Because they aren't necessarily pressing for attention, we often put them off to deal with “urgent” issues.

Urgent and Important (Crises)

Important and Urgent activities are either emergencies that you couldn't predict or those that you've left until the last minute and have reached crisis point.

These are things we have to manage right now and have a relatively short-term focus.

Not Urgent and Not Important (Distractions)

These activities are neither important for achieving your long-term goals nor urgent. They are essentially distracting you from doing things that matter.

Urgent but Not Important (Interruptions)

Urgent but Not Important activities are things that sap your time and energy without contributing to longer term benefits. They keep you busy but have no real value

Eisenhower Urgent and Important Matrix - Examples

<p>Important but Not Urgent (Plans)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longer term planning• Work that directly contributes towards goals and objectives• Risk analysis• Relationship and team building• Education and training• Proactive maintenance• Creating a budget and savings plan <p>Invest more of your time in this quadrant to help prevent and eliminate many of the urgent activities in Q2 and balance the demands in Q4.</p>	<p>Urgent and Important (Crises)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fire-fighting & pressing problems• deadlines• Equipment breakdowns• Client complaints• Items from Q1 that weren't dealt with <p>By spending more time in Q1, developing systems and plans, you can make many of these tasks more efficient or even eliminate them outright.</p>
<p>Not Urgent and Not Important (Distractions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive or irrelevant email• Personal phone calls• Social media usage• Unimportant or unproductive meetings• Anything that causes you to procrastinate on, or delay, Q1 tasks <p>Reduce, or completely avoid spending time, effort, and resources on activities in this quadrant if where possible.</p>	<p>Urgent but Not Important (Interruptions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular meetings and reports• Phone calls and text messages• Most emails (although some emails could be urgent and important)• Requests from others that don't directly contribute to your objectives• Tasks that "We've always done this way" that are ineffective <p>Renegotiate deadlines, delegate where possible, and challenge the status quo of "regular" activities that don't necessarily add value, e.g., reports that no one reads or actions.</p>

- Procrastination means putting off something that we know we need to do.
- Some people habitually procrastinate to such an extent that tasks build up and their lives become very stressful.
- Procrastination often amounts to deliberately avoiding having to confront our fears.

Procrastination flourishes in two optimal conditions.

- First, when the task is not urgent we do not have to do it right now, there is time to do it in the future.
- Secondly, when there is something more pleasurable to do now. Procrastination is usually about putting pleasure before pain.



Reasons why people procrastinate...

- Lacking a sense of mastery
- Assume you have to be in the mood
- Fear of failure
- Fear of rejection or intimacy
- Fear of success

Being a procrastinator.....

How does it help me?	How does it hinder me?

If I change and no longer procrastinate.....

What will be good?	What will be bad?

Putting it into action

The Problem	Self Talk	Action
<p><i>E.g. Changing my procrastination habit will mean people will expect more from me, there will be more pressure and responsibility on me to do things</i></p>	<p><i>E.g. I can choose what things I want to commit to and what things I don't. I can build up gradually to doing more things. People aren't going to change their expectations of me overnight.</i></p>	<p><i>E.g. Keep going with doing, rather than putting off. If someone puts pressure on me to commit to something I am not ready for yet, talk to them about it.</i></p>

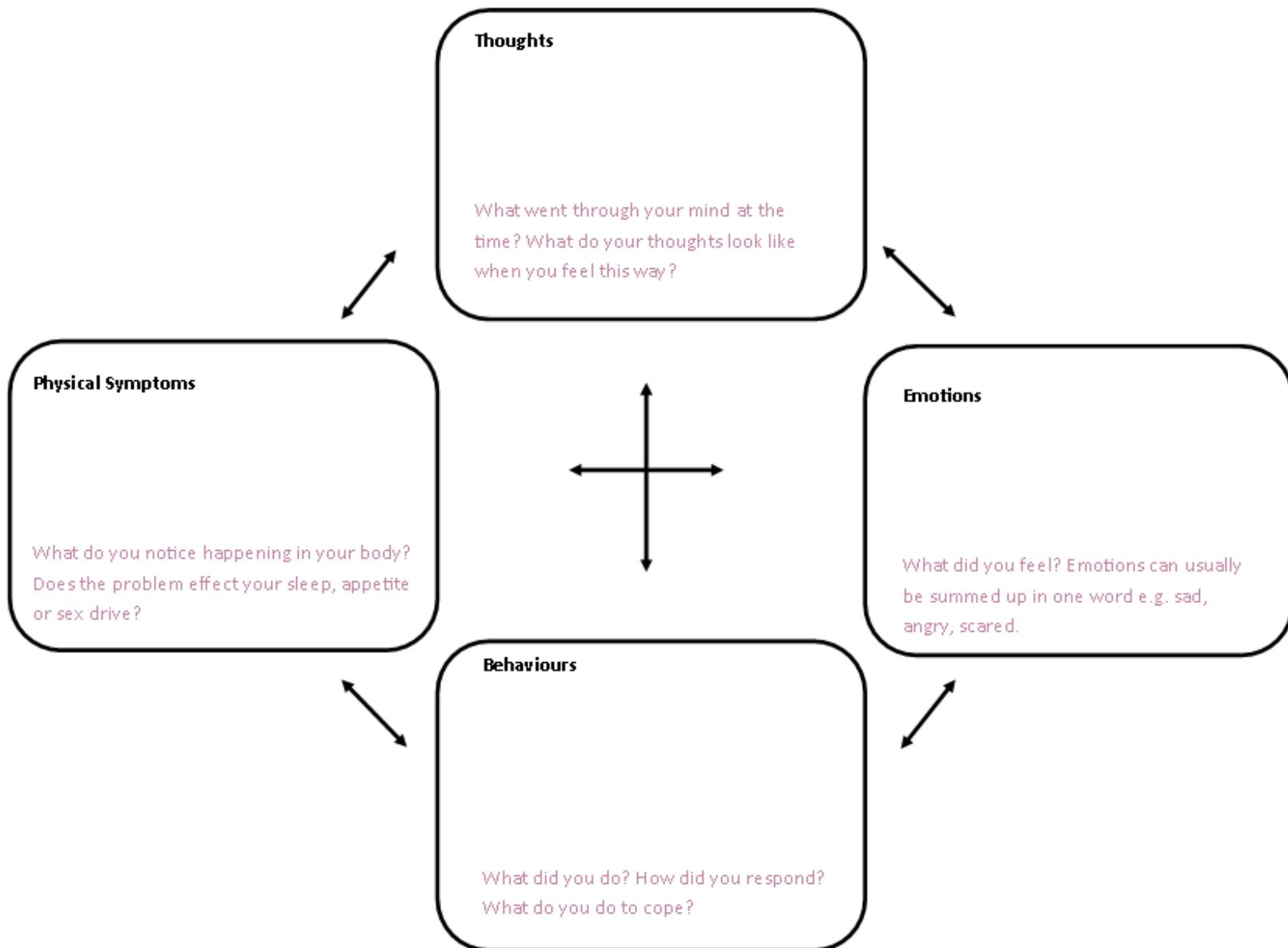
Working from home with children

- Use digital learning for children. See if the school has any online resources.
- Create a timetable for the children, similar to one they would follow when in school. Remember to add breaks.
- Go for a short walk in the garden, open the window for some fresh air, change rooms, or use some relaxation exercises together.
- Use further resources to aid learning such as: books, podcasts, games, puzzles, audio resources and BBC Bitesize. See further resources.
- When you are looking after your children be present. Keep work and parental responsibilities as separate as possible.

Take home messages

- Make sure the home 'office' set-up is safe and ergonomic and that you are mobile and take exercise.
- Create a routine that works for you
- Build a scaffold to create more of a positive work/home life balance
- Try some time management strategies
- Prioritise some of the tasks in your life according to the Urgent and Important Analysis.
- Identify if you are procrastinating and consider how changing this habit may impact you

Try it for yourself....



Getting more help and information



IAPT Psychological Therapy Services are available and free if you need more help.



IAPT stands for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies. These NHS funded national services offer free access to evidence based therapies for low mood, anxiety and depression across England. They offer treatment over the telephone, via online platforms and video links. If you think that you or someone you know needs support for low mood, sleep problems depression or anxiety you can self refer to your local IAPT Service.



Local IAPT services are listed on the NHS website and you can search with your postcode here: [https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological%20therapies%20\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological%20therapies%20(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)

Getting more help and information



If you need **urgent** help for your mood, are having thoughts of suicide, are harming yourself or have thought about self-harm, it's important to tell someone. Don't struggle by yourself. Contact your GP if you can. If you cannot wait to see a doctor or feel unable to cope or keep yourself safe, you can contact the organisations below to get support right away.



The Samaritans are here to listen at any time of day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. Call free on **116 123**.



Shout offers confidential 24/7 crisis text support for times when you need immediate assistance. Text "**SHOUT**" to **85258**



NHS urgent support guidance - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/urgent-support/>

Other useful resources and links

- i NHS Every Mind Matters - https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/?WT.tsra=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=EAIalQobChMIkcjMo-Di6QIVnIBQBh01HQQFEAAEgKXUfD_BwE
- i Mental Health Helplines - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>
- i The NHS information about COVID-19 is available here:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- i CALM have lots of advice and information about mental health -
<https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
- i Mind are a mental health charity with a wide range of information about mental health -
<https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- i Citizens Advice offer support and financial advice, if you have problems with your rented home or you need to find out what benefits you can get -
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- i National Debtline is a charity offering free and independent advice over the phone and online - <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/>
- i Money Supermarket have collated the latest information and advice with how coronavirus might impact your financial situation -
<https://www.moneysupermarket.com/money-made-easy/coronavirus-and-family-finances/?from=onsite-banner>

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partners moves us closer towards
our goal to make London the
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