

What if I need more help?

If you feel you required additional emotional support whilst you are in the hospital, please talk to a member of staff.

Once you leave the hospital emotional support is available in the community. If it has been over a month after the traumatic event, and you continue to feel concerned about how you are feeling and coping, it may be useful to ask for further support. You can discuss accessing such services with your GP.

Additionally, North West Boroughs Healthcare have a **new 24/7 crisis line** to support people's mental health.

People living in Halton, Knowsley, St Helens and Warrington who are experiencing a mental health crisis they can access a dedicated mental health crisis line on **01925 275 309**. This is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to people of all ages, including children and young people, who need urgent mental health support.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600



Self Care Kit

For patients with COVID -19

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatkach.

Author: Clinical Lead
Department: Clinical Psychology
Document Number: STHK1389
Version: 1
Review date: 30 / 04 / 23

Who is this booklet for

This booklet is for people who have recently been admitted to hospital and tested positive for COVID-19 (or suspected cases of COVID-19).

Any hospital stay can be a difficult experience both for the patient and also for their family and friends.

A hospital admission under unexpected and / or frightening circumstances, such as this current pandemic, can be especially difficult. The treatment people have, the things they see, hear, feel and think, can all have an impact on their emotional wellbeing.

Understandably, while in hospital most people focus on their physical recovery. However, emotional wellbeing and recovery is equally important and focusing on this can also help their physical health.

This document aims to provide you with information and advice to help you cope during this difficult time.

We hope you find it useful.

Other Activities - sudoku

				7	5		
7			1			4	
5					2		
		1	3	9			8
3			7	8	6		4
8			4	1	7		
		8					9
	5			3			1
		4	6				

			8		5			
	3			6				7
	9				3	8		
	4	7	9	5		3		
				7	1		9	
			2			5		
1					2	4	8	
		9					5	
					6			

Other Activities - word search

Why not try other activities that can help you to relax and focus your mind on the here and now.



Spring



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




BIRDS	CALF	GARDEN	LAMB	SNAIL
BLOSSOM	CATERPILLAR	GRASS	NATURE	SPRING
BUGS	CHICKS	HATCH	NEST	SPROUT
BUNNY	FLOWERS	INSECTS	RABBIT	TULIP
BUTTERFLY	FROG	LADYBUG	ROBIN	WORM



What to expect

Some common emotional reactions to an unexpected and/or frightening health event can include:

- Shock
- Anger
- Disbelief
- Panic
- Sadness
- Disorientation
- Fear
- Confusion
- Agitation
- Boredom
- Anxiety
- Sense of loss of control
- Guilt
- Sense of loss of dignity
- Low mood
- Relief (at getting help)

It is important to know that **there is no right or wrong way to feel**

Strong emotions are normal, even to be expected, and can come and go over time.

This is because your mind is trying to make sense of everything that is going on in order to keep you safe. It is trying to do this under extraordinary circumstances!

The hospital environment

Some hospital wards can feel like the strangest of places with lots of noise, activity and frankly alien-looking equipment.

Certain medications and procedures can also influence your emotions. For example, coming around from sedation to see hospital equipment and staff wearing masks and goggles can feel very scary and confusing.

⇒ This is normal and usually passes, it can help to talk to staff

What to expect

Difficulty sleeping

Emotional distress can often disrupt our sleep, which in turn affects our mood. This together with the busy hospital environment can make sleep particularly difficult.

- ⇒ As far as is possible do things that you know help you relax (i.e listening to music, reading, drawing/colouring, meditation)
- ⇒ If worries are keeping you awake try writing them down. You can choose whether or not you wish to come back to them later.

Feeling lonely

Being apart from loved ones is particularly hard when you are unwell. Due to social distancing rules it is likely that you have significantly reduced contact with friends and family who would normally support you through challenging times. This can affect your mood.

- ⇒ Think of ways to stay connected (i.e. video-call, diary, letters)

Tolerating uncertainty

When you experience an unexpected and/or worrying health event it is common to experience uncertainty. Life might feel less secure than before, that you suddenly have less control and no longer have the answers.

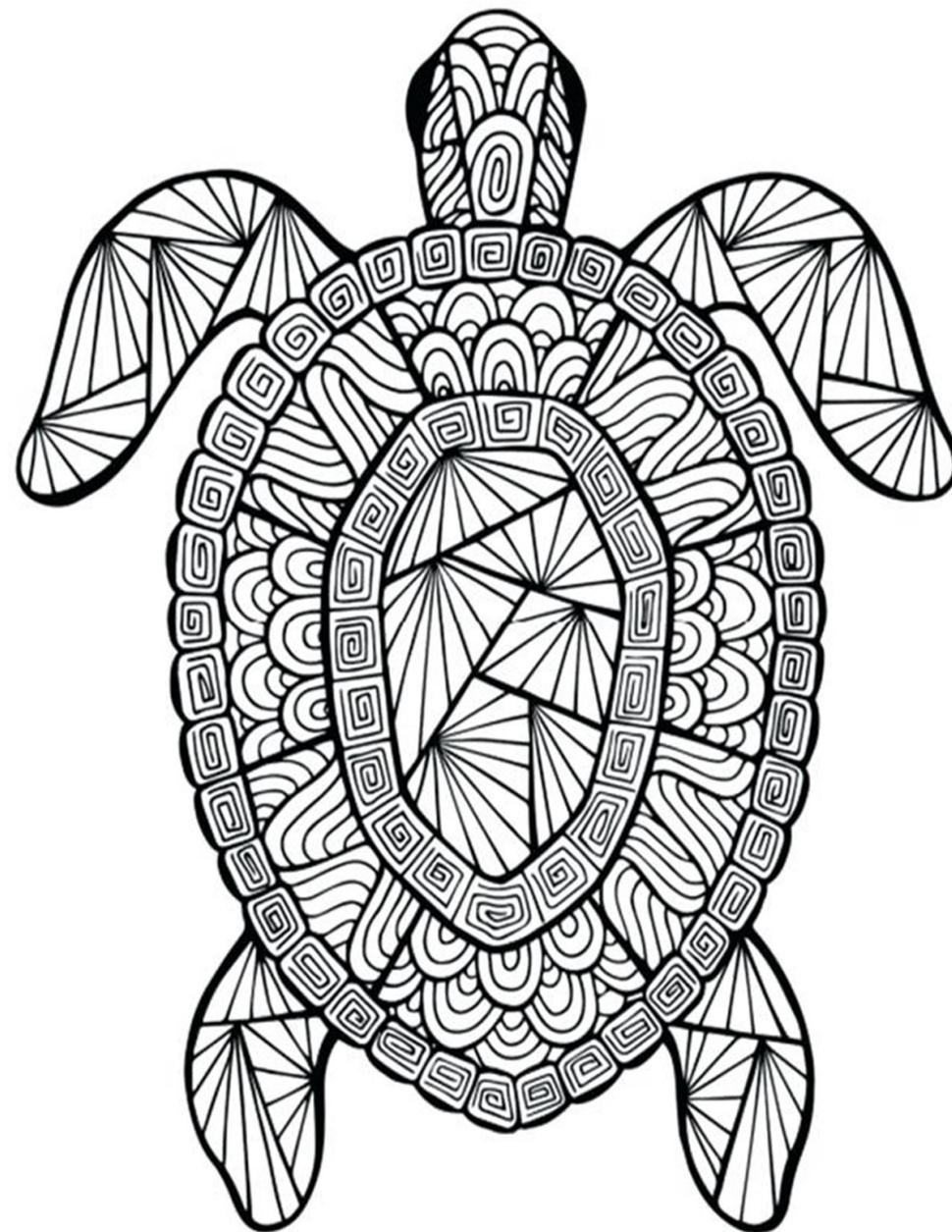
You might feel uncertain about:

- ◆ Your health
- ◆ Your treatment
- ◆ The future
- ◆ How you will cope

- ⇒ Don't be afraid to ask your health care team questions, they will answer what they can. .

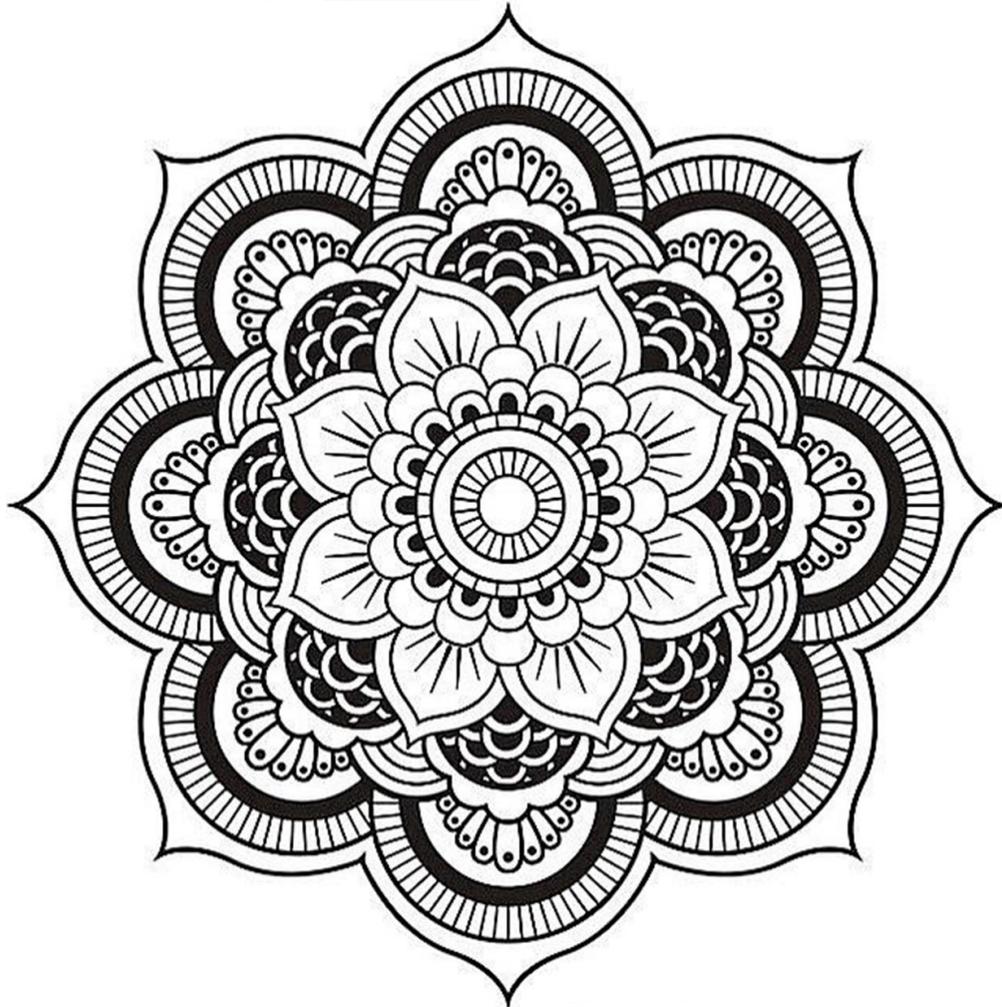
Try and hold in mind that you are in the very best place to support your care and recovery. Staff are there to look after you and support you through this challenging time.

Mindfulness colouring



Mindful colouring

Mindful colouring can help to engage your mind in a relaxing, present moment experience. It can also be a positive distraction from everything that is going on around you on the ward. Many people find it a beneficial tool in stressful situations. Here are some you can try.



Boredom

Sometimes due to all the noise and activity being in hospital can feel 'too much'. At other times it can feel like '*ground-hog day*'; repetitive and boring with all the days merging into one.

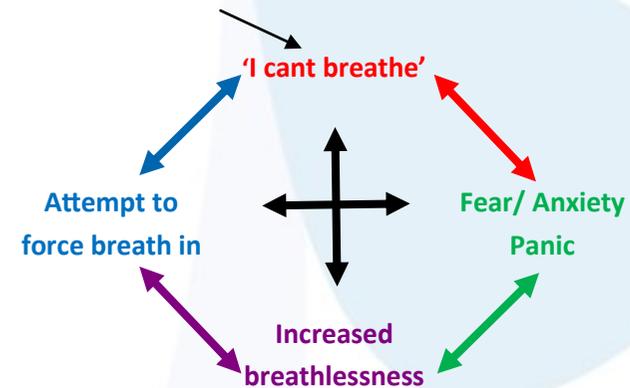
- ⇒ As far as is possible, engage with things that keep your mind active (i.e reading, drawing/colouring, puzzles, radio)

Breathlessness

Breathlessness is the sensation of shortness of breath, it is a key symptom of Covid-19.

Although shortness of breath can occur for many reasons, when it is linked to your health it can feel particularly frightening. This can lead to a vicious circle of increasing anxiety and breathlessness which sometimes results in panic.

Shortness of breath



- ⇒ Instead of trying to force breath in, try to open up your shoulders and breathe out (i.e. sigh)
- ⇒ Try to slow down your breathing even though you feel you should speed it up (see next page: **rectangular breathing**)

Rectangular Breathing

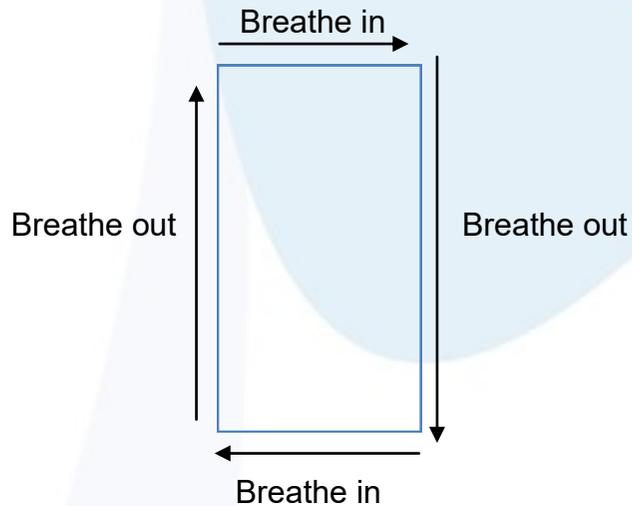
This technique helps to ease your sense of breathlessness by slowing down your breathing and reducing the sense of fear in your body.

What you will need:

A rectangular object in the room. A door is perfect!

What to do:

- ⇒ Look up to the top left hand corner of the door
- ⇒ Use your eyes to trace horizontally from the top left hand side of the door to the top right hand side of the door. Do this slowly and breathe in as you do so
- ⇒ Now use your eyes to follow the longer length of the door from the top right corner of the door all the way down to the ground. Breathe out as you do this.



It should only take a few minutes to feel calmer.

Acceptance and Mindfulness

I cannot control
(So, I can LET GO of these things)

The noise

I can control

(So, I will FOCUS on these...)

What will happen

How long this will last

Engaging with activities
My connection with others

My kindness and grace
How I follow advice

How others react

The actions of others

Where I focus my attention

Being woken

Mindfulness is the practice of bringing awareness to the present moment, on purpose and without judgement.

By learning to simply observe our thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations with a kind and gentle curiosity we can, with practice, begin to 'let go' of difficulty.

Well known Apps for practicing Mindfulness include:



Teaches meditation and mindfulness in just a few minutes each day



Provides guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs and relaxing music

Relaxation and Visualisation

Rectangular breathing is not just for breathlessness!

It can be helpful at any time to help you to feel more relaxed and calm

You can add to this by using colour breathing...

Imagine that as you breathe in you are taking in the **calm blue air** and as you breathe out, imagine you are breathing out all of the **red tension**. Imagining this change in colour can deepen the relaxation.

With any breathing exercise remember ... practice makes perfect!

Managing difficult thoughts and feelings

It is easy for our mind to get stuck on a 'train of thought'. This can be about the future (worry) or the past (dwelling) and sometimes leads to feelings of anxiety and / or low mood

If you notice you are on this 'train', a simple grounding exercise can help you 'step off'. The grounding exercise below uses the 5 senses to help you 'step-off' and focus back on the present moment.

5 ★ 4 ★ 3 ★ 2 ★ 1
SLOW DOWN & CALM DOWN
FIRST OFF - TAKE 3 SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS!

5 List 5 things you can **SEE** 

4 List 4 things you can **FEEL** 

3 List 3 things you can **HEAR** 

2 List 2 things you can **SMELL** 

1 List something **positive** about yourself 😊 

FINISHED? NOW - TAKE 3 MORE SLOW & QUIET DEEP BREATHS ☺

Step out of your worries — STOPP

STOP ! Just pause for a moment

TAKE A BREATH

OBERVE

- What thoughts are going through your mind?
- Where is your focus of attention?
- What are you reacting to?

PULL BACK - PUT IN SOME PERSPECTIVE

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK!

- Is this thought a fact or opinion?
- Is there another way of looking at this situation?
- What advice would I give a friend?
- What would a trusted friend say to me right now

PRACTISE WHAT WORKS - PROCEED

- What is the best thing to do right now?
- What will be helpful for me to think and do?
- Where can I focus my attention right now?
- Do what will be effective and appropriate.

Be compassionate and kind to yourself.

This is a challenging environment and situation to be in.

What else can help?

In an adapted way, try and do the things that have helped you cope at difficult times in the past (if you are able to).

It could be reading a book, talking to a friend or family member (via phone, video call), listening to music etc. It may be about giving yourself permission to do nothing and focus on your recovery.

What has worked for you in the past? How could you adapt this strategy to use it now?: _____

It is understandable to feel anxious at times. If you find yourself lost in worry, try and bring yourself back to the present moment:

Memory game

Using memory can help.

- Name as many dog breeds as you can
- Name all of the cities you have visited around the world
- Repeat the alphabet backwards

Describe an object

Find an object around you and try and describe it, as if to someone who has never seen it before...

“This is a cushion, it is a square shape with blue and yellow stripes...it feels soft with some hard ridges around the edge”...
Continue until you feel calm.