



STUDENT TRANSITIONS TOOLKIT

STUDENT TRANSITIONS

Toolkit

Welcome to your transitions' toolkit! This toolkit has been designed in order to allow us to get to know you and to equip you with some skills to support your wellbeing before your college journey begins!

It's such an exciting time in your life starting a brand-new chapter, however, we also recognise that it can be a little overwhelming at times. That's why we have developed this toolkit! It will take you on a wellbeing journey and show you how to practice simple mindfulness; a valuable skill that you can use throughout this new journey!

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Part One: Getting to know you!

This section allows you to consider all of the things that you may want to let college staff know before your college journey begins. This section is entirely optional, and you do not need to complete it if you do not wish! It is designed to allow us to be able to get to know you as a person before you start college. This way, we can provide a seamless transition and build support if you feel you need it, meaning you can be confident when you start college that the right mechanisms are in place!

Part Two: Transitions Toolkit

This section provides you with a transitions' toolkit. Here we have included many skills for you to maintain your optimum levels of wellbeing. Once again, these are all optional and you may want to try some and not others! We appreciate that one size doesn't fit all! Mindfulness is a skill and the secret to success lies in practice! We hope you will find the time before college to try some tools and techniques out as we recognise how important wellbeing is on this new journey.

PART ONE

Getting to know you!

Home address:		Potential personal tutor:	
Essential Information you will need to know about me and my wellbeing:		Previous school:	
		Local authority:	
		16-18	
		19-24 Ldd	
		19+ SFA	
		24+ Loan	
PHOTO/ DRAWING OF ME	What I like about me:	Things to remember for my wellbeing:	
	What other people like about me:	Things I am confident in doing in college:	
The most important things to remember when supporting or teaching me are:		Things that make me feel happy are:	
		Things that make me feel sad, worried or anxious are:	
Professionals who may already support me:	To keep me healthy and safe I need:	How does my mental health impact my life and possible college future:	
The most important things in my life are:	I want my future to look like this:	My usual week looks like this:	

PART ONE

Getting to know you!

My previous education

Please include: current support and in what capacity the support is received.

What would I like to gain from receiving support? What would I like to achieve?

What do my parents and my school think about what college life looks like for me? What support do they think I need?

Comments from external agencies involved in supporting me:

You can use the box below to write any other useful information. You may have a certain way of learning that is easier for you, you may prefer quieter environments - all of this helps in your transition journey!

My notes:

PART TWO

Transitions Toolkit

Welcome to the Transitions Toolkit.

We have designed this toolkit for you to use at your own leisure throughout the summer period. You will find numerous activities to enable you to make positive contributions to your wellbeing. You do not have to complete them all, and you may only wish to participate in the ones that are relevant to your wellbeing. You will need access to a computer and some activities do require an internet connection - don't panic if you don't have one of these- not all of them need one.



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SECTION 1: WHAT IS MINDFULNESS? THE BASICS

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment, using techniques like meditation, breathing and yoga. It helps us become more aware of our thoughts and feelings so that, instead of being overwhelmed by them, we're better able to manage them.

How can mindfulness help?

Mindfulness can be used as a tool to manage your wellbeing and mental health. Some people call mental health 'emotional health' or 'wellbeing'. We all have times when we feel down, stressed or frightened; most of the time those feelings pass, but sometimes they develop into a more serious problem, and this could happen to any one of us. It's important to maintain your mental health; but being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that you don't have a mental health problem. With good mental health, you can:

- Make the most of your potential
- Cope with life
- Play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends

One of the best things about learning how to be mindful is that it can teach us how to slow down in our every day lives. It isn't easy to be calm and relaxed in



the modern world but mindfulness can help us to achieve this. Being mindful is very much about being and noticing the present moment we are in, and preventing our thoughts from racing ahead to the future and things we may worry about that haven't happened yet.

Take a moment to stop and notice what is around you. Use your senses to hear, touch, feel, see and maybe even taste your surroundings.

What can you hear? What can you see? Can you notice the chair under you if you are sitting? Or the floor under you if you are standing, or maybe lying down? And what about you? Are you hot or cold? Can you notice aches or pains?

Jot your thoughts down below and begin to practice this skill.

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Take a moment to notice the thoughts that are in your mind currently. Are they based in the present moment or are they ahead to things in the future?

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SECTION 2: ACHIEVING MINDFUL BREATHING - SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

This section allows you to learn the skills needed to carry out mindful breathing techniques. These can be especially useful if you struggle to sleep at night or find it really difficult to switch off from modern life and the fast pace that it can sometimes go at! These exercises take a bit of practice and they are unique to you as an individual. Once you become accustomed to them it can be really helpful to build them into your daily routine.

Breathing

This is a chance for you to step out of the daily grind and to allow time to be present with yourself; that is, being present with yourself, and with whatever arises in your mind and body.

Take a minute to observe your breathing. Breathe in and out as you normally would: notice the time between each inhalation and exhalation; notice your lungs expanding. When your mind wanders, gently bring your attention back to your breath. This is a great example of the most basic skill-one-minute mindfulness. It can work really well if you become overwhelmed or anxious in any given situation.

Use the space below to note down when this may work best for you.

Are there any situations that increase your anxiety?

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MINDFUL BREATHING: SLIGHTLY MORE IN DEPTH THIS TIME!

One of the main practices of Mindfulness Meditation involves the breathing. The primary aim is to develop a non-judging awareness, allowing thoughts and feelings

to come and go without getting caught up in them. This takes a while to cultivate but creates calmness and acceptance.

1. Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed, if that is comfortable and your spine reasonably straight.
2. Direct your attention to your breathing.
3. When thoughts, emotions, physical feelings or external sounds occur, simply notice them, giving them the space to come and go without judging or getting involved with them.
4. When you notice that your attention has drifted off and become caught up in thoughts or feelings, simply note that the attention has drifted, and then gently bring the attention back to your breathing.

It's ok and natural for thoughts to arise, and for your attention to follow them. No matter how many times this happens, just keep bringing your attention back to your breathing.

ONLINE LEARNING

Log on to the Let's Chat Website and follow this link:

[Relax - LetsChat \(letschatwellbeing.co.uk\)](https://letschatwellbeing.co.uk)

This is a really useful video to learn some breathing exercises.

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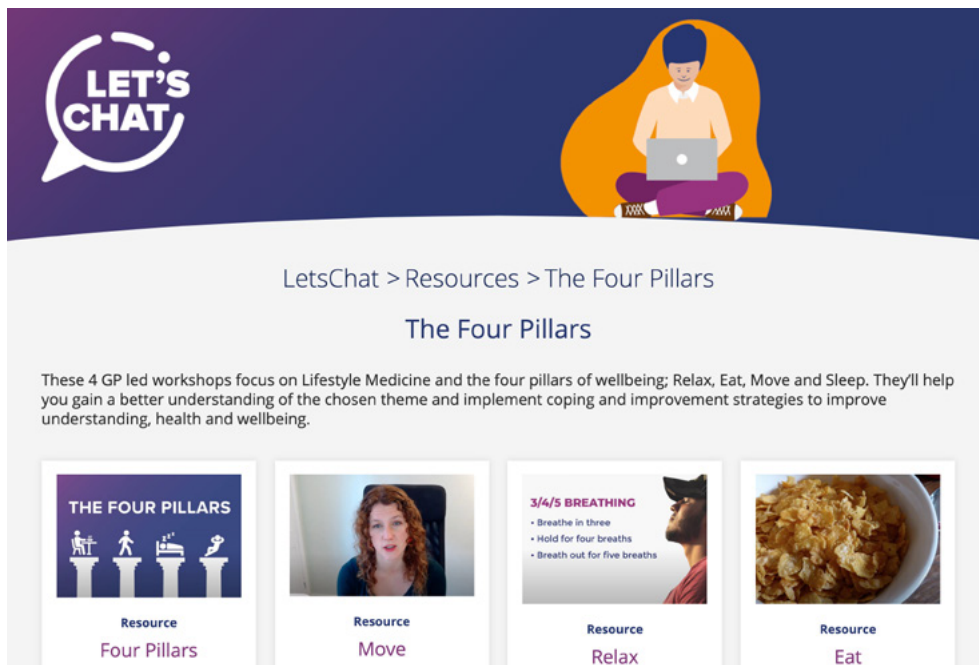
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ONLINE LEARNING

Have a look at the Four Pillars from Let's Chat. They are a great place to start when considering our own wellbeing and teach us positive strategies about moving, relaxing, sleeping and more. Follow this link:

[The Four Pillars Archives - LetsChat \(letschatwellbeing.co.uk\)](https://letschatwellbeing.co.uk)

You should see the below screen and from here you can explore all Four Pillars.



If you would like some more strategies & activities that focus on our thinking patterns as human beings, you may find the following useful:

www.moodjuice.com



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SECTION 3: MOTIVATING MYSELF

It may be useful at this point to pause and reflect back on the goals you set yourself in Section 1. Often, if our well-being isn't at its optimum level or we aren't doing enough self-care activities, it can be really hard to get motivated to reach our goals or to attend college or begin tasks that we need to complete. This section will give you a bit of information on how

motivation works and what we can do to stay as motivated as possible to maintain our well-being and reach our aspirations.

First, when we look at motivation, we need to look at our WHY! Have a think about why you chose the goals that you did and note them down below:

Goal	What is my why?	Intrinsic or extrinsic?

For example, we may have a goal of submitting work on the deadline in the new term- often the reason behind this is because we want to do well in our chosen college courses. However, as we all know, sometimes this WHY just doesn't quite get us motivated enough on its own. So we need to be aware of a few more of the principles behind our get up and go!

There are 4 basic steps:

1. **Intrinsic or Extrinsic motivation** - is the motivation coming from within you with no reward or is it from elsewhere with a reward attached? (Which one do you think we are most likely to do?)
2. **Reward balances** - We often have a mixture of both types of motivation - intrinsic and extrinsic. We are all motivated hugely by reward, therefore, we need to balance between the two as we wont always get rewards for doing things. So we need to remember other ways of rewarding ourselves - being kind & other small things to make you feel good for doing what you set out to do.

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3. **Self-Reinforcement** - It's often a really good idea to keep to-do lists and physically cross ideas off as and when you come to them! Know that when you cross things off- you will provide yourself with positive reinforcement- ideally, things that bring you closer to the end goal. So, if the goal is deadlines, you may buy yourself new stationary when you complete a deadline for the next one!

4. **Choose positive activities** - You may find after time that you need fewer material rewards and more positive, routine activities to distract you from negative feelings and help you stay on your chosen path. That's good news! A positive diversion can be a new hobby, a new way to exercise, a group or club you'd like to join, a continuing ed class you now have time to attend. Smaller diversions can also help you stay on track whenever you're feeling bored, upset or a little down. Again, keep a list of activities that you can refer to when you think your emotions are about to get the best of you and you need to focus your mind on something else. Some ideas include writing in a journal, calling a friend, taking a walk, listening to music, washing your car or your dog, or taking a trip to the library or a local museum or gallery.

TRY MAKING A TO-DO/ACTIVITY LIST BELOW:

When you have made your list, try to work out if your motivation for the tasks is intrinsic or extrinsic. If you can do this, it may help you to understand why you feel less motivated to tackle some tasks than others. The bigger the reward, the more likely we are to motivate ourselves so remember, balance is key!

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ONLINE LEARNING

If you go back onto the Lets Chat website, you will find some fabulous resources on Identity by following this link: Identity - LetsChat (letschatwellbeing.co.uk). This accessible video introduces you to concept of identity, from both a therapeutic and every -day perspective. Led by professional and accredited therapists who have an interest in raising awareness and understanding of emotional wellbeing.

This is not a lesson or a tutorial, but it is something slightly different. It is more of a conversation and reflections by therapists around emotions and the importance to recognise and work with your emotions to help with your personal wellbeing.

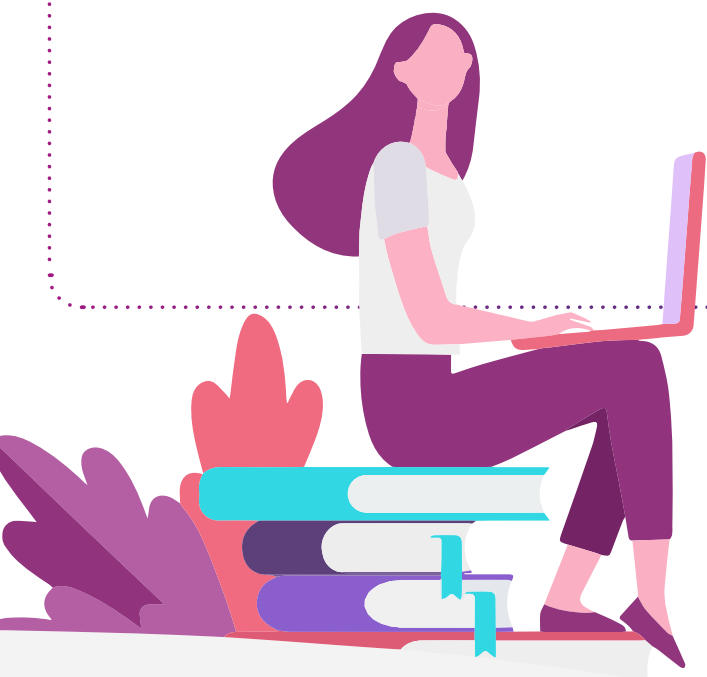
You can listen to it all at once, or each step at a time, you can come back to it time and again, when it suits you. You can watch it with friends, as part of a class tutorial or just for your own personal interest and curiosity.

You will find out about:

- what we mean by identity
- give space and time for people to think of their own shapes
- have ideas about how we can support who we are

Additionally, the NHS website “Every Mind Matters” provide free action plans for both mind and body which you may find useful at this point. Here is the link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>



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SECTION 4: ANXIETY, WORRIES AND STRESS

Generally speaking, Anxiety is a positive thing! It is the thing that spurs us on in sports events and in exams to do well and it means we care. However, sometimes, Anxiety and worries can cause us a great deal of stress and it's important we deal with those. It's perfectly normal to worry about starting college or to feel anxious about it.

The good news is, there are strategies that can help enormously with this. Lets start with stress. It isn't often that we get asked to identify what is making us worried and what is making us stressed so it's important we remember to do this. If we carry all of our worries round in our heads, it becomes very hard to deal with each problem at a time. If you click on the link below, it will take you to a great resource from the BBC called the Stress

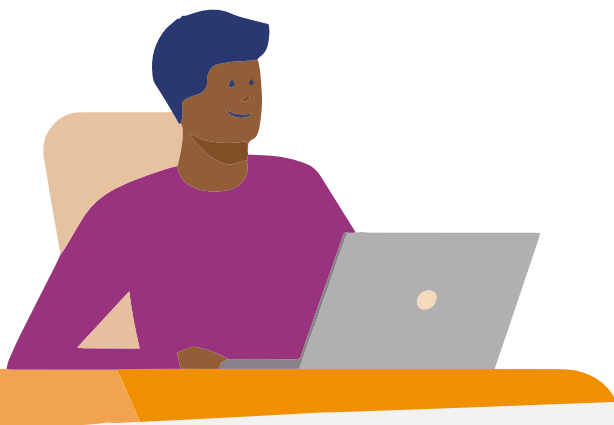
Container. It allows us to write down all of our worries and identify what we can do to navigate them:

ONLINE LEARNING:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/safety/documents/health/health-stress-container-exercise.pdf>

Once you have done this, you should be able to put your worries on paper one by one and identify coping strategies you may or may not have to cope with them. Helpful coping strategies include things like exercise, talking, shopping and taking a bath. These coping strategies enable us to be resilient to life's worries and ensure we try to keep our wellbeing to its own optimum level. Everybody has entirely different coping strategies. Note yours down below if it's helpful.

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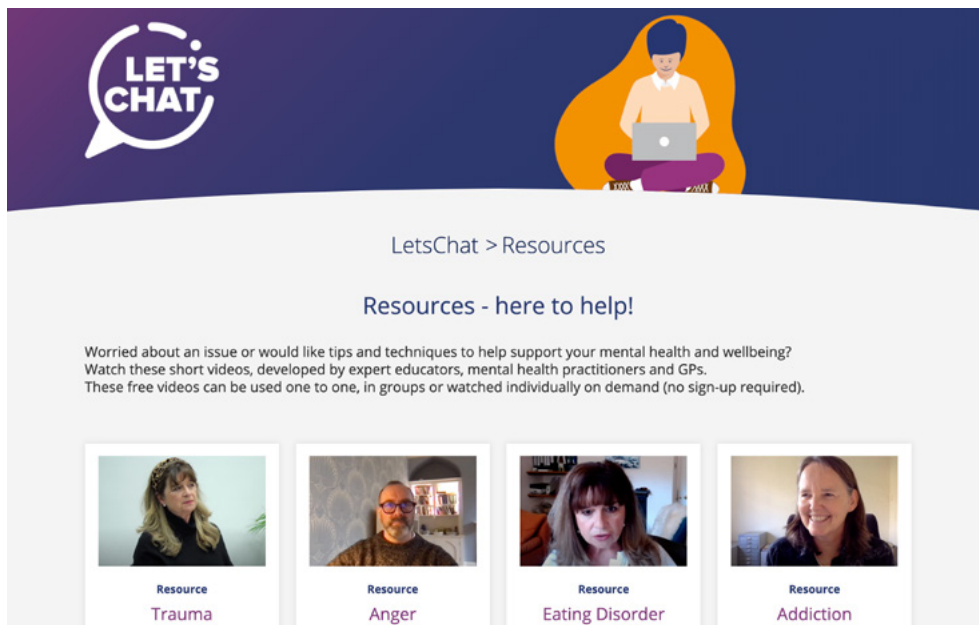
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ONLINE LEARNING

The Let's Chat website has an amazing array of resources for stress, anxiety and worry. If you follow this link:

[Anxiety - LetsChat \(letschatwellbeing.co.uk\)](https://letschatwellbeing.co.uk)

it will take you to them. If you go to "Resources" and then "Talking Health Series" you will find an array of wonderful videos, created by some very knowledgeable and friendly experts that could be very useful.



If you would like some more strategies & activities that focus on our thinking patterns as human beings, you may find the following useful:

www.moodjuice.com

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There is a really good technique for stress, worry and anxiety known as the apple technique. It comes from mindfulness and it is below:

ACKNOWLEDGE - Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.

PAUSE - Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Pause and breathe.

PULL BACK - Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts.

LET GO - Let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or cloud.

EXPLORE - Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else – on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry, or do something else – mindfully with your full attention.



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If you notice yourself becoming anxious or worried, give this a go and see if it works for you. The next section teaches you some mindfulness meditation which is also very useful when we are dealing with worries.

BREATHING AND THINKING GUIDED MEDITATION

Read the script aloud in a calm, soft, steady voice and maintain a slow pace.

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Settling

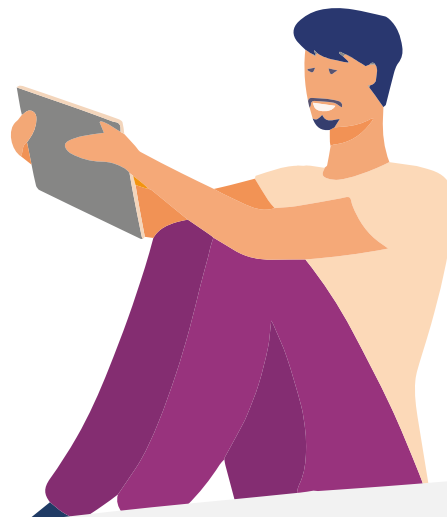
We are now going to start looking at our experiences more closely. We are going to do a short meditation.

Meditation is a practice, a way of learning to focus and pay attention. We are going to use meditation to help us focus on our breathing and thinking

Did you know the breath can tell us how we are feeling and that just by focusing on it, the breath can help calm us?

.....

To help settle, we need to get into a good sitting position. This is the position where we can stay quiet and still, so make sure you are comfortable. Have a good wriggle and a stretch to get a comfortable seated position. If you can, try not to slouch. We want to be alert and awake.



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Main Practice

Now we start by simply concentrating on the breath.

Just breathe in and just breathe out.

Where can you feel the breath moving? Is it in the stomach? Is it in the chest? Maybe it's at the nose or the mouth. It doesn't matter where it is, just how you feel the breath and where you feel the breath.

Breathe in, breathe out. How does the breath feel?

Is it smooth? Is it slow?

Maybe the breath feels tight? Maybe it's fast?

However, you're breathing is OK. We don't need to change the breath, we don't need to try and make it calm.

Breathe in, breathe out. How does the breath feel?

If you get distracted, if you get caught daydreaming or thinking, then that's OK. We just start again and focus on the next breath.

Breathe in, breathe out. How does the breath feel?

And now just try focusing on the breath in the silence for a few moments.

You may have noticed that the mind keeps getting distracted. We think a lot. This is OK. If so, each time we notice this we just start again, start with the next breath.

But there is something we can purposely do to help us not get caught up in these thoughts.

As you breathe, when you notice that the mind has wandered off into thinking, we can do something a little different. We can simply say to ourselves, 'thinking' or 'I'm thinking'. We then come back to the next breath.

Breathe in, breathe out.

Each time we label the thoughts like this we stop getting caught up in them. We stop letting our thoughts shape our feelings and mood.

So, each time we get distracted, we gently and kindly just say 'thinking' or 'I'm thinking' before letting go of the thought and coming back to the breath.

All very gently. It doesn't matter how often we are thinking, we can simply label it 'thinking', and come back.

Breathe in, breathe out.

Our minds may be very busy. It's OK. We are just mindful of this and we can come back to our next breath.

Breathe in, breathe out. Nothing to strive for. Just resting. Just letting thoughts fade naturally.

Close

And as we continue to breathe, in and out, we can open the eyes, have a little stretch and allow the practice to close. How are we feeling right now?

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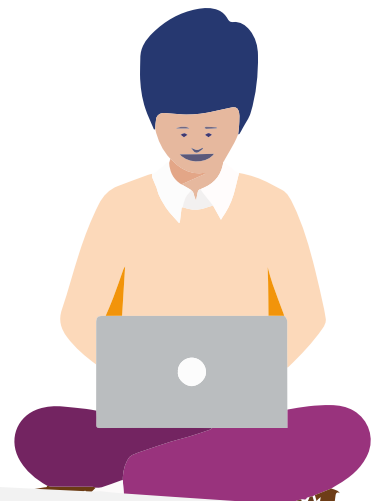
In addition to some of these strategies, one of the best forms of coping with worries and anxiety is exercise.

Exercise doesn't have to be vigorous
- Yoga is a great coping mechanism so if you feel up to it, see what's on offer

online or locally (when permitted).
There are some great virtual classes - good if you don't feel comfortable exercising with others! If the body is well, the mind is well!

Jot down things below you could do:

Activity	When



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SECTION 5: REFLECTION

Have a think about what you have learned within this toolkit and what else you feel you may need support with. Note down some strategies that have been really useful to you or any resources that you have come across that were beneficial.



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VIRTUAL COLLEGE TOURS

You may also find it INCREDIBLY useful to do some virtual tours of the college - they will help you to create visual maps of your new environment and allow your brain to familiarise itself with the college layout! You can always be supported with this by staff and this is not the only way to familiarise yourself but it's a great start.

Use the link below to get started:

<https://www.weston.ac.uk/why-choose-us/campuses-and-facilities/interactive-virtual-tours?>



This resource was written by Georgie Ford, Advanced Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner at Weston College and MHFA England Instructor.



letschatwellbeing.co.uk