



My **Little** book of



Statistics show that mental and emotional well-being is something that we need to approach in a positive way in order for us to remain healthy especially during this pandemic.

- Research has proved that mental health is a major barrier to learning and attainment, so being stressed, anxious or having low mood can affect your performance in learning.
- Everybody suffers from stress, anxiety or low mood at some point in their life, so it is important to understand our feelings and be aware of some strategies that might be useful in making us feel better.

IDEA no 1.

Keep a log of how you feel each day and strategies or things you did to remain healthy and in a good place. e.g. exercise, talking to someone

TOP TIP

Remember to write down the good things as well as things you struggle with. This will remind ourselves that life is naturally full of not just the downs but the UP's also.

At the end of each entry, state what you are grateful for.

Read through the rest of this booklet and work on the top tips to keep you healthy.

The Stress Bucket – what is it?

Stress

The sources of stress are external to us. We can't control how much stress comes into our life at any one time.

Body/Mind

A little bit of stress is good for us-it keeps us motivated, but too much can be overwhelming.



Release Behaviours

We need to reduce the amount of stress in our life by engaging in stress-relieving behaviours.

Look at the following list of positive release behaviours and stay away from the negative ones – they don't help!

Positive	Negative
Exercise Engaging in hobbies Socialising Talking it through	Drug abuse Self-harm Eating issues Obsessive compulsive behaviours

Positive release behaviours release 'happy' chemicals in our brain.

Negative release behaviours seem to solve the problem in the short term, but end up CAUSING more stress, so make matters WORSE.

If you have a problem, you can talk to;

Head of Year

Your Tutor

Your Teacher

Mrs Monk – pastoral worker

Your Friend

Your Family

Organisations



Talking really helps!



The Hibernation Switch – what is it?

Low Mood

When we get a cold, we get the urge to stay in bed! This comes from a primal part of our brain that recognises we are not at full strength so would be safer staying in. When the cold symptoms go, we come out of hibernation.

Stress can cause the hibernation switch to go on too, causing people to feel tired and low in mood.

This can go on for a prolonged period because the brain doesn't know when the person is better.

What can we do?

List activities that you enjoy, such as exercise, meeting friends Plan a schedule of when you can do them.

Build this up gradually-don't tire yourself out or the hibernation switch will stay on!



High Alert – what is it?

Brain Filters

Our brain constantly takes in ALL the information around us from all of our senses.

If we were aware of all the information, we would have brainoverload!!!

The brain focuses on what it thinks is important.

For people with anxiety, their focus is always on searching for danger, without them realising! This makes them worry or panic more than usual.

What can we do?

If you ever feel panicky, use this technique to calm you down...

Controlled Breathing exercise;

Breath slowly and deeply from the stomach, not from the chest

As you breathe in count '1'

As you breathe out say 'Relax'

As you breathe in count '2'

As you breathe out say 'Relax' etc.



Learning

Anxiety and Learning

When you are worried or stressed about something, you may find it difficult to concentrate.

You might find it difficult to put things into order or working out which information is the most important. Tasks can sometimes take much longer to do and you might feel frustrated or angry at yourself.

What can we do?

If you ever feel frustrated or overwhelmed because you have lots of things on your mind, try this!

Refocus your attention onto something specific. e.g.
Colouring an intricate pattern.

Ten minutes on this or similar task will clear the mind of the muddle.

After that time, your head should be clearer.



Avoidance – what is it?

The problem with avoidance

In the short-term, avoidance of activities/situations eases the problem, because you don't have to face your fears.

Long-term, the problem gets worse because it is more difficult to return to the situation.

What can we do?

The most effective way of ending the anxiety trigger is to face the situation.

Get in there and stay there for as long as possible.

The anxiety feelings will naturally peak and subside in time.



Changing the 'High Alert' Filter

Making a long term recovery

To make a memory, we review, make links, create stories and revisit.

Our memory of the day effects our brain filter.

We might have a million brilliant things happen to us in one day, but the one thing we think about for hours is the thing that went wrong.

By thinking about it over and over, you tell your brain that life is bad, life is unhappy, you are stressed, you are under threat.

This keeps that brain filter on high alert another day!

We need to switch the brain filter to 'happy'.

What can we do?

Keep a 'Gratitude Diary'

Write down ten things that went well.

Give a reason why each of those events was a positive.

Decide which bit was the best bit of your day.



Sleep

The importance of sleep

We have several sleep cycles a night

During REM sleep we process all of the information we have received in the day.

A good night's sleep helps us to organise and process our thoughts.

Interrupted sleep can leave us feeling muddled.

Barriers to sleep

Processing alcohol.

Digesting food.

The effect of light.

'Worrying'.

What can we do?

Don't eat before bed.

Go outside at sundown for a little while-your brain works out that it needs to start winding down for bed.

Switch off the laptops/phones one hour before bed-they give off the same light as the midday sun so your body takes longer to wind down.

Participate in a mindfulness task before bed to switch off those worries.

