

## Moving Forward from Lockdown

### A resource booklet for People with Learning Disabilities, Family Members and Carers

March 2021



## Introduction

This resource booklet has been developed to tackle some of the difficulties and challenges that may arise due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

We initially did some research to find out how people with learning disabilities may be affected by a pandemic. We reviewed historical events and found that unfortunately, there has not been much research on the learning disability population. We therefore created a questionnaire and two surveys to collect information on the impact of COVID-19.

One questionnaire for people with learning disabilities, one survey for family member/carers and one survey for care staff teams were developed to collect this information.

We found the following

- For people with learning disabilities
  - Anxiety and worries about the virus and how this will affect their family
  - worries about their routine and not being able to do the same things
  - Some people with learning disabilities were enjoying a break from doing a lot of different things
- Carers/family
  - Worries about managing routine and ensuring enough meaningful activities were available
  - Unsure how to manage when people with learning disabilities are feeling anxious or depressed.
  - Some people with learning disabilities were doing better with the reduced demands placed on them.

This information highlighted that resources were needed to support people with learning disabilities and their family members/care staff teams. Therefore, this resource booklet has been developed to provide support to manage the changes following lockdown restrictions.

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## Section 1: How are you feeling?

We can have lots of different feelings and that is okay. Sometimes we can feel sad and sometimes we can feel happy, this is also okay.

Coronavirus has left us all experiencing lots of different feelings.

Have a look below and tick or circle what you are feeling today.



### **Joy**

Confident  
Loving  
Hopeful



### **Sad**

Bored  
Sleepy  
Lonely



### **Surprised**

Amazed  
Excited  
Confused



### **Angry**

Jealous  
Withdrawn  
Irritated



### **Disgust**

Awful  
Dislike  
Hate



### **Fear**

Scared  
Anxious  
Panic

## What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is feeling stressed and worried.

It is a normal healthy reaction to danger or worrying situations.

We all feel stressed and anxious at times.

Some anxiety is good for us. We need to feel anxious to help us deal with emergencies.

During the coronavirus pandemic, we were in a lockdown.

This was to stop the spread of the virus and to keep us safe.

There have been lots of changes in our lives.

We have not been able to do lots of things we enjoy.

For example, our day centres, schools or work places may have closed.



## Why do we feel anxious?

When we think we are in danger, a chemical called Adrenaline is released in our bodies.

This is like an alarm and gets us ready to run away or fight, so we can survive.

This is called our 'Fight or Flight' response.

It works so well that it often starts even when it is not needed.

This can include when we think we are in danger, even when there isn't any.

You might feel anxious when you:



Meet big groups of people



Go for a doctor's appointment



Sometimes you may not know why

Our bodies feel different when we are anxious.

We make decisions quickly and focus on the danger

Our eyesight gets better and we watch out for danger

Mouth becomes dry

Heart beats faster

Get butterflies or feel sick

Hands get cold and feel numb

Muscles tense so we feel shaky

Feel dizzy or get a headache

Breathe fast

Adrenal gland releases adrenaline. This makes us feel stressed.

Feel you need the toilet

Hands feel sweaty





## What happens when you feel anxious?

Everyone's anxiety is different.

You might behave differently. Here are some things you might notice...

Feeling frightened, scared or stressed



Having worrying thoughts again and again

Problems with sleeping; sleeping too much or cannot go to sleep



Change how much you eat, eating too much or too little.

Feel angry or irritated



Find it hard to be still



Lose interest in the things you like to do



If we feel anxious too much, it can be a problem. It can get in the way of our lives.

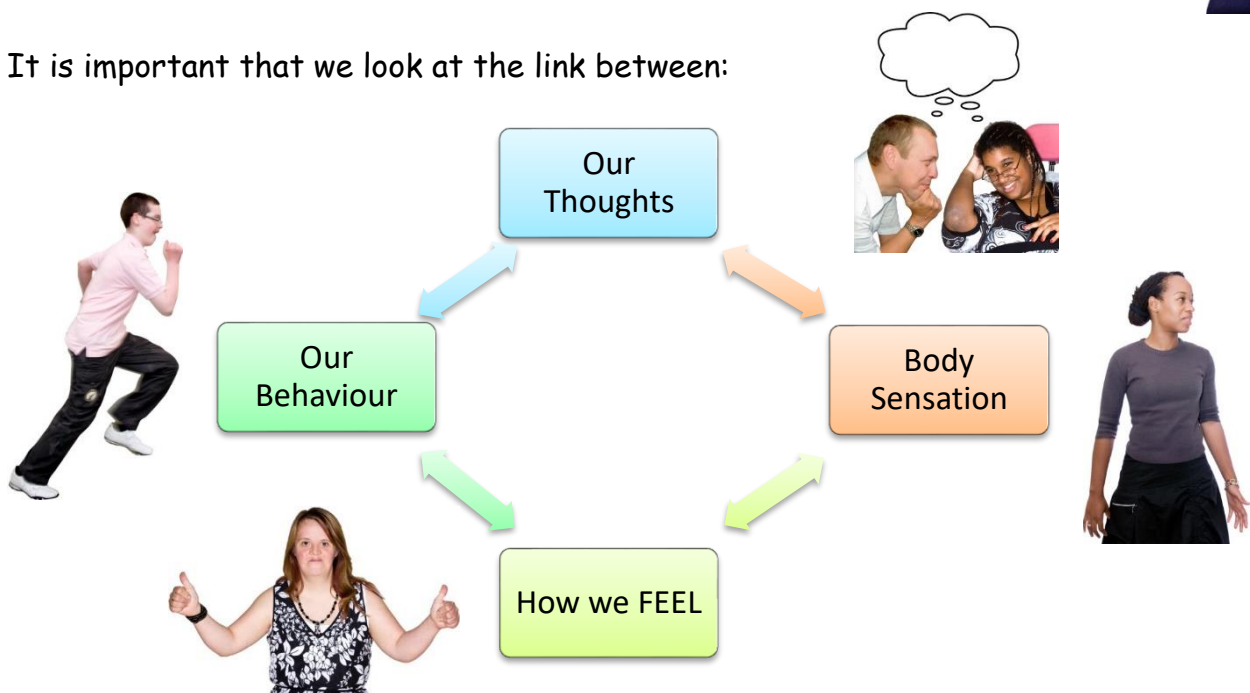
If you still feel worried and scared, we may behave differently:

- You might try to leave or run away. For example, leave a friend's house early when visiting.
- You might try and avoid the thing which makes you feel worried. For example, you may avoid visiting people or places.
- You might use coping behaviours. For example, fiddling with your clothes or avoiding eye contact.



These behaviours can keep your anxiety going.

It is important that we look at the link between:



If we can change the way we think, we can learn to control our feelings.

- If we think negatively, we can feel angry, sad and scared. We may cry or get angry with others.
- If we think positively, we can feel happy. We may smile and be kind to others.





## Normal Anxiety: How you might have felt during Lockdown

Sometimes you might feel anxious or worried



When you feel anxious your heart might beat faster. You might breathe more quickly.



It is okay to feel anxious about lockdown. This is a normal reaction in your body.



Many people feel anxious about the lockdown as they are unable to do the things they normally do.



It is normal to feel anxious about going out to the following places:

Shops



Day centre

Restaurants



College

## What to do if you feel anxious?

When you are anxious about lockdown you can:

Tell a family member, friend or carer



Do a breathing exercise



Do an activity that you enjoy



Go for a walk or do some exercise



Hopefully some of these activities might help you to feel better.



Even though lockdown might be around for a bit longer, you can still enjoy activities with other people such as:



Art and crafts



Sport



Picnics



Video games

## The Coronavirus and Lockdown

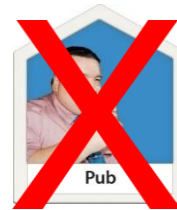
If Coronavirus cases rise in your local area the government might change the rules for your town.

This means that you cannot do some of the things you have been doing.

This is called a 'local lockdown'.

These are some things that might change:

Restaurants, pubs and cafes might close



You might not be able to visit clothes shops

Day centres may close



You may no longer be able to meet with people you do not live with

There are things that we can do to keep us safe and stop the spread of germs:

Wear a face mask



Wash our hands regularly



Use hand sanitiser



## Coping with Anxiety:

### Anxiety Thermometer

When we start feeling anxious our thoughts, feelings and behaviour can change very quickly.

Here is a thermometer which can help you to find out how you are feeling. It is numbered 1 to 10, to show feeling very calm to very anxious.

You can use this thermometer by drawing on it or creating your own. You can also use this to find out what makes you feel anxious.

10. Feel very anxious and cannot cope.

9. Feel anxious and it is hard to cope.

8. Feel overwhelmed.

7. Keep thinking about the same thing

6. Hard to think clearly and feel uncomfortable.

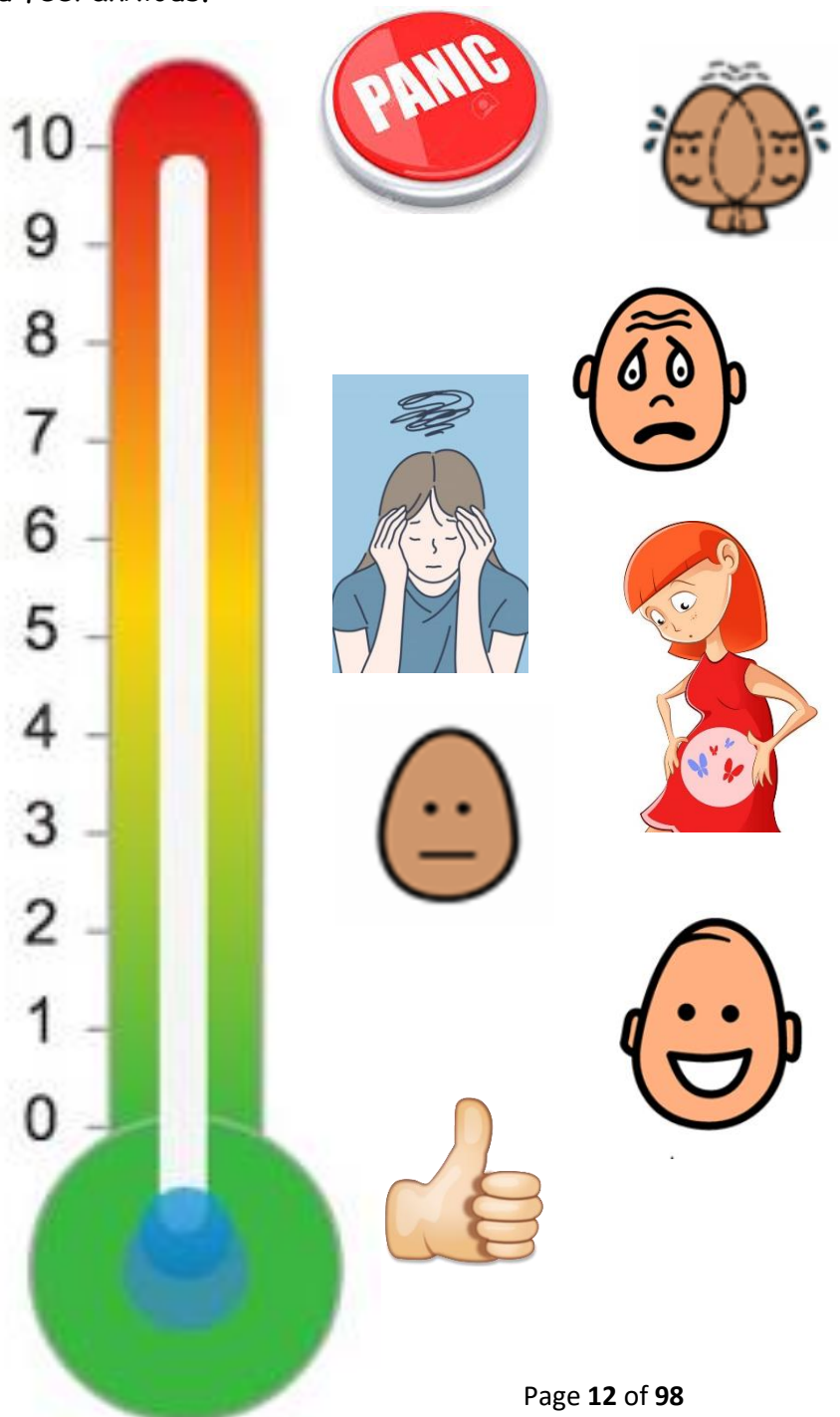
5. Feel stressed and struggle to focus.

4. Starting to worry.

3. Feel a bit strange.

2. Feel okay.

0 and 1. Feel calm and happy.





## The Worry Box and Worry Time

Sometime when we worry a lot, we can feel tired and stressed. When there are lots of different worries it can be helpful to write them down. Writing them down can help you to think better.



Once you have written them down, why not put them in a worry box?

No matter how BIG or *small* the worry is, you can put it in the worry box.

Whenever you have a worry, write or draw it down and put it inside the worry box.

The worry box will put your worry away for you. You can leave it in there for as long as you would like.

You can come back and have a look at your worry during worry time.

Worry time is when you share your worries with a carer, friends or family member.

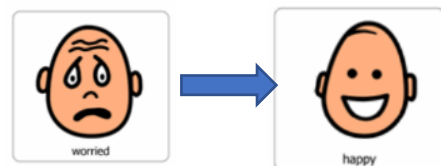
Have a go at making your own worry box. You can be as creative as you want!





## YouTube Videos

We have made some videos to help you to manage your worries.



The videos include ways which may help you to relax, feel calm and happy.

You can try this out with a friend, your family or a carer.

There are 5 videos which may help you. These are:

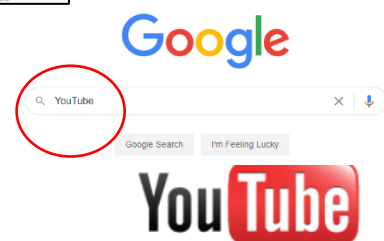
- A Balloon Breathing Exercise Video
- A Breathing Exercise using your Imagination Video
- 5 Second Breathing Exercise video
- A Mindfulness and 5 Things Exercise Video.
- Finding a safe place Exercise Video.

Follow these steps to find the videos. Please ask a friend, family member or carer to help you.

1. Open your web browser on a device.



2. Type in 'YouTube' (copy and paste this) to your search bar.

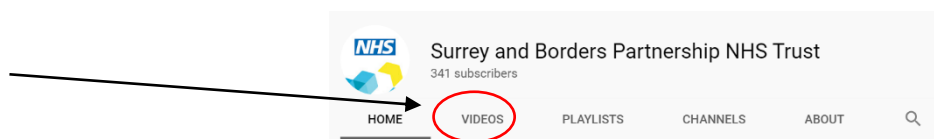


3. Click on the YouTube Website (or right click this logo).

4. In the YouTube search bar type 'Surrey and Borders' (copy and paste this). Then click on the link.



5. Click on 'Videos'.

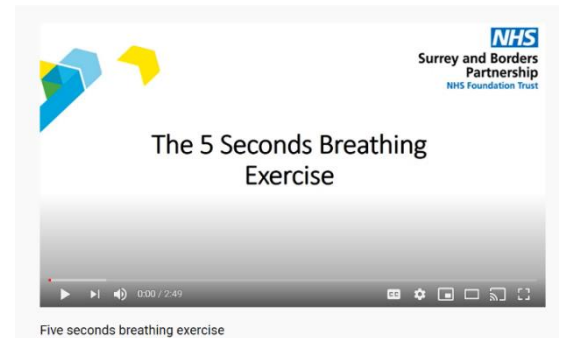


6. Then scroll down for the videos.

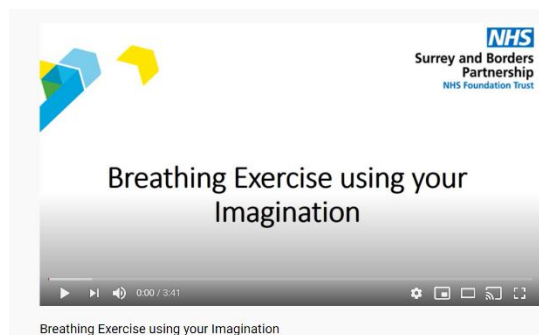
You can right click on the pictures or click the links below to go to the videos:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00iHsmjsEW8>



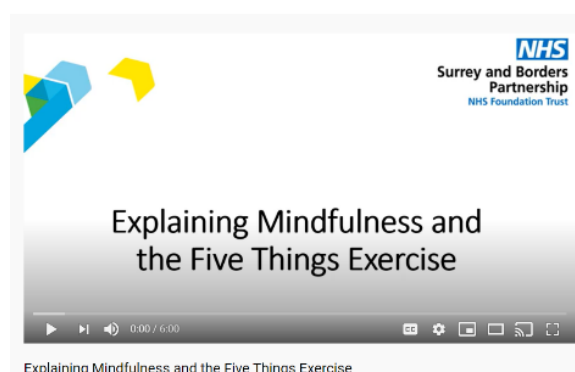
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn9jN1unfc8>



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yc\\_81mg\\_1nk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yc_81mg_1nk)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnvTdiX7x6w>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5IxpsO7jjg>

## What is Depression?

Almost everyone feels down from time to time.

Feeling low is a natural reaction, particularly in circumstances like those caused by the Coronavirus.

However, for some, this low mood can last for a long time and start to affect their daily life.

This is a common mental health problem called Depression.

Depression can happen to anyone and many people will feel depressed at some time in their lives.

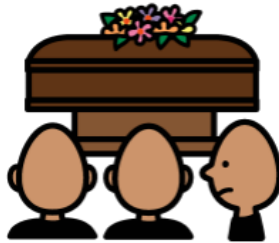
### **What causes Depression?**

The reason why someone may be depressed is different from person to person.

Often there is more than one reason but sometimes it may not be so obvious:



Being bullied or abused



Death of someone you love



Loss (your favourite carer, a sibling leaving or moving away from family)



Illness

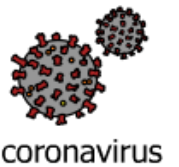


Changes in living situation (moving home to live in the community)



care staff

Changes in routine (e.g. staff changes)



coronavirus



Depression can also be caused by the difficulties that go with the Coronavirus:



Having to stay home



Worry & not knowing what is going to happen next



Changes in roles and responsibilities

### What happens when you are depressed?

Depression is different for everyone. Here are some things that someone with depression may experience:

#### Feelings

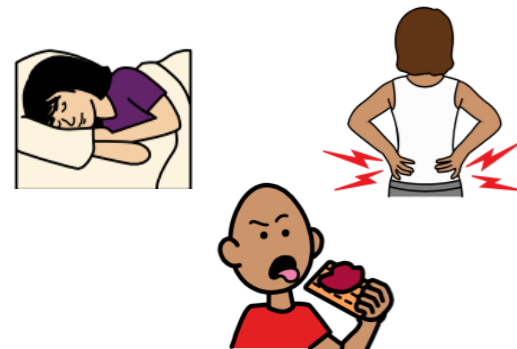
- Feeling sad, down, hopeless, guilty, alone or angry
- Anxiety and fear
- Crying easily
- Loss of interest and enjoyment



#### Physically

Feeling depressed can make changes in your body:

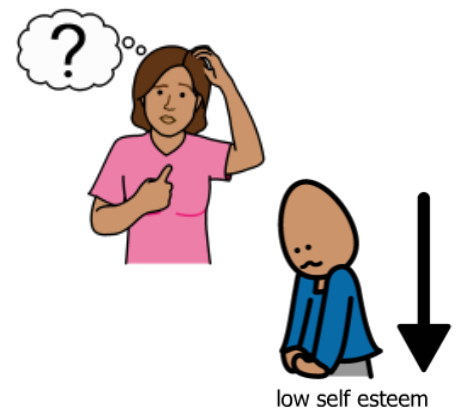
- Tiredness and lack of energy
- Changes in sleep
- Changes to appetite or weight
- Poor memory and concentration
- Worsening of chronic conditions or aches and pains



## Thoughts

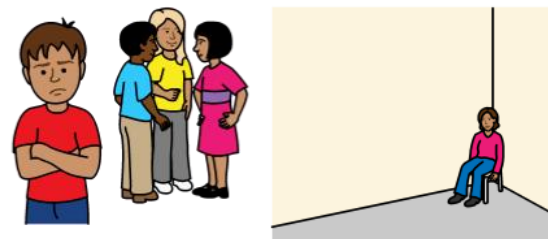
You may have:

- Unhappy thoughts and expecting the worst
- Not thinking you are good enough
- Difficulty making decisions
- Thoughts of hurting yourself



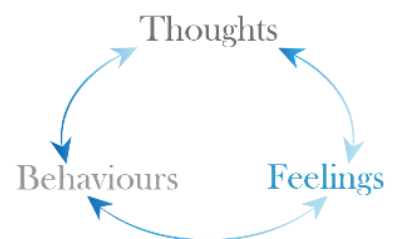
## Behaviour

- Not wanting to look after yourself
- Avoiding activities that you usually enjoy
- Not wanting to hang out with friends or family
- Not enjoying life



Our feelings, thoughts and behaviours are all linked.

Check out Ben's story to see how.

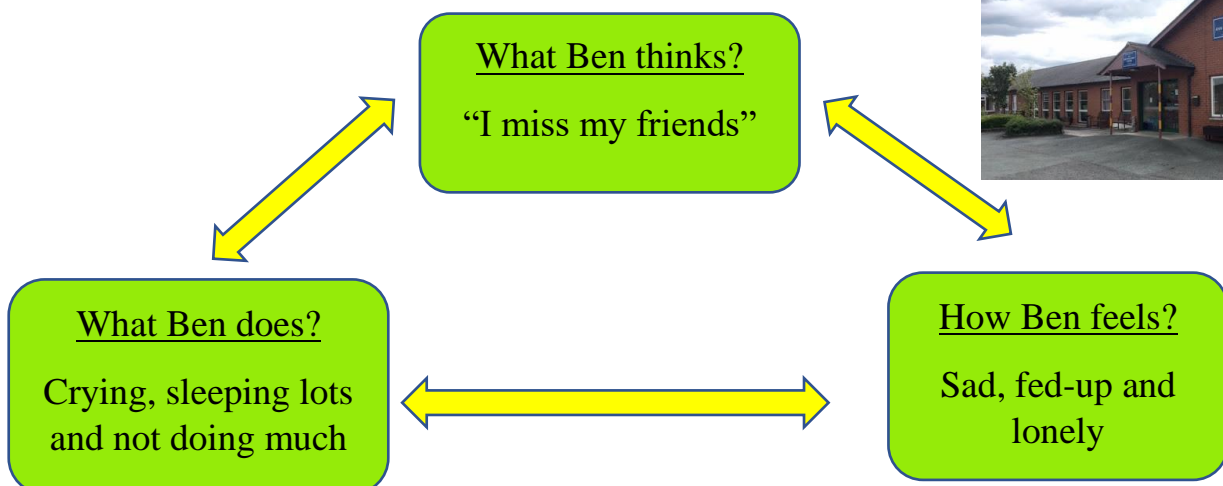


## Ben's Story

This is Ben.

Ben's day centre has been closed due to the Coronavirus.

He has had to stop going and instead must stay at home.





By thinking of unhappy thoughts, Ben is feeling sad. So, he is likely to do things that does not make him feel good. This increases his negative thoughts and feelings.

### How can depression be treated?

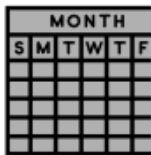
If you are depressed, it is important to talk to someone you trust and tell them how you are feeling.



Go to your GP. They might recommend therapy with someone who is trained.

Do activities that you enjoy!

Here are some things you can do during quarantine to make you feel better:



Get into a routine



Eat healthy food



Exercise



Spend time outside



juggle

Learn a new skill

## Low Mood Sponge and Sieve Analogy

Sometimes when we feel sad or our mood is low, our brains can become like sponges and sieves.



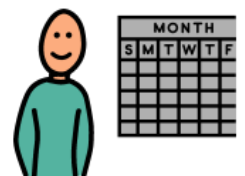
We become really good at noticing anything negative about ourselves, other people or situations. Our brains soak up all of these negative things like a sponge. We are good at remembering all of these negative things in the sponge. This keeps us feeling sad.

At the same time, we become not so good at noticing anything positive about ourselves, other people or situations. Our brains let all of these positive things go like a sieve, so they trickle out of our minds and we forget them. This also keeps us feeling sad.

We need to try and notice and remember the positives so that they don't fall straight through the sieve. This will also help to balance out our negative sponge, helping us to feel a bit better.

You can try:

- Setting a time each day where you spend a few minutes noticing positive things. You could set an alarm to remind you to do this.
- Remember that positive things can be very small, like smiling at somebody or finding a TV programme funny.
- Try writing down or talking about the positive things you have noticed with somebody else - this will make you more likely to remember them.
- Plan in things for your day that you know you will enjoy or find positive.



## For people who have been coping well

Things that might have changed during lockdown.

Because of lockdown, you have had to stay at home.



This means that you **could not** go to the following places:

Shops



Day centre

Restaurants



College

Or see your friends and family (if you do not live with them)



Lockdown has changed what you do in your life, for example:

You might have had college lessons online



You might have had video calls with friends and family



You might have done some online shopping

You might have ordered a takeaway

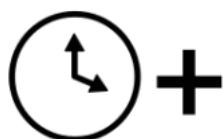


You might have enjoyed doing these activities more than before. This might be because:

It is quieter



There are less things to focus on



You have more time to do things

There are fewer people



You also might have spent more time with family or carers because they are at home more



It is okay if you have enjoyed staying at home during lockdown.



This has been the same for a lot of people in the country.



Staying at home during lockdown might have made you:

Feel more relaxed



Happy

Calm





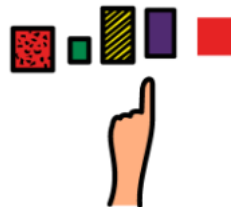
Now that lockdown is being lifted things will slowly start to return to normal. For example:

Shops are starting to open



College and day centres are also starting to open

It is important to take one day at a time. You still have choices about what activities you want to do.



It is important to speak with your carers about how you are feeling as lockdown



For some people lockdown has been a positive experience as it has helped make a positive change to their routine.

It is important that if you have been happier during lockdown, been less worried and more relaxed then you try and keep the positive changes in your routine as we move forward from lockdown.

Write down some good changes that lockdown helped you to make

Why are these good?

What can I do now to make sure they continue?

## Strengths Focused Activities

Strengths are natural skills that someone has.

It can be any activities that you are good at or any personal qualities that you have:



Sharing



Being creative



Dancing



Being good with animals

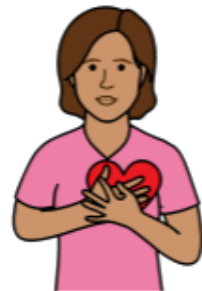
When someone recognises and uses their strengths, they tend to:



Feel energised

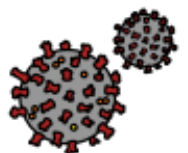


Have better well-being  
and mood



Feel good about  
themselves

It is especially important to recognise your strengths during difficult times- like now with the Coronavirus.



coronavirus

It can:

Give you hope

Fight feelings of  
loneliness

Strengthen your  
bonds with  
others

Allow you to  
support others

Allow you to  
grow



We can also learn a lot from difficult times and even build strengths in areas where we feel less good at. This can help us become better at tackling any new challenges.

However, people may not recognise their strengths straight away.

This is because strengths can often be hidden, as it may be a skill that someone might think is not that important.

Here are some easy steps to help you find and recognise your own strengths:

### **SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES**

Write down a list of things that you like doing. It can be a hobby or something that is part of your daily routine.

Then choose one that you think you are the best at

Now think of these 4 questions and try to answer them...

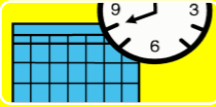




1) What is the activity?



2) How do you do it?



3) How often do you do this activity?



4) Who do you do this activity with?

### PERSONAL QUALITIES

Here is a table of common personal qualities that someone may have. Have a look and see if you can circle the ones that you have. If you are finding it hard to choose, then ask your carer or family to help you.

Kind	Positive	Thoughtful
Curious	Brave	Caring
Honest	Creative	Helpful
Fun	Patient	Confident

## **Section 2: Easing out of Lockdown**

### Easing out of lockdown/feel good plan

How might I be feeling about lockdown easing

There's no 'normal' response to lockdown easing. You might feel relieved or excited. But you might also find yourself feeling less positive about the changes. You may move through a range of difficult feelings and thoughts, for example:

- **Stressed, anxious, afraid or panicked** for the changes that are coming.
- **Conflicted or confused** for example, you may want to socialise more if it's allowed, but feel like perhaps you should still stay at home.
- **Protective of your lockdown routine**, like you'd rather not have to deal with more change.
- **Reluctant or unmotivated** to rearrange events that couldn't happen during full lockdown. This could be big celebrations like birthdays, or everyday things like barbecues, meet-ups, or dating.
- **Uneasy about relationships** that have changed during full lockdown.
- **Under pressure to return to all your pre-lockdown activities**

You might feel one way one day, and another way the next.

Easing out of lockdown could take some getting used to — and it's OK to take your time.

Here are some tips on how you can transition back to life before lockdown:

### **1. Talk about your feelings and emotions**

There's no 'normal' response to lockdown easing. You might feel relieved, excited or anxious. If you are concerned about going back to school/college, daycentres or work, talk to the staff about what measures they have in place to make the transition easier.

If you are a carer for someone with a learning disability try not to make assumptions about how they are feeling. Ask them if they are worried or feel scared about anything, but also if they are excited about or looking forward to



something. No matter how the person feels, let them know that it is completely normal to feel a mixture of emotions.

**Provide the person with as much information about their new routine and day as you can.** This will help them to prepare for any changes that have been made to the timings of their day, the layout of their classroom, day Centre or respite service, their peer groups. For some people, it can be really helpful for them to visualise these changes - any pictures to help make things feel more familiar.

## **2. Plan to do the things you love again**

We have been living in a time like no other, so, naturally, it may take time to get back into the swing of things once lockdown is over.

A simple way to transition out of lockdown is to plan ahead; make a list of the things you are missing and want to do again - friends you want to visit, places you want to go.

## **3. Begin to re-establish your old routine**

During lockdown your routine may have changed. A phased return back to your usual routine, rather than large and sudden ones, are generally easier to deal with. Begin to re-establish old routines, such as usual morning and bedtimes.

It is also a good opportunity to reflect on whether it is possible to continue some of the things you've been doing differently.

Remember that the transition back to normality may take some time. People will experience ups and downs. If you are a carer for someone with a learning disability try your best to support, reassure and comfort them, without putting pressure on yourself.

## **4. Review your priorities in life**

Many people are finding the current pace of life easier to deal with. It's worth reflecting on whether you want things to return to how they were before. It's an opportunity to review your priorities and really think about what makes you happy.

## **5. Remember that it could take a while to adjust**

As lockdown restrictions gradually begin to lift, remember that it will take a while for life to get back to 'normal' — and it's OK if you take longer to adjust than others.

It's also important to recognise that some people won't be ready to return to "normality", and need a much slower, more gradual return to normality.

Adapted from Mind “Managing feelings about lockdown easing”

## My Easing out of Lockdown Plan:

What went well during lockdown:

What I needed help with during lockdown:

## My 5 Golden Rules for Easing out of Lockdown:



What I do	What you can do
<div>Green Happy</div> <div>Amber Agitation starts</div> <div>Red Unable to manage</div>	<div>Green Proactive</div> <div>Amber De-escalate</div> <div>Red Reactive</div>
<div></div>	
<div></div>	



X's Feel Good Plan

Add Date





What am I like when I am happy  
or calm?

(List here other feelings that I have or things that I do when I am happy or calm)



What am I like when I am sad  
or worried?

(List here other feelings that I have or things that I do when I am sad or worried)



## Things I need to do to stay happy or calm:

(List here anything that I already do to help me feel happy or calm)



## Triggers to becoming sad or worried:

(List here things that can happen that make me feel sad or worried. For example, an argument with a friend or seeing somebody that has upset me)



## Early warning signs:

(List here anything that other people notice about me when I am starting to feel sad or worried)

## What helps when I am starting to struggle?

## Crisis plan:

- Contact my GP
- Talk to family, friends or support workers
- Call the crisis line 0300 456 8342

## A Healthy Balance of Activities

During lockdown your daily activities probably changed.

This may have been difficult because it meant stopping things you enjoy.

But it may have also been good because it helped you to realise that your life was too busy.



It's important to think about whether you would like to do MORE or LESS activities as you plan your weeks ahead.

It is also important to have a healthy balance of activities in your days and weeks.

Most of the activities we do can fit into the following groups:

**SELF-CARE** (showering, washing, dressing, cooking, eating, housework, shopping etc)

**PRODUCTIVITY** (work, day service, education)

**LEISURE** (hobbies, interests, TV, social media etc)

**EXERCISE** (going for a walk, playing a sport etc)

**RELAXATION** (this can be anything that you find relaxing even if it is just sitting and listening or watching or just having some space and time to yourself)

Think about the activities that you plan to do in the days ahead.

Does your daily/ weekly routine include activities from each of the groups above?

Are you doing too much of one type of activity?

Are you allowing yourself enough relaxation time?

Are there any activities you want to stop doing?

Are there any activities that you want to start doing?

As you move forward from lockdown try and ensure that your routine has activities from each of the groups and take time to think about what balance is best for you.

## Timetable Examples

Here are 2 different timetables that you can use:

	Getting up	Morning self-care routine
	Breakfast	Make breakfast
	Morning	Craft activity session Go for a walk Phone a friend or family
	Lunch	Make my lunch and help clear away
	Afternoon	Shopping Relaxation activity
	Dinner	Help lay table for dinner and wash up
	Evening	Film night Help make popcorn
	Bedtime	Evening self-care routine

## Your Timetable

Date:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Morning	Wake up: Breakfast:	Wake up: Breakfast:	Wake up: Breakfast:	Wake up: Breakfast:	Wake up: Breakfast:	Wake up: Breakfast:	Wake up: Breakfast:
Afternoon	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:
Evening	Tea:  Go to Bed:	Tea:  Go to Bed:	Tea:  Go to Bed:	Tea:  Go to Bed:	Tea:  Go to Bed:	Tea:  Go to Bed:	Tea:  Go to Bed:

It's important to get a balance of activities, Try to complete one task from each colour each day. You are more likely to stick with the plan if you write it out on the timetable provided. Try and plan your whole week, you can always change it if you want to!

### Self care:

- Shower or bath
- Help with cooking
- Help with housework

### Relaxation:

- Listen to music
- Read a book
- Listen to an audio book
- Listen to a relaxation story

### Educational:

- Watch educational videos such as:  
Wildlife with Steve Backshall  
Science with Maddie Moate
- The Nature History Museum has videos and activities to do at home
- Take a virtual tour of the Science Museum

### Exercise:

- Go for a walk
- Follow an exercise video (Joe Wicks PE)
- NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/>
- Dance (Ori Mabuse has videos on Youtube)
- Couch to 5k program
- Choose a physical activity from below

### Leisure Activities:

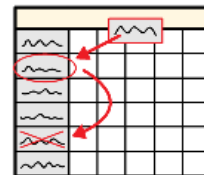
- make time for your own hobbies
- Pick an activity from below
- Sensory activities can also be hobbies



## Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Techniques

### Communication Recommendations for Managing Transition: Leaving lockdown and resuming normal activity

Change and transition can be difficult for some people who have a learning disability. As services for people with learning disability begin to resume their normal service, there will be lots of changes for the people we support over the coming weeks.



To ensure a successful transition and minimise the occurrence of behaviours that challenge, it is important to manage these changes carefully.

In general, this means taking time to make plans in advance, including all the people involved (e.g. the individual, their family and carers, day service staff, employers, etc.), to make sure everyone knows what is going to happen and when.



It can also be helpful to introduce changes gradually, by attending a new service for just a short period at first, before building up to longer visits.

**When talking about future plans, there are a few things you can do to help ensure people with a learning disability understand and can prepare for change.**

### Use visuals to enhance your message

For many people, words on their own have little meaning: If a message is given verbally without any visual clues, the message might be misunderstood or important information missed.

There are lots of ways to visually support your message, though not all of them are helpful for everyone. Consider whether the person or people you support would benefit from one or more of the following types of visual support to help them understand:



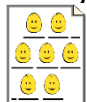
### **Sign-supported English (e.g. Makaton)**

Even people who understand spoken language can find it helpful to have a visual sign alongside speech to help them remember and process what is being said.



## Symbols, pictures or photographs

Think about how abstract the symbols and pictures you are using are and try to make sure your communication partner understands them. While symbols can sometimes be helpful, they are often quite abstract and other, clearer methods of communication might be more beneficial: Some people may be good at recognising drawings; others might respond better to photographs.



## Written information

If the person you support has some literacy skills, giving them written information might help them remember what you've said. To support them to read and understand, use symbols, pictures and photographs too, as appropriate.



## Objects

For people with a severe learning disability, understanding photographs can be difficult too. These people often rely on objects to interpret and make sense of their environment.

**NOTE:** It may also be helpful to make visuals specific where possible. For example, videos and photographs of key people and buildings can be particularly powerful ways to support your message.

## Create a visual timetable or calendar

Depending on how the person manages change and their understanding of the concept of time, it might be helpful to demonstrate visually what they can expect. This might be helpful for breaking large amounts of information down into manageable steps.

Waiting for something to happen can be difficult for many people with a learning disability, often leading to frustration and a consequent increase in behaviours that challenge. By using a timetable to show what is going to happen when, we can increase predictability and allow someone to prepare for change.



When making a visual timetable, bear in mind the following points:

- Depending on what the person understands, make timetables using written words, symbols, pictures, photos or objects, as appropriate. Photographs

of a person doing an activity can be a very powerful method to facilitate understanding.

- Timetables can be made for parts of the day, a whole day, a week or even a month. The timescale used will need to be appropriate for each individual.
- It is important to think about when to introduce the idea of upcoming change: Some people might have a good understanding of time but may manage better if events are discussed with them relatively shortly before the event to reduce the risk of anxiety building up over time. For other people, a longer period might be preferable, to give them more time to get used to the idea of change.
- After each activity, cover them up, remove them from the timetable or cross them off, so it is visually clear that they have been completed.
- Make sure you only countdown to an event that you know for definite is going to happen when you say it will!

### **Use Social Stories so people know what to expect**

A Social Story is a short story that can be used to describe a specific situation, giving an individual accurate information about what to expect and prompts about how to respond, as well as providing reassurance and positive feedback.



Even if you know the person you support understands what you are saying without visual support, using a Social Story can still be very helpful as a means of helping them to understand and validate their emotions.

It can also help improve their understanding and retention of information through increased consistency and repetition.

A Social Story often acts as a script of carers, making sure everyone is giving the same information in the same way every time.

### **Helping people to express themselves**

Bear in mind, the person you support might have difficulty understanding and effectively expressing what they are feeling. To support with this, make sure you:



- Encourage them to get involved in planning their activities:
  - If you use visual timetables, use these to promote choice and facilitate communication so that individuals can say what they want about the things they do each day.
  - Talking Mats can provide a simple way of expressing feelings, making choices and making decisions. It provides someone with a visual way of organising their thoughts and can also be adapted to use symbols, pictures, photos or objects as necessary.
- When using the social story, talk to people about how they might be feeling and provide opportunities for them to tell you about their worries. Visual aids might help with this, for example using a board or book with different faces to represent different emotions.
- Observe behaviour and look out for any changes that might indicate a person is overwhelmed, unhappy or distressed.



### **A general note about planning activities post-lockdown**

The recent reduction in availability of LD services has provided an opportunity for us to reflect on the ways people react to the demands placed on them in their daily lives.

Specifically, we have noticed that many of the people we support have been calmer and more relaxed during the lockdown period, leading us to question whether the demands placed on them in the past have been too great.

If the person or people you support have coped well during lockdown, it may be worth thinking about how you can support them to enjoy a more relaxed timetable of activities in the future.



# A Guide to Intensive Interaction

## What is Intensive Interaction?

**"Intensive Interaction is an approach to teaching the pre-speech fundamentals of communication to adults who have severe learning difficulties and/or autism and who are still at an early stage of communication development."** (Valuing People Now, DoH, 2009)

- A practical and accessible means of achieving engagement and interaction with people who exhibit a severe social or communicative impairment.
- Finding a connection with someone who is difficult-to-reach and then building a more equitable and inclusive relationship with them and improving quality of life for that individual. (Firth, Berry & Irvine, 2010)

## Some Fundamentals of communication

- Use and understanding of **eye contact**.
- Use of **facial expressions**.
- Learning to 'read' facial expressions.
- Learning to **enjoy giving attention** to another person.
- **Taking turns** in exchanges of behaviour.
- Use and understanding of **physical contact**.
- Use and understanding of **gestures**.
- Learning to 'read' **body language**.
- Learning about **personal space**.
- Learning to **concentrate** and attend.
- Learning and using **vocalisations** to become more meaningful.



Intensive Interaction is led by the person and the communication is on their terms. It is a way of developing an emotional engagement where communicating is a fun activity and helps build relationships.

## Who is it for?

It is intended for people of all ages, who are:

- **Pre-verbal** (without speech).
- People who are **difficult to reach** (seeming to prefer to be away from human contact).
- People with **profound and multiple learning difficulties**.
- People with **severe and complex learning difficulties**.
- People with '**autistic spectrum disorders**', particularly those with developmental delay.
- People who **engage in self-stimulatory activities** which can prelude social involvement with other people.
- People who present with **severe multi-sensory impairments** and as a consequence may have become socially isolated or unmotivated.



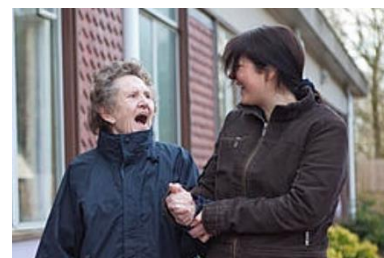
These people all have poorly developed social and communication abilities, usually accompanied by additional learning, sensory or behavioural difficulties.

The idea of intensive interaction is to celebrate people's behaviours and to turn them into deliberate and communicative behaviours.

## What do we respond to?

Respond to any possible thing the person does- that you feel comfortable with:

- **Vocalizations** e.g. humming, grunts, murmurs, all voice noises.
- **Other noises made with the mouth** e.g. clicks, blowing, smacking lips.





- **Other noises made with the body** e.g. tapping, clapping, hand rubbing.
- **Movements** e.g. rocking, swaying, moving around the room.
- **Facial expressions** e.g. smiles, grimaces, mouth opening and closing, blinks, eye contact.
- **Physical Contact** e.g. pats, taps, reaching to hold you.
- **Stereotyped behaviour** e.g. repetitive and rhythmic behaviour.



### How do we respond?

Think about what feedback the person is getting from their behaviours. Which sense are they stimulating; sight, sound, touch, taste, smell?

- **Imitate-** A similar imitation of what the person just did. Show that you are enjoying it!
- **Join in-** Extend the response.
- **Say something-** Encourage and celebrate what's happening.
- **Be dramatic-** Reward behaviours by responding with lots of enthusiasm.
- **Nonverbal responses-** Smile, widen your eyes, nod, body language.
- **Running commentary-** Say out loud what's happening, interpret the persons responses. e.g. "you're looking at me, you like to tap the door."



Experiment with your responses. Look for feedback. You are encouraging them to be aware of the communication of another person and start to rehearse turn-taking.

It will take time!

The people we work with will develop in various ways. For some, even a little progress in communicating may have a major lifestyle effect.

### Further Information

- Nind and Hewitt (2001) *A practical Guide to Intensive Interaction*. BILD
- Phoebe Caldwell (2000) *You don't know what it's like*. Pavilion Publishing.
- [www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk](http://www.intensiveinteraction.co.uk)
- [www.bild.org.uk](http://www.bild.org.uk)
- [www.usinabus.org.uk](http://www.usinabus.org.uk)

This information was adapted from:

*'A Practical Guide to Intensive Interaction'*. Nind and Hewett (2001).

Published by BILD.

*'Using intensive interaction with a person with a social or communicative impairment'* Firth and Barber (2011).

Published by Jessica Kingsley

# A Guide to Objects of Reference

## What are Objects of Reference?

Objects of Reference are one of the communication systems that can be used by people who have difficulties communicating. The objects are used to represent the things the individual needs to discuss, just like words, signs and symbols and are often used with people who cannot recognise these options.

Similarly, to words, signs and symbols they need to be chosen and used carefully and used consistently in order for the individual to be able to learn what the object stands for and use it to communicate.



## Who are Objects of Reference for and why?

An Object of Reference is accessible to people who have a complex Learning Disability, and are often also used with people who have visual difficulties alongside this. They are more accessible because they:

- Provide information through touch
- Are easier to interpret than pictures for those with visual perceptual problems
- Are concrete objects linked to the symbolic words in language?
- Remain in place giving time to process
- Are a visual/tactile reminder to support memory
- Can support receptive language if presented just before the associated activity.



## Choosing objects

It is important to think carefully about the objects you choose to represent the activities. The objects and activities must be meaningful, motivating and frequent



Meaningful: Try and watch the person's response to the object carefully. If you are not getting any sort of reaction, it may be that the object is not meaningful for them. It may not be being used consistently or it may not be the right object to communicate the message

Motivating: We communicate to share information, and this relies upon having the interest to do so. Choosing an activity that someone likes makes it motivating, and makes them more likely to want to communicate.



Frequent: Although activities should be motivating they must also be frequent enough for the individual to be able to make the association between the object and the activity. For example, Gill's most favourite activity is making pumpkins, which she does when Halloween comes around, if she had an Object of Reference for this she may take many years to associate it, because she would not use it frequently enough to link the object with the activity. If she did associate them, the object may then remind her of an activity she can't do 11 months of the year, and she may feel frustrated if she regularly used it to request making pumpkins.

Types of Objects of Reference include:

Easier to understand



Difficult to understand

**An actual object** - One used in the activity it represents e.g. a cup for 'drink'

**A related object** - One related to the activity it represents e.g. a bracelet for seeing a particular member of staff who always wears bracelets.

**A partial object** - A piece of the entire object e.g. a small piece of rope for a swing.

**A shared feature object** - An object that has a shared feature such as texture e.g. A piece of leather for a sofa.

**An abstract object** - One with no relation to the activity, such as a wooden cube for going out in the bus.

Things to consider when choosing objects:

- It is best to start with two or three objects to begin with to prevent them from becoming confusing.

- It might be useful to watch the individual engaging in the activity to help you to decide which object would be meaningful for them.
- The object needs to be portable and suitable to take along to the activity.
- The object should be (as far as possible) unique to the activity. E.g. a towel may be used at swimming but could also be used for a shower or a wash so it could get confusing.
- Make sure it is an object that the individual would associate with the activity; this might be different from what you would choose. E.g. Car keys may not symbolise a car journey to someone who doesn't do the driving.
- If the person has a visual impairment then is the object a size, colour, weight, or shape they can distinguish?



### Stages of Development of Objects of Reference

It is important not to expect the individual to know what the objects mean and how to use them immediately. It may take a long time for them to develop understanding and they may not become completely independent in using their Objects of Reference.

Stage	Descriptors	Characterised by	
Stage 1	Intolerant  Difficult to reach  Dependent  Extraneous	Individual shows little tolerance of Object of Reference. Ignores, drops or throws it.	Show the object to the individual EVERY time they experience the activity. Pass it to them, encourage them to hold it. If they throw it on the floor offer it again. If this continues hold it yourself or put it down close to the person. Be sure to begin the activity immediately after presenting the object to help to create the link between the object and activity.
Stage 2	Tolerant	Holds/carries Object of Reference but	Continue to show the object EVERY time they experience the activity.

	Difficult to reach Dependent Extraneous	demonstrates little understanding.	Pass it to them, and encourage them to put it away when the activity ends. They need to attach meaning to the object, and if you sometimes skip giving them the object then they will become confused. Consistency is key.
Stage 3	Tolerant Receptive Dependent Meaningful	Individual begins to show understanding of meaning of one or more Objects of Reference.	Continue to show the object each time they experience the activity. You can now try choice making - offer two objects and allow them to choose, making sure you can follow through with the choice.
Stage 4	Tolerant Expressive Dependent Meaningful	Individual will correctly select from a range of Objects of reference on prompt from staff.	At this stage the individual can choose from their bag / box / shelf of objects when they are taken over to it and asked what they would like. Encourage them to pick up an object and pass it to someone who supports them.
Stage 5	Tolerant Expressive Independent Meaningful	Individual selects and uses Objects of Reference independently to express a need.	Now the individual uses the Objects of Reference independently it is important to maintain the system. Check and replace any missing objects and continue to encourage their use. Attaching symbols to the objects might enable the individual to begin to recognise symbols.

Adapted from Tony Jones (Liberator)

#### Further Information

- Ockelford, A. (2002) Objects of Reference. London: RNIB
- Park, K. (2002) Objects of Reference in Practice and Theory. London : Sense
- [www.talksense.weebly.com](http://www.talksense.weebly.com)



## A Guide to Talking Mats

## What are Talking Mats?

Talking mats are a communication system that can be used by people who find it difficult to express their likes, needs and wants verbally. They are mats to which you can attach, and rearrange pictures or symbols as required.

Across the top of the mat there is a visual scale. One symbol indicating a positive opinion, one indicating a negative opinion, and there may be one in the centre indicating a neutral feeling.









### Uses of Talking Mats

- Help the individual to express their preferences or feelings
- Provide a tool to enable the individual to explore issues and to structure and verbalise their thoughts.
- Help people with a learning disability to both understand what is involved in a decision and to then give their opinion.
- The visual presentation of Talking Mats helps comprehension as well as providing an effective way for people to express their views.
- The structured and consistent format of Talking Mats makes it easier both for people with dementia to keep to topic and for the listener to follow the track of the conversation.
- Support people with communication difficulties to express negative as well as positive views and reduce the tendency for people to acquiesce (i.e. agree with everything.)

### Using Talking Mats

**Step 1 - Getting a mat:** You can purchase Talking Mat packages from [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com), or you can make your own. A door mat will suffice - just make sure it is a new one! If making your own ensure that mat is made of a material that hook Velcro tape will attach to, as you will need to laminate the pictures you choose to use and attach the hooked Velcro to the back of them.

**Step 2 - Choosing the right visual scale:** It is important to choose the symbols for the visual scale carefully as each individual has a different way of understanding positive and negative feelings, and may recognise specific symbols for those feelings. Think about the person you work with and which symbols might suit them. If there are symbols they are already familiar with then it is a good idea to use those.

Positive	Negative
	
	
	

**Step 3 - Choosing the right pictures:** The pictures used for the items for discussion can be photographs or symbols, colour or black and white. This depends on what the individual is familiar with, and what they respond well to. Ensure that the pictures are clear, big enough for the person to see, and that it is obvious what they represent. E.g. a photo of car keys may mean a trip out in the car to you but the person you work with may need a photo of a car, or even a photo of the specific car they use when going out.

#### Step 4 - The Talking Mats session

- Lay the mat on the table in front of the individual.
- Try to set the scene by explaining what it is you will be talking about. Explain each of the symbols.
- If the individual doesn't seem to understand don't panic. Model how to use the talking mat for one or two pictures, or support them with where to put the pictures, some people learn and understand more easily by watching.
- You can test if the person is really understanding the process by passing them a picture of something you are certain that they do or don't like and seeing where they place it.
- Make sure you use words and sentences that are suited to the individual, some people may not recognise 'Do you like .....?', but respond well to 'Is ..... good or is ..... bad?'.



- For some individuals you may be able to use the process, or the finished Talking Mat as a basis to discuss the topic further.

**Step 5 - Recording the information:** It is important to record the information that the person has expressed to you. This can be done very quickly by taking a photograph of the finished Talking Mat and noting down important information on the Report form.

The image shows a 'Talking Mats Report Template' form. At the top, it says 'Talking Mats®' and 'Report Template'. Below this are fields for 'Name:', 'Contact:', and 'Date:'. There is a 'Topic:' label followed by a large rectangular box with the text 'Insert photo of completed Talking Mat'. Below the photo box are several sections: 'Positive about:', 'Unsure about:', 'Negative about:', 'Additional comments:', and 'Action Points:'. At the very bottom, there is a small line of text: 'Talking Mats Ltd. is a Social Enterprise. All profits are reinvested in the development of Talking Mats. © 2015 Talking Mats Ltd. All rights reserved.'

### **Further Information**

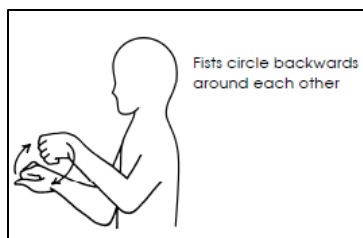
- [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)

Some of this information was adapted from:

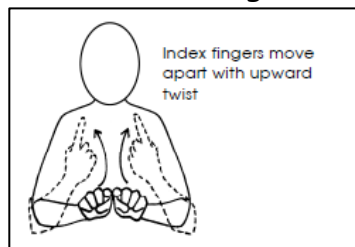
[www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)

## Using Makaton To Support Conversations: Managing Change and Transition

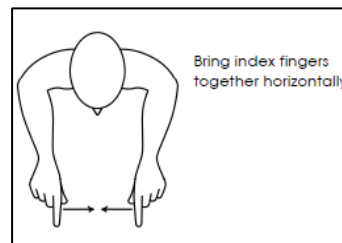
Coping with change can be hard. For some people, changing activities or going from one place to another is difficult. One way to manage these transitions is to make sure the person understands what is coming next.



**To change/after/become**

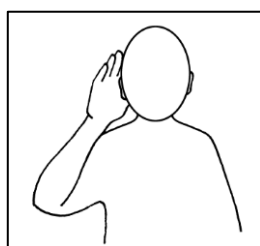


**Different**

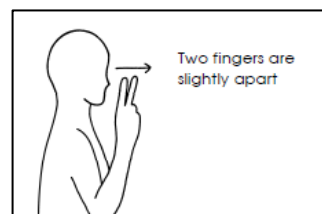


**Same**

Before conversations, make sure you have their attention - you might need to remind them to look or listen.

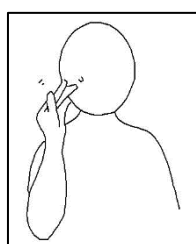


**Listen**

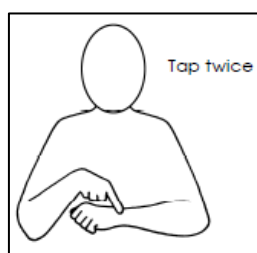


**Look**

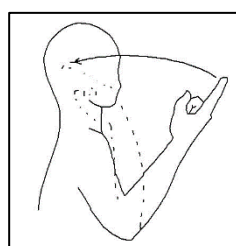
Make sure they understand their schedule and let them know when things will happen.



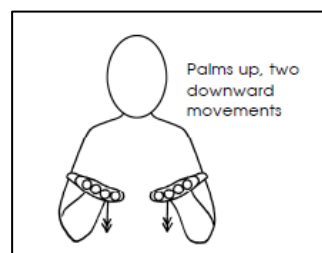
**When**



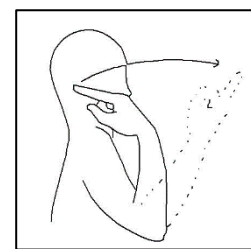
**Time**



**Yesterday**

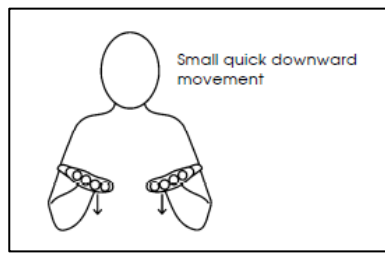


**Today**

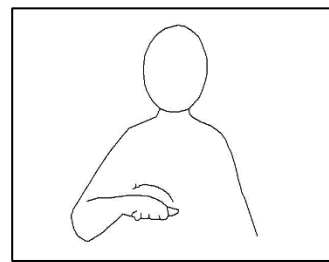


**Tomorrow**

Help them sequence activities, letting them know what is happening now and next.



**Now**

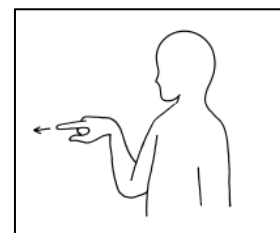


**Next**

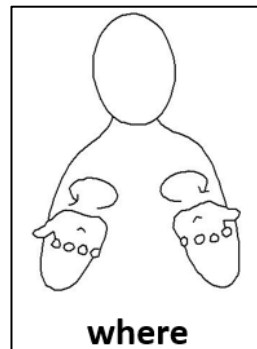
Don't just tell them where, make sure you show them too.



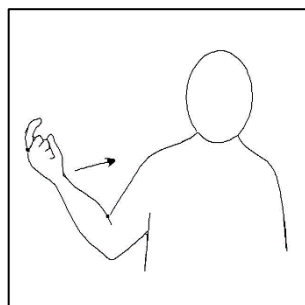
**Here**



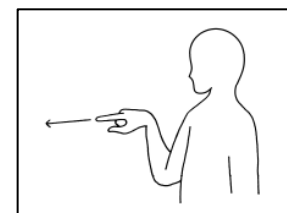
**There**



**where**

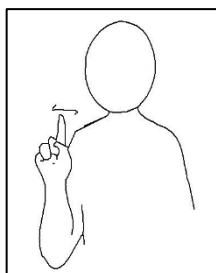


**Come**

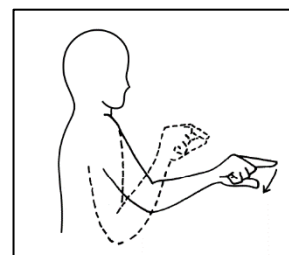


**Go**

To make change as predictable as possible, it is important to establish routine. Make a timetable to help the person remember what is coming next. Whenever possible, ask them what they want to do and let them choose activities.



**What**



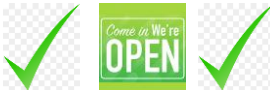





**Choose/pick**

## Social Stories

Here is a social story you can use with your service users. This is about worrying about going back to normal.

You can use this as an idea for future social stories or update it accordingly.

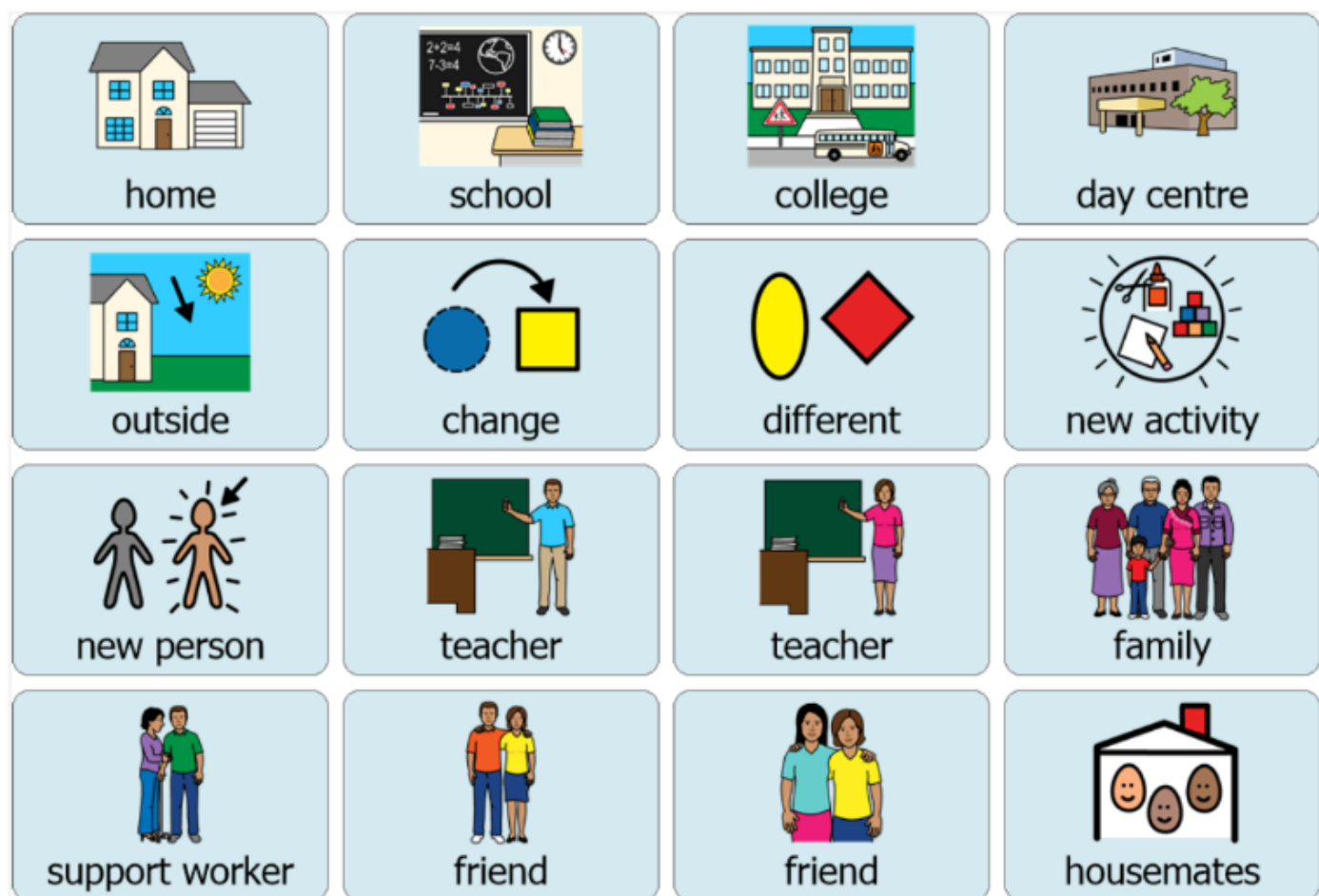
<p>I have been at home for a long time because lots of places have been closed because of a virus (the corona virus)</p>	<p>Insert picture of person's home</p> 
<p>I have not been to school/ college/ day service. I feel safe at home. I like being peaceful and not rushing about</p>	<p>Insert picture of person's day service or a place that they have not been able to go to</p> 
<p>It is now safe to go back to how things were before.</p>	<p>Insert picture of person's day service or a place that they have not been able to go to</p> 
<p>When I go back to .../insert name of provision/ I will need to get ready on time and remember my routine</p>	
<p>I am feeling worried/excited /nervous (insert emotion/ vocabulary relevant to the person) about going back to ... I will miss home.</p>	

<p>To help me get used to going back to....</p> <p>I can count down the days until it is time to go to...</p> <p>I can talk to someone I trust about what is making me worried.</p>	 
<p>I can make a plan that might help me feel more prepared. My plan could be:</p>	<p>To make a list of the things that I like about...</p>  <p>Take lots of breaks,</p>  <p>Start by going to the activities I like the most,</p>  <p>Plan to spend time with people that I really like at ...</p> 
<p>If I am worried about staying healthy, I can remember to wash my hands often.</p>	
<p>It will take time to for me to get used to my old routine but I can work with people I trust (insert name) to make it easier.</p>	



## Symbols for Change and Transitions in COVID-19

Here are some symbols which may be useful to communicate the ongoing changes and transitions that may be occurring due to the pandemic.





bus



train



car



taxi



walk



walk dog



supermarket



park



pharmacy



clean



wash hands



face mask



face mask



latex gloves



apron



new clothes



breakfast



lunch



dinner



snacks



drink



tea



coffee



ice cream



video chat



video chat



board game



sport



book



cook



Watch T.V.



art



sick



tired



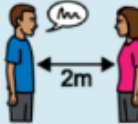
bored



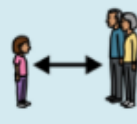
lonely



Same



distance of 2  
meters



distance from  
at-risk people



virus



Work from home



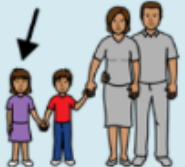
Stay at home



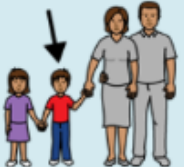
Dad



Mum



Sister



Brother



Grandparents



Baby



breakfast



lunch



dinner



snacks



drink



tea



coffee



ice cream



video chat



video chat



board game



sport



book



cook



Watch T.V.



art

## Exercise

Exercise is good for you and can help you stay well:

It is good for your well-being



It can help you be less stressed



It is good for your body





It can help you get stronger and fitter



It is good for your health



It can help you sleep better



You don't have to go to the gym to do exercise. You can do exercise at home:

You can dance to your favourite music



Do online fitness classes



Do exercise DVDS



Do yoga



If you want to exercise outside you can:

Go for a walk



Go for a run



Go for a bike ride





Speak to your carer for help with exercising



## Stopping smoking

Smoking is bad for your health. When you stop smoking your body starts to get better straight away. Now is a good time to stop smoking.



Tips to help you stop smoking:



Make a plan to stop smoking

- Pick a day you are going to stop smoking
- Tell people you are stopping smoking
- Get rid of your cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters
- Give yourself a treat when you stop smoking after a day, week and month.

Make a list of reasons to stop smoking



Take it one day at a time



Keeping telling yourself you can do it



Get active



Keep busy



Save your cigarette money for a treat



Talk to staff who are looking after you to get support to stop smoking



Get help through your local NHS Stop Smoking Service.



You can find your local service through this link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/smokefree/help-and-advice/local-support-services-helplines#bt4Q3X2d7CKUh5MI.97>

## Reducing alcohol

If you drink too much alcohol over time it can make you ill.



You should drink less than 14 units of alcohol a week

The word unit says how much alcohol is in a drink.

The number of units depends on the size and strength of your drink.

A small glass (125ml) of wine that is 12% strength is 1.5



A pint of beer that is 3.6% strength is 2 units





A 25ml pub measure of spirits is 1 unit

14 units is around six pints of average-strength beer or ten small glasses of low-strength wine.

**Tips to help you drink less alcohol:**

If you do drink, spread it out over a few days



Have days where you do not drink alcohol at all



Do not drink in the daytime





Have a smaller drink than your normal size



Drink water in between alcoholic drinks



Eat food before you drink alcohol



Stop drinking altogether



Speak to your carer or GP if you need help with stopping or cutting down alcohol intake.



## Nutrition

### The 5 key points for a Healthy Diet:

- **Variety** - choose a variety of different types and colours of fruit and vegetables. As well as providing vitamins, minerals and fibre, the natural colours and flavours of plants add powerful anti-oxidants to our diet. Remember to have 5 a day (1 portion = 1 handful)
- **Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates** - include starchy foods such as chapattis, breakfast cereals, noodles and oats as part of your meals/ snacks. Aim to include one food from this group at each meal time and eat regularly.
- **Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins** - Remember to have enough protein in your diet. Try to include two portions of fish each week, one of which should be an oily fish (darker skinned), for example: mackerel, trout, sardines or kippers.
- **Dairy and alternatives** - with dairy foods providing the richest and best absorbed source of dietary calcium, aim for three portions a day to meet most calcium needs.
- **Fluids** - it is important to drink plenty of fluids every day.



### Nutrition: things to remember



Keep a routine of meals



Eat all food groups



Have sit-down meals

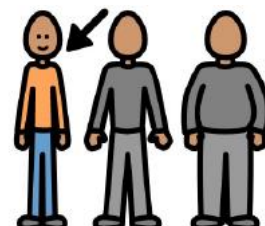


Enjoy your meal

During lockdown you might have noted some differences on the way you eat and drink...

Some people did not feel like eating much, and lost some weight.

When we lose too much weight without meaning to or when our weight is low, this can make us feel tired and more likely to get ill.



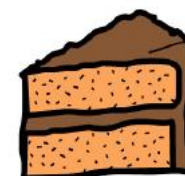
**Here are some things that can help if your weight is low:**

Try to eat little and often.

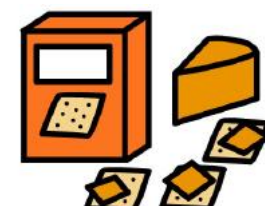


Some ideas of snacks are:

**Sweet:** thick and creamy yoghurts, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, puddings (custard, mousse, crème caramel,...),...



**Savoury:** cheese and crackers, mini pork pie, sausage roll, scotch egg, mini sandwiches, nuts...



When we don't feel like eating much, some drinks can be helpful. You can try:

Milkshakes, Smoothies, Hot Chocolate, Enriched Milk (add four tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to each pint of full fat milk),...



**Food fortification** is when we add extra nutrition to meals, snacks and drinks, to make it more nourishing. Some ideas:

Add cheese to sauces (aim for milky/creamy sauces), pasta dishes/pizza, soups, scrambled eggs/omelettes, mashed potatoes, beans on toast, vegetables.



Add skimmed milk powder to Milk (add four tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to each pint of full fat milk and use this in drinks, with breakfast cereals and in cooking), porridge, mashed potato, sauces, custard, milky puddings, creamy soups, milkshakes/smoothies.



Add sugar, jam or honey to cereal or porridge, puddings, hot drinks, milkshakes/smoothies, glaze vegetables.

Add ground almonds or nut butter to porridge, vegetable soups, sauces, smoothies.

\* If there are any health concerns which have previously required you to limit fat and sugar in your diet, e.g. diabetes or high cholesterol, you should discuss whether you still need to limit these with a health professional.

Some people gained weight during lockdown.

Too much weight can lead to health issues, like diabetes, heart disease and difficulties walking.

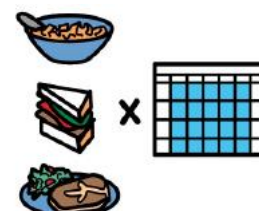


**Here are some things that can help if you gained too much weight during lockdown:**

Start the day with a healthy breakfast. People who eat breakfast find it easier to control their weight and are slimmer than those who don't.



Eat three regular, balanced meals a day. Try to have meals at planned times during the day and only include snacks if you are physically hungry.

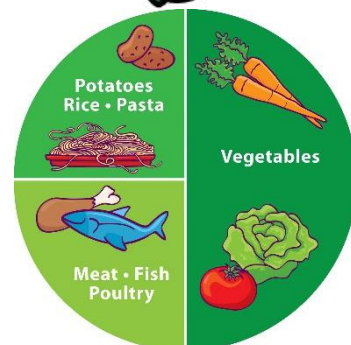


Watch your portion sizes especially when eating out.

Aim to eat more fruit and vegetables - recommendations are to include at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. One portion is about a handful.



Half fill your plate with vegetables/salad and divide the other half between meat, fish, egg or beans and starchy foods like potatoes, rice, pasta or bread.



Be careful about how the food is prepared - avoid frying and remove visible fat of meat and poultry before cooking it. Steaming, boiling, grilling and baking are better.

Be careful with sauces, tomato-based ones tend to be lighter. Choose foods and drinks that are low in fat and sugar and limit sweet, fatty and salty snacks.

Aim to drink two litres of fluid per day, choosing low calorie, non caffeinated drinks.



Avoid eating at the same time as doing something else, for example when reading or watching TV, as this can cause you to overeat. Eat slowly, concentrate on and really taste the food you are putting in your mouth.



Remember it takes time for your brain to know your stomach is full so wait at least fifteen to twenty minutes before deciding you need more food.

## Access to Healthcare

Lots of people with a learning disability get a health check.

A health check is when the doctor checks if you are healthy. This includes your physical and mental health. It is free and takes place once a year at the doctors.

You do not have to be ill to have a health check- in fact most people have it when they are well.



A health check is important because it helps you to stay well by:



Talking about your health, which helps to find any problems early, so you get the right care



Helping you to take an active role in your own health and wellbeing



Spotting any gaps in your immunisation record, like your flu jab!

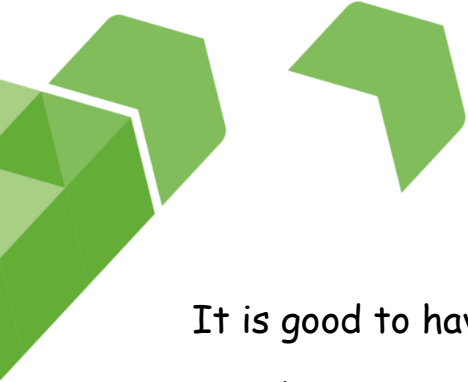


Offering information about any long-term conditions that you have



Offering information about important screening programmes





It is good to have a health check every year. This is because you may not always know when you are ill or need to see your doctor. Or you may not be able to tell people if you feel unwell or different.

If you want to, you can bring someone to support you. This could be a family member or carer.

During your health check, the doctor or nurse will:

### **1) Check things about your body**

Like your eyes and ears!

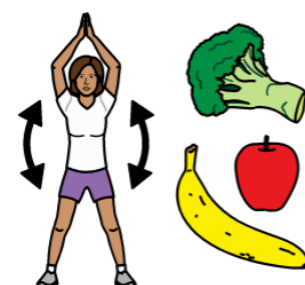
They will measure your height, weight, heart rate, blood pressure.

They may also take a blood test or urine sample from you. You do not have to do this, if you do not want to.



### **2) Ask you about your lifestyle**

- What food you eat
- what exercise you do
- Any medications you use
- Whether you drink or smoke





### 3) Give you health information

Such as advice on:

- healthy eating
- exercise
- contraception
- stopping smoking



### 4) Check for any other illnesses that are more common if you have a learning disability

Such as epilepsy, constipation or problems with your swallowing,



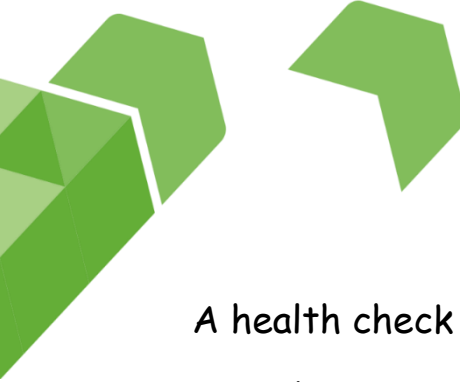
### 5) Check to see if you have any other health appointments

This may be with physiotherapy, psychology, speech therapy and language therapy and others.



### 6) Find out if you have had any other tests, or if you may need additional tests


These tests can help spot a potential health problem in someone that does not yet have signs or symptoms, such as for cancer.



A health check also helps you to get to know your doctor better. It gives you a chance to ask them about anything that is hurting or worrying you.



### **Please remember**



If you are worried about your health then you do not have to wait until your health check to go the doctor's. It is important to follow any concerns up as soon as possible and get help.

Let your family member or carer know. They will help you book an appointment.



Health appointments are still going ahead during the coronavirus. To prevent the spread of coronavirus, there have been changes to these appointments. They may be virtual (video, phone call) or face to face.

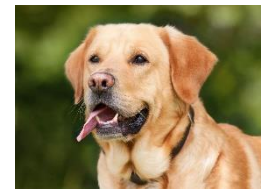
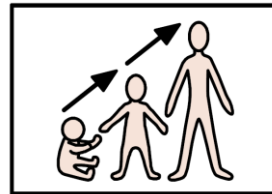
## Loss and Bereavement

### Life's Journey

All living  
things are  
made



All living  
things grow



All living  
things die



Why do people die?



Some people die when they are old



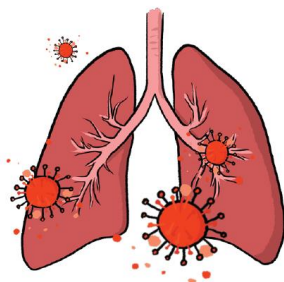
Some people die after an accident



Some people die when they are ill



There is a new illness called coronavirus



Coronavirus can affect your lungs and breathing

Why do people die?



Coronavirus is spreading around the world



Some people will die if they get coronavirus



It is not your fault if someone dies

# What happens when someone dies?



When people are alive they		When people die they	
	Breathe		Stop breathing
	Talk		Stop talking
	Move		Stop moving
	Feel		Stop feeling



When someone dies you might:



**feel sad**



**feel angry**



**feel tired**



**feel lonely**



**have a sore  
head**



**feel worried**



**feel sick**



**have  
nightmares**



**want to be by  
yourself**



You might also have these feelings when you lose something important:



Your carer stops supporting you



Your parents split up



A friendship comes to an end



Your activities are stopped because of the coronavirus



You cannot know how long these feelings will last. You might feel better with time.

## What happens after someone dies?



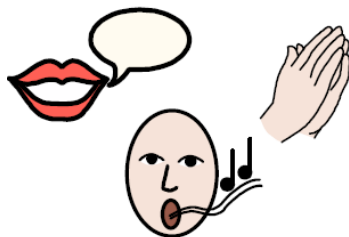
When someone dies from coronavirus, you might not be able to see them



After someone dies there is a funeral service



At a funeral family and friends say goodbye to the person who has died



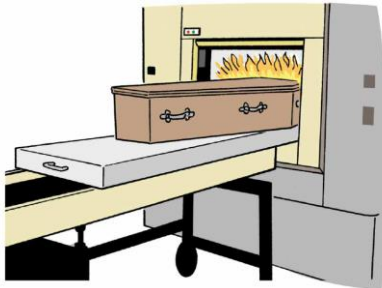
Some people will talk, pray and sing at a funeral



Some people will cry. Some people will not cry. It is OK to cry



Some people who have died are buried in a cemetery



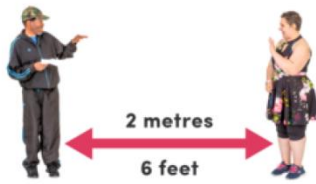
Some people who have died are cremated



There are special rules about funerals to stop coronavirus from spreading to other people



If someone you know died from the coronavirus, you won't be able to see them in the coffin



There are special rules about how many people can go to a funeral and how close they can get to each other



Funeral services may be shorter



It might take longer than usual for the funeral to happen



If you already have an illness that means you are likely to get coronavirus then you might not be able to go to a funeral

## Things that might help you feel better



It is OK to cry if you need to



Try and do things you normally enjoy



It is OK to talk about the person who has died



You can visit the person's grave or go to a place to remember them



Keep a special object that belonged to the person who has died



Keep some photographs of the person who has died



## Tips for when you or someone else cannot attend the funeral

If you cannot go to the funeral

- It may be possible for someone to record or film the funeral
- You may be able to watch the video online
- You may be able to write or record a message for someone to read out or play at the funeral
- Ask family and friends who attended the funeral to tell you about it
- You could attend a memorial in the future when the lockdown rules end to remember the person who died
- You can say goodbye to the person who has died on your own

You could have a memorial at home. You could:

- Look at pictures of the person who has died
- Play some of their favourite music
- Write a message to them
- Light a candle
- Do things that your culture or religion tells you to do

If you know someone who cannot go to a funeral of someone close to them:

- Stay in touch after the funeral, let them know you are thinking of them
- Share your memories of the person who died if you knew them too

## Ways to support a person with a learning disability through a bereavement

### **Talk**

- Use words they understand
- Describe death in a concrete way - e.g., the person has died instead of the person has passed away or gone to heaven/better place
- Talk about the person who has died and help them to understand it is okay for them to talk about it
- Talk about what is happening, funeral process
- Answer any questions as concisely as possible
- Talk about everyday things that are important to the individual as well

### **Involve**

- Involve person in the planning and suggestions for the funeral - choosing flowers and what they can wear to the funeral
- Try to let the person make their own decision about what they want to do - viewing the body, attending the funeral
- Let the person decide whether they want to keep any items to remember the person by

### **Reassure**

- It is okay to cry and have a range of emotions
- Do not assume you know how they are feeling. Listen, don't try to fix. They need time and space to work through the process themselves
- Be patient, make time, listen
- Reassure they are not at fault

### **Encourage**

- Keep to routine
- Have reminders of the person that has died if this is helpful
- Find time to relax somewhere comfortable
- Support and encourage them to remember the person on special occasions
- Support the person to move forward by encouraging exploration of new activities
- Support and encourage visitation or special place of remembrance if they want to

**Remember**

- There is no time limit on grief
- Appearance can be deceptive - they may look like they are coping okay but are struggling
- Keep in touch
- Do still invite them to parties and events / coffee or lunch
- Show sensitivity
- Do remember there will be times when they don't feel able to talk
- Offer practical support with day-to-day things

### Coronavirus: Ways to keep busy

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-ways-keep-busy>

Creative activities: a collection of free activities designed to engage the senses and connect with nature (Sensory Trust)

[https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/activities?fbclid=IwAR33ZEDipJx0P9-HUI8087krM4RkKP7mayMimDwR\\_SXZ-UuCxTMCpZpQQ2k](https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/resources/activities?fbclid=IwAR33ZEDipJx0P9-HUI8087krM4RkKP7mayMimDwR_SXZ-UuCxTMCpZpQQ2k)

Music therapy resources for parents and carers (Music Therapy Works)

[https://www.musictherapyworks.co.uk/music-resources-for-home-learning?fbclid=IwAR3lt4jEO1Y-LFDB4pwjIavXcqpbmLPa6MsMc83POXICa\\_U31OuVf6BwYus](https://www.musictherapyworks.co.uk/music-resources-for-home-learning?fbclid=IwAR3lt4jEO1Y-LFDB4pwjIavXcqpbmLPa6MsMc83POXICa_U31OuVf6BwYus)

Free activity resources (ELSA Support)

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/category/free-resources/>

Live streams of animals from around the world you can watch at home for free

<https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/g31784857/live-animal-webcam-zoo/>