

Wellness activism for winter

Tips for looking after you and yours



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Introduction

As the clocks change and the days become shorter, we may find we have less energy, or our mood feels lower. The wee tips in this booklet don't replace professional advice, so if you need to speak to someone then please contact your local services or GP to find support near you. These tips are around self-care and looking after your wellbeing in winter.

Since the pandemic started in 2020 our lives have experienced so many changes, and while restrictions are easing, we may find that we are actually finding it hard to get back into the routines and patterns we had before lockdown. We are not the same people as we were when we went into lockdown. We change with our experiences and the COVID-19 pandemic has been an experience the likes of which, few if many of us at all, may have experienced. This all takes time to adjust to. There are also other concerns around fuel prices, climate change, the economy and more which can leave us feeling, quite overwhelmed at times.

Remember, you do matter.

Kind regards

Hilda
COPE Scotland
www.cope-scotland.org

We all only have so much energy, how we use that energy matters as does how we find ways to top our energy levels up. This wee booklet won't have all the answers, but we hope, it may offer some ideas which help while looking. We apologise in advance for any errors or omissions in the booklet, details can change so please check directly with any services listed any changes they may have made.

The sections include:

- **Tips to lift your mood**
- **Tips to beat festive stress (new section being added)**
- **Tips for more energy**
- **Tips for winter warmth**
- **The coorie for wellbeing**
- **Self-care ideas**
- **Living meaningfully and mindfully**
- **Useful contacts**
- **Helplines**
- **Visualisation for the new year**
- **Tips for journaling**
- **Goal setting snakes and ladders**



£41 million Winter Support Fund for low-income households.

Funding to help people struggling financially during the winter is part of a new £41 million support package.

The Winter Support Fund will help those on low incomes, children and people at risk of homelessness against a backdrop of rising living and fuel costs.

Key elements of the package include:

- **£10 million to help people who are struggling to pay fuel bills**
- **£25 million flexible funding to help local authorities support wellbeing and respond to financial insecurity based on local needs**
- **£6 million for third sector partners to support low income families**

Social Justice Secretary Shona Robison said:

"We know that many families are struggling financially due to the increased costs they are facing right now. This package of measure aims to ease some of that strain by providing direct support to people.

"The Scottish Government has invested £2.5 billion to support low income households in 2020-21, with around £1 billion focused on supporting children as a cornerstone of our national mission to tackle child poverty and homelessness.

"That includes doubling the Scottish Child Payment to £20 per child per week, with our plans to do so set out in the forthcoming Scottish Budget.

"We are passing on every penny of the £41 million we received in UK Government consequentials.

"However, this in no way makes up for the recent £20-a-week cut to Universal Credit, which has taken an estimated £460 million from the pockets of the people in Scotland who need it most."

Support for those struggling with fuel bills will include access to fuel top-up vouchers, advice to manage fuel debt and support for those in remote and rural areas.

The Winter Support Fund will continue to promote cash-first responses in line with our draft national plan on ending the need for food banks as a primary response. In some cases help may also be offered to tackle social isolation and support mental health. In addition to helping people heat their homes and meet rising food costs, funding will help to ensure no-one is faced with rough sleeping this winter.





Background

The funding comes from consequential of the UK Government's £500 million Household Support Fund. The Scottish Government's Covid Recovery Strategy sets out our vision for recovery and the actions we will take to address systemic inequalities made worse by Covid, make progress towards a wellbeing economy, and accelerate inclusive person-centred public services.

The Scottish Government is providing unparalleled support across the early years for low income families through Best Start Foods, Best Start Grant and Scottish Child Payment, worth £5,300 by the time a family's first child turns six.

The Scottish Government is also delivering new Bridging Payments for around 150,000 school age children, providing £520 this year and next, and delivered a £130 pandemic support payment for around 500,000 low income households this month.

The Warm Home

The Warm Home Discount is a government-run scheme that provides one-off payments of £140 off electricity bills to help customers keep warm over winter. For more information if you are not sure if you qualify, please phone: 0800 027 0072 Monday to Friday 8:30am - 6pm You will need your electricity account number and the postcode of your supply address The account number can be found on the top right hand corner of the electricity bill.



wee changes can make a big difference to lifting your mood

Diet

A healthy balanced diet is important at all times, especially if your mood is low. For more information on a healthy diet visit www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition

Move more

Exercise helps produce feel good hormones and neuro transmitters which can help lift mood, even starting a short walk, every day is a step in the right direction, sometimes when our mood is low we can't be bothered, but finding a way to be active 30minutes each day could make a real difference.



Be mindful of turning towards unhelpful coping strategies when we feel down or overwhelmed, such as drugs, alcohol and gambling, which can be so easy to access if you are online

Taking non-prescribed drugs or misusing alcohol can make us feel even worse and may lead to addiction. Alcohol is a depressant so it lowers your mood even more. It is dangerous to self-medicate with drugs and/or alcohol when you have thoughts of suicide, as you are more likely to act on those thoughts of killing yourself and you could die. If you feel you are using non-prescribed drugs or alcohol to lift your mood, speak to your GP who can advise you of services you may find helpful. There are other things which can help lift your mood in a healthier way. If you are having thoughts of suicide, speak to someone straight away. Gambling is also an unhelpful way to lift your mood as it can lead to addiction and financial challenges. Check out the resources sections if you find you are adopting unhelpful habits to cope with a life challenge.

How you talk to yourself

Self-talk, and body language is so important in lifting mood, if we slouch, tell ourselves how awful we feel, how pointless it all is this will make us feel even worse, become aware of your self-talk maybe read COPE's wee changes on improving self-talk www.cope-scotland.org

When we may need to speak to someone about how we feel

Sometimes low mood is a reaction to something which has happened in our lives and it maybe we need to go and speak to someone about this to help us work through the feelings arising from this. Speak to your GP about services they can refer you to for more support.

If you are having thoughts of suicide, tell someone

If your mood is so low you are having thoughts of suicide, speak to someone straight away, the Samaritans have a free phone number 116 123, there is also Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87, also speak to your GP about services which can offer support, also are there friends or family members who you could talk to about how you are feeling? You are not alone, there are people who care, and yes sometimes it takes time to find them, but it is worth the effort, your life matters.

Do something which distracts you

Get involved in something, distract yourself, clean out those drawers that keep sticking as full of paper, or rearrange the furniture, or listen to upbeat music. Sitting thinking about how low you feel will not help. Our physical environment can reflect how we feel inside, sometimes when we are feeling low we neglect the house so why not give it a spring clean now, don't wait until winter has passed. It will feel better for it and so may you.

Be kind to yourself

Pamper yourself, do something which makes you feel special. You are very special. Sometimes when our mood is low, we neglect ourselves, then when we look in the mirror, we say unkind things to ourselves. Be kind to your body and your mind. Practice mindfulness and try to find something each day, no matter how small, to be grateful for and appreciate.



Give it time

Remember this too will pass, it's like rain, telling the rain to stop, won't make the rain stop, but it won't rain for ever, sunny days will come back, sometimes its recognising that things take time and giving it and yourself time.



Smile even when we don't feel like it, as this is when we need a smile most

You matter, be kind to yourself, from the beginning of time till the end of time, there will only ever be one you, you are a unique and special human being. Smiling, laughing, watching comedy programmes can all help lift our mood too, so please give some of these tips a go, they may just help make you feel a wee bit better. Maybe try some laughter yoga? Never heard of laughter Yoga? Check out the video section on www.cope-scotland.org for more information.

wee changes can make a big difference

Tips to beat festive stress

Manage expectations

Even though this festive period maybe different from last, we are still working our way through this pandemic. We need to give ourselves time to readjust to all that has happened. This includes not feeling under pressure to 'be' any particular way. It maybe through loss we find this time of year challenging. Be kind to yourself and do what works for you, not what the adverts and films all sell as the perfect Christmas. On the COPE Scotland website www.cope-scotland.org there is a piece on coping with loss, it won't have all the answers, but may offer something to help you suffer less if you have been touched by bereavement and loss.



Manage the stress

The past months have been unlike most of us have ever experienced. Even with life trying to return to some kind or normal, it's a new normal and it takes time to adjust to that. Before the pandemic we had challenges to deal with, the pandemic brought more and as we ease out of that, we may find even more challenges. The festive period for many can be a very stressful time, so it matters, you make time to reduce the stress you can and find ways to manage the stress which you feel needs to be taken on board. There are many tips in this booklet as well as pieces on the COPE Scotland website www.cope-scotland.org on ideas to help manage stress and to recharge your battery, as well as a workbook on, "picking up the pieces when the world feels changed"

Watch the pennies

Sometimes when things seem overwhelming, we can feel 'ach stuff it' and decide lets' just blow the money and have a great Christmas. However, the most priceless gifts are often the ones which cost the least money and in a time of uncertainty, spending money, we can't afford, is only setting up a problem we need to deal with in the future. It maybe already you are worrying where you will even get food to eat on Christmas day. Check out Trussell Trust for a foodbank near you <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-afoodbank>

Make plans as far ahead as suits you

This can often be a time of year which is stressful, trying to get round and visit all the people you feel you must see. With the restrictions lifted this may even be more of a challenge as we don't want to miss anyone out, while actually feeling exhausted at the idea of all those we feel we must connect with. Be realistic in what you can do and still stay safe. If that means for this year you maybe don't get round anyone, so you don't offend everyone, then maybe have fun planning something you will do with each group of family/friends in the future.

Be aware of unhelpful coping strategies

When we feel overwhelmed, anxious, fed up, we can turn to strategies which aren't helpful for us, gambling, overeating, drugs, alcohol. This can lead to even more challenges and in the long term doesn't help us at all. Sometimes we need someone to talk to, or, help to find ways to cope with how we feel. Many services are closed over the festive break, but there are still helplines if you don't have friends or family to talk to. Use them, they can save lives, sometimes our own. We have listed some contacts at the end of this wee sheet.



What connections do you need?

We are often sold this image of 'The perfect Christmas' and when we don't recognise that as our experience, either feel left out, or try to recreate it. But life isn't like the telly and in real life people are unpredictable, whereas in the films and adverts they work from a script and keep repeating it till they get it right! If you enjoy your own company and don't want to spend Christmas with others don't feel under pressure to 'do what others think you should do'. If you are alone at Christmas and don't want to be, then see what can be done to create some company, even if that's a phone call, a virtual zoom call, or walking the dog with someone you know. Maybe explore volunteering opportunities or see if there are any local community events to get involved with. It maybe you have a neighbour who is also alone on Christmas day, perhaps spend it together?

Your wellbeing in emergencies

We have a fire drill; in the event of fire, we know what to do. We should maybe also have a wellbeing drill. So, we know what to do if we feel overwhelmed. If we maybe have panic attacks, what we can do to help control them. On the COPE Scotland site www.cope-scotland.org there is a video on surviving panic attacks. This does not replace professional advice; the aim is to offer some self-management tips until you speak to someone. There is also a video and several pieces on the site if you feel your mood has dipped, again this does not replace professional advice. We are all different, think about your own circumstances and if you are in receipt of any health care support, work out with your providers, things you can do to look after you and emergency numbers to call when self-management is not enough.



Have enough supplies in

It's important when planning ahead to have enough supplies in, so you have enough medication, food, other items you may need over the festive period. This is even more so if you need to self-isolate. However, do not bulk or panic buy to a point where it creates a storage problem, or things go out of date. Often there are things on the news about shortages of this, that and the other. One thing the pandemic has taught us, is sometimes the small things make the biggest difference. So don't worry if you can't get the ingredients for that 'special Christmas meal' beans and toast when shared with loved ones can mean more than a table groaning with food.

Tap into assets around you

We are often capable of a lot more than we give ourselves credit for, but often we lack the confidence to see that. If you visit www.cope-scotland.org there are several pieces on lifting confidence, including in the video section, "how to use a kinder inner voice". We can also be more creative than we realise. It is amazing, there are often far more local assets than we realise, local groups, befrienders, places of worship. Find out what is happening near you and if it meets your needs maybe think about how to tap into those assets.

Useful numbers

Samaritans 116 123

Domestic abuse and force marriage helpline

T: 0800 027 1234

Childline T: 0800 1111

Emergency Homelessness T: 0800 838 502

Alcoholics Anonymous

T: 0800 0086 811 / 0800 9177 650

Gamblers Anonymous Scotland

T: 0370 050 8881

Overeaters Anonymous

<https://www.oagb.org.uk/find-a-meeting/>

Narcotics anonymous T: 0300 999 12 12



wee changes can make a big difference

Tips to have more energy

There can be many reasons why we may have no energy, including some health conditions, if you are concerned about your health, please speak to your GP, these tips are for self-management and don't replace professional advice.

Sleep is important

If we feel we don't have enough energy, then we need to look at our sleep habits and see if we can get into routines which work better for us. Sleep, for some, no problem, head on pillow few minutes later and, they're off! For others, sleep does not come easy and the more you think about the fact you can't get to sleep, the harder it is to sleep. However, sleeping and sleeping well are essential for our physical and mental health.



Wakening easily

Studies by Orfeu Buxton, an associate professor of biobehavioural health at Penn State University, suggest, we all have a flight or fight response, abrupt noises can wake us up and put us on full alert, if you find it hard to sleep, you will find being wakened like this can make it harder to get back to sleep. Noises like the sea are non-threatening sounds, which vary in volume so are less abrupt and more likely to lull you back to sleep. For more information on this study follow this link. www.livescience.com/53403-why-sound-of-water-helps-you-sleep.html You will also find on YouTube many videos of the sea, why not check them out see if you can find one which works for you?

What can keep us awake at night?

There can be many reasons why we find it hard to get a good night's kip: We may work shifts, or have a young baby who needs cared for, or we may be worried about something. We may have chronic pain and it keeps us awake. We may be bored as each day feels like the day before and not much happened, so we cat nap throughout the day, then can't sleep at night. Too much sleep is also not good for us. We may be caring for someone and their poor sleep affects our sleep. We may have had an upsetting experience and are scared to go to sleep in case we have bad dreams. Where we stay may be noisy, there may be light pollution from streetlights, cars, buses. We may not feel safe to sleep. We may have had too much coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, or smoked cigarettes, or a combination of all these things. We are all unique so what keeps us awake can be unique too.



Eat a balanced diet

We wouldn't expect a car to run on no fuel, so our bodies need fuel and the right fuel to meet our body's needs, fatigue can be one of the signs of a diet which isn't balanced. This site offers further advice on the benefits of and what constitutes a healthy diet www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition It's also important not to become dehydrated, so make sure and drink enough water.

Being with others

Some people find being around others who are important to us can give us energy. It may be for whatever reason you haven't been able to spend as much time with people who recharge your energy, become aware of this, and explore how you can make more time for the people and activities which matter to you.



Specific challenges to a healthier sleep

If you have some specific challenges in your life which are affecting your sleep explore what services or opportunities are around locally which may help you address them. For example, if chronic pain is an issue, find out are there any Mindfulness courses near you, or perhaps centres which offer meditation classes. If you are caring for someone and aren't already linked into a carers' centre, find one near you and see what support there is that you can tap into. If something is worrying you, find someone to talk to and see if the problem can be solved and if not, explore things which may help you worry less. If you have experienced trauma and are having flashbacks speak to your GP about services which can help you. We often think there is no support or opportunities out there, but it's amazing how when we start to look what we can find. Check out www.cope-scotland.org 'Whit's Happening' resource mags for more info around what may be helpful for you.

Having purpose

Having a reason to get out of bed, start our day in whatever fashion that has meaning for us, to be involved in something which helps us live our values and can offer us a sense of purpose is good for our wellbeing. If you visit www.cope-scotland.org and browse the document sections, you may find various resources there which could be of interest. These include, life purpose affirmation cards, motivation workbooks, videos and more.



Self-care including self-talk!

Just like a car needs fuel it also needs an MOT and regular service. If you aren't looking after yourself, you may find there is a lot of energy going out, but not a lot of time being spent topping that energy back up. Making time to relax matters and can make a big difference. The story we may tell ourselves about how we are feeling can also impact on our energy levels.

Relax and recharge routines

We become what we do repeatedly! If we never make time to relax and recharge, then deciding to make time means a change in routine and that can sometimes be a challenge. If we find we don't have a lot of energy, then to regain energy, something needs to change. Remember, if something really matters to us, we shall try and find a way, if it doesn't, we will find an excuse! So small steps lead to bigger changes and be kind to yourself on the journey. Negative self-talk and worry drains energy, instead try, and find ways to walk on the sunny side of the street.



wee changes can make a **big difference** to help keeping you warm over winter



Clothes

May seem obvious but layering clothes and wearing a hat and socks can help keep you warm, including wearing a hat indoors if very cold and slippers.



Block draughts

Check if you have any draughts in your home and block them up with draught excluders. You can make your own by recycling old materials. The legs from old trousers, sleeves from woolly jumpers, just sew or staple up one end, stuff with anything which is suitable, sew or staple up the other end and if you fancy being creative give it a snakes tongue or caterpillar legs go for it. Just take care if you have children or pets there are no choking hazards and ensure there are no fire risks. If you look online, you will find plenty of inspiration. Use curtains ideally with a thermal layer, open them during the day to let sunlight in and close them in the evening. Think about installing a door curtain if your front door is very draughty or put a flap over the letter box inside the house.

Diet

It's important during a cold spell that you eat well. If money is tight this can also be a challenge. Look for deals in supermarkets like 2 for 1 on porridge, this is a healthy meal to help keep you warm and can be eaten any time of day. Soups are a great way to stay warm and nourished, such as Cup A Soups or Mug Shots. You can also easily make your own with chicken stock cubes, vegetables and noodles, cheap and cheerful chicken noodle soup. For more ideas on cooking on a budget, take a look online or TV. BBC Good Food has lots of straightforward every day and comfort food recipes.



Being warm in bed

If your home is cold wear a hat to bed to help keep the heat in, try if possible to have a warmer tog quilt, this can also be brought into the living room to snuggle in if the weather is cold. Throws and fleece blankets add another layer of warmth to your bed as well as being something else to use to stay warm if wrapped around you in the living room.

Staying warm across the generations

We feel the cold differently depending on age and physical health, it's important to make sure any younger or older family member's needs are also met as well as anyone with a health condition. Make sure you receive the benefits you are entitled to, speak to Citizen's Advice. If someone has poor circulation in their hands and feet, heated insoles and gloves could be a good choice.



Gizzmos which can help

You can get meters which tell you how much energy you are using. Become aware of items which are high cost e.g. kettles, only boil what you need or if you boil more keep it in a flask till the next time you need it. If you have radiators, explore with advice centres or housing providers using foil or radiator reflectors to stop wasting heat from the back of the radiator, if your radiator is under the window maybe explore putting a shelf above it to stop heat being wasted. But don't put anything on the shelf.

Mobility in winter

If you have mobility issues or use a wheelchair you may find it challenging to stay warmer in winter, a wheelchair cosy can help this as well as make sure if you are out you wear something waterproof. Speak to your health care advisors about specific tips to meet your needs.

In winter it's tempting to not move and just snuggle on the couch, the wintry weather is more reason to keep doing some form of exercise e.g. yoga practice to develop an internal heat that keeps us healthy and warm. Check out FREE opportunities to be active in your area.



Use heating wisely

If you have central heating, turning the heating down a wee bit may help you keep the heating on longer, use a thermostat to see how warm your house is, in general most homes in UK are between 18 and 20 degrees Centigrade. Use layers of clothes and fleece throws to help keep warm. However, as already stated if you have specific health conditions or other vulnerabilities to the cold seek advice around how your needs can be met. If you don't have central heating, heat the rooms you use most and keep the doors closed on those you don't so cold air doesn't travel. Energy suppliers can vary in costs, shop around and make sure you are getting the best deals.

These are only some tips, for more advice contact:

Home Energy Scotland: 0808 808 2282

Compare energy deals: www.energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/

Citizens Advice Bureau: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-schemes-to-help-you-save-money-on-energy-bills-s/

Macmillan Cancer Care: many local libraries have outreach services or visit www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/benefits-and-financial-support

Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/mind-body/preparing-for-winter/

Maybe check out other local services and groups in your area including local money advice centres.

Maybe see if you can register as a priority services customer, for more info www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register-people-need

Sometimes worrying about money can affect our mental health, if this is an issue for you, see what services you can connect with locally. These helplines may also be useful. You don't need to be alone with this, there are people who care, sometimes it takes time to find them, but they are there

The Samaritans: free phone number is 116 123

Crisis Text Line: www.crisistextline.uk or Text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer

Breathing space: 0800 83 85 87

wee changes can make a **big difference** in helping you feel better. Coorie the Scottish way to Wellbeing and Balance

Take pleasure in the simple things

Visit the library online, borrow a book, written or audio if you fancy having a wee story read to you and snuggle up in a comfy warm blanket with a cup of tea for even 15 minutes, just embrace the moment. Here is one example of an online library www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/online-library

Take a walk on the wild side

We know the weather in Scotland can be wild, so embrace it. Wrap up warm on a cold day and go out a walk, even for a short while, if you have a dog enjoy sharing it with them, maybe even visit a park or beach somewhere you both can experience nature in the raw. When you get home, snuggle up with a warm blanket and bowl of homemade soup.



Have a cosy home

Keeping the house warm when money is tight can be a challenge, so have warm snuggles, use colours which suggest warmth, maybe invest in a salt lamp which can glow a lovely orange colour, or download an app to your TV, if it's a smart one, showing a log fire crackling, or invest even in a wee electric heater with coal, or log effect, again to create that feeling of warmth. When it's really cold maybe focus on one room in the house being the cosy room so heat can be concentrated in that area.

Share a cuddle

Many of us like a cuddle, it maybe with another person, or even sharing affection with our pets, its suggested stroking a cat or dog has real health benefits for us as well as being good for our pets, there are some suggestions even watching videos of cats can be good for us as its boost's energy and positivity! Or make a nest of cushions and blankets with the kids, get out a board game and a bowl of popcorn and for a wee while just enjoy the fun of being together. There are also weighted blankets which can help give that feeling of being cuddled and for some promote better sleep.

Appreciate the landscape

Nowhere in Scotland are we far from the great outdoors, from Loch Lomond, to the Campsie Hills, the West Highland way, the Cairngorms, Glencoe and so much more. Check out any special deals on buses and trains to explore the outdoors around you or borrow or hire a bike, join a cycle club, health walk or a rambler's group. Take a warm flask of soup and some sandwiches and appreciate how much of nature we still have around us.



Getting away from it all and getting perspective

Enjoying the variations in the natural world in Scotland can help take us away from our troubles even for a wee while, the openness and space can help give us perspective, just to be, not to be trying or doing, just to be. Walking up a mountain or hill or whatever you can manage depending on your fitness and health listening to the silence and seeing the world spread out around us can help recharge our batteries and heal perhaps the emotional aches we have as we realise, we are connected to something so much more than ourselves. If walking is a challenge, we have many lochs in Scotland, just sit and watch the sun reflect off the water, listen to the wind in the trees and realise we all have a wee bit of paradise on our doorsteps.

Making the most of what we have

Money can be tight and sometimes even trying to make sure the children are fed is a challenge. Coorie is also about how do we protect ourselves and our family to feel safe, and cosy even when life is challenging? Keeping an area of the house cosy, making wholesome warm meals which don't cost a lot, using free local facilities like libraries and local community resources can help build a community cuddle where we can all feel cosier and safer and have a sense of balance and wellbeing. Coorie is also about caring for ourselves, each other and the environment, together we can all help build a cosier world for all.



Little Self-Care Tips

as ever if in doubt check with your GP

Enjoy escaping into a good book

Find a book you enjoy and read for at least 6 minutes each day, or listen to a talking book. Pop into your local library which has a great selection of books and materials which are free. You can also register for an online library in many places.

Find a way to relax that works for you and is good for you

Make time every day to relax, even if only for a few minutes. There are many relaxation exercises online, you can also visit www.cope-scotland.org for some examples including the 3minute relaxer. If a relaxation exercise doesn't work for you, explore other options, mindful colouring in, playing a game of patience, sitting quietly and for a few moments you are not doing something, or rushing somewhere, just being in the moment. Its also suggested watching videos of cute kittens can help us unwind so maybe visit you tube and see if you can find something works for you.



Connect with nature

Spending time in nature is good for our wellbeing as is doing something which is good for nature. Even if it's only looking at pictures of the natural world, or, finding ways to bring more of the natural world into our homes. Maybe take a new interest in gardening if you have one or find out if there is a local allotment, or community growing initiative looking for volunteers. There is a handbook on gardening on the COPE Scotland website you may find of interest www.cope-scotland.org co designed with a local community growing initiative Growchapel.

Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet

Our bodies need water and a balanced diet to perform at their best. That doesn't mean we can't have a treat now and again, however, being aware of the impact diet has on our mood and energy levels can help us make healthier choices. There are many resources in your local library or online which offer ideas for a healthy diet.



Find healthy strategies to cope with stress

Sometimes when life feels overwhelming or stressful, we can turn to unhelpful coping strategies, like consuming more alcohol than is recommended, or turning to drugs, gambling, overeating, and other strategies which we think may offer short term relief, but in fact can lead to more problems in the long run. If we are feeling distressed by something which is happening, talking to someone about how we feel and finding healthier ways to destress, is what is best for us in the longer term.

Find ways to move more

Being active is good for our self-care. For some people this is maybe going to the gym, or cycling, or jogging, but that may not work for everyone. What matters is you find something which works for you, which you incorporate into your life on a regular basis. Walking the dog, playing with the children or grandchildren, put on your favourite song and have a wee dance, get stuck into housework with a bit of vigour, all this too can help us move more.



Appreciate

When life is challenging sometimes it's hard-to-find things to appreciate, however, they are there. Looking for the positive in the world, may take effort when all we see are things we are concerned about, however, seeking them out can reinvigorate us and offer us hope. Make your own joy or appreciation jar to offer inspiration. Instructions for how to do this are also on www.cope-scotland.org

These are only some wee examples of self-care, there are many more. What matters is you find something which works for you and your wellbeing.

wee changes can make a big difference in tips to live meaningfully and mindfully

In many ways we still are living in uncertain times. It is amazing we now have a vaccine and for many of us are not only vaccinated by now, but also had our booster shot. However, we know we still need to be cautious. Finding a way to get on with our day in this new world where COVID-19 exists takes time and is a balance of managing risk and staying safe, while easing ourselves into getting out and about again and doing things we enjoy. Living meaningfully can help us find pleasure in the simple things and feel more content regardless of what life is throwing at us. Mindfulness can offer us ways to be in the moment and not be overwhelmed when things feel very challenging as they often can:

Mindful breaths

A few times a day observe 5 Mindful breaths, just normal slow breaths but bring your full attention to your breathing.

Whatever you do give it your full attention

Take your time don't be thinking about what you plan to do next or what you have or haven't done, be in the moment.



Decide what is important to you

Weed out that which isn't kind to you or others. Let your children and those close to you know they are loved, find new ways to let you know you also love and care about yourself.

Learn to be calm in situations

Try not to react defensively and with anger, find solutions don't focus on problems and blame.

Pace yourself

Don't have huge to do lists cramming every minute with activity, give your life a chance to pause and breath rather than always be panting.



Learn to live in the moment

The past is a different country we don't live there anymore, and the future has still to be, so plan for it, don't worry about it.

Realise it's hard to be content in the moment when you worry about the future or get upset and angry by the past.

If you hurt or are angry find out what needs to change for you to let this suffering go

Learn the art of deep listening, when you talk to someone be with them, give them your full attention, listen to your children and actually hear what they say.



Eat slowly and savour your food

Drink water feel how cool and refreshing it is, bite into fruit and appreciate how sweet and juicy it is. Give what you are eating your full attention, don't talk between bites just take it slowly and enjoy.

Be in the moment

Savour life and eat it with your eyes and ears, become aware of bird singing, flowers, the noise of wind in the trees, the world is a magical place full of interest and beauty learn to see that.

Make any chore a chance to mediate

Do the chore slowly, methodically and with the activity as your sole focus, this can be from working on a report to cleaning the toilet. Be there in the moment giving it your full attention. Make focusing on the present a habit, remember it's called the present because it's a gift.

Visit the use your senses to relax and be in the moment
for more tips and ideas on www.cope-scotland.org.



wee changes can make a big difference in tips to live meaningfully

Sometimes when life feels routine and options feel limited, it can all feel a bit mundane. This can make us feel bored, restless, unsettled as if the whole world is at a party, we didn't get an invitation to. We have heard of living mindfully, even living kindly, so here are some tips for living meaningfully, as we all need a reason to get out of bed in the morning.



Do something which has a positive impact on someone else

This can be from making banana bread which one of the family will enjoy, phoning an elderly relative or friend you haven't spoken to for a while, even giving a wee gift of an affirmation jar which may help someone smile? Visit www.cope-scotland.org for ideas on making your own affirmation jar.

Recognise your strengths and use them

When we feel bored, unsettled, out of sorts, we can be unkind to ourselves, even get angry as we know we should be doing X,Y,Z but just can't be bothered. It's hard to tell yourself, your life has meaning, when you are using an unkind inner voice. Often, we are too quick to condemn ourselves and think we can't do things, as opposed to actually reflect we can do a lot more than we give ourselves credit for. Learning to use a kinder inner voice, helps us to recognise our strengths and use them to make a difference in our lives as well as having a positive impact on others. This piece and video is helpful for using a kinder inner voice www.cope-scotland.org video section has a piece on using a kinder inner voice.

Think about the difference doing the task will make

If we feel overwhelmed getting the house back in order as maybe it's got a wee bit out of hand. Visualise what it will be like when it's finished, putting on some music gets you feeling energetic and you may find you are more motivated to do it and finish it. Same can hold if you have a garden and things need weeded or cut back. It maybe you want to create a safe space for nature over winter, the little green space has some amazing ideas www.littlegreenspace.org.uk of how we can support nature.

Learn what matters to you and why

Sometimes we think its fancy holidays, or nights out, or a new kitchen, or.....but other times when we stop to think about it we realise it's the moments we spend with people who matter to us, the laugh we shared, the calm of watching the wind in the trees, escaping into a great book, the first time we made scones and they rose! Not being in pain.

www.cope-scotland.org has a variety of affirmation cards in their download section. There is a workbook and set of cards specifically looking at motivation and life purpose which you may find helpful.

What are the routines that have become our habits

It's amazing how easily we slip into routines which become habits, maybe not even ones which are good for us, but it's been going on so long we don't even think about it, or why we do what we do. www.cope-scotland.org has a tips sheet in the download section for changing unhelpful habits which you may find of interest.



Find something you want to belong to and people you want to be with

We recognise loneliness can be an issue, sometimes to fill that need for company we get involved in 1001 things to be around others, and still that feeling remains. Sometimes having one or two meaningful relationships is more satisfying than 1001 contacts where we maybe in a crowd, but we still feel alone. Working on the relationships which have meaning for us, can help bring more meaningfulness into our lives. www.cope-scotland.org in the download section has a workbook on 'Getting back your oomph' which may be of interest as it also touches on relationships (page 29).

If you need to talk to someone please do

Sometimes things can happen which rocks our World, we lose someone close to us, our health is affected, we lose our job, we find we are taking early retirement and hadn't planned for it and wonder what next. Sometimes we need to talk to someone about how we are feeling. That maybe a friend or family member, but it maybe someone who is trained to offer support. There is a wellbeing piece on www.cope-scotland.org on the art of communication on how to open up if you need to share as well as being there for someone who needs to share with us.



Have confidence that what you do matters

How often do you hear someone describe themselves as I am 'just a' or, maybe have done that yourself? As if somehow there are some people more valuable than others. We are all valuable, every single one of us and we all have something to give. Maybe some people earn more money, that's not because they are more valuable, that's because whatever they do carries more responsibility, or requires more time commitment, or whatever. We all contribute something to this world, and we all have meaning, it's just sometimes we forget it, or don't realise the value a smile has to someone who really needs it. Being confident, is not the same as being arrogant. Having confidence can help us find meaning.]

www.cope-scotland.org has a workbook and affirmation pack which can be used as a self-help tool to increase self confidence which may be of interest. These are available in the download section.

Live the life has meaning for you

We can be sold an image of how our lives should be and social media in many ways has contributed to this, where it seems all these people are having all these amazing times and here we are again, Friday night and doing nothing exciting! Oh the pressure when someone asks what you did at the weekend and you have nothing amazing to share.....so what! Being happy and being content are not necessarily the same thing. Some people may need to climb Everest to find meaning in their life, other people it maybe that hour a week when they go a walk in the hills, or start a new book, or make a banana loaf and share it with the family, is what gives them that feeling of internal satisfaction. Sometimes finding pleasure in the little things, we find, we can have more pleasure and find more meaning every day.

Emergency Services Websites and COVID19

Central and Southern Scotland

Phone Scottish Power Energy Networks on:

T: 0800 092 9290 (from landlines)

T: 0330 1010 222 (from mobiles)

Electricity

Who you need to contact depends on where you live

Emergency Homelessness

T: 0800 838 502 - out of hours after 4.45pm

Monday to Thursday, 3.55pm Friday and weekends

Gas

National Gas Emergency Service

If you smell gas phone the National Gas Emergency service

T: 0800 111 999

Help for the Elderly and People with Disabilities or Long-term Illnesses

Utility companies work with local councils to make sure vulnerable people get support during disruptions.

You should tell your supplier if you have:

- a disability
- a long term illness
- a visual impairment
- hearing difficulties
- any other specific requirements

Medical or Mobility Equipment

Tell your supplier if you depend on a continuous power supply. For example, for stair lifts or hoists.

North of Scotland's Central Belt

Phone Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE)

T: 0800 300 999

Police Scotland

W: www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/covid-19-policescotlandresponse

Scottish Ambulance Service

W: www.scottishambulance.com

Scottish Welfare Fund

T: 0141 276 1177

SGN Manage the Network that Distributes Gas Across Scotland

T: 0800 912 1700

Social Work Direct

T: 0141 287 0555 (Office Hours)

T: 0300 343 1505 (Out of Hours)

Water

Phone Scottish Water

T: 0845 601 8855

Financial Hardship and Support

Advice Scotland

T: 0808 800 9060

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods

- if your child is the right age for a payment
 - whether you're in work or not, as long as you're on certain payments or benefits
 - as long as you're the parent of a child, or the main person looking after the child
- For more information visit www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/

Citizens Advice Scotland

Launched a new national advice helpline to boost the network's service during the coronavirus crisis.

T: 0800 028 1456

Check your council tax to see if you are missing money off

W: www.checkmycounciltax.scot

Self-isolation

This link will share what the latest guidance is around a self-isolation grant.

www.mygov.scot/self-isolation-grant

Find a foodbank near you

W: www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-afoodbank/



GAIN Network

T: www.gain4u.org.uk helpline

T: 0808 801 1011

GHA – for help with benefits & fuel advice

T: 0808 169 9901

Glasgow Life Communities and Libraries

If you or anyone you know are worried about their current financial situation, let them know about their new helpline number

T: 0808 169 9901

Govan Law Centre: (Glasgow-wide service)

T: 0141 440 2503

W: www.govanlawcentre.org

WhatsApp: 07564 040765

Home Energy Scotland

W: energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/home-energyscotland/

W: news/covid-19-faqs-home-energy-scotlandcustomers

T: 0808 808 2282

HMRC

T: 0300 456 3565

Mortgage Payment Assistance Line

T: 0808 145 0437 (Bos Halifax & Lloyds)

Scottish Housing Advice

W: scotland.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/scottish_housing_advice_coronavirus_COVID_19

Fuel

Home Energy Scotland

Energy suppliers have started to open their Warm Home Discount Schemes.

Eligible clients could get £140 off their winter electricity bill.

Call 0808 808 2282 or **email**

adviceteam@sc.homeenergyscotland.org for more information.

The Warm Home discount is accepting applications NOW. The Warm Home Discount is a government-run scheme that provides one-off payments of £140 off electricity bills to help customers keep warm over winter. For more information www2.scottishpower.co.uk/whd.process?execution=e1s1 or **phone:**

0800 027 0072 Monday to Friday 8:30am - 6pm

You will need your electricity account number and the postcode of your supply address. The account number can be found on the top right hand corner of the electricity bill.



Helplines

Alcoholics Anonymous

T: 0800 0086 811 / 0800 9177 650

Advice. Scot

T: 0808 800 9060

Alzheimer's Scotland

T: 0808 808 3000

Autism Helpline

T: 0808 800 4104

Beat Eating Disorders

T: 0808 801 0677

Blue Cross for Pets

(Support following the death of a pet)

T: 0800 096 6606

Breathing Space

T: 0800 83 85 87

Bullying

www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

T: 0845 22 55 787

CAB

T: 0800 328 5644

Campaign Against Living Miserably CALM (Men)

T: 0800 585858

Child Bereavement UK

T: 0141 352 9995

Childline

T: 0800 1111

(Help prevent) Childhood abuse

T: 0808 1000 900

CHSS Advice line Nurses

T: 0808 801 0899

Combat Stress

UK charity for Veterans Mental Health

T: 0800 138 1619

CRUSE Bereavement support Bereavement support helpline

T: 0808 808 1677

Dementia Helpline

T: 0800 888 6678

Digital Support Freephone Helpline

T: 0800 158 3974

Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline

T: 0800 027 1234

Drinkline Scotland

T: 0800 7314 314

Emergency Homelessness

T: 0800 838 502

Families Affected by Murder and Suicide (FAMS)

T: 07736 326 062

Families Outside Peer Support Group

(supporting families affected by imprisonment) Text FAMOUT 60777 or Freephone 0800 254 0088

Forces Line for any member of the armed forces, veterans, and their families

T: 0800 731 4880

Gamblers Anonymous Scotland

T: 0370 050 8881

Gambling Helpline

T 0808 8020 133

Glasgow Disability Alliance helpline

T: 0800 432 0422

Glasgow Helping Hero's

T: 0800 731 4880

Hopeline UK (people under 35)

T: 0800 068 41 41

LGBT Helpline

T: 0300 123 2523

LGBT Youth

Text: 07786 202 370

Mind Info Line

T: 0300 123 3393

Modern Slavery Helpline Scotland

T: 08000 121 700

NA

T: 0300 999 1212 (10am-12midnight everyday)

NHS 24

T: 111

OCD Helpline

0845 390 6232 or 020 7253 2664

www.ocdaction.org.uk

One Parent Families Scotland Helpline

0808 801 0323

Parkinson's UK Scotland

T: 0808 800 0303

Pandas (perinatal mental illness)

T: 0808 1961 776

Parent Line

T: 08000 28 22 33

Glasgow & Clyde Rape Crisis helpline

Freeephone: 0808 800 0014

Report a Consumer Issue

Advice Direct Scotland

T: 0808 164 6000

Report a Loan Shark

T:0800 074 0878

Scottish Hazards free to use, confidential advice network for workers who are having difficulties with their employers regarding being able to follow the new guidance or the new laws. Free Phone Number 0800 0015 022.

Sexual Health Info Line

T: 0800 567 123 but changing to

T: 0300 123 7123

Silverline (older people)

T: 0800 4 70 80 90

Shelter Helpline

T: 0300 330 1234

Shout (an affiliate of crisis text line)

Text: SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer

SOBS (Bereaved by Suicide)

T: 0300 111 5065

The Lullaby Trust

T: 0808 802 6868 Bereavement support/ following the death of a baby or young child

The Macmillan Support Line is open 7 days a week between 8am-8pm

T: 0808 808 00 00

The Samaritans

Free Phone T: 116 123

The Spark Relationship Counselling and Support

T:0808 802 0050

Universal Credit Helpline

T: 0808 169 9901

Victim Support

T: 0345 603 9213

WSREC Hate Crime Helpline

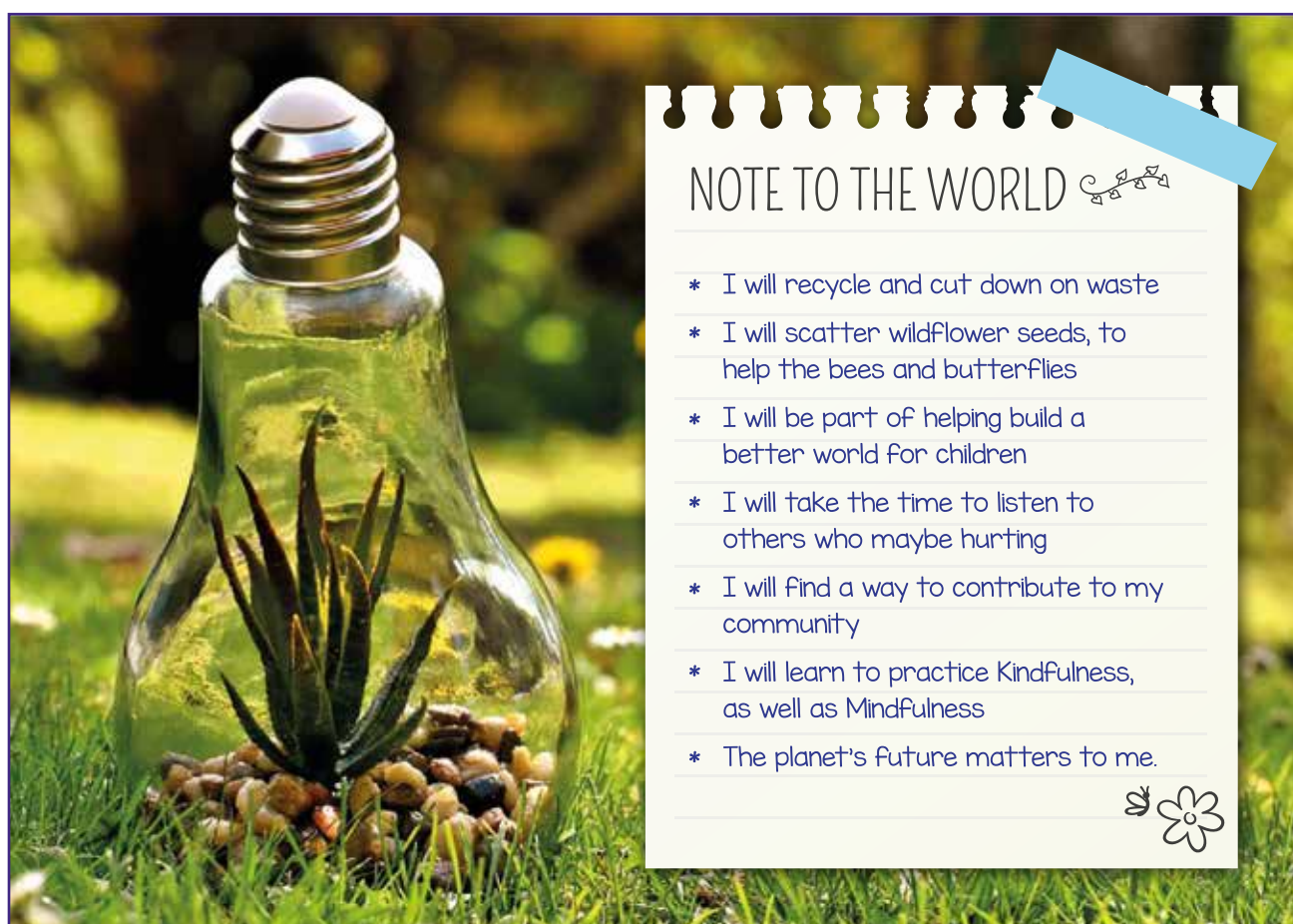
T: 07497 187 992

Young Minds

T: 0800 018 2138

Every day is a day to start afresh

Often at the New Year we decide to make resolutions. Sometimes it is to lose weight, get fitter, stop smoking, or some other unhelpful habit, take up a new hobby, get a new job, stop worrying, spend more time with the family.....the list is endless. Following COP26 many of us may also be exploring what other actions we can take personally to help the planet. During the pandemic and lockdown, there were many examples of people being kinder to each other, despite whatever challenges they may have been facing themselves. A new year offers an opportunity to begin to vision what we want our future to look like, for ourselves, our family, community and the planet. The following wee tips sheets may offer some ideas around visualising what matters to you for 2022. There are also tips on journaling as that is a useful tool to help track progress towards our goals and finally, there is a fun wee goal setting snakes and ladders tool which you may find useful. This helps you consider the steps towards your goal, the possible obstacles you may need to overcome to get there and the rewards for each step. There is also a wee tip to setting goals which you may find helpful.



wee changes can make a big difference

Tips for visualisation

What is creative visualisation?

We can think of creative visualisation as a way of using your imagination, to help create what you want to happen in your life. We do it all the time and probably aren't even aware of it. We may decide we want toasted cheese. We imagine the lovely warm toasted bread with the melting cheese. We may have none of these ingredients so need to go to the shops and get them. To do this we need money so need to look for our card or cash. In our mind we imagined toasted cheese, and before we know it, our feet are taking us along a line of decisions which result in us enjoying eating this lovely feast! It started with an idea, the more our imagination focused on a reality where this was something we were doing, the more motivated we were to make it happen and it did!



Why does it matter what we imagine?

It's amazing how much our thinking goes into creating what happens next. Using our imagination towards goals which matter to us will help us move towards having or achieving what we visualise. However, our faith in our ability to achieve that matters. When we visualise something, we also need to believe this is something we can do. There are many pieces on www.cope-scotland.org you may find helpful for increasing confidence. It is also really important we take time to think, what is it I want, what do I want to make manifest in my life.



How does this work?

Our thinking is pretty complex, in addition to the thinking we are aware of, our consciousness, there is also our preconscious mind, it's kind of there if we need it but we don't think about it all the time. Then there is our unconscious mind. Like an iceberg, we only see what is above and just below the water, the bulk of the iceberg is hidden from view. This is also true of our unconscious. However, this is where our fears live, the self-doubts, attitudes and experiences which can hold us back from reaching our potential. Creative visualisation is a way to help us override any self-limiting beliefs we may have, by helping us develop new attitudes about ourselves and what we are capable of.

How do I start?

The aim of creative visualisation is to bring something into your life which wasn't there before or imagine a new life where something which isn't helpful for you is no longer an issue. The key things to remember are, it needs to be something which really matters to you and view it in the positive. If you are in a job you hate, don't visualise leaving that job, instead visualise yourself in a new job which makes you feel fulfilled. What does that new job look like? Be clear on what your goals are maybe include bullet points to achieve those goals. Knowing what your goals are and why they matter is really important for visualisation so please take time on this. Tune into your gut reaction, does this feel right? The clearer your vision the more it matters to you, the more motivated you will be to make it manifest. When you visualise you may be imagining something you don't yet know how to do. Don't worry about that as in setting your goals this is something you can work towards. The stronger the memory you are making of visualising yourself having already succeeded, the stronger will be your motivation to get there.

Give it time and be relaxed

Thinking about what we really want in our lives and why, is sometimes easier said than done. Give it time, don't rush it. When you are planning to think about this, spend some time first getting relaxed and do this at a time when you won't be disturbed, so try and switch off your mobile! You may want to have a relaxing bath first or listen to some music which inspires you.



What resources do I need?

Creative visualisation happens in your mind. The resources you need is your attention. Being mindful can help focus our attention. A pen and paper to journal, and perhaps to make a vision board. You can also use images and words from magazines to create your vision board, whatever works for you. The aim is to take what is in your mind and put it in front of you in words or pictures to help what you want to make manifest even clearer in your mind. Time can be sometimes hard to find. To begin with, even if you can make 20 minutes a day, every day, this can make a difference. It is better to perhaps use less time more frequently than a lot of time now and then.



What could creative visualisation offer me?

These tips are for self-management. If there has been something in your life which has had an impact on you and what you believe yourself capable of, this may require professional intervention. Ask your GP or other health care provider about support near you. If you perhaps want to achieve something, new house, relationship, job, improved sense of wellbeing, pass a test and more, then creative visualisation is a tool that may help you achieve that desired goal.

Untangling notes with boxing gloves on!

Sometimes we have so much going on in our lives, it's like being given a ball of very knotted wool, putting on a set of boxing gloves and a blind fold and told to untie the knots! Hmmm how many seconds and the ball of wool goes flying. The same holds when our lives feel very overwhelming and stressful, we don't know where to start. Relaxation doesn't take away the knotted ball of wool, but it takes off the blindfold and boxing gloves and makes it easier for us to be calmer and focus on the knots which we need to put our energy into unknotting. Make a note in your journal about the knots that are holding you back from your dreams.



Stay kind and positive

Creative visualisation is around bringing something kind or positive into your life and the lives of others and is a tool for bringing more positive energy into the world. If at this time you find it hard to be positive do speak to someone as our mental health matters and sometimes self-help alone is not enough. What is also helpful, if you think this is hard, is it to think of someone you admire who succeeded, sometimes against the odds, that you would see as a role model. Yes, goals need to be realistic, however, we are often capable of more than we give ourselves credit for, so if you are going to dream, dream big and see where those aspirations take you and remember, if you need help ask, we all need help sometimes.

Using all your senses

You may find watching this wee video helpful for realising just how many senses we have <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfxulw98FYE>. This is using your senses to relax; however, you can use them to visualise. Imagine your goal has already happened, you have succeeded, what do you see, hear, smell, taste? What can you touch, is there wind on your skin? Are you moving, how does that movement feel e.g., you may want to learn to drive a car, can you feel the car moving? The clearer the vision is in your mind, the more often you visualise this, the more likely you will feel motivated to achieve that goal as already you can imagine you have achieved it. You may want to add people, times of year. The more your imagination works in a positive way the more focused you are on achieving this goal. This is where a journal and or a vision board can help as you can capture all of this to reflect on and remind you what you are working towards on days when maybe this is harder than others.

Perspective

There are a couple of ways you can visualise; one is that you are in the vision and experiencing all the positive things you are aiming to achieve. The other is seeing it through someone else's eyes, e.g., you may imagine watching yourself on a screen. Perhaps a film you have written the script for and directed? Try it both ways, see what works for you. A reminder, if you are working through any issues, or have any feelings of depersonalisation or dissociation, speak to a health professional before trying these exercises, they are for self help and do not replace professional advice.

wee changes can make a big difference

Tips for journaling



What is journaling?

There are many kinds of journals. The tips here are for journaling which can help setting goals to support wellbeing and capture your own thoughts in a way which helps you get to know yourself better. Journaling means writing down how you are feeling, or what you are thinking. When we put pen to paper and see something written before us, it can often make it easier to understand what we are thinking and may help us begin to work through what we need to do to help regain a sense of balance and wellbeing.

Journaling and goal setting

How often do we say, we want to be happier, more confident, feel better? But what does that actually mean? What would we be doing, saying, thinking, how would we be responding to others and situations in our life if we were happier, more confident, felt better? Journaling is a way to help us to look at where we are now, and where we want to be, it can also help us plan and keep a record of our progress towards achieving what matters to us in a way we can see, touch, feel, measure.



From journaling to action

Most of us, if not all of us can usually offer many reasons why something didn't happen. Or feel defensive if perhaps someone says something which to them was neutral, but triggers something in us we react to and maybe even feel hostile about. In journaling we may find we write something which requires us to take a step back and think 'oh, okay, may be I do have more choices and have used excuses, or blame to stay stuck.' Remember, if you have something which you need to work through seek counselling. These tips are for self-management. To help 'own it' use 'I' as in 'I feel' 'I think' 'I want' also to help us move towards what we are wanting to achieve, use terms which suggest it's happening now e.g. 'Now I am visioning this great new job and how much more valued I feel, I am so excited!' Making your dreams come true needs action, so after each session capture even in a couple of sentences, how you feel after doing your journaling today and what action or next steps you plan to take towards the vision you want to achieve.

Journaling in therapy

Some people experiencing particular challenges e.g., around trauma may find journaling useful. However, please note, this is something best done with professional support. Using journals for some lifestyle changes or choices, or for improving is something which we can do ourselves. Using journaling in a therapeutic way can bring up many emotions and feelings and it's important you have appropriate support from someone who is qualified and experienced enough to help you work through this.

Making journaling a habit

The more we journal, the more we may find it useful in helping us to achieve our goals. These can be, around improving wellbeing, planning for a career change, moving to a new house, moving to a new country, dealing with a problem or challenge, understanding ourselves better. Whatever the goal is we have decided will be better for our lives. However, this takes time and a change in our routine to make time for this to become a regular part of our day.



Journaling and motivation

Working towards change does take effort, and sometimes we may feel we can't be bothered, it's too hard, it's not happening, another challenge has cropped up. Our journals are a reminder of how far we have come, why we are doing this and can also capture what we learned to overcome when our motivation slipped. We don't have to do it all at once, and we don't have to have it all done by tomorrow. Small measured considered steps help us work towards what we want to achieve at our pace. Our visualisations when captured in our journal offer us something to reflect on why the effort just now matters and what the benefits shall be for the future.

Visualisation and journaling

To help clear your mind so you can focus on what you want to visualise you may want to try some relaxation techniques or some breathing exercises. Find one which works for you. These are two examples <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jl6-JIDiojQ> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpQ-R8CgQ5A>

Even 5 or 10 minutes a day can make a big difference over time. Do this before you journal or visualise in your mind the change you want to see. It may be you are enjoying packing up to move to a new home, picking colours for the décor. It may be you have moved on from a relationship which was not healthy for you. You see yourself free, confident, making the choices which matter for your wellbeing. The focus is one of positivity, imagine it like a film of how you want your life to be as if it was already happening. The using the senses to relax video is helpful in becoming aware of all of our senses so when we visualise the way we want our life to be we can add as much detail as possible. Which we then capture in our journal. Imagine you have succeeded, what that looks like. This is why setting goals for what we want to achieve matters so we set goals which are achievable and something we can see ourselves working towards.



Writing as medication

Some people may call it journaling, some may call it meditation. There are many kinds of meditation, there is meditation associated with Mindfulness. You may find this site useful www.freemindfulness.org/ download However, there is also a form of meditation called visualisations meditation. Journaling can be used as a tool to help support this.



Tips for journaling time

Make time where you can do this without being distracted or concerned someone may see what you are writing. Your journal is private, it's yours. Even in therapy you may discuss if you want, what is in your journal, but you don't feel obliged to hand it over. This is your private space where you can write what you are thinking and how that makes you feel. Try and build in time each day not only to write in your journal, but also to have the space to read, and reflect on what you have written. There are many ways to journal, find a way that works for you. If you are using journaling therapeutically don't feel you need to write about the traumatic event, it's your journal, it's about what is right for you in this moment.

Tips for journaling time

Take some time to think what it is you want to write about, what is it you hope to achieve and take time to do this. If when you write it down it doesn't look right, no problem change it, the clearer we are on what we want to move towards the more energy we have to invest in taking those steps. This is why making space to feel calm and visualise the outcome you are seeking matters. Don't worry if at times your mind and your writing wanders, that's always something to be curious about later. This is why building in space to reflect matters and learning to be mindful so we can respond to what we see written in a way that is helpful for us.

GOAL SETTING SNAKES AND LADDERS

We may have a memory as children of playing that well known game Snakes and Ladders? This is a variation on that theme looking at the steps we need to take to achieve our goals, the possible obstacles we may encounter, how to overcome them and the reward for each step.

This tool is part of a variety of tools aimed at helping us solve what can sometimes be the complex puzzles which are our own lives. This one has a focus on steps to achieve goals and works well when used with the Jigsaw lid and getting back your oomph workbook all available for FREE on the COPE Scotland website www.cope-scotland.org

HOW TO USE

- If using a hard copy please write your goal in the section of the poster relating to your goal, ideally in pencil so you can rub out and use the poster again, so being kind to the environment
- There is also an editable version on www.cope-scotland.org and instructions below on how to edit if doing an e version
- Take time to think about what are the steps you need to take to achieve your goal and write these in the space in the poster
- Then for each step think what obstacles you may encounter and add that in the section on what may hold you back
- Having identified what may hold you back, then think, what can I do to overcome that obstacle? and add that in the space provided
- We all need some motivation, so think about the rewards you can have when you take each step and add that in the rewards section

The poster is a motivational tool to help you plan the steps you intend to take towards a goal which has meaning for you. These are some useful tips for goal setting:

IS IT YOUR GOAL?

Might sound obvious BUT achieving goals takes motivation and if it's not really a goal you would choose for yourself then it's hard to get motivated so make sure any goal you set is your goal and something you really want to achieve.

IS IT REALISTIC?

Now there is always a balance between confidence and having a go and not setting yourself up to fail, we can all set goals which are set so high they are unobtainable and then we feel disheartened, so once you decide on your goal maybe ask advice from others who can help you achieve it or a step towards it as sometimes its wee steps which get you there, dream big and go for it while balancing that with not putting yourself under undue pressure.

TIMELINE

Moving from dreaming to having dreams come true requires more than talk it requires action, having a timeline helps achieve goals as it focuses you on what you need to do within a specific time. Now it may be a big goal, no problem, just break it into smaller goals each with their own timeline.

HAVE A GOAL BUDDY

Having someone to share your goals with can help motivation, also it means there is someone who you can keep up to date with progress this helps in making sure you keep to your timeline. This is a buddy someone to offer support and encouragement.

DON'T FEAR TO FAIL

We all fail all the time, we learn from what didn't work to try again, so don't worry if it all doesn't go to plan first time, review the plans for next time.

GET ADVICE

There are so many agencies, groups, and maybe people you know who can help you set and take steps to achieve your goals so find out what and who is in your area that can help you achieve the goals which are important for you.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Imagine how good you will feel even taking steps towards your goals, believe they can be achieved and see it in your mind's eye how good that will be, remember, success isn't measured by the position we achieve but the obstacles we overcome seeking to achieve.

This tool is for wellbeing promotion, if you are struggling with any issues just now, please speak to someone, you matter.

Produced by COPE Scotland, inspired by Snakes and Ladders

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wee changes can make a big difference

in helping you feel better tips to setting better goals

Is it your goal?

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Have a goal buddy

Having someone to share your goals with can help motivation, also it means there is someone who you can keep up to date with progress this helps in making sure you keep to your timeline. This is a buddy someone to offer support and encouragement

Focus on the positive

Imagine how good you will feel even taking steps towards your goals, believe they can be achieved and see it in your mind's eye how good that will be, remember, success isn't measured by the position we achieve but the obstacles we overcome seeking to achieve, sometimes we need to go back to the drawing board, doesn't mean we give up. If we need inspiration of what we can achieve think about others who have overcome significant obstacles to pursue a life dream

Is it realistic?

Now there is always a balance between confidence and having a go and not setting yourself up to fail, we can all set goals which are set so high they are unobtainable and then we feel disheartened, so once you decide on your goal maybe ask advice from others who can help you achieve it or a step towards it as sometimes its wee steps which get you there, dream big and go for it while balancing that with not putting yourself under undue pressure

Write it down

Take the time to really think about your life now and what you want to change, this can help you decide on your new goals, once you have decided to write it down, even do an inspiration board with pictures something to look at which will help motivate you to achieve that change

Timeline

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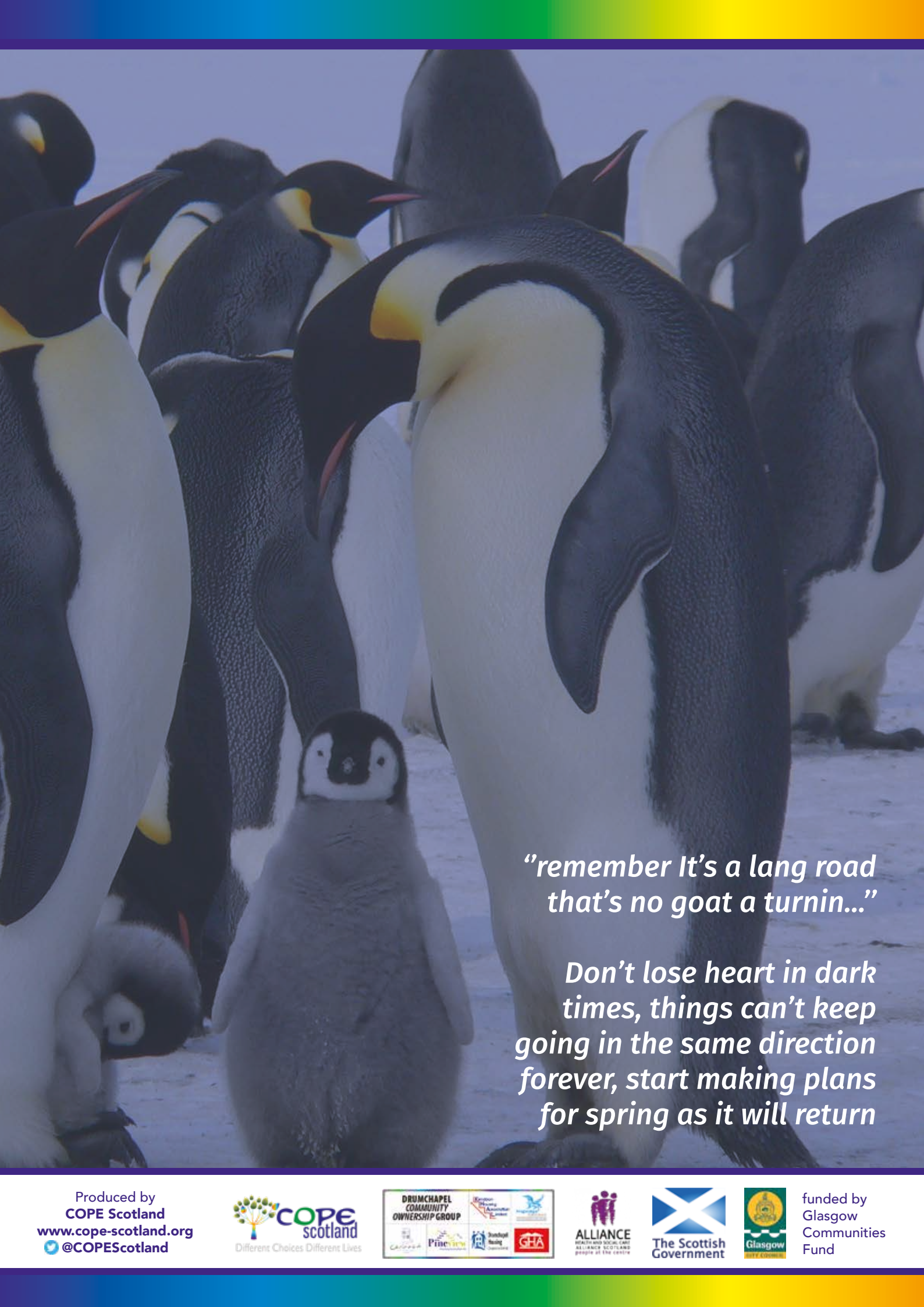
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*“remember It’s a lang road
that’s no goat a turnin...”*

*Don’t lose heart in dark
times, things can’t keep
going in the same direction
forever, start making plans
for spring as it will return*