**HOW TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING**

Stress, anxiety and low mood are feelings that affect many of us at some point in our lives. The NHS offers strategies to help you stay mentally and emotionally well, and here are some of them:

**Connect with other people** by

* arranging time to be with your family and friends
* switching the TV off to talk or play a game together
* visiting someone
* finding an opportunity to volunteer.

**Be physically active.** It will:

* cause healthy chemical changes in your brain that make you feel better
* give you the satisfaction of setting goals and achieving them.

And you don’t have to spend hours in a gym, just choose activities you enjoy.

**Learn new skills.** It will increase your self-confidence and give you an opportunity to connect with others if you:

* sign up for a new course at a local college to learn practical skills, a new language or any subject that interests you
* start a new hobby – maybe something you’ve already been thinking about?
* work on a DIY project, and there are plenty of free video tutorials online to help you.

**Give to others.**  As well as helping them, it can be rewarding for you. Examples are:

* saying thank you to someone
* spending time with a friend or relative who needs support or company
* offering help with a project
* asking a friend how they are, and really listening to their answer.

**And finally, pay attention to the present moment.** Make a habit of noticing your surroundings and giving all your attention to what’s happening now. Doing these things can take your mind away from your worries for a while and give you a different focus.

**More serious episodes of mental illness** can also affect any of us, and if you suffer from those you should contact your doctor or call 111.

*Sent by Dr Virmani and Dr Bedi’s patient participation group*