

Thrive with Five

Take Notice

Issue Three



Take Notice of the world around us, in everyday life and spend more time doing so.

Welcome to Thrive with Five

Issue Three - Take Notice



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People have been telling us about their worries and fears since our lives have changed due to the Coronavirus. Many of us have found that our usual coping outlets and networks have been disrupted or cancelled, leaving us feeling alone, worrying the future. Thrive with Five is a five-part series of self-help information based on Five Ways to Wellbeing. It helps us to focus on the small steps we can take each day, to build our self-care and emotional resilience, enabling us to cope better with life's challenges. We hope you enjoy Take Notice and find these tips helpful – we are here to help support each other where we can. Stay safe and well.

Chloe

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This publication focuses on simple ways in everyday life, in which we can be more present in the moment, noticing where we are and what we are doing. If you would like to develop these ideas, find out about mindfulness. You can find more helpful tips on getting started at:

www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started

Help us to help others!

Be part of our supportive community and send us your self-care ideas and inspiration for keeping healthy and well whilst social distancing and self-isolating. Help us to grow a valuable resource of information with tried and tested tips for self-care.

We love to hear about the things that are working for you. Send your inspiring self-care tips direct to our inbox.

Try to keep your ideas shorter than 60 words. Pictures or illustrations would be a lovely addition. We cannot promise to publish every contribution and we may have to edit some text at our discretion, but we do read all self-care tips with great interest. Together we can do so much.



Suffolk User Forum



@SUFMentalWealth

Thrive with Five

Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give



Thrive with Five and nourish the soul.

Suffolk User Forum is the voice for mental health service users in the East and West of Suffolk. We provide peer advocacy and support and gather people's experiences of mental health services. Our reports to influence decision makers, promoting coproduction to improve services to better meet people's needs. We also signpost people to services and promote self-care for improved mental health and wellbeing.

Thrive with Five is based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing, researched and developed by the New Economics Foundation. The five ways are Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give. They provide a framework that can help us think about the things that matter most to us.

They help us develop small changes that help us to feel stronger and healthier in mind, body, and spirit. We can use these wellbeing areas to support us, whatever our circumstances, age, or situation. Our Thrive with Five guides share proven tips on how we can incorporate self-care into everyday life.

Take Notice is the third in this series. It is about being curious and more aware of the world around us.

Taking a few minutes every day, to stop and take notice is a great way to slow down the pace of our busy lives, becoming more present in the here and now. Taking notice of things grows our appreciation and gratitude. It is a great way to boost our mood and strengthen our awareness.

Take Notice

Being aware of the world around us



Focusing on our breath and just being

Our everyday lives can be so busy. Sometimes we can be overwhelmed by all the things we have to do, by our thoughts, emotions, or feelings.

We may be preoccupied by our daily 'to do' lists, worries about health, family, work, and money. This can mean that we stop noticing things about the world around us and lose connection with ourselves and our surroundings.

Evidence shows that what we do and the way we think have the biggest impact on our wellbeing. Paying more attention to the present moment – to our own thoughts and feelings, and to the world around us can really improve our mental wellbeing.

This can help us build the emotional resilience we need to cope with life's challenges, feel kindness for ourselves and appreciation for the world around us.

Just a few minutes each day where we stop, take notice of our thoughts and the world around us, can help us to release judgement. We can begin to understand more about ourselves, see joy in our lives, strengthening our wider awareness.

Taking notice is about becoming more aware of the present moment. Noticing the sights, smells, sounds, tastes, and textures that we experience, as well as our thoughts and feelings that occur from one moment to the next.

Take Notice in everyday life

Take notice for just a minute each day



Taking notice of nature

Taking notice can be used in our everyday life and does not have to take a lot of effort or time. We can practice taking notice in just one minute!

In this section, we describe one-minute ways to take notice that can try anywhere and at any time that suits you.

Notice Nature

Take a minute to notice nature. Stop and look out of your window, notice the sky, the shape and colour of the clouds, the night sky. Notice how the trees are moving in the wind, the colour of the leaves. Take in the beauty of the natural world around you. If you are outside, pause, and touch a plant, notice the texture of the bark, stems, leaves, petals. Notice the fragrance.

Breathing

Take a minute to observe your breathing. Breathe in and out as you normally would. Notice the time between each inhalation and exhalation; notice your lungs expanding. When your mind wanders, which it easily can, you can remind yourself to focus on your breath, gently bringing your attention back to breathing.

Listening

Take a minute to listen to the sounds around you. You can do this wherever you are. You do not need to try and recognise the sounds you hear, just listen, notice the wide range of sounds that are about you. Absorb the experience. If you recognise a sound then label it and move on, allowing yourself to listen more and to catch new sounds.

Be observant

When taking public transport, or as a passenger in a car, we can disconnect from technology and simply observe our surroundings. Notice what is around us; notice buildings, their shape, colours. Notice the sounds and smells around us.

Take notice of our pets

If we have a pet, we can take a minute to pay attention them, their colour, the texture of their coats, how they move their bodies, what makes them excited or calm, and what they choose to explore. We can notice how they make us feel when we are around them. Feeling the warmth of their bodies.

Checking our thoughts

We can take time to check in with our thoughts. What are we thinking or feeling? We can ask ourselves whether we are choosing thoughts that help our wellbeing. We can consciously change negative thoughts to something more positive. Just checking our expression and making ourselves smile, can really help move negative thoughts to more positive ones.

Stay in the present moment

If our thoughts are focusing on worries about future events or reliving the past, we can allow ourselves to release and let go. Directing our attention to what is happening here and now can help calm our minds to feel more at peace. Think about five things you can see, hear, smell and touch

Play a favourite piece of music

Listen to a favourite piece of music or song. Notice how this makes you feel.

Brush with the other hand

The everyday task of brushing our teeth is a perfect opportunity to practice taking notice. Try focusing on how the toothbrush feels brushing over each tooth, the taste of the toothpaste and the feeling of doing this repetitive activity in a different way.

Practice mindful eating

When we are eating any meal, we can pay attention to our food. Notice the texture: really see it, feel it, smell it, take a bite into it and notice the taste and texture in the mouth, continuing to chew, bringing your full attention to the taste of the food by eating slowly. Savouring it for just a minute.

Spend a minute outside

Make time to get outside, breathe in the fresh air and notice of the world around you. If it is a warm day, take a minute to focus on the warmth of the sun on your face. Close your eyes for a few seconds and observe how the sun feels on your face. If you cannot get outside, look for a sunny spot in the house, or your office. Open your windows and doors to let the fresh air in.

Take a different route

Try taking a different route to the shops, to work, college or university. If you use a lift, try taking the stairs. Park a little further away than usual. Take notice of your new surroundings, the sounds, smells, the shape of buildings, the different trees and plants, the different skyline.

Disconnect from technology

Disconnect from technology and observe the simple beauty of the world around you.

More time to Take Notice

Take Notice everyday



Giving our attention

Buy a house plant

Bring the beauty of the natural world indoors, by adding a plant to your office or around your home. It connects you with nature and is an opportunity to nurture its growth.

Grow your own

Growing your own veg is a great way to take notice as well as contributing to healthy eating, increasing your daily fruit and vegetable intake. If you have a garden or some containers that is great. However, you do not need a garden, just a packet of seeds is all you need! You can grow herbs or cut and come again lettuce on a windowsill. Not only will it help you eat seasonally and save money, but gardening helps you stay physically active.

Do some colouring

Google 'mindful colouring' to find free printable colouring sheets. Or buy an adult colouring book – take time to focus on colours and shapes. We are never too old to enjoy colouring in!

Listen to a guided meditation

There are many high-quality, free guided meditations available online. Search 'guided meditation' on Google, YouTube or your favourite podcast app.

Give yoga a try

Yoga focuses on strength, flexibility and breathing to boost your physical and mental wellbeing. It relaxes you and can help improve your sleep. Find a free online video and try it! Search 'Yoga' on YouTube.

Start a nature journal

Record the places you visit, and the plants and animals you see. You could include sketches, or even press flowers and leaves you collect.

Try composting

Doing things that connect you to the earth, like composting, can really help you feel good. Collect your food waste and add it to your compost bin to create rich soil for your garden.

Take a dog for a walk

Take a dog for a walk and see how they respond to nature. If you do not have your own, offer to walk your friends or neighbour's dog.

Take a lunchtime walk

Break up your day with a walk at lunch. The fresh air and exercise will get the blood and oxygen pumping, which can help improve your focus.

Reduce your plastic use

Feel more connected to the earth by reducing the amount of single-use plastic you use. Try alternatives like beeswax wraps or paper straws. Buy a reusable cup for your takeaway tea and coffee to reduce waste and feel more connected to the planet.

Try photography

Go outside and spend time taking photos of trees, plants, buildings. You do not need a special camera to capture beautiful colours, textures, and reflections.

Revisit an old favourite

Re-read your favourite book, or re-watch your favourite childhood movie - see if it makes you feel the same way.

Join a walking group

Walking in a group can help you reduce stress and build connections with others in your community. Find a walking group near you.

Have a clean-up day

Help nature and our countryside by cleaning up and collecting rubbish with one of the many organised groups around not only will you be helping the environment but making connections with other people.

Explore

Explore your garden or a park. Notice the different plants, trees, and insects. Look out for nature in unexpected places. Notice different fungi, lichen for example.

Spend time outside

Go to the beach for a paddle build a sandcastle, have a picnic, and explore the rock pools. Or if you can set up an outdoor dining space at home.

Attract birds into your garden

A good way to attract birds to your garden is by providing a bird bath or even just a large shallow bowl of water. Choose a spot near trees or shrubs with low branches so your birds can make a quick getaway if they feel threatened.

Gratitude

Write a gratitude diary, find one thing each day to be thankful for. Record the things you have experienced when taking notice that you found enjoyable.

Find more ways to take notice of nature in our publication Connect:

www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk/covid-19-support/thrive-with-five



Suffolk user forum

your voice for emotional
and mental health



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