



Activity workbook & toolkit

For adults supporting children's
mental health & emotional wellbeing



Who are OUR Generation?

OUR Generation is an EU PEACE IV funded project that provides a unique opportunity for communities, across Northern Ireland and the Border Regions of Ireland, to work together to halt the intergenerational impact of trauma and to build emotional resilience and peace for generations to come. The Project is match-funded by the Executive Office in Northern Ireland and the Department of Rural and Community Development in Ireland.

A project supported by the European Union's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEU PB).





Stress Questionnaire

Because everyone reacts to stress in his or her own way, no one stress test can give you a complete diagnosis of your stress levels.

This stress test is intended to give you an overview only. Please see a Stress Management Consultant for a more in depth analysis.

Answer all the questions but just tick one box that applies to you, either yes or no. Answer yes, even if only part of a question applies to you.

Take your time, but please be completely honest with your answers:

		Yes	No
1	I frequently bring work home at night		
2	Not enough hours in the day to do all the things that I must do		
3	I deny or ignore problems in the hope that they will go away		
4	I do the jobs myself to ensure they are done properly		
5	I underestimate how long it takes to do things		
6	I feel that there are too many deadlines in my work / life that are difficult to meet		
7	My self-confidence / self-esteem is lower than I would like it to be		
8	I frequently have guilty feelings if I relax and do nothing		
9	I find myself thinking about problems even when I am supposed to be relaxing		
10	I feel fatigued or tired even when I wake after an adequate sleep		
11	I often nod or finish other peoples sentences for them when they speak slowly		
12	I have a tendency to eat, talk, walk and drive quickly		
13	My appetite has changed, have either a desire to binge or have a loss of appetite / may skip meals		
14	I feel irritated or angry if the car or traffic in front seems to be going too slowly/ I become very frustrated at having to wait in a queue		
15	If something or someone really annoys me I will bottle up my feelings		
16	When I play sport or games, I really try to win whoever I play		
17	I experience mood swings, difficulty making decisions, concentration and memory is impaired		
18	I find fault and criticize others rather than praising, even if it is deserved		
19	I seem to be listening even though I am preoccupied with my own thoughts		
20	My sex drive is lower, can experience changes to menstrual cycle		
21	I find myself grinding my teeth		
22	Increase in muscular aches and pains especially in the neck, head, lower back, shoulders		
23	I am unable to perform tasks as well as I used to, my judgment is clouded or not as good as it was		
24	I find I have a greater dependency on alcohol, caffeine, nicotine or drugs		
25	I find that I don't have time for many interests / hobbies outside of work		

Your score:

A yes answer score = 1 (one), and a no answer score = 0 (zero).

TOTALS

Most of us can manage varying amounts of pressure without feeling stressed. However too much or excessive pressure, often created by our own thinking patterns and life experiences, can overstretch our ability to cope and then stress is experienced.

4 points or less: You are least likely to suffer from stress-related illness.

5 - 13 points: You are more likely to experience stress related ill health either mental, physical or both. You would benefit from stress management / counselling or advice to help in the identified areas.

14 points or more: You are the most prone to stress showing a great many traits or characteristics that are creating un-healthy behaviours. This means that you are also more likely to experience stress & stress-related illness e.g. diabetes, irritable bowel, migraine, back and neck pain, high blood pressure, heart disease/strokes, mental ill health (depression, anxiety & stress). It is important to seek professional help or stress management counselling. Consult your medical practitioner.

Tips to help improve your score

Review the questions that you scored yes:

- Is this a problem that I need to address
- Can I do something about it myself
- See if you can reduce, change or modify this trait.
- Start with the ones that are easiest & most likely to be successful for you.
- Only expect small changes to start with, it takes daily practice to make any change.
- Do I need some help or support to make this change
- Support from friends, family/colleagues will make the process easier and more enjoyable.
- Professional help is always available & your GP is a good place to start
- Check out the top 10 tips to manage build your resilience in this booklet



Top Ten Stress Busting Tips

1. Learn to manage your time more effectively

We waste a lot of time doing unimportant tasks, especially when stressed, so prioritise your day and do the important jobs first. The unimportant ones can wait, and often they will disappear completely leaving you time to do other things. Also, do not put off the unpleasant tasks – avoidance causes a great deal of stress. Give unpleasant tasks a high priority and do them first.

2. Adopt a healthy lifestyle

If we eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly and ensure we get adequate sleep and rest our body is better able to cope with stress should it occur. If this is not the case, then this may be a warning sign so don't ignore it. Engaging in some form of physical activity may help you by working off the biochemical and physical changes that occur within your body due to stress. Relaxation also helps your body return to its normal healthy state. Good relaxation techniques include breathing exercises, massage and a variety of complimentary therapies.

3. Know your limitations and do not take on too much

We can cause ourselves a great deal of stress because we do not want to let people down. We then end up doing more than we should. Learn to delegate effectively and be assertive so that you can say 'No' without upsetting or offending.

4. Find out what causes you stress

Take time to discover what is worrying you and try to change your thoughts and behaviour to reduce it. A stress assessment can help you to fully understand the causes, the implications to your health and how to manage, cope and make necessary changes.

5. Avoid unnecessary conflict

Do not be too argumentative. Is it really worth the stress? Look for win - win situations. Look for a resolution to a dispute where both parties can achieve a positive outcome. Find out what the real cause of the problem is and deal with it.

6. Accept the things you cannot change

Changing a difficult situation is not always possible. If this proves to be the case, recognise and accept things as they are and concentrate on all that you do have control over. Managing change effectively is essential or else performance will be reduced.

7. Take time out to relax and recharge your batteries

You will perform more effectively during work if you regularly take a short 10 / 15 minute break, easily making up the time you used relaxing. Alongside this, at least one annual break of at least 10-14 continuous days is recommended.

8. Find time to meet friends

Friends can ease work troubles and help us see things in a different way. The activities we engage in with friends help us relax and we will often have a good laugh. It boosts the immune system that is often depleted during stress.

9. Try to see things differently, develop a positive thinking style

If something is concerning you, try to see it differently. Talk over your problem with somebody before it gets out of proportion. Often, talking to a friend/colleague/family member will help you see things from a different and less stressful perspective. You may also need to consider professional help in order to achieve the desired outcome and prevent ill health and / or burnout.

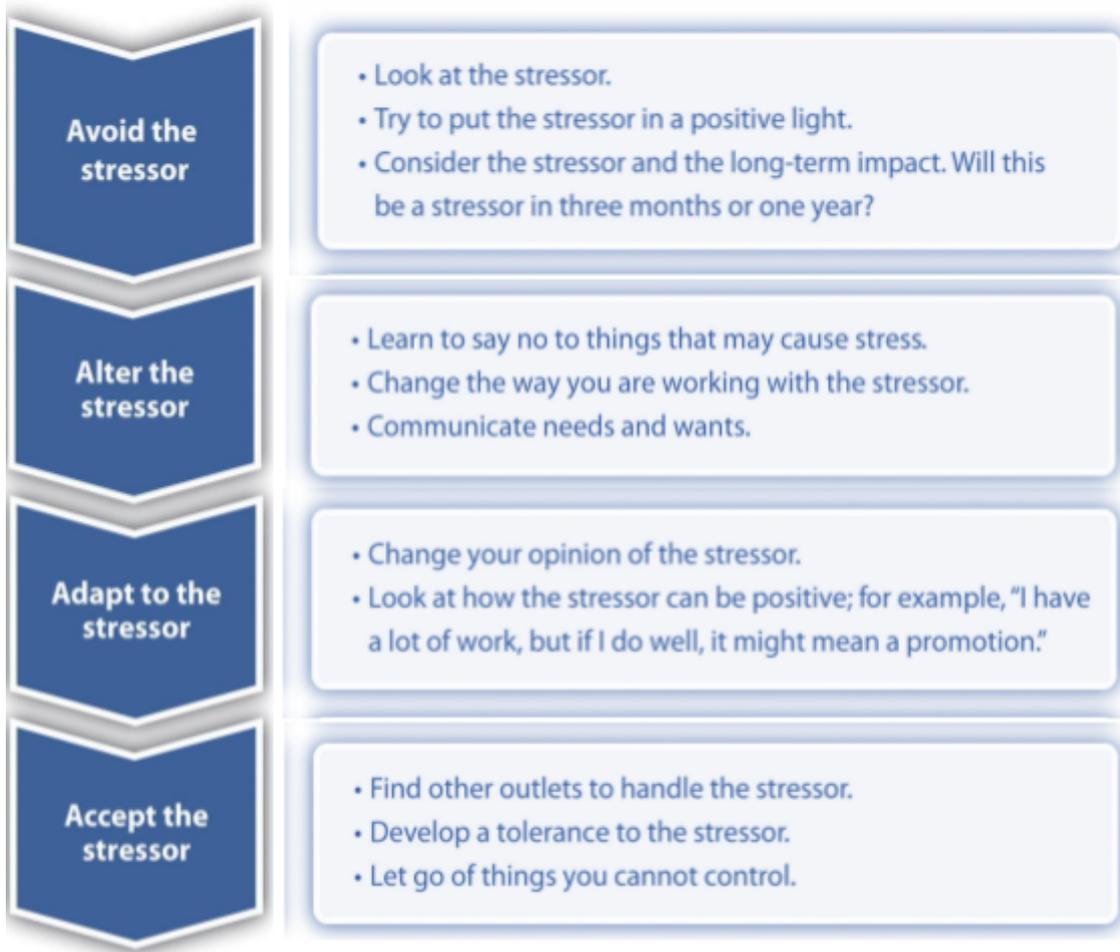
10. Avoid alcohol, nicotine and caffeine as coping mechanisms

Long term, these faulty coping mechanisms will just add to the problem. For example, caffeine and nicotine are stimulants – too much and the body reacts to this with the stress response increasing or even causing anxiety symptoms. Alcohol is a depressant!

A – Z of self-care

Choose a wellbeing strategy for each letter of the alphabet

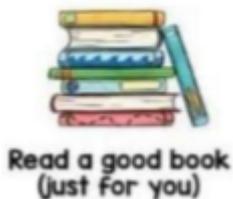
A		N	
B		O	
C		P	
D		Q	
E		R	
F		S	
G		T	
H		U	
I		V	
J		W	
K		X	
L		Y	
M		Z	



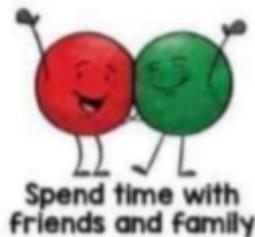
Things you can do



Uplifting Activities



Connect with Others



Simple grounding technique

If you are feeling anxious, worried, overwhelmed or scared bring your attention back to the current moment with this simple grounding exercise. Notice the following around you:

- 5 things you can **SEE**
- 4 things you can **HEAR**
- 3 things you can **FEEL**
- 2 things you can **SMELL** (or recall your favorite scents)
- 1 thing you can **TASTE**

3 Ripples of Resilience

1. Personal - Inside me:

How can I help myself?

How do I speak to myself, what words methods can I use every day and long term?



2. Friends/Family/Colleagues - Surrounding me: Who can I reach out to?

Who do I know on a personal level, who do I trust?

3. Professionals - Extra support: What professional support is out there?

Help lines, medical professionals, support groups

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.



There are five simple actions to help maintain and improve your emotional wellbeing in everyday life. Try to build these in to your daily life – think of them as your ‘five a day’ for emotional wellbeing.



Connect

Connect with the people around you, with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your lifetest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you everyday.



Be active

Go for a walk or run, step outside, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy, one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a bus or taxi, eating lunch or talking to friends, be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or interest or sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



Give

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, or consider joining a community group. Look out, as well as in, seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

The 5 ways to wellbeing were developed by the New Economics Foundation

5 Ways to Wellbeing Diary

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
							
							
							
							
							

How are you taking 5? Record your activity or strategy for each of the 5 ways each day. Remember 1 activity could cover several categories



ACTION CALENDAR - FOR FAMILIES



30 actions to help parents look after themselves and their families in challenging times. Please use and share

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| 1 Go on a smile collecting mission, starting with a smile in the mirror | 2 Choose one song each and arrange a family dance off | 3 Send someone a message to show you really appreciate them | 4 Take turns to notice 3 things around you that are beautiful | 5 Be kind to yourself and others | 6 Together, make a list of things you are grateful for | 7 Think of a goal to work towards and do one thing to get started |
| 8 Take a mindful walk together and notice what you see hear and smell | 9 Play Musical Statues | 10 Create a bedtime routine together to help with sleep | 11 Bake cupcakes and decorate them as gifts for each other | 12 Cross your arms and give yourself a hug | 13 Take turns to share a happy memory | 14 Find out about the values and traditions of another culture |
| 15 Do something together to support a local charity | 16 Create a collage of things that make you feel happy | 17 Before bedtime, share what has gone well during the day | 18 Introduce a family 'Daily Pause' to be calm together | 19 Create a family wishes jar and take steps to make them happen | 20 Learn a new skill together as a family | 21 Create a kindness box to keep a record of kind actions |
| 22 'Surpriserise' yourself. Find unexpected ways to move your body | 23 Make a rainbow salad | 24 Smile and say something positive every time you walk into a room | 25 Create a poster highlighting everybody's strengths | 26 Notice the shapes, colours and smells of a new family meal | 27 Make a list of things that have helped you cope with difficult times | 28 Tell someone you love how much they mean to you and why |
| 29 Do something good for the environment | 30 Hold an awards ceremony to celebrate acts of kindness |  "A person's a person, no matter how small"
- Dr Seuss | | | | |

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



www.actionforhappiness.org

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living at www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys

Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind



COPING CALENDAR: KEEP CALM. STAY WISE. BE KIND



30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Please use & share

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| 1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact | 2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you! | 3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why | 4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system | 5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch | 6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them | 7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help |
| 8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly | 9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them | 10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up | 11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you | 12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast | 13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with | 14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger |
| 15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you | 16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits | 17 Learn something new or do something creative | 18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity | 19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small | 20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself | 21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with |
| 22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others | 23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news | 24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go | 25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths | 26 Take a small step towards an important goal | 27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why | 28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year |
| 29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing | 30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time |  "Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances" ~ Viktor Frankl | | | | |

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



www.actionforhappiness.org

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living, including books, guides, posters and more here: www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys

Personal & Family Support Organisations in Northern Ireland

Websites & Apps for Android & i-phone



www.amh.org.uk/services/resources-for-children-and-young-people



www.amh.org.uk/new-life-counselling



www.mindingyourhead



0808 808 8000

www.lifelinehelpline.info



www.zestni.org/services



www.samaritans.org



www.childline.org.uk



www.cypsp.org



www.actionforchildren.org.uk



Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership
www.parentingni.org



www.womensaidni.org



Supporting and Promoting Male Health and Wellbeing
www.man-ni.org



www.parentingni.org



The Association
for Child and Adolescent
Mental Health

www.acamh.org

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/directory-services-help-improve-mental-health-and-emotional-wellbeing>



<https://apps4healthcareni.hscni.net>



Hear2Help

It's free to download and contains contact information for people living in Northern Ireland and reading material for people who find themselves struggling with everything from substance abuse and suicidal thoughts, to coping with bereavement and advice on claiming benefits.



Stay Alive

The Stay Alive app is a suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information and tools.



Silver Cloud

Silver Cloud is a free 8 week online course to help you manage stress, anxiety and depression.



Catch it

Learn how to manage feelings like anxiety and depression with Catch It. The app will teach you how to look at problems in a different way, turn negative thoughts into positive ones and improve your mental wellbeing.



distrACT

The distrACT app gives you easy, quick and discreet access to information and advice about self-harm and suicidal thoughts. The content has been created by doctors and experts in self-harming and suicide prevention.



eQuoo: Emotional Fitness Game

The eQuoo app uses adventure games designed by psychologists to help you increase your emotional fitness and teach you new psychological skills.



Student Health App

The Student Health App provides easy access to more than 900 pages of reliable health information all in one place. The content has been created for university students by NHS doctors and is regularly updated.

Use the app to reduce your worries, feel more confident and get the support you need at what can be a challenging time for any student

ThinkNinja



Free during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis

ThinkNinja is a mental health app designed for 10 to 18 year olds. Using a variety of content and tools, it allows young people to learn about mental health and emotional wellbeing, and develop skills they can use to build resilience and stay well.



MoodSpace

Stress, anxiety, & low mood self-help



Wysa

Stress, sleep & mindfulness therapy chatbot



7 Cups

A website which provides online therapy and free support to people experiencing emotional distress by connecting them with trained listeners.



Moodtools- depression aid

If you are feeling sad, anxious, or depressed, lift your mood with **MoodTools!** MoodTools is designed to help you combat depression and alleviate your negative moods, aiding you on your road to recovery.



Fear tools- Anxiety app

FearTools is an evidence-based app designed to help you combat anxiety, aiding you on your road to recovery. This application is especially useful for those suffering from Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Phobias, and Social Anxiety Disorder.

Lets Try Some Special Types of Breathing!!

Rollercoaster Breath!

Stretch out one hand like you are giving a high 5, this is the rollercoaster, now take your index from the other hand and pretend this is you! We are going to breath as we go on the rollercoaster.

Starting at the outside edge of your thumb, breathe in and use your index finger to trace up to the top, then when as you move down the hill on the roller-coaster breath out. Repeating this for each finger.



LIFT breathing!

Sit tall like a building, stack your hands in front of you – the one below is the ground floor and the other is a lift that can go up and down,

As you breathe in take the lift to the top floor by raising the top hand up keep moving it until you finish breathing in. As you breathe out bring the lift down again.

Try to get your hands to meet just as you run out of air

Rainbow Breath!

Stand tall and still let your shoulders relax and your arms hang by your sides,

Imagine your fingers all different coloured markers, and we want to draw a rainbow about our head!

As you breathe in raise your arms wide. Then reach high and let your palms turn to face each other. Let your hands float down as you breathe out.



Bumble Bee Breathing!

Pretend you are a bumble bee smelling flowers, breathing in through the nose and then making a humming noise while breathing out!

Balloon Belly Breathing!

Pretend your belly is a balloon now place your hands on your tummy and take a big breath in, letting your hands lift off your tummy, as if they are on the surface of a balloon that is being blown up. As you breathe out, let your hands return to your stomach, as if the balloon is deflating.



DRAGON Breath!

Sit up straight while kneeling with your spine long. Take a deep **Breath** in through your nose and when you breathe out through your mouth whisper a roar like a dragon!

You can also stick out your tongue and open your eyes and mouth wide when you do this!