

Brightlife Telephone Prompt Sheet

For Social Prescribing Teams and NHS Link Workers

Please note that this Brightlife Prompt Sheet is intended for the experienced Social Prescribing Coordinators and therefore does not include basic information or prompts on topics such as safeguarding awareness, ensuring people have sufficient medication, use of active listening skills and how to manage silences.

If you are new to Telephone Befriending and require further background information please visit <https://www.befriending.co.uk/resources/covid-19-support/>

Suggested topics and advice for participants

1. Health

- How are you feeling today – any concerns or worries?
- Are you adhering to Government/ NHS guidance?
- Who is supporting you and do you have any unmet needs?

2. Emotional Wellbeing

- Do you have a routine for each day or would you like help to devise one?
- Are you regularly calling a friend, relative or neighbour? During this time of isolation it is important to feel connected. Maybe set a planner and have contact with people at set times and/or days to ensure you speak to someone most days.
- If you do not have anyone you can call, we can offer you support over the phone or arrange someone to have regular befriending calls with you through Age UK.
- Ensure that you talk about topics other than coronavirus and negative things e.g. what are they doing to occupy their time? what games are they playing? what book are they reading...and is it good?
- Send and ask for pictures of people's day... the flowers appearing in the garden.
- Write a letter to someone. Reach out to someone in a way that doesn't happen as often anymore. Spend the time to put together a letter to someone you love.
- Keep a diary or start a blog.
- Create a jar of plans or activities to do in the future when the outbreak is over.
- Watch a TED Talk. TED talks are short informative talks on all sorts of topics. They are educational and insightful: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TEDtalksDirector>

2. Emotional Wellbeing continued...

- Listen to a podcast or a new audio book. There are hundreds of free podcasts available on Apple and Spotify. There really is something for everyone.
- Read a book you've had on your shelf and been meaning to get to.
- Practice Mindfulness or do some breathing exercises; there are many helpful apps you can download onto your phone such as CALM and Headspace. Alternatively, there are also guided meditation videos on YouTube you can access for free.
- Limit the amount of time that you spend watching news about coronavirus as this can affect our wellbeing and increase feelings of depression, helplessness and concern for loved ones.

3. Physical Activity

Ideas to make the most of your self-isolation:

- Take regular exercise throughout the day. Guidelines suggest getting up and moving around every 45 minutes if possible - not spending hours sat watching TV or sitting still.
- If you can go outside, take a walk each day (whilst observing the social distancing regulations).
- Build an amount of physical exercise into your daily routine to suit your ability. Maybe try to increase your number of 'sit to stand' sessions each day, or the number of times you do this in 30 seconds or 1 minute to gain strength and mobility, thus reducing the risk of falls and keeping independence. Try watching and joining in with TV exercise sessions or use YouTube or other sites and enjoy keeping active.
- Is there a job around the house that you've been meaning to get to, a drawer or cupboard to tidy? or a hobby you never got around to starting?
- Do you have a garden and do guidelines allow you time outdoors – gardening is a great physical activity.

How to look after your mental health and wellbeing if you are staying home.

1. Plan your day

- We are all adjusting to a new, rather strange, way of life. This can be a risk to our mental wellbeing.
- As tempting as it might be to stay in pyjamas all day, regular routines are essential for our identity, self-confidence and purpose.
- Try to start your day at roughly the same time you usually would and aim to set aside time each day for movement, relaxation, connection and reflection.

2. Move more every day

- Being active reduces stress, increases energy levels, makes us more alert and helps us sleep better.
- Explore different ways of adding physical movement and activity to your day and find what works best for you.
- Even at home, there will be lots of ways to exercise and keep your body moving.
- Read our guide on keeping active and visit [Every Mind Matters](#) for some ideas to get you started.

3. Try a relaxation technique

- Relaxing and focusing on the present can help improve your mental health and lighten negative feelings.
- Try some different meditation or breathing exercises to see what helps. For example, sometimes we can be so tense that we do not even remember what being relaxed feels like. Progressive muscle relaxation teaches you to recognise when you are starting to get tense and how to relax.
- A range of relaxation techniques, including progressive muscle relaxation are available from the NHS.

4. Connect with others

- Staying at home, especially if you live on your own, can feel lonely. Find creative ways to keep in touch with co-workers, friends, family, and others to help you (and them) feel more connected and supported.
- Explore ways of connecting that work for you, whether by post, over the phone, social media, or video-chat. This could be anything, from sharing a cup of tea over video, playing an online game together, or simply sending a supportive text message.

Advice from the MIND website continued...

5. Take time to reflect and practice self-compassion

- Make time every day to reflect on what went well. It's important to recognise your successes and the things you are grateful for, no matter how small. Consider keeping a gratitude journal each day where you could write two or three of these things every night before you go to bed.
- Mindfulness techniques may also help you focus on the present rather than dwelling on unhelpful thoughts (though they may not be helpful for those experiencing more severe depression).
- MIND has a number of relaxation and other digital exercises on our website.

6. Improve your sleep

- Feelings of uncertainty and changes to daily life may mean you have more difficulty sleeping.
- There is a lot you can do to improve your sleep. Aim to go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even at the weekend if you can, and try to get some natural sunlight (by opening your curtains and windows) where possible. This helps to regulate your body clock which can help you sleep better. Wind down before bed by avoiding using your phone, tablet, computer or TV for an hour before bedtime.
- A range of [tips for improving sleep](#) can be found on our website and from [Every Mind Matters](#).

You can find more tips for looking after your mental health [here](#).

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