The aim of these Wellbeing Workbooks is to help you learn more about stress and the things you can do to help reduce your stress when you feel very worried or anxious.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- There are four workbooks altogether and they should each take around 2 hours to complete
- The workbooks should supplement the information you are learning about mental health in your school classes
- Each workbook has information, exercises and games to help you learn about wellbeing
- The exercises in the workbooks are simply there to aid your learning. You do not have to share any of your answers to the exercises; you can keep them as private as you would like to
- If you are feeling really stressed and think you would like to talk to someone about this, there are phone numbers and websites at the back of this book which might be useful
IN SESSION 1 WE LOOKED AT:

- What stress is
- What causes stress
- How stress affects you
- What keeps stress going
- How you can change your lifestyle to make yourself feel less stressed
- How you can begin to deal with stress

IN SESSION 2 WE WILL LOOK AT:

In Session 2 we will be looking at stress and how it affects the way we behave. We will be working on:

- How stress affects our behavior
  - Avoidance
  - Under-activity
  - Over-activity
- How stress can affect our thought process
- How to work on avoidance and under-activity
- Things to help when you do too much
EXERCISE: HOW IS LIFE JUST NOW?

On the scale below, how good was life this week?

0 10

As bad as it could possibly be  As good as it could possibly be

Now think about what has been happening in your life recently to make you feel this way. Think about the good things and the bad things:
EXERCISE: WHAT MAKES A ‘GOOD LIFE’?

On the scale below, mark where you think you would need to score in order to feel you had a ‘good life’

0________________________________________10
As bad as it could possibly be As good as it could possibly be

How would you know that you had reached a ‘good quality of life”? What would you be doing differently compared to now, if anything?

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Stress can be caused by lots of things happening in our life all at once. This can make us feel like there is too much to deal with at one time.

In the last session, we learned that the best way to deal with a lot of stress is to break the problem down and approach it in chunks. Today we will focus on how to make good changes to our everyday behaviour to deal with stress.

To help you make beneficial changes to how you behave when you are stressed, it would be helpful to look at how you behaved before you were stressed and how you behave now. The next exercise will help you with these questions. Take your time and do each question one at a time.
EXERCISE:

When you feel relaxed, what do you do?

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How do you feel emotionally and physically when you are relaxed?

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The word search below shows different situations which we may find hard when we are stressed. Think about how stress has affected you in these activities and what you could do to reduce this effect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SHOPPING</th>
<th>PRESENTING</th>
<th>GOING OUT</th>
<th>SLEEPING</th>
<th>EATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOING TO SCHOOL</td>
<td>MOTIVATION</td>
<td>WORKING</td>
<td>STUDYING</td>
<td>EXERCISE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TALKING TO PEOPLE</td>
<td>MOOD</td>
<td>PLANNING</td>
<td>CLEANING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The word search below shows different situations which we may find hard when we are stressed. Think about how stress has affected you in these activities and what you could do to reduce this effect.

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

How does stress affect your behaviour?

Stress affects our behaviour in many aspects of our everyday lives. We may avoid situations which have been stressful or emotional. We may increase or decrease several behaviours related to the stress we feel.

The list shows some ways in which stress can affect our everyday behaviour. You might experience all or some of the following:

- Stop talking to other people
- Stop answering the phone
- Stop taking part in fun hobbies
- Stop looking after yourself e.g. your diet or appearance changes
- Avoiding things
- Not sleeping
- Trying to do too many things
- Being very concerned with safety
- Unable to sit still
- Having arguments with other people
- Hesitating
- Talking more quickly

How does stress affect what you do?

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Do you do less - if so, in what way? What have you stopped doing?

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Do you avoid situations or activities- if yes, what sort of things do you avoid?

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Do you rush around trying to do too much - if yes, how so?

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AVOIDANCE

When we are stressed we may avoid stressful situations on purpose.

**FOR EXAMPLE** - You haven't done your homework and are worried about asking for help

RESULT - The teacher may become annoyed/disappointed, and could send letters home to parents/guardians

What is avoidance?

- Avoidance is a way of reducing our fears by escaping from things/situations that cause us stress

Why do we do it?

- We think we can't cope with a situation/person
- It can make us less stressed for a little while

But the more we avoid things, the more we can lose confidence in ourselves and our ability to cope in lots of different situations
TYPES OF AVOIDANCE

Simple Avoidance
- Physically avoiding particular situations such as a supermarket or dogs

Subtle avoidance
- Putting things off
- Not doing something outside our comfort zone
- Using others to hide behind
- Doing things to make yourself feel safe e.g. sitting near the exits in cinemas
- Not asking friends to go out in case they say no

WHY DO WE AVOID?

Stressful Situation: going to the shops

Bodily Symptoms

Avoid

Changes in behaviour

Worrying thoughts
WHAT DOES AVOIDANCE MEAN FOR YOU?

Follow the link here to do a jigsaw to find out what avoidance can do to you:

https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=1e07a82cd311

So we know that stress can make us avoid situations that might make us stressed. But, stress can also affect how much we are able to do. We can do too little (under-activity) or do too much (over-activity).
What is under-activity?

- When people feel stressed they often get tired easily and can't be bothered doing things they'd normally do. They tend to give up their hobbies and things that used to make them happy.
- If stress puts you in a bad mood, you might not want to open up to people around you.
- Being under-active can make you less confident and make you do even less.

How can under-activity affect you?

Being under-active can keep your feelings of stress and bad mood going. If you are under-active and in a bad mood for a while, this can sometimes lead to depression.

How does Under-Activity Affect You?

- Makes you feel worse. Depressed/low.
- Stop doing activities that you enjoy.
- Not feeling good about yourself, thinking you are worthless.
Stress can also make us want to do everything and to do it all the time. Our behaviour can increase the amount of work we do. This can be a good thing if we have a lot of things to do and places to be, but too much over-activity can make us burn out and become exhausted.

Am I doing too much?

Why am I always rushing around?

Do I ever relax?

Under-activity and over-activity can be seen as ways to avoid situations. For example, by keeping busy we can avoid some emotional issues.
Try to face the situations you find difficult or plan activities that you have stopped doing one by one.

The first time you face a difficult situation, it may take a while for the worry to fade. The next time, it may not be so bad and the worry will fade away the more you do this. Keep going!

The first time you may feel tired or demotivated when faced with a stressful situation, but your mood will improve if you are able to finish your plan and also acknowledge what steps you have achieved, no matter how small.

Each time you face your fears your anxiety won’t be as bad, and will drop off more quickly afterwards.

Planning ahead of stressful situations can make facing these situations easier, so you start coping better in times of stress.
HOW TO WORK ON AVOIDANCE AND UNDER-ACTIVITY

There are 5 steps that will help you in tackling your avoidance or inactivity.

**Step 1**
Make a list of things you have been avoiding/you have stopped doing.

**Step 2**
Choose which one to do first. List them in order of difficulty and start with which one you will find the easiest to do.

**Step 3**
State clearly and specifically what it is you want to do.

**Step 4**
Plan the steps to carry it out.

**Step 5**
Do it and review it.

Let's look at some examples and try it for ourselves. Here are two people, John and Rebecca, who are taking steps to improve avoidance and under activity.

Both John and Rebecca have been under a lot stress recently. As a result:

- John had some panic attacks in public places with a lot of people around and is now avoiding busy public places; this is having an impact on his social life
- Rebecca has slowly withdrawn from friends and family as her mood and confidence has been low
**STEP 1: LIST THINGS YOU HAVE STOPPED DOING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s List</th>
<th>Rebecca’s List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going into shops</td>
<td>Stopped going out with partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling by train</td>
<td>Stopped going to parents on a Sunday morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to cinema</td>
<td>Stopped going to gym with her friend Kate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOW IT’S YOUR TURN**

Make a list of the things that you’ve been avoiding / stopped doing

Step 1. Look back at Exercise 2 which looked at things you might want to change to have a better ‘quality of life’. Thinking about activity level - avoiding things; not doing much; doing too much, list the things you want to change here:
STEP 2: CHOOSE WHAT TO WORK ON FIRST

Do this by arranging your list in order of difficulty and start with what you will find the easiest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s List</th>
<th>Rebecca’s List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Going into shops</td>
<td>1. Going out with partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Going to cinemas</td>
<td>2. Going to parents’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Travelling by train</td>
<td>3. Going to gym with friend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOW IT’S YOUR TURN

Which one are you going to tackle first?

Step 2. Choose which one to tackle first. Do this by arranging the list in order of difficulty and start with what you will find the easiest to tackle first:
**STEP 3: STATE CLEARLY WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s List</th>
<th>Rebecca’s List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to go to my local shop and not rush around</td>
<td>I would like to start to spend time with my partner again and begin to talk to them again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan a slow increase in going to the shops, going first with Carl to get just a few things</td>
<td>Probably best if it’s the cinema to begin with so we don’t have to talk much but at least we will be spending time together again &amp; I’m getting out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOW IT’S YOUR TURN**

Be specific about what it is you are going to do

Step 3. Decide clearly and specifically what you would like to be able to do. Give details about where, when and how you imagine yourself doing it:

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### Step 4: Plan These Steps to Carry It Out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s Plan</th>
<th>Rebecca’s Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone Carl and arrange to go to the local shop tomorrow afternoon, it is quiet around 2pm.</td>
<td>Speak to partner and let them know that I want to start going out again – let them know that it will take time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy a paper, this will not take long.</td>
<td>Organise baby sitter on Wednesday night at 7pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will try to walk around at a slow pace.</td>
<td>Buy tickets in advance so can’t change my mind or speak to partner to ask them to pick them up on way home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will practice relaxation before I leave the house. I can also check that I am breathing steadily and slowly when I am in the shop.</td>
<td>Make sure I have time to get ready and remind myself of the importance of seeing the plan through.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOW IT’S YOUR TURN**

Write down the benefits of tackling this.

Step 4. Plan the steps to carry this out. Again give specific details: dates, times, exactly what you will do – all the ‘when’s, ‘where’s and ‘how’s’. Write it here:

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STEP 5: TRY IT AND REVIEW IT

- How did you feel and what were you thinking when you were doing the task you set yourself?
- What did others do that helped it go well?
- How did you feel after you carried out your plan?
- Was there anything you would do differently the next time?
- Acknowledge each step of your achievements, no matter how small

Make a note for how things went – what went well, what didn’t go so well, what you have gained from this experience and any ideas for future practice.

Write your notes here:
PLANNING THE NEXT STEPS

- Plan and practice the first step in your plan (Step 4) until you can manage this without difficulty, then move onto planning your next goal.
- In relation to avoidance, do not move onto the next step until you have mastered the first and are no longer experiencing physical symptoms.

Points to remember:

- Some people with depression may find that it takes time until they start to enjoy things again as much as they used to.
- Some people with anxiety may find that it takes time until their physical symptoms begin to fade. By practicing regularly, physical symptoms will pass.
- Set yourself small, manageable goals, which will have a high chance of success. Take one small step at a time.

After each step:

- Acknowledge each step and perhaps give yourself a small reward every time you complete each task.
- Share your success with friends and family.

So that’s us dealing with avoidance and under-activity. The other behavioural extreme that stress can cause is that we can become over-active – which can cause us additional stress.
Tips for dealing with over-activity

- Make a daily list (use activity diary in handout) to plan the week ahead
- Stick to one task at a time and see it through
- Make the amount of activity reasonable including time for rest and relaxation
- Set aside time for yourself and to do things you enjoy
- Remember you are not superhuman

Motivation
Remember, it will not be easy making changes especially when you are stressed so it is important to try to work on your motivation levels. If you are feeling low or anxious then your motivation will already be low or you will probably be feeling very tired which will also affect your motivation.

Session 3 - Stress and Thoughts
1) How can stress affect your behaviour?
   a. Taking time to relax
   b. Reading a book
   c. Over-activity – taking on too many things at one time
   d. Meditating

2) Why do we avoid some situations when we are stressed?
   a. People have learned through past experiences, thoughts and behaviours to avoid some stressful situations in order to reduce the feeling of stress
   b. When people are stressed, they avoid some situations because they are lazy
   c. People may avoid some situations when they are stressed because they are too busy
   d. Stress can make people sleep all the time and they might sleep through stressful situations

3) How does under activity affect you?
   a. You are doing too much at one time and this can lead to exhaustion
   b. You may stop doing activities you enjoy, which can make you feel bad about yourself, which can in turn make you feel worse
   c. You may avoid stressful situations all together
   d. You might find something fun to do in order not to be bored

4) Which of the following does not describe over-activity?
   a. Doing too much work
   b. Not finding time to relax
   c. Rushing around
   d. Being too exhausted to do anything

5) Which of the following is not a helpful way to reduce stress?
   a. Reading a book
   b. Listening to music
   c. Exercise
   d. Taking on more work at one time

Answers: 1-C, 2-A, 3-B, 4-D, 5-D
USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Childline**
  - Phone: 0800 1111 (free 24 hour)
  - [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

- **Mental Health Foundation**
  - Information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities
  - [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

- **Mind**
  - Promotes views and needs of people with mental health problems
  - Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm)
  - Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

- **NHS**
  - NHS 24: phone 111
  - [www.nhs.org.uk](http://www.nhs.org.uk)

- **PAPYRUS**
  - Young suicide prevention
  - Phone: 0800 068 4141 (Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm & 7-10pm. Weekends 2-5pm).
  - [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

- **Rethink Mental Illness**
  - Support and advice for people living with mental illness
  - Phone: 0800 5000 927 (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm)
  - [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

- **SafeSpot**
  - An app and website designed for young people to improve coping skills and access information about mental health
  - Website: [www.safespot.org.uk](http://www.safespot.org.uk)
  - App: available on Google play/Apple store for free

- **Samaritans**
  - Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair
  - Phone: 116 123 (free, 24hour)
  - [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)