**MINDYOUR5 categories**

Here are five categories that if included daily, will help look after your brain and through this, bring good ‘mind health’ or positive mental health.

MINDYOUR5 is a fun programme:

* It’s relaxing
* It helps you think better
* It helps you deal with emotions better
* It makes you feel more comfortable with friends and family

Practice one element from each category every day!



**Healthy Practice**

**This reminds you to look after your body in order to look after your brain. For example, it helps to practice a regular sleep routine or to eat a balanced diet.**

**Want to sleep but can’t?**

Here are some sleep tips to try:

* Decide on starting a sleep training routine – give yourself 30 days to learn a new sleep pattern.
* Plan a sleep routine. For example, your routine could look like this:
	+ Don’t drink caffeine after 3 pm
	+ Try and eat by 7.30 pm
	+ Put away screens an hour before you sleep
	+ Do something relaxing (it will be better if it is a little old-fashioned!) for example, read, listen to an audiobook, have a sleep playlist
* Tidy up your bedroom and make it cosy and comfortable for sleeping. Having fewer distractions helps to stay focussed on dropping off to sleep
* Keep your bedroom for sleeping as much as you can during this training period. Our brains look for cues to help us sleep. If you associate your bedroom with staying awake, having fun or being stressed, then it’s harder to train it to associate it with rest and security
* Cover your clock and don’t check the time. Checking makes us more worried about missing out on sleep
* Avoid sleeping in the day, it messes up your body clock
* If you really, really can’t sleep – don’t toss and turn, get out of bed, do some gentle stretches, breathing or think of things that relax you. Then try again



**Activity**

**Activities are very helpful for brain health. These include most sporty and physical activities, creative activities (e.g. art), calming/soothing activities (e.g. mindfulness/having a massage), exciting activities (e.g. a new game).**

**Do an activity every day and in between activities have short rests.**

Want to learn to relax? This is an activity too.

Here are some tips to help you relax:

* Create a special relaxing place in your mind or in reality. Focus on some special features that are in this place and when you do, say the word ‘relax’ quietly to yourself
* Practice breathing into your stomach. Imagine you have a balloon in your stomach you are trying to blow up
* Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of 4, hold for 2 and breathe out through your nose or mouth, slowly for 6
* Make yourself a relaxing playlist of music and keep it to play at times of tension so you can let go. You can also create a collection of calming pictures, or have a soothing activity you can do



**Positive Thinking**

**How we think will influence our emotions and our actions. Some thoughts are positive and uplifting and others are negative. Negative thoughts can make us feel unhappy or anxious.**

**The way we think is unique to each of us. Learning to manage our thoughts and get a good balance between negative and positive is very helpful.**

Here are some popular quotes about thinking for you to (ahem) think about!

*We cannot approach a problem with the same thinking we used when we created them.*

*Albert Einstein*

*A dog is a man’s best friend. When a dog looks at you, the dog is not thinking what kind of a person you are. The dog is not judging you. Apply that thinking yourself, maybe you could be someone’s best friend.*

*Anonymous*

You can’t change who you are, but you can change what you have in your head so that it can change what you do.



**Positive Emotions**

**Knowing what you feel and being able to express and manage emotions is very helpful.**

**For example, when you watch a movie, observe what emotions this brings about in you. Talk with someone else who has also watched it and share what you experienced. See what you have in common and how you differ.**



**Your Connections**

**Friends, family and relationships are really important to help us feel happy. Leaving some time every day to spend a little face to face time with some or all of them can be very good for positive mental health.**

**Tip: Connections are not only about being with others. Try and connect to nature every day – go for a walk or do some work in the garden instead of in your room.**

**Think of different activities that fit each section and try and practice them every day. You can keep a note if you wish.**