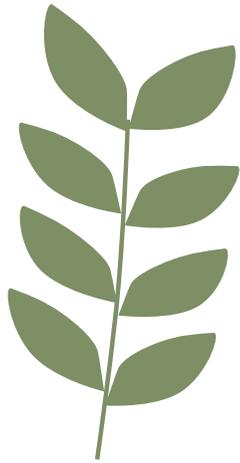


# A GUIDE TO LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



**ST CLEMENTS  
SURGERY**

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## 1. Eat well and stay hydrated

Eating well and staying hydrated are often neglected when people are struggling with their mental health. However, keeping well fed and hydrated are known to help stabilise mood and energy levels.

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## 2. Keep active

Keeping active is one of the best things you can do to look after your mental health. It causes your brain to release endorphins - the chemicals behind happiness.

Build some physical activity into your daily routine, if possible.

This can be simple activities like:

- A short walk
- Dancing to music
- Following an online workout
- Cleaning your home
- Moving around the house to a different room, if you have been still for a while.

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## 3. Set daily goals - no matter how small

In the morning, set a goal for the day - it is a great way to create motivation and purpose.

Keep the goal specific and achievable.

Examples include:

- Reading a chapter of a book
- Going for a walk
- Completing a crossword or puzzle
- Reaching out to a friend or relative
- Reflecting on your mood and thoughts in a diary.

## 4. Optimise your sleeping

Low mood and sleep are closely related.

A low or anxious mood can impair sleep, which can then further worsen mental health.

The best strategies to improve sleep are:

1. Find a relaxing activity to do before sleep, such as reading, meditating or listening to music, the radio or an online 'sleep story'.
2. Minimise screen-time before bed - artificial screen light can prevent sleep.
3. Download the free app **Sleepio** proven to help overcome sleep difficulties.
4. See your GP - there are sleeping pills and other gentle anti-anxiety medications that can help you relax in the evening.

## 5. Get as much fresh air, sunlight and nature as possible

Exposure to fresh air and nature is a very effective way to reduce stress, anxiety and improve your mood.

The positive effects of nature can be felt by:

- Regular walks
- Spending time with the windows open to let in fresh air
- Finding a space to sit near a window with a view of trees or the sky
- Finding some flowers or potted plants for your home
- Getting as much natural light as you can
- Listening to recordings of natural sounds in the background of your activities, such as birdsong or rainfall.

## 6. Find ways to relax and be creative

Schedule activities you enjoy into your daily routine or try new skills:

- drawing, painting, or sewing
- DIY
- mindfulness
- singing or listening to music
- yoga or meditation
- free online courses by FutureLearn.



## 7. Connect with others

Social contact helps many people with low mood.

Calling friends, relatives or neighbours can be very uplifting.

Reflecting on thoughts and feelings with others helps rationalise negative thoughts and detach yourself from negative emotions.

If you do not have anyone to talk to, register for **free with Side by Side**, a fantastic online community for peer support, with someone available to talk 24/7.

[sidebyside.mind.org.uk/register](http://sidebyside.mind.org.uk/register)

## 8. Try Talking Space

Talking Space is one of the best resources to help overcome stress, anxiety or depression.

It is a completely free, confidential service which you can access entirely from home.

It is scientifically proven to be effective in improving mental health.

They offer a range of talking therapies and wellbeing activities to overcome anxiety and depression.

Anyone can book an appointment online or via telephone.

01865 901222

[www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/talkingspaceplus)

## 9. Where else can I find support?

### For emergency support:

- Call **999** - if your life, or someone else's life, is in immediate danger.
- Call **111** - if it is out of hours for your GP and you need medical help quickly, but not immediately.
- Your **GP** - if the surgery is open and you need medical help quickly, but not immediately.
- Call **Oxford Safe Haven on 01865 903037** - if you experience a mental health crisis at the weekend (Friday-Monday 6pm-10pm).
- Call **Papyrus Hopeline on 0800 0684141** - for confidential suicide prevention advice, available 9am-midnight.
- Call **Samaritans on 116 123** - for confidential emotional support if you feel distress or despair. Available 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

### For non-emergency support:

#### Our team at St Clements

If you are struggling, do not hesitate to book an appointment with one of our GPs for support and guidance.

#### Oxford Mental Health Helpline

0800 7830119  
A 24/7 helpline for accessing information and professional support.

#### Oxfordshire Mind Guide

[www.oxmindguide.org.uk](http://www.oxmindguide.org.uk)  
01865 247788

This directory outlines the variety of mental health support and services available for different circumstances, from Eating Disorders to Alcohol Dependency. Support includes courses, groups and drop-ins.



## 10. Try some self-help apps

### To reduce thoughts of self-harm or suicide:



#### Calm Harm - free

Reduces urges to self-harm and manage emotions in a more positive way.



#### Bluelce - free

Helps young people manage their emotions and reduce the urge to self-harm.



#### Stay Alive - free

A suicide prevention app with tools to help you stay safe in a crisis.

### To improve sleep:



#### Sleepio - free

An online sleep improvement programme, clinically proven to help you fall asleep faster and stay asleep.

### To overcome stress, anxiety or depression:



#### SilverCloud - free

An 8-week course to help you manage stress, anxiety and depression at your own pace.



#### My Possible Self - The Mental Health App - free

Learn how to manage fear, anxiety and stress and tackle unhelpful thinking.



#### Catch It - free

Learn to manage negative thoughts and look at problems differently.



#### WorryTree - free

Notice, record and manage your worries using cognitive behavioural therapy techniques.



#### Feeling Good: positive mindset - free

Use audio tracks to help relax your body and mind and build your confidence



#### Cove - free

Create music to reflex emotions like joy, sadness and anger to help express how you feel.