

OLICAT SCHOOLS

FIVE WAYS FOR FIVE DAYS
FOR WELLBEING

Issue 3 May 4th 2020



We hope that you are staying safe and well during these unprecedented times. This week’s edition has been written for us by a ‘Specialist Leader for Wellbeing’ who shares some great ideas for being present in our lives. Please read on...

All of the ideas in this issue give options for cultivating present moment awareness. This involves monitoring and attending to current experience rather than predicting future events or dwelling on the past.

Studies show that if an individual can move their focus regularly to present moment experience, that there are numerous health benefits including lower levels of perceived stress, anxiety and depression, improved

mood and a sense of enhanced wellbeing.

One study suggested that being present and aware in the midst of daily hassles, increases stress resilience and decreases the impact of harmful stressors.

Connection

Written by Faiy Rushton

The current situation means many of us have had to turn to our laptops, tablets and phones as a way to stay connected with other people, either for work or to keep in touch with friends and family. How wonderful that we have this way of communicating and what a difference it can make when we might otherwise feel cut off from other people.

The only issue we might begin to have is when online communication is prioritised over communication and connection with those that we live with. How can we prevent this or tackle device or screen use dominating our interactions and making us feel disconnected from those that we live with? How can we improve connection with those we love?

Sit down together as a family and discuss technology and limiting its use at times when the family gathers, i.e. meal times, time spent together in leisure time; walks, playing games, watching TV.

Make it a rule that if someone wants to talk to you that you put down or switch off the device that you are on and give your full attention to the conversation. If we don’t put the device aside, we are sending the message that what we are doing is more important than the person in front of us.



Discuss times when technology use is appropriate; for work, for learning, connection with friends and leisure but also suggest that there are times in the day when we all need a break from technology and offer ideas for alternative non technology based activities for the whole family to engage in - connecting time.



Click on this link to find more ways to connect with each other.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/uk/blog/the-creativity-cure/201509/8-ways-really-connect-each-other>



How will you improve your connection with someone that you love?

FIVE WAYS FOR FIVE DAYS FOR WELLBEING

Take Notice

During these times many of us might find ourselves trying to make sense of what is happening and trying to plan for the future but struggling because things feel so uncertain at the moment. One of the ways we can help ourselves when we notice ourselves worrying or feeling frustration, is to bring ourselves into the present moment, the here and now, by noticing what is in our experience right now. One of the ways we can do that is through coming to our senses, our physical senses and observing what we can see, what we can hear, what we can feel via touch, what we can smell and what we can taste. Through coming to awareness of what sensations we are noticing in the body, we divert our attention away from the worry thoughts and connect with our current reality rather than what might happen. There is a really helpful exercise called STOP that you can use help you with this.

Stop – in the normal busyness of life (or even while sitting in the garden), let yourself pause for a moment

Take some conscious breaths – notice where you feel the breath in the body; at the nose, chest or stomach and bring your full attention to each in and out breath for a few breaths

Observe – tune into your five senses – what can I see, hear, touch, taste and smell?

Proceed with doing what you were doing.



Children may also be experiencing worry at this time. You could try doing the **STOP** practice with children, inside or outside your home. For example; **STOP**, focus on your breath, tune in to what you can hear and then carry on with what you were doing. You might ask your child what they have noticed.

Keep Learning



With many of parents feeling under pressure to make sure that their children keep up with their studies, at the same time as managing working from home or taking care of younger children or having responsibilities for the care of other people, it can feel like an impossible task.

It can be important to remember that learning comes in all shapes and sizes. In a recent Zoom call with my extended family where we were talking about this issue, my brother said that almost anything you do in the home or while taking your daily exercise can turn into learning or a lesson and if this less formal learning is

initiated by a child, even better.

He gave an example of his eight year old son being really interested in identifying different bird songs when they were out for their daily walk and so they began recording the songs and once they got home working out which songs matched to which bird. If you're interested you could have a go yourself. Click here.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/16/home-birds-how-to-spot-20-of-the-most-common-species-from-your-window-walk-or-garden>

It's a Riddle

Did you solve last week's riddles?

- 1. Louise has 5 children, 4 girls and one boy.
- 2. A piano has 88 keys.
- 3. We leave behind footprints.

This Week's Riddle

If a bird is sitting on a twig, how can you get the twig without disturbing the bird?



This could also apply to identifying birds that you can see.

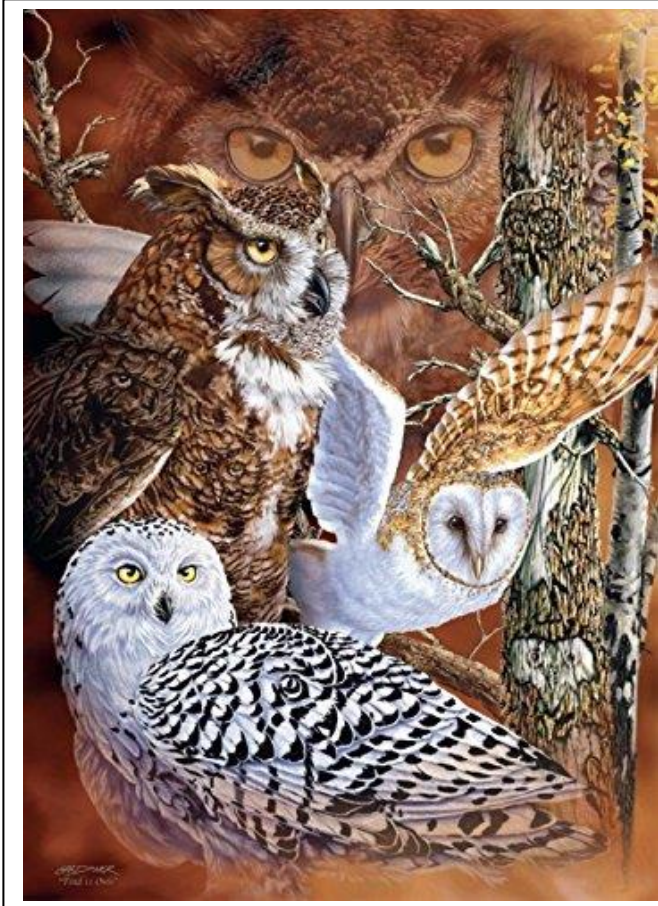
So how about considering what other everyday things that you do could be learning for your child?

WHAT CAN YOU NOTICE?

How many owls can you see in the picture?

FOR CREATIVE MINDS

Can you sketch some of the things that you see in your garden or out of the window?



Be Active and Keep Well



Nothing was more heartwarming than the story of second world war veteran, Captain Tom Moore, who has just been made an honorary Colonel to mark his 100th birthday, walking 100 lengths of his garden to raise more than £30 million so far for the NHS.

How about making your walk a mindful walk?

- As you walk, turn your attention to the sensations you can feel in the body; feet in contact with the ground, the swing of your arms, your breathing.
- Tune in, in turn, to your five senses; what you can see, hear, touch, smell and taste.
- When you notice things that capture your attention, allow yourself to pause and take in the moment.



WHAT JUST 15 MINUTES OF WALKING PER DAY DOES TO THE BODY

REALITY FARMACY

During this time many of us find ourselves at home with very few options for being as active as we might normally be. One of the easiest ways we can be active is through making the most of the government guidelines to go out once a day and take a walk as daily exercise.

The benefits for our physical and mental health are clear. The research shows that a daily walk can protect against obesity and type 2 diabetes, improve our heart health, reduce the risk of some cancers, and importantly, combat depression and anxiety.

- Ideas to increase your steps as a family:*
- Set yourself a challenge to walk a marathon throughout a week.
 - Walk indoors on the spot or lengths of a room or use a treadmill if you have one.
 - Walk lengths of your garden.
 - Explore different walking routes from your home that enable you to maintain social distance.
 - Walk 10,000 steps a day (most phones have a Health app that help you record these).

- Ideas for making walking fun for children:**
- Make a scavenger hunt – write a list or have pictures of things to spot.
 - Take pictures – create a scrap book from the pictures.
 - Nature rubbings – paper and crayons; take rubbings from tree trunks, the pavement, a leaf
 - Go on a bug hunt – take a magnifying glass and look at ants, spiders, beetles.
 - Gather ‘treasures’ for an art project.
 - Turn your walk into an obstacle course - jump over the cracks in the pavement, run a circle around the bench, touch that tree. Run fast, STOP!
 - Play ‘I Spy’
 - What does that sign mean? – ask what they think the signs around them mean and if nobody knows look it up when you get home.

WALKING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The evidence base has grown over the last 21 years and we reviewed what is now known about walking and mental health in 2018

Walking may improve positive mental health outcomes such as happiness and self-esteem

A seminal review of walking and health was published in 1997 but noted that mental health had been "surprisingly little studied"

There is strong evidence that walking can prevent and treat depression and anxiety (strongest evidence for depression)

Walking outdoors in natural environments may bring additional mental health benefits

This infographic is based on a scoping review of walking and mental health. We looked at 13,014 studies and analysed 50 of them. This was published in June 2018 in BJSM.

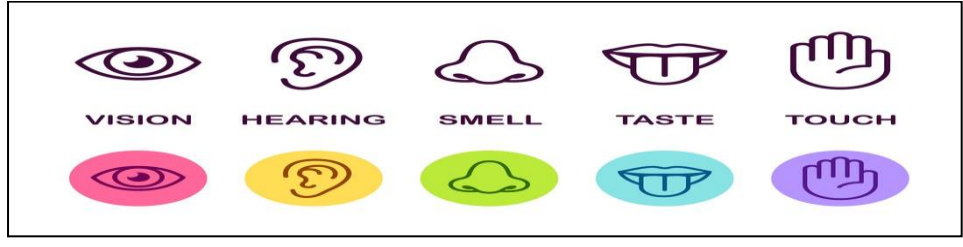
Kelly P. Williamson C. Niven AG, Hunter RE, Mutrie N, Richards J. 2018. Walking on sunshine: scoping review of the evidence for walking and mental health. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*. 52(12), 800-806. doi: 10.1136/bjsports-2017-098827

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For young observers...
What words will you use to describe what you see on your walk this week?

FIVE WAYS FOR FIVE DAYS FOR WELLBEING

We know that giving to others has a really positive impact on our own sense of wellbeing...

Give...



Phone a family member

With people having to self- isolate it's more important than ever that we check in with family and friends who might be having to do this.

One of the ways that we can give to those around us is through giving our time and attention and letting those we care about know that they are not alone and that we care about them.

Ways to check in:

- Send a text or voice message on a regular basis.
- Use snail mail and send a letter or card to let them know you are thinking about them.
- Dropping off or leaving a favourite treat.
- Put aside some time to call a loved one and give the call your full attention.
- Arrange a call on Zoom, Facetime or Skype to connect or potentially connect a family group or group of friends together.
- Send an email or e card.

Food banks in the UK are in crisis during this time, some are having to close and therefore need all the help they can get to keep going and continue to support the hardest hit families.

- Search <https://trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/> to find your local food bank.
- Items to donate – UHT milk, tinned fruit, tinned vegetables, beans, spaghetti, long life juice, tomato/pasta sauce, soup, tea, coffee, pasta, rice, noodles, cereal, rice pudding, custard, biscuits
- Items like toiletries and hygiene products are also needed.
- Many supermarkets have collection points.
- Volunteer to work at the food bank.
- Arrange a collection at your school, church or workplace.

How do food banks work?

- Families and individuals are usually referred by doctors, health professionals, social workers and Citizens Advice.
- Contact your nearest food bank to get a referral from an agency who will supply you with a voucher.
- Once referred, the person gets a voucher that can be redeemed for an emergency parcel with a minimum of three days worth of food.



Spiritual Reflection...

