

Wellbeing tip - number 6

It's OK not to be OK.

So far we have spent some time thinking about how we can plan for things to go as well as possible, what to do when things don't quite go to plan, how to distract ourselves from difficult thoughts and how to rest and sleep properly.

It is, of course, worth acknowledging that it is not realistic to expect ourselves to feel positive all of the time and that it is completely normal to have days when we feel low or experience times when we feel unhappy. All of these are perfectly normal feelings and part of the full range of emotions that we experience as human beings – anger, fear, disappointment, hatred, loss, grief, loneliness, shame. We are living in very uncertain times at the moment, times that none of us have gone through before, so it is completely to be expected that we may be feeling more anxious or worried than usual. Difficult feelings are a normal part of life and we should not interpret them as meaning that we have somehow failed...and just because we are feeling like this today does not mean that we will feel like this tomorrow or that we will always feel like this.

It's OK to let others know you're not OK.

Sometimes we can be fearful of telling others how we feel in case they judge us and perceive us as weak. 'Putting on a brave face' and pretending that we are feeling OK when we are not can get in the way of us receiving support and can delay the process of us feeling OK again...some of us are very good at pretending that everything is OK when it is not!!



When someone asks how you are, instead of saying 'I'm fine' think of something you can say instead. The phrases I tend to use are **'Actually, I'm struggling a bit today'** or 'I don't feel I'm coping very well today'.

What would your phrase be to let someone know you are having a difficult day?

To help build your confidence in doing this, practise on others how you would like them to respond to you. For example, if someone tells you they are 'fine', **ask them a specific question about what they have been doing to open up the conversation.** You might find they are pretending too! Or if they say they are having a bit of a bad day, try to find out why. You'll be amazed at how much you can help just by asking and listening.



Sleepy



Confused



Silly



Happy



Sad



Furious



Surprised



Angry



Embarrassed



Loving



Bored



Sick



Scared



Amused



Friendly



Frustrated

Sometimes we may feel 'low' or 'not right' and we don't even understand why which can lead to us blaming ourselves. Having a deeper understanding of **what** you are feeling and **why** may help you to move through the difficult emotion.

1. Try to identify more specifically **which emotion** you are feeling. Are there any you could add to the poster?

2. Try to identify **what happened** to make you feel this way.

3. Use points 1 & 2 when letting others know that you're not OK so **they know specifically how to help** you or as an explanation and a reason to be kind to yourself.

Sometimes we simply can't work out why we feel low and this is OK too. We can just say: 'I've thought about it but I can't work out why I'm low'.