

Health & Wellbeing

June / 2020



Taking Notice means actively bringing our mind's attention and interest to the world around us and ourselves; what is going on externally to us and what is happening within us. Taking notice means being present in the moment; observing what's beautiful or unusual in the world. It means being aware of our thoughts and feelings as they arise, without getting lost in them. It means savouring the moment.

Throughout our lives' many of us will experience times where we find ourselves lost in our own thoughts. We may find that we are so busy making plans, going from task-to-task, going from one place to the next and pushing forward in many different directions that we don't take time to reflect and take notice of the world around us. At other times in our lives, we may find that we aren't very busy in the same way – but are occupying our minds with 'doing nothing'; we can find ourselves worrying about the future and being bogged-down with unhealthy thoughts and negative feelings. In both cases, we can find ourselves not taking the time to pay attention to the present moment – the here and now. By taking notice and being in the present, we can improve our mental health and sense of wellbeing.

Being aware of the present moment and your own feelings and thoughts, can help you to positively change how you're feeling about life. This is also known as mindfulness and it can really help you to be calm and more able to deal with what life might throw at you. It can be as simple as taking five minutes out of your day to appreciate something new or noticing the seasons changing.

Why is 'taking notice' important for our mental health and wellbeing?

- Taking notice can help to reduce worry, anxiety and depression.
- Taking notice can help to improve our self-awareness.
- Taking notice promotes positive behaviour change.



Challenge yourself and your family to complete these 14 **TAKE NOTICE** challenges over the next four weeks.

Have a 'clear the clutter' day.	Listen to a new piece of music and think about how it makes you feel.
Go for a walk and sit for a while, notice what you see, smell and hear.	Plant some seeds and watch them grow.
Sit outside your house or in your garden and list all the things of a certain colour - it is amazing how much you will spot.	Get creative and take some photos of the world around you. Focus on capturing what's in front of you.
Ask someone how they are feeling and really listen to what they say.	Try beginning to practice mindfulness - there are some fantastic Apps available.
Make some bread - notice the feel of the dough, the shapes you can make, the smell of the yeast.	Find a piece of artwork by a famous painter - each member of the family write 5 things they notice or feel about the painting - share your thoughts with each other - I wonder how different they will be?
Sit in silence for 5 minutes.	Find some breathing exercises and practice them together.
Eat mindfully - savour each mouthful	Notice those around you - how could you make their day?

Ready, set, go!

Taking notice sounds a lovely idea but it takes effort and practice. In our busy lives we can forget to stop, to breathe and to notice. We forget. If this lock down period has taught us anything then it is to remember the simple things in life. Our family units; appreciating our friendships; taking walks; breathing the fresh air; enjoying the sun on our faces; making our own bread; playing board games. This time has been tough in so many ways, for so many people and on so many levels- but one thing we can do in these times is 'take notice.'

www.2aspire.org.uk

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Useful Resources for being ACTIVE



Resources that may be useful for adults to learn to 'TAKE NOTICE':

Moodzone

Get ideas on how to take part in mindfulness at www.nhs.uk/moodzone

Action for Happiness

Action for Happiness is a movement for positive social change and promotion of wellbeing. They bring together people who want to play a part in creating a happier society for everyone. The monthly calendars are a great resource for the whole family.

www.actionforhappiness.org

Mindapples

Mindapples promotes mentally healthy living for everyone by promoting simple, daily activities.

Mindapples.org

Mental Health Partnerships Five Ways app

The Five Ways to Wellbeing app, developed by Somerset Public Health, helps people improve their well-being through everyday activities. You can find out more here:

www.mentalhealthpartnerships.com/resource/five-ways-to-wellbeing-app

<http://www.pocketmindfulness.com/6-mindfulness-exercises-you-can-try-today/>

https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/body.cfm?id=22&iirf_redirect=1

Reminder of ways we can take notice:

Taking notice in the everyday, being in nature, seeing arts and cultural events (lots online at the moment) and taking notice through mindfulness



These resources are great for children to help to teach them to 'TAKE NOTICE' - though all are great for the whole family:

Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is modern meditation, a unique web and app-based program developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to people's lives. Just as we eat well and stay fit to keep our body healthy, meditation is about mental health and looking after the mind. This app has specific sections for different ages of children and different foci and the best thing is that it is free!

<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>

<https://biglifejournal-uk.co.uk/blogs/blog/5-fun-mindfulness-activities-children-breathing-exercises>

Great books for kids

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Mindful-Kids-Mindfulness-Activities-%20Monkeys/dp/1782853278>

Five Senses Safari

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/344455071470166057/>

Scavenger Hunt

Write a list of things to 'spot' when you are out on your daily walk. See how many things your children can tick off the list. This will help them to notice things on their walk rather than just walking. You could also take a little bag and the children could collect things off a list and perhaps make a picture, write a story or a poem about it upon their return.

HAVE FUN - what will you notice?

"The present moment is the only moment available to us, and it is the door to all moments."

By Thich Nhat Hanh