



**Thorpey's  
Bat and Chat**

# Journal



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# Bat and Chat activity journal

You can use the ideas in this journal throughout the 12-week programme. The ideas should give you space to pause, reflect and work out your needs as you take part in the sessions.

Over the 12 weeks, this resource can help you capture small moments or try out tools that you find helpful. Before filling it in, you should read our Welcome to Thorpey's Bat and Chat resource to get a better understanding of what Bat and Chat involves.

We designed the ideas to help you notice change in a kind and realistic way, plus give yourself credit for showing up and taking part.

We hope it becomes a useful companion during Thorpey's Bat and Chat – you might even want to keep using it to support you beyond the programme.

## How do I use this journal?

You might use this journal to note:

- How you're feeling
- What you enjoyed in a session
- Something new you tried
- A positive you noticed about yourself

You can also use it between Bat and Chat sessions to reflect on how things are going day to day.

You can fill in the activities in whatever way works best for you. Some of us like to write a lot, others prefer writing a few words or using drawings. It's also OK if you'd prefer to just read through the pages.

There's no right or wrong way to use the resource, and you don't have to share anything unless you want to.

# What is self-care?

Self-care is about doing things that help us feel **good**, stay **healthy** and **cope** with difficult feelings or experiences. It could be something small like going for a walk, limiting phone use or talking to someone we trust.

We all have our own preferences for self-care – it will look different for all of us. **Remember that taking time for self-care is not selfish.**

## Why is self-care important?

When we take time to look after ourselves, it can make a real difference to our mental health and wellbeing. It might not fix everything overnight, but it can help you feel more in control and better able to cope with everyday life.



## Trying ideas from our self-care library

The Mind website has a library of activities and self-care ideas to help you look after your wellbeing. The library includes:

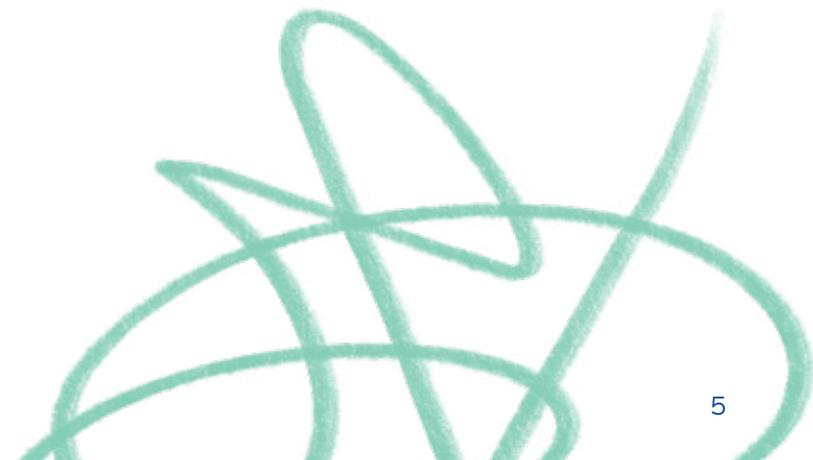
- Breathing exercises
- Grounding techniques
- Mindfulness activities

Throughout this resource and during the 12 weeks of Bat and Chat, we'll introduce and explain some of these ideas for you to try.

These techniques might not work for all of us – **remember that different things work for people at different times.**



You can find these and more resources in our Self-care library – type [bit.ly/mindselfcarelibrary](https://bit.ly/mindselfcarelibrary) into your internet browser or scan the QR code to access it.



# What is mindfulness?

There's a close connection between mental health and mindfulness:

- **Mental health** is about how we think, feel and cope with everyday life.
- **Mindfulness** is a practical skill that helps us notice what's happening in the present moment without judgement.

Mindfulness helps us to be aware of our thoughts, feelings and body. This can help us become more self-aware and kinder to ourselves. We might also feel calmer and less stressed, as well as being more able to choose how to respond to thoughts and feelings.

**Mindfulness is paying attention to the present, including your thoughts and feelings, without judgement.**

## Practising mindfulness

By practising mindfulness, we can effectively move our focus to the present moment, away from other thoughts. Some of us find that mindfulness helps manage our day-to-day wellbeing. And sometimes, we might already do mindful practices without realising it. **Opposite are 20 ideas for how we might practise mindfulness in everyday ways.**

Do a stretch and name the body parts you're moving	Blow bubbles and watch them float and pop	Eat a snack very slowly, noticing its feel, taste and texture	Do a stretch and name the body parts you're moving
Move to music, but let your body choose how	Walk like you're exploring a new place, noticing everything	Doodle freely for 2 minutes without judging the outcome	Listen to a song and focus on 1 instrument
Balance on 1 foot and notice what helps you stay steady	Watch clouds and make up what shapes they are	Walk barefoot on grass or sand	Count 10 different sounds you can hear while out walking
Take photos of things that catch your attention	Notice changes in daylight at different times of day	Send a kind message and notice how it feels to connect	Spend a few minutes noticing nature, even through a window
Hold a cold drink and notice the temperature and weight of the cup	Watch a candle flame for 1 minute	Choose a colour and notice it everywhere	Notice the feeling of sunshine or warmth on your skin



**In what ways do you already take a moment to be mindful?**

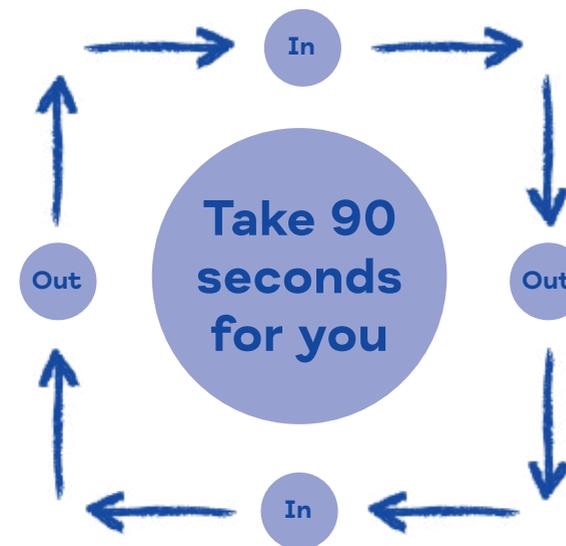
## Mindful breathing

Mindful breathing is when we focus on our breath, gently bringing our attention back to the present moment. This can help us feel calmer and reduce feelings of stress or overwhelm.

This type of technique does not aim to change how we feel, but aims to help create space to:

- Slow down
- Feel more grounded
- Respond to situations with greater clarity and balance

### Try a breathing window

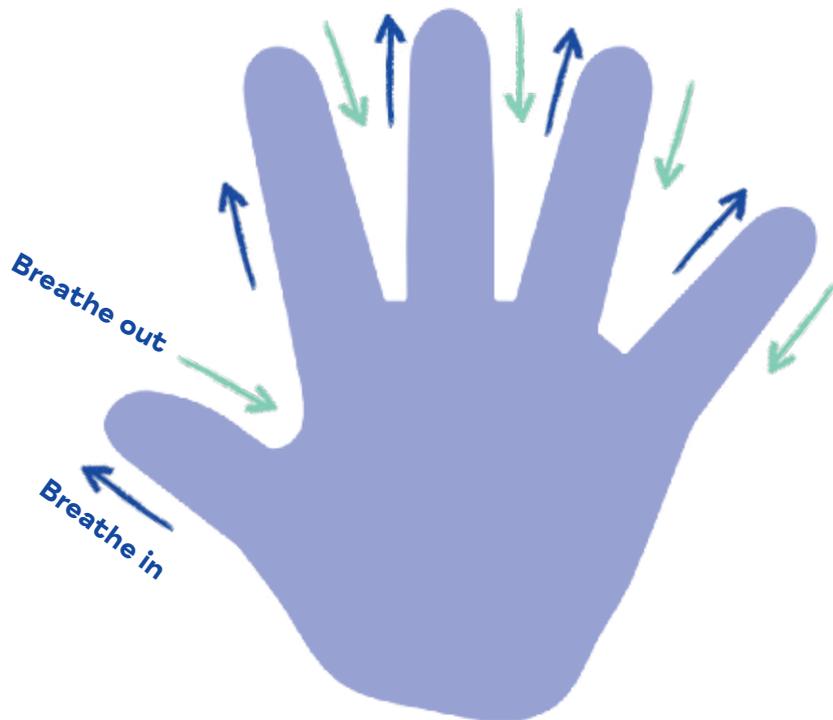


1. Find a square shape in the room.
2. Trace each line clockwise with your eyes
3. Take a deep breath in and out as you follow each line.
4. Keep your breathing slow and steady
5. This can improve oxygen flow and adjust your focus

## Try 5-finger breathing

This mindfulness technique can help to relieve stress and anxiety. It can take your focus away from worries and stressors by enabling us to pause and use our fingers to take 5 deep breaths.

1. Stretch out 1 of your hands nice and wide.
2. Use your index finger from your other hand to slowly trace up your thumb from the bottom to the top. As you do this, slowly breathe in through your nose.
3. Once you get to the top of your thumb, trace your index finger down the other side. As you do this, slowly breathe out through your mouth.
4. Keep going until you have traced your whole hand.



### Top tip

More ideas for breathing techniques can be found at [mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/4](https://mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/4)



# Charging your wellbeing battery

**As with a battery, there are things that can drain and recharge our wellbeing over time.** What affects our battery is individual to us. This activity helps us to think about the things in our life that may be draining us but also what helps us to recharge.

**Things that could be draining me:**  
(for example stress at home or work, sleep problems)



**Things that could help me recharge:**  
(for example talk to someone about how I'm feeling or try mindfulness)

# Practising gratitude

Gratitude can help us to celebrate the present and focus on what we already have, rather than what we don't have. Practising gratitude can also help us to value and appreciate:

- People around us
- Ourselves
- Our situations
- Our circumstances

**What 3 things do you feel grateful for right now?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



## Top tip

More ideas about gratitude can be found at [mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/3/1](https://mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/3/1)



# Grounding techniques

Grounding is about reconnecting with our body and the 'here and now'. Grounding techniques are especially helpful when we feel stressed, anxious or overwhelmed. It can reduce anxiety, stress and emotional overload.

Some of us find that it helps us feel safer and more connected to the present moment.

## Try seated grounding

You could try this technique at your desk, the kitchen table or on the bus – maybe even at a cricket match!

1. Sit comfortably in the seat with both feet on the ground and your back supported.
2. Take a slow breath in and out.
3. Notice how the seat feels under you.
4. Take another slow breath in and out.
5. Notice how your feet feel on the ground.
6. Stay with these feelings for a few more breaths in and out. This should help your body feel calm and settled



## Top tip

The grounding technique instructions for 'Tense and Relax' can be found at [mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/3/2](https://mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/3/2)



## Different ways to ground yourself

You can try grounding yourself in many different ways and places. We've given some more ideas below for you to try. But you can also add your own suggestion in the blank box at the end.

**Take 3 slow breaths while waiting in a queue or at a bus stop.**

**Notice 5 things you can see while walking outside or in a park.**

**Feel the air on your skin while outside or near an open window or door.**

**Listen to a sound that feels steady and regular while you're in a busy space.**

# Self-compassion as self-care

Self-compassion is about treating ourselves with the same kindness, understanding and respect that we'd offer to a friend. It means noticing our needs and speaking to ourselves in a supportive way, especially when things feel difficult.

Self-compassion is also about:

- **Understanding we can all go through difficult experiences.** It's important to remember that everyone goes through challenges, stress and setbacks. You're not alone – lot of us feel this way.
- **Mindfulness and being present.** Try to notice how you feel without ignoring it or becoming overwhelmed by it. This can help you respond to difficult moments rather than react automatically.



Think about someone close who is supportive to you. What positive things might they say about you?



Write down at least 1 strength you have...

Write down at least 1 positive quality you have...

Write down at least 1 thing they see you make effort with...

Write down at least 1 thing they appreciate about you...

# Using positive affirmations

Affirmations are kind, believable statements about yourself. For example:

**I am trying my best today**

**I showed up and that counts**

**I got here this morning**

**I am learning and that is enough for now**

Try writing some of your own affirmations to be kinder to yourself in the box below.



## Top tip

More ideas for positive affirmations can be found at [mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/2/10](https://mind.turtl.co/story/wellbeing-activities/page/2/10)



# Basics of meditation

Meditation is the practice of paying attention to the present moment. In some ways, it's similar to certain elements of mindfulness.

We might meditate using our breath, body, sounds or an image. Meditation isn't about stopping our thoughts or emptying the mind. While our minds might wander, the practice is about noticing this happening and returning our attention to the present.

You can meditate in different ways to find what works for you. You could try:

**Sitting quietly for a few minutes in the morning to focus on your breathing.**

**Taking a slow, mindful walk and notice each step as you go.**

**Sitting in your car before getting out, while noticing your breath and body.**

**Spending some time before bed listening to a guided meditation, like a podcast.**

Try writing some of your own ideas for ways you could meditate.

**If you've tried some of our ideas but you're still finding meditation difficult**, we have some tips and advice:

- At first, start small by meditating for 1 or 2 minutes. Try to do small amounts as often as you can.
- Remember that it's normal for your mind to wander.
- Try setting a sound or movement you can use to bring you back from any distracting thoughts – this is called an 'anchor'.
- Be kind to yourself as much as possible. Try not to judge yourself, because there is no right or wrong way of practising meditation.



### Top tip

There are lots of resources available online. Search for '[mini meditation](#)' on YouTube.

# Your journey through Thorpey's Bat and Chat

At any point during this 12-week programme, take some time to reflect, write or draw about your experiences at Bat and Chat.

**What achievements from the programme are you proud of?**

**What changes have you noticed in yourself throughout the 12 weeks?**

**Which ideas or self-care tools work well for you? Will you keep using them after the programme ends?**

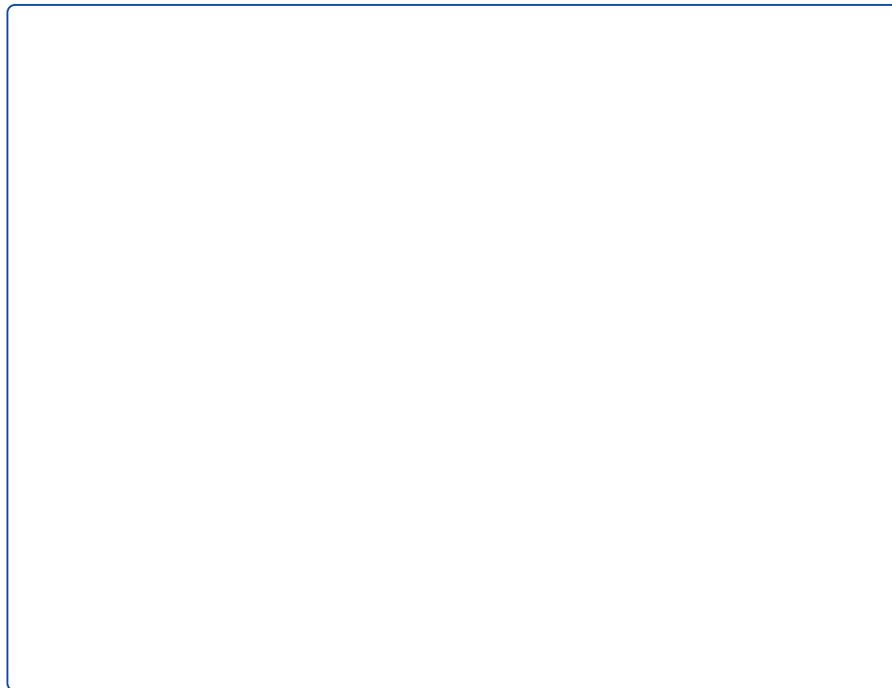
**What could you do to keep staying active after the programme ends?**

# Your space: freewriting and mindful doodling

The blank space on the next pages is for freewriting and mindful doodling.

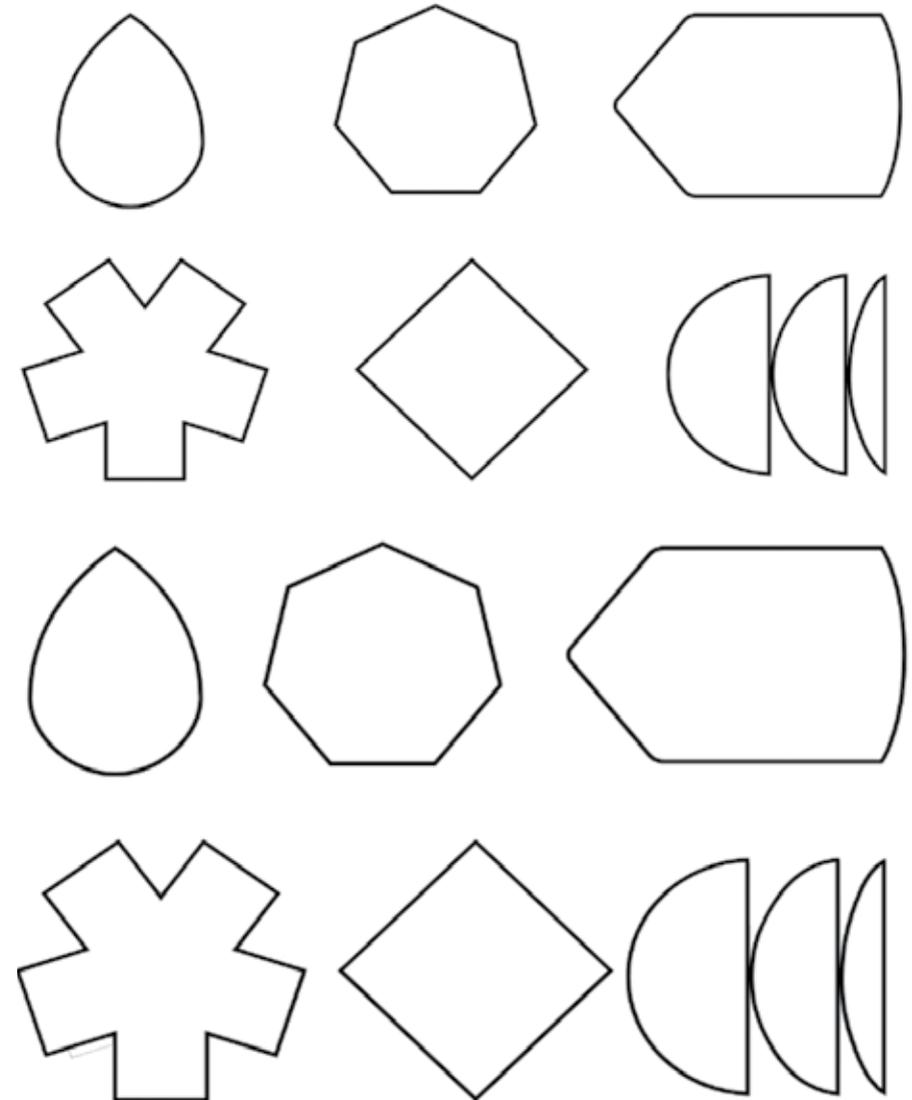
## Freewriting space

To practise freewriting, set yourself a time limit or an amount of space to fill. Don't stop writing until the time or space runs out. You can write about anything you want – it might be your feelings, how things are going in the programme or a new self-care idea that you tried.



## Mindful doodling space

Start with a simple shape and slowly fill it with repeating lines, dots, or patterns. Let your hand move without planning the result. Keep your attention on the motion and rhythm of drawing, gently bringing your focus back whenever your mind wanders.



## Physical activity

You can find out more about being active to support your mental health at [mind.org.uk/getactive](https://www.mind.org.uk/getactive)

Or why not visit the Hub of Hope 'physical activity and movement' finder at [hubofhope.co.uk](https://www.hubofhope.co.uk)

**We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.**

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