

Mental health problems can affect anyone, any time of the year, but mental health awareness week is a great time to show your support for better mental health and looking after your own wellbeing.

Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, the theme for **Mental Health Awareness Week**, 10 -16 May 2021 is 'Nature'.

Access to nature is crucial for our mental health and millions of people re-discovered this during the lockdowns both this year and last. For more details of the week click [here](#).

The Week is an opportunity for people to talk about all aspects of mental health, with a focus on providing help and support.

Life has been tough for us all during the pandemic. Our daily lives have changed considerably with the months of lockdown and loss have had a huge impact on our mental health.

According to research by Mind of over 16,000 people, more than half of adults and over two thirds of young people said their mental health got worse during lockdown. Many people developed new mental health problems as a result of the pandemic and, for others with existing mental health problems, these have gotten worse.

Use this week as an opportunity to open your eyes to the power of nature



The past months have brought challenges and worries for us all, but especially for frontline key workers and health-care workers, who have the added worry of bringing COVID-19 home with them to their families.

It is expected that the need for mental health and psychosocial support will substantially increase in the coming months and years.

Taking care of your mental health is as important as taking care of your physical health.

Mental health problems affect around one in four people in any given year*. They range from common problems, such as **depression** and **anxiety**, to rarer problems such as **schizophrenia** and **bipolar disorder**.



Take action to get the best out of the 'new normal', it may be hard but we all still need to live in the best way we can during these unusual times.

This may be creating your own routine of things you enjoy doing, running, cycling, binging on Netflix, helping others in the community or learning a new skill, it doesn't really matter what it is as long as you feel like you are achieving something and spending time looking after your own physical and mental wellbeing. For more information on looking after your mental health during the pandemic click [here](#) to access our guide.

It is important that we all as individuals do what we can to look after ourselves and each other. You may have concerns about how others are coping with the current situation. Starting a conversation with someone around their mental health can feel daunting. You may be worried that you will say the wrong thing but remember saying nothing is far worse. For more details on supporting others during the pandemic click [here](#).

Like adults, children will respond to the current situation in different ways, such as being more clingy, anxious, withdrawn or angry. Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra care and attention. Remember to listen to your children and re-assure them. For more details on supporting children during the pandemic click [here](#).

Research has shown that emergency services workers are twice as likely as the public to identify problems at work as the main cause of their mental health problems, but they are also significantly less likely to seek help. So during the pandemic it's even more important to look after your own mental health when working on the frontline.

Here are some tips:

Think about your purpose:

Be clear about why you are doing this job

Be clear on expectations:

Make sure you know what is expected of you and whether it is realistic.

Keep your boundaries:

Establish clear boundaries between work and personal life, don't take work home with you.



Talk to colleagues:

Make time to talk to your colleagues about your experiences and share fears and concerns.

Value your own family and relationships:

While work is important, your family and relationships need to be valued.

Exercise: Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem, can help you concentrate, relax and increase your overall wellbeing.

Get plenty of sleep: Sleep helps regulate the chemicals in our brain that transmit information. These chemicals are important in managing our moods and emotions and an imbalance in those chemicals can result in us becoming depressed or anxious. Read our sleep guide [here](#).

Eat well: A balanced diet that is good for your physical wellbeing is also good for your mental wellbeing. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well.

Avoid alcohol: The numbing effects of drinking are only temporary and can often lead to mental health issues. It's advised that if you do drink, that you stay within the governing bodies recommended unit guidelines.

Keep in touch: It's good for you to catch up with friends and family face to face or over the phone.

Take a break: A change of scenery or pace is good for you.

Do something you're good at: Enjoying yourself can help beat stress

Care for others: Supporting others uplifts you as well as them.



Ask for help: If at times, life gets too much for you, it's important that you speak to someone, this may be a family member or trusted friend, your GP or a professional organisation, see the list at the end of this guide for details.

Making positive change is more important than ever, especially during uncertain times, but it's difficult to know where to start. Do one thing today, whether it's going for a walk, learning a new skill or doing something creative, taking the first steps to getting support for yourself, or reaching out to someone else, take the opportunity to do one thing during [Mental Health Awareness Week](#).

Evidence suggest there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

- 1. Connect with other people** – Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. This may be more difficult at the moment, but still try to connect with others by video call or on a social distanced walk.
- 2. Be active** – this is great for both your physical and mental wellbeing.
- 3. Take notice** – paying more attention to the present can improve your mental wellbeing. Click [here](#) to try mindfulness.
- 4. Learn new skills** – continued learning though life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interactions and a more active lifestyle.
- 5. Give to others** – research suggests that acts of giving and kindness and being part of community life can improve your mental wellbeing.

For more details on the **5 steps to wellbeing** click [here](#).

Whatever you've been through this year, Mental Health Awareness Week is a chance to make a positive change for your mental health.

Where to get help:

[NHS](#)

[Samaritans](#)

[Mind](#)

[AnxietyUK](#)

[Mental health org](#)



Police Mutual Services

Our Care Line Service provided by Health Assured can offer advice and information, helping with a range of concerns including emotional support.

Take a look at the e-portal or download the APP.

Health & Wellbeing e-portal

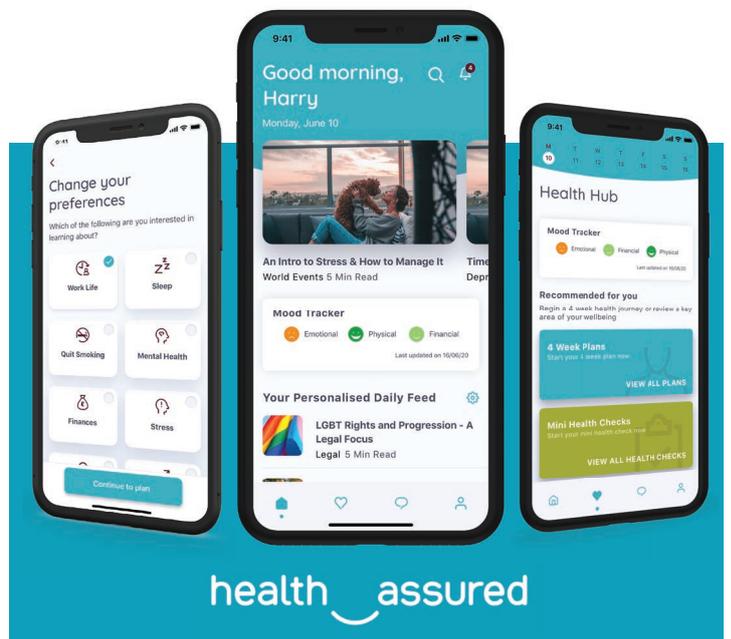
<https://healthassuredeap.co.uk>

Username: policemutual Password: careline

We've teamed up with **PayPlan**, one of the UK's leading free debt advice providers, who offer free and confidential advice to anyone in serious financial difficulties.

They're able to advise you on a range of debt solutions suited to your individual circumstances, helping to protect you and your family with a sustainable way to manage your debt.

Get free and confidential help to combat your debt, call **PayPlan** on **0800 197 8433**.



Download the **Health Assured App** and register today - your code is **MHA107477**

For more information on how Police Mutual are supporting you during the coronavirus pandemic click [here](#).

Call us 01543 441630
Visit policemutual.co.uk

We're open from
9am - 5pm Mon - Fri

* Time to Change. Attitudes to Mental Illness 2014 Research Report

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