

Better You

Win!
Dinner for 2 worth £100 p.8

😊 The Happiness Issue

Jul-Sep 2019

Change your thinking

Retrain your
brain for a more
positive life

Inside

Help your child
be more resilient

How to ask someone
about suicidal feelings

The truth about
the menopause

Salma's story:
Gardening for gladness

Wellness

Change your thinking habits

Sometimes it can help your mental wellbeing to reflect on your thought processes. Are any of these thinking styles familiar? Start challenging them – you may see situations in a more positive way.



Trying to mind-read

You assume you know what others are thinking – usually about you.

What you could think:

What's the evidence? Those are my own thoughts, not theirs. Is there another, more balanced, way of looking at it?

Predicting the future

You believe you know what's going to happen in the future.

What you could think: Can I really

predict the future? How likely is it that this might happen, really?

Thinking "I should" or "I must"

You set up unrealistic expectations.

What you could think: Am I putting more pressure on myself? What would be more realistic?

Catastrophising

You imagine and believe that the worst possible thing will happen.

What you could think: What's actually most likely to happen?

Ignoring the positives

You only notice the bad stuff and filter out the positives.

What you could think: Am I only focusing on the bad things? What's more realistic?

Exaggerating the negatives

You exaggerate the risk of danger, or the negatives.

What you could think: How would someone else see it? What's the big picture?

Jumping to conclusions

Rather than observing the facts, you make your own judgements.

What you could think: My judgements are not always right or helpful. What are the facts? Is there

another perspective?

Comparing and despairing

You see only the good and positive aspects in others, and compare yourself negatively against them.

What you could think: What would be a more balanced, helpful way of looking at it?

Criticising yourself

You put yourself down and blame yourself for situations that are not totally your responsibility.

What you could think: There goes the internal bully again. Would people who know me agree? Am I totally responsible for this?

Black and white thinking

You believe that something or someone can only be good or bad, right or wrong, rather than somewhere in between.

What you could think: There are shades of grey. Where's this on the spectrum?

Making the past present

When situations trigger upsetting memories, you believe that danger is here and now rather than in the past.

What you could think: This memory makes me feel upset, but it's not happening now.

From the editor

Welcome to the Happiness Issue of our health and wellbeing newsletter, BetterYou.

Thank you so much to the hundreds of you who completed our reader survey last time. A big theme that came up for many of you was mental wellbeing. So we've got lots of experts to help in this edition, and information about where to go for more support. And if you'd like to find out more about Bristol Community Health, your local NHS community health services provider, please turn to page 8 or visit briscomhealth.org.uk

C Madsen

Claire Madsen
Deputy Clinical
Director



Get support

Do you need some help with your negative thoughts?

- Talk to your healthcare professional about cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and other available therapies.
- Refer yourself to NHS's psychological therapies service, without going to your GP: bit.ly/talkingtherapy
- Browse mental health apps here: bit.ly/nhs-apps



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Living with the menopause

The menopause – which is when a woman stops having periods and can no longer get pregnant naturally – can come with a number of symptoms, but there are many things that can help.



“It was like being on a nightmare roller coaster,” says Lauren, of the menopause that caused such upheaval in her 40s. “I was up one minute, down the next, and uncertain about what was coming and when. Sleeplessness, night sweats, memory challenges and palpitations took turns at raising their game.”

What helped her find her sense of self again? “Listening to my own body and learning to be kind to myself. I started to think before I said yes, and learnt to say no. Regular weight training, eating nutritious food, decluttering, staying well-hydrated and finding time to relax, reflect on what was going well every day and just ‘be’ were critical.”

Dr Heather Currie, specialist gynaecologist, says: “Exercise is brilliant for both physical and mental health. It doesn’t need to be intensive – walking is great, for example. Cutting down on alcohol and caffeine and maintaining a healthy

weight will also help reduce flushes and sweats. These can disturb your sleep and affect wellbeing.”

“If you care about someone who is going through the menopause,” says Lauren, “be sensitive to the changes that you notice. Don’t judge or assume you know what’s going on. Be curious. Be there. Offer to go for a cuppa.”

“Sleeplessness, night sweats and memory challenges took turns at raising their game”

Many women find online forums helpful in reminding them that they’re not alone or ‘going mad’, says Heather. “Mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy can also help,” she says.

She recommends finding out about symptoms and treatments. “Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can be very effective for hormone-related low mood, anxiety and depression. These symptoms are very common and often unexpected – but can have huge impact.”



Get support

If you are experiencing the menopause and struggling with the symptoms, talk to your healthcare professional.

For more information and support visit:

[nhs.uk/conditions/menopause](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause)
Symptoms and treatments

[menopausematters.co.uk](https://www.menopausematters.co.uk)
Information and online discussion forums for women to connect

[womens-health-concern.org](https://www.womens-health-concern.org)
Patient arm of the British Menopause Society – factsheets, telephone/email advice (for a fee) and ‘find a specialist’

[womenofacertainstage.com](https://www.womenofacertainstage.com)
Supports women in the workplace and gives advice to employers

[facebook.com/MenopauseSocial](https://www.facebook.com/MenopauseSocial)
Find local social events

What’s the menopause?

It’s a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman’s oestrogen levels decline. Most women will experience menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on everyday activities, for example:

- Hot flushes • Night sweats • Vaginal dryness and discomfort during sex
- Difficulty sleeping • Low mood or anxiety • Reduced sex drive • Problems with memory and concentration

Right: Lauren Chiren, founder of Women of a Certain Stage.





YOUR STORIES

“If I don’t stand up for myself, no one will”

Feeling low after being diagnosed with a number of health conditions, Salma took control of her health – and ended up feeling happier, too.

It was embarrassing at first,” says Salma, remembering the first time she started work on her Eastville allotment. “We Muslim ladies don’t usually go out to work on an allotment. We were overlooked by the motorway and people would make fun of us as they drove by.” Salma smiles, shaking her head. “But I wanted to do this for my health.”

Arriving in the UK from Bangladesh in 1987, it was difficult for Salma as she couldn’t speak English. She was also diagnosed with diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and chronic pain.

It was a low time, she remembers: “I broke down, worrying how I was going to cope, and how people would treat me if I was housebound. I felt really helpless.”

“When you are first diagnosed with a condition,” says Bristol Community

Health deputy clinical director and consultant physiotherapist, Claire Madsen, “it’s usual to feel quite frightened. You really don’t know what to expect, and you might think that the things you enjoy doing are ending forever.

“Remember that you really can do things to make life better. Talk to people who’ve had the same experiences. Eat well and stay

active. Find an activity that helps you socialise and get more involved in your community – it’s brilliant for your mental health.”

First steps

Salma approached Bristol Community Health’s Health Links team, which provides interpreting, advocacy, signposting and referral services for people who don’t speak English as their first language.

“The team helped Salma enrol on language classes and linked her up with the local community to help her feel less isolated,” says Shahnaz Chowdhury, from Health Links.



Get support

Find out what’s on in your community at wellaware.org.uk

Access our interpreting and advocacy service, Health Links, on 0117 902 7115, healthlinks@nhs.net or visit bit.ly/healthlinks-bristol



Shahnaz from the Health Links team.

With Salma's growing confidence in English came a realisation that she wanted to gain more control over her life and her conditions.

"I remember thinking: 'If I don't stand up for myself, then no one will,'" she says. "I started healthy cooking classes which helped me learn new things and meet people," says Salma. "And the Bristol Community Health physiotherapy team helped me manage the pain in my body. They showed me exercises and told me how to manage it myself. They gave me courage. With that help I felt a little better."

Salma started working in her back garden but soon decided she wanted to do more. She encouraged a friend who also had health problems to get an allotment with her. "At first, the work was daunting. But we got fitter by walking the 20 minutes to get there, and learned what to do by watching other people. Now, I sometimes go there two or three times a day," she says. "It is difficult, hard work, but it makes me feel happy. It gives me a reason to go out and meet up with my friend. And I enjoy giving the vegetables to friends, relatives and local charities."

"Salma has become an inspiration to the local Bengali community," says Shahnaz. "A lot of people visit her allotment to see all the vegetables she's growing. They are astonished! All the vegetables that are grown back home, and she's growing them here. They say: 'Am I in Bangladesh, or am I here in the UK?'"

"To those who are suffering with illnesses like me," says Salma, "I would like to say to those brothers and sisters: whatever you are suffering from, you can get help. Do whatever you feel like doing – just go and do it."

Building resilience

Encourage your pre-schooler to stick with it when the going gets tough, with some tips from Bristol Community Health's health visitor Sandra Holmes.

1 Help them learn from mistakes

Teach them that it's OK to get things wrong. Mistakes help us to think about new ways of doing things until we get it right. Help them to be curious about why something didn't work the first time and not to be discouraged by setbacks.

2 Teach them about brain development

Explain that their brain is like a muscle. When we keep trying and learn new things it is like exercising our brain and helping it to grow. Try planting some seeds together. The plant doesn't grow all at once but needs care and attention over time – just like our brains.

3 Remind them of past successes

Use examples like: "When you were one, you couldn't use a spoon properly and needed help. Now look at you! You can use a spoon and a fork all by yourself."

4 Let your child lead the play

Sometimes in a busy family it can be hard to find time for one-to-one play with your child. But even 20 minutes, three times a week, can work wonders for your child's self-esteem. Sit on the floor next to them and watch them with interest. Only get involved when they want you to, and follow their lead.

5 Use praise carefully

Praise your child for the effort they have put in, rather than the finished result. For example, say: "Wow, I can see you have worked very hard at that! Well done", rather than: "You are so clever!". Then they'll realise that successes are won by hard work and the right strategies, rather than just natural ability.

6 Be patient

It can be hard to watch your child struggling with a task. Try to watch patiently and quietly – and encourage them to keep on trying. If they fail and say that they can't do it, say: "You can't do it yet – but, if you keep trying, one day you will find that you can."

7 Set your child challenges

Help them gain new skills. This teaches them that you believe in them. Your faith in their ability will boost their self-esteem.

8 Be a good role model

Think about the language you use about yourself so they know that even adults need to work at things and don't always get things right first time. Don't say: "I am terrible at this." Try: "Well, I think I am going to have to keep practising until I get better at this."

For more information about local health visiting services, visit bit.ly/healthvisitors



How to help someone with suicidal feelings

Suicide is the biggest killer of under 35s in the UK. Asking about suicide saves lives, but it can be hard to know where to start. Here are a few ways you could start a conversation.

Ask directly: "Are you thinking about suicide?"

By using the word suicide, you are telling the young person that it's OK to talk openly about their thoughts of suicide with you. Evidence shows that talking about suicide does not make it more likely to happen – it reduces the stigma and is often the first step in a person's recovery.

"Sometimes, when people are feeling the way you are, they think about suicide. Is that what you're thinking about?"

"Are you telling me you want to kill yourself? End your life?"

"It sounds like you're thinking about suicide, is that right?"

"It sounds like life feels too hard for you right now and you want to kill yourself – is that right?"

...

Advice provided by **Papyrus**, a national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide.

If someone is suicidal, listen to them and allow them to express their feelings.

They may feel a huge sense of relief that someone is willing to hear their darkest thoughts.

"It sounds as though things are really hard at the moment... Can you tell me a bit more?"

"Things must be so painful for you to feel like there is no way out. I want to listen and help."

"Take your time and tell me what's happening for you at the moment."

"I am so sorry you're feeling this way. Can you tell me more about how you are feeling?"

"Can you tell me more about why you want to die?"

"What has brought you to this place/to feel this way?"

"It's hard and scary to talk about suicide but take your time and I will listen."

Reassure them that they are not alone and you can look for support together.

"It's not uncommon to have thoughts of suicide. With help, many people can work through these thoughts and stay safe."

"There are organisations that offer support. I can help you find their contact details."

"You've shown a lot of strength in telling me this. I want to help you find support."

"There is hope. There is help available and we can find it together."

Get support

- For everyone: Samaritans, call 116 123 (24-hour), email jo@samaritans.org or visit samaritans.org
- For people up to the age of 35: Papyrus, call 0800 068 4141, text 0778 620 9697, pat@papyrus-uk.org or visit papyrus-uk.org
- For men: Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), call 0800 58 58 58, or visit the webchat page at thecalmzone.net



Consistency for our patients

We've just launched our new 'named nurse' approach, which focuses on continuity of care. We'll be ensuring, as far as possible, that one nurse cares for a small group of patients that they see regularly.

This enables us to deliver a more consistent, person-centred way of working, so we act as a central point of contact for patients, families and carers.

Learn more



Stay up to date with our services and latest news at briscomhealth.org.uk/news

New community navigators for people with learning disabilities

People over 18 who have a learning disability and are feeling low or lonely will now have some extra support from our new specialist Community Navigator service.

A community navigator will spend time getting to know the person, find out what they are interested in and then support them to get more involved in their community. They will also help with debt, benefit or housing issues, bereavement and help with getting into exercise.



Get support

Anyone can make a referral to the service, either for yourself or someone you know. Call Simone on 0117 440 9100, email community.navigators@nhs.net or visit communitynavigators.org.uk



Did you know that the Community Navigator service also supports people over 50?



News in brief

Improving access for people with learning disabilities

Our Community Learning Disability Team, which helps people get better access to NHS services, is changing. Everyone we help will now have a care coordinator as their key contact, and the team will work more closely together to ensure the right care at the right time: bit.ly/cldt-team

Living with type 2 diabetes?

We offer one-to-one peer support by trained volunteers who are also living with type 2 diabetes. You can:

- Regularly meet with someone living well with type 2 diabetes
- Get practical tips and ideas on managing your diabetes
- Speak to someone in confidence

diabetes@brigstowe.org / 0117 9555038.

Want to help shape our services?

There are lots of ways you can get involved, whether it's taking part in focus groups, giving feedback on strategic plans, or even volunteering. Join our participation community: briscomhealth.feedback@nhs.net / 0117 440 9180.

Who are we?

Bristol Community Health is your local provider of NHS-funded community health services for adults and children. We are not for profit and 100% owned by our employees. All of our surpluses are reinvested back into services for the good of our community.

Want to find out more about our services and how to access them? Interested in working with us? Visit briscomhealth.org.uk

Need this newsletter in another format or language? Get in touch on:

- 0117 440 9000
- briscomhealth.comms@nhs.net



Win!

Win: A meal for two worth £100



Enter our competition to win a meal at Riverstation restaurant

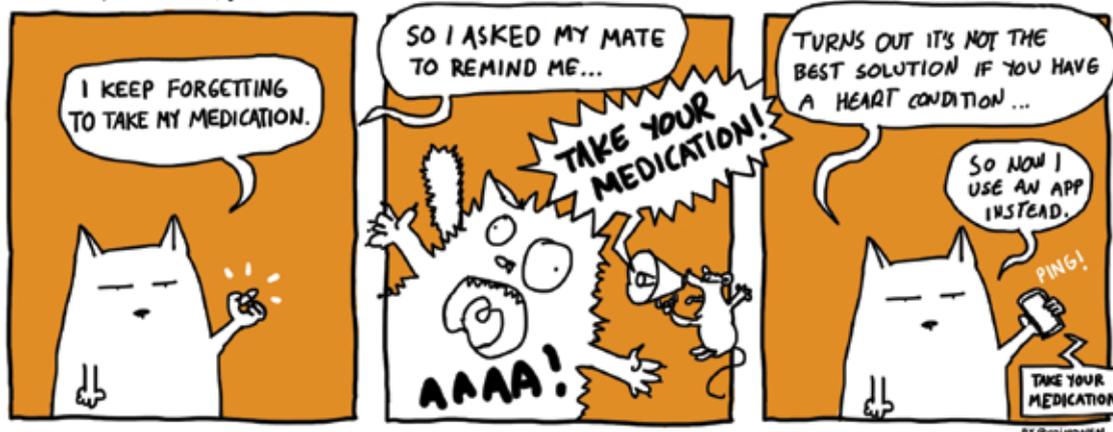
The prize A £100 voucher to spend at Riverstation. With a waterside location and large alfresco terraces, Riverstation is a friendly space for any time of day. Seasonal menus, carefully selected local beers and ciders, cocktails and wines work side by side with a warm welcome.

How to enter Go to www.bit.ly/riverstation

By when? Midnight Friday 23 August 2019

The winner will be drawn at random from all correct entries on Monday 26 August 2019 and will be contacted by Monday 2 September. If they cannot be contacted by Monday 9 September, we reserve the right to choose an alternative winner. Only one entry per person. Prize is non-transferable with no cash alternative. Competition not open to employees of Bristol Community Health. Terms and conditions specific to the prize will be given to the winner. Riverstation / The Grove, Bristol, BS1 4RB / riverstation.co.uk

THE MEDICINE CAT



Need help remembering?

Find out about some NHS-recommended apps that might help: bit.ly/nhs_apps

Some tips to help you remember: bit.ly/meds-tips