
Help with your concerns or worries



We know that you may be feeling lost or fearful right now. Lots of people are worried about the events taking place back home and may be concerned about friends and family during this time.

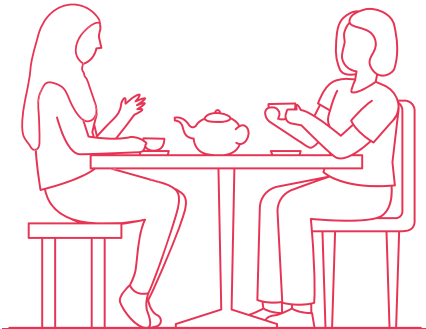
You may be experiencing 'tashweesh' or worry about what the future may hold. Or you might be having trouble sleeping or have noticed changes in your appetite. Feeling these things is normal, but we want you to know that you are not alone and help is available for whatever you are going through.

Here, we hope you will find different things you can do to keep yourself well and some useful ways to get support if you are finding it hard. These five

ideas and tools, which are like exercises, will help you to stay grounded in the present moment, and not get lost in worries.

You may also find Good Thinking's Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Islam guidance helpful which shows how many of the ideas featured here are also encouraged in Islamic teachings. We have included some extracts in this resource and you can read the guidance in full on their website, visit: www.good-thinking.uk.

ONE **Connect with others**



It's natural during difficult times to want to be alone with your worries, however staying connected with others is important as it can provide:

- **A chance to talk about your experiences and gain perspective on them**
- **Affirmation of our identity and helps share compassion for our struggles**
- **Emotional support and allow you to support others**

Ways to stay connected:

- Meeting members of your family, friends and others in your local community
- Take time to connect with others either by phone, text, or through email and social media
- Joining local organisations or groups in your area, for example a football club, a sewing club or playgroup
- Reach out to your local Mosque or Islamic centre – you can find your closest one at www.mosquedirectory.co.uk

As Good Thinking's *Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Islam* guidance highlights, Allah also encourages us to connect with Him in the Quran.

'And when My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I respond to the du'a (prayer) of every supplicant when they call on Me'
— **QURAN 2:186**



Ways you can connect with Allah:

- Spending 5 minutes reciting or listening to Quran daily
- Doing the morning and evening 'dhikr/zikr' (remembrance/gratitude) as recommended by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)
- Spending a few minutes daily doing 'dua' (supplication); ones recommended by the Prophet (PBUH) or your own personal duas in your own language

TWO Be physically active

Being active reduces stress and helps us sleep better. If it is safe for you to get outside, then each day get some fresh air or take time to exercise by going for a walk or a run. If getting out and moving around is not easy or possible for you, keep moving about indoors as often or as much as you can.

It is not only great for your physical health and fitness, it can also:

- **Reduce feelings of worry or stress**
- **Help you to feel more positive**
- **Lower your risk of long-term health conditions**

Ways to stay active:

- Walking around your local area or parks
- Easy, low-impact exercise, like stretching
- If you have access to the internet, explore the NHS' Couch to 5K or 10-minute workouts, you can find this by visiting: www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise

THREE Learn something new

Continued learning through life improves self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

Research also shows that learning new skills can improve your wellbeing by:

- **Boosting self-confidence and reducing low mood**
- **Helping you to find a sense of purpose**
- **Keeping your mind busy**



Ways to bring learning into your life:

- Read books you enjoy
- Learn a new language or improve your English skills.
- Learn more about your local area
- Cook something new
- Rediscover an old hobby or try a new one
- Sign up for an online course

As Good Thinking's *Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Islam* guidance highlights, knowledge and learning are highly praised in Islam, as mentioned in this Quranic dua:

'Rabbi zidni ilma' (O my Lord increase me in knowledge)
— QURAN 20:114

There are lots of different ways to bring learning into your life and set some new goals while you're at home. You could:

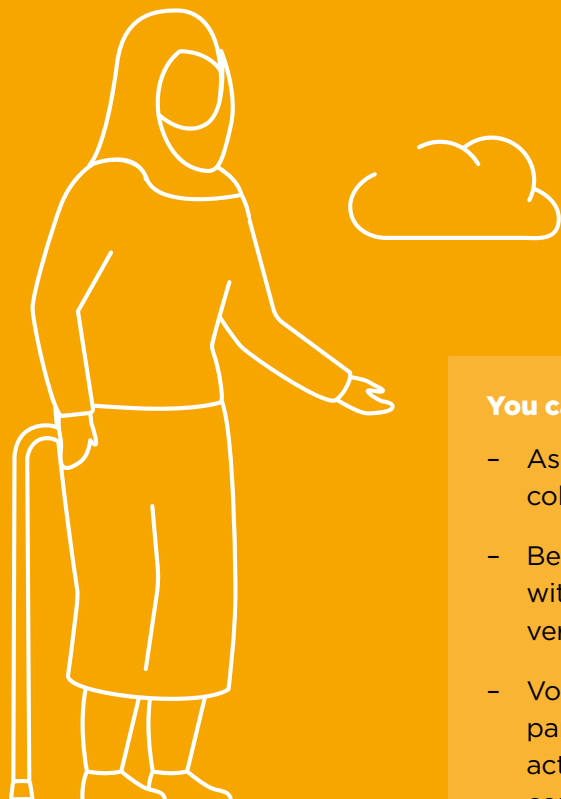
- Memorise a few verses of the Quran or short duas of the Prophet (PBUH)
- Read books you enjoy (perhaps set up a virtual Quran/ Hadith study circle with your friends)



FOUR

Be kind to others

People who show a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Acts of kindness, however small, can improve your wellbeing and happiness.



You can do this by:

- Asking friends, family or colleagues how they are
- Being a good listener without interrupting is very supportive
- Volunteering or participating in new activities in your local community

As Good Thinking's *Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Islam* guidance highlights, 'zakat' (charity) is the 3rd pillar of Islam and 'sadaqah' (voluntary charity) is highly recommended in Islam.

Acts of giving and kindness can earn you much reward from Allah. It is important we show compassion to everyone. You could try:

- Just smiling at others, this is a form of charity in Islam as per the saying of the Prophet (PBUH) 'a smile is a charity' [At-Tirmidhi]
- Saying thank you to someone for something they have done. The Prophet (PBUH) said 'whoever does not thank the people has not thanked Allah' [Sunan Abi Dawud]

FIVE

Pay attention to the present moment

Sometimes you may feel as though you have one foot here and one foot in your home country, and it can be difficult to connect to the present moment. It's important to take a break from the things that may be distressing you, such as the news or social media.

Simply checking in with yourself and listening to how you're feeling is really important. Be a compassionate listener to yourself each day.

This can:

- Improve your sleep
- Reduce stress and worries
- Reduce chronic pain



As Good Thinking's *Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Islam* guidance highlights, allow yourself to connect to your thoughts, your feelings, your body, and the world around you.

This is often called 'mindfulness'. This is something recommended in Islam also and is known as 'khushoo' (paying attention or humbleness) and is highly encouraged in prayers; attention to the words you are reciting, the meanings, your movements in prayer and where your eyes are focusing.

'Can't you see the earth dry and lifeless - and suddenly when we send down waters upon it, it stirs and swells and puts forth every kind of lovely plant!'
— QURAN 22:5

You could start by:

- Spending time with nature and reflecting upon it
- Practicing 'khushoo' in your 5 daily 'salah/ namaz' (prayers) by paying attention to the words you are reciting, the meanings, your movements in prayer and where your eyes are focusing.



Some grounding exercises you can try



1 Breathing exercise

- Find a quiet space. You can do this exercise sitting in a chair with your feet on the ground.
- Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach.
- Breathe in for four seconds, feeling your stomach rise.
- Then breathe out for four seconds while pressing gently on your stomach.
- You can repeat this as many times as you wish.

2 5,4,3,2,1 Exercise

- Find a quiet space, you can do this exercise sitting or lying down
- Name five things you can see
- Name four things you can touch
- Name three things you can hear
- Name two things you can smell
- Name one thing you can taste
- You can repeat this exercise as many times as you wish.

Ways to get professional support

Lots of people will experience feelings of worry at some point in their life and others may experience signs such as

- **Low mood**
- **Problems sleeping**
- **Stomach pain**
- **Headaches**
- **Feeling tired most of the time**
- **Changes in appetite**
- **Negative thoughts and feelings**
- **Feeling pain without any known reason**

Reaching out to someone we trust is one of the most important things we can do to keep well, but there is also professional help available to you. A family doctor (or also known as a General Practitioner or GP) is there as someone to talk to and support you without judgement.

You may find Good Thinking's 'Coping with Trauma' workbook helpful, which is available online: www.good-thinking.uk/workbooks/. It provides techniques to help people who have experienced trauma and are out of danger now, and there are also accompanying short films.

One of the ways you can get help is to register with your local doctors' surgery and make an appointment to see a GP. Nurses and doctors at your local surgery can give examinations, advice and treatment to help keep your body, heart and mind healthy.

This is done in a confidential way. This means everything you tell the doctor is kept private, including your personal details and medical records.



Everyone in England has the right to register with a GP

- You do not need a fixed address to do so
- You do not need identification
- Your immigration status does not matter
- GP registration is free of charge
- You can request a male or female doctor, nurse or interpreter
- The GP must use a professional interpreter if you cannot understand or speak English

It is possible that you may be asked for some documents, but if you don't have them the doctors' surgery cannot say no to registering you. Doctors of the World can help you find a GP near where you live: 0808 1647 686 (freephone, Monday to Friday 10am to 12 midday).

If you have any issues registering or seeing a doctor, your local HealthWatch can direct you to advice – call them on: 0300 68 3000.

You can also find further information and practical advice on accessing healthcare at www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services/therapeutic-wellbeing-resources/

Other places to get support

If you would prefer to discuss the different types of support that could be available to you.



The **Afghan Association Paiwand** is a community organisation and charity that provides appropriate cultural services for members of refugee and migrant communities whose needs cannot be met by mainstream service providers. Paiwand respond to the health, social, cultural, welfare, educational and employment needs of community members, in particular those who are socially excluded. You can contact them on:

📧 www.paiwand.com/contact-us-referrals

☎ 0208 905 8770



The **Afghan Association London** is a charity dedicated to providing assistance to refugees and other members of the Afghan community in London. They offer a wide range

of support services and advice to the Afghanistan community including educational projects, cultural events, immigration advice and referral and general advice on housing, health and welfare. You can contact them on:

📧 www.afghanassociationlondon.org.uk

✉ aalharrow@aol.com

☎ 0208 861 6990



Good Thinking is supported by the NHS and London borough councils. They provide free, 24/7, digital support to anyone seeking mental health advice. Good Thinking's Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Islam guidance, shows how many of the ideas featured here are also encouraged in Islamic teachings. You can read the guidance in full on their website. For more information visit www.good-thinking.uk.

Please be aware that not all help is going to be available in your language unfortunately, but we hope this guide contains a mixture of support services and options to seek advice.



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About this resource

This resource has been produced by Thrive LDN in partnership with the Afghan Association of London, Afghan Association Paiwand, the Refugee Council, the ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health at King's College London, and Good Thinking.

Good Thinking's Five ways to good mental wellbeing & Islam guidance is supported by The Muslim Council of Britain, the British Islamic Medical Association and the British Board of Scholars and Imams, in collaboration with the London Borough of Newham Public Health Team. The full resource is available online at www.good-thinking.uk.



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Centre for
Society and
Mental Health



Our thanks also to colleagues at Healthy London Partnership, Central and North West London NHS FT, South London and Maudsley NHS FT, London Councils, and the Greater London Authority.

Thrive LDN is a partnership between London's NHS, public services, the Mayor of London, councils, and charities to promote better mental health and wellbeing for everyone.

For more information visit
www.thriveldn.co.uk.