

Post Covid-19 Self Help Rehabilitation Guide

Psychological recovery

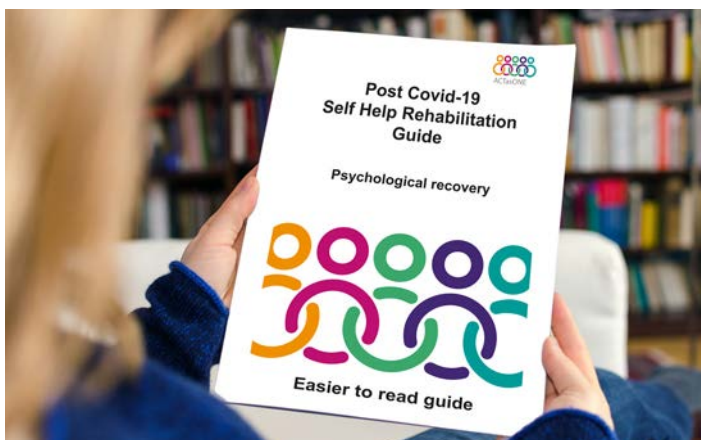


Easier to read guide

Introduction



These booklets are for people who have had Covid-19 and have symptoms that have lasted for more than 4 weeks.



There are 6 booklets in total. This one is about psychological recovery.



The booklets have been developed by lots of different healthcare professionals.

They work together to help people with long Covid.

Psychological recovery



When you are recovering from Covid-19 you may experience lots of emotions including:

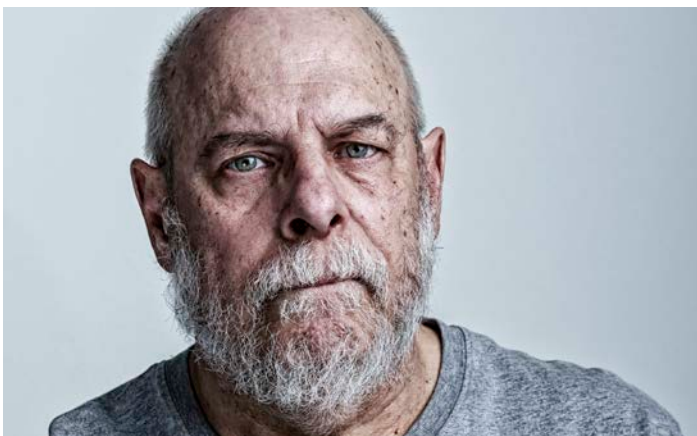
- Shock



- Anxiety



- Sadness





- Helplessness



- Anger



- Confusion



Some people who are recovering from a dangerous illness like Covid-19 may feel overjoyed because they're alive.



This might mean they push themselves too much when they are still in recovery.

Everyone will feel different emotions and possibly feel all of the above.



This is normal because having a life threatening illness is frightening and traumatic.

Here are some common psychological reactions you may feel



Delirium

Delirium has symptoms such as being confused, seeing and hearing things that are not real and thinking people are trying to harm you.



Response to trauma

You may have nightmares, flashbacks and problems with memory and attention.

This is could be a response to the trauma you have been through during your illness.

You may be triggered by news stories about Covid-19.



Anxiety

You may feel anxious and have symptoms like a fast heart rate, sweating, shortness of breath and more.

Anxiety is scary but it cannot harm you.



Low Mood and Motivation

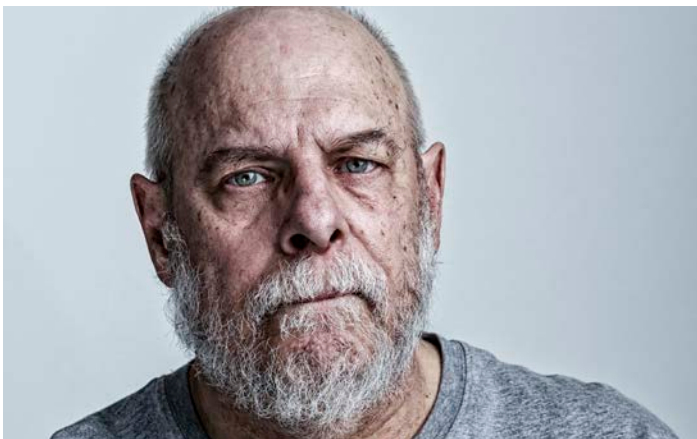
It will take some time for you to come to terms with what has happened.

You may feel weak, tired and breathless for some time after Covid-19.



It will have been upsetting for you not being able to see family and friends while you were in hospital.

You might also have been worried that you would not survive.



The world has felt very different and our routines and things we usually do have changed.

Any of these things can make us have low mood and motivation.



How can I help myself?

It is important to talk to people about how you feel and your experience.

This may help you to move forward with your recovery.

Self-compassion



Self-compassion means being kind to yourself.

Do not put pressure on yourself to do things too soon.

Take note of your achievements even if they are small.



If you want to cry, don't stop yourself from doing so.

It is a healthy way to release your feelings.



Have a routine and do things each day which:

- Make you happy
- Give you a sense of achievement
- Make you feel connected to other people. Like ring or video calling family and friends.
- Involve physical exercise like short walks.

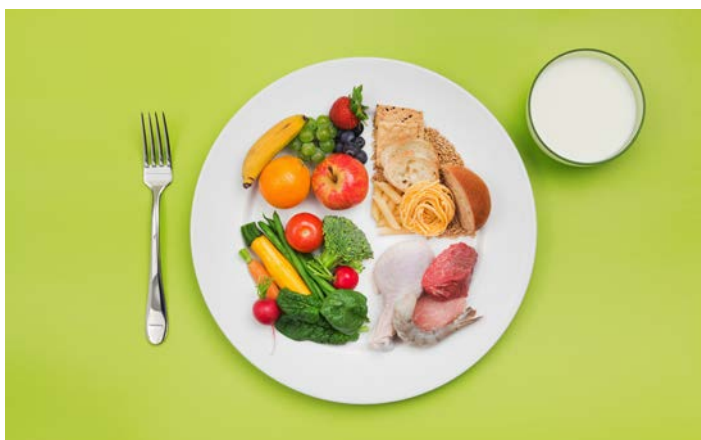
Self-care



You should take time to relax.

Keep a good sleep routine.

Wake up and go to bed at the same time every day.



Eat a healthy diet.

Make time for yourself to do things you enjoy.



Go outside for fresh air and a walk if possible.



Accept help from others if you need it.

Spread out your activities so you don't have too much to do at once.

Mindfulness exercise – Take 10 breaths



It is good to do mindfulness exercises when you get caught up in your thoughts and feelings.



Mindfulness is about slowing down to really notice what you are doing.



This exercise will help you relax.

- Take ten slow breaths that go low down into your stomach
- Focus on breathing in and out gently
- It is best to breathe in and out through your nose.



When you are breathing, take notice of the breaths and how the air is moving around your body.

See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they are just passing cars, driving past your house.



Take notice of how your body feels when you're breathing in and out.



Look around the room and take notice of what you can see, hear, touch and feel.

Cognition and communication



Cognition is your brain using the knowledge it has to understand things through thoughts, experiences and your senses.

Cognitive thinking is the way your brain puts thoughts together.



Communication is being able to think of the message you want to get across and being able to express it such as talking.



You may find cognition and communication more difficult during your recovery.



You may also experience problems like

- Difficulties understanding what people are saying
- Difficulty reading
- Difficulty finding the right words to say
- Difficulty having a conversation
- You may only experience these difficulties when you're tired or in certain environments where it's hard to concentrate.

Here is some advice to help



Have conversations in quiet places to help you concentrate.



Have more important conversations when you feel rested.



If you have not understood what someone has asked, ask them to write down the key points.

This resource was developed collectively by members of the multidisciplinary team featuring healthcare professionals working in health organisations across Bradford district and Craven. We are grateful to Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust for giving us permission to use and adapt their resource for Bradford district and Craven patients.

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