

POST OFFICE HORIZON IT  
INQUIRY

# Your wellbeing

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# Relaxation...

These relaxation exercises should help calm the mind and the body.

**1.** Breathe in and out as usual.

Sit or lie comfortably with your arms relaxed. Close your eyes if you want. Just breathe normally, but try to notice your breathing

**2.** As you breathe in, count to 3 or 4.

**3.** When you breathe out, say 'Relax' to yourself.

**4.** Do this 5 times.

**5.** Go back to breathing normally.

**6.** Practice every day for a week – it should get easier.



**Don't force yourself if it's hard to do. Just go back to breathing normally. It will still help you feel better.**

# Relaxation...

... Imagine a calm place.

**1. Close your eyes and picture a place that is calm and peaceful.**

Think about somewhere **you've been, imagined or seen a picture of.**

**2. What can you see?**

What colours are there?



**3. What can you hear?**

Are there birds singing or waves on the beach?



**4. What can you smell?**

The sea breeze or fresh rain?

You can stop any time you want. Just open your eyes.

**5. What can you touch?**

What does the earth feel like under your feet? Is it hot and sunny, or cool with a slight wind?

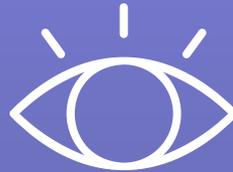
**Give this place a name.**

**Come back whenever you want. This will help you feel less trapped.**

# Coping with flashbacks

Count down from five, naming things that you see around you right now, or just things you like:

5 things you can see



4 things you can feel

1 thing you can taste



3 things you can hear

2 things you can  
smell



**If you are alone, saying these things out loud will work best.**

# Coping with flashbacks

Be in the present:

Pick up something soft and hold onto it.

How does it feel in your hands?

Place a cool, damp cloth on your face for a few minutes.

Run your wrists under cold running water.



What happened to you in the past is not happening to you now.



Tell your brain you are not back in the past.

Remind yourself you are *alive*.  
You are *safe*.  
You *survived*.

# Difficult thoughts and feelings

These things can help you take control of difficult thoughts and feelings:



Do a puzzle, like a crossword, word search or sudoku puzzle.



Do some exercise or stretching.

Read a book or watch TV.



Write a letter.



Draw or paint a picture, make a model or do something creative.



Think about what happens if someone calls your name while you are deep in thought.

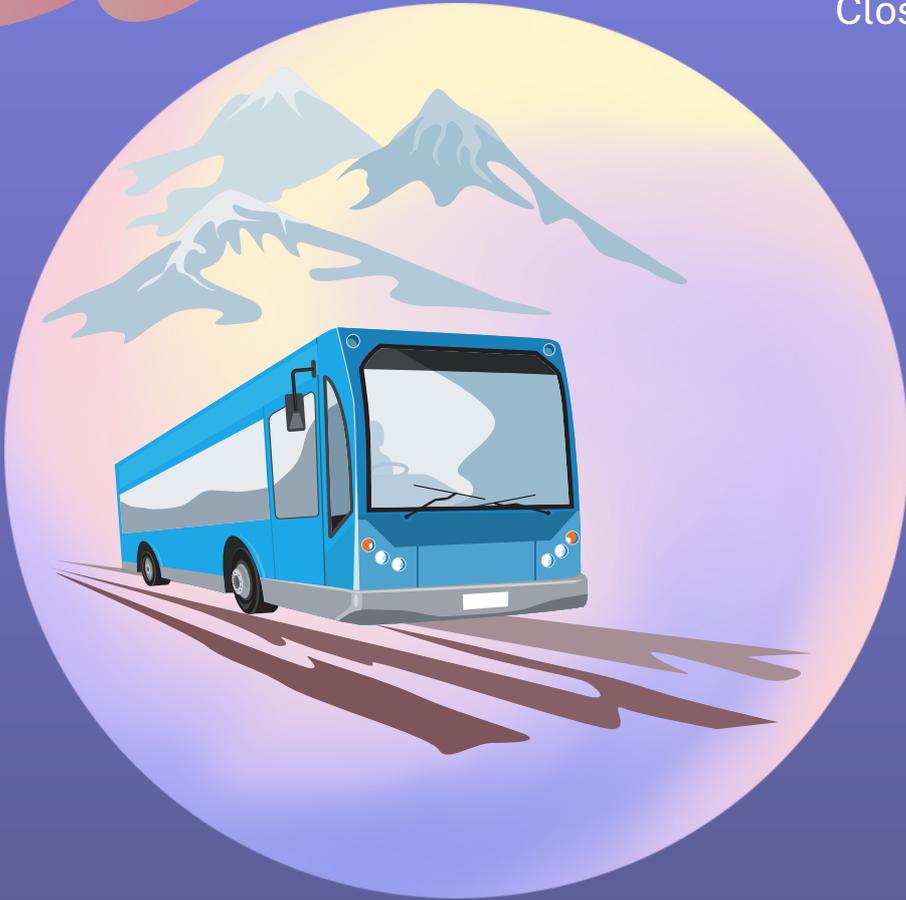
You will suddenly think about who is calling you.

Your brain can switch to thinking about something else very quickly. This is useful if you need a break from difficult thoughts or feelings.

# Difficult thoughts and feelings

Imagine driving a bus:

Close your eyes and imagine:



1.

You are the driver of a bus and your upsetting thoughts are the passengers. If you listen to the chatter you will be distracted.

2.

Put up a glass shield between yourself and the passengers. You are now in your own cabin, driving the bus.

You know the passengers are there but you can't hear them.

3.

Look ahead and focus on driving the bus. The passengers can't get to you.

4.

The upsetting thoughts are there but, like the passengers, they can't get to you.

**This may sound a bit odd at first but it works really well. It can help take the power out of upsetting thoughts.**

# Sleeping well

Improve the quality of your sleep.

Try to wake up at the same time every day.

Avoid daytime naps.

Try some of the relaxation exercises in this booklet.



Exercise during the day (but not right before going to bed).

*This guide is intended as an aid to support the wellbeing of those reading it, but should not be taken as a substitute for qualified medical opinion where required.*

## **If you are in crisis and are having thoughts of suicide:**

- **Go to A&E** or ask for an **emergency appointment with your GP**
- **Call 999 or 111**
- Call the **Samaritans 24/7** (Freephone 116 123)

Acknowledgement: Thanks go to [the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#) which first produced this booklet in 2019 and has made the guidance available for other inquiries.