



Storytelling Wellbeing Resources

CoppaFeel!
breast cancer awareness

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HEY THERE

CoppaFeel!’s community mean the world to us. From our Boobettes to our bucket shakers, everyone who helps us spread the chest-checking word is an essential part of what makes us the charity we are. But we know that for some of our community, dedicating their time and energy to us can come at a cost.

We rely on Storytellers like you to help us demonstrate the value of our work. But we recognise that asking you to tell your story around breast cancer might not always be easy. Managing everything that comes with sharing your experiences on the regular can be tricky and we’ve got a duty of care to make sure we’re doing everything we can to make sure we’re not adding to any burden you may be facing.

That’s why we’ve pulled together this booklet of Wellbeing Resources. It’s home to all of the support you can access before, during and after telling your story as part of the CoppaFeel! community.

We appreciate you.

A SERIOUS NOTE...

While we endeavour to support you as much as we can, we know there may be circumstances where you need more support than we can offer.

If you are ever in acute distress, please either call your GP and request a same day appointment, or call The Samaritans on **116 123**.

If you feel your personal safety is at risk, go straight to A&E, or call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

If you can’t do this by yourself, ask someone to help you.

Mental health emergencies are serious. If you’re ever in crisis, it’s important to seek support. You’re not wasting anyone’s time. You matter.

STRESSORS & YOUR RESPONSE TO THEM

Stress is the physiological and psychological response to situations that threaten or challenge us and that require some kind of adjustment - we have a stress response.

The level of stress we experience depends on **how resourced** we are for dealing with the situation, and **how drained** we'll be by the situation. This is crucial when we're telling our story because if we're stressed when we begin, we're more likely to feel triggered by something when we revisit it. **Check out page 7 for tips** on how to make sure you're well resourced when you show up to tell your story.

But even if we show up well resourced, we can still be triggered by certain stressors. Knowing what those stressors are and what our responses to them are can give us a message and let us know we need to check in with ourselves and do something to help us increase our resilience in the moment.

These responses come in four forms:

PHYSIOLOGICAL

We might experience tense muscles, difficulty relaxing physically, headaches, feeling like your heart is racing, tight chest.

EMOTIONAL

We might feel feelings of anxiety, fear, grief, resentment, paranoia or helplessness. Emotional responses to stress can also manifest as excitement or agitation.

MENTAL

We might notice heightened perceptions and vigilance, faster thinking, difficulty concentrating and excessive self-criticism.

BEHAVIOURAL

We might engage in coping strategies (either positive or negative), become problem focused and/or emotion focused.



- * What are your stressors generally?
- * Symptoms of stress?
- * Where do you feel stress in your body?
- * Is that a warning signal for you?
- * What do you do if you notice any of these things?
- * Stressors around cancer - are there things you think you might find particularly tricky to hear talk about?
- * What might you do if you notice any of these things before, during or after a session?

A self care plan can help you figure out how to respond when you notice you're stressed or tense.

SELF CARE PLAN

Signs I'm stressed/tense

Helpful self-care activities

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

The main things that cause me worry, stress/ anxiety

People to reach out to

Things that might stop me taking care of myself & how I can encourage myself to

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Resilience: The ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events. The more resilient we are, the more we're able to deal with tricky situations. The ace thing about it? It's dynamic and ever changing. Just because we don't feel resilient one day, doesn't mean we aren't resilient full stop. It's a muscle we can grow and strengthen.

Resilience is especially important for those of us who tell our stories a lot. So how can we develop this crucial quality?



- * How can you integrate more of these elements into your life, particularly around the times you're telling your story?
- * What would help you feel more resilient?

The Activity & Mood Tracker on Page 8 is really useful for helping identify the things that make you feel nourished, in turn helping to build your resilience.

SAVOUR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Reflection/journaling after sharing your story and focusing on and the positive parts of the experience (what felt good? What served you well? What parts of the process filled up your cup?) is proven to be beneficial for building resilience. Think about how you can integrate this into your routine when you're telling your story.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness has become a bit of a buzzword but being more mindful can help you stay in the moment and regulate your responses to situations - in the moment and beyond. If meditation isn't your bag (and it can be especially difficult for people who are living with trauma), just trying to notice and pay attention to what is going on inside and outside ourselves, moment by moment can go a long way to helping increase your resilience. Check out Page 16 for some mindfulness and meditation resources.

MOTIVATION

Connecting with meaning helps us be more resilient, more self aware, authentic and confident and have access to a reservoir of core energy that keeps us going. Ask yourself why are you doing this? Why is it important to you? What matters to you about telling your story?

CONNECTION

A strong network fulfils the very human need for belonging and contact and when we're grounded in our network we know who to turn to when we need building up, which in turn makes us more resilient. Who helps you feel strong and supported?



SHOWING UP WELL RESOURCED



SLEEP:

Getting good quality sleep is essential for showing up ready to share your story. When we're sleep deprived even minor stressors can impact us. Try and get a good night's sleep before you tell your story. Rest is important too!



HYDRATION:

It seems simple but when you're thirsty you just can't function at your best. Without getting enough water, your brain doesn't work as it should, so your mood can be negatively affected.



EXERCISE:

We've all been told exercise is good for our mental wellbeing but any movement at all can help us feel better prepared for dealing with tough things. Even if it's just a gentle walk before we start, taking time to move in whatever way works for us can be a huge help. Exercise also improves resilience.



NUTRITION:

We aren't here to tell you what to eat but making sure you've got enough energy to do what you're asking of your body and brain is **CRUCIAL**. That means emotionally and mentally as well as physically. When you're hungry, you just can't function at your best.



JOURNALING PROMPTS

Journaling can help you achieve goals, track progress and growth, gain self-confidence, reduce stress and anxiety, find inspiration, strengthen memory and make sense of the world around us and our feelings about it.

We get into our heads about how much journaling we should be doing - but even 5 mins is enough to help us make sense of what's going on for us.

Try these journalling prompts if you're not sure where to start:

APPRECIATION

- * What have I appreciated about myself today?
- * What have I done well?
- * Where have I shown strength, confidence, resilience or other positive qualities that might serve me in the future when I may feel I'm lacking in these?
- * What did I appreciate about my experience today and how might that serve me in the future?

EMOTIONS

- * What are three things that can instantly disrupt a good mood and bring you down?
- * What strategies do you use to counter these effects?
- * How do you take care of yourself if you've noticed these things occurring?
- * Are there any barriers to you implementing coping strategies?
- * Are these triggers more likely to occur when you're doing something specific?
- * How can you mitigate lessen the impact of those things if you know they're going to happen?

SAFE SPACE

- * Describe a moment when you've felt at your most calm, content or relaxed. Where were you? What could you see? Hear? Feel? Smell? Taste? Were you alone or with company?
- * How can you bring this place to mind in times of stress or tension?

REFLECTION

- * What have you gained by sharing your story? Did you lose anything?
- * If you lost anything, what actions do you need to take to help you regain it?
- * What would help you ensure you don't lose that if you tell your story again in the future?
- * What would help you ensure that telling your story is a primarily positive experience?
- * What needs do you need to recognise after telling your story?



FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

Research from the New Economics Foundation found that there are five ways to wellbeing. They are: Connect; Be Active; Take Notice; Keep Learning and Give.

We're encouraged to eat at least five fruit and veg a day to aid our physical health. The idea of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing is to get five a day of these to help us with our mental health.



CONNECT:

We're innately social creatures and connection is a great way to remind ourselves we're important and valued



BE ACTIVE:

There's a proven link between moving our bodies and positive mental wellbeing. As much as we might hate to admit it, being active is as good for our brains as it is for our physical health



TAKE NOTICE:

Taking notice of our surroundings, our emotions and our thoughts is a great way to stay present and live a little more mindfully. It can also help us pay attention to our needs a little more closely



KEEP LEARNING:

Even if we hated school, learning new things as an adult is a great selfconfidence boost and a brilliant way to connect with others. Both of these things have a positive impact on our mental wellbeing in turn



GIVE:

There's a link between doing good things and increased wellbeing. The good news is, you're already a legend by giving your time to CoppaFeel! So pat on the back for you.



- * How can you get your five a day?
- * Is there one of the five a day you feel like you're particularly lacking in?
- * How could you prioritise that moving forward?

DEALING WITH HEALTH ANXIETY

Health anxiety can be an unwelcome side effect of moving about in the breast cancer space. Sometimes it can be a minor inconvenience, or sometimes it can be an overwhelming and constant fear that gets in the way of daily life.

Our friends at Self Space created a guide to help us all tackle those anxieties and feel more in control of our minds and bodies.

Check out their tips:

SPEAK TO YOUR DOC

Health anxiety can make us book in to see our doctor a LOT or try to pretend we're actually not anxious about our health at all when it's dominating our thoughts. We can often flit between the two. Neither is that helpful. If this sounds familiar, it could be worth mentioning health anxiety to your doctor. They'll be able to advise.

BLOCK DR GOOGLE

We all know you shouldn't Google your symptoms. But we've all been there. While searching for answers online might feel like you're taking control, you're actually just feeding your fear. When the urge to Google arises, have some distractions ready. Audiobooks are great if you know that happens late at night, puzzle games are great distractions for other times of the day.

TAP INTO YOUR INNER SHERLOCK

You know your body better than anyone else, so if your worries persist, start taking notes so you can keep an eye on what's going on. You might start to notice some patterns. Maybe you're getting headaches before social events, or your belly gives you a hard time when you're overwhelmed. If there is some kind of

common denominator it could be that you're experiencing symptoms of stress or social anxiety. That doesn't make them any less real - you still deserve to be taken seriously. Having this info will help doctors understand the issue more fully.

BEWARE OF MISINFORMATION

Social media, while brilliant, is also a hotbed for misinformation, especially around mental health, physical health and general wellness. When you see someone sharing info, ask yourself can I verify this anywhere else? A new study has found that over 50% of the top videos about ADHD on TikTok contained misinformation. Keep that in mind when you're scrolling and try to notice what info you're consuming.

KNOW YOUR BODY

Bodies do change and if you've noticed anything that feels unusual for you, it means you know your normal. Your body has its own regular and irregular rhythms and its own version of what is normal for it. But if something is really concerning you, it's really worth speaking to your doctor(not Google). They want to hear from you if something's on your mind.

SOCIAL MEDIA & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Social media can be a brilliant place for connection. It can allow us to meet people with similar experiences, find community at times we need it most and it can give us a platform to share our story in a way that works for us.

But sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Managing your mental health when using social media is so important - especially if you're using it as a tool to tell your story. If your online world ever makes you feel overwhelmed, or you find it hard to cope with or switch off from, you're not the only one. The struggle to keep the online world positive is real.

CURATE YOUR FEED

It's obvious to say but you can make your social media feeds the sort of place you want to hang out. Muting, or unfollowing, accounts that feel too much for whatever reason, is a great way to make your feed feel like a safe place.

NOTICE YOUR BEHAVIOURS

Pay attention to how you're using social media. If logging in to Insta is the first thing you do when you wake up or the last thing you do before bed, how is that impacting you? When you're posting, ask yourself am I doing this because it feels positive for myself and the people who'll see this, or am I doing it for another reason? Using social media more mindfully can help us have a more positive relationship with it.

Apps like **OneSec** can help us break the habit of checking socials 'cos that's what we've conditioned ourselves to do and deleting apps can help us manage how much time we spend on them.

CHECK IN WITH YOUR FEELINGS

There may be times when content around breast cancer is particularly loud or heavy, such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October), any time a high profile person is diagnosed with the disease or if there is a death from breast cancer in the community or beyond. At these times, taking really good care of yourself is particularly important.

At times when there's a lot going on, you might notice an increase in doomscrolling. Pay attention to how you're spending your time. Ask yourself why you're online and how it's serving you. Is it making you feel positively or negatively connected? If you notice that there's more negative emotion attached to your usage, take some time away.

If you can, try and stay present and connected IRL. Meditation, going for a walk or calling a friend will provide similar stimulation to being online, but you'll feel more focused and relaxed. Check in with your self-care plan and see how you can give yourself some TLC.

AFFIRMATIONS

Positive affirmations are a good way to boost wellbeing. They might seem like another fad but there's actually a fair bit of neuroscience behind them. They've been shown to help with our inbuilt tendency to linger on negative experiences, increase resilience and decrease stress and rumination (amongst other things - find out more [here](#)).

Using positive affirmations won't magically make a problem go away! But regular practice can help change the way you see yourself and any tricky situations you face in the longer term. It's a practice that takes minimal effort and can have a big impact.

There's no right or wrong way to use affirmations. You don't have to repeat them every day and you don't have to say them out loud if that feels too WEIRD for you. Repeating them in your mind a couple of times a day, or writing them down works well. Try these on for size next time you need a little extra wellbeing support.

- 01** I believe in who I am
- 02** I am stronger than my fears
- 03** I trust my own wisdom
- 04** I am resilient. I am strong
- 05** This is just one moment
- 06** I am proud of how far I have come
- 07** I am ever growing, ever developing
- 08** I am secure, loved and safe
- 09** Every day, I am growing stronger in time
- 10** I face every challenge I encounter



MINDFULNESS RESOURCES



BREATHING SPACE

Good for: Slowing down

A quick (around 3 minute) practice to help you take a pause. Perfect for anchoring yourself in the present, increasing your awareness and cultivating a sense of stillness.



BODY SCAN

Good for: Checking in with yourself

Take some time to check in with your body by mentally scanning head to toe. This can help to reduce stress and tension and increase self compassion.



GROUNDING PRACTICE

Good for: Before you tell your story

A grounding practice can help get your mind and body in sync, quietening some of the noise in our mind and connecting us with the present.



LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

Good for: When you need TLC

The perfect way to boost wellbeing and reduce stress. A loving kindness meditation also increases positive emotions, empathy, compassion and can decrease self-criticism.



COACHING PROGRAMME

As part of our wellbeing resources for CoppaFeel! Storytellers, you will have access to both group coaching and 1:1 coaching to explore anything that comes up for you when telling your story. The group coaching will take place once a month (on the first Monday of the month) and 1:1 sessions can be booked at a time that works for you. Chat to your CoppaFeel! contact for more info.

WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is a space to help you to raise your awareness - of your situation or the topics you want to explore. It's a chance to help you have your own insights and see your potential to solve a problem. It's not structured training (like a course). It's also not therapy, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy or a way of someone else solving your problems for you (sorry!).

ABOUT YOUR COACH

Your coach for all sessions will be Alice-May Purkiss. Alice has been a Boobette and been part of the CoppaFeel! furniture for a while. She also works with people to help them find the language for their stories and figure out how to take care of themselves in the process. Find out more about Alice and the way she works [here](#).

GROUP COACHING

Unlike 1:1 coaching, group coaching involves working with a group of individuals who share common goals and challenges. This approach allows participants to learn from each other, share their experiences, and receive support and feedback from both the coach and the group.

These one hour sessions will take place once a month and will be open to anyone who has told their story to or through CoppaFeel! There's no pressure to contribute, it's totally fine to just come along and observe.

1:1 COACHING

In 1:1 coaching sessions, you'll get support and guidance to explore the issue or topic you need help with. These may be around confidence, resilience, managing complex emotions or taking care of yourself.

At the start of the session, you'll work with your coach to set a goal for the session, establish some useful outcomes and work towards these outcomes together.

Coaching is a conversation. Everything you discuss with your coach is an offer for you to explore your topic further. These can be booked by [emailing Alice directly](#).

SIGNPOSTING

There is tonnes of other support available to you, beyond that which we're able to provide.

Check out this list of organisations and let us know if you think we're missing anyone:

01 TREKSTOCK

A charity for those diagnosed with cancer in their 20s or 30s. They offer a range of programmes to support people's physical and mental wellbeing. They focus on creating community and connection too.

Find out more.

02 TEENAGE CANCER TRUST

TCT supports those up to age 25 diagnosed with cancer. They have a network of nurses and youth support workers who offer invaluable information and support and they run bespoke events for people in this age bracket.

03 SELF SPACE

An on-demand therapy service. They're open 7 days a week, 7:30am – 9:30pm with over 65 therapists to choose from. Available **online** and in person and prices start from £60 for 30 mins.

04 SAMARITANS

Can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on **116 123**. It's free to call. If you feel someone is in immediate danger, a threat to themselves or other people, you should direct them to their GP or A&E.

05 CALM

No matter who you are, where you're from or what you're going through, you'll find support at **CALM**. From their place to anonymously write down your thoughts, to their chatline (0800 585858 available 5pm - midnight) they've got you.

06 MACMILLAN

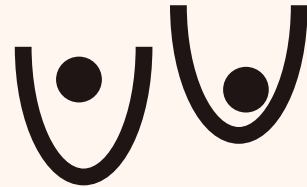
Exists to help everyone with cancer live life as fully as possible. You can call (0808 808 00 00), email or chat with a trained cancer information advisor online. You can also access free specialist counselling. Find out more **here.**

07 MIND OUT

An LGBTQ+ mental health service run by and for the LGBTQ community. There's an **online support service**, peer support groups and signposting to further support groups to help you access the help you need.

08 THE EMPOWERMENT GROUP

An organisation who offer culturally appropriate therapy (often heavily subsidised) to the Black adult community. They exist to develop an inclusive mental health care system. **Find out more.**



THANKS AGAIN...

for being part of the CoppaFeel! community and for sharing your story so generously. Please do take advantage of the wellbeing resources and tools available to you while you're working with us.

Any questions or concerns? Reach out to your CoppaFeel! contact and they'll be happy to help.

Take really good care.

Team CoppaFeel!

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