



The 12 days of wellness...

Learner Name:

WELCOME TO 12 DAYS OF WELLNESS



Journal/workbook overview...

Christmas can be a difficult time for many of us. There is a lot of pressure to do things you might not want to do; spend money you don't have and meet people who you might struggle to get on with. There also seems an expectation that you should enjoy the very things that might be making you miserable! This can impact the way we feel and the way we behave.

The 12 days of Wellness is about you taking back some control over Christmas and the New Year and doing something for yourself each day. Each day has a different wellness challenge. These are simple tasks to make you feel good and re-frame your negative feelings into something more positive. It is a challenge though! So, no cheating and be prepared to do new things and try out some of these ideas!

This journal/workbook gives you the opportunity to write down and reflect on what has worked for you and a chance to read other learners reflections on how they have managed each day's wellness challenge.

You can help other too by joining our Facebook group – where you can share ideas and support others.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/303522511197007>

We hope you have some fun along the way too!

Wishing you a contented and peaceful Christmas

The Recovery and Wellbeing College Team



USEFUL CONTACT INFO:

FACEBOOK

Closed Facebook Group – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/303522511197007>

Or go to our page <https://www.facebook.com/CnKRecoveryWellbeingCollege>

@C&K Recovery & Wellbeing

Click on **more** at the top of the page and click on **Groups** from the drop-down menu

(To post thoughts and encouragement to others doing the challenge)

COLLEGE CONTACT

Email – CKRecovery.Wellbeing@swyt.nhs.uk

Phone – 07827 883728 / 07826 876172

Please note we are closed from 23rd December until 4th January



1. ON THE FIRST DAY OF WELLNESS...

Being grateful is good for you! Sounds strange doesn't it! If you have access to the internet try googling "why being grateful is good for you!" and see what you get!

Write down in your journal 12 things you are grateful for. These can be people in your life – (name each person), something you like about yourself – you might be good at talking or have a favourite part of your body (I like my eyes!), a memory you have, interests and hobbies you enjoy the fact you have a roof or food in the cupboard... it really can be anything! If you are stuck think about people less fortunate than you – there is always someone!

	Things I am grateful for:	Examples
1		<i>My best friend</i>
2		<i>Living in Yorkshire (best place in the world!)</i>
3		<i>I am good at DIY</i>
4		<i>Food in my cupboard</i>
5		<i>My eyesight – still pretty good!</i>
6		<i>My family (well some of them!)</i>
7		<i>My hands – they still work!</i>
8		<i>My bed – it's so comfortable</i>
9		<i>The Recovery and Wellbeing College!</i> 😊
10		
11		
12		



Reflections from a leaner

Ok I'll admit it! Sometimes I will wallow in my own self-pity – don't we all? Life is unfair, unjust and at times cruel. I often feel frustrated by other people and how they might behave or how they refuse to see my point of view – especially when I am right! It is easy for me to think about the *what ifs*, and the *if onlys*, to see my lot in life as half empty! So where does this thinking get me? Nowhere – only more depressed and frustrated!

One thing I have started to tell myself is that I am lucky, that there is always someone else much... much... much worse off than I am. Counting my blessings and the good things I have in my life helps me feed and nourish positive thoughts and lifts my mood. I become much more content and it helps me see the best in others too! I don't take the good things for granted and I can admire how others overcome adversity and difficult situations. So please count your blessings as you would gifts under the Xmas tree, you will be pleasantly surprised how many are hiding under there!

How did you do? Was it hard?

It can be difficult to get our minds to thinking differently. That is because we often have default settings – like well-worn paths we travel down. This exercise is helping you form a different path, and that takes effort and energy. So well done for completing this challenge!

What are your reflections? Why not write them here. It's just for you!



2. ON THE SECOND DAY OF WELLNESS...

Get more active...We know that physical health and mental health are very closely connected. When you are feeling low it can be a battle to do anything. But did you know research suggests that after 10 minutes of walking your mood will lift! So set a target for yourself to become more active. It can be as little as 10 minutes and it can include anything that is physical – gardening, cleaning the house, clearing out the shed, you can do chair exercises - anything! For top tips go to our website:

<https://www.calderdalekirkleesrc.nhs.uk/resources/moving-more/>

Get out the house and see some Xmas lights! Buy a card to send someone...anything that is a challenge and gets you moving counts!

Reflections from a learner

I started exercising when I was suffering with anxiety and depression. I found that it gave me something to get up for, and something other than how bad I was feeling to think about. Prior to then I hadn't been interested in exercising, and at the time I couldn't really imagine anything worse than getting all breathless and sweaty. My motivation was at an all-time low, but I was desperate to try anything to feel better...including exercise. It really worked. I learned that getting active doesn't have to be jumping around or running for miles. There are so many ways to get active. I found that by gradually increasing my exercise routines I was able to enjoy exercise and build a healthy body and mind. Exercising for me, helps me to burn off excess energy (and my Xmas dinner), and I feel relaxed after. I also love the feeling when I have set myself a goal and I achieve it. I do have a physical health problem and injury, at times I can struggle to be very active, so I adapt- I go for walks or I do some gentle stretches, all of which make me feel good. So why not give it a go...even if it is to burn off those mince pies.



How did that go?

Motivation is the hardest thing to find for this challenge. That is why it is best to set a simple, realistic and achievable goal! Keep taking small steps and take notice how you feel after moving more and you will soon be active! One small step in the right direction is better than no step at all!

Write below what you did for this challenge. What motivates you? What active things do you like? Think broadly about this... it's not all about gyms, sports and walking. Gardening, housework, DIY, shopping, meeting up with others etc. are just as relevant.



3. ON THE THIRD DAY OF WELLNESS...

Today you are going to be **your own best friend for the day!** Be kind and compassionate to yourself. Here are the rules to follow:

You are not allowed:

- Put yourself down
- Use negative self-talk
- Focus on anything negative (including relationships or past events)
- Tell yourself you are not worth it (because you are!)

You are allowed:

- Think about your best qualities
- To make mistakes – be forgiving of yourself
- Praise and encourage yourself – say well done to yourself

Write down your best qualities – what would your best friend say?

My Best Qualities are!	Example
	<i>I am kind to others</i>
	<i>I have lovely ankles 😊</i>
	<i>I am quiet – which allows others to talk!</i>
	<i>I am sensitive to others</i>
	<i>I'm the first to get in touch with friends</i>
	<i>I talk a lot! Why not, life would be dull without me!</i>
	<i>I am creative</i>
	<i>I am logical</i>
	<i>I am smart</i>
	<i>I have a good sense of humour</i>
	<i>I am a thinker</i>



Reflections from a learner

It can be easier to focus upon negatives, setting myself a few positive rules is a game changer for me. I needed to start to think about how a kinder person would talk to me. Like a best friend who has my best interests at heart. It takes some practice! I grew up thinking that negative thoughts were the most honest, so to start with, it felt a bit false. As I persevered it was not long before I began to agree with the positive things. The rules above help me to realise that I am more than the negative thoughts that I hold about myself, that there really is more truth in me when, I am being kind. I find that my mood changes and colours my day with hope. I hope you will find this too.

How did today feel?

Like our learner said in her reflection it can feel false to treat yourself in this way at first. That is to be expected as our thoughts often lag behind our emotions. Don't worry they will catch up! It is OK to see your strengths and good qualities. The truth is not many of us do this enough!

What are your reflections? Was it hard at first, feel false? Did it get easier or do you need more practice?



4. ON THE FOURTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

Connect with someone – be the first to reach out! Try and pick someone you have been meaning to contact for some time or have been wondering about. If no one springs to mind you can say hello to someone in a shop or out on a walk. But be the first to reach out!

You could call someone on the phone, text, email, write a letter – anything.

If you are concerned about this challenge – you can write down how you might start a conversation and some questions you might ask. Be a good listener and take interest in the other person's life. Ask questions about them i.e. How have you coped in lockdown, how is your family? etc.

Reflections from a learner

It can't be denied that 2020 has been unprecedented. No one has been left unscathed by the Covid 19 pandemic. As we near the end of 2020, I can't help but reflect on the many things that have happened to me, which in normal times would be difficult enough! My father underwent major heart surgery, my children's education was severely disrupted, I had a relationship breakdown, workplace issues and personal bereavements. Trying to deal with all this has not been easy and it all has affected my mental health where I have re-lived some life traumas, suffering flashbacks.

Covid-19 showed the true character of my friends. One of the 'best' things to manifest itself, has been selfless acts of kindness, specifically, reaching out to me by family, friends, even strangers. When I have been at my lowest - texts, phone calls, letters, cards, smiles, hellos have helped enormously!!!

Normally, I wouldn't hesitate to 'reach out' to others, but the lows I experienced somehow clouded everything. Looking back, the simple act of reaching out, unexpectedly or not, re-affirmed my trust in humanity, and crucially, helped me to 'feel good' and to remind myself that reaching out has profoundly positive effects on us all. This has been a tough, difficult year for me – but being the recipient of someone reaching out and reaching out to others has enabled me to see the light at the end of a very long tunnel!



Who did you reach out to today? And how did it go?

Loneliness and isolation were the biggest concerns of learners at our College throughout the lockdowns this year. Reaching out to others, even if you feel that you are the one needing the support can still be beneficial to you. You don't need to tell everyone everything about how you feel but admitting you are struggling can help others admit they are too. This brings connection and can help with those feelings of loneliness.

You might want to follow <https://letstalkloneliness.co.uk/> campaign on the web and social media #LetsTalkLoneliness

Reflections from you... have you felt lonely? What helps you conquer these feelings. How does it feel to reach out?



5. ON THE FIFTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

Do something creative! We are all creative! The human mind is full of ideas waiting to be expressed. It is one of the best things you can do. You can connect with some skills you have forgotten or find out you have some new ones to discover. You can lose yourself in an activity and be distracted from any disturbing or negative thoughts. What you choose to do is up to you! draw, paint, craft, build, cook! If it goes wrong, it does not matter you had a try and it can make a funny tale to tell people (you should see my baking efforts!)

Write down and/or take a photo of what you have managed to do and share with others.

Reflections from a learner

Long before I had a mental health diagnosis, creativity made feel good. When I was a child I loved to make things: peg dolls, string art, castles made of matchsticks etc. Creativity was encouraged in my family; my mum made our clothes and always had some knitting on the go. I remember my dad having a go at painting by numbers when he was unemployed for a while. I noticed how much better he felt when he was being creative. I have learnt how mindful creative practice can be. Working on something that needs a lot of concentration, or learning something new, means you need to be in the moment and away from distracting thoughts of the past or anxiety inducing thoughts of things to come.

But creativity isn't constant. I may have bursts of creativity where making something is easy, but there are times when I just can't focus and have no inspiration. I have found it frustrating when I can't be creative which then adds to my low mood, so I always have a few different projects on the go, some easier than others. This means that when my mood is low I can do some simple crochet (always my go to craft) or do some drawing, simple mark making exercises or Zentangles. If I can find no inspiration, then I can copy ideas from Pinterest. If I'm really creative, then I'll do some more difficult and intricate crafts. I will also use this time to finish off more complex projects and get started on something new.

I also like to use my creativity to make gifts for friends and family. That good feeling you get when giving gifts is so much better when that gift has been created with your own hands and talent and infused with your love. This also gives me a sense of purpose that can be missing when my mood is low. (see my work below)





How did you feel and what are other people's reactions? Did you learn something or surprise yourself? Write below your reflections and feel free to share on Facebook!

A large, empty rectangular area with a light pink background, intended for writing reflections.



6. ON THE SIXTH DAY OF WELLNESS

Be in the present in the moment. This wellbeing challenge encourages you to stop and notice and be still. You can do this anywhere and at any time of the day just for a few minutes! Just be still, notice your surroundings, what colours and textures do you see? What can you feel on your skin? What noises do you hear? Try not to make any judgements – just observe and notice.

It is a great way to quiet your mind and any racing thoughts. You can do this in lots of ways, in the bath, lighting the fire, whilst out walking, do the washing up – anywhere!

Reflections from a learner

When you have a mental illness, you are given a problem. The hard thing is finding a way of overcoming this. When I became mentally ill I was aware of the disturbance in my life and my relationship with reality. It's hard sometimes for anyone to find their harmony and balance but it can be even more difficult if you are mentally ill. One way I find help is through the practice of "being present." This can also be called mindfulness. Have you ever been in a quiet place, maybe in nature and just felt calm, safe and at ease? Have you spent time just observing the simplicity of life in the natural environment.? If that is "yes", then that to me is mindfulness. I find that the focus on being relaxed in the moment can be a simple way out of worries and regrets of the future or past, mindfulness brings back my grounding and balance. I sometimes find to "just be here" is enough. Just getting that harmony back. It's a great gift is this very moment. It is the present!

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift...that's why they call it present”

Master Oogway (From Kung-fu Panda) 😊



How did that go? I bet you had wandering thoughts! Don't worry we all do, the important thing is to bring yourself back to the present moment with no judgement!

Write down what you noticed..... The sounds, colours, taste, smell etc.
How did it feel – were you content, restless, relaxed?



7. ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

A day of no complaining! Today is going to be positive! Challenge those negative thoughts and try to be an optimist for the day! We all get caught up in thinking that is not always helpful to the way we perceive the world. This can have a detrimental impact on the way we feel.

The best way to deal with negative thoughts is to welcome them politely. Acknowledge you have the thought but recognise that it is just that! A thought! You can choose to accept it or show it the door.

Try and catch as many of those negative thoughts as you can before accepting them and write down at the end of the day how you did. How you felt and what techniques you used.

Reflections from a learner

I grew up in a family that was very judgmental of others. My parents were also very critical of me and my siblings. Unfortunately, it is easy for me to slip into the same patterns of negative thinking and complaining. Some days nothing is *right* and I moan and complain and criticize others. The other day I found myself blaming the weather for how I felt! I feel bad inside and even lonely when I behave like this and I am not the best person to be around!

With practice I have re-framed my thinking. The first step was recognising this to be a problem! I noticed how I felt and what I did and how it affected others. The second step was to acknowledge that these were only thoughts and it was not bad to have them. I have a choice whether to act on them. Finally, what helped me was using more positive language and approaches where I praised people when they did something good using simple language such as calling people “stars”. I also learned to laugh at my own mistakes and make light of other people’s (with an added mix of sympathy!). We all make mistakes and I still complain and can be critical at times– but I have changed how I react to these thoughts and remind myself how destructive and unhelpful acting on them is.

My Self-talk – phrases:

It does not really matter. It is not important. It makes no real difference. Everyone makes mistakes. I am good at other things, I don’t have to go with that thought, everyone has good and bad qualities, it is always best to remain positive



What did you notice about yourself today that was different? What did others notice? Did you feel better inside? Was it easy to get caught into negative complaining thinking?



8. ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

Make a plan for an enjoyable day. Now you might have to do this the night before – but plan your enjoyable day. Think about all the opportunities to spoil yourself such as mealtimes. You might like walking, photography or window shopping. Cook your favourite meal, meet up with a friend. The choice is yours. Nothing is perfect so aim for an enjoyable day and keep your expectations realistic.

Enjoyable Day Plan	<i>My Enjoyable Day Plan (some ideas)</i>
	<i>Lie in and read in bed!</i>
	<i>Big fry up for breakfast (instead of lunch)</i>
	<i>A trip to town to look at the Xmas decorations</i>
	<i>Telly tea with pizza!</i>

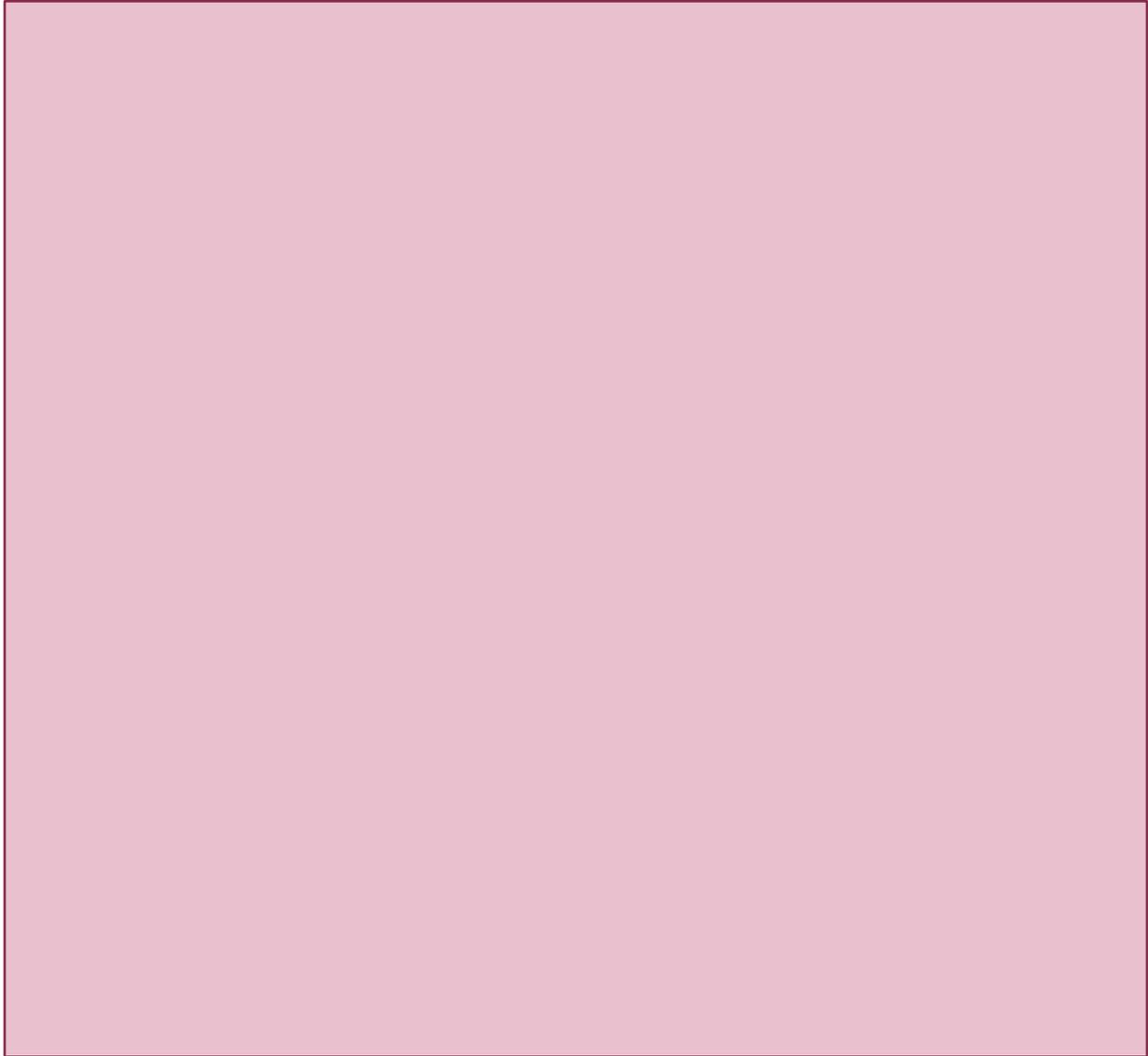
Reflections from a learner

Unsurprisingly this year has been very difficult and I have found myself, at times to be lacking in motivation and wallowing in self-pity. After a few weeks of feeling like this, I realised that while my situation was unlikely to change anytime soon, my attitude towards it could. I gave myself a little pep talk (as you do) and decided to try and make the best out of each day.

One example of me planning an enjoyable day was recently on my daughter's birthday. She no longer lives at home so not only were we unable to go out and celebrate, nor could we visit each other at home. Instead, I decided to plan a lovely walk at Beaumont Park in Huddersfield and take a picnic. We had never been to this park before and were suitably impressed, it was beautiful! We got plenty of exercise in, climbing up and down all the steps (of which there were many) and had a lovely lunch stood in the bandstand. I must say the flask of hot chocolate went down a treat as well as the obligatory caterpillar cake, despite her being 26! So while, it wasn't how we would have normally chosen to celebrate her birthday, we all really enjoyed ourselves and it will be stored in the memory banks for a long time to come.



Write down how that felt! When could you do this again? Are there any special events in your life coming up you can use to plan something?



9. ON THE NINTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

Be healthy and cut something out! At this time of year we can all over indulge eating too much chocolate, over eating generally, over drinking etc. So choose something you are going to stop putting in your mouth! You could have a back to normal eating day, a day of no alcohol or no chocolate – the choice is yours! This will help you appreciate your indulgences more and hopefully your body will feel better too!

Reflections from a learner

This is hard!!! Like lots of people, I've been drinking more than I would like to since lockdown. Usually I don't drink through the week because of work, but now I'm not working, it's become such a habit to have a drink almost every night. I know it's not good for my health, both physical and mental, but more than that, I don't actually want to drink so often. I wake up and think, 'I won't have a drink tonight' but then as the evening creeps up, my will power disappears. Then I get really cross with myself and feel like I've failed. That's not good for my mental health either.

I know that if I try to just stop completely, I'll fail and beat myself up about it, so I need to make it easy for me to succeed. So, I decided to try and do a night-on and a night-off. I did a week like this and it really worked. I think because on the evenings when I did have a drink, I'd made a positive choice to do this, so I didn't get angry with myself for doing it. And the feeling of achievement when I do a 'dry' evening is so great. In fact I even found myself doing two evenings in a row! I think that making it easier for me to achieve has really helped and it's great to not wake up and feel bad about myself!

Well done! How did that feel? Was it tough? Have you notice physically any differences? Do you feel healthier?



10.ON THE TENTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

Do something kind for someone! Helping others and doing a good deed is not only good for the person on the receiving end but you too! So think of a kindness you could do for someone and try it out. It does not have to be anything overly big. It can be as simple as calling up someone to see if they are OK, to making a drink, to doing something in your community where you live, sending a card etc. The choice is yours.

Reflections from a learner

Millie, my neighbour is quite vulnerable and often very lonely. As my act of kindness, I took her to the market in Huddersfield. She loves looking at all the old and antique things on the stalls and carefully looks for little gems that make her happy. She likes odd cups and saucers, but they must be light china with pink flowers. She enjoys making cups of tea and to put a biscuit on the saucer. Chatting with the stall holders she tells them about her cat Princess. Millie likes to buy milky coffee or sometimes a chai from the street food place in Fartown. I now take Millie once a month and this week we had chai and a samosa sitting in the car because of Covid closing our usual haunts. She doesn't really understand why her favourite cafés are closed but at least the market's open for treasure. She's always saying how kind I am for taking her but really, I enjoy the rummage too!

What did you do? How did it go? What did you feel afterwards?



11.ON THE ELEVENTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

No screen day! Screens are a big distraction and time can be lost. Like anything, we can overindulge on social media and watching TV. So why don't you see what happens when you have a day off. Think about the ways you might want to use your time instead. Some of the ideas above might be worth re-visiting and trying again! You can give all your screen time up, TV included or something like using Facebook or social media.

Here are some more ideas. You can read (kindles allowed) draw, walk, talk, meditate, take a long bath, cook/bake something special, take pictures on your phone, play a board game.

Reflections from a learner

Looking at my smartphone, scrolling through Facebook, switching the TV on, have become my default settings. When did this happen? My phone tells me I spend at least 2 hours a day looking at it (did I say 2 – well is more like 4)! Without thought or reason these escapisms have in some ways become my prison. They have trapped me in a world laid out in front of me demanding little from my imagination or effort on my part! Endless tirade of other people's opinions, grudges, bug bears and mindless garbage! Ok that may be a bit strong, but I am sure you can relate. Even the News can drain my soul of the nourishment it needs - full of negatively! So, I have made the conscientious decision to go on a Social Media and TV fast! No consuming of easy eye fodder!

I found this quite liberating (back to the prison allegedly). I had time to do other things, think about other stuff. I enjoyed being bored for a moment or two. Whilst my brain was demanding a diet of screen stimulation – takeaway fast food, I told it to hold on because today we are defiantly having steak! (sorry veggies)!

Go on give your brain a treat by filling your time with some proper stimulation you won't regret it! So, what did I do? Had a lie in, went for a long walk, took pictures on my phone, cooked a curry, had a bath, read a book, phoned a friend!

How did you get on? Was it as hard as you thought? Did you have more time to do other things?



12. ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF WELLNESS...

Treat yourself – but try something different!

So today is a celebration of everything you have achieved these 12 days! So, you can treat yourself today! The challenge is to try and find a new way of doing this! You can buy something, get a takeaway, take some time out for yourself, etc. But before you do.....

Think of as many ways to treat yourself as possible. Try to make it different by doing this at a different time or adding an extra thing to it:

Your treats!	Examples of treats with a twist!
	<i>Go for a long walk and reward yourself with drink</i>
	<i>Get your hair, nails done (if allowed) and take a selfie to show off!</i>
	<i>Buy something – new clothing (take a selfie again!)</i>
	<i>Take some time out to read – in bed, bath or favourite seat – whilst drinking a flavoursome drink!</i>
	<i>Take a bath in the middle of the day! Or at night with candles!</i>
	<i>Watch a favourite film – with popcorn!</i>
	<i>Night-time walk to spot the Xmas lights</i>
	<i>Have a big breakfast!</i>
	<i>Meet up with a friend – and get a takeaway drink!</i>
	<i>Get a takeaway and watch your favourite programme or film</i>



Reflections from a learner

In my childhood it was always very frowned on to do something like this. I was expected to work hard, not encouraged to play or take any time out for myself. I was expected to put others first all the time and not to pay attention to my own needs. I remember once being told off for reading because I wasn't doing something productive!! Now I know that much of this was because of my mum's mental illness, but it's still difficult to break out of. As a result, I spend all my time being busy, busy, busy and feel guilty if I do anything just for myself. I'm also really good at looking after other people, but not so good at looking after myself!

I really liked this challenge because I am being told to treat myself – it's something I had to do! And I had to schedule time to do it specifically. I chose to watch a film, in the morning, in bed! It felt so naughty!!! But I really enjoyed it – and guess what? The world didn't stop turning just because I wasn't busy being busy!! I'm going to make a pact with myself to give myself a treat more often from now on.

Well done – this is your last day. I hope you have rewarded yourself with a special treat. Working on your wellbeing takes effort but I hope you agree it has been worth it! Write down your thought about what helps you and the things you want to keep from the 12 days... and make some plans in the New Year to carry on 365 Days of Wellness!



Thank you to all our volunteers who have kindly helped in developing this workbook/journal. The reflections you have are so insightful, honest and authentic.

Life can be hard and tough and often feels like a muddle! But somehow it is easier when we know others feel the same. The good news is that there are things we all can do to live well. There is no guarantee to a happier life, but we can strive for a more a peaceful, contented and resilient one that connects with others.

Please keep connected through our Facebook page and share any insights that will encourage others to take some control back of their lives and see the value in their own worth.

May I take this chance to wish you a peaceful and contented festive period.

Stay well, stay safe and reach out,



Matt Ellis

Principal Recovery and Wellbeing College

