

## MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE NEW NORMAL

So, we are well into the second phase of the lock-down period and possibly starting to get used to a new normal. Whilst we are social distancing on site and working from home, trying to make the effort to go out for exercise and only making essential trips, we should also be considering our mental health during this time.

If you have been joining in with the 'Clap for Heroes' on a Thursday night at 8pm, you may have found a little light relief in seeing people standing outside or felt the sheer pleasure that comes with banging on a pot lid with a wooden spoon, but waiting once a week to release some tension may not be enough if we are to get through this with a healthy mind.

In this edition of the Wellness Newsletter we have included a number of resources to keep you entertained and informed, there are some useful tips too!

## TIME TO TALK



An email is just an email but a phone call connects people. How about going one step further and joining one of the Virtual Coffee Mornings taking place on Teams throughout the business at 11am Monday to Friday.

Coffee Mornings on Teams offer a scheduled time to talk giving you the opportunity to take five and reconnect with your colleagues to talk about anything that comes to mind. Some coffee mornings run quizzes, discussions on the next best thing to watch or simply offers a place to take your mind off work for a moment.

To find out more please contact Jude Tymon - Head of Well-being, Health & Safety Behaviours.

Contact: [jude.tymon@colasrail.com](mailto:jude.tymon@colasrail.com)



## TAKE THE MIND PLAN QUIZ

To find out how your mind is doing, take the Mind Plan Quiz supported by the NHS.

Recently tailored for the COVID-19 outbreak, it's super quick and gives you a moment to assess how you are doing.

This quiz includes 5 questions, the answers will help you build a practical plan you can use to help maintain and improve your mental health and well-being.

Take this [short quiz](#) to:

- reflect on how you've been feeling over the last 2 weeks and issues that are affecting you
- get top tips for action you can take, and advice about further support

Once you've completed the questions you can opt to have your plan emailed to you and you can revisit and edit it at any time.

Every Mind Matters is only designed to point you in the right direction. It is not a medical assessment – if you're worried about your mental health or want to discuss your results you should speak to a health professional.

For young people looking for advice on your mental health please visit: [Rise Above](#).



# BE KIND TO YOURSELF



## #BEKIND #BEAWESOME: LET'S FIND OUR OWN CAPTAIN TOM!

Once this is over we will all know someone who has been impacted by COVID-19, you may be considered a key worker working through this time, you may have family members still working as key workers, you may know people who have contracted the virus and recovered, you may even know someone who didn't. The one thing we can all do to help ourselves and each other is to be kind and supportive to one another, not only during this time but beyond.

COVID-19 seems to have brought out the best in people with neighbours offering to help each other with shopping, groups of runners volunteering to collect and deliver prescriptions to people who are unable to leave their homes, communities clapping for key workers on a Thursday, support groups being set up online for people who need to talk, with so many acts of kindness going on, why not tell us about what you have been doing?



Send in your  
**Acts of Kindness to**  
[marketing@colasrail.com](mailto:marketing@colasrail.com)

Send in your acts of kindness with a (picture if possible), by emailing them to [marketing@colasrail.com](mailto:marketing@colasrail.com), so we can share it with your colleagues, you never know....you may inspire someone to do something out of the ordinary.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF AND RECOGNISE SIGNS OF STRESS



## A GUIDED S.T.O.P. PRACTICE FOR STRESS

**S**

### STOP

Stop what you're doing right now, get in a comfortable position, either seated or lying down.

**T**

### TAKE

Take a few deep breaths. With each exhalation allow your body to soften a bit more.

**O**

### OBSERVE

Begin to observe your body, noticing if there's any tension or tightness anywhere, including the face. If you do notice any tension just allow it to soften and be aware of how you're feeling emotionally right now.

**P**

### PROCEED

Begin to observe your body, noticing if there's any tension or tightness anywhere, including the face. If you do notice any tension just allow it to soften and be aware of how you're feeling emotionally right now.

For the full guide and more info click here:  
[A Guided S.T.O.P. Practice for Stress](#)



## VALIANT VOLUNTEERS

Fancy lending a hand to help others but not sure where to start? Why not:

- Reach out to your neighbours, particularly anyone elderly or vulnerable
- Check if your region has set up a COVID-19 Mutual Aid Support Group at <https://covidmutualaid.org/>
- Contact your local borough for all relevant volunteering opportunities
- Donate to your local food bank
- Volunteer via GoodSAM <https://www.goodsamapp.org/home>

# TIME TO GET CREATIVE

## COLAS RAIL RAINBOW

Send us your version of the Colas Rail Rainbow or any rainbow inspired artwork. Colouring in is a good way to relax and recharge our batteries it also brings some mindful focus to our day.

This colouring in activity is one for all the family, feel free to download a copy of the outline or send in your own version of the Colas Rail rainbow.

The outline image was created by DB Cargo of a Class 66 rainbow, we stand by them in encouraging everyone, all kids, young and old to colour in the



picture and stick it on the window at homes, on plant or freight vehicles etc. Take a picture of your creation in the window and send it in to us in support of the NHS and key workers. Download pictures via the Intranet news article for this issue.

Send your pictures or anything you create in support during this time to [marketing@colasrail.com](mailto:marketing@colasrail.com) with the subject line Colas Rail Rainbow.

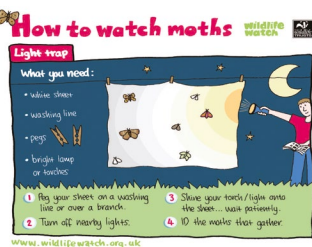


## WILDLIFE ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

For those who have found a new calling as a home school teacher, whilst trying to remember and then explain what a fronted adverbial is or trying to conduct suspect science experiments why not get closer to nature?

There are some positive sides to COVID-19, for many of us it has given us the gift of time and with wildlife getting a much needed break from persistent air pollution since the lock down, now is a great time to get involved with nature. Wild Life Watch has some great activities you can do at home or in the park whilst taking your exercise with the children.

We have picked two activities that we liked below, click on the link to find more: <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activity-sheets>



## SMART RECIPES

Get creative with food by using the Smart Recipe app from Change4Life to find easy ways to prepare tasty, healthier meals the whole family will love.

We all love tasty food but it's not always easy to cook healthy meals for the family especially if the kids are picky.

Remembering ingredients and keeping track of portion sizes can be a hassle. But don't worry;

the Meal Mixer will take care of that for you. Smart Recipes is free and available on all [Apple](#) and [Google Play](#) devices.



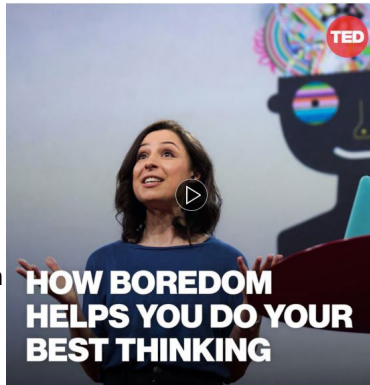
# LINKS & APPS

## TED TALK

An interesting take on how boredom can lead to your most brilliant ideas.

Marcus E. Raichle, et al., "A default mode of brain function", PNAS, 2001

The term "default mode" was coined by neuroscientist Marcus Raichle. It is used to describe the brain "at rest;" that is, when we're not focused on an external, goal-oriented task. So, contrary to the popular perceptions, when we space out, our minds aren't switched off. [Click Here](#)



## HUNCHED BACK AND 'TEXT NECK'

Hunching over your keyboard is usually a sign that you have a tight chest and a weak upper back. Over time, this type of posture can contribute to you developing a rounded upper back, which can cause shoulder and upper back stiffness.

When hunching over a computer, your head may tend to lean forward, which can lead to poor posture. Using a mobile can cause similar problems dubbed "text neck".



Upper back, neck and rear shoulder strengthening exercises, chest stretches and neck posture drills are recommended to help correct a hunched back.

Exercises to correct a hunched back:

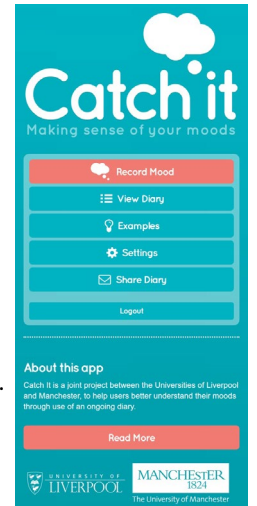
- gently lengthening your neck upwards as you tuck in your chin
- seated rows in or pull-ups - [Click Here](#)
- chest stretches [Click Here](#)



## CATCH IT - APP MAKE SENSE OF YOUR MOODS

Learn how to manage feelings like anxiety and depression with Catch It. The app will teach you how to look at problems in a different way, turn negative thoughts into positive ones and improve your mental well-being.

Available on all [Apple](#) and [Google Play](#) store related phones and tablets.



Catch It is not a substitute for professional mental health care. If you are worried about any aspects of your mental health, contact a professional.

## SELF-HELP FOR ANXIETY MANAGEMENT

SAM is an App. to help you understand and manage anxiety. The App has been developed in collaboration with a research team from UWE, Bristol.



SAM will help you to understand what causes your anxiety, monitor your anxious thoughts and behaviour over time and manage your anxiety through self-help exercises and private reflection. The "Social cloud" feature will enable you to share your experiences with the SAM community while protecting your identity. **SAM is free to use and can be accessed via [Apple](#) and [Google Play](#).**

## USEFUL LINKS

Well-being email: [wellbeingenquiries@colasrail.com](mailto:wellbeingenquiries@colasrail.com)

Aviva Well-being and Aviva Digital GP App available to all Colas Rail UK staff.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Helpline  
0800 030 5182

Able Futures Helpline 0800 321 3137