

My Mental Health First Aid Kit

A practical guide to supporting mental
wellbeing when living with a lung condition



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INTRODUCTION

Living with a lung condition can affect your physical and mental health. Family members, friends and caregivers may also experience emotional challenges as they support someone living with a lung condition.

This toolkit is designed to help you recognise when you may be struggling, identify what helps you cope and build a personalised collection of tools and resources that support your wellbeing.



Image: Collete's toolkit

BEFORE YOU START

"Mental wellbeing is like oxygen: we all need it and we all need to refill it regularly."

Mental wellbeing is a state of feeling mentally well. To keep feeling well, you can take small steps to maintain and boost your mental wellbeing. This is a bit like keeping an oxygen tank full.

When you feel well, your "oxygen tank" is fuller and you are often better able to manage everyday challenges. Stress, illness, loneliness and uncertainty can gradually drain that tank.

This toolkit has been designed to help you:



recognise when your tank is running low



identify what helps refill it



create a personal toolkit you can use to stay well and find support when you need it.

FOUR AREAS OF YOUR KIT

The Kit is organised into four areas that can support mental wellbeing.



HEALTH

Your physical health, symptoms and the things that help you feel physically well and manage your lung condition.



RELAXATION

The things that help you feel safe, calm, rested and recovered, and support you during stressful situations.



EXPRESSION

The hobbies, interests and activities that bring meaning, enjoyment or purpose to your life.



COMPANIONSHIP

The people, communities and support networks you trust, who make you smile and help you feel connected.

HOW TO BUILD YOUR KIT

Everyone's Kit will look different.

The following steps will help you recognise when your tank is running low, identify what helps refill it and choose the tools and resources that work best for you.





Step 1: Recognise

What happens when my tank is running low?

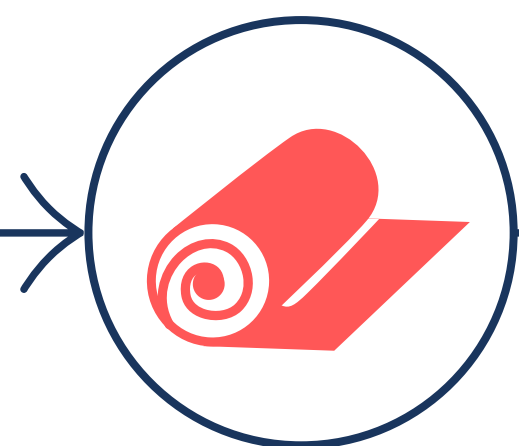
I NOTICE OR FEEL...



HEALTH

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

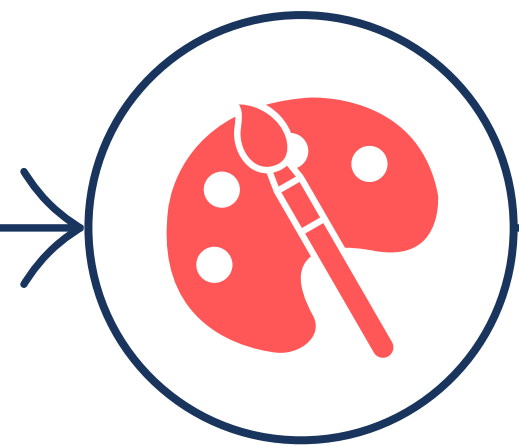
- ☐
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RELAXATION

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

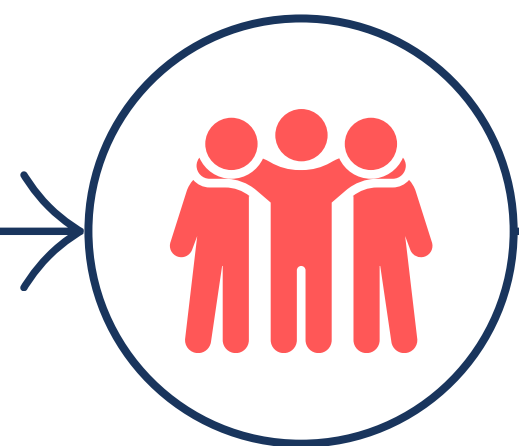
- ☐
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- ☐



EXPRESSION

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



COMPANIONSHIP

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



Step 1: Recognise

Examples



HEALTH

- ☐ poor sleep
- ☐ more breathless
- ☐ tired or fatigued
- ☐ flare-ups
- ☐ persistent cough
- ☐ increased mucus
- ☐ less energy for everyday activities
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



RELAXATION

- ☐ overwhelmed
- ☐ racing thoughts
- ☐ tense
- ☐ constant worry
- ☐ feel afraid
- ☐ trouble relaxing
- ☐ feel anxious about breathing or symptoms
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



EXPRESSION

- ☐ less interest in hobbies
- ☐ no motivation
- ☐ feel low
- ☐ tearful
- ☐
- ☐ hard to concentrate
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



COMPANIONSHIP

- ☐ feel lonely
- ☐ avoid others
- ☐ withdraw from family or friends
- ☐ avoid social activities
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



step 2: Refill

What helps me feel better?

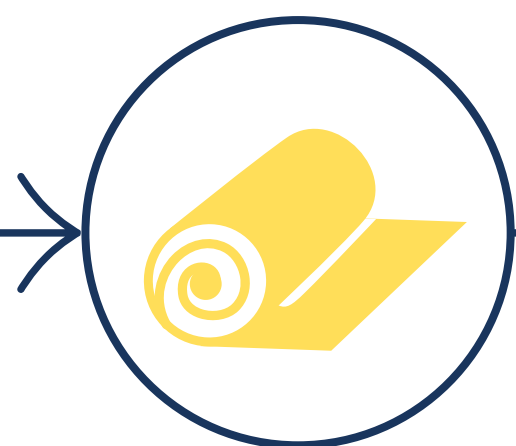
THINGS I CAN DO...



HEALTH

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

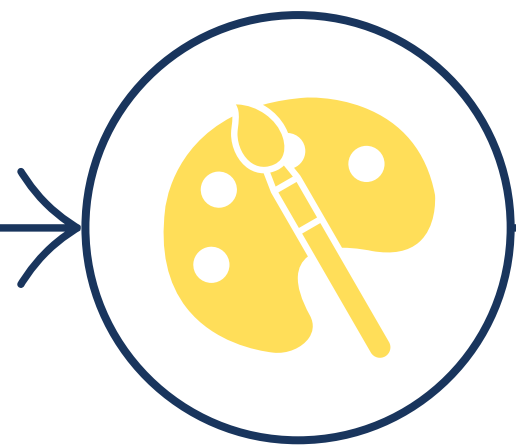
- ☐
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RELAXATION

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

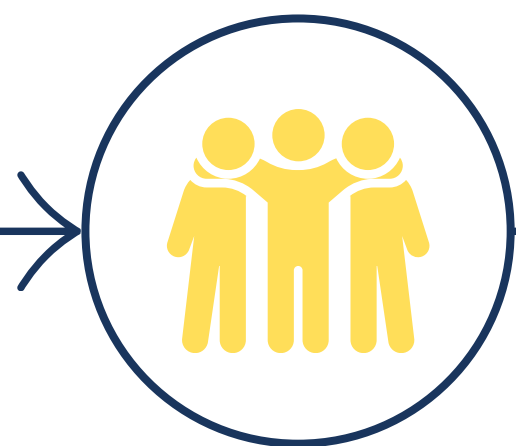
- ☐
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- ☐



EXPRESSION

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



COMPANIONSHIP

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



Step 2: Refill

Examples



HEALTH

- ☐ rest
- ☐ follow my breathing plan
- ☐ take my medication as prescribed
- ☐ eat healthily
- ☐ stay hydrated
- ☐ pace activities
- ☐ take breaks
- ☐ gentle exercise



RELAXATION

- ☐ listen to music
- ☐ practise mindfulness
- ☐ deep breathing exercise
- ☐
- ☐ spend some quiet time doing something I enjoy
- ☐
- ☐



EXPRESSION

- ☐ read or write
- ☐ garden
- ☐ paint or draw
- ☐ create a daily routine
- ☐ walk in nature
- ☐ make or add to Keepsake box
- ☐ make small change to home
- ☐



COMPANIONSHIP

- ☐ call a friend
- ☐ join a support group
- ☐ see my family
- ☐ take part in an activity I enjoy
- ☐ join an online community
- ☐ spend time with people who make me feel supported



Step 3: Build your Kit

What do I need to Keep my tank full?

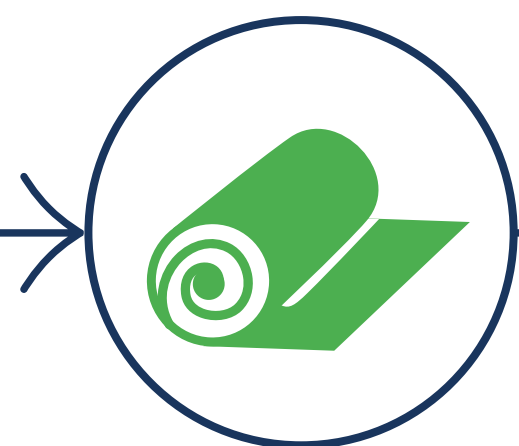
I NEED...



HEALTH

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

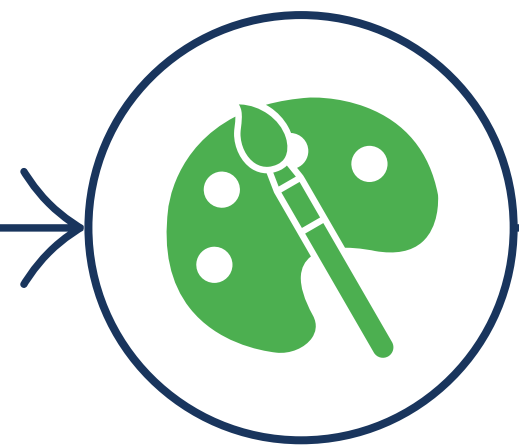
- ☐
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- ☐



RELAXATION

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



EXPRESSION

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



COMPANIONSHIP

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



Step 3: Build your Kit

Examples



HEALTH

- ☐ medication list
- ☐ appointment information
- ☐ follow breathing plan
- ☐ inhalers
- ☐ emergency contacts list
- ☐ list of healthcare team contact details
- ☐



RELAXATION

- ☐ music playlist
- ☐ relaxation exercise
- ☐ mindfulness or meditation app
- ☐ bath
- ☐ list of activities that help me relax
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐



EXPRESSION

- ☐ favourite book
- ☐ hobby ideas
- ☐ inspiring quotes
- ☐ journal or notebook
- ☐
- ☐ art or craft supplies
- ☐
- ☐



COMPANIONSHIP

- ☐ details of local or online support groups
- ☐ happy photographs
- ☐
- ☐ a list of people I can contact when I need support
- ☐
- ☐



CHECKLIST

Record here each item that you need (listed in step 3), then tick it off when it is in your Kit.

HEALTH

[illegible]

RELAXATION

[illegible]

EXPRESSION

[illegible]

COMPANIONSHIP

[illegible]

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Sometimes self-help is not enough.

It may be time to seek additional support if you notice:

- persistent sadness, anxiety or hopelessness
- difficulty coping with daily life
- ongoing sleep problems
- panic attacks or intense worry
- feelings of isolation or loneliness that do not improve.

If you experience thoughts of suicide, thoughts of harming yourself or feel unable to keep yourself safe, seek urgent professional support immediately.

MORE INFORMATION

You can refer to recommended resources on the ELF website to help you build your Kit, including breathing and relaxation exercises, support organisations, helplines and resources for caregivers.

These resources will be made available in different languages and can be tailored to your country and local support services.