

# A GUIDE FOR WOMEN

A creative self help guide to staying healthy and happy.




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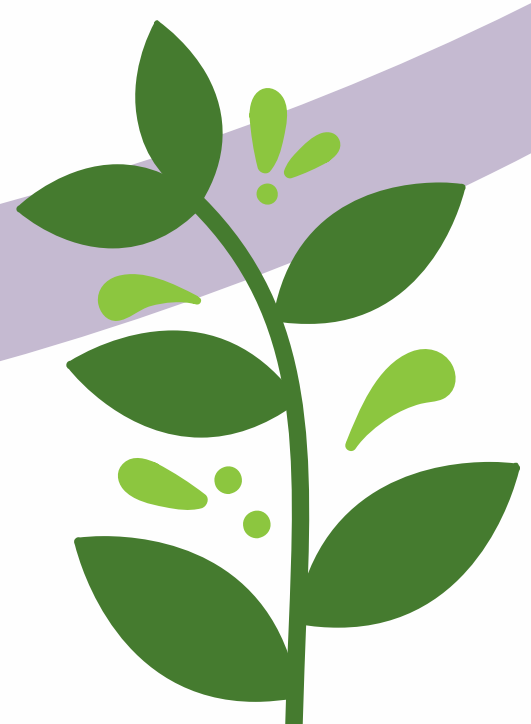
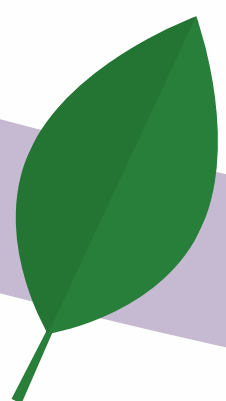
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Mental health and wellbeing is about how we think and feel and how we cope with day-to-day life.

Good mental health and wellbeing helps us enjoy life and cope well with life's challenges.

In the same way we all have physical health, we all have mental health and we need to look after it. 

This creative self help guide for women provides information and tools to build resilience and help you to cope better with more challenging times.





Women can be impacted differently from men by a range of social and gender related issues. Women are more likely to be affected by biological factors and related life events.

## ADOLESCENCE/TEENAGE YEARS

Changes in hormones can lead to mood swings and feeling generally more emotional. Social pressures, body image and academic stress can also affect teenagers' mental health.

## BECOMING A MUM

Parenthood is a time of great joy but can also present many challenges that might affect women's mental health. The physical recovery from childbirth, changes in hormones, sleep deprivation and adapting to a new routine can all impact on how we feel and cope.

## JUGGLING RESPONSIBILITIES

Women often carry the invisible responsibility of housework and support of the family. Balancing this with work can often cause stress and leave little time for self care.

## MENOPAUSE

Perimenopause and menopause bring hormone changes, potentially causing women to feel stressed, anxious or low in mood. 'Brain fog' and feelings of low self esteem at this time can also impact our mental health.

## LATER LIFE

When children move out, 'empty nest syndrome' can mean some women feel lonely. Retirement can also lead to loss of identity, boredom or lack of direction. Experiencing bereavement can also have an impact on mental health.



## **10 WAYS TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

One little step is already a move towards improving your wellbeing...

1. Eat well and drink sensibly
2. Keep physically active
3. Ensure you get enough sleep
4. Take time to do things you enjoy
5. Keep in touch with others
6. Take a break
7. Talk about your feelings
8. Accept and value who you are
9. Care for others
10. Don't be afraid to ask for help



**CHECK IN  
REGULARLY**

**POST A LETTER OR  
A CARD**

**STAY CONNECTED**

Keeping in touch with  
others is good for our  
mental health & wellbeing.

**BE THERE FOR  
EACH OTHER**

**MAKE A PHONE  
CALL, OR SEND A  
TEXT**



## POSITIVE SELF TALK

Saying things to yourself in your head is very powerful. Your body believes this 'self talk'. Saying positive statements over and over can help you develop a new attitude to yourself and to situations. This can help cope with challenges or when you feel worried or nervous.

Think of some positive phrases that you could say to yourself...

You could write your positive self talk phrases down or type them in to your phone and look at them if you feel worried or nervous.

**I am confident**

**I am well prepared**

**I have people that love me**

**I can do this**

**I am enough**

**I am doing really well**

**My body is an instrument,  
not an ornament**



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# Relaxation

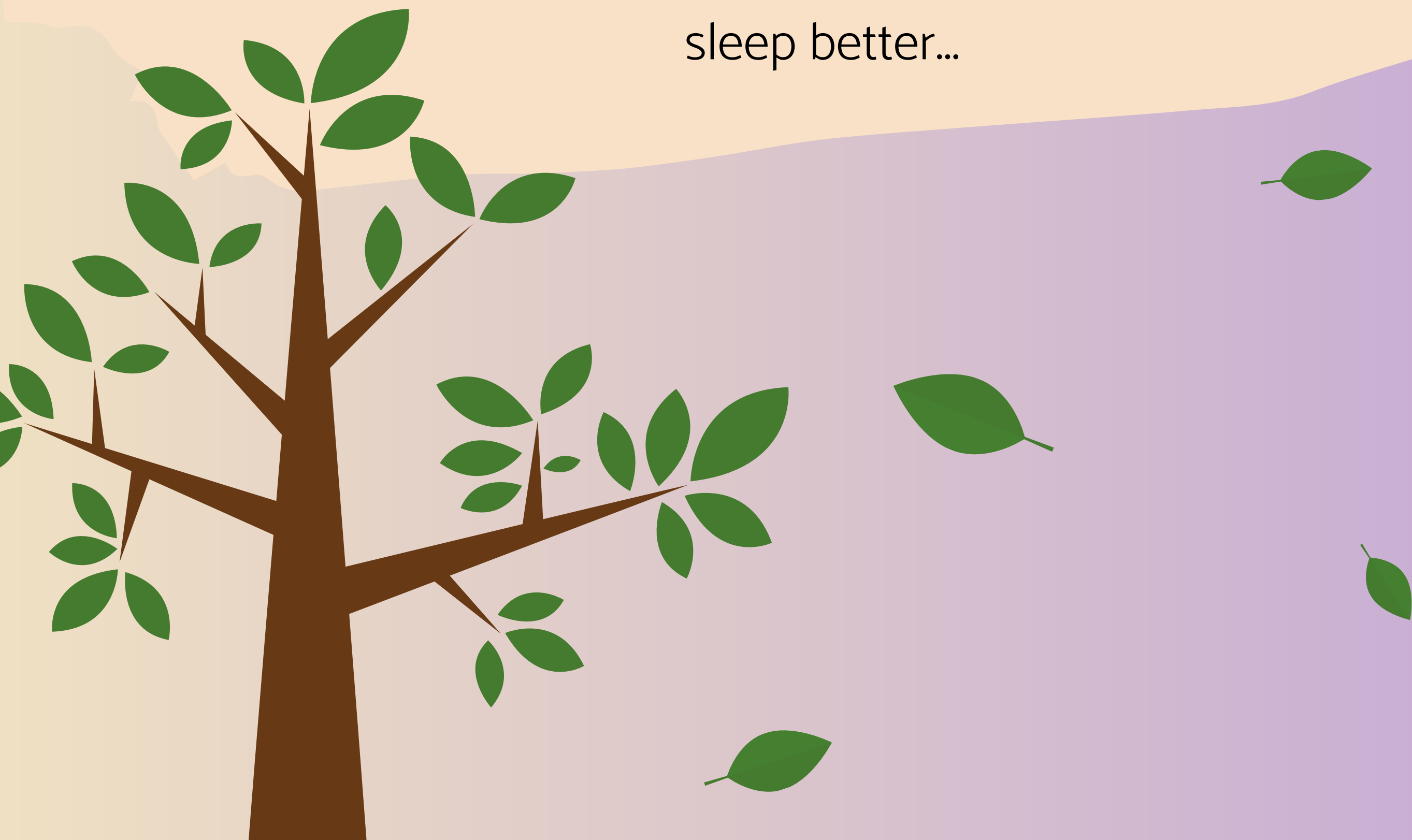
Relaxation doesn't have to take up lots of time. Simply taking a few minutes for yourself to do something you enjoy can give you enough space to feel calmer. Try to make a plan for your day or your week...and remember to build in some form of relaxation!

## Pause...

Throughout the day stop what you are doing for a minute, let your shoulders drop, take a deep breath in through your nose, slowly exhale through your mouth, and let your mind calm down...

## Go for a short walk...

Brisk walking releases 'feel good' endorphins, allows you to take in the natural environment, and the fresh air helps you to relax and sleep better...





# FOCUSSING ON YOUR BREATH...



- **Simply Breathing** and paying attention to the moment for a few minutes every day can help build healthy coping skills and calm anxiety. Try to take a little time to breathe, focus on the present moment and be thoughtful about the small details of where you are and how you are feeling.
- **Box Breathing** involves exhaling to a count of four, holding your lungs empty for a count of four, inhaling for four, holding for four, exhaling and beginning the pattern again. Look at any square shape to make this easier.
- **Body Scan Meditation** involves paying attention to parts of your body in a gradual sequence from head to toes. It is a good way of releasing tension you might not even realise you are experiencing.
- **Mindful Cup of Tea or Coffee (Decaff of course!)** simply sit and just be in the moment. Take five minutes before the day begins...this is even more important when we are going through a busy or more challenging time.

# THINGS I CAN CONTROL

When we are facing a challenge or a stressful event it is easy to get lost in worrying about all sorts of things that are out of your control. This is a natural reaction but it is not that helpful. Instead why don't you try this simple activity to help focus on what is in your control:

1. Acknowledge how you are feeling about the situation.
2. Draw round your hand on a piece of paper.
3. Outside the hand write 'Out of my control'
4. Inside the hand write 'In my control'
5. Write outside of the hand things that are out of your control.
6. Inside the hand write things that are in your control for this particular challenge or stressful situation.
7. Try to focus more attention on the things you can control which will help to reduce feelings of worry.





# Things I CAN'T Control

My Friends' and Family's Behaviour

Other People's Feelings

The Way I Behave

My Self Talk

My Breathing

Asking For Help

Things I CAN Control

Taking Care of Myself

The Past

What Others Think of Me

What Other People Say



# DAILY WELLBEING TOOLS

*To get you through the day*

- Exercise
- Baking or cooking
- Walking
- Create a daily 'to do' list
- Learn a new skill
- Gardening
- Colouring or craft
- Yoga
- Have a 'clear out'
- Look through old photos
- Start a journal
- Spend time outdoors
- Read a book or magazine
- Mindfulness
- Phone or visit friends or family
- Make a 'feel good' playlist
- Light a candle



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In the same way we look after our physical health every day, we should look after our mental health and wellbeing every day. Think of some activities that you enjoy. This can be anything at all whether it is a hobby, an activity or a task. You could take some time to try some new Daily Wellbeing Tools, and remember to review these regularly. You can use the table below if that helps...

### **ACTIVITY- MY '5 A DAY' FOR MY MH & WELLBEING**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**NOTES**

**REMINDERS**

# WELLBEING BINGO

Wellbeing Bingo is a great way to reflect and get you talking and thinking about what you've done in the last week to look after yourself. It can be anything at all however small like catching up with a friend, going for a walk or listening to good music. You can create your own or use the suggestions in the example below. You can play yourself or ask friends or family to play it with you. It can be printed and played like a game of bingo, or simply used to think back on things you have done for yourself.

## IN THE PAST WEEK I HAVE...

Played with a pet



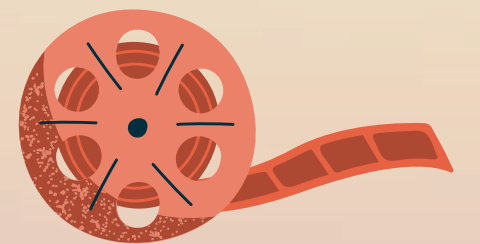
Offered support to others



Danced



Watched a great movie/TV show



Listened to good music



Spent time with my family



Was kind to others



Stayed hydrated



Read a good book



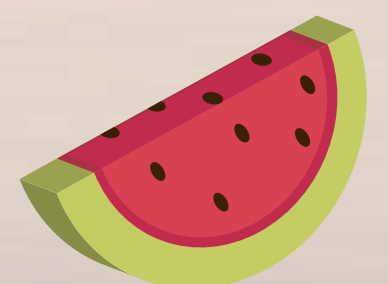
Done some exercise



Had some 'me' time

**RELAX**

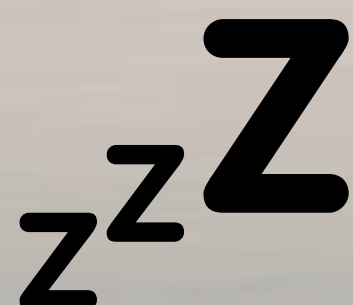
Eaten something delicious



Treated myself



Had a good sleep



Spent time with my friends



Visited somewhere new





## MY SELF STUDY

# Good Moments

Three Good Things

1.

2.

3.

How did this make you feel?

Research has shown that thinking about three things that went well or made us smile can improve our mood, help us feel more positive and able to cope.

This is particularly useful when things are tough. Small things are best. It can be anything from a smell, sound or touch.

It can be something you have done or something someone has done for you.

## **WHAT CAN THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU DO TO SUPPORT YOU?**

**Let the people around you know that there are some simple things they can do to help you cope...**

Acknowledge that it is ok to be concerned.

Don't dismiss my questions or concerns, instead just listen and try to reassure me.

Taking part in another activity while talking can make it easier.

Try to stay positive and offer me safety.

Check in with me regularly.

**Together we are well**

**IT'S NORMAL  
TO FEEL WORRIED**







#MENTALHEALTHMATTERS

# ARE YOU WORRIED OR NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

## CONTACTS FOR SUPPORT

### NHS 24

Free Call - 111

<https://www.nhs24.scot>

### BREATHING SPACE

Free Call - 0800 83 85 87

<https://breathingspace.scot>

### LIVING LIFE (NHS)

Free Call - 0800 328 9655

<https://www.nhs24.scot>

### ANXIETY UK

Free Call - 0344 775 774

<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

### SAMARITANS

Free Call - 116 123

<http://www.samaritans.org>

### BEAT - EATING DISORDERS

Free Call - 0808 801 0711

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

### CRUSE BEREAVEMENT SCOT

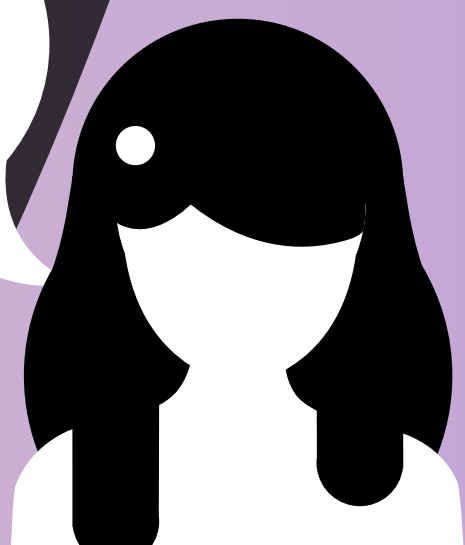
Free Call - 0845 600 2227

<http://www.crusescotland.org.uk>

### SCOTLAND'S DOMESTIC ABUSE HELPLINE

Free Call - 0800 027 1234

<https://www.sdafmh.org.uk/en/>





#MENTALHEALTHMATTERS

# ARE YOU WORRIED OR NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

## CONTACTS FOR PARENTS & CARERS

### BREATHING SPACE

Free Call - 0800 83 85 87

<https://breathingspace.scot>

### SAMARITANS

Free Call - 116 123

<http://www.samaritans.org>

### NHS 24

Free Call - 111

<https://www.nhs24.scot>

### PARENTLINE SCOTLAND

Free Call - 08000 28 22 33

<https://www.children1st.org.uk/help-for-families/parentline-scotland/>

### YOUNG MINDS CRISIS LINE

Text: YP to 85258

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

### PAPYRUS

Free Call - 0800 068 41 41

<https://papyrus-uk.org/>



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## USEFUL LINKS & WEBSITES

Self Esteem Self Help Guide - [www.nhsinform.scot/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/)

Periods (menstruation) - [www.nhsinform.scot/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/)

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) - [www.nhsinform.scot/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/)

Endometriosis - [www.nhsinform.scot/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/)

Your Mental Health and Wellbeing in Pregnancy (Ready Steady Baby!) - [www.nhsinform.scot/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/)

Coping with Stress After Having a Baby - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Feeling Depressed After Childbirth - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Sleep and Tiredness After Having a Baby - [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

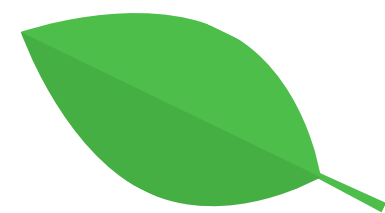
Parent Club - [www.parentclub.scot/](http://www.parentclub.scot/)

Menopause and Mental Health and Wellbeing - [www.nhsinform.scot/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/)

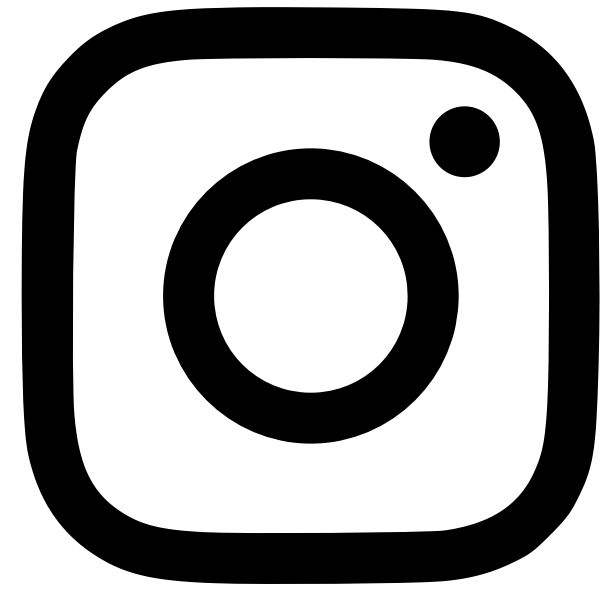
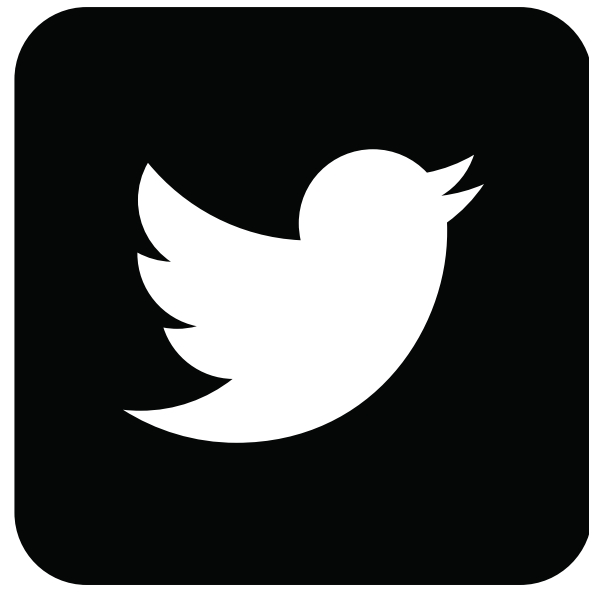
Support if You're Caring for Someone with Dementia - [www.nhsinform.scot/](http://www.nhsinform.scot/)

Scottish Women's Aid - [www.womensaid.scot/](http://www.womensaid.scot/)

Additional MHWB guides for adults, children and young people - <https://www.nhsaaa.net/services/services-a-z/health-information-and-resources-service/>



## FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



@NHSAAA

@ActionHappiness

@MentalHealth

@PublicHealthAAA

@SouthAyrshire

@EastAyrshire

@North\_Ayrshire