

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

MANUAL

A GUIDE TO COPING WITH LIFE'S CHALLENGES

GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

Tips on healthy living

STRESS: A vicious circle

— how you can break out of it

DEALING WITH ANGER

Big Ears: Want to help a mate?

Help them to talk about it

RELAX!

Easy relaxation exercises

**DRUGS: What do they
do to our heads?**

**Up-to-date contacts for
information and help**



TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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A GUIDE TO COPING WITH LIFE'S CHALLENGES

life...

Nobody said it was going to be easy. Even if someone did, they were well out of touch with reality. It's tough out there. The least they could've done is give you some kind of **instruction manual** for this thing, this . . . LIFE thing.

Well lads, here it is.

The first thing you need to know is to stay **happy** and **healthy**. You have to look after your **head** as well as your **body** because whatever happens to one will always affect the other.

Most things that might stress you out are covered in here. There's tips on relaxing and how to help your mates as well as how to get help yourself if you need it. And if it isn't in here, try one of the organisations listed at the back (they're also dotted about on the pages where they're most relevant).

So, for (almost) everything a man needs to know about keeping happy, healthy, beating the blues and staying worry free, read on.

This is your manual for the 21st Century.

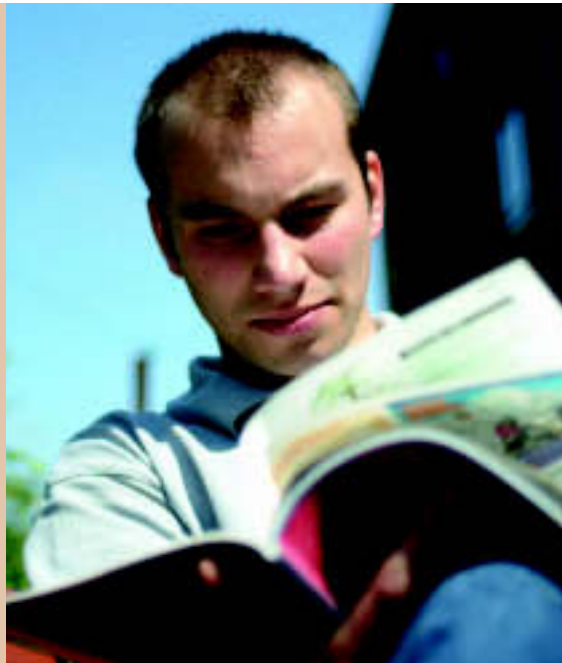
Man.
(Sorry about the delay.)

The Basics

— get this stuff right before you worry about anything else.

Unless you're chained hand and foot to a concrete block, there's always something you can do to improve things.

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the basics

Right then, let's start with the basics:

EAT WELL
SLEEP WELL
RELAX



Food

A balanced diet means:

- fruit and vegetables — fresh, frozen or canned; pure juices and dried fruits
- bread, cereals and potatoes — crackers, noodles, oats, chapattis, pasta and rice
- lean meat, chicken, fish and alternatives — ‘alternatives’ are pulses, nuts, seeds and soya products

Simply put, if our bodies aren’t getting all they need, we’re unlikely to be happy in our heads.

Sleep

We need between six and ten hours’ sleep a night (differs from person to person). Can’t sleep? Try these:

- try to be more physically active
- cut out stimulants (tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks, speed, coke, E, chocolate)
- try not to booze before bed *every* night (we might fall asleep quickly but it stops us getting the really deep sleep we need)
- eat a light snack before bed — milky if possible
- don’t work or study right up to bedtime — wind down first

Don’t lie there staring into the dark — get up, have a snack, read a book, brush your teeth then try again. If these steps don’t have any effect after a few days, see your doctor.

Relax

Spend some time on yourself. Change the scene and get your mind off the events of the day.

- All day with people? Get some time alone.
- Alone all day? Catch up with your mates.
- Headwork all day? Get some exercise.
- Grafting all day? Use your head instead.

See the section ‘Relax’ for more tips and some easy relaxation exercises.

Beyond the basics

Apart from food, sleep and relaxation, we all need somewhere safe to stay and someone to talk to. We all need some kind of goal in life to keep us going as well. Keep your goals realistic and take it one step at a time on getting there.

Not happy? Think what could be missing in your life and see what you can do to plug the gaps. Unless you’re chained hand and foot to a concrete block, there’s always something you can do to improve things.

LINKS:

www.channel4.com/health

Lots of information on physical and mental health.

www.healthscotland.com

Health Scotland website with health information and links.



The Big Job
The Flash Car
The Slick Suit
The Gorgeous Bird
The Beautiful Home
The Exotic Holidays
The Six Pack

He's always on top of it, never down. He's the best lover, the most caring partner, the perfect father . . . and he doesn't exist!

man not superman



No level playing field

For a kick off, we don't all start out in life with the same advantages and disadvantages. For a lot of people, the main priority is just keeping fed and keeping a roof over their heads. It's the basic stuff that really keeps us happy and healthy — everything else is just icing on the cake.

Don't believe the hype

Supermen are made up by the media in order to make whatever aftershave/car/shoe/home/beer/watch/telly/moby/bank account they're trying to flog this month seem more attractive to us.

Learn to say 'no'

Many men have fallen into the trap of trying to do more than everyone else in order to feel they're 'worth' something. Health suffers as a result because we all have to stop sometimes — otherwise we break. Be clear about your own goals, realistic about what you can take on and learn how to say that magical, two-letter word: 'no'.

Self-esteem

It's always a good thing to *try* to be perfect but there's no point doing yourself down because you're not — **nobody is**.

- Eat healthily and exercise and your body will take the shape that suits it best.
- Being comfortable with yourself is the most attractive look of all.
- Think positive — never mind what you haven't achieved; think a while on what you have done and congratulate yourself.



stress

Pressure is normal and is the result of the demands life places on us. Our bodies react to help us deal with pressure or challenge by producing adrenaline. It gets us 'hiked up' when we need it.

BUT

Too much or too little pressure can lead to stress. What is stressful to one person may not be to the next — it all depends on how we deal with things.

Stress is bad for us. It causes sleeplessness, anxiety and short tempers. In the long term, it can lead to high blood pressure, trigger mental health problems and put you in an early grave.

SIGNS OF STRESS:

- off food • can't concentrate • not sleeping / not sleeping well • head going round in circles
- short temper • off sex • sore back / neck
- indigestion • feeling the need to drink or do drugs more • chest pain • headaches •

Of course, there could be physical causes for these symptoms as well. Go and see your doctor if they persist.

We can't avoid pressure completely but we can stop it building up into stress in the first place.

A VICIOUS CIRCLE . . .

Stress causes us physical discomfort and affects our concentration and sleep which makes everyday tasks more difficult which in turn causes more stress which means worse concentration, poorer sleep and more discomfort causing us more stress ...



Breaking the cycle of stress

- Step 1:** do some relaxation exercises to regulate breathing and ease the aches and pains.
- Step 2:** do something to take your mind off daily tasks and wind down — maybe some form of physical activity.
- Step 3:** examine your life — see if you can change things around to reduce demands on you.
- Step 4:** get into the habit of doing Steps 1 and 2 every day and Step 3 regularly.

No instant fixes

Doing some relaxation and exercise should help you feel better in the short term but it can take a few days of repeating the steps above to feel the full benefits. If it's not helping, go and see your doctor.



big idea

Ever wondered how to help a mate who's having a hard time?

Quite often, the best thing you can do as a mate is just to be there for them to talk to. People are often reluctant to talk about themselves — guys especially — so here are some tips:

- make yourself available — let them know they can talk to you if they want (you might think they know they can but it helps if you remind them)
- don't be too pushy about it — they'll talk when they're ready
- go somewhere quiet and private
- assure them anything they say will stay between you and them (make sure it does!)
- just listen — don't be too eager to jump in with your pearls of wisdom (unless they ask for your advice)
- don't judge — it's not your life and you *don't* know the full story

Helping someone share their woes can be a rewarding experience and can even make you feel better about your own life.

rs

BUT

Be aware that listening to heavy stuff can be heavy on you, too:


- take time to wind down and relax afterwards
- 'offload' if you have to — this means telling someone else about what's happened BUT BE CAREFUL not to mention names or anything that could give your mate away
- don't take it all on yourself — some stuff you can't deal with alone
- you can offer sympathy and company but not therapy like a counsellor or treatment like a psychiatrist
- help your mate get the help they need (see the 'Help' section)



'He was just one of the lads; pub two or three times in the week, clubbing at the weekend, kickabout on a Sunday. When he split up with Sarah he didn't seem that bothered. We all took it he was okay about it. Then we started missing him in the pub, he'd turn up at footy but wouldn't play — back was always bothering him. But he was still smiling, still cracking jokes. It wasn't 'til I went round his place to try and drag him out for a beer I saw the state he'd got in. He was pretty embarrassed but we got talking.

'I'd never realised he'd taken the thing with Sarah as bad. He's my oldest mate as well but you're not going to spill that sort of stuff in a big group, are you? He'd just been sitting in and brooding and his confidence had gone totally. He's over it now, started coming out with us again, but I still go round on my own in case he wants to talk. Half the time it's me moaning at him now!'

in the
dole-
drums



The dole? People think it's easier than working ... they don't have a clue.

Okay, so there are some who seem happy enough on the dole but what about the rest of us?

No cash, no social life, not being able to provide for your family, putting up with all the crap society throws you — little wonder your self-esteem can take a nosedive after a while signing on. So, what can you do about it?

MAKE A CHANGE — YES, YOU CAN.

Plenty of people have hit a low or started out low and hauled themselves up.

‘When I lost my job at the depot that was it — everything fell apart. I just felt so bloody useless. I did really badly at school so it wasn’t like I could just walk into another job. I went down and down.

‘Eventually, I realised I had to give myself a kick up the backside or I’d just rot away. I went down the day centre and started helping out. I do art with them or sometimes they just want to talk. One thing’s led to another and now the manager wants me to go on a course for Occupational Therapists. Never have thought I’d be doing something like that! I can get funding for it as well now I’ve been on the dole as long.

‘Life’s not perfect — I’m still skint — but I feel like I’m going somewhere again. It’s made all the difference.’

WORTHLESS?

Apart from the cash, a lot of the satisfaction that comes from having a job is in feeling, at the end of the day or the week, that you’ve achieved something. You don’t need to be in a job to feel that.

● Volunteer

Pick up new skills, meet new people. Doing something worthwhile for others can help you feel better about yourself. There’s a huge range from conservation work to drugs education projects. Look in *The Phone Book* for your local Volunteer centre or contact Volunteer Development Scotland and ask about opportunities near you. Your Jobcentre might suggest some volunteering but **you can choose** which charity you do it with.

● Training schemes / Work placements

Not skilled enough to get the kind of job you want? Jobcentres offer work placements and training courses for the long-term unemployed. They’re free and will pay to cover expenses. While there’s no guarantee of work at the end of it, the knowledge and skills you could pick up can only help. Ask for details.

● Night classes

Another good way of picking up qualifications and skills. Most secondary schools and colleges run night classes and there’s usually BIG discounts if you’re unemployed (some only cost £1). Ask for details.

● Cut yourself some slack . . .

Not everyone could survive on the dole. Maybe you’re looking after kids as well or caring for someone or just at home doing the housework — these are important jobs in themselves.

LINKS:

Careers Advice

Help and advice in choosing or changing your career. Check the *Yellow Pages* under ‘Careers Advice’.

Citizens’ Advice Bureaux

Free and confidential advice on any legal matter from housing to employment. Check the *Yellow Pages* under ‘Counselling and Advice’ or visit www.nacab.org.uk for an online guide to your rights, email questions and local office search.

Scottish Volunteering Hotline

Tel: 08000 15 15 11
Call for more information on volunteering.

Volunteer Development Scotland (VDS)

Stirling Enterprise Park,
Stirling FK7 7RP.
Tel: 01786 479 593
(9am–5pm, Monday–Friday)
Supports volunteering across Scotland. Call or write to find out about volunteering opportunities in your area.

relax

LINKS:

Know The Score

Freephone:
0800 587 587 9
www.knowthescore.info
Drugs information helpline
for teenagers, young
adults, parents and
friends.

Talking to Frank About Drugs

Freephone:
0800 776 600
Counselling on any drug
worries you have about
yourself, friends or
relatives.

'Relax? I don't have the time!'

- When we're busy is the very time we most need to relax.
- Doing some relaxation will help you cope better with busy, stressful periods.
- Any time at all relaxing is better than none.



When we're stressed, our muscles get tense, our posture goes and our breathing gets shallower. All this reduces our ability to concentrate (frustrating if you're trying to do anything) and, more generally, puts us in a bad frame of mind. Effective relaxation is a mixture of getting our minds off our concerns and getting our bodies working right again.

Stretching

Stretching will relieve the aches and pains but is best done when 'warmed up' (move around for 10 minutes first). Remember to be gentle on yourself and breathe out while you stretch, and breathe in when you relax.

Exercise

Exercise takes our mind off our worries, burns off adrenaline and anxious energy, releases the 'feelgood' factor and helps us sleep better. Keeps your heart healthy and the spare tyre at bay as well.

Massage

Getting massaged is a great way of relieving muscle tension and improving blood flow around your body.

Meditation

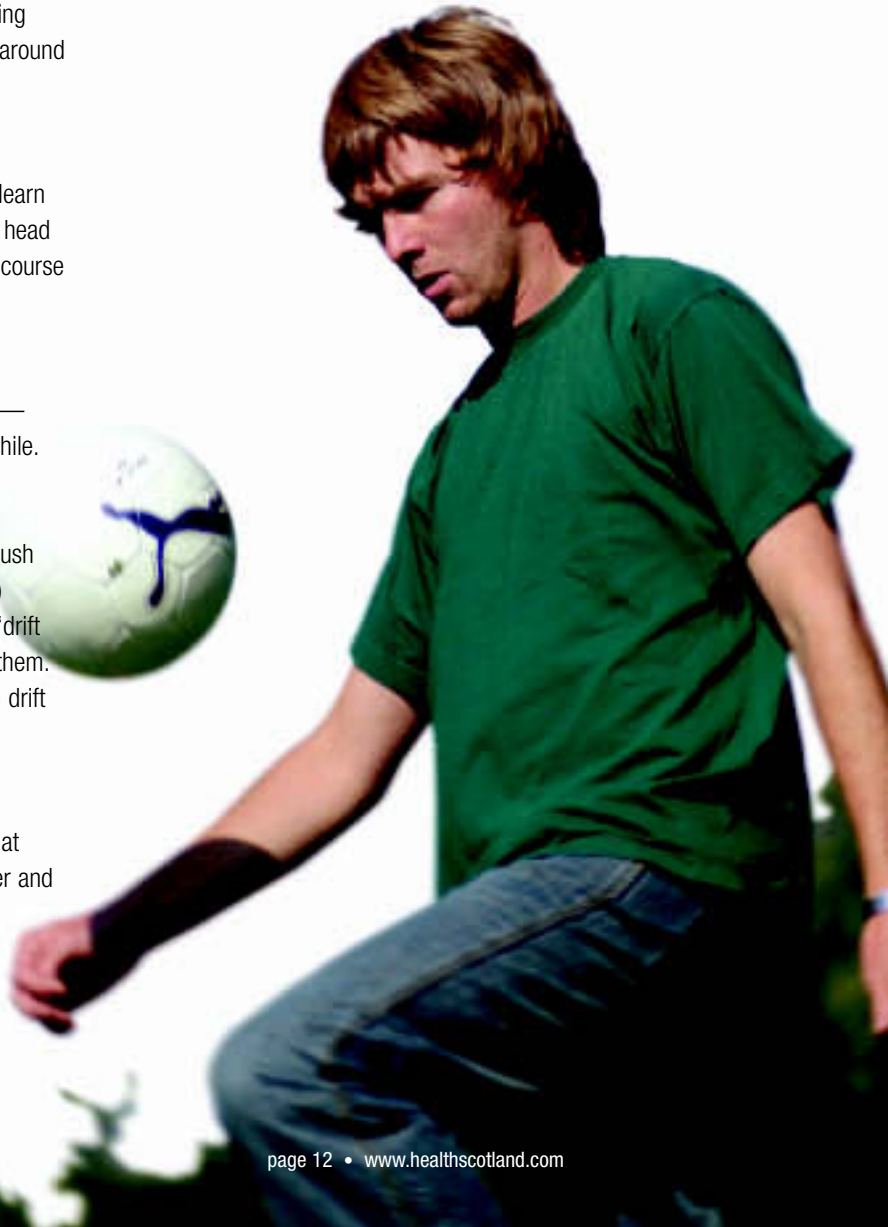
You don't have to be a Buddhist monk to learn how to meditate. It's about emptying your head of the chatter that builds up in it over the course of the day.

1. Find somewhere reasonably quiet.
2. Sit or lie down and get comfortable — you're going to have to stay still a while.
3. Close your eyes and try to picture a peaceful place.
4. Other thoughts / images will try to push in (unpaid bills, your work deadlines) — just let go of them and let them 'drift past' without thinking deeply about them.
5. Noises may distract you — let them drift past you, too.
6. Keep doing this as long as you can.

You won't be able to do this for very long at first. Do a little every day and it gets easier and the benefits more noticeable.

Drugs and alcohol

Relying on drugs and alcohol to relax isn't a good idea. Drugs and alcohol only mask the symptoms of stress. Do something with real health benefits instead (like exercising); relax regularly to stop stress building up and try to make changes so life isn't stressful in the first place.



easy relaxation



Exercise 1: Breathe!

What's it for?

General relaxation, beating panic attacks, boosting concentration.

Where should I do it?

Anywhere — exams, interviews, at work, on the bus or train.

How?

Dead simple! Breathe in gently for 10 seconds, hold it for 2 then breathe out gently for 10. Repeat at least 3 times. Use a watch or clock to time yourself or count like this: 'One hundred and one, one hundred and two', etc.

Be careful ...

... if you suffer from asthma or other breathing problems. Don't push it — you know your own limits.

Exercise 2:

The Squeeze

What's it for?

Muscle tension, getting blood flowing, boosting concentration.

Where should I do it?

Anywhere — sitting down or standing up.

How?

Start with your feet and do each step 3 times before moving on.

1. Scrunch your toes tightly for a sec then relax.
2. Bend your feet up so your toes leave the ground then relax.
3. Push down on the floor with your feet so your calves tense up then relax.
4. Tense your thighs then relax.
5. Clench your bum together then relax.
6. Tense your stomach muscles then relax.
7. Squeeze your arms into your sides then relax.
8. Hunch up your shoulders then relax.
9. Clench your fists then relax them.

Repeat 3 times.

Be careful ...

... if you've got any strains, injuries, high blood pressure or physical disabilities. You know your own limits.

Exercise 3:

Little, Middle, Big Breath

What's it for?

Combined stretching and breathing in one exercise — regulates breathing and relieves muscle tension.

Where should I do it?

You'll probably want to find somewhere a bit private if you're shy about looking a bit strange while you do this one.

How?

1. Stand with your feet beneath your shoulders, your hands together in front of your groin. Look straight ahead keeping your head level. Relax as much as possible. You may wish to close your eyes.
2. 'Little Breath': slowly take a wee breath in, raising your hands together. Stop breathing in when they reach your belly-button, hold it for a second then slowly breathe out as you return your hands to your groin.
3. 'Middle Breath': wait a second or two then do the same again but this time raise your hands to your chest, hold, then slowly breathe out, returning your hands to your groin.
4. 'Big Breath': wait a second or two, then breathe in again, raising your hands. This time, go all the way: reach up above your head in a big stretch, breathing in steadily as you go. Your lungs should be full to bursting when you reach the top. Hold it there for a second then breathe out slowly drawing a big circle out from your sides with your hands as you bring them back to your groin.
REPEAT STEPS 2-4 AT LEAST THREE TIMES
5. Gently shake out your arms and legs.

Be careful ...

... if you suffer from asthma or other breathing problems or if you have any strains, injuries or physical disabilities. You know your own limits.

highs and lows

LINKS:

Know The Score

Freephone:
0800 587 587 9
www.knowthescore.info
Drugs information helpline
for teenagers, young
adults, parents and
friends.

Talking to Frank About Drugs

Freephone:
0800 776 600
Counselling on any drug
worries you have about
yourself, friends or
relatives.

www.crew2000.co.uk
Non-biased information on
drugs, a-z of substances.

www.trashed.co.uk
More articles on various
drugs.

Humans have used substances to relax and change the way they feel for millennia. Most of us do it every day without thinking — smoking, drinking tea or coffee, a pint or two after work.

But what about street drugs?

What do they do to our heads?



Interference

Drugs work by interfering with the natural balance of chemicals in our brains and our bodies. Some, like heroin, mimic the effects of chemicals our own bodies produce. Others, like Ecstasy, trigger the release of the body's own chemicals.

Every body different

We all have different amounts of our various natural chemicals washing around inside us. We all use them at different rates. This is one reason why some people seem to be affected more than others.

What goes up, comes down

There's no such thing as a free ride. Eventually, the chemicals that have been introduced or released get used up.

So what?

Apart from the danger of addiction and risks to physical health, drugs have side-effects on our heads as well. Because we're all used to our moods changing, we might not even realise it's happening. The strength of these effects varies from person to person but the more you do, the stronger they get.

Ecstasy

Once the tidal wave of the 'loved up' chemical serotonin has subsided, the body struggles to produce enough to keep us on the level. This is what clubbers have called 'midweek blues'. After a few days, things usually return to something like normal. Research has suggested that long-term use damages the body's ability to produce serotonin and so makes users more likely to develop a depression.

Speed / Amphetamines

Coming down off speed causes anxiety and panic attacks in some people and seriously disrupts sleep patterns. Heavy use causes 'amphetamine psychosis' where the user becomes very anxious, panicky and paranoid (a 'psychosis' means a loss of reality). This isn't that surprising as lack of sleep will do this anyway. These problems usually stop after a period of not taking the drug but can trigger more serious mental illness.

Cannabis / LSD / Magic Mushrooms

Cannabis can cause paranoia and anxiety. Research has found that users have higher levels of the natural chemical dopamine in their brains. High dopamine levels have been linked to psychotic illness and schizophrenia. This doesn't mean that cannabis 'causes' schizophrenia but, along with LSD and Magic Mushrooms, it may trigger the condition in some people. Paranoia is more common and the fear it brings can make normal living difficult. Cannabis also hinders our ability to form short-term memories and affects concentration — not helpful for anyone trying to study or learn.

Giving up / Cutting down

Using any kind of drug (tobacco and alcohol included) can add to feelings of frustration and anger as you go through regular cravings, come-downs and disruption to sleep. Consider cutting down or giving up. Get support where you can. Be prepared to feel irritable, have cravings and have disrupted sleep for a while! Once you're through it you'll feel all the better and life will be easier (and cheaper).

da-da
ga-ga

LINKS:

Home Start

Tel: 08000 686 368
(8am–8pm,
Monday–Friday;
9am–12pm, Saturday)
www.home-start.org.uk
Support, friendship and
practical help for families
with at least one child
under five years.
Call for details of local
projects or visit the
website.

Parentline Scotland

Tel: 0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Information, help and
advice for parents of all
ages.

www.childcarelink.gov.uk

Search for childminders,
nurseries and after-school
care in your area.

The pressure's on these days for men to be great fathers as well as great breadwinners ...

but nobody can do it all.

Babies

The first few months are incredibly stressful — everyone finds it difficult to handle. Maybe you're coping alone or staying home while Mum works? A growing number of dads are in that category. With all the time and energy going to baby, communication between partners can suffer and arguments can become more frequent. The first few months and years are also some of the most rewarding. Don't miss out on all of it — it doesn't come again.

What makes a good dad?

Superdads don't exist. **The most important thing you can give your kids is your time.** No amount of toys or clothes will make up for Dad not being there. Before you take on extra shifts to pay for goodies, think whether you'll still have the energy to play with them afterwards or read a bedtime story. If you're not working, just think how much they can benefit from the time you have to spend with them as they're growing up.

Time out

Time out is hard to come by when there's a baby or young kids in the equation. That doesn't mean you, or their mum, can do without. Get at least half-an-hour a day when you can be alone and do something for yourself. You'll be better able to cope with all that parenthood throws at you. If you're part of a couple, make sure you still spend some time with each other — it'll keep your relationship stronger. Yes, it's hard — the important things often are.

Share the load

Being at home doesn't mean you don't work and whoever stays at home will tend to do more of the housework. Coupled with looking after a baby, that might put an unfair burden on one of you. Look at your workloads and responsibilities and discuss how they can best be shared and / or divided.

Accept help and support

Don't be shy in accepting the help of your parents, friends or neighbours — there are no prizes for going it alone. There may be a parenting project or group locally. They're a good way of meeting other people and sharing skills at a time when you can get very isolated because of the demands of your family.

Work

Balancing family and a job is always a tricky one but employers are becoming more understanding about the needs of men with families. Talk to your employer about parental leave or the possibility of more flexible working hours.

Choices

Being a parent and bringing up children means you take decisions and make choices. What works well at one point may not work later and just because it worked for the next-door neighbours doesn't mean it'll work for you. Be prepared to keep looking at your choices, make changes when you need to and try not to feel guilty about the choices you've made — it's pointless.



motor mouth

YOU CAN TALK FOR SCOTLAND
WHEN YOU'VE HAD A FEW . . .

but when was the last time you talked about what's *really* bothering you?



Drink or no drink, talking about what's getting us down is a great way of shrinking life's worries, irks and annoyances. **You don't have to make a big scene about it.**

- Choose your time — Saturday night in the pub probably isn't the best time.
- It's usually easier to talk if it's just you and someone else — avoid groups.
- Just ask: 'Can I talk to you for a bit?' — easy!
- If you're unsure, you could try 'I'm well hacked off at the minute about something' (that way you can gauge their reaction before going on).
- Make it clear up front that what you tell them is for their ears only.

If it's something more serious or personal ...

- find someone you really trust
- go somewhere private where you won't be interrupted
- you could call a helpline
- consider a professional listener or counsellor

See the 'Help' section towards the back for different ways of getting help and 'Contacts' for where to get it.

Express yourself

While the problem's just washing around inside, it can be hard to see how it can be tackled:

- having to explain ourselves to someone else helps us get our thoughts in order
- if you can't talk to someone, try writing it down
- try a helpline or email support group

Talking about your feelings and admitting to your problems is not a sign of weakness. It's the first step towards getting things sorted out ... and that will only make you *stronger*.

- Keeping it bottled up never did anyone any good.
- Life's miserable if you never share your worries.
- Talking / writing about it helps you see problems clearly.

LINKS:

Breathing Space

Tel: 0800 83 85 87
(6pm–2am)

Listening service for young men. Can also put you in touch with local help.

www.thirdaid.com

email support groups and message boards let you meet other people with similar problems.

www.depressionalliance.org

Tel: 0131 467 3050

Depression Alliance Scotland offers information and support to people affected by depression through publications, an information service and a network of self help groups.

anger



'It got to being a bad habit with me. Flying off the handle was just the way I dealt with things and 'cause I'm big nobody argued but it ended up a lot of people round me got hurt by it.

'I went and got counselling for it in the end and he helped me a lot. I can see it coming now so I can avoid it better. I can spot myself starting with the angry thoughts and I've learned to let go of them. Plus I was stressed out by work and the family and everything.

'No **one** thing has helped — it's been a lot of little things. I go for runs, I've stopped drinking as much, make sure I'm getting enough sleep. The wife doesn't like it when I disappear on my own for hours but she understands. It's just me — what I need. It's not like I'm "cured" either — you've got to keep at it. It's like a new way of life but it's worth it.'

Feelings of anger and frustration can be useful. They can give us the drive to change things that need to be changed.

Anger often comes when we feel we've lost control of things — i.e. events (or other people) are controlling us rather than the other way around.

Anger can be a sign you need to change something **but be careful** — it may not be what you think at first.

First steps:

- 'count to ten' before you do anything — **calm down**. Chances are, whatever's just tipped you over into a blind rage is not the real cause
- remember the old saying: 'Ensure brain is in gear before engaging mouth!'
- walk away, change the scene, get out of the situation where you became angry
- burn off angry energy by taking some exercise
- do some relaxation exercises

Feeling calmer? Now:

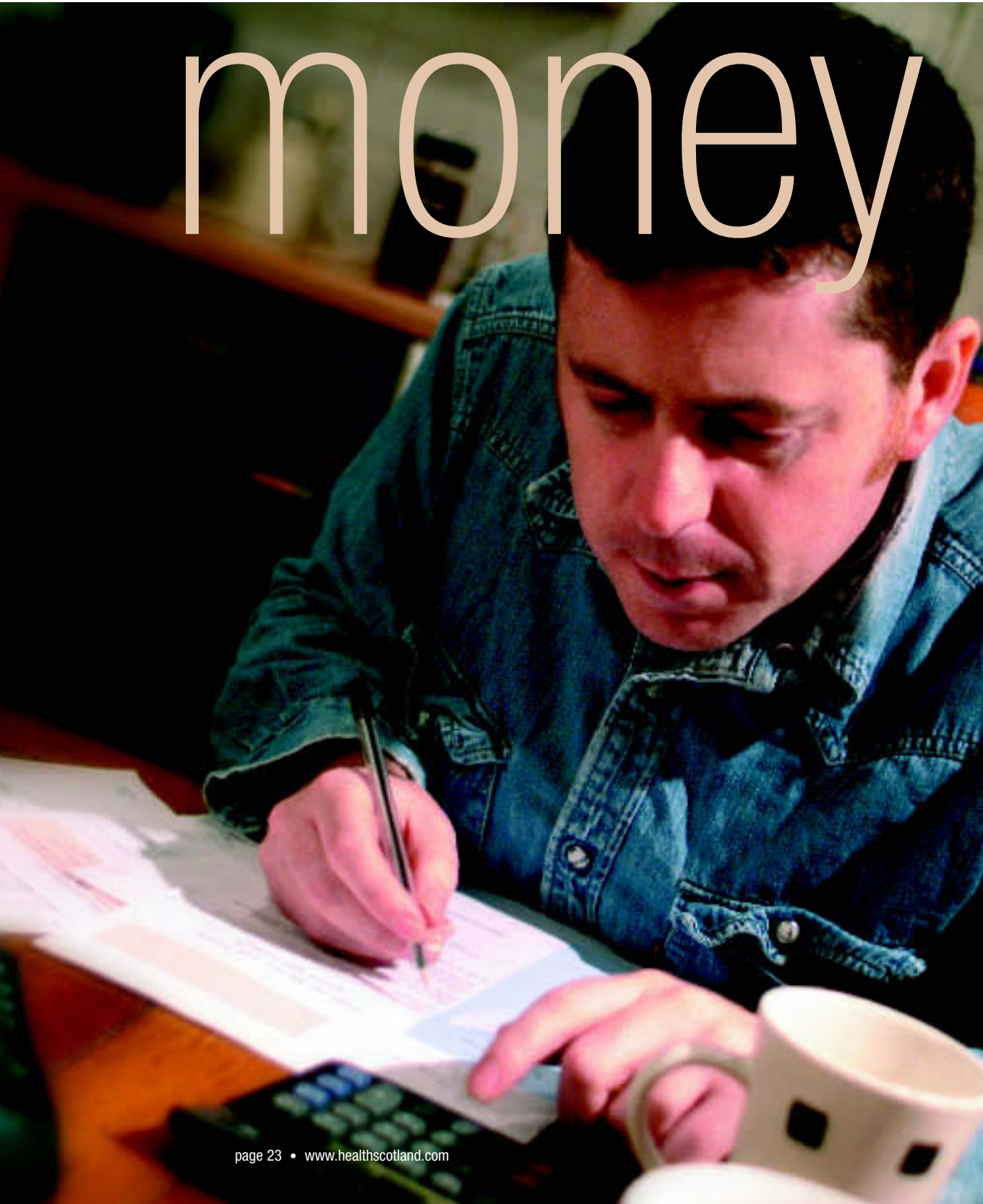
- think back over your whole day leading up to the angry bit
- be honest with yourself about what else might have upset you
- is it a situation or person that always gets you wound up — can you avoid it / them?
- if someone is trying to wind you up, try responding with humour or just walk away
- talk it through with someone NEUTRAL — it's a good way of getting your thoughts in order
- if talking / thinking about it makes you angry again then stop — there's no point in re-living it
- beware of 'bottling up' anger — it'll only come out later

We can't always change or get rid of the thing that's bugging us most but we can adjust other areas of our lives to compensate and make the whole thing more bearable.

Maybe . . .

- you need to get out of a relationship that's doing you harm or a job that's making your life a misery
- your anger could just be a sign you need to spend more time on yourself and relax more
- you need to take more exercise — we're designed to be active — any wonder we get wound up sitting in offices and traffic jams?
- you need to consider cutting down or giving up drinking or taking drugs
- you need to be upfront about your own needs and wants more rather than just going along with what everyone else expects of you

money



There's never enough. Meanwhile, here are a few tips on getting by with less.

Budgeting

Make yourself a budget. Include everything you have coming in the way of earnings and benefits on the one side and everything you have to shell out for on the other. Include leisure activities and things like clothes. This will let you see where your money's going and how much you have left for other things. Then comes the hard part — sticking to it! Not sure how much you're spending? Keep a diary for a few weeks of everything you spend on — from the rent right down to every last packet of chewing gum.

Benefits

Are you getting everything you're entitled to? Tax and benefits depend on individual circumstances. Make sure everything relevant to you has been taken into account. Ask at your local benefits office.

Cheap stuff

There are charities in lots of areas that can help with cheap or free second-hand furniture for those in need. Charity shops are also a great source of cheap clothing. It's not unusual to find clothes with designer labels, still in good nick and at a fraction of their original cost.

Good deals

Shop around — don't assume that just because the shop says it's the cheapest it actually *is* the cheapest. You might be able to get a trade-in somewhere else or better credit terms. On more expensive items, you can usually save money by paying in cash up front if you're able. You can often get better deals if you buy over the Internet but make sure it's a reputable company with a real address and telephone number.

Credit

Think what will happen if you can't keep making the payments. Work out what you'll end up paying in total in the end — it might be cheaper taking a loan with a bank or building society and using the money to buy the thing outright rather than taking credit from the store.

Debt counselling

If you're snowed under with debt, consider debt counselling. A debt counsellor will help you sort through your finances, look at the way you spend your cash as well as how to handle creditors.

LINKS:

Benefits Agency / DSS

Advice and help with state benefits. Look for them in *The Phone Book* or visit www.dss.gov.uk to find your nearest office.

Citizens' Advice Bureaux

Free and confidential advice on any legal matter including money and debt. Check the *Yellow Pages* under 'Counselling and Advice' or visit www.nacab.org.uk for an online guide to your rights, email questions and local office search.

Money Advice Scotland

Tel: 0141 572 0237
Call them to find out about free debt counsellors and money advisors in your area.

relationships

Like anything else, we have to look after our relationships if we want them to keep on the straight and narrow.

Communication

Good communication is the cornerstone of good relationships. If you are in a relationship do something with your partner at least once a week. It doesn't have to cost money — the time spent together is the most important thing. Let each other know what's going on in your life as well as the way you feel about things.

Time apart

Make sure you get a little time to spend doing your own thing. Having some separate pastimes and interests means you have more to bring to the relationship when you're together.

Arguments

There's nothing wrong with having an argument once in a while. If you're arguing regularly, you need to figure out why and perhaps seek help.



ips

Arguing and being nippy can turn into a bad habit that benefits nobody.

- Intimidating, threatening or using violence on your partner is **never** okay.
- If it's you being threatened or physically abused, **get out of there**.

Couple counselling

Being counselled as a couple has saved many relationships. Counselling helps couples to sort through difficulties they have in communicating with each other.

Break-ups

Sometimes, it's better that people separate rather than continuing to hurt each another. There's often a feeling that you should stay friends. **This takes time**. You need to establish separate lives before you can meet again on that level. If you still have to see each

other because of your children, try to keep an emotional distance for a while:

- keep contact to the minimum needed to see to your children
- don't ask what's going on in their mum's life
- try not to pass comment if you do hear things or the kids tell you things
- try not to meet socially
- don't make your children act as go-betweens — it's not fair on them

Love and sex

It's worth reminding yourself once in a while that love and sex are not the same thing. You can have one without the other but it's usually more rewarding if they go together. It's much easier to open up sexually with someone you really trust. Most people agree that more sexual partners does not mean a happier individual.

Protect against disease — use a condom.

LINKS:

Couple Counselling Scotland

Tel: 0131 558 9669
(9am–4.30pm)
www.couplecounselling.org
Call to find out about couple counselling in your area or check their lists online.

Parentline Scotland

Tel: 0808 800 2222
Information, help and advice for parents of all ages including stepfamilies.

www.brook.org.uk

Information and advice on sex, contraception and family planning.

www.relate.org.uk

Information and links on couple counselling plus an email helpline (available late in 2002).

the 'M' word

what's it all about . . . ?

- it's all about feeling good
- it's about well-being
- it's about our **mental health**

Mental health does not mean mental illness!

What do we mean by good mental health? Coping well with life and the challenges it throws at us and feeling good about ourselves. To have good mental health, we need to be looking after ourselves physically as well. It's not much of a surprise, really — our heads are connected to our bodies after all!

It works both ways

If you're physically ill, your mental health can suffer so you need to pay extra attention in looking after it.

Why bother?

Good mental health is a cornerstone of good health generally. It's important to consider our emotional state regularly so that we can spot problems early, deal with them quickly and stop them dragging us down.

'So when is it a "problem"?'

When the way that we feel stops us getting on with our normal, daily lives or living the way we want to live: that's when it's a problem.

When should I get help?

Whatever anyone says, you'll only get help when you feel ready to ask for it! But, bear in mind that **small problems tend to turn into bigger problems if you ignore them**. Smaller problems are more easily dealt with. Just 'soldiering on' is not the answer.

What kind of help?

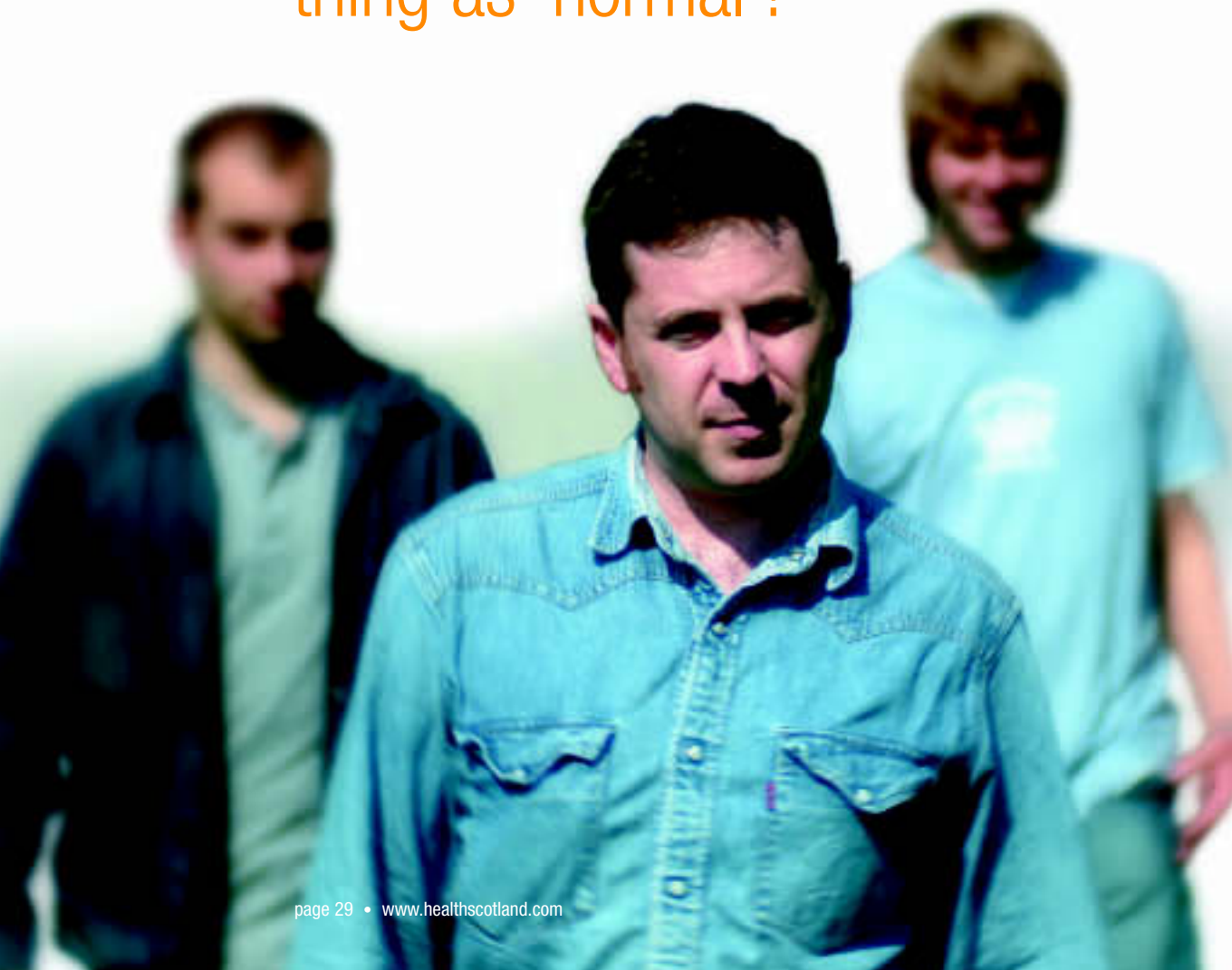
Often, you can help yourself given the right information. Getting help doesn't just have to mean going to your doctor. Maybe you just need to talk about it with a friend or relative.

If you have a problem, issue or experience you would like to discuss with a professional please contact one of the organisations listed at the end.



normal?

News flash — there's no such thing as 'normal'!



Everyone is different, has different needs and reacts differently to life's challenges. Everyone has their problems — some are just better at hiding them (and dealing with them) than others.

Did you know that at least. . .

One person in **four** will have some kind of difficulty with their mental health in the course of a year?

One person in **ten** will suffer from depression?

One person in **ten** will suffer from anxiety?

These numbers only account for those people who actually seek some kind of help. There are lots more out there who suffer in silence because they don't realise they have a problem, don't know how or where to get help or because they're afraid of what other people might say if they find out.

So, if anything, having experience of some kind of mental health problem is more normal than not.

It's **normal** to feel down sometimes.

It's **normal** to be hyper sometimes.

It's **normal** to be anxious sometimes . . .

But why does nobody talk about it?

Even though we all have to deal with mental ill health at some point, either our own or of someone close to us, there is still a lot of **fear** and **stigma** about it. Why? Because mental ill health is hard to see and can be hard to understand. We tend to shy away from things we're afraid of without even realising it. Stigma only makes it harder for everyone to come to terms with it.

People get better!

There's a perception that once someone's 'got' a mental illness, that's it, end of story, they're stuck with it. **Not true!** Many illnesses can now be treated and people do recover. Even for problems that will never go away completely, people can and do learn how to live around their problems (just like you would a bad back) and lead otherwise normal and happy lives.

If you need to speak with a professional you could contact one of the organisations listed at the end.

help

Getting help is not a sign of weakness. It means admitting there's a problem in the first place and that's the first step to making **positive** changes in your life.



'I had a particularly sensitive problem which was causing me a great deal of stress. I didn't want to talk to my folks about it or my girlfriend and I eventually plucked up the courage to speak to my doctor. He was excellent, spent time with me, arranged some appointments. I could have saved myself weeks of worry and depression.'

Being sad, down, anxious, afraid or 'on top of the world' are all normal feelings — just not all of the time.

Sooner is better

The longer a problem continues the more difficult it can be to shift or put right.

Practical help and information

Check the lists of organisations and websites at the back. Knowing more about a problem can help you deal with it. Perhaps you need a hand (like in dealing with debt or caring for a loved one) or someone to talk to for a while? No computer? Access the Internet at your local library.

Your doctor

- Doctors treat everything you say to them and everything about you as confidential.
- They only have a very limited time for each patient — make the most of it.
- Think carefully what you're going for — make a list of symptoms / what's wrong.
- If you think it's for something 'emotional', stress or depression, say so (don't just complain your back's sore or you can't sleep).
- You have to be a danger to yourself or others before they'll put you in hospital because of a mental health problem. They need the consent of a relative or the agreement of another doctor as well.
- Decide beforehand if you want drugs to help you or if want another kind of help (like counselling) and tell the doctor.

Counselling

- Anything you say will be strictly in confidence.
- There are no instant results — counselling courses usually run over a number of weeks.
- It can be hard work — you only get out what you're prepared to put in.
- There are lots of different counsellors using different techniques — you might need to try a few to get one that works for you.

Drug treatments

Your doctor might prescribe drugs for you to help with a variety of mental health problems:

- take them as directed
- some drugs can take a few days or even weeks to start having an effect
- ask your doctor's advice if you want to stop — it can be unpleasant (even dangerous) if you do it too quickly
- you might need to try different drugs before you find one that works for you
- tell your doctor immediately if you have any side-effects
- tell them if the drugs seem to make you worse.

Self-help groups and support groups

Support groups are there for people with similar difficulties to help each other, to share information and ways of coping. They can also give a louder voice to those with the same concerns.

jargon

Anxiety

Feeling 'keyed up' or worried about something, 'freaked out'. Not being able to sleep properly. Often the result of stress or stressful situations.

Care in the community

Most people who have mental health problems now get shorter stays as in-patients, if at all, and then are cared for in their own homes by doctors, social workers and Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPNs).

Counselling

Talking to a trained or experienced listener about what's bothering you. Helps you sort through your feelings and the way you behave in certain situations. There are many different types of counselling. Increasingly available on the NHS.

CPNs

See 'Care in the community'.

Debt counselling

Debt counselling helps with money issues, how to deal with creditors, budgeting, balancing your finances and looks at how and what you spend money on.

Depression

In a rut, 'the blues', feeling low, being negative about yourself and life in general, loss of interest and withdrawal, not being able to see the positive side of things, perhaps having thoughts about taking your own life. If you feel like this for two weeks or more with no let up you should seek help (some folks hang on for months getting worse and worse).

Drug treatments

Many different drugs are used to treat mental illness. Most common are anti-depressants and tranquillisers. They are not 'wonder cures', they take time and work best when individuals try to sort out the causes of their problems as well. There is no shame in taking these drugs — millions do it every day.

Eating disorders

Anorexia: eating too little or nothing at all and not being able to stop it.

Bulimia: eating but then making yourself sick right after and not being able to stop it.

Over-eating: eating too much all the time and not being able to stop it.

Grief / Loss

The feelings that come with loss of a loved one or of some other major part of our lives coming to an end (like a job or relationship). Grief is a normal part of the healing process but should not continue for too long.

Hypomania / Mania

Feeling invincible/superhuman, that you can do anything, 'on top of the world', apparently not needing sleep or rest, not being able to calm down.

Manic depression

Constantly swinging between the worst lows (depression) and the highest highs (mania) and not being able to stop or 'level out'.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCDs)

Always having to do a specific thing or set of things because of a fear that something bad will happen if you don't. Common ones are hand washing (hygiene), counting things, making sure doors are locked (security) and things to do with food (see 'Eating disorders').

Panic attacks

'The shakes' and / or difficulty breathing properly and / or being sick because of a rush of fear or anxiety about something. Often the result of stress over long periods.

Peer support group / Self-help groups

People at the same stage in life or with similar problems giving each other help, advice and support.

Phobias

Fear of anything: wide open spaces, small spaces / crowds heights and spiders are a few of the common ones. Fear is normal but is seen as a 'problem' when it stops you going about your normal business.

Postnatal depression

Depression suffered by many mothers following childbirth.

Psychiatrist

Doctor who specialises in the mental aspects of health. Expert at deciding what the problem is and giving the right drugs, treatment and care.

Psychologist

Expert in human behaviour. Can help in working through feelings around the way we act in different situations.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Mood changes brought about by changes in season — typically winter depressions. Caused by lack of sunlight and can be treated with exposure to the right kind of light.

Schizophrenia

Name given to a range of symptoms (every sufferer has different ones) including hearing voices, seeing unpleasant things that aren't there or having unpleasant thoughts that won't go away. Some sufferers feel that the whole world is ganging up against them ('Paranoid Schizophrenia'). Not 'split' or 'dual' personalities.

'Sectioning'

Also called 'compulsory admission'. The law states that a doctor can make you go to hospital as an in-patient whether you want to or not. This only happens if they feel that you are likely to harm yourself or someone else. Everyone has the right to appeal through the Mental Welfare Commission (see 'Contacts').

Self harm

Cutting, burning or injuring yourself in any way because you don't like yourself or because it makes you 'feel better' or more 'in control'. Causes and reasons for doing it differ from person to person but it's generally not just a 'cry for help' (most keep their self-harming secret for fear of the stigma it carries). On the increase among young people.

Stigma

Negative ideas or prejudices about something based on incorrect or incomplete information. Usually associated with things people are afraid of — like mental illness for example!

Stress

The result of living with things that are difficult to cope with. Pressure is a normal by-product of living our lives but too much or too little is bad for our health.

contacts

Benefits Agency / DSS

Advice and help with state benefits. Look for them in *The Phone Book* or visit www.dss.gov.uk to find your nearest office.

Breathing Space

Freephone: 0800 83 85 87 (6pm–2am, 7 days), www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk
Listening service that can put you in touch with local organisations for help and advice.

Careers Advice

Help and advice in choosing or changing your career. Check the *Yellow Pages* under 'Careers Advice'.

Carers' Support Services

Support for people caring for a relative who is unwell or in need of care. Check *The Phone Book* business section under 'Carers' for local projects or ask at your local Youth Enquiry Service.

Citizens' Advice Bureaux

Free and confidential advice on any legal matter from housing to employment. Check the *Yellow Pages* under 'Counselling and Advice' or visit www.nacab.org.uk for an online guide to your rights, email questions and local office search.

COSCA

18 Viewfield Street, Stirling, FK8 1UA
Tel: 01786 475 140 (9am–5pm, Monday–Friday), www.cosca.org.uk
Write or call for details of counsellors in your area.

Couple Counselling Scotland

Tel: 0131 558 9669 (9am–4.30pm), www.couplecounselling.org
Call to find out about couple counselling in your area or check their lists online.

Cruse Bereavement Care

Tel: 0870 167 167 7
Support and advice for people coping with the loss of a friend or relative. Call the helpline for details of local projects.

Eating Disorders Association

1st Floor, Wensum House, 103 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich NR1 1DW. Tel: 0845 6347 650, www.edauk.com
Information and advice on eating disorders.

Home Start

Freephone: 08000 686 368 (8am–8pm, Monday–Friday; 9am–12pm, Saturday), www.home-start.org.uk
Support, friendship and practical help for families with at least one child under five years. Call for details of local projects or search online.

Know The Score

Freephone: 0800 587 587 9, www.knowthescore.info
Drugs information helpline for teenagers, young adults, parents and friends.

Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland

Argyle House, K Floor, 3 Lady Lawson Street, Edinburgh EH3 9SH
Tel: 0131 222 6111 (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm)
Oversees the welfare of psychiatric patients. Appoints doctors to give second opinions about treatment and compulsory admissions and detentions in hospitals ('sectioning'). Hears appeals against detentions and complaints about treatment.

Money Advice Scotland

Tel: 0141 572 0237 (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm)
Call them to find out about free debt counsellors and money advisors in your area.

Talking to Frank About Drugs

Freephone: 0800 776 600
Counselling on any drug worries you have about yourself, friends or relatives.

National Union of Students

Support, information and advocacy for people in higher and further education. Look for them in your college handbook / directory for local branch.

NHS Helpline

Tel: 0800 22 44 88. Talk to an NHS nurse.

Parentline Scotland

Freephone 0808 800 2222, www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Information, help and advice for parents of all ages including stepfamilies.

Penumbra

Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY
Tel: 0131 475 2380 (9am–5pm, Monday–Friday),
www.penumbra.org.uk

Projects in various locations in Scotland (including one for young people in the Borders). Help with accommodation, support, counselling, social activities and advocacy. Information and advice on mental health over the phone.

Scottish Association for Mental Health

Cumrae House, 15 Carlton Court, Glasgow G5 9JP
Information Line: 0141 568 7000 (2pm–4.30pm,
Monday–Friday), www.samh.org.uk
Various projects across Scotland — call to find your nearest.
Information, advice, support and activities.

Scottish Volunteering Hotline

Freephone: 08000 15 15 11
Call for information on volunteering.

Smokeline

Freephone: 0800 84 84 84 (12 noon–12 midnight)
Advice on dangers of smoking and how to give up.

The Line

Freephone: 0800 88 44 44
Information, counselling and messages home for young people
living away from home.

The Samaritans

Tel: 08457 90 90 90 (24 hours, 365 days a year)
Confidential listening service for anyone who needs to talk to
someone.

Volunteer Development Scotland

Stirling Enterprise Park, Stirling FK7 7RP
Tel: 01786 479 593 (9am–5pm, Monday–Friday),
www.vds.org.uk
Supports volunteering across Scotland. Write or call or to find
out about volunteering in your area.

Your Doctor

Go and see your doctor if you're having problems with your
mental or physical well-being. They will talk to you can refer
you on to other services such as psychologists and counsellors
or prescribe drugs to help with your symptoms.

Youth Enquiry Services and Youth Information Projects

Information on local services for young people (usually up to 25
years), support and sometimes counselling. Check local *Yellow
Pages* for your nearest. Times vary but best try during office
hours.

Websites

**No Internet access at home? Try your local public library or
nearest Internet café.**

www.1stpm.org — articles by folks with experience of various
traumas — lots by young people.
www.bac.org.uk — search for a counsellor near you.
www.bbc.co.uk/health — BBC site on health including good
section on mental health.
www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk — advice on talking and
listening.
www.brook.org.uk — information and advice on sex, contraception
and family planning.
www.channel4.com/health — lots of information on physical and
mental health.
www.childcarelink.gov.uk — search for childminders, nurseries
and after-school care in your area.
www.cosca.org.uk — lists counsellors and counselling organisations.
www.couplecounselling.org — lists couple counselling organisations.
www.crew2000.co.uk — information on drugs and a-z of substances.
www.depressionalliance.org — information and links on
depression plus a chat room.
www.edauk.com — Eating Disorders Association website.
www.healthscotland.com — Health Education Board for Scotland
website with health information and links.
www.home-start.org.uk — support for families with at least one
child under five years, lists local projects.
www.knowthescore.info — drugs information, links to other sites
and details of local drugs projects and services.
www.mentalhelp.net — articles on many issues including dealing
with anger and depression.
www.mind.org.uk — information on mental health and related sites.
www.mindbodysoul.gov.uk — information on all kinds of issues
affecting young people.
www.nacab.org.uk — info on legal consumer matters, search for
your local Citizens Advice Bureau.
www.parentlineplus.org.uk — excellent advice and information for
parents and children.
www.peer-support.org.uk — site offering support and advice for
young gays, lesbians and bisexuals.
www.penumbra.org.uk — Penumbra website with information on
mental health.
www.relate.org.uk — information on couple counselling plus an
email helpline (from late 2002).
www.samh.org.uk — information on mental health and related sites.
www.surgerydoor.co.uk — general health site, articles on various
conditions and links.
www.thesite.org.uk — information on drugs, sex, mental health
and more.
www.thirdaid.com — email support groups let you meet other
people with similar problems.
www.trashed.co.uk — in-depth and non-biased articles on drugs.
www.vds.org.uk — find a volunteer centre in your area.

Health Scotland cannot
guarantee the quality of
information on websites
run by other organisations.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MANUAL

A GUIDE TO COPING WITH LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Thanks to:

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