

# GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER LOCKDOWN (P4-P7)

North Lanarkshire Psychological Service

June 2020

We have all been at home for many weeks due to Coronavirus. This time has been known as “lockdown”, and for most of lockdown we had to stay at home, apart from exercising and going to places like the supermarket. The government asked everyone to do this to reduce the chance of people catching Coronavirus, and in particular to help to protect older people or those who were not very well.



When lockdown started, you might have felt uncertain. Maybe you felt more emotional – angry or upset – or you had questions you wanted to ask. Maybe you found it harder to sleep, or you were uncertain about going outside. Maybe your body felt tense, or you were worried about what might happen next. Then, over time, once you knew what to expect and what the days would be like, life might have seemed more certain and familiar. And maybe you felt more settled too.



**“You have brains in  
your head.**

**You have feet in  
your shoes.**

**You can steer  
yourself any  
direction you  
choose”**

- Dr Seuss



A story about  
Coronavirus  
and going  
back to  
school after  
lockdown.

This is how we often feel when there is a big change in our lives.

Sometimes people refer to this as feeling 'stressed' or feeling 'anxious'.



If we feel stressed or anxious, it can affect our emotions and how we think, it can affect how our bodies feel, and how we behave. This is normal.

Everyone feels like this to some extent. Usually as we adapt to the change and it starts to feel less new, these emotions, thoughts and physical sensations settle.

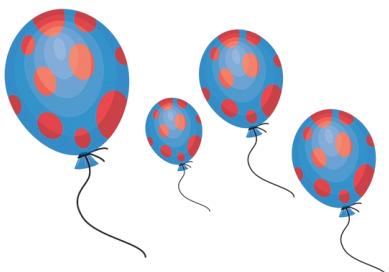
Coming out of lockdown and going back to school is a big change. So you may notice feeling stressed or anxious. You may also be looking forward to going back to school – maybe being at home became a bit boring. You might be excited to see

other people and be looking forward to getting back to learning. It is possible, and normal, to feel both excited and nervous at the same time. It is likely that everyone will be experiencing this in some way – you, your friends, even your teachers.



There are some things we can do to help our bodies feel calmer and to help our brains feel more in control whilst we are going through any change. If you practise these you may find adapting to going back to school easier.

One of the most effective ways to feel calmer is to do deep tummy breathing. Breathe in very slowly – pause – and then breathe out very slowly – pause, and breathe in very slowly – pause – and then breathe out very slowly – pause. Keep going for 5–10 minutes. You know if you are doing this properly if you place your hands on either side of your tummy – it should naturally go out as you breathe in, and then go back in as the breath releases, like a balloon!



Tensing and then releasing our muscles can help our bodies relax. This is easier to do if you are sitting or lying down. You can go right around your body, tensing each part for a count of 10 and then releasing.

So you could start with your feet; tense them tightly as you slowly count to 10, and then release and notice how they feel.



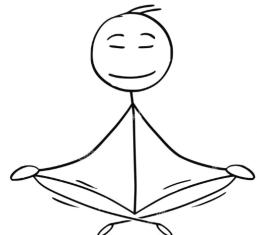
Next go to your legs and lower body – tense and squeeze as tightly as you can, count slowly to 10, and then release and notice.

Then do the same with your arms and hands – squeeze your fists and press your arms into the sides of your body, count slowly to 10, and then release and notice.



Finally, push your shoulders up towards your ears, tense your neck and screw up your face tightly, count slowly to 10, and then release. Now notice how your whole body feels.

If our bodies feel more calm and relaxed through doing deep tummy breathing or tensing and releasing our muscles, then our brains also tend to feel calmer and more in control of what we are thinking, feeling and doing.





Sometimes if we are going through a change, we notice that bothersome worries and thoughts are going round and round in our heads. It can feel like you cannot think about anything else, as if your brain has been hijacked! Worries grow and get stronger the more attention they receive. The more we notice worries the bigger and more bothersome they get.

If you are finding worries and thoughts are going around in your head, it might be helpful to share these with someone you trust. This might be a parent, an older brother or sister, or even a pet!



You can agree a 'Worry Time', 10 minutes when you can talk about what you are thinking and feeling and not be disturbed by anything else.

If the bothersome worries or thoughts come up at any other time, write them down so you can refer to them during Worry Time. And then distract yourself by getting on with something you enjoy doing.



Some children and young people find thinking of their own 'Safe Place' very helpful.



This might be somewhere in their home, somewhere they have visited, or just somewhere special they have created in their imagination. A place where they feel safe, happy, relaxed and content.

You can draw a picture of your Safe Place and put in lots of details. Think about what you can see, hear, smell and feel. Enjoy the positive emotions you feel when thinking about this place or looking at your picture. You might give your Safe Place a name – like ‘Happiness’ or ‘Relaxed’. When you think of it or look at your picture, focus on how you feel – safe and relaxed knowing all will be well.



When we are going through a change in life, it is helpful if we can stay healthy and keep other parts of our daily routine in place. This way we know what to expect some of the time.

#### You can help yourself by:

**Sleeping!** Children and young people of your age should be getting 9-11 hours sleep a night. If you are well rested you are better able to cope with any change.



**Eating & drinking!** Regular meals and lots of water will help your body be healthy and in balance.



**Exercise!** Daily exercise will help your mind and body be positive.



**Relax!** Find time to do the things you love – whatever that is.



This information is to help you make the transition from lockdown back to school. If you find you are struggling with this change then let someone know so that they can help you.

## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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