



# A guide to dealing with uncertainty

This is a difficult time for everyone, we've had to adapt to change very quickly and at the moment there is no end in sight. This can cause anxiety and stress for many people. This guide offers advice on how to overcome uncertainty and managing change and expectations. We will also give you some different mindful activities that you can try.



# Tips to overcome uncertainty

## 1) Acceptance:

Accepting what has happened is the first step, while we may not be happy at the moment we cannot change the circumstances. By taking steps to accept the restrictions and rules we can start to manage our feelings and thoughts.

## 2) Pay attention to how you are feeling!


Feelings are a key part of how we cope with uncertainty and change. It is beneficial to take time to identify your feelings. Take time each morning to ask yourself “how are you feeling?” you can then think about what causes this feeling and then work toward overcoming any negative feelings that build.

## 3) Invest in yourself:

Self-care is important. It should be an essential part of everyone’s routine including time to have substantial meals, sleep, bath or shower and time to do the other things that you enjoy. Things such as crafting, or reading are included in self care as they are great things to help focus your mind and this in turn can help you manage any feelings or thoughts that you cannot control.

## 4) Focus on the present!

Mindfulness is a great skill; this allows you to turn away from intrusive thoughts and focus on the here and now. Like with any skill it takes time to develop but with practice you can create techniques that work for you when you are feeling overwhelmed or anxious. Taking part in guided meditations is a great way of being mindful.



## **5) What can you control?**

It is very easy to see the things that you cannot control such as the lockdown measures, changes to exams and learning, not being able to go to friends houses or hanging out like you use to. This can be hard to deal with and may make you feel stressed or anxious.

Instead of focusing on this, focus on what you can control such as the time you go to bed or wake up, washing your hands and using hand sanitiser, wearing a mask, setting a timetable so you can work through any tasks that you have to do at home.

By doing this you are shifting your focus and will help you take steps to managing your wellbeing.

## **6) Set goals:**

It is very easy to feel overwhelmed with uncertainty when you feel like you cannot cope with the change. It is important in these instances that you set smaller achievable goals.

Struggling with being at home, set a goal to go on walks it can start with doing a 10-minute daily walk or a 20-minute weekly walk and then slowly increase this at a pace that you feel comfortable with.

## **7) Find enjoyment and connection.**

The way we keep in touch with each other has changed due to the lockdown measures in place but this doesn't mean that we need to lose touch. Taking one socially distanced walk a day with someone from a different household is a great way to get outside and see those who you are apart from.

Using technology, we can keep in touch with friends and family including using social media and things like Netflix party (Watching a film together with friends).



## **8) Limit news intake**

The hardest part of this pandemic is seeing the news. Everywhere you look there is information about the current climate even on social media. This is where it can get difficult. You may want to know what is happening, but you can do that using reliable sources such as the governments website. Not everything that you see on social media is the truth and you do not have to read the news if it becomes too much. It is ok.

## **9) Not alone**

The most important thing to realise is that you are not alone. This pandemic has affected everyone from people working from home, not completing exam and isolating for long periods of time.

Ask for help if you need it? Helplines such as Samaritans **(116 13)** and Childline **(0800 11 11)** are still available to support you if you are struggling with the current situation.

### **Further advice available at:**

[How to cope with uncertainty during Covid-19 \(bacp.co.uk\)](https://www.bacp.co.uk)

[Coping With Change & Uncertainty During Coronavirus | Every Mind Matters | One You \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

[Dealing with Uncertainty During the Coronavirus Pandemic - HelpGuide.org](https://www.helpguide.org)





# Overcoming change and managing expectations

We all react differently to change, some of us thrive when change happens and can use change as an opportunity to try something new whereas others struggle with change as it affects our routines that we have created. This can make us feel anxious or stressed.


## Positive thinking

It is very easy to think of the negatives when we think of change. We often think about what we are missing out on due to changes happening, an example of this could be lockdown means that we cannot see our family or friends. By changing how we think we can focus on the positives such as lockdown is protecting our family and friends.

Changing our thoughts can be difficult and takes some practice. Write down any negative thoughts or feelings and then underneath them try changing it to something positive. By doing this you are managing any negative experiences or feelings and building this skill can be useful for the future.

## Break it down

Big changes are hard – They can make you feel like you cannot overcome them. This pandemic is an example of this as we have adapted very quickly as things change. Break this down into small steps. Washing hands is important so the first step could be making sure that your hand washing routine is fully ingrained into your life, then think about how to leave the house safely (socially distanced and wearing a mask).



We can also break down expectations for the future. Lockdown will end and when it does, we will be taking steps to return to the 'norm'. This will not happen in one go but you can set preparations for when this happens.

Small steps could include ensuring that you know the safety procedures of college when its re-opens, have a masks or shield so you can access services safely etc.

### **Make a plan**

Creating structure in a time where things are changing is important. Going to bed and waking up as you would if you were making the journey to college is important as it creates some normality, getting dressed and having a separate workspace (not just your bed) can also help you feel like you have some control over the changes.

This will also help your transition in the future back to college as you already have a small routine in place.

### **Pace yourself**

Trying to do this all at once will make you feel more out of control. Do one thing at a time, this will help you stick to any changes that you make. Struggling with routine? Change one part of your routine, let that become comfortable and then focus on a different part of your routine. This helps your brain manage change at a pace that you feel comfortable with.



# Mindful activities

Here are some mindful activities that can help you work through difficult thoughts or feelings.

## Meditation:

### How to Practice Mindfulness

mindful  
mindful.org

1

**Take a seat.** Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.

2

**Set a time limit.** If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as 5 or 10 minutes.

3

**Notice your body.** You can sit or kneel however is comfortable for you. Just make sure you are stable and in a position, you can stay in for a while.

4

**Feel your breath.** Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes out and as it goes in.

5

**Notice when your mind has wandered.** When you get around to noticing this—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.

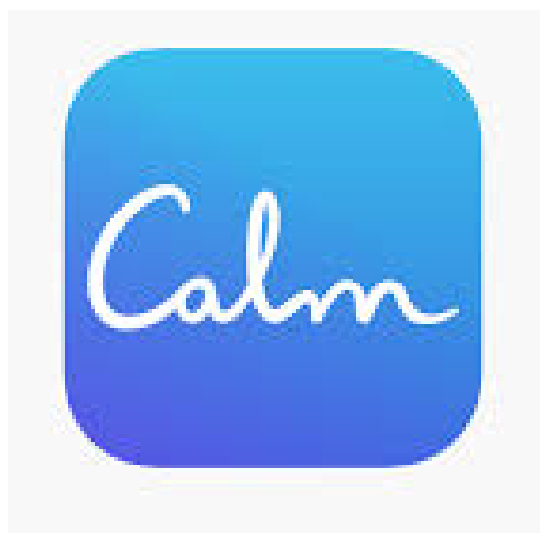
6

**Be kind to your wandering mind.** Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.



By Mindful Staff





mindful  
healthy mind, healthy life

 headspace



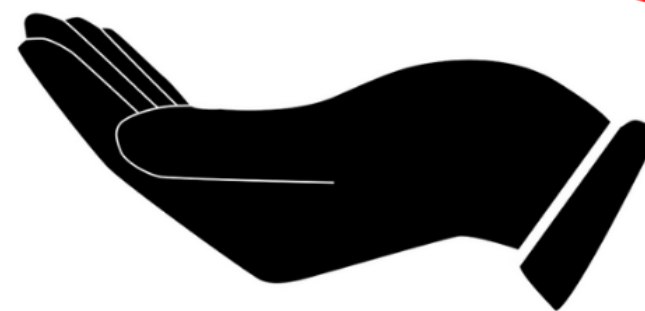
Use your 5 senses:

 **5** **4** **3** **2** **1** 

**5** things you can see



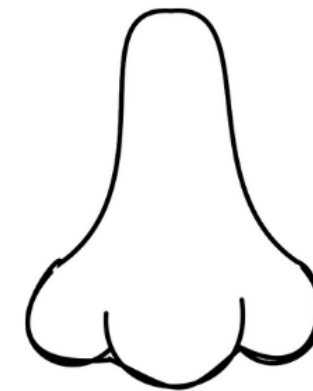
**4** things you can touch



**3** things you can hear



**2** things you can smell



**1** things you can taste

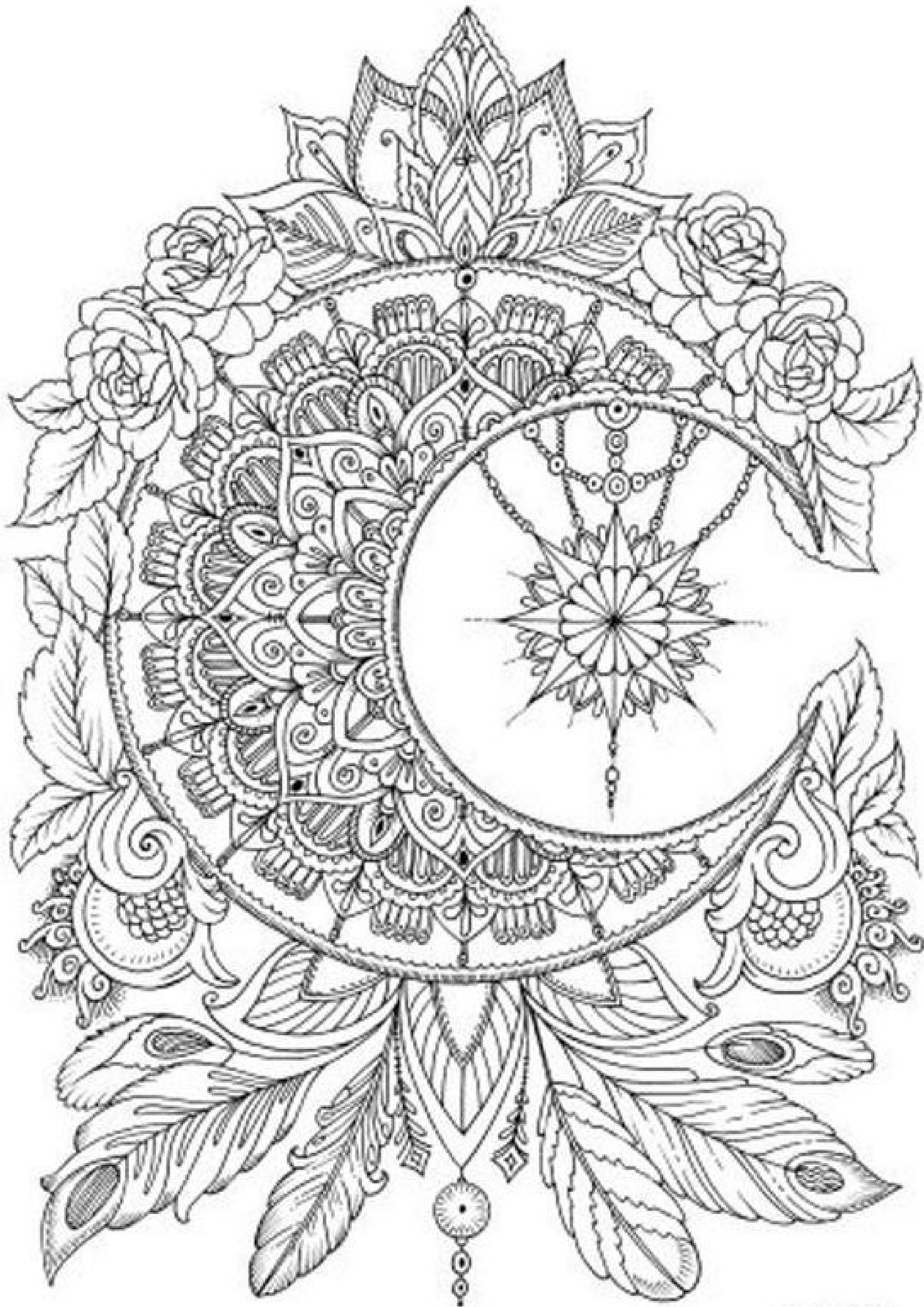




[Midnful colouring:](#)







## Create a Sacred Space:

Creating a sacred space for when you meditate is a great way to leave your thoughts and have time sometime to yourself. All you need is a quiet room where you can build up your sacred space in your mind. It is a safe space created by you for you and it is somewhere you can go to when you are feeling stressed, anxious or just want to rest the mind.

Sit down, relax, take some deep breathes and begin to create a sacred space in your mind using the following prompts below to gradually guide you to create this space:

Are you somewhere hot? Somewhere cold?

Inside? Outside? The beach, A forest, A lake, your bedroom, your garden? Anywhere you feel safe and calm.

What can you see? The ocean? Your bed?

What can you hear? The crunching of leaves? The wind?

What can you touch? The sand? Water?

What can you smell? Freshly cut grass? Perfume?

What can you taste? Salt air? Tea or coffee?

Is there anyone with you?

Do you have a somewhere to sit? A hammock? Chair? Bed?

Once you have your space you can re visit it anytime that you need.



## Journaling:

Journaling can be a great way for you to manage your thoughts and feelings as it give you a way to express yourself. This could be through a gratitude journal where you can write down daily what you are grateful for, a emotion journal where you can record how you are feeling or just a general journal where you can write about how your day has gone and record any expriences that you have had.

Here are some journal prompts that you can use:

- What am I looking forward to today?
- What will I do if I feel anxious today?
- How am I feeling?
- Name 2 things that I have learnt today
- Name 4 thoughts that have made me smile
- What has happened today that challenged me? How did I overcome this?
- What mantra or positive affirmation will I use today
- What did I do for myself today?

## **Further resources:**

[Health and Wellbeing Centre's Gratitude journal](#)

[Journaling for mindfulness](#)

[Journaling for mental health](#)



## Positive affirmations

Reciting positive affirmations can be useful on days that you are really struggling. Find an affirmation that you can relate to and use this to calm your thoughts and focus your mind.

Here are some examples:

### *Positive affirmations*

**I am confident**

**I am braver than I believe, stronger than I seem,  
smarter than I think**

**I am enough**

**If I fall I will get back up**

**Today will be a good day**

**I can control my own happiness**

**I believe in myself**

**I accept who I am**

**I am capable of so much**

**I am proud of myself**

**I forgive my mistakes**

**It is ok to not know everything**

**I can do this**

**I love every cell of my body**

You could also have a new affirmation each day, you can find these yourself and pick your favourite for the day or use other services which provide daily affirmations such as:

[Daily Affirmations & Positive Quotes from Louise Hay](#)

[Unique Daily Affirmations](#)

## Music:

Research suggests that music can stimulate the body's natural feel good chemicals (e.g. endorphins). It can help energise our mood and provide an outlet for us to take control of our feelings. Music can even help us work through problems in our lives. On a day where you may feel stressed you can listen to your favourite song to help you relax or listen to songs that remind you of your childhood can be a great way to distract yourself from any negative thoughts.



## Crafts:

Crafting is a great distractive technique. As you focus on your project your mind takes a rest from any negative thoughts. Check out these fab craft ideas:

[Check out the video here.](#)



More craft ideas can be found on our FB page where we share weekly craft ideas every Monday.

You can find out more here:

