

Guidance Sheet

Relaxation

How to use the video



Who is the video for?

The video is for people with learning disabilities who might have been feeling down, anxious or struggling to cope with the coronavirus pandemic and changes to the restrictions. It is designed to show people who might be feeling worried, tense or worked up how they can relax and help themselves feel calm. The relaxation exercise shown in the video will help anyone. If family, friends or support staff want to do the relaxation alongside the person with a learning disability they might find it's nice to do as well.

Who can help people with learning disabilities use the video and how do they do it?

This guide is for people who can help the person with a learning disability. These can be family members, friends, or support staff. It is also suitable for social care staff and health professionals.

The video can be used in a number of ways depending on the individual circumstances of the person with a learning disability. You can meet face-to-face if social distancing restrictions allow, remotely by phone, or using online video links such as zoom or skype or mobile phone apps, if you and the person with a learning disability have internet or enough mobile data.

Start by talking about being anxious and worked up. You might need to find out the words people use for being anxious. Sometimes people talk about being 'stressed', 'worried' or 'wound up', sometimes people say they feel 'jittery' and 'can't settle'.

Talk about the fact that everyone can get anxious. When this happens we can get worked up and our bodies can feel tense. Talk to the person about what happens to their bodies when they get anxious. They might breathe faster, feel a bit hot, their hearts might beat louder and faster, they might feel shaky, they might get butterflies in their stomach or they might need to go to the toilet more often. Not everyone feels the same way when they are anxious. Talk to the person about how they feel when they get worried or anxious.

Ask the person if there are times they feel happier, calm, quiet or relaxed. See if there are things they do that help them to feel better. For example, some people might watch favourite TV programmes, listen to music, look at photographs, stroke or play with a pet cat or dog, have a warm bath or a shower. Some people might just sit quietly. If the person feels they are getting more upset or worked up then they might be able to do relaxing activities that help them feel better.

What is this video about and how can it help?

Some people who are anxious find that their bodies feel very tense and worked up. Relaxation is a way to help people's bodies feel better and calm. Learning to relax is just like learning to do any other skill. It takes practice and it takes time. If you get a chance, watch the video yourself before you show it to the person you support, so you

know how it works. Make some time to talk to the person you support about relaxation. For some people, learning to relax will be part of learning how to manage anxiety and will help when they get worked up. For other people, doing relaxation will just be a nice thing to do with people they get on well with or who support them.

How to use the video

The video is a way for people to learn to feel relaxed. Relaxation needs to be done regularly. People find that the more they do it they get better at it. The video isn't very long, so plan to watch the video with the person 2 or 3 times a day. At first it might be quite hard, but if the person uses the video for a week then they will find it starts to get easier.

Choose a time when it is quiet in the house to watch the video. Ask the person you are supporting to wear some comfortable clothes. Ask them to sit in a chair that supports their back or to lie down on a bed or sofa, with a cushion to support their head. The person in the video can do the relaxation exercise sitting down but it can just as easily be done lying down. Make sure that the person can see the video when they are playing it. After you've watched it together a few times, it might be enough just to listen to what the person on the video is saying.

It will probably help if you (friend, family member or support worker) do the relaxation as well. You might find you enjoy it just as much!

If the person becomes upset

Relaxation is for everyone, whether they are feeling anxious or not. However some people might be feeling a bit upset or be struggling emotionally. So it's understandable if people become a bit upset when doing the relaxation exercises. However, if there are serious concerns about someone's mental health or if they are at serious risk of harming themselves or others then their GP should be contacted.

Other booklets and resources

Before you use this video read through the Introductory booklet with the person you are supporting. It tells you about the other booklets you can look through. They show different ways of helping the person to feel better. You will find the relaxation video, along with these other resources, at the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities <https://www.sclد.org.uk/information-on-coronavirus/> and at NES Scotland <https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk>

This booklet has been adapted from StepUp, a guided self-help intervention for people with learning disabilities and depression. You can look at the online training for StepUp which includes video clips.

Online modules and the manual on StepUp can be found at NES Scotland, <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/15095/learning-disabilities/talking-therapies-for-depression-step-up> and NHS Education England. <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/intellectual-disability-and-depression-talking-therapies/>

Feedback

If you have any feedback or thoughts about the booklets then we would really like to hear from you. You can contact ihw-cope@glasgow.ac.uk