

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a bright red short-sleeved shirt, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is standing in a gym, with her hands resting on the handrails of a treadmill. The background is slightly blurred, showing other gym equipment and bright lighting.

HELP for
HEROES

RECOVERY COLLEGE:
SELF-HELP GUIDES
TO RECOVERY

MIND
IN ACTION


A FIELD GUIDE
TO SELF-CARE:

MIND IN ACTION

When we are in a hurry, angry or upset our minds can feel clouded and we can feel quickly overwhelmed.

By observing our thoughts and feelings and practicing a few mindfulness techniques, we can learn to quieten racing thoughts and feel calmer and more in control.

HELP for
HEROES

A man with a full red beard and glasses is shown in profile, looking out a window. He is wearing a green t-shirt and holding a white mug. The background outside the window is a bright, green, hazy landscape, possibly a park or a field. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting daytime.

**BODY
EMOTION
MIND
IN ACTION**

PREPARE

**HELP for
HEROES**

FOCUS THE MIND

We can choose to shine our spotlight of attention wherever we wish, although doing so takes patience and practice.

Practicing focused attention for as little as a minute a day can help to calm a busy mind. Try focusing your attention on one thing at a time and noticing the ordinary in a new and extraordinary way. If this feels difficult or overwhelming because your mind feels full, try to simply observe your swirl of thoughts whilst breathing slowly. Acceptance alone can allow us a moment of clarity and some space in our minds. As you create this space, allow your body and emotions to settle into their own natural balance.

HELP for
HEROES

This is what happens to our minds when we meditate and are mindful of our body and our breathing. Our thoughts and feelings can still be there in our minds, but rest peacefully because we know how to return to our breathing to calm them.

Watch the mind video.



BODY
EMOTION
MIND
IN ACTION

ACKNOWLEDGE

H■LP for
HEROES



THE WORRIED MIND

Our brains have the amazing capacity to comment on, judge, evaluate and question our own experiences and emotions. However, these very abilities can get us caught up in all sorts of problems! Our brains often ruminate and allow us to self-criticise – so that threat feels like it is all around us. We have the ability to create elaborate ‘what if’ scenarios and worry, worry, worry.

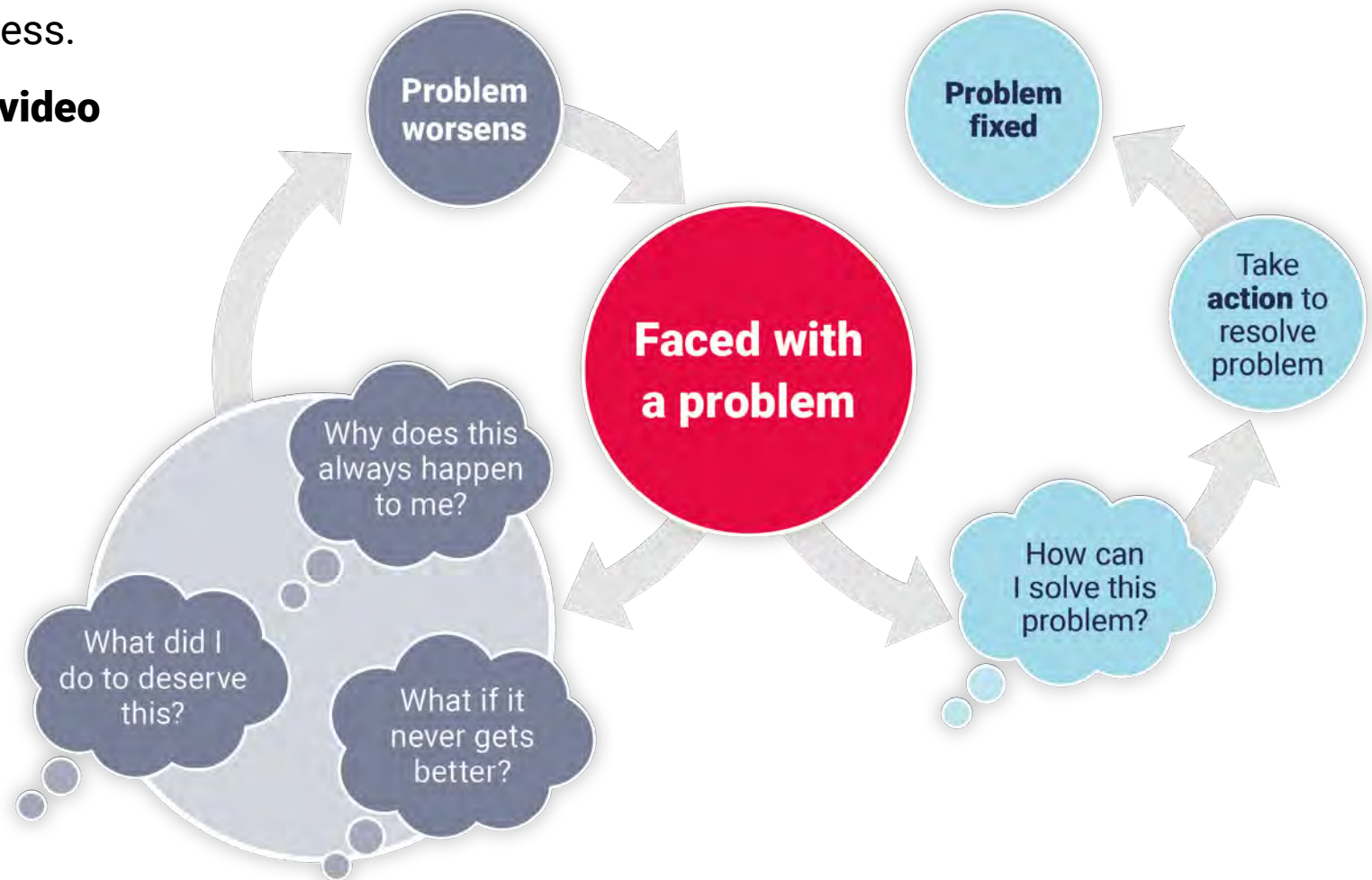
HELP for
HEROES




HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL THINKING

Sometimes, our thinking can get caught up in negative cycles, which then adds to our emotional distress.

Watch the black dog video



A young man with short brown hair, wearing a red t-shirt and white earbuds, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is looking towards the right. The background is a soft-focus field of green grass and yellow wildflowers, with a bright sun low on the horizon to the left, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Acknowledging a busy mind and practicing some simple steps to slow it down brings the focus of our attention to what is going on in the here and now. Some useful techniques for slowing down the mind include:

- + **MINDFUL BREATHING**
- + **MINDFUL WALKING**
- + **MINDFUL EATING**

HELP for
HEROES

BODY
EMOTION
MIND
IN ACTION

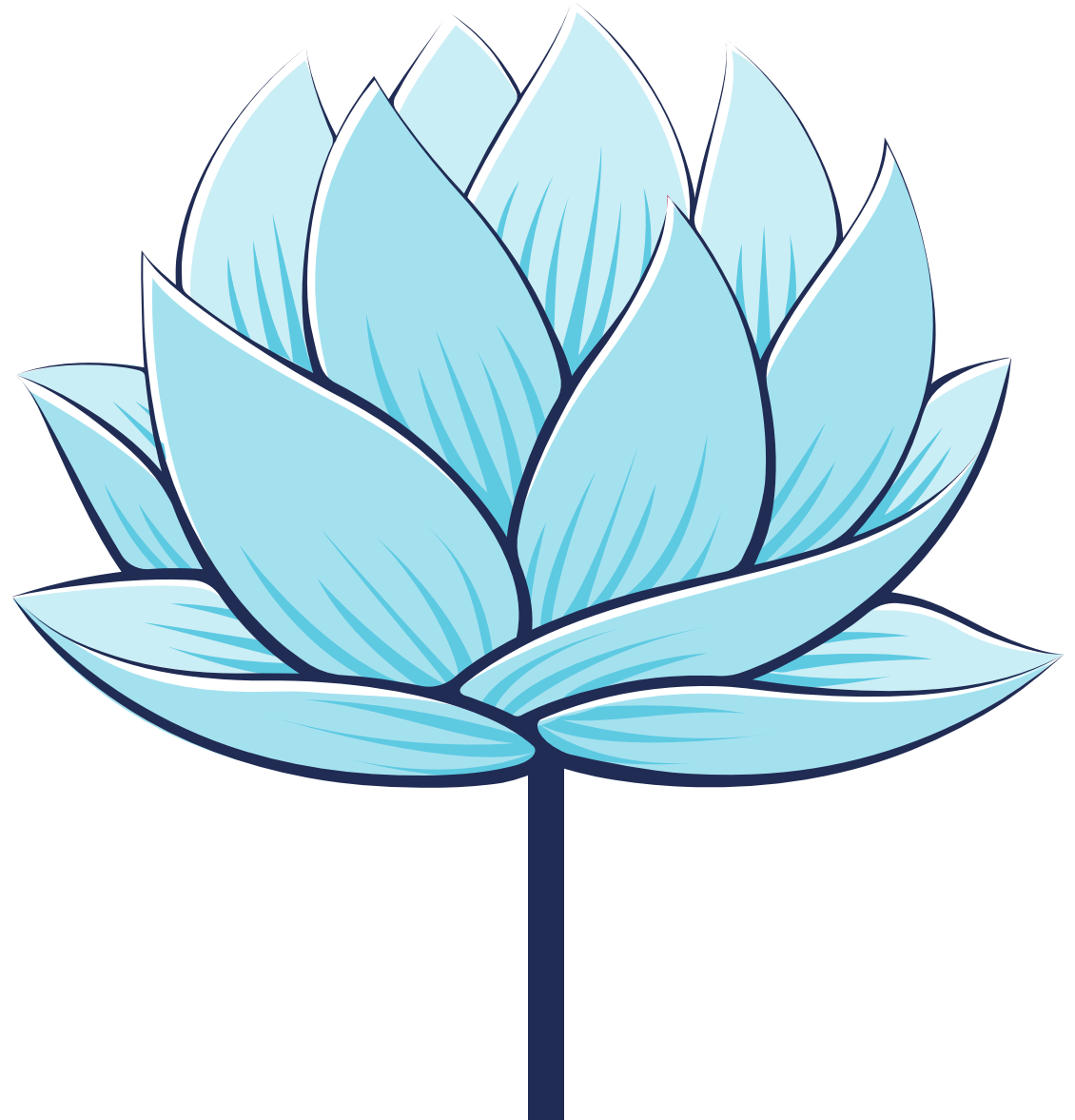
TREAT

HELP for
HEROES



Think of suffering as a kind of mud which helps flowers of happiness to grow. There can be no flowers without mud.

“NO MUD, NO LOTUS.”
Thich Nhat Hanh



HELP for
HEROES

WHAT IS HELPFUL?

Before we can change something, we need to have awareness:

- + **ATTUNE TO WHAT'S GOING ON FOR US**
- + **ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE NEED TO BREAK THE CYCLE AND CHANGING SOMETHING**
- + **RECOGNISE THAT WE HAVE THE CHOICE TO DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT**

HELP for
HEROES



Try using the R.A.I.N technique to manage difficult emotions:

RECOGNITION

ACCEPTANCE

INVESTIGATE

NURTURE

(Non identification with the emotion)

- + **TRY ENGAGING YOUR INNER CHEERLEADER:**
- + **EVERY DAY, IDENTIFY ONE POSITIVE THING THAT YOU HAVE DONE**
- + **BE AS KIND TO YOURSELF AS YOU ALWAYS ARE TO OTHERS**

“As on the battlefield, if you get the chance, take a knee and pause; give yourself a moment of mindfulness and calm in the heat of the battle.”

Captain Carol Betteridge RN, OBE

A person is walking away from the camera on a beach at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon to the left, creating a bright glow and reflecting on the wet sand. The person's silhouette is reflected in the water on the sand. The ocean waves are visible in the distance under a blue and orange sky.

**HELP for
HEROES**

SOOTHING RHYTHM BREATHING

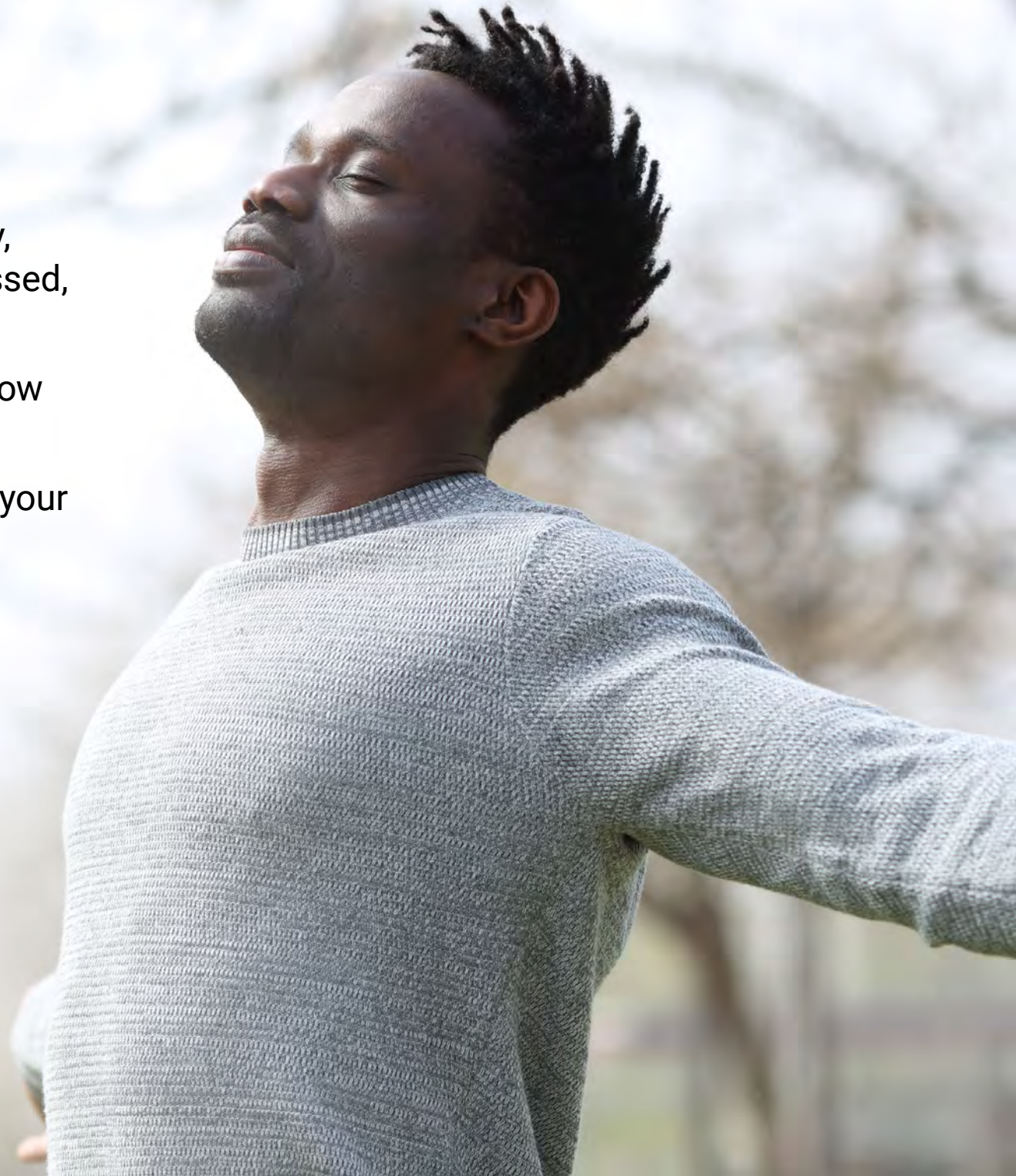
As we learn what happens to our body, emotions and mind when we are stressed, what can we do about it?

Stress is an everyday part of life, it's how you manage it that matters.

Try these breathing exercises to calm your mind from the effects of stress.

Watch the breathing video

HELP for
HEROES



AND FINALLY...

If you have any questions at all, take positive action by contacting a member of our Recovery team:

getsupport@helpforheroes.org.uk