



Hello!

We hope you enjoyed the webinar with us. Below is some of the content we talked about, as well as our contact details if you have any questions about what was presented.

## Noora Wellbeing

This webinar was done in collaboration with the non-profit association Noora Wellbeing. Noora is about sharing knowledge across borders specifically regarding women's health and wellbeing. It is about learning from each other, and collaboratively inspiring each other.

To learn more, get in touch or become a member (membership is free), see [www.noorawellbeing.com](http://www.noorawellbeing.com)

Sign up for the quarterly Noora newsletter [here](#).

## A wholistic model of women's health

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This model is based on a bicycle wheel. It is about the whole body as part of an individual, and the individual in relation to its context.

The function of a wheel is to roll, or in other words, to enable movement. All the parts of the wheel must function together for this to happen as smoothly as possible. The same is true for the body. Everything in the body is, in essence, about movement. The body constantly strives for balance in and between its different systems in order to be able to move in as optimal a way as possible. If one system is not working the way it should, there will be an impact on other systems. Let the imbalance remain for a long time, and the systems start to change.

The **wheel** represents movement. The **road** is our context, such as our work, home and social life, and environment; the **tyre** stands for our diet and the **inner tube** represents breathing and rest; the **rim** is our skin and the **nipples** are the different body systems, for example the muscles, organs, hormones and the microbiome; the **spokes** illustrate energy and balance, and represent how all these parts act on the **hub**, which is us, as individuals, with all our experiences, personalities, genes, beliefs and ideas.

When we feel overwhelmed, it may be that we are affected on more levels than we are able to comfortably manage. When the context we are in changes dramatically – such as with the Covid-19 pandemic – we might lose ways of managing that we have had before. Hence, we are offering you some suggestions for what you can do to impact things in life that you might have more control over, with regards to touch, breathing, nutrition and movement.

Youtube link as presented at webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sii4rmLP8Lw>

## Reducing overwhelm using Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT or “tapping”)

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EFT is an amazing tool sometimes known as ‘Acupuncture without needles’ which once learnt, you can use anytime, anywhere, to reduce anxiety, stress and overwhelm in a matter of moments. Research shows that Tapping calms the amygdala in the brain, regulates our nervous system, and reduces stress and anxiety by up to 50%!! In this short interactive tap-along session, you are invited to join registered EFT and Shiatsu Practitioner Hannah Currant, in tapping Acupressure points on the face and upper body, to help release overwhelm, and discover the effectiveness of the technique for yourself.

For a handout about tapping, please go to <https://www.hannahcurrant.co.uk/abouttapping.html> and scroll down to the bottom of this page.

Youtube link as presented at webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGg2ItW7KBA>

## Digestive health for emotional balance

Alexandra Koumis

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Our digestive health is influenced by the microflora living within it. Our microbiome is made up of trillions of commensal micro-organisms, including bacteria, fungi and archaea. These micro-organisms live happily within us and provide us with many substances which we use to stay healthy. The beneficial bacteria within our microbiome produce vitamins and other nutrients, creates our neurotransmitters, communicates with our nervous system and brain to maintain mental and emotional health and they support our immune system – plus much more.

The best way we can support these micro-organisms and have a happy microbiome is to eat foods which they love to feed off. Especially the different types of Bacteria. These bacteria provide us ‘their host’ with beneficial substances which we use within our biological processes to keep up healthy. One of the keyways bacteria provide these beneficial substances is by eating the foods we consume, and the by-product of their activity are a number of beneficial nutrients

Our neurotransmitters are chemical messengers which communicate throughout the body signalling different responses which work to influence our mood, regulate emotion, concentration, energy, alertness and sleep.

Serotonin is known as our happy neurotransmitter, it helps to regulate your mood, stay calm, happy, be more focused, reduces anxiety and depression. 70%-90% of Serotonin which is actually made in our gut, which also houses 90% of our serotonin receptors. If we do not have enough Serotonin being produced, we may be more susceptible to low mood, depression and anxiety. Serotonin is also the pre-cursor to Melatonin, which is the neurotransmitter that promotes sleep that also aids in promoting healthful rest and rejuvenation of our bodies and emotional balance.

To ensure we are able to produce enough Serotonin (and Melatonin) we need to support our gut health.

Firstly, we need to be eating the foods which the bacteria like to eat – and this is FIBRE!

Fibre is found in all plant foods which include wholegrains and fruit and vegetables. These are known as act 'pre-biotic' to feed the friendly bacteria in the gut. We need approximately 30g of fibre per day but on average most people eating a typical western diet are struggling to eat half of that figure.

Tips to increase your fibre intake:

- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables; consider adding fruit to your breakfast.
- Add two-three portions of vegetables to every lunch and dinner
- Make an overnight chia, oat and seeds pot for breakfast + add some berries!
- Add pulses like beans, lentils or chickpeas to stews, curries and salads.
- Choose chopped up vegetables, fruit, dried fruits or nuts and seeds for snacks between meals.
- Making your own hummus with chickpeas or butterbeans for example – which you can have as a snack with chopped veggies or to accompany other meals
- Add toasted seeds and raw vegetables to salads.
- Sprinkle linseeds (also known as flaxseeds) on to foods or soak 2 tablespoons in a small amount of water overnight and drink first thing in the morning.

Youtube link as presented at webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zJYIJBjpk>

For a longer version see: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw8DOUv\\_62Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw8DOUv_62Q)

## Breathing to relax & reconnect

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### Pelvic Floor Breathing

Focus on the space between your jaw and vulva, at the front and back of your trunk, imagine there is a balloon around this entire space (this is to ensure that you breathe into the whole 360° area).

As you breathe in, relax your jaw (you can place your tongue lightly behind your front or bottom teeth, if this helps to keep your jaw relaxed) and drop your shoulders.

Breathe so that your ribs expand to the side, your bra-strap expands to the back, your diaphragm expands, your lower belly softens - guide your breath lower so that your vulval area expands like a flower opening.

Continue to breathe in fully, softly and gently (without any force, pushing or pressure) to take up the entire space within the 'balloon' surrounding the front and back of your torso, expanding and relaxing fully into the whole area.

Maintain that relaxation as you breathe out fully.

Aim to take at least 10 breaths in this way.

### Grounding Visualisation

As you breathe down to your vulva, bring your focus to the central point in your perineum and imagine there is a connection between this root chakra point and the earth (don't try and work it out in your mind, just allow your body to create this connection in a way that is real and true for you – it can feel like a rope, cord, umbilicus, tree or a light).

Allow your body to soften where this connection meets your body, give yourself permission to take up your place and this space at the root of your body. Harness this sensation and direct it down to the earth.

Continue to breathe deeply and feel the tendrils of this connection burrow deep down towards the centre of the earth, where you can access the deep nourishment and replenishment of earth energy.

Allow yourself to feel how well held you are by the anchor of the earth – in this moment, there is nothing to do, nothing to say, allow your body to simply rest in this place of deep restoration. You are rooted, you are grounded – continue to breathe and know that just for now it is completely safe to fully relax and let go.

Youtube link as presented at webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejOc9os3F8&t=5s>

*If you would like an audio recording of this visualisation, please send Helen a message via the contact form on the website above.*

## The basics women need to know about food and mental health

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Women are twice as likely to suffer from depression than men<sup>1</sup>. This is in part due to our female hormones and how they change throughout the menstrual cycle, in menopause and later years.

Food plays a vital role. Eating too much or too little of certain foods affects the ability to produce or balance specific hormones thus affecting mood and mental health.

Therefore, it is essential that, as women, we understand how to put nourishing meals together to meet our individual needs.

In this punchy and practical 5-minute talk Emma explains 3 nutrition basics to consider in your meal planning. Find out how you can start making changes today to support your mood.

Youtube link as presented at webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJezaK2dBgk>

## Walking when overwhelmed

Jenny Wickford

Movement is crucial for physical and mental health. The effects of exercise, and how much one needs to exercise to have an effect on health, is highly individual and depends on what one wants to achieve. However, even going to regular walks has benefits for your mental health<sup>2</sup>.

Also, as we spend more and more time on screens, remember to not sit for long stretches. Take regular breaks from all the online and computer work!!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Salk RH, Hyde JS, Abramson LY. Gender differences in depression in representative national samples: Meta-analyses of diagnoses and symptoms. *Psychological Bulletin*. 2017;143(8): 783–822.

<sup>2</sup> Hansen A. *The real happy pill: Power up your brain by moving your body*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing; 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Bowman K. *Don't just sit there*. USA: Propriometrics Press; 2015.

## Yoga for relaxation of body and mind

### Alexandra Koumis

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In this session Alex will guide you through some simple postures and breathing exercises to gently allow the body to relax and unwind. Yoga is an effective practice to allow the body to relax and find tranquillity when feeling overwhelmed, exhausted or anxious. This short sequence incorporates soothing positions which help to calm the nervous system, relax the body and mind, reducing 'over-thinking' and worry. This can also be a nice sequence to try before bed to unwind from a busy day.

This series of simple poses is suitable for all, even those without previous yoga experience.

### About Yin Yoga

Yin Yoga is a beautiful slow practice that integrates the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine energy meridians. Asanas (postures) are held for a longer amount of time – typically 3 – 5 minutes. This invites the body to fully relax at the fascial level and connective tissues and work energetically at the energy gates and meridians these positions stimulate. Encouraging the flow of Qi through its easing of the body and mind into stillness.

Although in stillness we are in concentration and awareness of our body. In Yin Yoga we can bring about a profound self-healing. Yin Yoga weaves meditation, breath work, visualisation, sound and self-massage into the practice. With the aim to fully open the circulation of life force energy.

In Yin Yoga we use a number of props to make it comfortable and adaptable for all body abilities. These include plenty of pillows, bolsters, blocks and blankets!

Youtube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYXyfdmz7RE>

## Develop your inner HERO: optimize your health without the overwhelm

### Sarah Mannion

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### Your inner HERO

Cultivating these four capacities - even just doing small things to support each one - can have a big impact on your overall wellbeing:

- Hope
- (Self)Efficacy
- Resilience
- Optimism

All of the things you do to support your health develop these traits. You strengthen your resilience and confidence that you can deal with challenges and changes when they arise, and you cultivate joy and an overall sense of wellbeing.

## Cultivate your HERO

The following suggestions help to cultivate hope, resilience and optimism, as well as support you in building new habits and behaviours.

### *What's within your control?*

- Many choices about your health and lifestyle are within your control
- Identify the things that are within your control
- Identify the choices and practices that can have a positive impact on your wellbeing
- Focus your energy on these things, rather than the aspects of your life you really cannot change

### *Set your goals - small and steady!*

- Don't try to do everything
- What's most important? What behaviours would bring the biggest benefit to your life?
- Choose one or two things and break these down into the smallest possible action steps
- Make the action steps clear - so you know when you reach them
- Celebrate all successes!

### *Do things that bring you JOY*

- Write your joy list!
- Do something that brings you joy every day - this doesn't have to be a big thing
- Be present and savour the experience of it
- Use your list to take a few minutes out if you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed

There's a lot you can do to support your wellbeing - take things one step at a time!

Youtube link as presented at webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BNYuZes4To>

## Thank you!

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Gavin Brockis edited the videos for this webinar. Gavin works with audio and video production and offers advice on online learning and content. His work ranges from simple little videos (as in this webinar) or more professional educational and promotional materials. If you have an idea of what you would like to do, Gavin can help you make your ideas a reality.