

Prioritise your wellbeing

This guide aims to help you look after your wellbeing when you're getting support or connecting with Mind at a distance.



Accessing mental health support at home has benefits and challenges. For example, we can access services from familiar places and we don't have to travel. However, the technology can be confusing or frustrating and there can be issues around privacy and personal space.

This guide shares local Minds' and your peers' experiences and ideas for navigating the challenges. We've grouped these into four areas:

1. **Practicalities**
2. **Practice & Play**
3. **Personalise**
4. **Boundaries & Breaks**



Practicalities

These core factors can have a big impact on how at ease we feel when we're getting support.

- **Internet connection**—if a weak signal disrupts your video call don't worry, it happens to us all. Try our tips to improve the signal or reset the call (see Start using Zoom and Connect with Mind guides), or switch to a phone call.
- **Privacy**—this includes finding a private space to have the call; trusting the technology; your local Mind's policies and process. See 'Privacy and safety' guide for information and tips on all these.
- **Safeguarding**—if you don't feel safe to talk openly at home, your local Mind can help, and suggest ways to communicate. E.g. meet in person; take the call outside; text/message.

Wellbeing tips

Ideas to try when connecting with Mind at a distance.



Practice & Play

Lack of confidence with the technology is often a barrier to feeling comfortable online. Small shifts can make a difference.

- **Mindset**—take the pressure off and embrace being a beginner. Ask questions, have a go, play around with different features, get it wrong, try again! Remember, this is just another way to connect with support, it's not the support itself.
- **Test it**—if you're worried about how to use a platform (e.g. Zoom), you could ask your local Mind to go through it with you; use our short guides to try it out with friends/family; or test it yourself (e.g. visit zoom.us/test).
- **Time**—trust that you'll get more confident as the technology becomes familiar. There's no rush.



Personalise

A benefit of not meeting in-person is more scope to personalise support to your needs. Use these prompts.

- **Communication**—what type of communication works best for you? E.g. writing by text/email, talking by phone/video. Ask your local Mind if they can accommodate this.
- **Accessibility**—are there any changes you or your local Mind can make so it's easier to connect? E.g. related to hearing or vision difficulties; sensory processing; learning needs. This could range from using fidget toys to aid concentration, to booking a translator.
- **Visibility**—it's up to you how visible you are on a video call. You can turn off your camera so others can't see you, or (on Zoom), click the 3 dots at the top of your video image and click 'hide self-view' so you can't see yourself. Many find this a relief, it can be draining and anxiety provoking to see ourselves talk.

Wellbeing tips

Ideas to try when connecting with Mind at a distance.

Personalise continued

- **Pace**—go at your own pace, whether in trying out new communication tools and skills; sharing experiences; or having your camera on. Your comfort is the priority.
- **Be your own host**—have refreshments ready to help you relax and stay alert; take breaks from the session and your screen.



Boundaries & Breaks

Accessing support at home can blur natural boundaries between people and places. Here are some ideas to build these back in.

- **Privacy**—to keep your home space private on video calls, either choose a neutral space or use the Zoom feature to blur the background or add a filter. (See the Zoom guide for how).
- **Create space**—being close to people’s faces on video calls can trigger anxiety or be tiring and draining. If this is the case, try these tips: look away from the screen at regular points to the middle/far distance; use an external keyboard to create space between you and the screen; avoid ‘full screen’ to make faces smaller; imagine you’re in a bubble of personal space in your room, an extra layer of separation between you and the session.
- **Sharing in writing**—having the option to write instead of speak in video calls or online groups is great. Just be aware that once something is written, it’s difficult to take back—make sure you’re happy to share it first. If you’re more comfortable sending a private message, you can do this in the Zoom chat. In the ‘to’ box, select the person’s name you want to message (instead of the default ‘everyone’) then type your comment.



Wellbeing tips

Ideas to try when connecting with Mind at a distance.

Boundaries continued

- **Interactions**—in a group call where people participate in a range of ways, there may be times your request to speak, or your chat comment, isn't seen. Try not to take this personally—it's worth repeating your comment and trying to speak again. If you're struggling with this, tell the host in a private message or after the session.
- **Rest**—support at a distance can be tiring, especially video calls. Rest after and during if you need to. Let your host know if you take a break.
- **Reset**—without a journey home and time for reflection, the ending of a session can feel abrupt. A room that was lively is now quiet; you feel tired after intense discussions. If possible, arrange to do something that helps you reset after a session, even if only for 10mins. E.g. going outside; listening to music; moving and stretching. Anything that lifts you or helps you move on from the session.

What's in your control?

With our wellbeing, it's useful to think of what's in our control to change, and what are issues and ideas to take to your local Mind.

Start noticing what affects your wellbeing when you're getting support at a distance. When it's going well, what's helping? When it's not, what are the triggers?

Use this guide as part of conversations with your local Mind, so that together you develop support that works for you.

Find out more

Ask your local Mind for more of our short guides to help increase your confidence connecting at a distance.

These include:

- [Connect with Mind](#)
- [Start using Zoom](#)
- [Privacy and safety.](#)

