**The Pause Isolation Tapes**

**Pause, Breath, Relax**

Hello and welcome to the first Pause@UoB blog!

While we may not be able to see students face to face at the moment we wanted to let UoB students know that we are still here and offering a Covid 19 friendly version of our Pause Drop In Service. We also thought we could offer you a little insight in to how the Pause team are faring during lockdown and share with you some of the things that have helped us or lifted our spirits. Hopefully some of the topics we talk about or activities we suggest may go some way to making this period a little easier.

**We’re still here**

The Pause team are all still here; we have each set up a Pause HQ at home and are able to offer telephone support to any UoB students who want to talk. Even if you are not currently living in Birmingham we are still offering a safe, confidential and relaxed space to talk about your mental health and emotional wellbeing.

**It’s not all banana bread and sourdough starters**

If you look at social media it may seem that everyone else is nailing lockdown; getting work done alongside learning 17 new languages all whilst knocking up sourdough pizzas and biscuits. Please believe me when I say this is not the case, some days we thrive and other days we all just about survive. This is the time to be kind to yourself and make sure we are doing the small things that make us feel ourselves.

I thought I would share 2 things that I have found really helpful over the last few weeks; podcasts and breathing, hardly cutting edge science but stick with me!

After weeks of being glued to the news and daily briefings I was feeling constantly overwhelmed and anxious about things that were out of my control. I found having podcasts on, rather than the news or the radio, while I work is a fantastic way to have some company while I get things done but without the constant barrage of information. Here are 3 of my current favourites;

* Off Menu – Comedians Ed Gamble & James Acaster invite special guests in to their magical restaurant to choose their dream meal.
* Films to be Buried With – Brett Goldstein speaks to a weekly guest as they go all the way into life and death by the way of movies.
* You’re Dead to Me – A history podcast with a difference, covering the bits of history that you probably don’t remember doing at school.

I would also like to share a really easy breathing exercise I use when I start to feel my anxiety levels rise and get that fluttering feeling in my chest. You simply breathe in for the count of 4, hold the breath for a count of 4 and then breathe out for a count of 6. I do this 4 or 5 times in a row, focusing on the breathing and counting and it really helps me feel calmer and less overwhelmed. Why not give it a try now…

Breathe in 2…3…4

Hold 2…3…4

Breathe out 2…3…4…5…6

**Want to talk?**

While campus is closed, you can still access support from Pause 7 days a week, 10am – 6pm. If you would like to speak with someone please call **02078 414470** and leave a message or you can email us at askbeam@childrenssociety.org.uk and one of the team will contact you to arrange a time to talk.