I’ve never written a blog before but I thought why not. Now’s a time if ever there was one to do new things so here goes. I’m Lorraine and I’m the training manager at HEY Mind so this is a particularly strange time for me. I’m usually out all over the place delivering training, meeting new people and hopefully making a difference. Like lots of you I’m now working at home and trying to find my new normal. There are ups and downs in all of that and every day is different but I’m certainly enjoying my journey to work. Very stress free.

More than ever I’m trying to practice what I preach. I’m currently sat in my little back garden in the sunshine listening to the birds twittering away. Thank goodness no one has told nature about a lockdown because it is really starting to get going. I’m being mindful on my one bit of outside exercise, noticing the different trees blossoming, cherry, magnolia, may blossom and it’s amazing when life slows down a bit like this how much you do notice so I say give it a try. It really does make you smile. You may have read Anna our fundraisers log where she talked about the 5 ways to wellbeing. Following on from that I thought I’d introduce you to Great Dreams and [www.actionforhappiness](http://www.actionforhappiness), which has some great ideas to do what it says on the tin, find ways to help you find happiness. Let’s face it we all need to do that right now.

**Great Dreams** is a way of incorporating all the things that help us get through the tough times so I don’t know about you but I’ll give anything a go.

**Giving**, doing things for others- I’ve been giving support and help to my colleagues at work who might have more going on than me at the moment keeping our front line services running.

**Relating.** Connecting with people- This is a weird one because it’s made me connect more with friends and family than I usually do, Food for thought that maybe we all need to make more effort in the future when all this is over.

**Exercising** – We all know it’s good for us but do we do as much as we should? I’m taking this as an opportunity to get healthy again. I’ve been having more fruit and veg and not one ready meal in sight. I don’t think Jamie Oliver needs to worry just yet but I’ve actually been cooking meals from scratch.

**Awareness**, live life mindfully- really just taking more notice of what’s around you and I’ve taken up doing my mindfulness meditation’s again which are great if you can’t get to sleep. Headspace is a good site to get some exercises.

**Trying out**, learn new things –I suppose that’s where the cooking has come in because I’ve tried new things. I’m gutted I didn’t get better organized before lockdown because I wanted to start knitting again. I haven’t done it for years and can only really do scarves or squares but it would have been nice to give it a go. Maybe that will be my new hobby when this is all over.

**Direction,** have goals to look forward to – like lots of people out there I’ve had to cancel a holiday which I was really looking forward to so having the freedom to travel to other places in this country will be my thing to look forward to. I need to get to the seaside on the East coast because that’s my happy place.

**Resilience,** finding ways to bounce back – for me this is acceptance that the situation we’re in is out of my control and it’s for the greater good. I really do hope it will save more lives and so I know I’ll bounce back at the end of these challenging times

**Emotions,** look for what’s good – I’m quite an emotional person so I do wear my heart on my sleeve. It would be really easy for me to get caught up in all the anger and upset over the bad things that people are doing but I’ve decided to only take notice of the good things going on out there, and there are so many good things happening.

**Acceptance,** be comfortable with who you are – I’m using this time to reflect on the positives of who I am. It’s easy to be very critical of yourself but we all have good things about us. Spend time thinking about your best bits.

**Meaning**, be part of something bigger- I think we’ll all look back and realise we are part of something pretty monumental at the moment. Life with be different when we come out of lockdown but I’m looking forward to not taking things for granted in future. I hope that feeling lasts for us all. Stay safe, keep smiling and use this time wisely to be your best self.