Coming back into the office after working at home during these last few week feels a bit like coming out of a cocoon but instead of metamorphosing into a beautiful butterfly I’ve become a timid little mouse, tentatively arriving at the car park at work and checking my bag for the third time to make sure that I have wipes, tissues, hand sanitiser and anything else that I can think of to protect myself. I walk to the entrance and someone is already there, politely holding the door open for me to follow them. ‘”It’s okay, I’ve got it thanks, social distancing and all that” I cheerily say, but feel rude and paranoid that I may have offended them.

People keep telling me we have to get ‘back to some sort of normality’ but I am reluctant; The Virus is still out there but I need to see people, discuss work issues and plan for how we can make things safe for others; Zoom is great but it’s not the same as being in a room with colleagues.

That first day I am wary; of touching the door handles and the kettle(!) but also of people coming too near me and then worrying about how I can explain that I’m worried, but after a while I start to relax. It’s nice being in the office. I see people I’ve not seen for a while, we are all taking care and being very considerate of each other. I’m not being distracted by my children or feeling guilty because I can’t keep them entertained.

I make sure that I stick to the guidance – there are things in place at our office to help with this - and I make sure I practice the CBT techniques that I talk to others about; challenging my thoughts and weighing up probabilities. And as I leave for the day, I notice that I feel better, it’s been a good day and I decide I’ll do it again next week.

Small steps………