

Mental wellbeing

1.

Go for a walk: exercise, sunshine and beauty. Living rurally, I feel connected to the changes across the year: there is always something changing in nature. I find learning to see new elements of nature beautifully reflective and makes me appreciate the world I live in. But sometimes when I have had a bad day or week, I need more to prevent spiralling bad thoughts. So I listen to music, ring a friend (if there is phone reception, which there isn't always in the Highlands!) or listen to a podcast; there is no right way, or 'pure' way to walk for mental wellbeing, find what works for you and do it.



2.

Stay connected: living rurally can be lonely, but there are a lot of community groups for a range of hobbies and interest groups, that can be easily found through social media, (especially Facebook). And while many are currently dormant due to Covid, communities are still thriving online.

Social media can feel a little like shouting into the void sometimes, but can still be great for staying connected. I often send pictures of my walks to my grandma, (even if she never text replies).

And, of course, friends are just a phone call away!



3.

Reflect on what brings happiness: do some hobbies feel like a chore? Do you do some things just to fill the time, or just to feel productive? Identifying what makes you truly happy can help you to use relaxation time better, and leave room to try new things. Of course, there are many things that must be done to live, but even washing up can be brightened with good music.

