

RESILIENCE

in the time of COVID-19



A Wellbeing Guide by Stoke Your Gratitude

**When you walk
through a storm
hold your head up
high and don't be
afraid of the dark.
At the end of the
storm there's a
golden sky and
the sweet silver
song of the lark.**

**Michael Ball,
Captain Tom Moore &
The NHS Voices of Care Choir**

The Legal Bit



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How to use this book

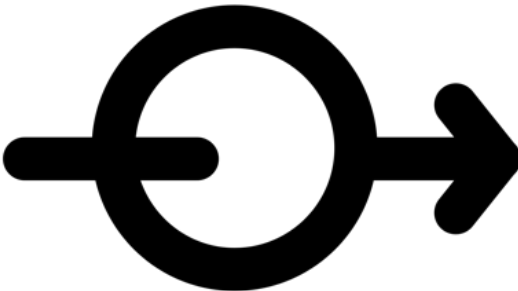
You can read this book in any order. Feel free to dip in and out of any section.

Most importantly, think deeply about the reflection questions and write down full and complete answers to improve your resilience and wellbeing.



I gotta get through this

Daniel Bedingfield



Lyrics inspired this book and perhaps those same lyrics will inspire you too. The artistic creations of the music industry speak to us about the human condition. It's through their emotion that we can understand that troubles are shared amongst people and that similarly our sources of joy are often shared too. It's the small things that matter; they are priceless.

Now more than ever, our hardships are shared with people throughout the world. As a species we have to get through this because surviving is in our nature.

The questions in this book will help you to change the way you regard the problems in your life. If you spend time answering them as fully as possible, you will create new neural pathways in your brain to guide your personal journey in this brave new world.

when life gives me lemons I make lemonade

The Boy Least Likely To



When we make lemonade, we don't remove the sourness from the lemons. Instead, we dilute the strength of the sour by adding water. Adding sweetener makes the sour taste more pleasant too. Likewise, what we add to our thinking helps us to bounce back from sour life circumstances.

That doesn't mean we should only focus on the good in a situation, or to even pretend that everything is good. Going too far is false positivity. That's when we pretend everything is great, when it's clearly not.

Lemonade wouldn't taste great if it was made from just water and sugar, would it? We need the taste of the lemons. Similarly, we can't fully appreciate the sweetness of joy and happiness if we are unable to contrast these with problems, difficulties and unwanted feelings. Making great tasting lemonade is about balancing the flavours.

Reflection Questions:

Can you recall a time when your positive attitude helped in a difficult situation?

In what ways have your unwanted experiences in the past shaped you into someone stronger?

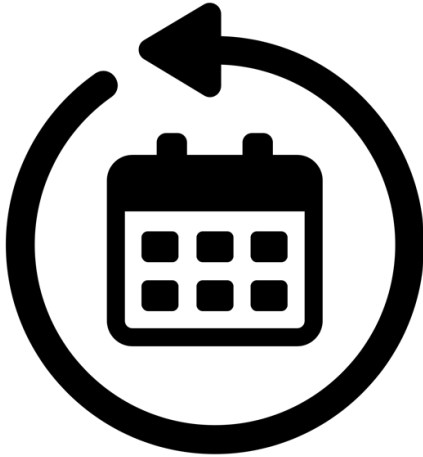
What unexpected outcomes have occurred for you only because you experienced a particular adversity?

In general, how do you personally make a situation more bearable for yourself? For others?

How do you think our response to natural disasters may build a stronger civilisation for the future?

Yesterday all my troubles seemed so far away

The Beatles



The world changes constantly, but in our minds we often don't live in the moment so we miss it. Instead we lament what we've lost. We think of a future when we will be reunited with that which we've lost. We think of the past and how glorious it was back then, making us crave those times. We also think to the future and hope that it will bring us what our hearts desire. Rarely do we consider that in the future we may look to the past and desire that which we have right now, in this very moment.

There are wonderful things happening right now that we just don't appreciate. If we do spend time thinking of the present, it's easier for us to focus on the problems, rather than any blessings. Identifying the wonders of today is also something we can do now, rather than waiting for the future to arrive so we can look back on today with nostalgia.

Let us appreciate the past and the present, while also looking forward to the future.

Reflection Questions:

In what ways was life easier before?

What do you now appreciate about life before COVID-19?

What could you previously do easily that you will take more pleasure from in the future?

What is problematic now that you'll appreciate more once things settle?

What can you appreciate about the here and now?

What do you want to learn from this situation?

What are you grateful for today?

there's always been a rainbow hangin' over your head

Kacey Musgraves



We all live the way we do because other people do things that benefit us. Of course, not everything that people do benefits us. However, if we can see and appreciate helpful people, they can serve as a rainbow on our rainy days.

Sometimes the benefits we derive from the work that others do are directly received because someone serves us, such as the person delivering our parcels, the friend who reaches out to us, or the people who taught us how to read.

Other times the benefits arrive indirectly from the actions of others, such as those who choose what is sold at the supermarkets, those who provide fuel for the vehicles that transport our goods, or those who inspired our favourite movie directors. This list is endless. We can be grateful to many people, and for so much.

Reflection Questions:

Who has given you help and support in the past?

Who is supporting your lifestyle these days, either directly or indirectly?

Can you make a list of 10 people who you don't know personally, but to whom you are grateful?

With whom can you share your troubles?

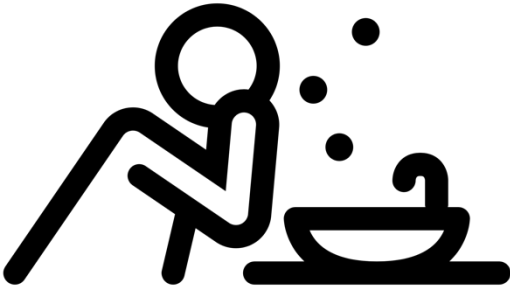
Where can you find help and support online?

What events, developments and activities have occurred in the past to give you the resources, skills and infrastructure to communicate with others in the present?

What do you do that benefits others?

You wash your face in my sink

Dream Warriors



So much has occurred in human history for us to have access to clean water on tap, indoor plumbing, and cleansing products to keep us and our homes clean. If we were living centuries ago, and this pandemic had struck, then our understanding of infection control and our ability to do anything about it would have been very much limited.

On some occasions, we may not have everything that we need, such as antibacterial products that were in short supply, but we do have greater knowledge of infections, and other products, facilities and resources that will help us.

Of course, it would be better if we had more sanitation and medical capacity. This pandemic will hopefully see improvements to the way we, and society, prepare for our future.

Reflection Questions:

What facilities, products and resources are available to help you?

Who creates these and gets them to a place where you can access them?

What must have occurred in history, science and technology for these things to have been created?

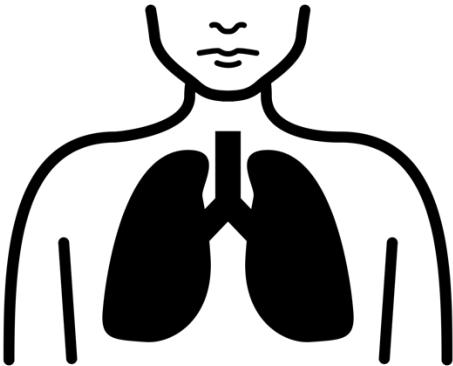
If you've not had access to something that you needed during the pandemic, can you now appreciate that thing more so than before?

What can you do to prepare yourself for your future?

Can you engage with your local residents' association to improve your local community? If you don't have one where you live, can you create one?

I feel that I'm alive

Celine Dion



Our bodies do so much for us, often without any appreciation from us. They can warn us that something isn't quite right. When you stub your toe, you immediately pay attention to it, right? Our bodies can also recover from injuries and illness. Minor cuts will heal themselves and most infections can be fought off. Our bodies are amazing self-repairing machines.

Our biology limits perception of our cells. They just function without our conscious control. Yet our cells are the building blocks that give us form and function. It's through them that we are enabled to experience the world. So, they do deserve our recognition, don't they?

Praise your body for what it does, even if it doesn't fit society's ideal aesthetic image. For most of us, these beauty standards are unattainable. That's not being kind to yourself. It makes much more sense to appreciate our bodies just as they are right now.

Reflection Questions:

Which parts of your body do you appreciate?

What functions of your body do you appreciate?

What does your body allow you to do in the world?

When does your body feel most alive?

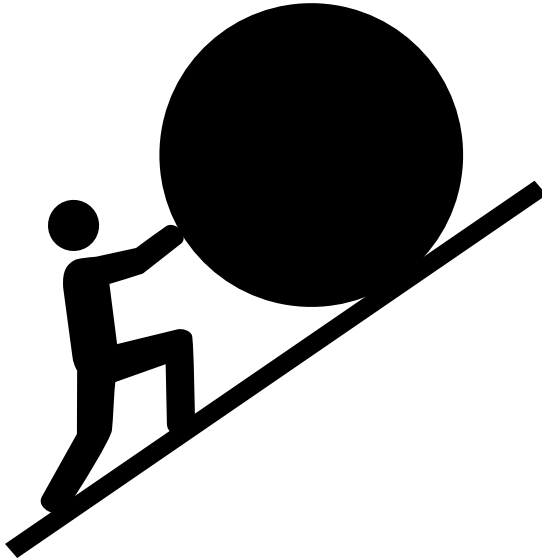
Where have you travelled to around the world?

What have you grown to accept about your body?

Who do you have to thank for having a body?

I know that life won't break me

Robbie Williams



Throughout the centuries, some types of suffering have decreased, and some have increased. Every civilisation has faced challenges, and every individual has faced problems. Unfortunately, much suffering remains and will always remain.

You too have your own set of challenges particular to your circumstances. Some are similar to those faced by others, some seem unique to you. Through the years that you've lived, you've overcome countless challenges, some more problematic than others. Yet, as you're reading this, you're still here. Each time you've encountered a problem you may have suffered in some small or big way. As a way of coping and surviving some aspect of you may have changed. On each occasion you've developed your skills and strengths, and you have come out the other side. Even if the problems haven't been fully resolved, you've managed to get through adversity time and time again. This all forms your unique life story.

Reflection Questions:

What situations have made you feel anxious in the past that you can look back on and smile about now?

In what ways have you grown stronger over the years?

What can you share about your life story with others that might help them to overcome the challenges in their lives?

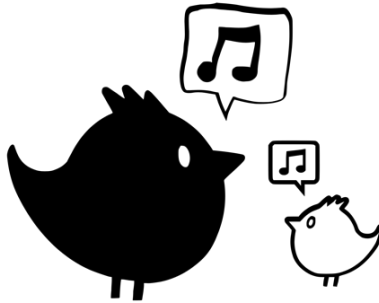
Who are your role models?

What can you learn from the way they cope with their challenges?

What can you do that you enjoy?

Don't worry about a thing 'cause every little thing gonna be alright'

Bob Marley



Birds have much to teach us. For example, each morning they sing with joy. They simply enjoy being out in nature. They focus their efforts on simple things such as eating or chatting with their friends and family.

Humans spend a lot of time thinking. Thought is our greatest strength, but overthinking is our greatest weakness, often leaving us worrying.

Of course, birds have problems too. Yet, even in the face of the harsh reality of living wild with predators, and other safety and security issues, including food shortages at certain times of the year, birds remain resilient. They do what they can, and they don't overthink the rest.

The same is true for other animals too. Enjoying time observing them in nature, or even on the screen, can teach us about them, and in turn we learn about ourselves. The more we observe other animals, the more we can learn to live carefree.

Reflection Questions:

Have you heard the birds chirping recently?

Which are your favourite wild animals?

What does observing and listening to your favourite animals teach you?

Which animal most resembles your personality?

If you've ever had companion animals, what did they teach you?

What can you do to give yourself some peace and relaxation?

When did you last sing in the shower?

What are your favourite songs, and when did you last listen to them?

**I put my trousers
on, have a cup of
tea, and I think
about leaving the
house**

Blur



It can definitely feel uncomfortable having restrictions placed upon your movements. However, it's good to know that we're doing our little bit to help others. Even so, we crave going to other places. If you're feeling constricted and confined, that's normal. Remember, it won't always be like this.

There are places we wish we could visit, and when we have been there in the past, we've not fully appreciated them for all that they give us, including the benefits we gain from being there and the aesthetics of the place.

It's a wonder that many places exist because much had to occur for them to have been created and maintained. A greater appreciation of the locations where we spend our lives can help us to look forward to when we can freely revisit these places at our leisure once more.

The same consideration can be given to examine what makes our home special to us.

Reflection Questions:

Where do you hope to visit once this is over?

Which locations give you the most relaxation?
Fulfilment?

What do you want to experience in these
locations that you wish to visit?

How can you use the Internet to visit some
places virtually?

Where in the world do you still wish to visit?

How will you use this emergency to help you
become more driven to achieving your travel
goals?

What comforts do you have at home that a
person wouldn't have had 100 years ago?

I just called to say I love you

Stevie Wonder



It's good to tell your close friends and family how much they mean to you. They might not know if you don't tell them. It's especially good to ensure they know this during a pandemic. They will feel good for knowing how much they mean to you, you will feel good at having brightened up their day, and your bond will become that little bit stronger.

Each significant relationship in your life may involve love of some sort; for example, parental love (love for your child), familial love (love for a family member), romantic love (love for a partner) and platonic love (love for a friend).

People can leave our lives for any number of reasons, so why not tell them now, rather than possibly living a life of regret later on?

It might feel odd, especially if you've never told them before. It might be worth rehearsing what you'll say and then being brave and telling them.

Reflection Questions:

Who have you contacted to say how much you care?

Who do you love?

What do you love about them?

Do they know this is what you love about them?

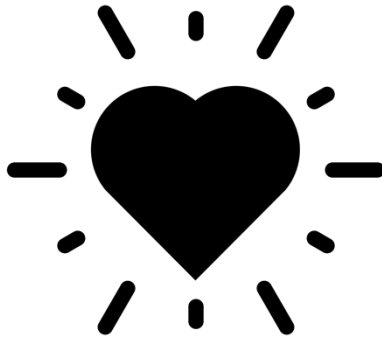
How can you best express this to them?

What do you love about yourself?

How can you remind yourself of what you love about yourself?

I was getting kinda used to being someone you loved

Lewis Capaldi



Sometimes special people enter our lives who view us better than we view ourselves. These people can help us to see our greatness.

Throughout our lifetimes we'll meet many different people and it's worth celebrating those who have a positive influence upon us. For this we can be thankful. It's worth spending time acknowledging their impact upon our lives.

There may be people in your life right now for whom you're thankful. Or perhaps there are people who've you've lost touch with, but with whom you could contact to rekindle your friendship. The same might be true of your family. Close family ties with people who are not toxic, but with whom that connection has simply dwindled away, are important because the stronger our connections with the people important to us, the better our wellbeing.

Reflection Questions

Whose love have you experienced in your lifetime?

In what ways has someone shown you that they care for you?

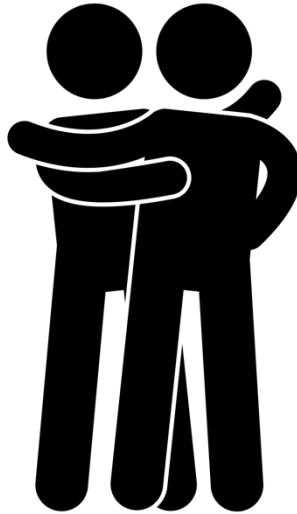
What did their love show you about yourself that you didn't know beforehand?

If they are still in your life, how can you celebrate this bond you have?

If they are no longer part of your life, how can you commemorate them and their love?

U can't touch this

MC Hammer



**Who will you want to hug
more often when this is over?**

Many of us have been craving human touch and physical intimacy. Humans are social creatures and we need to feel loved and wanted. One of the reasons we miss human connection so much is that physical touch releases the love hormone oxytocin.

Video conferencing has allowed us to see and hear people through the digital realm, but the technology doesn't currently exist to experience human touch from afar.

Lockdown has given us a chance to evaluate what we consider valuable, and so creating a safe physical connection with the people you love and care about may be one of the things that you may consider more valuable than before.

Reflection Questions

Who gives you the best hugs now?

What makes a hug feel special for you?

How often do you want to feel someone's touch?

What do you now appreciate about touch that you didn't realise before this emergency?

How do you aim to improve your connections with people in the future?

If you could hug anybody right now, who would it be? Is it somebody you've been able to hug during lockdown?

**Toast to the ones
here today. Toast
to the ones that
we lost on the
way**

Maroon 5



Unfortunately, by its very nature, not everybody gets to survive a pandemic. Though fortunately, the vast majority will survive. Those that haven't made it deserve to be commemorated. Maybe you'll come up with your own small way to do this.

Living through a pandemic means you yourself have an interesting true story about history in the making. Your experience is valuable for others in the future to understand what it was like. So if you document your thoughts and feelings in a journal, it may be included in an archive sometime in the future. Your experience would be preserved in history as your legacy to humanity.

There are other ways in which we can help on a smaller scale. In your own small way you can do something kind for someone else. Perhaps your actions can change the way that future generations regard this pandemic and the way people in society did their bit to help out at the time or afterwards.

Reflection Questions

How in the future might we commemorate the ones we lost?

What do you want future generations to learn and remember about this pandemic?

How will you personally share knowledge of those that have been lost with future generations?

What random acts of kindness can you do this week?

Whose lives can you improve by your words and actions?

**I got these fresh
eyes, never seen
you before like
this**

Andy Grammer



Why is it that babies and toddlers find the world fascinating and so funny? They see it with fresh eyes. For them, many experiences are new and so they are exciting. As adults, we've experienced so much before that we get used to it and we no longer see how incredibly amazing the world really is. When we continue to have the same experiences continuously, we get so used to them that we forget they are there or we get bored of them.

If we look at the world in amazement and enjoy the sights, sounds, aromas, and other sensory experience, we might experience the novelty that a baby enjoys. Maybe then we'll smile and laugh more. Being in lockdown means that so much of what we took for granted has been restricted. So we had the opportunity to experience the ordinary as novelty and to treasure the mundane as marvellous.

Reflection Questions

What wonders in your world are you now noticing?

What sights, sounds, tastes and aromas do you now value more than ever?

What delights you?

What do you want to experience more of when all this is over?

How will you live your life differently in the future?

Which of your senses do you appreciate the most?

In the middle of a crisis you must appreciate the day

Paul McCartney



Even during the worst of worst days there is always something for which to be grateful. When you learn to find those golden nuggets hidden amongst the dirt and rubble, you'll be able to survive all but your last day.

When you're facing a problem, it can be challenging to find anything to be grateful for about that problem. Focusing your attention on other unrelated matters for a few moments may allow you to identify aspects of your life that you appreciate and for which you are grateful.

The key to unlocking unlimited gratitude is to perceive your life with a playful, appreciative mind. Choose anything and consider what can I appreciate about this? If nothing comes to mind, then move onto something else. Keep going until you find things you appreciate that you'd never considered before! Welcome to your new wonderful life!

Reflection Questions

In the present moment, what is around you that you can feel thankful for?

What have you eaten today?

What have you had to drink?

Who've you communicated with today?

What have you seen online today?

What do you possess now that you didn't own when you were younger?

Are you breathing by yourself today?

I'm scared

Billie Eilish



It's normal to feel scared at times. A pandemic is certainly one of those times. So, if you are scared, it's normal, and that's okay. Also, give yourself permission to consider if being scared is helping you. Sometimes a little bit of a fright can prompt us to make wise decisions. However, if the fearful thoughts won't stop, or they are leaving you with little energy, then please seek professional support for your mental health, perhaps by contacting the agencies listed near the end of this book. There's no shame in seeking support from supportive friends and caring family too, if you have people like this in your life, and if you feel comfortable sharing.

Additionally, your thoughts don't have to remain in your head. There are plenty of creative ways to capture your thoughts and feelings so that they are released from your mind and held elsewhere. E.g. writing them down, creating an audio recording of them, constructing a poem, drawing doodles, painting a scene or composing a song.

Reflection Questions

In what ways can you comfortably express your emotions?

If you've felt scared before, did that feeling eventually pass?

How is feeling scared sometimes helpful?

How would a poet describe your favourite emotions?

What creative activities do you have available to express yourself?

Who can you talk to?

**‘cause everybody
cries, and
everybody hurts
sometimes**

R.E.M.



These are challenging times that we're living through. You might feel more emotional than usual and that's not surprising. Our emotions are likely to be all over the place because we've never encountered anything like this before. The impact upon our lives and lifestyles is immense. Unless we're developing or deploying a vaccine or cure, there's not much we can do to change the existence of the pandemic. For most people, that's not within our control. What is under our control is the way we perceive the impact on our lives. We can change the way we think about the change in our lifestyle, and we can also control some of the things that we do.

When you're totally overwhelmed, crying is beneficial. It helps to relieve distress. It's okay for everyone (regardless of their age or their gender identity) to cry from time to time, because it's part of being human and it's good for our wellbeing.

Reflection Questions

What benefits have you experienced during (and after) a good cry?

What have you learnt from past hurts?

What will you learn about yourself during the pandemic that will help you in the future?

What does suffering teach us?

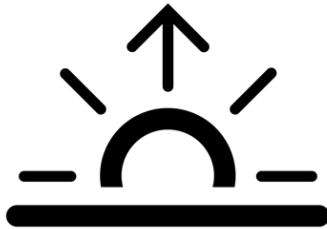
What do you value now more than ever?

What do you have control over?

Starting now, what will you do differently to continuously improve your own wellbeing?

**I will be strong, I
will be faithful
'cause I'm
counting on a new
beginning**

Savage Garden



If we survive, we might as well thrive. We can't live all our dreams right now, but we're hoping for a fresh start on life soon.

Hope is vital for getting us through these times. The stronger our hope for a bigger, brighter future, the better our wellbeing. Hope is vital for survival.

This new beginning shouldn't be taken lightly. We have a unique opportunity to change the way we live our lives, even if it's as simple as making time to enjoy those things that we currently don't have easy access to enjoy.

Your life has a meaning and purpose that you define, based on your hopes and goals for the future. Right now, we are taking a pause but soon life will resume in full swing and when it does, you can strive towards living your best life.

Reflection Questions

In what ways do you want to live life to the fullest once this is over?

What will you now add to your bucket list?

What are your hopes and dreams?

What will be your contribution to humanity?

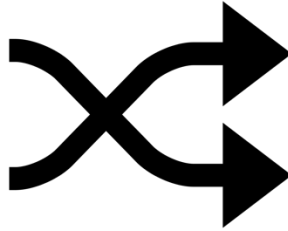
How can you make baby steps towards achieving your ambitions?

What do you need to learn to fulfil your dream goals?

How will you make the most of the time available to you?

**Change is a
powerful thing,
people are
powerful beings**

Lana Del Rey



Survival of the fittest is about adapting to the situation. In this book there have been many different strategies and reflection questions to help you psychologically adapt to the situation of the pandemic.

You are a strong and capable person. You have survived so much in your life. You can get through these tough times too. You will have stories to tell future generations about what it was like to survive through these times. Your story might even be about thriving during and after these times. Through the adversity of the pandemic your life was changed because you came to the realisation that what occurs between your ears defines your life experience.

These times have the power to help you find meaning and purpose in your life. To live with passion, and to provide humanitarian support to others can result in your life being special to not only yourself but to countless others too.

Reflection Questions

What have people and organisations done to adapt to the situation, that has surprised you, in a good way?

What have been the hidden benefits of changes to your lifestyle?

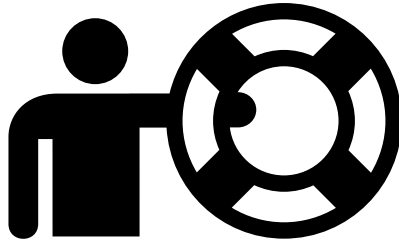
In what ways might the world change for the better as a consequence of the pandemic?

What have been the most inspirational stories you've heard?

How can you change your perspective to foster more appreciation and gratitude for the good in your life?

Lean on me when you're not strong

Bill Withers



Which support services can you learn about so that you can refer them to a friend if they were in need? E.g.

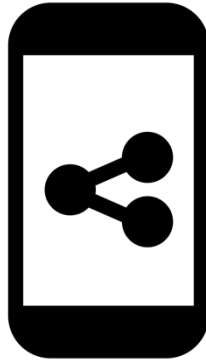
www.samaritans.org

www.mind.org.uk

www.changes.org.uk

www.healthy-minds.org.uk

Has this book helped you?



If so, please feel welcome to share it, as it is, with your friends, family and colleagues, and thank you for doing your bit to help others.

Attributions

“When you walk through a storm hold your head up high and don't be afraid of the dark. At the end of the storm there's a golden sky and the sweet silver song of the lark.”, from *You'll Never Walk Alone*, written by Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers, and performed by Michael Ball, Captain Tom Moore & The NHS Voices of Care Choir.

“I gotta get thru this” from *Gotta Get Thru This*, written and performed by Daniel Bedingfield.

“when life gives me lemons I make lemonade” from *When Life Gives Me Lemons I Make Lemonade*, written by Jonathan Owen and Peter Hobbs, and performed by The Boy Least Likely To.

“Yesterday all my troubles seemed so far away”, from *Yesterday*, written by John

Lennon and Paul McCartney, and performed by The Beatles.

“there’s always been a rainbow hangin’ over your head” from *Rainbow*, written by Kacey Musgraves, Natalie Hemby and Shane McAnally, and performed by Kacey Musgraves.

“You wash your face in my sink”, from *Wash your Face in My Sink*, written by Andrew Gooden, Louie Constantine Robinson and Richard Barrington Rodwell, and performed by Dream Warriors.

“I feel that I’m alive” from *I’m Alive*, written by Andreas Carlsson and Kristian Lundin, and performed by Celine Dion.

“I know that life won’t break me” from *Angels*, written by Guy Chambers and Robbie Williams, and performed by Robbie Williams.

“Don’t worry about a thing ‘cause every little thing gonna be alright’, from *Three little birds*, written by Bob Marley, and performed by Bob Marley & The Wailers

“I put my trousers on, have a cup of tea, and I think about leaving the house (Parklife)”, from *Park Life* written by Damon Albarn, Graham Coxon, Alex James and Dave Rowntree, and performed by Blur.

“I just called to say I love you”, from *I Just Called to Say I Love You*, written and performed by Stevie Wonder.

“I was getting kinda used to being someone you loved” from *Someone You Loved*, written by Ben Kohn, Lewis Capaldi, Pete Kelleher, Sam Romans and Tom Barnes, and performed by Lewis Capaldi.

“U can’t touch this”, from *U Can’t Touch This*, written by Alonzo Miller, MC Hammer and Rick James, and performed by MC Hammer.

“Toast to the ones here today. Toast to the ones that we lost on the way” from *Memories*, written by Adam Levine, Jacob Kasher Hindlin, Jonathan Bellion, Jordan Johnson, Michael Pollack, Stefan Johnson and Vincent Ford, and performed by Maroon 5.

“I got these fresh eyes, never seen you before like this” from *Fresh Eyes*, written by Andy Grammer, Ian Kirkpatrick, and Ross Golan, and performed by Andy Grammer.

“In the middle of a crisis you must appreciate the day”, from *Appreciate*, written and performed by Paul McCartney.

“I’m scared” from *Ocean Eyes*, written by Finneas Baird O’Connell, and performed by Billie Eilish.

“‘cause everybody cries, and everybody hurts sometimes” from *Everybody Hurts*, written by

Michael Mills, Michael Stipe, Peter Buck and William Berry, and performed by R.E.M..

“I will be strong, I will be faithful ‘cause I’m counting on a new beginning”, from *Truly Madly Deeply*, written by Daniel Jones and Darren Hayes, and performed by Savage Garden.

“Change is a powerful thing, people are powerful beings”, from *Change*, written by Lana Del Rey and Rick Nowels, and performed by Lana Del Rey.

“Lean on me when you’re not strong”, from *Lean on Me*, written and performed by Bill Withers.

Our Gratitude to our Funders

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