

at the Fringe

2023



fringe

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is one of the greatest celebrations of arts and culture on the planet.

For three weeks in August, the City of Edinburgh welcomes an explosion of creative energy from around the globe.

Artists and performers take to hundreds of stages all over the city to present shows for every taste. From big names in the world of entertainment to unknown artists looking to build their careers, the festival caters for everyone and includes theatre, comedy, dance, physical theatre, circus, cabaret, children's shows, musicals, opera, music, spoken word, exhibitions and events.

Audiences can create their own festival experience from a mixture of ticketed, free and street performances.

In 2023, there are 67 countries represented by Fringe shows - with over 3,000 shows part of the festival across over 250 venues in the city.

Go ahead and #FillYerBoots!

@edfringe

What's inside

	page
Introduction from the Lord Provost	2
About Thrive Edinburgh	3
Thriving at the Fringe	4
About Health in Mind	5
The importance of arts to our wellbeing	6
Mike's and Linda's Fringe memories	8
Wendy's memory of the Fringe - That day was just joyous	9
Shona's memory of the Fringe - A sense of community	10
Your five ways to wellbeing this summer	11
Visiting the Fringe on a budget	14
Free food during the festival	15
Edinburgh's free WiFi	18
Xabier's Fringe memory - It's a wild time in the city	19
Arts and crafts ideas	20
Anna's Fringe memory - The Fringe still hasn't lost its magic!	22
Are you a poet and you didn't know it?	23
iThrive Edinburgh	24
Crowd anxiety	26
How positive affirmations can boost your confidence	30
#WritingToSayHello - Health in Mind's campaign to connect	31
Hello postcard	33
Lauren's Fringe memory - The natural beauty of Edinburgh	35
Wellbeing tips when visiting Edinburgh this summer	36
How to look after your mental health in the heat	37
Jim's Fringe memory - My first ever Fringe	39
Julie's Fringe memory	
- Memories that I cherish through the rest of the year	40
Useful contacts	41

Introduction from the Lord Provost

It's that time of the year again!

August in Edinburgh - a truly transformational change takes place in the city with performers, visitors and locals all participating in this glorious celebration of the arts and life itself.

Every year I look forward to receiving my copy of the programme where I mark out all the shows and events I want to attend but there is never enough time to do all I want to do such is the breadth and volume of what is available!

I'm always so mindful too of the performers, whether it's their first or tenth time; sense of excitement, anticipation and trepidation and that's why I'm delighted that this year Thrive Edinburgh is working with the Fringe and Health in Mind to produce this booklet which gives great tips and advice for looking after your mental health and wellbeing.

We hope it will be a helpful resource to all involved and participating in this year's epic Fringe!

Robert Aldridge

**The Rt. Hon. Lord Provost, City of Edinburgh,
and Chair of Thrive Edinburgh Assembly**



About Thrive Edinburgh

Thrive Edinburgh is the city's mental health and wellbeing strategy. Thrive Edinburgh is a city where every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community.¹ Our ability to thrive as human beings and as a city is closely tied to our mental health.

We have made it our goal to promote mental health and protect our citizens' resilience, self-esteem, family strength and joy and reduce the toll of mental illness on individuals, our communities, and our city.



¹ Adapted from the World Health Organisation

Thriving at the Fringe

In the summer, Edinburgh comes alive and offers lots of opportunities to get involved in different activities and festivals taking place across the city. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe – one of the world’s most famous celebrations of arts and culture – takes place each August.

With over 3,000 shows taking place across the city, there’s a great buzz and lots of excitement but it can also feel overwhelming at times.

This booklet offers wellbeing tips for both Edinburgh citizens and visitors to the Fringe, useful contacts, arts and crafts ideas to boost your wellbeing, memories of the Fringe shared by our community, and practical resources to make sure you stay well and make the most of your summer in the city.

You can find information about mental health and support available all year round on iThrive Edinburgh. Please check this online space to keep up to date with support available for Edinburgh’s citizens.

ithriveedinburgh.org.uk



www.ithriveedinburgh.org.uk

About Health in Mind

Health in Mind is one of Scotland's best-known and trusted mental health charities. We've been in Edinburgh since 1982 and through our unique pathway of support, collaborations, campaigns and resources, we build hope, resilience and understanding of mental health and wellbeing.



Each year we support 4,000 people to live the life they want to live. We put people at the heart of all we do and are committed to creating opportunities for people to progress in their lives.

You can find out more about Health in Mind and how we can support you at health-in-mind.org.uk.



This booklet has been produced in partnership by Thrive Edinburgh, Health in Mind and Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Many thanks to those across Edinburgh who have contributed to the booklet and shared their ideas and resources.

The importance of arts to our wellbeing

Art promotes inspiration, creativity, and relaxation and instantly improves our mood. Many studies have shown the positive effects of both creating and consuming art on mental health. Any kind of artistic expression can lower stress hormones while raising endorphin and dopamine levels in the brain. Here are some ways that art can boost our wellbeing.

Arts and community

Through getting involved in arts, people can create new social connections and build on existing support in their communities. By socialising with others, you can help to reduce any feelings of loneliness and isolation you may have.

The Fringe is all about going to see performances, having new experiences and meeting new people. Whether you are watching a show or performing in one, shows create a space for social connection with friends and family and other like-minded people.

Arts and physical wellbeing

Making and experiencing arts and culture can have a positive impact on your physical wellbeing. Art has the power to make you feel good by reducing stress and allowing the mind to focus and body relax.

Stress reduction

It's no secret that stress is bad for both our physical and mental wellbeing and creating art is a great way to relieve stress. Numerous studies have demonstrated that doing something creative for at least 20 minutes, such as doodling, colouring, and drawing, will lower stress levels. The best part is that none of these activities require any artistic experience.



Boosting self-esteem

Being creative boosts our self-esteem. It affirms the originality of our ideas and allows you to turn them into something material. Making time for your interests and crafts can boost your sense of worth and self-assurance.

Expressive therapy

Expressive arts, such as writing, music, dance, drama, and visual arts, promote deep individual and social development. People who engage in expressive art therapy can laugh, let go, and relax, which lowers tension, anxiety, and depressive symptoms.

Trauma

Healing from trauma is a complicated process but the arts and creativity can help aid this process. According to research, creativity can directly connect the mind and body to handle pain and can help with the healing process.

Art and emotional wellbeing

The arts have been proven to boost your emotional wellbeing. By exploring the arts, whether that be taking part in, watching or experiencing, you can become more aware of your own feelings, learn from others' experiences and make positive changes in your life.

While not always easy to do, finding the time to take a break from the pressures of everyday life can help to lift our mood, by boosting our confidence and making us feel more engaged and resilient.

Any type of art can enhance your mental health because it can lower stress, boost happiness, promote social relationships, and aid in self-discovery. Whether or not you consider yourself an artist, creative expression is great for your health.

Start making art today! Turn to page 20 for tips to get you started.

Love, love, love!



fringe

I love the Edinburgh Fringe and it feels such a privilege to have this exciting event on our doorstep. I used to see it as a frustration, battling through crowds, being delayed when wanting to get across town quickly. However, once we embraced the Fringe, there has been no turning back! I LOVE the energy, the diversity of people, the diversity of culture, the creativeness, the comedy, the dance, the drama, the music, the people watching... in fact I love it all! Several years ago, my husband and I decided to have a day at the Fringe, starting at midday and ending around midnight. We loved it so much, that the following year, our best friend joined us. Several years later, there are now approximately 12 of us that have a day out with a varied programme filled with acts that bring us joy. Sometimes the acts completely divide our opinions but that's all part of the fun. It's one of our favourite days of the year. Love, love, love!

**Mike Massaro Mallinson, Interim Chief Officer,
Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership**

Magic Dust

My first visit to the Fringe is still so vivid! I was 14 and I went to see this play called *“Letters Home”* – a play about the letters that Sylvia Plath, the poet, wrote to her mum from a young age through to her death. It was in a dusty church hall and I had no idea what to expect as the lights dimmed. I remember being completely transfixed as an actress told the story of *“Sivvy”* and her relationship with her mum – she played both roles and her only prop was a large ribbon that connected them across continents and experiences. I was absolutely transfixed and every year I seek out drama and performances that will provoke and inspire me. We are so blessed to have this amazing arts festival!

**Dr Linda Irvine Fitzpatrick, Strategic Programme Manager,
Thrive Edinburgh**

That day was just joyous

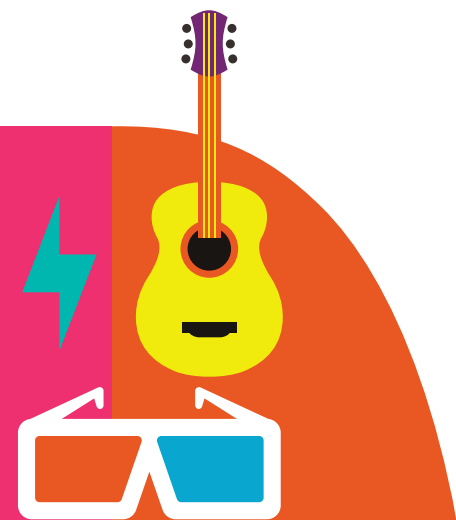


It's hard to pick just one memory of the Fringe as my attending the Fringe has changed so much over the years.

Firstly, attending with my parents and being in awe of the street acts to then attending for the first time on my own... and then as a young adult taking full advantage of the opportunity to enjoy all the Fringe has to offer until the sun came up the following day, including supporting some friends who were in shows.

My memories then changed as I took my own children and watched their faces reflecting the joy and wonderment I felt all those years ago. One of my favourite memories is attending with my now young adult children. We headed onto the High Street with no plans - except to see and experience as much as we could. We collected lots of flyers and then chose what to see. That day was just joyous - we went to such a range of shows - from mind reading to Wrestling Mania and everything in between. This year my eldest daughter is working at the Fringe and I am sure that will bring new and different memories too.

Wendy, Health in Mind Chief Executive



A sense of community



It is hard to choose a single Fringe story to share as there have been so many, but 2017 and celebrating 70 years of Fringe still stands out in my mind.

That year we put a video booth outside St. Giles' Cathedral and asked people to tell us why the Fringe was important to them. An elderly couple, who had just bought their 2017 Fringe tickets, recorded how they had met at the very first Edinburgh Fringe and had been coming back to the festival every year since. The single most repeated answer to what people felt was most unique about the Fringe, was *"a sense of community"*.

Edinburgh in August becomes a community not defined by geography or politics or religion, but a global melting pot of people brought together by a shared interest in creativity and freedom of expression. And at the 70th anniversary launch party, held in the Thomas Morton Hall, our first launch in Leith, the room was packed to the rafters: we had street performers and comedians and magicians, and Reuben Kaye was a glittering compere, and the whole evening sparkled with Fringe magic. The last dance was like a wedding, a huge circle of everyone there holding hands and singing Sunshine on Leith.

We also launched our first blueprint that year with public pledges for Fringe success to be determined by the quality of the experience rather than scale. So 2017 was a special Fringe for me.

**Shona McCarthy, Chief Executive
Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society**

Your five ways to wellbeing this summer

We're encouraged to eat at least five fruit and vegetables a day to take care of our physical health, but what about our mental health?

Research carried out by the New Economics Foundation found that there are five ways to wellbeing.

Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep learning, Give

Consider what they mean for you and what action and changes you would like to make in your own life. Here are some ideas to get you started this summer to boost your wellbeing.

Connect

Connecting with the people around us is a great way to remind ourselves that we're important and valued by others. Whether it's your relatives, friends, colleagues, or neighbours, by putting effort into developing these relationships, you'll enrich your everyday life and support networks.

Ways to connect:

- Plan a day with friends and family where you take part in Fringe activities.
- Write to someone you haven't spoken to in a while (see our Hello Postcard page 33).
- Start a conversation with someone new! Whether it's someone you sit next to in a show or meet in a queue.



Get active

Being active doesn't mean you have to engage in strenuous physical activity. Our physical and mental health benefits from regular physical activity. Small changes to our exercise levels can have a big impact on our lives.



Physical activity for even ten minutes has been found to improve mental health. Do something you enjoy, that works for your level of fitness.

Ways to get active:

- Do stretches or gentle movement that works for you.
- If you can, try and walk between Fringe venues - even for just part of the way.
- Have a dance! You can do a silent disco tour which is a great way to see the sights and get your body moving.

Take notice

Taking notice of our thoughts, emotions and surroundings is a great way to stay present and pay attention to our needs.

Looking back on your experiences will enable you to understand what is important to you.

Ways to take notice:

- Visit one of Edinburgh's green spaces and take notice of your surroundings and nature.
- Keep a record of things you've seen during the festival. Take photos or make notes in a diary or on your phone.
- Explore an area of the city you've never been to before.



Keep learning

Taking the time to learn new things is a good way to meet new people and boost our self confidence, which in turn improves our mental health and wellbeing.

Ways to keep learning:

- Visit an exhibition or see a show on a topic you don't know anything about.
- Take a bus or walking tour to learn more about Edinburgh.
- People come to Edinburgh from all over the world during August, so it is a great opportunity to ask questions and learn from the people around you.



Give

Not only can giving to others make you feel good and improve your wellbeing, it can also have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the people whose lives you touch.

Ways to give:

- Try and shop local when you can.
- Make a donation to a cause that's close to your heart.
- Recommend a show you enjoy and leave a review.



For more information and downloadable resources:
www.health-in-mind.org.uk/fringe23-5ways

Visiting the Fringe on a budget

We know times are tough just now, as the cost of living increases, but you don't need to spend lots of money to enjoy the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Here are our top tips for doing the Fringe on a budget.

See free shows

Hundreds of free shows are performed every year, so you're bound to find something that you'll enjoy in the guide. Some free shows may require a ticket, so make sure you know if that's necessary before you arrive! To find free tickets, you can use the free ticket filter on edfringe.com and on the Fringe app.

Watch world-class street events

The streets are full of performers during the Fringe. You can watch outstanding street shows from the likes of magicians, circus performers, music groups, drummers and buskers to name a few. You can make a donation of your choosing.

Walk to and from venues

Fringe venues in Edinburgh are tightly packed within the city, meaning it can be easy to walk between venues and see some of the sights!

If you need to travel a little further across the city, Lothian bus and trams provides regular services offering day, night and family tickets.

You can download the free Lothian travel app to help plan your routes: [**www.lothianbuses.com/app**](http://www.lothianbuses.com/app)

Perks for participants

If you're performing at this year's Fringe be sure to flash your performer pass at local businesses to receive a discount on everything from bagels and burgers to gym memberships and massages. Find out more and collect your pass at Fringe Central: Artist Hub.

Free food during the festival

Here is a list of organisations providing access to food to those living in Edinburgh over the festival period who need it.

Bethany Trust Care Van

The Bethany Christian Trust and Edinburgh City Mission, operate a Care Van that serves soup and sandwiches.

The evening care van will make the following stops every evening:

- 9pm Waverley Bridge
- 9.50pm King's Stables Road,
- 10pm Grassmarket
- 10.30pm High Street / North Bridge.

The lunchtime care van will make stops at:

- 12.30pm Market Street
- 1pm - 2pm King's Stables Road, Grassmarket, North Bridge
- 2pm Leith Walk (North of McDonald Road)

For more information, please contact: 0131 225 9445

**Please note the care van will not run on the last day of the Fringe (Monday 28 August 2023) due to road closures.*



Soul Food

Soul Food provide hot, delicious and freshly prepared meals while also offering some respite and support to anyone dealing with the challenges of homelessness, poverty or loneliness.



Drop in for a meal at:

Central Church, Central Hall, West Tollcross

Sundays 2pm

Oxgangs Community Church, Oxgangs Neighbourhood Centres

Sundays 5pm

Life Church, 2 Davie Street

Sundays 5.30pm

City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square, Newington

Mondays 5.30pm

Walpole Hall, St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Palmerston Place

Tuesdays 12.30pm (for over 60s)

Carrubbers Christian Centre, High Street

Tuesdays 5.30pm

Mustard Seed Edinburgh, St Margaret's, 170 Easter Road

Thursdays 5.30pm

Fridays 10am – 11am (breakfast)

Saturdays 4.30pm (for families)

Ps and Gs Church, York Place

Saturdays 5pm – 6pm (The Saturday Meal)

For more information, please contact:

Soul Food Central Office - hello@soulfoodedinburgh.org

Steps to Hope Food Provision Services

Steps to Hope will be serving hot meals on Sundays and Mondays throughout August.

Sundays Suppers:

Sunday 5pm St Cuthbert's Church
(in the cemetery), 5 Lothian Road

Mondays Munchies:

Monday 6pm St Cuthbert's Church
(in the cemetery), 5 Lothian Road

For more information please contact:

info@stepstohope.co.uk **www.stepstohope.co.uk**



Social Bite

Vesta Bar & Kitchen is a restaurant in the West End of Edinburgh. Every Tuesday afternoon between 3 – 5pm they serve a free two-course meal to people in a situation of homelessness or food poverty. 7-8 Queensferry Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4PA

For more information, please contact:

0131 220 0773 or info@vestaedinburgh.co.uk

You must first register your name at Social Bite café, 131 Rose Street, Edinburgh EH2 3DT.



The Breakfast Bothy (a Carlowrie Castle project)

The Breakfast Bothy is a meeting place where people experiencing financial hardship or homelessness can visit to get a warm breakfast, coffee, tea and good chat.

The Breakfast Bothy is from 9am – 11am, Monday–Friday at 100 Melville Drive, Edinburgh, EH9 9EX.

EdiFreeWiFi

- Edinburgh's Free WiFi

IntechnologySmartCities has partnered with the City of Edinburgh Council, to provide free WiFi service across Edinburgh city centre offering access to fast, efficient internet connectivity.

You may find yourself using more data than usual while exploring a new place, but you can save your phone's data by connecting to EdiFreeWiFi.

This is a free outdoor internet connection without cost or limits on time, so you can share photos, find transport timetables, look up directions, find a restaurant and more while out and about in the city.

How do I get online?

1. On your device, select 'EdiFreeWiFi' from the list of available wireless networks.
2. Register to use the service – you can do this with a valid email address, or a Facebook account by entering your username and password.
3. Enjoy your free WiFi connection!



Availability

The service is available outdoors 24 hours a day, all year round across Edinburgh's city centre, in both the Old Town and the New Town, usable on laptops, mobile phones and tablets.

There's no time limit on using the service, and you can find a map of the coverage area on the Edinburgh Free WiFi website.

For more information: www.edinburghfreewifi.com

It's a wild time in the city



You really need to be prepared for what is coming up! The Fringe brings some mixed feelings to me, though.

On the one hand, it's big fun going to a show with friends, doing some busking away from the Royal Mile, meeting random new people in any corner, and enjoying your time in a very likely mid-warm, lightly rainy weather. On the other hand, it's also overcrowded streets and places, higher prices for pints and rents overnight that will unwelcomely stay with us for the rest of the year, and also in many cases not the best conditions for workers, artists and volunteers. It's tricky, isn't it?

I work at *The Melting Pot* and last year we organised a very special Friday Drinks, kicking off the gathering in our own building and going later to see Vladimir McTavish's show. It was just hilarious, and I cannot recommend it enough to see (at least once in a lifetime) his unapologetic, witty performance. Eventually, absolutely everybody was very happy with the choice - not an easy one, burdening the responsibility of choosing one event among hundreds of them!

It's a wild time in the city, so take it easy. Leave home earlier when you're going out, and also be ready for the unexpected out there. Regarding the shows, you have to pick your battles. Having a wee look in advance into the Fringe's guide may be helpful. However, indulging yourself to be seduced by the quirkiest promotion that you may possibly find in the streets is vital to effectively joining the vibe.

Xabier, Edinburgh citizen

Arts and crafts ideas

Hands-on activities are a great way to look after your wellbeing.

Whether you'd like to lower stress levels, express creativity or simply improve your mood, crafting can be an enjoyable way to strengthen your mental health by promoting positive thoughts, behaviours and emotions.

The best thing about arts and crafts is that you don't need any special skills to start. We've collected some creative ideas for you to try at home that are fun, inexpensive and could have a positive impact on your wellbeing.

Colouring In

Colouring is proven to be a fantastic stress-buster for some people. Shading in intricate designs allows you to take a quick break and relax. The task is enough to keep your mind occupied without being too stressful or taxing. It can also be comforting as it's nostalgic as well.

Colour in the postcard included in this guide on page 33 and send to a friend!

Collage your vision of a perfect day at the festival

Think about what a perfect summer's day in Edinburgh looks like and collage it! You can use Fringe show flyers, magazines, print out pictures from the internet, draw or paint.

Once you have finished your collage, take one element from it and try to make it happen that day.



Make your own Wellbeing Toolkit

Find a box, it could be an old shoe box or cardboard box and decorate it!

You could choose to do this with flyers, newspapers, scraps of fabric, paint or pens. It's a great opportunity to get creative.

Once you have finished decorating, fill it with your favourite things.

This could include a book, photographs, positive affirmation cards, tea and your favourite snacks.

Save the box for a day when you need a little pick me up to brighten up your day.

Try creative writing

Creative writing can be a great way to improve your mental health. This is because it encourages people to choose words, metaphors and images in a way that really captures what they're trying to convey. This creative decision-making can lead to increased self-awareness and self-esteem as well as improved mental health.

Why not try writing your own poem about something you've experienced or something new you learned.

Find out more about Health in Mind's next **Poetry Collection** on page 23 - your poem could be included in the next collection.



The Fringe still hasn't lost its magic!



I've come through to the Fringe every year since I was a small child and I have lots of amazing memories of the festival. There is this incredible energy that is unmatched anywhere else in the world.

My favourite thing about the Fringe has always been the unpredictable nature of my visits and the busyness. There has never been enough time to do everything on offer but each year I discover something new and meet amazing people from all over the world.

Over the years I've given up planning out my days during the festival. You can plan to see great shows but some of my favourite performances have been the ones we've stumbled on by accident, heading into venues to get out of the rain, chatting to strangers in the crowd and swapping recommendations. That's what makes it so special.

I live in Edinburgh now and, while experiencing the Fringe as a local is different, the Fringe still hasn't lost its magic!

Anna, Edinburgh citizen



Are you a poet and you didn't know it?

Health in Mind is excited to announce our callout for poem submissions inspired by the five ways to wellbeing. This year's theme is 'Keep Learning'.

Whether you're an established poet or a budding writer, we invite you to submit your work for a chance to be featured in our printed collection for 2023. We select 10 favourites to feature in our collection, which helps raise funds for our vital mental health services.

For more information and details about how to take part please visit: www.health-in-mind.org.uk/fringe23-poetry or scan the QR code.

Deadline: Friday 1 September 2023



ATTENTION!



ALL POETS!

Theme: Keep Learning

A stylized illustration of a quill pen, shown in profile with its nib pointing towards the bottom right. It has a dark grey body and a long, thin, curved tail.

ithrive

EDINBURGH

Your online space for
mental health and wellbeing
in Edinburgh



Scan to
find support

www.ithriveedinburgh.org.uk

Learn more about...

Creativity

Creative activities have been proven to boost your mental health and wellbeing.

By exploring the arts, whether that be taking part in, watching or experiencing, you can become more aware of your own feelings, learn from others and make positive changes in your life.



Mindfulness



Mindfulness is the ability to be present in the here and now.

This can help you be more aware and understanding of your feelings in a non-judgemental way.



@ithriveedinburgh



@iThriveEdin

Crowd anxiety

During the festival the City of Edinburgh has an influx of visitors, meaning public spaces and venues become very crowded.

If you feel stressed or nervous due to large crowds of people, you're probably dealing with crowd anxiety. It can be hard to avoid crowds during the Fringe.

Thankfully, there are ways you can manage your anxiety and feel more comfortable around large groups.

What is crowd anxiety?

Some of the common symptoms of anxiety in large crowds include feelings of restlessness, nervousness, and unease.

You may also experience an increased heart rate, sweating, trembling, or nausea.

Other possible symptoms include difficulty concentrating or focusing, feeling overwhelmed or panicked, and a desire to avoid crowds at all costs.

Understanding your triggers is a great first step to managing anxiety in large crowds. This means recognising the things that cause feelings of anxiety.

Triggers can be:

- The extreme level of noise, activity, or chaos of a large crowd.
- Fearing that you won't be able to leave quickly in an emergency.
- Being concerned about possible harm from others in the event of an accident or emergency.

Once you know what your triggers are, you can take steps to avoid them or manage your feeling if they do occur.

Prepare yourself for the crowds

Preparing yourself mentally and physically for the experience of being in a crowd can help ease any feelings of anxiety you may experience.

Ways to prepare for busy crowds include:

- Scoping out venues ahead of time and identifying a safe place or exit route in case you need to leave quickly.
- Planning routes ahead of time so you can walk along quieter streets.
- Creating positive mantras or affirmations to repeat to yourself if you start to feel anxious.
- Making sure you've set yourself up well for the day by ensuring you've eaten properly, had enough sleep the night before, and are wearing comfortable clothes and shoes for walking!
- Don't be afraid to ask for help if you start to feel overwhelmed. Venue staff are there to help, so that you have a good experience.

Use grounding techniques

Grounding techniques are useful tools to have when you are experiencing anxiety in crowds.

This may include focusing on your breathing, repeating positive mantras or affirmations in your mind, and focusing on the sights and sounds around you.

Five sense scan

Focusing on each of your senses is a simple way to distract yourself from those thoughts that may be causing your anxiety.

This exercise can distract you from the difficult emotions you are feeling. You can write them down, say it out loud or just go through each one in your head.

Create a list of:

5 things you can see

4 things you can hear

3 things you can touch

2 things you can smell or taste

Take 1 deep breath.

Do you feel calmer and more present?

Breathing exercises

Breathing exercises can be done anywhere and at any time. You don't need any special equipment, and you can do them sitting or standing.

By taking some deep breaths, we can help ourselves to feel more relaxed. If you do try one of these breathing exercises, pay attention to how you respond and stop if you feel uncomfortable or strange in any way.

Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly (a few inches above the belly button) – try to breathe into the hand that is resting on your stomach. Place your hands on your lower ribs with middle fingers touching – if you are using your diaphragm, when you breathe in, the middle fingers draw away (just a few inches) from each other, and when you exhale, they touch again. Hug yourself with your hands on opposite shoulders (to stabilise the upper chest muscles and make it more difficult for them to be involved, which can help send the breath down). Three-part inhalation (you can imagine taking three breaths of air in) and long steady exhalation. If you feel that the third breath strains your shoulders, feel free to do two instead.

STOPP exercise

Take a moment to do this quick and easy exercise which can help ground you and bring you back to the present moment.

Stop

Stop what you are doing and just take a moment to pause.

Take a breath

Breathe in through your nose and then slowly out through your mouth. Notice as your breath moves through your nose and releases from your mouth.

Observe

Recognise the physical and emotional feelings you are experiencing. Are you reacting to anything? What does your body feel like?

Pull back

Remove yourself from your current situation and think of the bigger picture.

Could you look at this situation in another way?

What would you say to a friend right now if they were going through this?

Will you be worried about this in a month, 6 months or a year?

You have made a great step in looking for help – be proud of that.

Practice!

By having a plan to deal with your anxiety in large crowds, you can ease your fears and ensure you have the best time possible at the Fringe.



You can find more ways of dealing with difficult emotions and anxiety on:
ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/fringe23-calm

How positive affirmations can boost your confidence

Confidence in yourself, your skills, and your abilities is important. However, building confidence can be challenging.

Positive affirmations are encouraging phrases or statements which can counteract unhelpful thoughts and allow you to build your confidence.

They can help motivate you when you're feeling stuck or finding it difficult to get started with something.

It's easy to start using positive affirmations – pick a statement that works for you and repeat it to yourself. This can be out loud or in your head.

If you find that writing down your positive affirmations is helpful, or you want to carry them around with you throughout your day, why not make your own positive affirmation cards?

All you need is a piece of paper or notecard, scissors and a pen. Affirmation cards are pieces of paper about the size of a credit card that you can pop into your wallet, bag, or pocket that can be useful as a little reminder when you're on the move.

If you're struggling with unhelpful thoughts and feeling low, you could say:

"I am good enough"

"I deserve good things to happen to me"

"I deserve to be happy"



You can read more about positive affirmations on iThrive Edinburgh:
ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/fringe23-affirmations



#WritingToSayHello Health in Mind's campaign to connect

One of the five ways to wellbeing is 'Connect'. Connecting with others has a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing and is a great way to remind ourselves that we're important and valued by others.



With the rise of the internet, everything has increasingly been moving online, including the way we communicate with each other. Now more than ever, we have the ability to keep connected with those around us. Sadly, people now frequently report that they feel lonelier and lack real connections.

What is loneliness?

We can all feel lonely from time to time and feeling lonely is not always the same as being alone. Loneliness has been said to be the feeling that we get when our need for meaningful and rewarding social contact and relationships isn't being met, and it can have a real negative impact on our mental health.

What you can do to get involved

That is why we launched our **#WritingToSayHello** campaign during Loneliness Week in 2020. We want everyone to use the simple act of sending a postcard to build connections and remind others that you are there and are thinking about them.

It's moving conversations away from sending a quick text without much thought, to one in which we slow down and take the time to connect with each other in a meaningful way. The campaign has building relationships and connections at its heart.

We challenge you to make a connection with someone in your community. Whether you decide to write to a friend, your family, colleagues or neighbours, you can take the time to say **'hello'**.

We'd love to see what you've been sending or receiving, so tag us on social media channels and use the hashtag **#WritingToSayHello**.

Where to find us...



@health_in_mind



@Health_in_Mind



Health in Mind

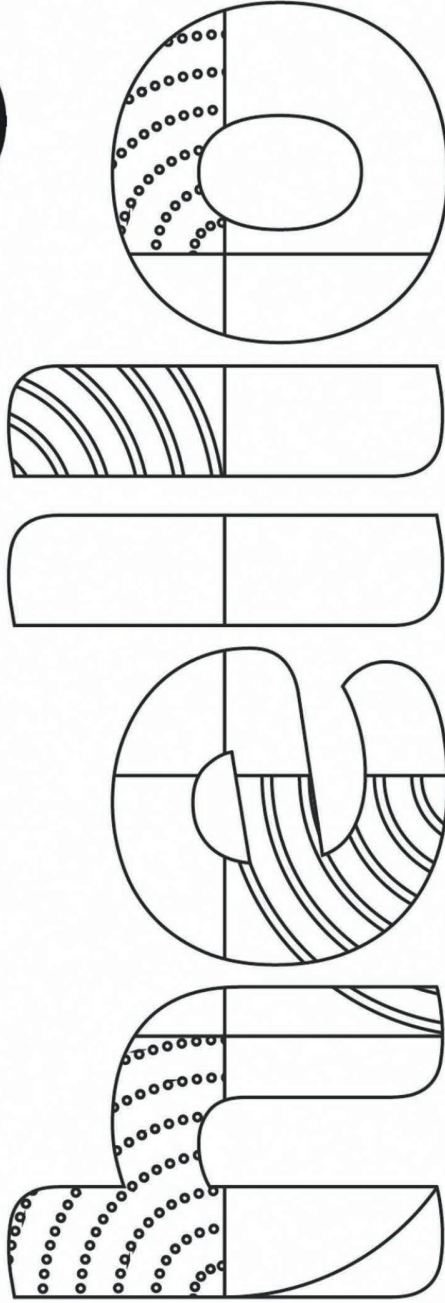


@healthinmind_



Health in Mind Scotland





From Edinburgh

Connect is one of the five ways to wellbeing.

Connecting with the people around you is important for your mental wellbeing. Send this postcard to someone you haven't spoken to in a while to show them that you are thinking of them.

www.health-in-mind.org.uk  

Health in Mind is a Scottish charity with your mental health at heart

#WritingToSayHello



We rely on donations and fundraising to provide mental health support to people living in Scotland. To support our work please visit our website or call 0131 225 8508.

Health in Mind is a charity, registered in Scotland SC004128 and a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland SC124090. The registered office is at 40 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RT.

The natural beauty of Edinburgh



As someone who didn't grow up in Edinburgh, I've always loved the Fringe more than my friends who grew up with it and perhaps take it for granted.

One of my favourite Fringe memories is coming out of a Fringe show at 3am and climbing Arthur's Seat with my friends to see the sunrise.

At a time when the city is so busy, it always relaxes me to remember the natural beauty of Edinburgh and to slow down and notice what's around me.

Lauren, Edinburgh citizen



Wellbeing tips when visiting Edinburgh in the summer

No matter how much or how little you participate in the Fringe, it's crucial to remember to look out for your own wellbeing. Edinburgh is busy, with everyone eager to get the most out of their Fringe experience, but it's important to prioritise your own mental health and wellbeing.

Here are some tips that you may find help you to avoid getting anxious, exhausted or feeling overwhelmed while visiting the festival. Some of these tips might seem obvious, but in the summer your normal routine can get lost, and a reminder can be useful.

Prioritise sleep. We understand that if you are visiting Edinburgh, you may only be here for a short period of time and can feel like you must take advantage of every moment. The truth is that there's so much happening throughout the entire month that even if you take a night off, there will still be plenty to see and do.

Try to eat healthily. If you are out exploring the city and watching shows all day, it can be easy to end up skipping meals or rely on convenience food. Eating three meals a day is a good way to boost your wellbeing as it can improve your mood and give you energy. Carrying some snacks with you can help if hunger hits between meals.

Take time for yourself. It's okay to take a break. At times you may feel you need a quiet moment to yourself away from the crowds so you can gather your thoughts and take a deep breath.

Manage your expectations. By setting some achievable targets as part of your Fringe planning to avoid pushing yourself too far.

Plan your day. Edinburgh is a small city, so despite all the hills and the cobblestones, having hundreds of venues across the city means it's easy to get from venue to venue - especially if you are trying to pack lots in. Edinburgh is busy in August so it's a good idea to book tickets in advance and ensure to leave enough time for yourself.

How to look after your mental health in the heat

Usually, the weather in Scotland can be quite changeable and during the summer it is common to experience four seasons in one day!

August is one of Edinburgh's hottest months, so it is important to be prepared for the hot weather too.

While most of us welcome warm weather, when it's too hot, your physical and mental health can suffer. Heat can increase your irritability and stress levels, and negatively impact your memory, attention, reaction time, and sleep pattern.

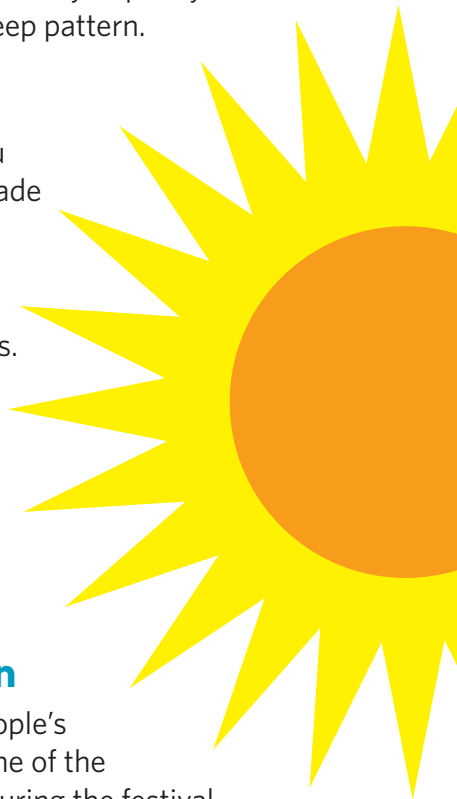
Ways to beat the heat

Keep out of the sun if you can. When you have to go outside, try and stay in the shade especially between 11am and 3pm which is usually the hottest part of the day. Protect your skin by wearing sunscreen, a hat and lightweight comfortable clothes.

There are lots of partially covered outdoor areas in the city centre such as George Square and Bristo Square that offer covered seating so you can enjoy the shade when you are having some down time.

Drink alcohol in moderation

When the sun is shining brightly, and people's spirits are high, people are often led to one of the many pop up beer gardens that appear during the festival.



Unfortunately, the sun and alcohol are not always the best match. Alcohol causes dehydration which can be felt even more when your body is already trying to adjust to the hotter weather. Symptoms of dehydration include a dry mouth, dizziness or confusion, and headaches. If untreated, dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion. If possible, try isotonic sports drinks to replenish lost salts, sugars, and fluids.

Drinking alcohol might make it more difficult to sleep well at night, which is already a challenge in warm weather. Although you may sleep quickly, the quality of your sleep is likely to be lacking and you'll probably wake up earlier than usual.

Try to drink in moderation and remember to drink plenty of water too.

Limit physical activity

Avoid exercising during the hottest parts of the day. Although it's best to avoid too much disruption to your usual routine, even when the temperatures are high, sometimes it has to be done. It may be hard to convince yourself to go for an early morning run when your bed is calling you but exercising in the middle of the afternoon can be dangerous and you may run the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

Take the temperature into account when planning your day and limit your activity to when it's cooler. If you find yourself trekking across the city to new venues, make sure you drink lots of water and take breaks.



My first ever Fringe!



It was 1997, in my early twenties, I was new to Edinburgh, not long moving here after graduating from Dundee University.

It was August and my new friend and drinking buddy Henry, suggested we explored the Fringe, he was from Edinburgh and knew the best places to go. I can't remember what we did, but we ended up at the Pleasance Courtyard.

We had a few pints and were seeing if we had enough money for a whisky for the road. We pulled out all our change (this was before smart phones, let alone contactless!) and worked out we didn't have enough for a whisky but between us could afford a half pint each. We were about to head to the bar, when a gentleman, who clearly had been watching us from the next table, lent over with a £20 note and said *"here get yourself a drink and have a good night"*. We were shocked and politely declined, but he insisted saying he was having a good day.

We were super happy, thanked him massively and headed to the bar. When we returned he was gone and we never saw him again, but it extended our night for a good few more hours and the memory of his generosity lives on.

For me this shows how during the Fringe, Edinburgh changes and becomes a friendly, village-like city, opening its arms to thousands of performers and visitors, with the Pleasance Courtyard nurturing a kind of family feel to its visitors. Little did I know that 20 years later I would become the Pleasance Courtyard resident close-up magician! I hope that my friendly nature at the Pleasance Courtyard nurtures that friendly family feeling and continues the village-like atmosphere throughout Edinburgh.

Jim, Edinburgh citizen and artist

Memories that I cherish through the rest of the year!



I love the bustle of the busy streets during the Fringe, especially during early August. Posters have started to go up and space on the pavement has reduced but there is a freedom to walk around the city centre and know that there will be something entertaining to see and someone interesting to meet.

I used to live in the centre of the city and loved how I could go straight from work to see a show or two and then walk home at the end of the evening when there were still throngs of people on the street. They might not have to go to work in the morning, but that's ok. I know that there will be another show to see or street performer to watch tomorrow.

Weeks one and two are the best. Free and preview tickets are always available and you take the chance, hoping that you get a good show. If you don't, then that's ok. It was free and you got to support someone who was putting themselves out there.

Week three I've seen all the shows that I want to see, I've hung out at the BBC hub and I've dared to cross the gauntlet of flyerers on the High Street. I've peaked and I know it's time to withdraw.

Week four is for the hardcore and the latecomers. The shows are going strong but it's time for me to stay indoors. To go home straight from work, close the door and put my feet up. There's a sorrow that it's over but there are so many memories that I cherish through the rest of the year.

Julie, Edinburgh citizen

Useful Contacts

National Services in Scotland

Police, Fire, Ambulance (emergency) - Call: 999

Police (non-emergency) - Call: 101

NHS 24 - Call: 111

Provides urgent care and advice when your GP, pharmacy or dental practice is closed.

Samaritans - Call: 116 123

A listening service for people having a difficult time, thinking about suicide or are worried about someone who is having suicidal thoughts.

SHOUT - Text: SHOUT to 85258

Free, 24/7 mental health text support service.

Breathing Space - Call: 0800 83 85 87

A confidential phone and webchat service for anyone in Scotland over the age of 16 experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

Citizens Advice - Call: 0131 510 5510

Specialising in confidential information and advice to assist people with housing issues in the UK.

Victim Support Scotland - Call: 0800 160 1985

Provides support and information to people affected by crime and campaigns for victims and witness rights.

National Services in Scotland

Alcoholics Anonymous - Call: 0800 917 7650

Advice and support for those who feel they have or are developing an addiction to alcohol or are worried about someone who is.

Drinkline Scotland - Call: 0300 123 1110

Advice to callers concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

Shelter's Housing Advice - Call: 0808 800 4444

Advice and support services offering one-to-one, personalised help with housing issues and homelessness.

Scottish Welfare Fund - Call: 0131 529 5299

Provides grants for people on low income.

Debtline - Call: 0808 808 4000

Free and independent debt advice.

Rape Crisis Scotland - Call: 0808 801 0302

A national rape crisis helpline and email support for anyone affected by sexual violence.

Scottish Women's Aid - Call: 0131 226 6606

Lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse.

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline

- Call: 0800 027 1234

Support for anyone experiencing domestic abuse or forced marriage, as well as their family members, friends, colleagues and professionals who support them.

Narcotics Anonymous - Call: 0300 999 1212

Support for people who have a drug problem.

National Services in Scotland

Gambler's Anonymous - Call: 0370 050 8881

Advice to callers concerned about their own or someone else's gambling habits.

Frank - Call: 0300 123 6600

Support and information about drug use.

Local Services

Access Point - Call: 0131 529 7438

Homeless support for people with support needs.

Advocard - Call: 0131 554 5307

Independent and collective advocacy for people in Edinburgh.

Partners in Advocacy - Call: 0131 478 7723

Independent advocacy for adults in Edinburgh and children and young people across Scotland.

Emergency Housing (Edinburgh) - Call: 0800 032 5968

Advice and support for people with emergency housing issues.

Edinburgh Housing Advice Organisation

- Call: 0845 302 4607

Provides free housing, advice, information, and representation to tenants of all tenure types in Edinburgh and Midlothian.

Edinburgh Crisis Centre - Call: 0808 801 0414

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need to talk to someone.

Edinburgh Women's Aid - Call: 0131 315 8110

For support or advice from Edinburgh Women Aid's services.

Local Services

Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre - Call: 0131 556 9437

Confidential emotional and practical support, information and advocacy to women, all members of the trans community, non-binary people and young people aged 12-18 in Edinburgh, East and Midlothian, who have experienced sexual violence at any time in their lives.

Shakti Women's Aid - Call: 0131 475 2399

Support for Black and Minority Ethnic women and their children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse.

Edinburgh Community Food - Call: 0131 467 7326

Helping people access a healthy diet.

Edinburgh Food Project - Call: 0131 444 0030

Provides emergency food and support to local people.

Edinburgh North East Foodbank - Call: 0131 554 2578

Foodbank located in north east Edinburgh.

Edinburgh South East Foodbank - Call: 0131 664 9353

Foodbank located in south east Edinburgh.

Edinburgh South West Foodbank (Salvation Army)

- Call: 0131 346 2875

Foodbank located in south west Edinburgh.

Social Bite - Call: 0131 353 0250

A social enterprise that helps give food and advice to homeless people.

Social Care Direct - Call: 0131 200 2324

If someone needs urgent social care or you think an adult or child needs protection.



fringe



 health-in-mind.org.uk
 [@Health_in_Mind](https://twitter.com/Health_in_Mind)
 [healthinmindscotland](https://www.facebook.com/healthinmindscotland)
 [health_in_mind](https://www.instagram.com/health_in_mind)



 edinburghthrive.com
 [@EdinburghThrive](https://twitter.com/EdinburghThrive)