

One thing at a time

When our mind is busy and we have many thoughts racing through at once or several decisions to make, it can leave us feeling stressed, exhausted and unsure of where to start. When we are feeling overwhelmed and emotional, it can be even more difficult to make a good decision. This tool will help you **calmly prioritise** the decisions you are facing and give you **a starting point for action**.

All you will need is a quiet space, a pen, and a piece of paper.

- ✚ To begin with, complete this short mindfulness task. This will help **calm your mind** before focusing on the decisions you want to make:
 - Set a timer for 5 minutes
 - Sit quietly with your eyes closed
 - Take a few deep breaths
 - Listen to any sounds you can hear in the room where you are sitting
 - Listen to the sounds you can hear from outside the window
 - Concentrate again on your breathing
 - Notice your body: your feet on the floor, the parts of your body connecting with the chair
 - If your mind begins to wander to the task ahead, re-focus on your breathing until the 5 minutes are over

- ✚ Now take your pen and paper and list all the decisions you are facing. This may initially feel overwhelming when you see it written down in one list! The next step of the exercise will help you **prioritise your decisions** to help you focus on **one thing at a time**.

- ✚ Now plot your list into the boxes on the next page:
 - **Box 1:** The decisions which go in here should be both urgent and important. These decisions will have the biggest impact on you if you don't address them. The decisions in this box are your **top priority**.
 - **Box 2:** The decisions which go in here should be important but not urgent, you can take a bit more time to think about these decisions. The decisions in this box are your **next priority** once you've worked through Box 1.
 - **Box 3:** The decisions which go in here should be urgent but not important. These decisions will not have the same impact on you as those in Box 1 but you may need to make a quick decision or small action to **take them off your list**.
 - **Box 4:** The decisions which go in here should not be urgent or important. These decisions will have **no impact** on you if you don't address them. Ask yourself honestly if you really need to do anything with these decisions.

<u>Box1: My Top Priority</u>	<u>Box 2: My Next Priority</u>
<u>Box 3: Quick Decisions/Small Actions to get them off my list</u>	<u>Box 4: Do I really need to do anything?</u>

You now have your **list of priorities!**

It may still look like you have a lot to do, but you have managed to **calmly prioritise** and create a **plan of action** for yourself.

And remember, **you are not on your own**. There are lots of services and support to help you. Visit the campaign webpage and download the 'Keeping Connected' resource which provides a directory of local and national services which are available on a range of issues.

If you still feel overwhelmed, the campaign webpage has details of emotional support services who can help.