

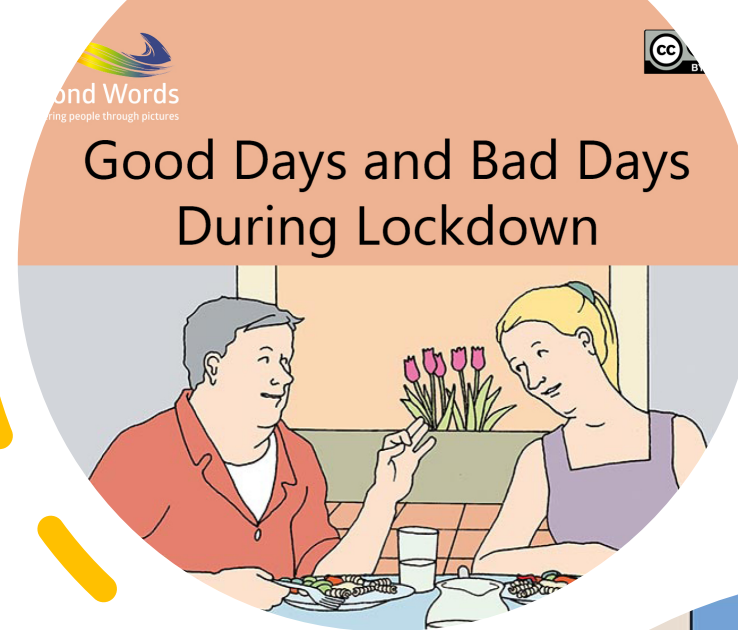
Mental health and recovery after lockdown

Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins
Founder and Chair
Books Beyond Words charity
(non-financial interest)



Lessons to help recovery and mental wellbeing after lockdown

- Normal routines and contact with friends and family were interrupted, and regular support stopped
- Many were at higher risk of serious illness with COVID, but had LESS testing, POOR access to PPE
- Many are grieving the loss of friends and relatives
- Now its difficult for people to get their confidence back and to rejoin previous activities
- Many services just stopped and still have no plan to reopen- especially congregate settings
- Some have learnt new skills: Alexa, Zoom, Skype to join *online bookclubs, gym, dance, counselling*



No health without mental health

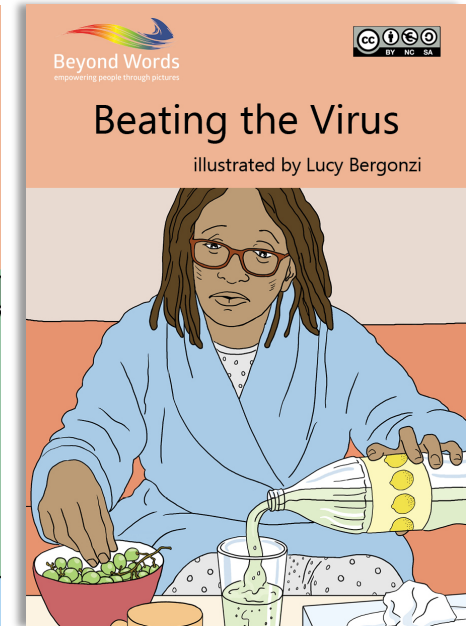
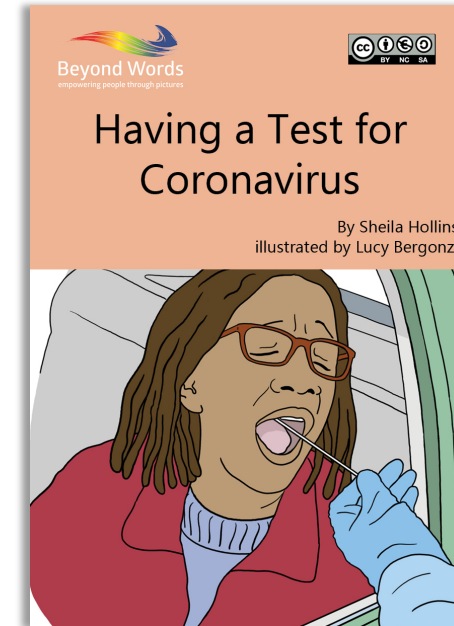
- Sensory overload will have increased with more 'meltdowns' for some autistic people
- Harmful or unhelpful ('challenging') behaviours may have become more noticeable and intense
- Some always found it hard to be close to people- now everyone is afraid to get close.
- Many are more anxious with persistent, intrusive worries
- Some are frightened of going to the shops to buy food
- Memories of past trauma have become more prominent



1. Supporting people during the pandemic: *Information is power*



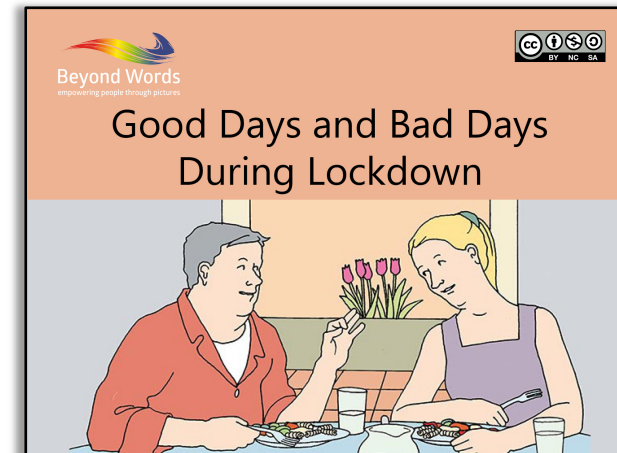
- Wordless stories in pictures to reduce anxiety
- To help establish healthy and enjoyable routines
- To keep safe.



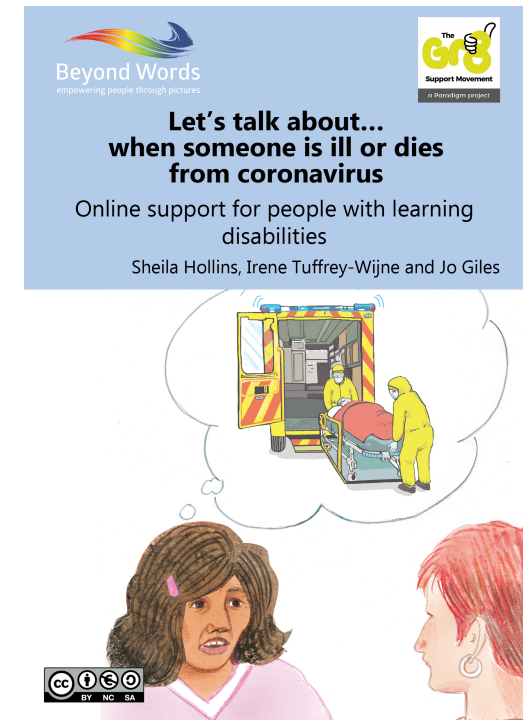
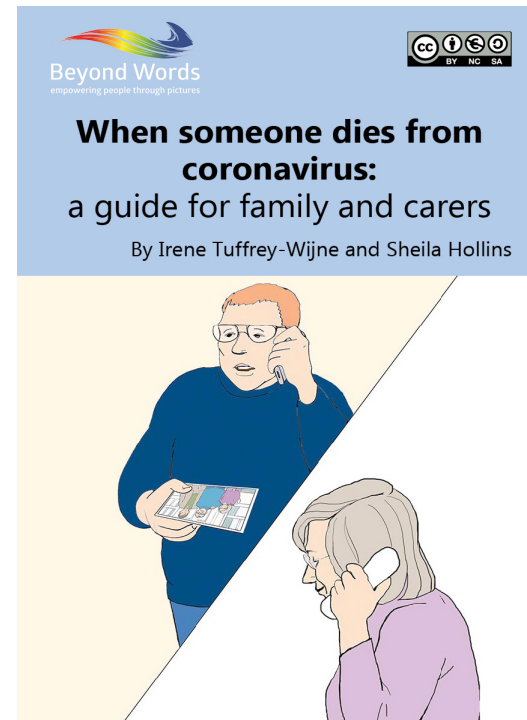
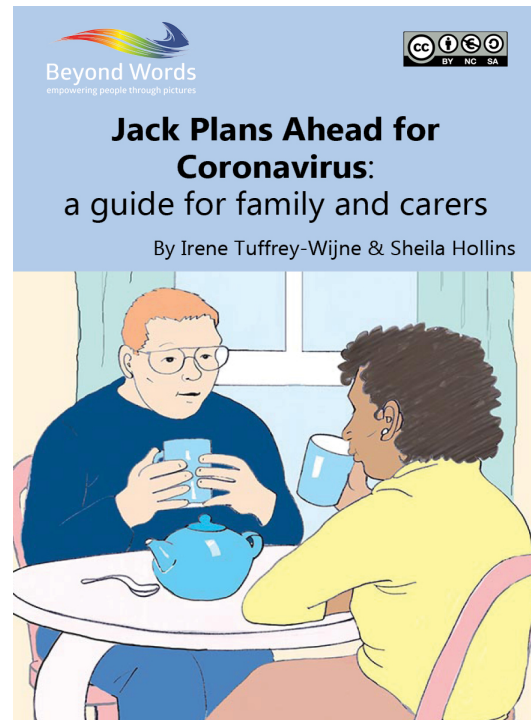
Beyond Words developed a range of **free resources** during lockdown

www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/coping-with-coronavirus

The advisory notes that accompany each resource have been translated into **several European languages** and there are **North American versions too**:



2. Illustrated downloadable *leaflets* for supporters and carers with practical advice and personalisable tools to keep people safe through the pandemic



For example: 'Jack Plans ahead' suggests what to have ready in a hospital bag and includes a template for *My One-Page Profile*

3. We turned our regular face-to-face book clubs into **online book clubs** to provide **opportunities for social interaction**



Having fun at an online Beyond Words book club meeting

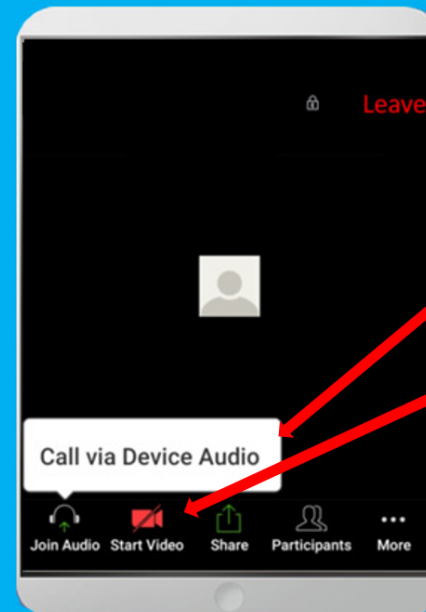


[Click here](#) for a guide to **hosting** an online Beyond Words book club meeting

[Click here](#) for a guide to **joining** an online Beyond Words book club meeting

www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk/book-clubs

Joining Beyond Words book club on Zoom

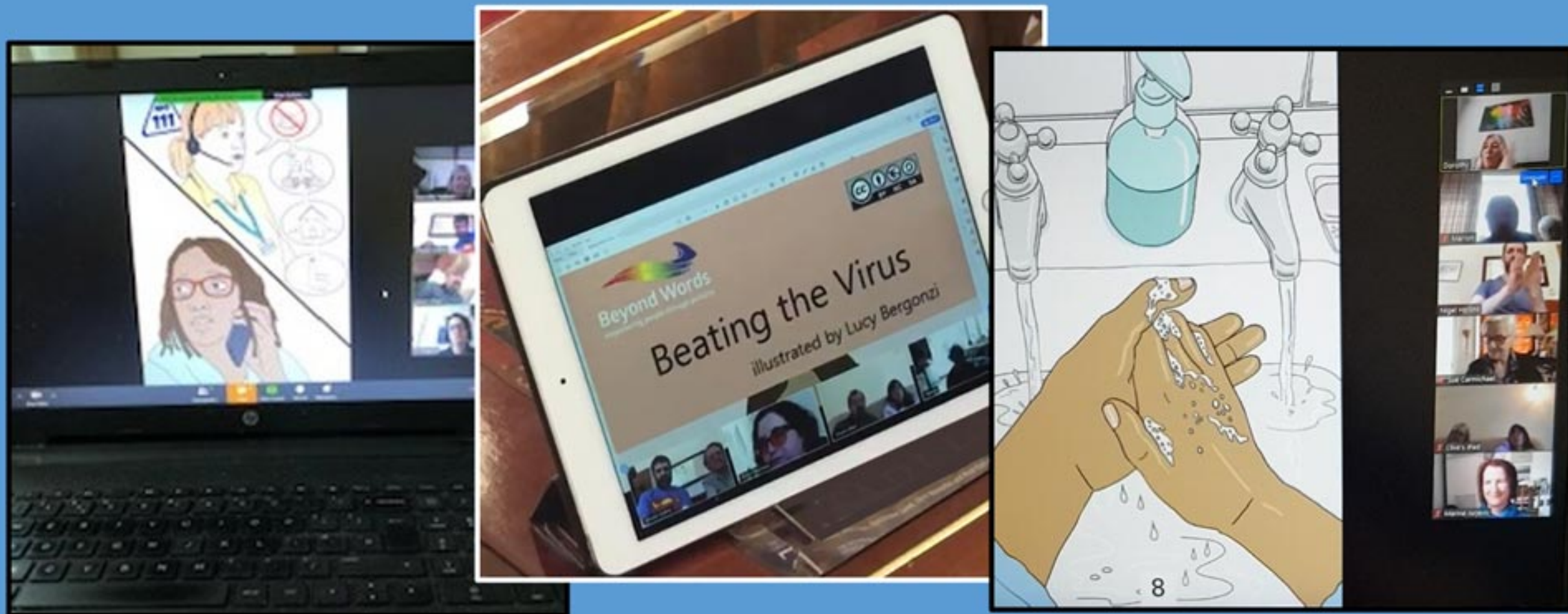


Click here so people can hear you.

Click here so people can see you.



These are pictures of screen-sharing at recent Zoom book club meetings. You can see the book picture on the screen, and also the gallery of participants on the side (or underneath).



4. Small groups learn, share and support each other- using sounds and smells and other sensory inputs

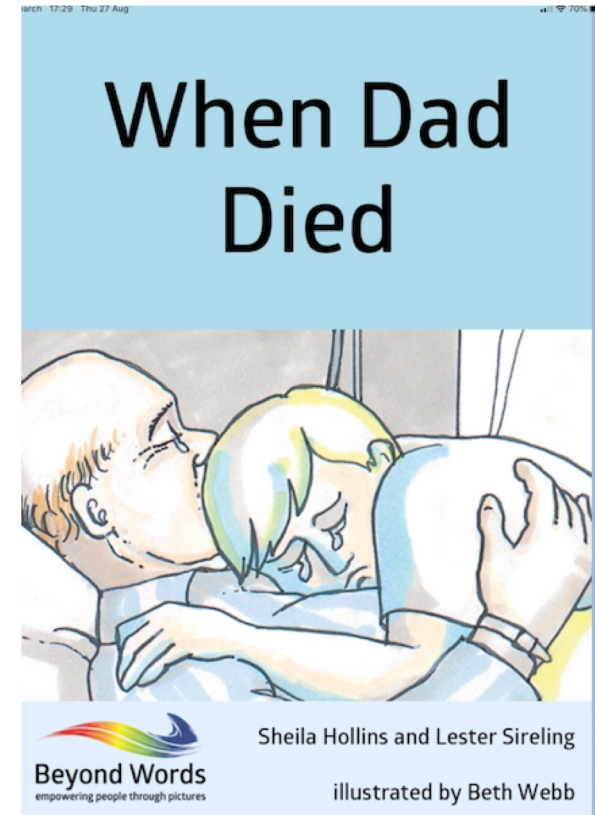
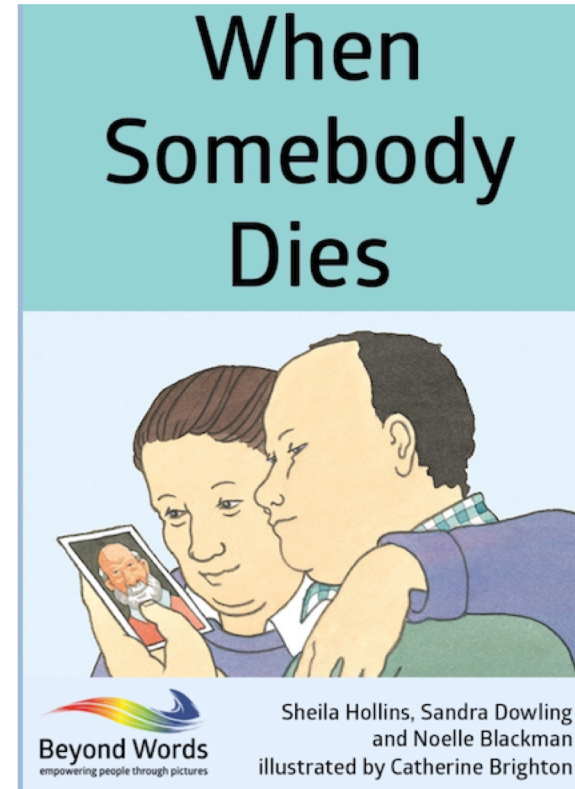


*A mixed group of students
from Chadsgrove Education
Trust College and Chadsgrove
School being **supported with
home learning.***



5. Lessons learnt *about death and dying*

1. Families, support workers and counsellors need to help people talk about death and dying, illness related anxiety and other difficult topics
2. Fear of dying doesn't go away-unless we talk about it and are included in funeral rituals
3. Many have found comfort in online church services and live streamed funerals





Questions about picture:

- What is happening here?
- What are the two people watching?
- Why are they watching this?
- How are these people feeling?

Prompts for people to relate it to their lives:

- What do you think you would feel if you couldn't go to the funeral?
- Has this happened to you? What was it like?



Questions about picture:

- What is going on in this picture?
- What are they talking about here?
- How do you think the woman on the right is feeling?
- What is the woman on the left doing?

Prompts for people to relate it to their lives:

- Who would you choose to speak to if you were upset about someone being ill or dying?
- Is there anything else, apart from talking, that would help you?

Let's talk about... when someone is ill or dies from coronavirus

Online support for people with learning disabilities

Sheila Hollins, Irene Tuffrey-Wijne and Jo Giles



This new free resource includes 10 images and suggested questions to prompt discussion

Other resources to support mental & physical wellbeing



The **BW Story App** breaks down all of our picture stories into short, searchable snippets between 2-9 pictures long.

Available for smartphones and tablets on both Apple and Android, the app makes it quick and easy to find pictures that will help you to support someone better.

Download the app with limited taster content for **FREE**.



Also available:

- Brand new recovery resources for primary school children
- Recovery resource for adults in preparation
- e-Learning modules

More information at: www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk

