READY AT HOME · VOLUME 13

Kids, Morale & Wellbeing

Keeping people okay

Talking to children about emergencies
A daily routine, games for kids and fun for adults
Ten-minute exercises, stretches and calming practices



THE SERIES

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8 Fire Safety & Security	9 Communications	10 Grab Bags & Kits	11 Pantry & Stockpile	12 Outdoor Skills	13 Kids, Morale & Wellbeing	14 Offline Knowledge &	15 Other Emergencies

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1. Talking to children

Children cope best when they know what's happening, have something useful to do, and see adults who are calm. They notice far more than we think, so silence often worries them more than honest, simple words.

Age	What helps
Under 5	Short, simple explanations: 'The wind broke the power lines. Men are fixing them. We're safe here.' Cuddles, normal routines, a favourite toy, a night light.
5-11	Answer questions honestly without scary detail. Give them a job (torch keeper, water monitor, checking on the dog). Let them help pack their own grab bag.
12+	Include them in planning. Teach real skills: first aid, the shut-offs, using the stove. Respect their worries and let them talk to friends.

Things to say

- "You're safe. We have a plan and we know what to do."
- "It's okay to feel scared. I feel a bit worried too, and that's normal."
- "Here's what's going to happen next..."
- "What questions do you have?"

Watch for signs of stress

Clinginess, bed-wetting, nightmares, tummy aches, anger, going quiet, or acting younger than their age are common after a frightening event. Most settle in a few weeks with routine and reassurance. If they don't, talk to your GP.

2. A daily routine

Structure is one of the best things for morale, for adults as much as children. Keep normal times for getting up, eating and bed.

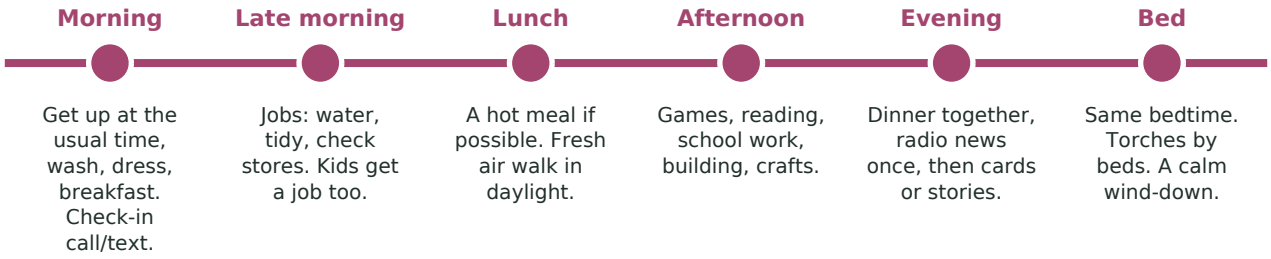


Figure 1. A simple day without power.

3. 30 things to do without power



Cards and board games by lantern light.



A blanket fort with torches and stories.

☐ Card games (snap, Go Fish, rummy, 25)	☐ Board games and jigsaws
☐ Build a blanket fort	☐ Torch shadow puppets
☐ Storytelling: everyone adds a sentence	☐ Write and act a play
☐ Draw a map of the house or garden	☐ Treasure hunt with clues
☐ I spy / 20 questions	☐ Learn three knots (Vol 12)
☐ Bake on the camping stove (pancakes)	☐ Read aloud by headtorch
☐ Make a 'storm diary' with drawings	☐ Paper aeroplanes competition
☐ Learn morse code (SOS)	☐ Stargazing on a clear night
☐ Indoor obstacle course	☐ Rock painting
☐ Origami	☐ Make a weather station (rain gauge)
☐ Sing-song / instruments	☐ Lego or building challenge
☐ Plant seeds on a windowsill	☐ Write letters to relatives
☐ Charades	☐ Puppet show with socks
☐ Make a family 'ready' poster	☐ Sort and check the grab bags together
☐ Hide and seek (lights on!)	☐ Draw the escape plan together (Vol 8)

Games that need nothing at all

Game	Ages	How to play
Twenty questions	5+	One thinks of something; the others ask yes/no questions to guess it in 20.
Story chain	4+	Each person adds one sentence to a story. Record it on a phone to listen back.
Simon says	3+	Do only the actions that start with 'Simon says'. Great for burning off energy indoors.
Shadow puppets	3+	One torch, a bare wall and your hands: rabbit, dog, bird, crocodile.
Sardines	5+	Reverse hide and seek: one hides, each finder squeezes in with them.
Categories	7+	Pick a letter and a list (animals, countries, foods); first to fill it wins.

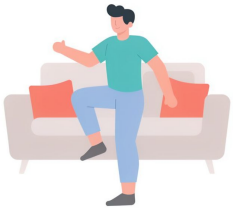
For the grown-ups

- Card games: 25, 45, rummy, poker for matchsticks.
- Chess, draughts, Scrabble, a big jigsaw.
- A book club of two: read the same book and talk about it.
- Cook a 'store-cupboard challenge' meal for each other (Volume 11).
- Learn a skill: knots (Volume 12), first aid (Volume 5), a few chords on a guitar.

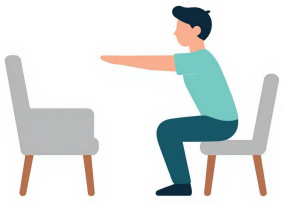
- Write letters to people you've been meaning to contact.
- Plan the next family day out, the garden, or a project for when it's over.

4. Moving every day

Ten minutes of gentle movement, morning and afternoon, keeps you warm, eases stiffness and lifts mood. Go at your own pace and stop if anything hurts; if you have a health condition, stick to what your doctor or physio has advised.



1. March on the spot
1 minute to warm up. Lift knees, swing arms.



2. Sit-to-stand
Stand up from a chair and sit back down slowly. 10 times.



3. Wall press-ups
Hands on the wall at shoulder height, bend elbows, push back. 10 times.



4. Supported lunges
Hold a chair, step one foot forward and bend both knees a little. 8 each side.



5. Plank
On forearms and knees (or toes), body straight. Hold 15-30 seconds.



6. Hamstring stretch
Sit, one leg straight, reach towards your toes. Hold 20 seconds each side.



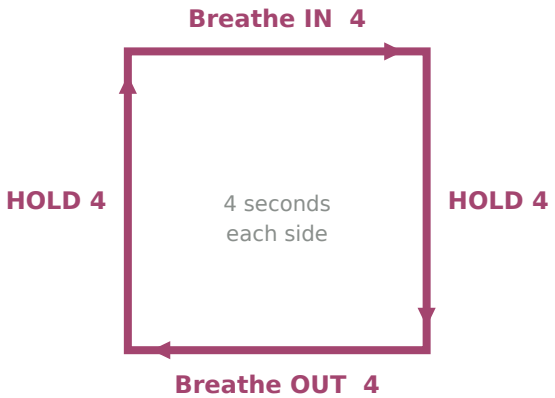
7. Cat-cow
On hands and knees, slowly round then arch your back. 8 slow breaths.



8. Doorway chest stretch
Forearms on the door frame, lean gently through. Hold 20 seconds.

Build a 'no-power box'
One box with cards, games, a jigsaw, colouring books, crayons, puzzle books, a few new treats and glow sticks. Only open it during an outage: the novelty is half the fun.

5. Looking after your mind



Box breathing calms the body's stress response in a couple of minutes. Trace the square with a finger. Repeat 4-6 rounds.

For children: 'smell the flower' (breathe in through the nose), 'blow out the candle' (slowly out through the mouth). Five times.

Figure 2. Box breathing.

Three more calming practices

Practice	How	When
5-4-3-2-1 grounding	Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can hear, 3 you can touch, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.	When thoughts are racing or panic is building
Body scan	Lying down, move your attention slowly from toes to head, noticing and relaxing each part.	At bedtime, to help sleep
Three good things	Each evening, everyone names three things that went well today, however small.	Around the dinner table; good for children too

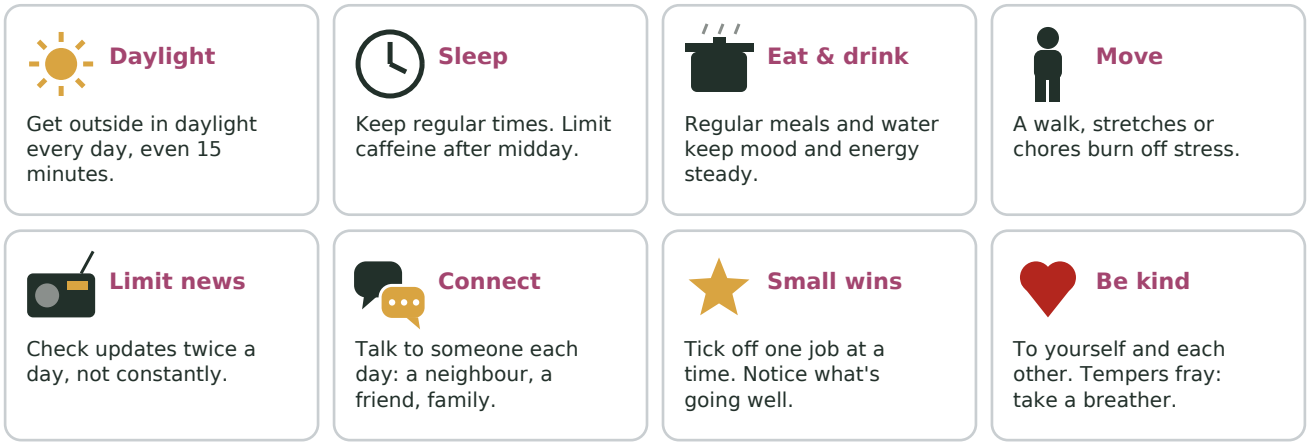


Figure 3. Eight things that keep people going.

Support lines (free, confidential)

Service	Contact	For
Samaritans	116 123 (24/7)	Anyone struggling to cope
Text About It	Text HELLO to 50808 (24/7)	Text support for any issue
Pieta	1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444	Free crisis support, 24/7
Childline	1800 66 66 66 (24/7)	Children and young people under 18
HSE Your Mental Health line	1800 111 888 (24/7)	Information on mental health services
Emergency	112 or 999	If someone is in immediate danger

6. Community

The most resilient households aren't the ones with the most kit, they're the ones that know their neighbours. Swap numbers, agree who checks on whom (Vol 9), share a generator or a stove, and look out for people living alone. After the storm passes, a cup of tea together does more for morale than anything in this series.

Emergency numbers & the series

Service	Number	Use it for
Emergency services	**112 or 999**	Ambulance, Garda, fire, coast guard. Works from any phone, any network.
ESB Networks	1800 372 999	Power cuts, fallen or damaged lines (24/7)
Gas Networks Ireland	1800 20 50 50	Smell of gas (24/7). Call from outside the house.
Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)	1800 278 278	Water outages, burst mains, boil-water notices
HSELive	1800 700 700	Health service information
Public Poisons Line	01 809 2166	Advice if someone has swallowed or touched something harmful (8am-10pm daily)
Samaritans	116 123	Anyone struggling to cope (24/7)
Text About It	Text HELLO to 50808	Free text support (24/7)
Childline	1800 66 66 66	Children and young people up to 18 (24/7)
Your county council	_____	Roads, flooding, local emergency centres
Met Éireann	met.ie / Met Éireann app	Weather warnings

Numbers checked November 2026. Write in your county council's number above, and your own local numbers (GP, out-of-hours doctor, pharmacy, vet, neighbours) in Volume 0.

The Ready At Home series

Vol	Title	What it covers
0	Start Here	Household plan & emergency numbers
1	Just Add Water	Home-dehydrated emergency meals
2	Power Cuts & Storms	Getting through long outages
3	Water & Sanitation	Storing, treating, toilets
4	Cooking & Warmth	Without mains power
5	First Aid	Step-by-step emergency care
6	Symptoms & Home Care	Red flags, minor illness, medicines
7	Home Systems & Repairs	Shut-offs, leaks, storm damage, floods
8	Fire Safety & Security	Alarms, escape plans, extinguishers
9	Communications	Family plan, radios, signals
10	Grab Bags & Kits	72-hour, car, child & pet kits
11	Pantry & Stockpile	A 30-day food store you rotate
12	Outdoor Skills	Fire, shelter, knots, navigation
13	**Kids, Morale & Wellbeing**	Keeping people okay
14	Offline Knowledge & Media	Libraries, maps & media without internet
15	Other Emergencies	Radiation, chemicals, heat, illness, cut off

This series gives general preparedness guidance. It is not a substitute for professional medical, electrical, gas or structural advice, or for a certified first-aid course. In an emergency, call 112 or 999 and follow the call-taker's instructions.

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