

COVID-19:

Looking After Your Mental Health

Disease outbreaks can affect our mental health. It is during such times that we need to stay informed but also to ensure we value our own wellbeing. We've put together some ideas and thoughts about how we can promote good mental health and be supportive of others.

Looking after your mental health while you are self isolating or social distancing

We are all adapting to the realisation that we will be spending more time at home and that our normal social activities are being significantly reduced or even shut down. These choices are increasingly not for us to take, and it is crucial that we adapt; keeping connected is key, such as checking in with others on social media, e-mail, video or on the phone.



Create new routines that prioritise looking after yourself

Try reading more or watching movies, having an exercise routine, eat a balanced diet, keep hydrated, try new relaxation techniques, or find new knowledge on the internet. Try to view this as a new if unusual experience, that might have its benefits.



Look after your physical health

Follow hygiene advice, wash your hands on a regular basis and make sure your wider health needs are being looked after, such as forward planning your food and prescription medication needs.

Try to avoid speculation

- focus on key information from reputable sources

Rumour and speculation can fuel anxiety. Having access to good quality information about the virus can help you feel more in control. You can get up-to-date information and advice on the virus from Gov.uk and NHS 111.

Stay in touch with friends on social media but be really careful not to share content which causes more alarm or panic. Ask yourself on a regular basis if your social media activity is causing a problem for you. If there are particular accounts or people that are increasing your worry or anxiety, it is probably best to mute them or unfollow alarming accounts or hashtags.





Talk to your friends and family

Involving our family and children in our plans for good health is essential. Ask children what they have heard about the outbreak and support them, explaining with the facts, without causing them alarm. Allow them to ask questions and explore together what that means for you all, especially as now schools have closed.



Try to anticipate distress

It is completely understandable that we can feel vulnerable and overwhelmed as we read news about the outbreak, especially if you have experienced trauma or a mental health problem in the past, or if you have a long-term physical health condition that makes you more vulnerable to the effects of the coronavirus. Try and check in with people who you know are living alone.

Working from Home

Whilst we may have worked from home before, it is quite different to do this over a long period of time and we need to be alert to how this can impact our mental health.

Some tips to support you working from home include:

- Keep in regular contact with colleagues by phone and video calls.
- Look after your physical health – eating well and exercising can have a positive effect on your mental health too.
- Try and get some fresh air at least once a day where possible.
- Separate work and home - switch off at the normal time at the end of the day.
- Make a list of those things you have achieved, no matter how small.
- Check in with others, knowing they are also finding the situation difficult can combat your isolation.

Useful Websites

How to avoid catching or spreading the virus

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

Check if you have coronavirus symptoms

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do

www.gov.uk/coronavirus