

Looking after your Mental Health during the Coronavirus Pandemic

The coronavirus outbreak is having an impact on everyone's lives. During this time, you may be bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also feel low, worried, anxious, or be concerned about your health or that of those close to you. Remember it's Ok to feel this way. Everyone reacts differently to events. How we think, feel and behave varies between different people and changes over time. It's important that you take care of your mind as well as your body.

Tips to help if you're worried about coronavirus:

Keep up your routines where possible – for example, if you play cards with your friends on a weeknight, try keeping this in the diary and playing a game on a video call instead. Or potentially join one of the many online quizzes hosted on Facebook or YouTube, playing as a team. Or use this time to establish new routines.

Avoid family arguments. Family tensions may rise during lockdown, tempers may be frayed and we may feel less able to keep our responses proportional. At time of tension it may help to take a pause, walk away and go to a different room in the house. Take a few deep breaths and come back to the situation when you're feeling in a calmer frame of mind. Try to empathise with the other person's point of view/feeling, think about different ways that you could respond.

Prioritise time for yourself. The challenge for May is to take 30 minutes each day to be kind to yourself. You could try reading or watching a programme, exercising, trying new relaxation techniques, or learning something new, or you may just want to use this time to rest.

Don't watch too much news. Whilst it's important to keep up to date with the latest news on coronavirus, it can be overwhelming, so in order to manage any feelings of anxiety consider only checking the news and social media once a day and make sure you get your news from trusted news sites.

Think about what you're eating, eating a balanced diet helps to keep you well and fuels your body and mind.

Maintain social contact. One of the feelings millions of us are experiencing during the coronavirus pandemic is loneliness. Our usual ways of seeing family, friends, colleagues have been put on pause. This means that we need to find new ways of keeping in touch. Staying in touch via video calls, WhatsApp or just regular phone calls, is vital. If you're not tech savvy, regular phone calls, messages or even writing letters are lovely ways to show someone that you're thinking of them.



Exercise helps both your physical and your mental health, if you can go outside then go for a regular walk, or if you are unable to go outside or would prefer to exercise at home then try some online exercise classes.



Limit your alcohol intake. In uncertain times like these you may well feel overwhelmed and it can be tempting to reach for a bottle to help cope with the boredom and uncertainty and as a way of dealing with your emotions but alcohol is a depressant.

Instead try to adapt positive coping strategies such as talking about how you're feeling to loved ones or professionals.

Getting enough sleep is important for maintaining positive mental health. Good quality sleep makes a difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain a regular sleeping pattern by going to sleep at the same time each night.

Do something relaxing before you go to bed or try breathing exercises or mindfulness exercises. Avoid caffeine in the hours before going to bed. If your mind is racing try writing a daily diary before bed to help transfer your thoughts on to paper.

Make your room as dark as possible or wear an eye mask, limit screen time before bed, if noise is an issue use ear plugs to block out sound, if you're struggling to fall to sleep then get up and do something relaxing, then go back to bed when you're feeling sleepier.



The Coping Calendar has 30 suggested actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis.



COPING CALENDAR: KEEP CALM. STAY WISE. BE KIND

30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Please use & share 🙏

1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact	2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!	3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why	4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system	5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch	6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them	7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help
8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly	9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them	10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up	11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you	12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast	13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with	14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger
15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you	16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits	17 Learn something new or do something creative	18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity	19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small	20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself	21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with
22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others	23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news	24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go	25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths	26 Take a small step towards an important goal	27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why	28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year
29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing	30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time	 <p style="margin: 0;">“ Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances ” ~ Viktor Frankl</p>				





ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living, including books, guides, posters and more here: www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys



May I be granted the serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, the courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference between the two.



Some ways to help you stay positive and happy during this crisis are:

- **Be open** – accept challenging or negative feelings and emotions for what they are without trying to suppress them, acknowledge the thought or feeling for what it is rather than struggling to change it.
- **Be aware** – savour the small moments, be fully present rather than worrying about what has happened or what may happen.
- **Be engaged/active** – take time to consider what's important to you, make a list of things you've not had time to do around the house and tick these off as you do them.
- **Practice self-compassion** – often we say hurtful or critical things to ourselves, be aware of our inner voice and practice being kind to ourselves
- **Be grateful** – both to ourselves and to others, look to identify at least one thing each day to be thankful for.

These are trying times, but they offer an opportunity to build resilience. By being open, aware, engaged and active, practicing self-compassion and gratitude, we can build resilience in these difficult moments. For more information visit: www.actionforhappiness.org

The following are good barometers of the quality of our mental health:

- How we cope with the ups and downs of everyday life
- How we feel about ourselves and our life
- How we see ourselves and our future
- How we deal with negative things that happen in our life
- Our self-esteem or confidence
- How stress affects us

Ask yourself:

- How do you know when your mental health is starting to deteriorate?
- What are the signs that you might spot?
- What signs might someone close to you spot?

Don't be afraid to ask for help if your mental health is starting to deteriorate or you're struggling to cope during these unprecedented times.

Building Resilience

10 keys to happier living. These 10 areas have been identified as key to helping to us stay mentally well.

Giving	do things for others, altruistic gestures, small acts of kindness
Relating	connect with people
Exercising	take care of your body
Awareness	live life mindfully
Trying out	keep learning new things
Direction	have goals to work towards
Resilience	find ways to bounce back
Emotions	look for what's good
Acceptance	be comfortable with who you are
Meaning	be part of something bigger

Source - actionforhappiness.org

To access support, use the links below:

- Samaritans
- Mind
- Anxiety UK
- Police Mutual Care Line
- [How to look after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)



For more information about the products and services available from Police Mutual:

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