

CORONAVIRUS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Tips, advice and guidance on where you can get support for your mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

If you're worried about the impact of coronavirus on your mental health, you are not alone.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a new and uncertain time for all of us and will affect our mental health in different ways, however how you are feeling right now is valid. With the right help and support, we can get through this. Here is some advice on things you can do to keep mentally healthy during this time.

'I'm feeling anxious all the time...'

Anxiety is a normal, human feeling of fear or panic. When we face stressful situations, it can set off our brain's in-built alarm bell system, which tells us something isn't right and that we need to deal with it. Our brain wants the difficult situation to go away, so it makes us feel more alert, stops us thinking about other things, and even pumps more blood to our legs to help us run away.

"A lot of people are finding things tricky at the moment, and allowing myself to recognise that these are difficult times for everyone, and that it's okay to struggle has really helped my anxiety surrounding this situation." - Young person @ Youngminds

**"If you find yourself feeling down during self-isolation, it can be very easy to slip into the mindset that you are alone, but this isn't the case." - Young Person
@ YoungMinds**

Worried about how you're feeling?

Check out:

youngminds.org.uk/find-help

YOUNGMINDS



Some tips to help you in lockdown:

- Try get a good nights sleep
- Try to eat a healthy and balanced diet
- Creative writing and reading can help with stress
- Listening to your favorite music or podcasts
- Exercise is great for the body and mind

you are enough.

“ I am struggling with self-isolation and social distancing, I feel so alone...”

Stay Connected

- Phone calls are a fantastic way to stay in touch with family and friends, but seeing their faces can make a huge difference! Try adding video to your calls- There are lots of free video calling services available too if you are worried about your data allowance!

Find a Positive online community

- Gaming is great way to connect and chat to others with similar interests– Check out Wes’s story @ <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-gaming-helped-my-mental-health/>

Remember to follow age appropriate guidelines and to avoid anything that encourages you to do things which are harmful for your physical and mental health and if you are worried about anything you experience online, talk to someone you trust.

Plan your days

- Take some time to plan how you want your days to look– by keeping some structure it can give a sense of normality. This will also help you keep on top of your school work and keep you focused. Don’t forget to plan in some time for things you enjoy too!

“I feel low because of all the bad news...”

- Try to limit the time you are spending checking the news
- Follow social media accounts that make you smile– check out @the_happy_broadcast on Instagram!



Headspace: Treat your head right

Staying Calm

Mindfulness

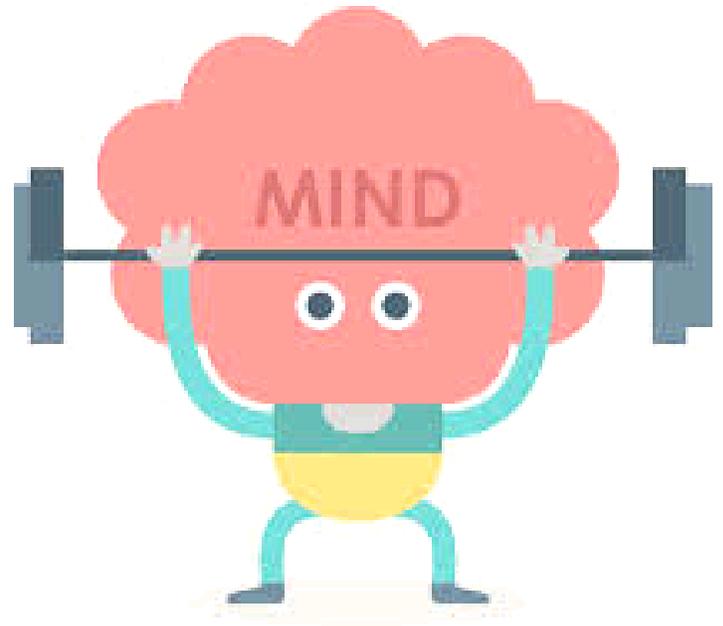
- There are a lot of great free apps available to help guide you through breathing techniques and meditation to help ease anxiety and clear your mind of any anxious thoughts.

Young minds recommends the ‘Headspace’ app!

Dealing with stressful situations at home

Walk away from any tense situations if you can. Being cooped up with others will naturally be frustrating which may cause some tension between you and the people you live with at times– Here are some tips to help you in these situations.

- You may be able to defuse arguments by walking away until everyone starts to feel calmer.
- If you and those you live with are showing no Covid-19 symptoms, you can go for a walk or do some exercise outside.
- Create a rota– this is a fun and fair way to stop fighting over the TV remote or deciding who is helping with what chores and will help avoid arguments.
- Reach out for help– if your living situation is difficult, please don't struggle in silence. Speak to someone you can trust. Call or text a friend or helpline. If you have worries about being overheard there are helplines which offer online messenger and text services (See list of helplines and resource's at the end of this article).



“Your wellbeing is always the most important thing to take care of, particularly at time like this. It is okay to be upset now but remember that we’re all in this together, and there are always going to be people who will listen and who you can talk to” - Young Person @ YoungMinds

“I am struggling to manage my eating disorder...”

- Check out Hope Virgo, a mental health campaigner and authors blog @ <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/coping-with-an-eating-disorder-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>. She shares her tips on coping with an eating disorder during self isolation.
- **One great tip she suggests:**
“Turn mealtimes in to social activities over the phone or on skype!”



“I have lost a loved one due to coronavirus...”

When you lose someone close to you, it's natural to have many different feelings. Everyone reacts in their own way. If you are finding it hard to cope here are some ideas where to get additional support.



What is grief?

Whether you have lost a family member, friend or pet you may be feeling a whole range of emotions. Grief is an emotional response to the loss and is a process rather than an event. It can impact on how you feel physically, mentally and socially.

Check out YoungMinds activists real life experiences on grief @ <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-and-loss/>.

Helpful ways you can communicate how you are feeling:

- Write a letter to the person you have lost telling them all the things you want to say to them
- Write a letter to someone who is supporting you, so they know what you are going through
- Keep a diary or journal of how you feel
- Express yourself through paintings or pictures
- Write a song or poem
- Create a memory box full of pictures and items which remind you of good times you had with the person you have lost



Don't forget the staff at school are available too during these difficult times if you have any worries!

You are not alone!

Helplines and services available

Winston's Wish @ www.winstonswish.org.uk

- Offering practical support and guidance to bereaved children, their families and professionals.
- Freephone Helpline: 08088 020 021 (Mon - Fri 09:00 – 17:00)- Email their ASK email service for free advice and support following a bereavement: askmailbox@winstonswish.org.uk

Hope Again @ www.hopeagain.org.uk

- Cruse Bereavement Care's website for young people with information, vlogs, podcasts, videos and sharing personal stories.
- Freephone helpline: 0808 808 1677 (Mon-Fri 09:30-17:00)- Email for young people, they can send a private email to: hopeagain@cruse.org.uk

The Mix @ www.themix.org.uk

- You can find information for young people about coronavirus and ideas for things to do while staying home on their website.
- The Mix's emotional support services are open as normal – you can talk to them about anything that's troubling you over the phone, email or webchat. You can also use their phone or online counselling service.
- Helpline open daily 4-11pm: 0808 808 4994

YoungMinds @ www.youngminds.org.uk

Crisis Messenger

- Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis
- If you need urgent help text YM to 85258
- All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors
- Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Samaritans @ www.samaritans.org

- If you're in distress and need support, you can ring Samaritans for free at any time of the day or night.
- Freephone (UK and Republic of Ireland): 116 123 (24 hours)
- Email: jo@samaritans.org

Childline @ www.childline.org.uk

- Under 19's can confidentially call, email, or chat online about any problem big or small-Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111
- Sign up for a childline account on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address - Chat 1:1 with an online advisor.

Kooth @ www.kooth.com

- Free, safe and anonymous support online