

## **Coronavirus and your wellbeing**

Social distancing and self-isolation can be really hard to deal with. It's normal to feel anxious, frustrated or bored, and if you're worried about the effect it will have on your mental health, you are not alone. Here are some tips for looking after your wellbeing during isolation.

### **Stay connected**

#### Video calls

Phone calls are amazing, and are a great way to stay connected. But seeing someone's face really can make a huge difference to a phone call. It can lift your mood and make you feel less lonely. There are lots of free video calling services you can use (Facetime, Whatsapp, Skype) and if you can connect to wifi this will help if you're worried about your data allowance. Don't be shy about going on camera!

#### Reach out

You're probably not the only person feeling worried, bored or frustrated. It's a good time for a catch up, so don't be afraid to make the first move and reach out to someone you haven't heard from in a while. They'll probably be very grateful to hear from you. Send them a message and let them know you care.

#### Online games you can play with friends

Board and video games can be a great to spend time with friends or family while giving you something to focus on. You can play a lot of these games online or via apps.

### **Stay calm**

#### Mindfulness

There are lots of great free apps you can use to guide you through breathing techniques and meditation that can help ease your anxiety and clear your mind of anxious thoughts. The 'Headspace' app is a good option.

#### Exercise

Try some meditation or yoga to give you some gentle exercise and help you relax. There are many sessions available on youtube.

Physical activity is very important to staying well so perhaps try out an exercise video.

#### Clean up your social media

You might be spending more time than usual scrolling on social media. Try unfollowing or muting accounts that make you feel anxious, upset or angry.

#### Take a break from the news

It can be tempting to keep a constant eye on the news during times like this but try limiting how often you check the news.

### Plan your days

Your normal routine might be disrupted and that can be stressful. Take some time to write down how you want to spend your day. Creating and sticking to a new routine will give you a sense of order and normality.

Decide on your new routine and make sure you build in time to do things you enjoy as well as studying. If you're living with other people, you could ask them to help you.

### **Fresh air**

If neither you or anyone you live with have symptoms, it is important that you get at least some fresh air each day. This might be a walk, a run or a short stroll as long as you stay at least 1 metre away from other people.

Connecting with nature is also very good for your wellbeing. The spring will come and all the new growth will continue. Take notice of what you see around you. Slow yourself down and look at the sky, the birds, the trees etc.

If you are stuck inside, make sure that you open a window to breathe the air from time to time.

### **Be productive**

In addition to studying, make a list of all those things you said you would do but never get round to. It could be sorting out your wardrobe, planting something to nurture, doing some drawing/making, reading a book that's challenging, fixing things around your living space etc. These tasks can make you feel productive and give you a sense of accomplishment.

Tidying your living space can also make you feel calmer and more positive.

### Rest

If you want to take the time off to rest and not be productive, that's really important too. Listen to your body.

Dealing with stressful situations at home

### Walk away from tense situations if you can

Being cooped up with other people will naturally be frustrating and might create tension between you and those you live with. You can defuse difficult situations by walking away from arguments until everyone starts to feel calmer.

## Create a rota

If you're in a situation where lots of people are fighting over who gets to decide what you watch on TV, who cooks and cleans, or anything else, you might find it helpful to create a rota. This can help you agree a fair system and help avoid arguments.

## Reach out for help

If your living situation is difficult, please don't struggle in silence. Speak to someone you trust. Call a friend or a helpline. If you're worried about being overheard, you could try texting or emailing instead. There are lots of helplines which also offer text and online messenger support.

**Stay connected, Stay calm, Stay active, Get fresh air, Be productive, Rest.**

## Useful online resources:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/looking-after-your-mental-health-while-self-isolating/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/self-help?wssl=1>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/13-march-coronavirus-self-isolation-how-to-look-after-your-mental-health-and-wellbeing-if-you-re-self-isolating/>

## Samaritans

- [www.samaritans.org](http://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](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

## The Mix

- [www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)
- if you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service, or get more information on support services you might need.
- freephone: 0808 808 4994 (1pm - 11pm daily)