**Staying Mentally Well in the COVID-19 Crisis**

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**Find a New Normal**

We have all needed to find a new routine now we are some weeks into the coronavirus crisis. While it is important still to have a routine – we don’t need to overly structure. In learning the new normal it gives you control and consistency and while national and local changes are introduced we can aim to adjust gently with them and begin to move forward.

**Exercise good self-care**

Exercise is one of the most important things and helps your body to produce hormones that help you self-regulate and control your mental health and state of mind. We have to take notice of this NHS and government advice to help us get through this- following guidelines to stay safe.

There is so much happening out of our control that can frustrate us. So it is even more important that we manage the aspects of our lives that we can control so we can look after ourselves.

* Go to bed at regular time.
* Eat as well as you can.
* Take exercise and fresh air.
* Talk kindly to yourself.
* Do activities that you enjoy.
* Self-soothe and calm.

Decide what would make you feel better and boost your morale. It may be something that is restricted at the moment but you can talk to a family member or friend about what you are going to do so that you plan and have something to look forward to..

Remember, it is okay to put yourself first and then you can be there for everyone else.

**Stay Connected**

We are lucky if we have technology to keep in touch. It is now possible to make a video call with friends and family, as well as talk on the phone. Make a decision to do that, Have a few deep connections and sustain them over time. It is important to keep in touch with friends.

**Take Time Out From Coronavirus Worry**

Many people found themselves becoming saturated in the first stages of the current crisis by constantly listening to and watching the news and spent days worrying over what was ahead.

Make an appointment with worry and use the rest of the time away from it by doing important things for self-care and staying connected with others- keep talking- to manage your worries effectively.

Also make time each day- make a pact with your family- that you will take a complete step away and actively avoid coronavirus worry. You can do this by spending time alone or with others- collectively.

**Name Your Worries To Tame Them**

If you name your worries you can take them. Identify what is worrying you most and then you can begin to tackle it. There is nothing worse than if you feel worries jumbling around in your head so your brain seems to be fogged. We need to separate each worry out so we can name them and put them in a box so they become tangible and something to be overcome. You can then decide once you have named them- “There is nothing I can do- it is in someone else’s control and so no point wasting time worrying about it”.

Or you can think, “I can do something about this “ and begin to think about how to tackle it.

Make a list. Get them out of your head and onto paper. Then look at the list and think how to tackle by focusing one thing and thinking about what you can proactively do. There may be big things you can’t help. Recognise them too but accept that some things you can’t change and share with someone. This can help to lighten the load.

There may be some worries on the list that shouldn’t be there that you can pass on. Equally, you can do this with your children and take some of their worries off them in the same way.

**Make Positive Plans for the Future**

Right now might feel really challenging and it might be hard to think about the future.

So think ahead- far ahead and make some plans for things that you might like to do

It can be something simple like having a coffee with friends that you are really missing. It could be a hobby that you can’t do at the moment.

Allow yourself to look forward to the things you miss.

Don’t find yourself in a situation where you feel that these can’t happen again.

There may be a different kind of normal for the time being but with new things you are able to enjoy and it may take a while for the things that you miss to be restored.

This situation will not last forever so try to plan ahead for when you can do the things you miss.

**Self Soothe Regularly**

Think about how you can soothe yourself and learn to calm. Prevent that state of overwhelm.

Allow yourself to take some time. Those who have been living with anxiety for a long time will understand the need to stop and reset but o many people are experiencing anxiety at the moment.

There is a separate page with 5 simple strategies to help you manage this and avoid that feeling of being overwhelmed.

We hope that these strategies are helpful. These are unprecedented times and we may sometimes need strategies to help us get through it. Adapt them to what works for you and use them when you need them.

**Take care and stay safe.**