

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF OUR MENTAL HEALTH

IF SOCIAL DISTANCING/SELF ISOLATING

Keep in contact with people in other ways

Human contact and connection is really important. We can keep in contact with people by Facetime, Whatsapp, Skype, and those conversations and interactions can really help at this time.

Reframe

If you can reframe your thoughts into being positive, that can help. If it's possible try to think of this time as an opportunity to get something done. It might be reading a book, doing something creative, listening to some music or catching up on something. Try to get into a positive mind frame. Remember this is for a set time period.

Try to keep a sense of normality

If you're not sick, and you're able to work from home, that can be really helpful. Try to keep a sense of normality as far as possible.

Self-care

It's important to practise self-care if you're self-isolating.

Take that time to look after yourself. Self-care is very important to our well-being.

If you're stuck by yourself, even if you're confined to one room of your house, you may still be able to do some meditation, yoga or even some basic physical activity while watching an exercise video.

You may want to look after yourself by limiting the amount of time you spend reading the news or looking at social media.

Strategies for anxiety

The worry for many people who are self-isolating is that they are going to become ill. They'll also potentially be concerned about their family's health and welfare.

If this is making you feel very anxious then think about access to media and social media. Some people can be quite paralysed by this anxiety and may want to completely stop interacting with the news, but for others this can be quite difficult. They want to know what's going on.' Not knowing' for some people can make their anxiety worse.

Maybe you could think about limiting how much time you spend on social media or reading, listening or watching the news.

You may want to think about where you are getting your information from. Are the reports sensationalising the situation and scaremongering? Or do you feel they are reporting responsibly and with balance?

Don't ignore your anxiety

It's very normal to feel scared about something like this. Acknowledge that you feel this way. Don't ignore these feelings.

Do something you can control

It can help to express this anxiety in a way that you can control. That could be writing down what you feel, or keeping a journal.

Let it go

Once you've written it down, let it go.

"Allow yourself to worry, put it down in writing in a notebook, and then put that away. Let it go.

Bring it back to the present

"With anxiety, it's often like you're 10 steps ahead, so bring things back to the present.

Think about your thought process

Be really aware of what you're thinking. Sometimes we are catastrophising; we're focusing on all these 'what ifs?' Bring things back to what you actually know.

Reassure yourself, calm yourself. We call it self-soothing.

Wellbeing check

Make sure you are looking after yourself, doing what you can to help, get a good night's sleep, eating well and doing exercise. If we manage our health like this, it can help make us more robust against anxiety.

Anxiety links our brain and body. Make sure you are doing what you can to look after your physical health.

Breathing techniques and mindfulness

Breathing and mindfulness techniques can help to relax you. These can be helpful in managing anxiety. They are good tools for dealing with nervous feelings.