

# Health and Wellbeing and the Coronavirus

All the information in this presentation comes from

the charity  and the British

Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

(BACP).

# How will we manage?

Being at home with our families for an extended period may not be easy and we need to try to make the best of a difficult situation.

We all need to stay positive and be kind to each other.



“No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted.” Aesop

# Coronavirus and your wellbeing

You might be worried about coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) and how it could affect your life. This may include being asked to stay at home or avoid other people.

This might feel difficult or stressful. But there are lots of things you can try that could help your wellbeing.



The Charity Mind have put together some ideas about how we can help ourselves during this difficult time.

# Think about your diet and your environment

- Think about your diet. Your appetite might change if your routine changes, or if you're less active than you usually are. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can help your mood and energy levels.
- Drink water regularly. Drinking enough water is important for your mental and physical health.
- If you are spending a lot of time at home, you may find it helpful to keep things clean and tidy, although this is different for different people.
- If you live with other people, keeping things tidy might feel more important if you're all at home together. But you might have different ideas about what counts as 'tidy' or how much it matters. It could help to decide together how you'll use different spaces. And you could discuss what each person needs to feel comfortable.



# Hand Washing



- Some mental health problems can cause difficult feelings or behaviours to do with washing or hygiene. If you experience this, you might find it hard to hear advice about washing your hands.
- If this is making you feel stressed or anxious, here are some things you could try:
- Don't keep re-reading the same advice if this is unhelpful for you.
- Let other people know you're struggling. For example, you could ask them not to remind you to wash your hands.
- Breathing exercises can help you cope and feel more in control. You can [find a simple breathing exercise on the NHS website](#). Our pages on [relaxation](#) also have some exercises you can try, and other relaxation tips.
- Set limits, like washing your hands for the recommended 20 seconds.
- Plan something to do after washing your hands. This could help distract you and change your focus.



# Connect with people

- Keep in touch digitally
- Make plans to video chat with people or groups you'd normally see in person.
- You can also arrange phone calls or send instant messages or texts.
- If you're worried that you might run out of stuff to talk about, make a plan with someone to watch a show or read a book separately so that you can discuss it when you contact each other.
- Think of other ways to keep in contact with people if meeting in person is not possible. For example, you could check your phone numbers are up to date, or that you have current email addresses for friends you've not seen for a while.



# Decide on your routine

- Plan how you'll spend your time. It might help to write this down on paper and put it on the wall.
- Try to follow your ordinary routine as much as possible. Get up at the same time as normal, follow your usual morning routines, and go to bed at your usual time. Set alarms to remind you of your new schedule if that helps.
- If you aren't happy with your usual routine, this might be a chance to do things differently. For example, you could go to bed earlier, spend more time cooking or do other things you don't usually have time for.
- Think about how you'll spend time by yourself at home. For example, plan activities to do on different days or habits you want to start or keep up.
- If you live with other people, it may help to do the following:
- Agree on a household routine. Try to give everyone you live with a say in this agreement.
- Try to respect each other's privacy and give each other space. For example, some people might want to discuss everything they're doing while others won't.



**THE MIND-SET**  
DAILY PLANNER

Saturday

| TIMES        | SUBJECT / ACTIVITY    | DONE x ✓ |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 9AM - 10AM   | Shower / Breakfast    |          |
| 10AM - 11AM  | French vocab          |          |
| 11AM - 12PM  | Me time               |          |
| LUNCH        |                       |          |
| 12PM - 1PM   | English: Learn quotes |          |
| 2PM - 3PM    | Chemistry - topic 3   |          |
| 3PM - 4PM    | Sport                 |          |
| 4PM - 5PM    | See friends           |          |
| 5PM - 6PM    | Maths - past papers   |          |
| 6PM - 7PM    | Dinner                |          |
| 7PM - 8PM    | Watch TV!             |          |
| 8PM - 8.15PM | Plan for next day     |          |

# Try to keep active

- Build physical activity into your daily routine, if possible. Most of us don't have exercise equipment like treadmills where we live, but there are still activities you can do. Exercising at home can be simple and there are options for most ages and abilities, such as:
- cleaning your home
- dancing to music
- going up and down stairs
- online exercise workouts that you can follow
- sitting less – if you notice you've been sitting down for an hour, just getting up or changing position can help.





# Get as much sunlight, fresh air and nature as you can

- Spending time in green space or bringing nature into your everyday life can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. It can improve your mood, reduce feelings of stress or anger, and make you feel more relaxed.
- It's possible to still get these positive effects from nature while staying indoors at home. You could try the following:
- Spend time with the windows open to let in fresh air.
- Have flowers or potted plants in your home.
- Use natural materials to decorate your living space, or use them in art projects. This could include leaves, flowers, feathers, tree bark or seeds.
- Arrange a comfortable space to sit, for example by a window where you can look out over a view of trees or the sky, or watch birds and other animals.
- Grow plants or flowers on windowsills. For example, you could buy seeds online or look for any community groups that give away or swap them.
- Look at photos of your favourite places in nature. Use them as the background on your mobile phone or computer screen, or print and put them up on your walls.
- Listen to natural sounds, like recordings or apps that play birdsong, ocean waves or rainfall. Get as much natural light as you can. Spend time in your garden if you have one, or open your front or back door and sit on the doorstep.



# Find ways to relax and be creative

- There are lots of different ways that you can relax, take notice of the present moment and use your creative side. These include:
- arts and crafts, such as drawing, painting, collage, sewing, craft kits or upcycling
- DIY
- colouring
- mindfulness
- playing musical instruments, singing or listening to music
- writing
- yoga
- meditation.





# Keep your mind stimulated

- Keep your brain occupied and challenged. Set aside time in your routine for this. Read books, magazines and articles. Listen to podcasts, watch films and do puzzles.



# Take care with news and information



- If news stories make you feel anxious or confused, think about switching off or limiting what you look at for a while.
- Social media could help you stay in touch with people, but might also make you feel anxious including if people are sharing news stories or posting about their worries. Consider taking a break or limiting how you use social media. You might decide to view particular groups or pages but not scroll through timelines or newsfeeds.

# Advice from the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

## What to do if you're feeling anxious:

### **Don't ignore your anxiety**

- “It's very normal to feel scared about something like this,” adds Elizabeth. “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,.
- “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,” says Elizabeth.

### **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**

- “I always talk to my clients about a wellbeing check. Sleeping, eating, exercising. If we manage our health like this, it can help make us more robust against anxiety.”

### **Self-management**

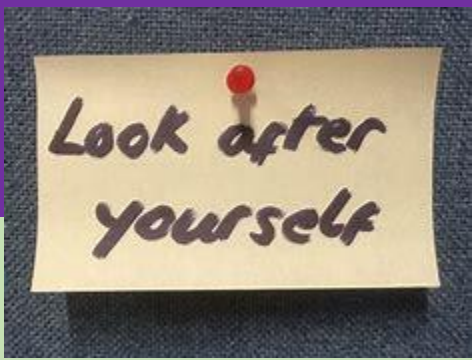
- Anxiety and the release of stress hormones can exacerbate physical symptoms, she adds.
- “Anxiety links our brain and body. Make sure you are doing what you can to look after your physical health.”

### **Breathing techniques and mindfulness**

- Practise mindfulness or use breathing techniques to help you relax.
- “These can be helpful in managing anxiety. They are good tools for dealing with nervous feelings.”



# Remember:



- this situation will not last forever
- make the most of a difficult time
- look after yourselves and others

