

Emotional Well-being in relation to Coronavirus and Social Distancing

Long periods of stress and uncertainty can understandably create challenges for our emotional and mental wellbeing.

The following suggestions may be helpful in managing the current situation, including periods of self-isolation:

- **Plan a daily routine** – including times for physical activity, mental activity, enjoyable activities and relaxation. There should also be differences between “school days” and the weekend.
- **Be active** - this can include online exercise classes (e.g. Joe Wicks’ daily 9am PE lessons, available free online), dancing, or playing active video games.
- **Connect with people** – e.g. through video chat, messages, phone calls, etc.
- **Access sunlight, fresh air and nature** - when possible, in line with guidelines.
- **Keep your mind stimulated** - as well as through school work, this can be through games, reading or maybe learning a new skill.
- **Maintain a healthy diet** – this can have a positive impact on mood, as well as general wellbeing.
- **Limit exposure to news and social media** – whilst it’s important to stay connected, notice when this may be having a negative impact on mood and take steps to address it – e.g. checking for updates only once or twice a day, and at pre-determined times (e.g. not just before bed).
- **Consider relaxation/mindfulness techniques** – see resources below.
- **Focus on what is within your control** – recognise when your focus is on things which are outside of your control; whilst this is understandable, it may be more helpful to focus on actions which are within your control (e.g. choosing to have a video-chat with a friend, instead of spending the time worrying about an issue you can’t control).
- **Be kind and patient with yourself and those around you** – it’s completely understandable to find things difficult at times; look after yourselves, look after each other, and remember that this will end.

You may also find the additional resources useful:

Advice for parents about talking to children/supporting them with Coronavirus information:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/talking-to-children>

Advice for supporting young people’s mental health, including in relation to Coronavirus:

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>

Advice about looking after your mental health and wellbeing when staying at home:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/staying-at-home> and
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#TakeCareOfYourMentalHealthAndWellbeing>

Relaxation techniques: <https://www.cntw.nhs.uk/resource-library/relaxation-techniques/>

Advice regarding sleep difficulties: <https://mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/s/sleep>

A wide variety of **apps** are also available that can help children/young people with **managing anxiety**, amongst other issues, including through techniques such as relaxation and mindfulness. Some of the apps which have been recommended include:

- [Chill Panda](#) - “a family friendly relaxation, breathing exercise and activity app. It allows children and adults to start to understand how their bodies respond to different feelings, and includes some play based activities demonstrated by a panda avatar”
- [Wysa](#) - “an emotionally intelligent chatbot which employs research-backed, widely used techniques such as CBT, DBT, Yoga and meditation, to support users with stress, anxiety, sleep, loss and a whole range of other mental health and wellness needs”
- [Mindful Powers™](#) - “a kid-first, holistic approach to helping young minds learn and practice mindfulness so they can respond more effectively to stressful situations through the power of play”
- The [Worriots](#) and [Wotnot](#) - “companion apps to help children offload their worries, and allow parents to monitor their child's concerns. The Worriots is a secure app designed for children, providing them with a safe place to share their worries, fears and concerns, which in turn provides them with a practical, fun coping mechanism for their fears, using one of the four Worriots characters. Parents can use the Wotnot companion app in parallel, which has been designed specifically to help parents/carers monitor children’s fears when they are sharing them through The Worriots app.”
- [Think Ninja](#) – free to all UK 10-18 year-olds for the duration of the covid-19 crisis, including self-help knowledge and skills for those who may be experiencing increased anxiety and stress at this time.
- [10% happier](#) – “the meditations, podcasts, blog posts and talks on this page will help you build resilience and find some calm amidst the chaos”.
- [Waking Up](#) - “guided meditations designed for children ages six to ten”.
- [Cosmic kids](#) - “yoga, mindfulness and relaxation for kids. Interactive adventures that build strength, balance, and confidence”.

The following apps are likely to be more suitable for parents/teenagers than younger children. Both are well-established mindfulness-based apps, which have made more resources available for free in response to Covid-19:

- [Headspace](#)
- [Calm](#)