
LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic continues to impact both our working lives and the wider world. Given the often overwhelming level of information presented, dissected and discussed each day, it's natural for us to feel anxious. Mental health is, therefore, just as important as physical wellbeing.

With that in mind, advice on coping with the stress of the current public health situation is set out below.

For all:

- Avoid watching, reading or listening to news that causes you anxiety or distress; seek information mainly to take practical actions. MindWise has posted some useful tips on switching off [here](#).
- If you want keep up to date on what is going on, schedule updates at a few specific times during the day. The near-constant stream of news reports can cause anyone to worry. Make sure your news and updates are from a reliable source.
- Protect yourself and be supportive to others. Assisting those around you who are in need can benefit the person receiving support, as well as the helper. You can find more about helping others [here](#).

For those taking care of older adults:

- Older adults, especially those in isolation or with cognitive decline, may become more anxious, angry, stressed, agitated and withdrawn. Provide practical and emotional support through informal networks (such as families) and health professionals. Click [here](#) to read Age NI's simple suggestions for aiding older people.
- Share simple facts and give clear, understandable instructions about reducing risks. These need to be concise and patient. Utilise family and other support networks in providing information, helping them practice preventative measures (e.g. handwashing, wearing face coverings etc.).

For those remaining in isolation:

- Maintain your connections. When in isolation, stick to personal daily routines and keep up to date with friends, family and colleagues via e-mail, social media, video conferencing and telephone.
- During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in healthy, enjoyable and engaging activities. Exercise as much as possible, follow regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Covid Wellbeing NI have created a database on how to 'Take 5' to help you with your wellbeing. Click the [link](#) for more information.

For those coming out of isolation:

- The easing of lockdown brings with it both hope and trepidation. Plan for, manage and take pleasure in those things you can control. Don't let these cause you to be fearful or anxious.
- Set your own pace. Don't be pressured into taking steps you're not ready to take. However, reconnecting with the world around you remains crucial.
- Try something that challenges you every day, or every few days. Keep going, regardless of how well you do. Vary your routine to expose yourself to different situations.

For World Health Organisation guidance on COVID-19 and mental health, visit:

- [Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak](#)

We have all been learning new ways of working and staying connected — feelings of unease are to be expected. By continuing to take sensible measures, and by following the advice of health professionals, we can limit the potential impact that COVID-19 can have on our wellbeing.

Some useful links for looking after your **emotional and mental health** during this time are listed below.

- [Anger](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Loneliness and isolation](#)
- [Stress](#)

And remember, if you are in distress or despair you can also call Lifeline on:

0808 808 8000

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