

# LOOKING AFTER OUR MENTAL WELLBEING



It is normal to feel worried and anxious during this difficult time. You may feel stressed or your mood may be low. It is really important that we all continue to look after our mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak. This will help build our resilience and make it easier to cope with the challenges we are all facing.



Our Better Health Hub is providing a telephone service on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am-4pm and on Thursday from 10am to 12 noon. This service will provide individual support for you if you are concerned about your ability to stay healthy during this outbreak, or those that support you. Please contact the service on 0758 417 4428. They are happy to ring you back if there are worries about mobile phone charges, or you could send them a text message and they will get in touch. Alternatively you can email [AA-UHB.BetterHealthHub.nhs.net](mailto:AA-UHB.BetterHealthHub.nhs.net)

## Steps we can take to make day to day life more manageable

- Rethink “I am stuck inside” to “I have more time to focus of myself and my home”
- Try to work out and plan a daily routine and keep some structure to your days
- Limit the time you watch the news or read about the coronavirus, only choosing credible sources
- Set up zones for daily activities, for example try not to eat in bed or work on the sofa
- If your worry or anxiety becomes unmanageable use telephone sources of support (below)

## 10 ways to improve our mental health & wellbeing

Even with social distancing measures in place there are still some things we can do to look after our mental health and wellbeing:

- Eat well and drink sensibly
- Keep active
- Ensure you get enough sleep
- Keep in touch with others
- Accept and value who you are
- Care for others
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Take time to do things you enjoy
- Talk about your feelings

## Keeping connected

It is important to explore different ways of keeping in touch with family, friends and colleagues while we are spending more time in our homes:

- ❖ Set a reminder to call someone each day
- ❖ Text someone a joke to make them smile
- ❖ If you don't mind chatting, post your phone number through a neighbour's door – they can call if they are feeling lonely
- ❖ Arrange to watch the same TV programme/film, then call to discuss

**Daily Wellbeing Tools:** In the same way we look after our physical health every day, we should look after our mental health & wellbeing every day. Think of some activities that you enjoy. This can be anything at all whether it is a hobby, an activity or a task. During social distancing we may not be able to do some of the things that we usually enjoy doing. You could use this time to try some new **'Daily Wellbeing Tools'** from our suggestions below:

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- Online exercise class
- Play a board game
- Baking or Cooking
- Create a daily 'to do' list
- Gardening
- Colouring or Craft
- Yoga
- Have a 'clear out'
- Look through old photos
- Start a journal
- Spend time outdoors
- Read a book or magazine
- Mindfulness
- Phone or video call friends or family
- Make a 'feel good' playlist

You can use the table below if that helps...

My Daily Wellbeing tools	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**Relaxation** doesn't have to take up lots of time. Simply taking a few minutes for yourself to do something you enjoy can give you enough space to feel calmer. Try to make a plan for your day or your week...and remember to build in some form of relaxation! Try Belly breathing- put one hand on your stomach and one on your chest. Slowly breathe in and out, feeling your stomach inflate and deflate like a balloon as you breathe

**Mindfulness...and focussing on our breath...**for a few minutes every day can help build healthy coping skills. Take time to breathe, focus on the present moment and be thoughtful about the small details of where you are and how you are feeling:

- Box breathing or four square breathing involves exhaling to a count of four, holding your lungs empty for a count of four, inhaling for four, holding for four, exhaling and beginning the pattern again
- Mindful cup of tea or coffee...**simply sit and just be in the moment.** Take five minutes before the day begins...this is even more important just now because we are out of our usual routines

**Gratitude & positivity:** this is thinking about three things that went well or made us smile which can improve our mood, helps us feel more positive and able to cope. This is particularly useful when things are tough. **Small things are best!** It can be anything from a smell, sound or touch. It can be something you have done or something someone has done for you. Use the template below if that helps:

Three Good Things	
Three things that went <b>well</b> .	<b>Why</b> did they happen?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

NHS 24- call free- 111

Breathing Space- call free- 0800 83 85 87

Samaritans- call free- 116 123

