

Coronavirus: How to protect your mental health

Coronavirus has plunged the world into uncertainty and the constant news about the pandemic can feel relentless. All of this can take a toll on our mental health, particularly for those already living with a mental health condition. While it is important to stay informed, there are also many things we can do to support and manage our wellbeing during these uncertain times.

A number of organisations have published guidance on mental health considerations relating to the coronavirus outbreak, including:

- Mind
- The Mental Health Foundation
- The World Health Organisation
- Young Minds
- NHS

For some people with pre-existing mental health conditions like Anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) keeping safe and well in relation to the coronavirus may trigger more compulsive thoughts and unhelpful behaviours.

OCD UK has published some guidance on coping with OCD in connection with coronavirus and the guidance to regularly wash our hands. <https://www.ocduk.org/ocd-and-coronavirus-survival-tips/>

The BBC have also published useful guidance for managing anxiety and OCD during the pandemic <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-51909368/coronavirus-how-to-manage-anxiety-and-ocd-during-the-pandemic>

Anxiety UK: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/blog/health-and-other-forms-of-anxiety-and-coronavirus/>

Talking to your child/children about coronavirus

Your children may understandably be concerned or worried by what they are hearing and seeing in the news or on social media. Young Minds have some really helpful tips on how to support your children at this time. <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>

Social Distancing and Self-isolating

Social distancing and self-isolating may seem like a daunting prospect and there are a number of things you can do to look after yourself and your families when self-isolating, these include:

- Continuing the things that you enjoy doing at home or use the time to discover a new hobby. You could try reading that book you've been meaning to start, watch that new series or try a new skill.
- Continue accessing nature and sunlight wherever possible in line with the Government's current coronavirus guidance. Do exercise, eat well and stay hydrated.
- Try and get into a daily routine that prioritises looking after yourself. You may find it helpful to plan out your time in advance and know what you are going to do each day, so you have something to look forward to.
- Look after your personal environment and create a space that you are able to enjoy and feel comfortable in.
- Staying in touch with your family and friends - you can still contact each other over the phone, on social media or through video calls.

- Keeping up to date with new information can help you feel more in control but do take a break from the news and social media if you feel like the updates are getting too much.
- Seek information at specific times, thus reducing the time spent checking things out.

Feeling worried about the spread of the disease and its impact on you and your loved ones is normal and it is important that we acknowledge these feelings and remind each other to look after our physical and mental health.

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