

## **Coronavirus and your Mental Health by Richard Stanton**

Keeping your mind healthy in difficult times...

It can be all too easy for us to lose our bearings, especially as we're suddenly spoilt for choice in things to worry about.

When we are faced with things that are out of our control with too many "what ifs" to juggle in our minds, it can be all too easy to lose track of "what is" and focus on what we can control. This can be all the more challenging when we are on our own without others around to help us keep our feet on the ground.

So, a few tips to keep on track:

**Stay connected:** One thing that's a lot more certain at the moment is that most people are at home! So it is a good time to make that call to old friends, family & even neighbours and maybe make a date for another, regular call and share a virtual cuppa....

**Talk about your worries:** It's quite normal to feel worry and anxiety at the moment and it can be helpful to share your worries with others - everyone has a different (not right or wrong) way of dealing with these. Comparing notes on ways of coping as well as simply sharing the load can help. If things are getting overwhelming, there are many people to talk to via helplines on the phone. We can give you suggestions, please just ask.

**Look after your body:** looking after your physical health is great for your mind and feelings - eating well, drinking plenty of water, avoiding too much alcohol, trying to keep a healthy sleep/wake routine are all going to help!

**Mind your media:** it can be all too easy to overload with constant news, adding fuel to worries and anxieties, perhaps try to ration news intake to several times a day only. There is a lot of information out there, much of

it inaccurate. If you're using the internet, you can trust information on the NHS (.NHS.uk) or government (.GOV.uk) websites.

Daily routine: Try planning ahead & make regular time to do things that you can enjoy at home that you might have been putting off like dusting off the violin, sorting out the photo albums, reading that book you haven't got round to reading and give yourself credit for having achieved them!

Take time to relax: When it's so easy to find things to worry about, it can also be easy to forget to make time to switch your mind off for just a little while - however you might do that. Making time to get outside in nature for even as short a time as 10 minutes a day (or longer), listening to your favourite piece of beautiful music or there is a whole world of meditation, mindfulness and relaxation resources on the internet can help.

These are just a few general areas to think about in trying to look after ourselves as best we can until we can all feel that business is once again a bit more as usual.

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**Further information is available on:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>