

A guide to looking after our Mental Health

The UK government is advising us to stay at home and only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work and to stay two metres away from other people if we do have to go out. This has meant that we have all had to adjust our lives in one way or another. This may be really difficult for some of us and we may be feeling a variety of mixed emotions.

Mental health is just like physical health: everybody has it and we need to take good care of it. Below we have included some tips to help look after ourselves and useful websites and apps that provide more information and support should you need it.



Here are some emotions that you may be feeling-

- Scared
- Worried
- Anxious
- Concerned
- Frustrated
- Angry
- Bored
- Lonely

How can we manage our anxiety?

- **Talk about how we are feeling and stay connected-** talking to a friend or family member about how you're feeling can often help. Even if you are not able to talk to someone face to face you can pick up the phone and call them, set up a video call or message them.
- **Use relaxation techniques-** if you are feeling anxious or stressed it is often beneficial to use relaxation techniques. One relaxation technique we can all try is meditation, this is a helpful way to relax your mind. Breathing exercises are also a good way to control your anxieties. There is lots of useful information on both of these techniques that you can find online.
- **Distract yourself-** during this uncertain time you may find yourself getting bored but there are lots of things that you can do to distract yourself. Some things we can do include: crosswords, puzzles, mindful colouring, playing a game, reading a book or listening to music (although the list is endless and you may have more imaginative and creative ideas).
- **Plan your time-** It's likely that you've been asked by your school, college or workplace to stay at home for a period of time. Setting a routine and sticking to it will be really beneficial for you and your mental health. Ensure you factor in work, time for yourself, meal times and what time you are going to wake up and go to bed.
- **Live healthily-** in order to look after our mental health it is important that we are living healthily. It is important to drink lots of water and try to reduce the amount of sugar and caffeine that you are consuming as sometimes caffeine can make anxiety worse. Try to eat balanced meals and at set times. A healthy diet will give you the strength and energy that you need to deal with daily stresses.
- **Exercising-** when we exercise it helps to relieve stress and anxiety. There are lots of home workouts that you can do in the comfort of your own living room. Check out the advice and useful tips that your PE department has been putting up online for you.

What support is available?

- **Childline** is there to help anyone under the age of 19 with any issues they may have, no matter how big or small. They provide lots of information on a variety of topics including feelings and emotions
<https://www.childline.org.uk>
- **Samaritans** are there, day or night, for anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure. They offer a listening and support service to anyone who needs it
<https://www.samaritans.org>
- **Young Minds** aim to help young people feel supported and empowered, whatever the challenges. They are there to make sure they get the best possible mental health support and have the resilience to overcome life's difficulties
<https://youngminds.org.uk>
- **NHS Mental Health and Wellbeing** provide accurate and up-to-date information and support with mental health conditions such as stress, anxiety and depression
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>
- **The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families** is a children's mental health charity with over 60 years' experience of caring for young people and their families
<https://www.annafreud.org/>
- **ThinkNinja** is an app specifically designed to educate 10-18 year olds about mental health, emotional wellbeing and to provide skills young people can use to build resilience and stay well.
- **Headspace App**- Meditation has been shown to help people stress less, focus more and sleep better. Headspace is meditation made simple, teaching you life-changing mindfulness skills in just a few minutes a day.
- **Chill Panda**- Learn to relax, manage your worries and improve your wellbeing. The app measures your heart rate and suggests tasks to suit your state of mind. Tasks include simple breathing techniques and light exercises to take your mind off your worries.



50 ways to take a break

Below are 50 ideas of things that you can do to help yourself relax. Some of these things you won't be able to do because of government guidance but there are plenty of things that you can be doing.

