

Take5

steps to wellbeing



Looking after your
mental health during
the coronavirus
(COVID-19) pandemic

As we continue to fight coronavirus (COVID-19), we can all help keep our families and communities safe by continuing to support public health measures to control the spread, such as hand washing and ensuring social distancing. With our usual social interaction limited for the moment, it's very important that we look after our mental and emotional wellbeing.

Here are some tips to help you look after your mental health during this time. Remember it is temporary and there are brighter days ahead!

Connect



Connect

Connect with the people around you. We are all in this together. Keep in touch with family, friends, colleagues or neighbours through calls, text or video links like FaceTime, WhatsApp, Messenger or Skype. Arrange a daily telephone call, especially with those who may be at home alone. If restrictions allow, arrange a safe and distanced meet up with family or friends.

Be active



Be active

It is important that we find ways to stay active during this time. Exercising helps us feel good mentally and physically. There are lots of ways to stay active at home, gardening or housework count as physical activity or try an online exercise video. Go for a walk, run or bike ride but make sure you follow current government advice on social distancing.

Take notice



Take notice

Stop, pause and take a moment to be still and look around you. Reduce your time watching the news and browsing social media. Let go of what none of us can control right now and focus on what you can control. Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings and be kind to yourself. It is normal not to feel 'normal' during this time. Listen to gentle music or try relaxation apps and videos. Know that this is temporary and things will get better. Take notice of your habits. Avoid smoking or drugs, and try not to drink too much alcohol. It can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Keep learning



Keep learning

For now, we are all learning different ways to do things and new ways to enjoy ourselves. Use this time for some discovery. Learning new things gives us a sense of achievement, increased confidence and enjoyment. Use this as an opportunity to teach your children new skills or maybe sign up to an online course.

Give



Give

We are all helping our community and our health service by following government regulations and guidelines and practising social distancing. This is the greatest gift you can give right now. You can still do something nice for a friend or neighbour, thank others, smile and be kind. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding.

Further information on how to look after your mental health can be found on the COVID Wellbeing NI Hub which can be accessed via the Minding Your Head website at www.mindingyourhead.info



If you are in distress or despair, you can call Lifeline on 0808 808 8000 where you can speak to a trained counsellor. This service is available 24/7 and is free from all NI landlines and mobiles.



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