



### **Self-Care During COVID-19**

We are currently going through what can only be described as an extraordinary and historical event. Covid 19 is having an unprecedented impact upon our world and the way we live our lives. At New Pathways we are aware that the thought of isolation is bringing with it uncertainty, anxiety, fear and worry about our families, friends and loved ones.

As we go through these exceptional times, the thought of quarantine and isolation, for many of us, brings with it a sense of anxiety. We have therefore put together this document and associated links to further resources, to hopefully help us all to cope with home confinement. By looking at what we can do to improve our physical and psychological wellbeing, we can take some control of our own welfare.

This quick information leaflet gives a few tips on how to look after yourself and your mental health during this time of social distancing. Please be mindful and responsible for your own safety and wellbeing. If you need crisis support please call a Listening Line: [HERE](#) or a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence helpline: [HERE](#)

#### **Isolation and Anxiety**

##### **1 Reframe**

Take this time as an opportunity to shift focus from the external to the internal, a chance to focus on yourself and your internal needs. Read that book you promised yourself you would read, watch that movie someone told you about, take some online guitar lessons. The list is endless.

##### **2 Have a routine**

Familiar patterns of behaviour being a sense of comfort and structure and this can be reassuring. Get up at the same time, eat meals at the same time. When this is over and we go back to normality, it will help to have routine in place.

### 3 Try not to become too consumed by Coronavirus and its effects

Obviously, we need to keep ourselves up to date and take the advice the Government is giving seriously. However, this can become overwhelming and our day time and night time thoughts can become overwhelming and in turn, feed into our anxieties. It's ok to give yourself 'time off' and it's ok to think of other things, to take time out, to keep ourselves grounded. If you want to stay up to date, but avoid any scaremongering/hearsay, please stick to reputable sources of information such as:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

### 4 Start a quarantine ritual

This may sound strange but if you keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings, it will give you time to reflect later. Make that daily call to your sister, parents, friends and do it at the same time. As we said, routine will help. Start a painting, drawing or garden project and add a little every day, weather permitting, to ground yourself and bit by bit you will see progress.

### 5 Ensuring virtual contact

We live in an age of accessibility. The internet has provided us with numerous options when it comes to maintaining contact with our loved ones and the outside world. Making sure that we can talk with our loved ones, can reduce our feelings of stress and ensure that those feelings of being cut off from everyone, are held in check. Apps like Whatsapp, Facetime and Marco Polo are freely available.

### 6 Keep physically healthy

We all know the benefits of keeping physically fit. Physical fitness is well known to aid psychological health. Whilst we are able to go outdoors, make sure you do so, even a 10 minute brisk walk will increase your heart rate and improve your wellbeing. Home confinement can render this difficult however there are many exercises you can do using simply a chair. Examples of these can be found online, along with a myriad of YouTube videos. Some of these are delivered so that you feel as if you are part of a group workout which can help those feelings of isolation. Here are some suggestions:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90481514/these-free-online-exercise-offers-will-help-keep-you-fit-and-sane-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

## 7 Home environment

Our minds cannot live completely independent from our environment. As the home becomes disordered, so can your wellbeing. Research tells us that staying clean and organised is a good thing. It helps us feel better about ourselves, it keeps us productive and it may very well keep us physically fit. It is also a good way of reducing your anxiety, it has been documented that cleaning your home for just 20 minutes per day can reduce the impact that stress has on your life.

Try this website..

[https://www.supersavvyme.co.uk/home/cleaning-wizard/declutter-your-home-to-clear-your-mind?gclid=EAlaIQobChMloejg7u616AIViKztCh1kGgQxEAAAYASAAEgJq0vD\\_BwE](https://www.supersavvyme.co.uk/home/cleaning-wizard/declutter-your-home-to-clear-your-mind?gclid=EAlaIQobChMloejg7u616AIViKztCh1kGgQxEAAAYASAAEgJq0vD_BwE)

## 8 Sleep well

At this time, many of us are struggling with heightened anxiety and worry, our sleep is likely to be affected and we need to be mindful of the negative impact this can have on our wellbeing. You may find that you are having trouble falling asleep or remaining asleep by worrying yourself awake. You can take steps to address this current issue by avoiding watching and TV or media updates before bedtime. Allow your mind to switch off by reading a book, if you use your mobile device maybe have a game on it such as a mystery game, something that takes thought and you need to focus on. There are many free sleep apps available from places such as Relax Melodies, Sleep cycle or simply a rain app.

There are other steps you can take, this website is helpful:

<http://dreamsleepnow.com/sleep-hygiene/>

## 9 Manage your diet

Eating well does not just affect our physical health, it also directly impacts on our emotional and psychological wellbeing. There is scientific evidence that states that a good balanced diet can have a positive effect on our mental health. With us all facing such uncertainty and with the availability of food products becoming problematical, it is important that we do not resort to buying comfort food but try to focus on buying good food. When at home we may be able to think clearly about what we need, but once in the supermarket, when we see panic buying, our primitive survival brain kicks in and we follow suit. Try to make a list of the foods you want and stick to it as best you can.

The following links give some good advice..

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/food-and-mood/about-food-and-mood/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/>

## 10 Cooking

There are many benefits of cooking that can help your anxiety at this time. It has long been known that cooking can help with feelings of reward that in turn can promote positivity and allows you to engage in your creative side. This is why, at New Pathways, one of the things we offer, under normal circumstances, is our cookery groups. The clients who attended spoke highly of the experience and of the positive benefits of learning something new. We are hoping we can get our normal chef Nic to do some lessons that we can place on our website. When normal service resumes, we will start these classes in person again but in the interim, there are many apps and online cookery sessions you can access. Jamie Oliver is doing a show at 5.30pm daily on Channel 4, Keep Cooking and Carry On, well worth a watch.

Here are some more suggestions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-B6PJbUAM4M&list=PLWW3MIqAKZfhI4W7nc5kIOBWoz54XjqT->

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHRXUeVsAQQ>

And for the children:

<https://www.epicurious.com/expert-advice/the-best-you-tube-channels-for-kid-friendly-cooking-videos-article>

Remember to check government advice if you think you have any symptoms linked to Coronavirus. Please follow Government Guidance on staying indoors and stay safe and well.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

**Stay at home, Stay safe, Protect the NHS**

**Our clients and anyone who has experienced trauma can also access our Trauma Self-Care resources here: <http://www.newpathways.org.uk/resources/>**