

Protecting Your Mental Health during Coronavirus



There are a lot of unknowns at the minute and this can be unsettling, scary and/or frustrating. We can only do our best to maintain the quality of the clinical care we offer whilst respecting the safe working guidance.

We all respond differently and have different skills, experiences and personal circumstances. To be kind towards ourselves and each other is always important, but possibly even more so during this uncertain period.

Everyday Working

- If you have any worries or concerns (however silly you may feel they are), please do not keep them to yourself – talk to your manager or a colleague.
- If you feel unwell, or need to self-isolate, please consider the safety of yourself and others, and do so responsibly. Do NOT beat yourself up about not being at work but be considerate to needs of others.
- If you're feeling overwhelmed or triggered by the circumstances and ever changing information about Coronavirus, please raise this with your manager, they can support decisions with respect to your experience.
- Limit the amount of time that you are exposed to information that could be inflammatory or scaremongering to that which is essential, evidenced and appropriate, inclusive of whilst in and out of work. Please focus on trusted sources of information (e.g. NHS and government websites) and mute, reduce or unfollow triggering accounts, pages or key words on social media forums (e.g. Twitter/Facebook).
- Please be mindful to your colleagues and their well-being. Check in with each other, support teams and individuals where possible, but do not go above your own physical capabilities, especially at times where you may feel unwell.
- This will be a marathon, not a sprint, so give yourself and others the time and space to adjust to different working patterns that might be needed in the next weeks and months.

Self-Isolating (when well) or Working from Home

- Try to keep a regular routine (e.g. maintain usual bed and meal times), with some variety in your activities (e.g. Saturday may involve different activities than Tuesday)
- Set daily goals to keep yourself focused
- Maintain some level of physical activity (e.g. HIIT routine, online Yoga/Pilates, solitary walking, gardening etc.)
- Achieve daily exposure to natural sunlight where ever possible

- Keep hydrated
- Allocate some time each day for restful activities and purposeful relaxation which works for you, particularly if your anxiety increases (e.g. art and crafts, playing music, prayer, breathing, talking with friends and meditation)
- Keep in touch with family and friends on a daily basis
- If you are working from home, try to maintain your usual hours. Check in with colleagues via phone, skype and email, set yourself tasks for the day and take regular, short comfort breaks.
- If you notice increase worry or anxiety, you could try the Apple Technique (AnxietyUK):
 - Acknowledge – notice the uncertainty as it comes into your mind
 - Pause – pause and breathe (don't react at all)
 - Pull Back – tell yourself that it's just the worry talking. The apparent need for certainty is not necessary or helpful. Thoughts are not always facts.
 - Let Go – let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You don't have to respond to it. Visualise it passing by like leaves in a stream.
 - Explore – explore right now. Notice your breathing, and then what you can see, what you can hear, what you can touch and what you can smell. Then shift your attention back on to what you were doing or on to something new.



GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

- In the event you experience any illness follow all the OFFICIAL guidance issued, here are some other useful sources and contact numbers for additional support for your emotional wellbeing.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) - information and guidance from MPFT
<https://www.mpft.nhs.uk/about-us/latest-news/update-coronavirus>

- Email ICC@mpft.nhs.uk
- Call the MPFT Coronavirus Staff Helpline on 0300 124 0354

Channel 3000. Psychologist offers mental health advice amid COVID-19 outbreak
<https://www.channel3000.com/psychologist-offers-mental-health-advice-amid-covid-19-outbreak/>

ACP-UK Rapid Response: Guidance for Clinical Psychologists in Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 at Work
https://acpuk.org.uk/cp_guidance_covid-19/?fbclid=IwAR0D1OyD_FmWM-G77Bgm3ApXyDIV93WsNU52pgmnh7IBVCNcheSVT64Yxxw

Podcast from Psychologists off the Clock: 'COVID-19 Anxiety, Cultivating Safeness, and Polyvagal Theory with Dr. Stephen Porges'
<https://www.offtheclockpsych.com/podcast/covid-19-anxiety-cultivating-safeness>

Collection of articles from BPS
<https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-33/april-2020/coronavirus-psychological-perspectives>

Remote work 'Survival Toolkit'

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O6SawA395SDh5nScz5f8XaWIPTFox9O7/view?fbclid=IwAR0TIDM53x5nlZ0BsTeNKHwaCnfi1f55bL-tv9W6JT_QCLVIHMZ5RmDWkM

Psychological impact of quarantine study

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30460-8/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30460-8/fulltext?dgcid=raven_jbs_etoc_email)

Collective psychosocial resilience from the ACP

https://acpuk.org.uk/cp_guidance_covid-19/

Mental Health Foundation advice and resources:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

WHO mental health and psychosocial considerations:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_8

BPS highlights importance of talking to children about Coronavirus

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-highlights-importance-talking-children-about-coronavirus>

Twinkl – offering free ultimate membership to educational resources for children with code:

PARENTSTWINKLHELPS:

<https://twinkl.co.uk/offer>

Mind.co.uk – guidance on managing mental health during the outbreak

<https://www.mind.org.uk/coronavirusoutbreakmentalhealthtips/>

Glo – yoga, pilates and meditation website offering free exercises

www.glo.com

Down dog – providing free membership to their yoga, barre and HIIT apps until April 1st:

<https://www.downdogapp.com/>

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra – offering a 'Digital Concert Hall': <https://www.digitalconcerthall.com>

New York Metropolitan Orchestra is live streaming presentations through their website:

<https://www.metopera.org>

NHS Mental health helplines:

Whether you're concerned about yourself or a loved one, these helplines can offer expert advice.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>