



SEND 0-25

Wellbeing briefing

March 2020

Looking after yourself, looking after your children

Infectious disease outbreaks, like the current coronavirus (Covid 19), can be scary and can affect our mental health. While its important to stay informed, there are also many things that we can do to support and manage our wellbeing during such times.

Follow this [LINK](#) to find out some tips that will help you, your fiends and your family to look after your mental health at a time where there is much discussion of potential threats to our physical health.

Some of the areas include:

- Looking after your mental health while you have to stay at home
- How to avoid speculation and where to find reputable sources on the outbreak
- How to stay connected
- How to talk to children
- How to anticipate distress

There is a lot of uncertainty around the current COVID-19 outbreak, particularly given that the situation is constantly developing and the information about the virus remains incomplete.

Understandably, this is causing a lot of worry and anxiety for people. Having children and young people at home, often when people are trying to work themselves, adds another layer of stress. It is therefore important to not only consider our physical health during such challenging times, but also to pay attention to our mental health. It is normal to feel worried, stressed and anxious when we are faced with uncertain situations, but the sooner we acknowledge and learn to take care of our mental health, the healthier and better equipped we'll be to cope with the situation we're having to face.

Looking after yourself

Taking care of our mental health and checking in on others is something that we can all do, and we need to remember that by looking after our own mental health, we'll be best placed to look after our children. Remember when they tell you on aeroplanes that you need to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others, it's like that.

Time is precious, especially when looking after children. However, try to plan your days or weeks to include something from each of the '5 ways to wellbeing' (developed by NEF)



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BE ACTIVE

Try to make sure that you and your family get regular exercise every day. You Tube has lots of exercise videos for kids and adults. Get children involved in planning their own 'indoor PE'.

If current government advice permits, try to get outside once a day either into your garden if you have one or in a place where there are few people. If you can't go out,

TAKE NOTICE

Take a break from the news and social media and concentrate on what's happening in the here and now in your family. Notice and appreciate the small things.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your wellbeing.

CONNECT

Social connection is one of the most important ways that we can look after our mental wellbeing. Social distancing is going to make that trickier, but we're lucky enough to have technology to help us out. Think physical distancing, but social connections.

Social media is great, but if you can, try to have phone calls or even video calls.

GIVE

Research tells us that giving back to our community helps people to feel valuable and makes us happier. We might not be able to contribute to our community in our usual way, but many people will still be able to find ways to give back.

Lots of community groups are setting up schemes that aim to help vulnerable people at this difficult time. If you want to get involved, check out local social media for ideas.

KEEP LEARNING

Learning a new skill or honing an existing one gives us a sense of purpose and achievement.

Whilst we're busy learning, we're less likely to experience anxious thoughts and worries.



Coronavirus Anxiety

As the coronavirus spreads, more and more people are becoming anxious about what it might mean for themselves and their loved ones. It's completely understandable (and normal!) to feel anxious about this emerging health crisis. As part of efforts to take best care of body and mind, here are some tips that might help in tolerating these uncertain times.



When stressed, our brains want us to be able to predict and consider the worst case scenarios to help us prepare and protect ourselves. This is great when there is a way of problem solving the situation – not so great when there isn't. Our brains are predisposed to focus on threat. We will forget the “everyday” and bring full attention to things which are scary, without taking time to really think about the facts.

For example, we might think nothing of getting in our cars everyday but be scared of spiders, even though the evidence suggests we are more likely to be at risk in a car than from a spider.

Furthermore, as a species we are not very good at tolerating uncertainty, something that in the current climate we might need to allow! Our minds want us to have explanations so when we can't find them our brains will fill in the gaps, and if anxiety has any say these explanations will be usually based on our biggest fears.

Anxiety can snowball; we start with one worry and before we know where we are it's grown and grown and we're now headed for a full on catastrophe (the “what if”.. “but then what if...” scenario), even when the likelihood of each possible thing coming true may be minimal. Anxious thoughts get in the way of our minds taking in what we need to know and deciphering fact from fiction.

The uncertainty of the coronavirus is scary. And scary gets our attention! However, it might help to try to stay grounded and get the facts instead of allowing our minds to make up the information for us. Try to find a source of information which is reliable. Snippets of information from social media may represent one person's worry thoughts, rather than the actual risk/facts. Make sure you are informed but not overloaded – consider limiting your exposure to information. For example, by restricting where you go to find information to reputable sources (such as the NHS, Government sites, World Health Organisation), or by setting boundaries around how much time you will allow yourself to read/listen to the news.

Coronavirus Anxiety continued

Use your past coping skills. Think about what has helped you in the past when you have felt stressed or overwhelmed. It could be yoga, relaxation, mindfulness, trying a new recipe, talking with a friend, distracting yourself with a puzzle, making time for self-soothing (taking a nice bath for example)... the list is endless! What helps will be different from person to person – use what works for you.



Consider the 5 steps to mental wellbeing. The more you nurture your mental health, the more resilient to anxiety and stress you will enable yourself to be. Strategies for mental wellbeing include: staying connected with other people; be physically active; learn new skills; give to others; pay attention to the present moment. You might need to adapt some of these if you are self-isolating or unable to participate with your usual activities. Some ideas include: trying a new exercise regime at home; making time for a long phone call to a friend; finding a new hobby; practising a mindfulness exercise. There are some great resources online that can help with activities during periods of self-isolation, why not try www.dothinkshare.com or check out our list of self-isolation activities.

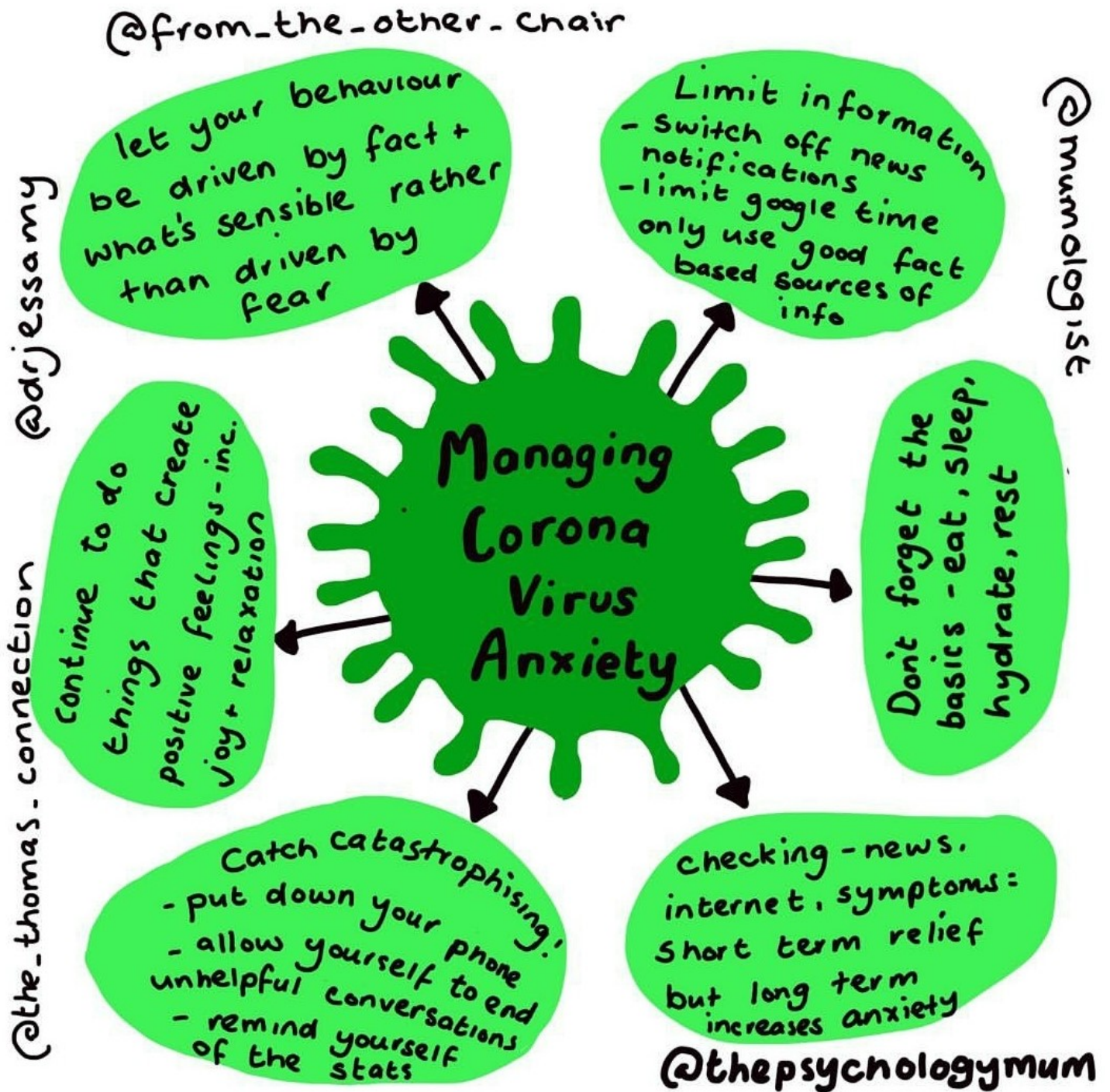


Information from the media is changing day by day. This can make times feel uncertain and the future unpredictable. Thinking too far ahead can feed those “what if..” thoughts.

Breaking your day into chunks could help you to step back. Instead of thinking about the whole day, think about the “now and next”. What are you doing in this moment, and what do you plan to do in the next. Think in terms of the present and immediate future. You’ll deal with anything that comes up as you need to, but contemplating something that hasn’t happened yet can be a playground for anxious thoughts.

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Social Story: My name is Coronavirus

This social story is a handy resource for reading with children, it has been attached with the Newsletter and can be used to explain the current situation. It explains the symptoms, how to keep your family safe and helps to reassure children.

HELLO!

I am a VIRUS,
cousins with the Flu and
the Common Cold

My name is Coronavirus

MANUELA MOLINA - @MINDHEARTKIDS
WWW.MINDHEARTKIDS.CO
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 INTERNACIONAL PUBLIC LICENSE

And you can help...

1

By washing your hands with soap and water while singing a song

You can sign your favorite song, the happy birthday song, or the alphabet song

2

By using hand sanitizer and letting it dry on your hands

Without moving them count to 10
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Once your hands are dry you can get back to playing!!

ELSA: 14 Day Challenge

14 Days of activities for children, each activity is hyperlinked to a resource on the ELSA Support website. If you open the attached document and click on the blue title of each activity you can download and print the activities for children.

ELSA SUPPORT 14 day Home Challenge

Click the BLUE writing to take you to a resource which you can download and print.

<p>Happy fab Booklet</p> <p>Look at the five things you can do each day to help you feel happier. Developing relationships with others can be done by telephone or video chat. It could also be done by writing a letter or by making a card for someone.</p>	<p>Jar of Courage</p> <p>Make a jar of courage with help from an adult. Put the labels on your jar and fill it up with the positive quotes. Take one out each day and read it. Believe it!</p>	<p>Hug in a Mug</p> <p>Give yourself a hug in a mug. Decorate the mug and add all the things that make you feel happy in the pieces of marshmallow.</p>	<p>Star Breathing</p> <p>Learn how to do star breathing so that you feel nice and calm when you feel either anxious, angry or upset. I bet you could draw your own star too. See if you can copy the poster and draw your own.</p>	<p>Self-esteem Bookmark</p> <p>Colour your own self-esteem bookmark and read it every day to remind yourself how amazing you are. You can use it when you read your book. You can do lots of reading at this time.</p>
<p>Mindful Flip Flop</p> <p>Some lovely mindful colouring today. I wonder if you can manage to colour all the sections and think about the words. Can you find time to really relax today? Enjoy opening and closing your flip flop!</p>	<p>Happiness Challenge</p> <p>There are five days worth of activities here but I bet you could do them all in a day if you set your mind to it. Lots of lovely happiness fun!</p>	<p>Mandala Wishes</p> <p>Today you need to draw your picture in the centre of the mandala and then think about your wishes. Write them in the petals and then do lots of lovely mindful colouring.</p>	<p>Mindful Rainbow Walk</p> <p>You might only be able to go into your garden if you have one but you could do this around your house and by looking through the windows. What do you notice?</p>	<p>A-Z of Self-care</p> <p>What can you do to look after yourself today? Read through the poster and then make your own A-Z of self-care.</p>
<p>Doodle a Day</p> <p>Doodling is relaxing. Try filling this all in today. What creative doodles can you do?</p>	<p>20 Faces</p> <p>Can you fill in all the faces with different expressions? Think about all the emotion words you know and try and put a face to each one.</p>		<p>Mindful Challenge</p> <p>There are five days of activities here but I bet you can do them all in a day if you set your mind to it. Have a lovely mindful time!</p>	<p>My Perfect Day</p> <p>What would your perfect day look like? Fill in this comic strip with all the things that would make it just perfect.</p>



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Coronavirus: supporting children and staff wellbeing

Wellbeing tips for schools:

- Give some time to talk and process what is happening, with children and as a staff group too. But also make sure that Coronavirus is not the *only* thing being talked about. Some people may wish to talk a lot about this, and others may not.
- Consider asking about what children have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misconceptions and reassure them.
- Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
- Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – children and staff – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Reassure pupil and staff that this is all normal and okay.
- Staff will need to model calmness, but it is also important to talk honestly and not pretend that things aren't different and worrying for some.
- Keep to daily school routines as much as possible. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability. Routine during unrest can be therapeutic, and changes particularly unsettling for some. If there are changes to routine, consider which children may need some extra help with this.
- Identify colleagues whose wellbeing may be more at risk. For example, there may be people who have experienced anxiety in the past.
- Identify children whose wellbeing may be more at risk. For example, those who may have relatives with health conditions or recent bereavements, and some SEN groups such those prone to anxiety; those with learning difficulties; those with Autism; and those with tendency for obsessive or repetitive behaviours.
- Stay informed by sticking to trusted sources of information. Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.
- As an adult you may be concerned yourself. Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if you need.



Useful Links

Advice for educational settings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>

NHS advice:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Some wellbeing tips for families:

<https://www.harrow.gov.uk/health-leisure/coronavirus?documentId=13113&categoryId=210266>

Talking to children about Coronavirus:

Advice on talking to children about Coronavirus, by British Psychological Society:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Talking%20to%20children%20about%20Coronavirus.pdf>

How to talk to your child about coronavirus, by Unicef:

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

Child-friendly explanation of Coronavirus for Primary age students:

https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

Information video on Coronavirus for Primary age children (KS2), by Brainpop:

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

Information video on Coronavirus for older children/adults, by WHO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOV1aBVYKGA&feature=youtu.be>

Your wellbeing:

Coronavirus and your wellbeing, by Mind UK:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

5 ways to wellbeing, by Mindkit:

<https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

Telford and Wrekin Educational Psychology Service Website:

<http://eps.taw.org.uk/default.aspx>

Telford & Wrekin Local Offer Website:

www.telfordsend.gov.uk



Useful links

Mencap - Easy Read guide to Coronavirus <https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20SS2.pdf> also the attached for ALD

<https://www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/easy-read-advice-on-the-coronavirus-v1.pdf>

Young Minds - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>

Carers UK - Guidance for carers: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>

Covibook – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing during the pandemic: <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>

Amaze - information pack for parents <https://amazesussex.org.uk/faqs-about-the-coronavirus-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-brighton-hove/> really like this link within the site: <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/>

Public Health England have produced an easy read version of their [Advice on the coronavirus for places of education](#). You can download it [here](#).



Local Offer for Special Educational Needs and Disability

Discover everything you need to know about education, health and care services in your local area for children and young people with SEND 0-25yrs at...

www.telfordsend.org.uk

Key features...

- > Search for clear and accessible information, advice and sources of support.
- > Explore leisure, fun and short breaks activities.
- > Find out about specialist services and education health and care plans.
- > Learn how schools support special educational needs.
- > Use the interactive map showing what is available near to where you live.
- > Have your say through our online feedback form.

